

PICKWICK ACADEMY TRUST
TRUSTEES AND MEMBERS MEETING

HELD AT IVY LANE PRIMARY SCHOOL ON 16 JANUARY 2018 AT 6.30PM

M I N U T E S

**PRESENT
TRUSTEES**

Fiona Allen (CEO)
Rob Hayday (Chair)
David Willis
Andrew Hall
Keith Hillman (FD)
Rob Ward

**IN ATTENDANCE
MEMBERS**

Paul Dimech
Gail Chilcott
Elspeth Griffiths
Alexandra Bond
Ian Fewtrell

OTHERS

Matthew Nightingale HT
Julia Hawkins HT
Chris Canning HT
Gina Cooke HT
James Passmore PLTSA

Steve Hayward (observing)
Janet Livingstone (clerk)

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Chair opened the meeting at 6.35pm.

Apologies were received from:

David Powell, Caroline Harrison, Sheila Copeman.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Members and Trustees declared no changes in business interests and no other conflicts of interest with items on the agenda of the Pickwick Academy Trust.

3. ITEMS FOR APPROVAL

BOARD MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 December 2017 were agreed as a true and accurate record and accepted by all trustees. The minutes were signed by RH at the end of the meeting.

4. BOARD MATTERS ARISING

4.1 Project Budget costs are included in the Finance Update and are on GovernorHub.

4.2 FA reported back from the Expectations Working Group. Sheila Copeman is speaking with the children and the deputy heads. The children had visited Ivy Lane School today and had been asked to consider the MATs Expectations of Pupils document over the coming weeks. There is a meeting with senior school leaders on Thursday 18 January and FA plans to pass on the MATs Expectations of Staff for them to review. SENCOs are meeting next Tuesday 23 January and will be passed the MATs SEND Policy for review and comment. The Chairs are meeting with FA on 20 February and will be asked to review the MATs Expectations of its Schools.

4.3 Named Trustees for specific areas:

Finance – Andrew Hall

Health and Safety – Paul Vincent

School Improvement – Paul Vincent & David Willis

Safeguarding – Rob Ward

SEND/Disadvantaged/social mobility – outstanding. Volunteers to come forward.

FINANCE

5. BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN AND DISASTER RECOVERY IN THE EVENT OF A CRITICAL INCIDENT

The ESFA online FMGS Questionnaire was completed in November, and this required a Business Continuity Plan before the end of February 2018. In addition, FA, KH and RH completed the Trust's own Risk Management Report and this highlighted the need for the Trust to develop its own Business Continuity Plan. The plan was written in December 2017 after reviewing best example plans from other MATs. There are still some unfinished items highlighted in yellow which will be completed over the coming week. This document requires an annual review.

RH proposed that the Business Continuity Recovery Plan be approved subject to its completion. This was seconded by RW and all Trustees agreed.

ACTION: updates to be supplied by Headteachers to FA and for completion to be confirmed on 27 February 2018.

6. FINANCIAL UPDATE REPORT

KH stated that overall PAT was in a good position, despite some teething problems.

Budget Management Reports

Detailed figures from the budgets of all 4 schools have been posted on GovernorHub. Each Head summarised the position of their school.

QC – expected to exceed budget (additional MAT costs). In-year projection for deficit of £38,576. Discussion is on-going regarding how to deal with the deficit in relation to staffing/PPA time/Leadership team. Income is expected to exceed budget by £24,622. A Capital Improvement Fund Bid has been put in to improve the toilets.

IL – In year projection is for a surplus of £1,519. Additional costs relate to staffing issues. Reserves in line with projected figures.

CPS – on going issue with photocopy lease. There is a projected overspend on staffing including a confidential staffing issue, overtime and extra duties costs. Hopefully in September the staffing costs will get back in line. CPS will need to recharge expenses incurred on behalf of the MAT and this was confirmed to be funded pro rata according to each school's pupil numbers.

A – See item 7

PAT Central Budget

KH reiterated that the original sum of £60K is insufficient owing to the volume of work following the establishment of the MAT being more than estimated and insufficient admin support coming from the founding schools. KH explained that £45K of the £60K budget had already been spent and this figure does not include all the costings to date. A query was raised by DW about the payments to FA and KH whose employment status was confirmed with increased costs due to workload not rate of pay. Both KH and FA are doing jobs that could be completed by staff on lesser salaries but as there is no central admin or financial support in place combined with the need to produce statutory and other important documents it was inevitable that FA & KH would be working beyond the agreed two days a week and 1.5 days per week respectively.

The meeting that took place today between FA, KH and the 4 heads helped to determine what we need in place for 1 September 2018 to meet statutory requirements. *This is reported later in Item 9.*

Project Budget

This is overspent by £20K and will need to be funded by schools as indicated on the spreadsheet. The expenses outstanding on conversion include Wiltshire costs for setting up the pension scheme.

LGPS

A report has been received from the actuary which has set an employer contribution rate of 25.4% for the pooled fund back-dated to 1 August 2017. This will cost approximately £20K more, although the impact for each school varies, with QC benefiting.

This result is disappointing as we understood a pooled fund would spread risks and lead to a more favourable rate. The actuary has been asked to provide further information. The rate remains the same over 3 years, whereas previously there has been a stepped increase, so this could be looked into. The Heads have provided for the increased costs in their budget monitoring statements.

HCSS accounting system

The implementation has not been without issues on functionality and the lack of analysis reports to support cost centre/ledger code reporting.

A meeting took place on 9 January with HCSS and SBMs. HCSS have agreed to discuss the delivery of improvements including the facility to produce local reports to meet our needs with their development manager as a matter of urgency.

KH will post an update on GovernorHub when he has heard back from HCSS.

ACTION: HCSS Update on GovernorHub prior to next Board meeting.

7. UPDATE ON ALOERIC'S FINANCIAL RECOVERY PLAN

There had been challenges producing budget figures due to personnel and software issues. An improved recovery plan had been produced and it was predicted that the majority of the deficit would be paid off by the end of the year.

KH and FA had met with MN to discuss the plan moving forward. Emma Preater (QC) will provide extra support at Aloeric and Amanda (IL) has also provided support. RH requested that an update should be available by the February Meeting with a clear guidance on tracking the situation and presenting figures on the overall financial situation with regard to salaries, income, expenses etc.

ACTION: Aloeric Financial Update to be provided in reformatted document that indicates status/impact of agreed actions

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

RH met with KH and FA on 21 November 2017 to review draft risk register templates. Following on, RH devised a new Risk Management Register to be used across the Trust so that risks can be recorded, traced and escalated to the Board. Since the Board meeting in December, FA has finalised this and is able to recommend it to the Board for note and approval. Further discussion now needs to be made with Trust Schools regarding their risk responsibilities. FA is meeting with Chairs on 20 February and will share the document with them. FA is grateful for all RH's work on this document. Systems will need to be developed to ensure the Risk Register is utilised on a regular basis and used as a leadership tool for improvement.

RH proposed that the Risk Register format and its content on GovernorHub is approved. He suggested risks at LGB level are reviewed at Trust level if the score is >12, and are discussed at Trust Level if the score is >15.

Headteachers and LGBs to utilise the risk register format for compilation of relevant risks to be shared with the Board. The Risk Register is on GovernorHub.

9. Investment Policy

Best Investment Policies from other MATs were reviewed and our own PAT Investment Policy has now been developed (as required by FMGS). This was approved by the Trust's Policy Panel on 9 January 2018 and has been shared with the Board for information and is for use by all across the Trust.

10. FUTURE MAT DEVELOPMENT

FA, KH, CH and the four founding Heads with JP met for an all-day discussion on future MAT development. FA was pleased to report that all 4 Heads are fully committed to the Trust and she thanked them for their open feedback during the discussion.

Firstly, all the achievements made during the conversion and to date were highlighted – all 48 of them! These had been recorded on a flip chart to inject positivity into the discussions

Then the frustrations were noted and discussed:

1. HCSS – the difficulties encountered with the new system and the effect on SBMs
2. HTs being torn between school improvement and MAT involvement
3. Perception of lost focus on the children
4. Central team issues and the lack of support forthcoming from the founding schools
5. Question - were we doing too much too quickly?
6. The extra work involved with going live on 1 August 2017 with regard to the finances had impacted significantly
7. Communications at the different levels.

FA explained the issues around the project budget; the work was greater than anticipated and she and KH were doing the bulk of it, rather than the four schools contributing as originally planned. This has necessitated the call for additional resource from school budgets.

Conclusions

FA summed up:

1. All 4 schools committed
2. There will be an Executive Meeting every 2 weeks with FA, KH, HTs, James Passmore and Caroline Harrison.
3. The MAT will be aligned with the Teaching School – FA will work with JP on a Growth Plan and arrangements for how School Improvement can be delivered through this arrangement.
4. CEO/FD. FA explained that the MAT did not have enough money currently to fund a new CEO/FD. More admin support would be provided for the central team, CPS to offer help. QC would enable Emma Preater to support Keith in a leading finance role – this would also provide succession planning. IL would provide support from Amanda with the delivery of HCSS – the exact role to be decided. CC would work alongside his Pastoral Support Manager to provide Safeguarding expertise. The extra support would enable FA to concentrate on the more strategic operations and development.
5. KH will cost the extra support that is required. Initially funding will come from reserves to get a working model in place. From 1 September 2018 the cost will be built into the budgets with increased contributions from each school. This might require some restructuring and efficiency savings.
6. MN would concentrate on stabilising the financial situation at Aloeric with support from QC and in doing so may take a reduced role in MAT development in the short term.
7. School Improvement. JH suggested there should be harmonisation of data across the schools – she was hoping to start this work in the hope it could be implemented by September 2018. (Currently cohort data is not comparable) Although tracking systems could be different at the schools, assessments would need to be similar so the data provided is comparable. A School Improvement Advisor was working across all four schools. School Improvement would be harmonised for instance TD days would take place at the same time and if possible weekly INSET could be shared.
8. On 5 February FA/KH and the 4 HTs are visiting a MAT in Stoke which should provide more information on the way forward and opportunity to progress plans.

A discussion followed regarding the timing of growing the MAT, covering costings of a central support team, the model of operation for the future. KH stated that an estimate of the minimum size of a MAT being financially secure and stable was now 3500 pupils which is double Pickwick's current number.

FA stated that if the £95K bid was successful, then a School Improvement Leader would be appointed. It was noted that there was talent in the four schools to make a successful Trust Team and wherever possible appointments and money generated should stay with the founding schools.

RH proposed that a succinct update (couple of A4 pages) was provided at the February Board Meeting covering:

1. **Proposed operating model**
2. **Succession planning**
3. **Resourcing**
4. **Growth of MAT**

ACTION: MAT DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

11. Headteacher Reports

RH thanked the HTs for the work that had gone into producing the reports and asked them to briefly highlight any issues for the Board. MN provided a useful introduction to the composition of the reports and each Headteacher highlighted key information from their documents.

The Board recognised that it was helpful to have the information although concern was expressed that there was too much content and that a summary of key points might be more beneficial. It was pointed out that the LGB would have more time to utilise the detail. EG queried the resource implications of producing the reports. DW stated that in the future School POD would automatically be able to generate a great deal of the information in the HTs report. The reports were considered valuable and presented the Board with an understanding of the business. Further harmonisation work is required by Headteachers so that there is consistency of reporting.

12. PLTSA Update

James Passmore updated the meeting verbally. Currently he is engaged in the creation of more hubs and he will update the Board with a comprehensive plan at the next meeting in February, including the integration with the MAT.

ACTION: PLTSA Update to be provided to the Board in February.

13. POLICIES FOR APPROVAL

FA confirmed that all December policies had been through the Policy Panel and had been ratified. The Health and Safety Policy is incomplete as it does not list the policies in use at each school, so each HT will provide a list of supporting H & S policies with review dates by the end of February 2018. FA asked the Board to approve in principle the incomplete policy at the moment. RH stated that the information provided by the Headteachers is to be used to plan reviews of similar policies across the Trust to harmonise documents so that there is a single policy for each subject area.

FA proposed that all the policies listed below be approved as recommended by the Policy Panel. RW seconded and all agreed.

Restructuring and Redundancy (to be used by CPS and new Pickwick Academy Trust staff). *(To be reviewed and harmonised in December 2018 recognising current risks of standardisation.)*

- ✓ Freedom of Information

- ✓ Data Protection
- ✓ Health and Safety (*completed policy to be presented at March Board Meeting*)
- ✓ Site Security
- ✓ Lone Working
- ✓ Grievance
- ✓ Financial Investment

ACTION: Headteachers to supply list of H&S policies with their review dates by end of February to FA for inclusion in final version of H&S policy to be presented to the Board in March for use across the Trust.

14. SINGLE EQUALITY SCHEME

This was deferred to the next meeting as not everyone had been able to see it.

ACTION – for inclusion on agenda at February Board meeting

15. CHAIRS OF GOVERNORS MEETING

A second meeting with LGB Chairs took place with CEO and FD on 12 December 2017 – three of the four were in attendance. All three Chairs had produced a *Chair of Governor Report for the CEO*. Discussions included issues such as contingency funds for central services, expansion of the Trust as a means of raising money. Chairs requested that they had the opportunity to meet with the CEO and FD before each Board Meeting. This was agreed.

16 TRUSTEE RECRUITMENT

Currently there was a vacancy for Vice-Chair and also a Trustee. A decision on this was deferred until the February meeting. The Members were meeting up shortly and would consider the recruitment issue then. It was not a requirement that Trustees had to be taken from the founding schools, so a skills-based appointment could be made.

Any comments on recruiting a new Trustee should be emailed to the Members directly or via RH. Anyone wanting to be considered for the Vice-Chair position should also contact the Members by 20 February 2018.

Action – Trustees to consider position of Vice Chair and express any interest.

17. ITEMS TO NOTE

17.1 FA confirmed that Headteacher appraisal had been undertaken at each school.

17.2 LGB Appointments made since the December 2017 meeting were:

- Aloeric – Ruth Gould
- Queen’s Crescent – Ashley O’Neill
- Ivy Lane – Joan Massina
- CPS – still in voting stage

17.3 The panel selecting the auditors met (with involvement from SBMs) and the outcome was posted on GovernorHub. **Bishop Fleming were appointed.**

18. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 27 February 2018 at Aloeric School at 6.30pm

The meeting closed at 9.15pm

Signed:

Date:

LIST OF ACTIONS

Item	Subject	Action required	By whom
5	Business Continuity Plan and Disaster Recovery	To complete the plan	HTs to supply updates to FA
6	Finance – HCSS Accounting System	Update on improvements from HCSS prior to February meeting	KH
7	Aloeric’s Financial Recovery Plan	Update for February meeting in reformatted document indicating status/impact of agreed actions	MN
10	Future MAT Development	Brief Update to be presented at Feb Meeting covering model, succession planning, resourcing and growth of the MAT	FA/KH
12	PLTSA Update	Comprehensive plan to be presented to Board in February meeting	JP
13	Policies for Approval – Health & Safety Policy	HTs to supply list of H & S policies with review dates by end of February to FA	HTs
13	Policies for Approval - Health & Safety Policy	Final H & S policy to be presented to Board in March for use across Trust	FA
14	Single Equality Scheme	Add to Policy list in February Meeting	FA/RH
16	Trustee Recruitment	Trustees to consider position of Vice Chair and express any interest	Trustees