

PICKWICK ACADEMY TRUST
TRUSTEES AND MEMBERS MEETING

HELD AT CORSHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL ON 26 SEPTEMBER 2017 AT 7PM

MINUTES

**PRESENT
TRUSTEES**

Fiona Allen (CEO)
Dan Stuchbury (vice Chair)
David Powell
David Willis
Sheila Copeman
Andrew Hall

**IN ATTENDANCE
MEMBERS**

Paul Dimech
Ian Fewtrell
Elspeth Griffiths
Paul Vincent

OTHERS

Matthew Nightingale HT
Julia Hawkins HT
Gina Cooke HT
Chris Canning HT
Keith Hillman FIN DIR
James Passmore PLTSA
Janet Livingstone (clerk)

APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from:

Rob Hayday (Chair) and Robert Ward (Trustees), Gail Chilcott and Alexandra Bond (Members),
Caroline Harrison CPS

1. WELCOME

DS welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked Corsham Primary School for hosting and organising a school tour at 6.30pm.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no other changes in business interests and no other conflicts of interest with items on the agenda of the Pickwick Academy Trust.

3. BOARD MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 July 2017 were agreed as a true and accurate record and accepted by all trustees. The minutes had already been signed by RH.

4. BOARD MATTERS ARISING

4.1 The Clerk will follow up on the declaration of interest form for RW. **ACTION: Clerk**

4.2 Item 5a regarding IL's lease agreement and rights of way. CH had previously spoken to Winckworth Sherwood without resolution, but will now talk to Browne Jacobsen regarding the inclusion of a specific indemnity clause. **ACTION: CH**

4.3 Item 5i – actioned by FA

4.4 Item 8c – actioned by CH

4.5 Item 9 – actioned by Heads and RH

5. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

HT VERBAL REPORTS ABOUT THEIR SCHOOLS
TEACHING SCHOOL VERBAL REPORT

The summary of the verbal reports have been amalgamated into a table – SEE APPENDIX A

6. FINANCE

6.1 & 6.2 Finance Report – Reserves Policy and update

KH had distributed a report setting out the current position on reserves and comparing this with the Reserve Policy. Under consideration by trustees was how they want the governing bodies to achieve that level of reserve and some expectation of time scales. Implications of the pressures of funding the proposed levels and changes required to achieve the reserve would be considered.

KH stated the need for reserves going forward to protect against risk.

The Reserves Policy states that a General Schools Reserve should be in place for each school and it should be set at 5% of central government income. FA said that funding levels would reduce next year. A discussion about CIF bids ensued with regard to school projects, but it was recognised that competition for this money was fierce.

PAT is accountable for the whole MAT money. The money will be delegated to local governing boards going forward. There was a need to make efficiency savings within the organisation if possible.

FA stressed that unity of provision for all pupils was paramount as the MAT moved forward.

KH put forward a 2% PAT General Capacity Reserve to provide £128k. So overall, KH recommended a 5% + 1%/2% contribution for each school towards reserves. Historically, Aloeric normally held a 3% reserve, while the other three schools aimed for 5% in their budgets, but all four heads recognised the need for and the challenge of building up their reserves and were pleased to hear that KH thought it was manageable to work towards a 7% figure, The time scale for each establishment would vary. KH asked the Local Governing Bodies to look at the budget implications so that they can make informed decisions and operate a flexible strategy. Auditors will expect to see the Reserve Policy.

Asset Replacement and Minor Improvement Reserves should be considered in the medium term.

KH recommended each school set a balanced budget as soon as possible. The report itemised the situation at each school and suggests how each Local Governing Body might address the gap. The Board would then have to approve each of the school's budgets.

The Board considered the Reserves Policy on the basis that it sets out the position it would like to achieve and AH proposed that it was approved. FA seconded the motion and the Trustees voted unanimously to approve the policy.

KH asked the Board to consider what messages and actions it wishes to convey to each of the schools Governing Bodies.

It was agreed unanimously that a school reserve of 5-7% should be set for each school.

KH would be consulting with the heads and finance officers of each school before the next board meeting regarding the individual school budgets.

The ESFA require a budget return to be submitted within 6 weeks of receipt of the funding notification which was 7 September 2017. So there is an urgent need to approve the 2017-2018 budgets of IL and A.

Three different options were given to facilitate this, and it was agreed that the Board would delegate authority to the Chair and Vice-Chair plus any interested Trustee to approve the budgets of Ivy Lane and Aloeric by 19th October 2017.

7. STAFF AND PERSONNEL HANDBOOKS FOR APPROVAL

FA explained that on 1 August 2017 all staff were transferred to the employment of PAT, and on 1 September 2017, the four schools had taken on new staff employed by the PAT. In July, the Board agreed to employ Robinson Grace HR Consultancy to undertake the task of developing a Staff and Personnel Handbook to support the new staff.

There are over fifty contractual and best practice documents each of which has been reviewed by the CEO and Robinson Grace to ensure safeguarding employees and the Trust Board. A review programme has been built in over the next academic year to enable the Board and founding Headteachers to formally review each document and amend if necessary.

DS proposed that the Board approve the Staff Handbook and Personnel Handbook as outlined in the Robinson Grace Report. This was seconded by DP and unanimously agreed by the trustees.

GOVERNANCE

8.1 PAT CONSTITUTION FOR APPROVAL

8.2 PAT GOVERNOR HANDBOOK FOR APPROVAL

8.3 PAT CODE OF PRACTICE FOR APPROVAL

FA had taken account of feedback from Governors, Board members and Headteachers given on the Awayday on 19th September and the three documents had been amended accordingly, where appropriate.

AH recommend that the trust board approve the PAT Constitution, the PAT Governor Handbook and the PAT Code of Practice. DP seconded the motion and the Trust Board unanimously agreed.

9. POLICIES FOR APPROVAL

9.1 Pay Policy

FA explained that the Pay Policy was a combination of QC and CPS ones. There had been a few differences which had now been standardised. The main contention had been the main pay grades (QC had an extra level) but these have now been harmonised to 6 grades.

The national recommendation is for those on Main grades 1 and 6 to get a 2% pay rise, whilst those on grades 2,3,4 and 5 would get 1%.

Discussion followed on the fairness of such an award, the message it sent to the teaching staff, the added cost going forward of awarding a 2% pay increase across the board, the danger of setting a precedent of going against the national guidelines and the feasibility of awarding a 1% increase to all teachers. FA stated that the unions wanted a 2% increase for all.

It was finally agreed that accepting the national guidelines was the safest, least risky option. However, it was also agreed that next year a more equitable system should be adopted.

DP proposed that the trustees should support the implementation of the STRB that includes the 2% increase for MPR1 and MPR6. This was seconded by SC and unanimously agreed.

DP proposed that the trustees should approve the Pay Policy 2017 to be implemented across Trust Schools, with the addition of a sentence stating that the Board would be aiming to implement a more equitable system next year. This was seconded by SC and unanimously agreed. ACTION FA

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

10.1 Pickwick Academy Trust name abbreviation

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

11. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on 7 November 2017 at Queen's Crescent at 7pm

The meeting closed at 10.05pm