

CBAT BOARD MEETING

Minutes of the Trustees' meeting held on 23rd March 2020 at 6:00pm via telephone conference call

Present: Nigel Riglar (Chair), Graham Ayre, Debbie Bird, John Gilbert, Emma Gray (Finance Director), Ruth Hollier, Stuart Wilson (Chief Executive Officer).

In Attendance: David Dale (Clerk).

1. Welcome and introductions

The Chair welcomed RH to her first Board meeting.

He explained that this meeting was being conducted via telephone conference call due to the restrictions advised under the current Coronavirus emergency (see item 9 below).

2. Apologies received and accepted:

None.

3. Declarations of Interest:

There were no new declarations.

4. Minutes of the meeting of 11th February 2020

It was **proposed** by JG, and **seconded** by DB, that these be approved and signed, to be published on the Trust's website. This was **agreed** unanimously.

5. Action point checklist

All actions ongoing or completed.

6. Matters arising

None.

7. Trustee appointments and resignations

The Clerk reported that, on the recommendation of the Chair and CEO, the Trust's Members had appointed Ruth Hollier as a Trustee on 17th March 2020. This was noted.

There had been no resignations since the last meeting.

8. Trust growth opportunities

With regards to the Trust's bid to sponsor a new secondary school in the south of Gloucester, the CEO reported that he, and other members of the project team, had been interviewed remotely by the Regional Schools Commissioner – this seemed to have gone well, and the outcome of the bid should be known by September. In response to Trustees' questions about the number of other bids, he said that there had been two other bids but it is not known whether they had also got through to the interview stage.

He reported that the RSC had also enquired whether the Trust might be willing to work with and support another MAT in the county. Trustees asked a number of questions about the

possible costs and benefits of this to CBAT, and the type of support that might be provided. The CEO said that he would be guided by what seemed to be in the best interests of the wider school community, and that he anticipated that CBAT would be compensated appropriately for providing support. Although details of the request are not yet known, he anticipated that it would be at the level of the MAT rather than individual schools, and might involve he and the FD. Once the RSC has provided a more specific proposal he will consult Trustees before making a decision. **Action: CEO** to circulate the RSC proposal in due course.

9. Health, safety and wellbeing – Coronavirus update

The CEO reported that much time and energy had gone into Coronavirus planning since the call from PHE three weeks ago. The schools had been working on getting ready for possible closure, although until the announcement came last week the working assumption had been planning for a 4 week closure. Work had focussed on developing virtual learning resources, and communicating effectively with parents. All schools closed last Friday, 20th March.

At Marling School, the situation had been managed last week so that only Y8 and Y9 students missed any time at school, and then just for one day each. The school had organised a celebration assembly for Y11 and Y13 students to mark their last day at school in a positive way.

Berkeley Primary School had seen some staff absence last week and had partially closed, affecting the younger age groups. Some staff are affected by the coronavirus restrictions and are either vulnerable or self-isolating.

The position today as the schools were open only for children of key workers, or vulnerable children, had been as follows:

- MS is offering provision from 8.00am – 4.00pm, 9 students had attended. MS will continue to offer this provision throughout the Easter holidays. Most staff had been at work today, but abiding by social distancing guidelines. The FD has met with support staff to explain their working arrangements. The school will take the opportunity to bring forward some minor works to premises (repairs, decorating).
- BPS had seen some staff absence last week and had closed its lower year groups. 11 pupils had attended today, with provision from 8.45am-3.15pm.
- CWJS had 12 pupils attend today, mainly children of key workers, with provision from 9.00am-3.00pm. Deep cleaning is underway.

Safeguarding cover is in place.

Trustees raised questions around:

- steps to avoid virus transmission in schools? The CEO said that parents should ensure that any child with symptoms stays away from school. A child becoming ill at school can be isolated. There are currently no plans for staff to wear PPE. Premises are cleaned daily.
- consistency with PHE and DfE advice? Yes, the schools are following this advice fully, but there are some grey areas around the powers of teachers and support staff. Legal advice is that the Trust can, if necessary, require staff to attend work, however there are sufficient volunteers at present.
- Financial implications – will the schools still receive full GAG funding? Will they incur any additional costs? All GAG funding will be received except for exam fees. No additional costs are anticipated at this time. There may be some small savings from the reduction in site maintenance and supervision but there will be loss of lettings income.

- Staff recruitment – the CEO said that the Trust will push on with its recruitment schedules, including the Deputy Headteacher at BPS. Interviews will be conducted remotely if necessary. He reminded Trustees that all newly appointed staff are subject to 6 months’ probation.
- How will pupils be assessed if exams are cancelled? What if pupils do not agree with their grades? What about A Level students applying to universities? Centre assessments will be provided, moderated by exam boards against prior attainment. There may be appeals about the process but not about the grades. There will be opportunities so sit exams in the next school year if necessary. Universities may decide to make unconditional offers or wait for grades to be published in summer.
- How will SDBs be affected while schools are closed? Urgent business will be carried out. NGA advice has been circulated. Meetings to be held remotely where necessary, the Trust will consider its arrangements for virtual meetings. **Action: CEO** to draft policy for virtual meetings and send to Trustees.

The CEO said that he would provide an email update for Trustees two weeks into the new term. **Action: CEO** to update Trustees.

Trustees recorded their thanks and appreciation to the CEO, Headteachers, and all staff in the schools, and asked for this to be communicated to everyone concerned. **Action: CEO** to pass on Trustees’ thanks to all staff.

10. Finance

(i) Budget monitoring

The FD reported on budget actuals for each of the three academy schools for the period to the end of February (month 6). She emphasised that this is raw data at this stage and is still being worked on. She note that BPS supply teaching costs are concerning and are being closely monitored. The budget report was noted.

A Trustee identified that there appeared to be calculation errors in respect of student numbers and academy contributions to the Trust. **Action: FD** to check figures and advise Trustees accordingly.

11. School Development Boards – dates of last meetings

The Clerk reported that no new SDB minutes have been finalised since the Board’s meeting of 11th February. It was noted that the SDBs had last met on the following dates:

- Berkeley Primary School 15th January 2020
- Cam Woodfield Junior School 13th January 2020
- Marling School 3rd February 2020.

Given the current position with school closures, and possible changes to how and when SDBs will meet in the near future, it is not clear exactly when the minutes of these meetings will be approved. **Action: Clerk** to circulate minutes of these meetings once finalised and signed.

12. SDB recommendations for consideration in line with Scheme of Delegation

None since the last Board meeting, this was noted.

13. Trust policies

The CEO reported that consultation on the Teachers' Pay Policy 2019/20 had closed last month and the feedback being discussed with the Trust's HR advisers. A final version of the policy was tabled. The CEO said that the changes to the salary scale had already been made and payments backdated where necessary and no member of staff was out of pocket. **Action: CEO** to email the policy to Trustees for approval.

14. Trustees' decisions under Scheme of Delegation since last meeting

None since the last Board meeting, this was noted.

15. Any other business

- (i) The FD reported on the cancellation of MS school trips (including three overseas trips), and ongoing work to refund parents. Refunds will be paid in the summer term, but with a quicker turnaround in any cases of hardship.

16. Risk register

The FD reported that risk assessments and business continuity plans were in place in response to the Coronavirus threat. She also briefed Trustees on the protocol surrounding critical incidents.

17. Dates of future meetings

- Term 5, week – **Monday 18th May 2020**
(Possibly using MS Teams – **Action: Clerk** to investigate)
- Term 6, week 6 (w/c 6th July 2020 - tbc).

The meeting closed at 6.52pm.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'R. Kelly', written over a horizontal line.

18th May 2020