**PICKWICK ACADEMY TRUST**

**TRUSTEES AND MEMBERS MEETING**

**HELD AT CORSHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL ON 17 SEPTEMBER 2019 AT 6.30 PM**

**MINUTES**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **PRESENT**  **TRUSTEES** | **IN ATTENDANCE**  **MEMBERS** | **OTHERS** |
| **Andrew Hall** | **Gail Chilcott** | **Keith Hillman** |
| **Rob Hayday (Chair)** | **Paul Dimech** | **Gina Cooke** |
| **Andrew Hall** | **Elspeth Griffiths** | **Julia Hawkins** |
| **James Passmore (CEO)** |  | **Emma Preater** |
| **David Powell** |  |  |
| **Paul Vincent** |  |  |
| **Rob Ward (Vice Chair)** |  |  |
| **David Willis** |  |  |

**Welcome and Apologies**

Apologies were received from Gill Clark.

RH welcomed all attendees to the meeting and to the new era of Pickwick Academy Trust. He welcomed James Passmore in his new role as CEO – confirming later in the meeting that in this role James was entitled to vote on decisions.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1. | **Declarations of Interest**  Members and Trustees were invited to declare any changes in business interests. There were none. It was agreed that there were no conflicts of interest with the agenda of the Board meeting. |
| 2. | **Corsham Broadwood Site Expansion**  CPS had been approached by Wilts CC with a view to admitting an additional 7 children into the Broadwood site due to the school’s expansion and lack of spaces in other Corsham schools. GCo explained that she attended an initial meeting with the Chair and Vice Chair of the LGB at which it was agreed it should be discussed at a full LGB meeting. GCo and JP attended that meeting (RH was unable to attend but had briefed them beforehand) when it was felt appropriate that the children should be admitted. KH and EP had carried out a prudence exercise on the financial position. Whilst the paper which had been written was clear, in future it would be helpful for Trustees to have 24 hours to consider the issue, raise concerns or confirm agreement even if this via Governorhub. RH explained the dilemma of governance with Trustees and LGB members asked to attend the same meeting to resolve the matter and to make the decision. Rh felt that the decision was a matter for the LGB as the Trustees were already familiar with the intention that the Broadwood would expand |
| 3. | **Ludwell Conversion Decision**  RH opened the discussion on the Ludwell conversion decision by saying that growth has always been a strategic direction the Trust has wished to take in order to ensure its sustainability. Ludwell has been an opportunity for the Trust for some time but other options have also been considered eg becoming a mixed MAT. However, the RSC has offered us Ludwell although there may be some logistical concerns ie that it is an hour’s drive away and capacity issues.  The Board has to make a decision about Ludwell: option (1) do not agree to the conversion, option (2) agree to the conversion or option (3) agree to the conversion but insist this is done in conjunction with Greentrees School in Salisbury also joining at the same time which would enable the Trust to form a southern hub.  JP summarised his paper:   * the school was put into special measures in January 2018 * Ludwell is at the top of the RSC’s list of schools who require a sponsor * There are some financial challenges – the school was predicting a £400k deficit in its 5 year plan. * Following a visit by KH/EP in March, it was agreed that the conversion should be put on hold. * The Trust was asked by the LA to support the LGB with the finances; five models were suggested but all were rejected by the LGB. However, Wilts LA is in charge of the school’s budget. * The recent Teaching and Learning review has shown significant progress in attainment. * On 30 August, we were informed by the HT that she had secured another post as interim CEO at Southern Academy Trust for 2 days a week until May 2020, remaining at Ludwell for 3 days a week. This improves the financial position at Ludwell. Southern Academy Trust is based in Shaftesbury, has 1 secondary school and 3 primary schools and is believed to be experiencing some difficulties * JP spoke to the HT on 17 Sept and has established that whilst she applied for a full-time headship in a school in Salisbury, she has now withdrawn that application. * There is a potential conflict of interest which would have to be managed very carefully by PAT as the new employer: pupil numbers, PAT documentation, finances. The LGB has also recognised the potential conflict of interest; * the LGB is now showing a willingness to become part of PAT   Since writing this paper, the situation has developed. JP and KH met the LGB last week to discuss their plans for growth. The revised 5 year financial plan now shows that overall in years 1 and 2 there will be a surplus but current predicted pupil numbers in year 3 will lead to a deficit. The LGB is looking at ways to improve links within the local community eg with pre-schools, libraries and other groups. The reaction of parents and staff to the changes at the school are positive.  The HT is not on the school’s payroll for 2 days a week. If she returned on a full-time basis after May, she might be expected to teach or provide school improvement work for PAT. The contractual arrangements (TUPE) would need to be checked carefully.  KH explained that if we wish to keep £156k from the MDIF fund, we have to take on 2 schools; Ludwell would be one and it is hoped that Greentrees would be the second. If the Board decides not to proceed with the conversion, we would have to hand this money back. Some expenditure has already been made which the Trust could claim as justified expense on school improvement.  Option (1): pay back £156k. The reputation of the Trust with the RSC would be put at risk and, potentially, we would not be looked upon favourably as a future sponsor. It was felt that the decision cannot be made purely on financial reasons.  Option (2) the LGB wants another Ofsted inspection. They would like the conversion date to be 1 Nov but only if an inspection has taken place. If it hasn’t happened by then, they would like to wait until after it has been done. It is felt by attendees that the MAT should be supporting schools in difficulties as it ties in with the Trust’s aims. It should not be about finances. However, the Trust has to ensure there is capacity to support the school and make the conversion a success.  RH said that we should expect LGBs to be supportive of what the Trust is doing but that we should be mindful that relationships may change once the conversion begins and the impact this may have on the current PAT operation. Nigel Anstey has been working with the LGB and will remain as Chair of the LGB until the conversion.  Option (3) JP pointed out that ideally it would be better if Greentrees decided to join the Trust before Ludwell. However, they aim to confirm their decision to us on 6 November. The RSC is losing patience with us as they believe we have had enough time to make a decision. By PAT taking on Ludwell shows a commitment to the area. The PLTSA already works with a group of schools in the Salsbury area and has a wide network in the area for school improvement.  There was a discussion on the Trust’s capacity to support Ludwell. At the moment, 2 of our schools are causing concern and require support. The Executive HTs support each support 2 schools for 12 days on school improvement. JH has agreed to add Ludwell to her caseload. JH and GC are confident that they would be able to deliver the support needed with the plans that have been put in place for our schools. JH explained that data at QCS shows that progress has slipped over the last 2 years, CPS data is not as strong as it was. The focus has been on other schools. However, a lot of work is now being done to address issues which have been identified. The HT at Ludwell has a proven record in school improvement. We would be able to allocate funds to create more capacity and more support at the other Trust schools.  In conclusion:  Option (3) – not agreed  Option (1) – not agreed.  Option (2) - Recommendation is that the Trust accepts this option, preferably after an Ofsted inspection. JP to investigate whether an Ofsted inspection can be requested before the anticipated conversion date of 1 Nov 2019. Proposed PV, seconded DW. Agreed unanimously by all Trustees present. |
|  | **Any Other Business**  Nominations for Chair and Vice Chair: any interested parties are invited to inform JP before the meeting on 1 Oct |

**Date of next meeting**: Tuesday 1 October 2019 at 6.30 pm at Corsham Primary School (Pound Pill)

**The meeting closed at 7.55 pm.**

**Signed …………………………………………………………………………**

**Date: …………………………………………………………………………**