

Minutes of the Trustees' meeting held on 30th March 2022 at 6:00pm at Berkeley Primary School

Present: Nigel Riglar (Chair), Graham Ayre, Debbie Bird, John Gilbert (via Zoom), Barbara Green, Ruth Hollier, Judith Taylor, Nicki Wadley, Stuart Wilson (Chief Executive Officer – CEO).

Apologies: None

In Attendance: Emma Gray (Chief Finance and Operations Officer – CFOO), David Dale (Clerk).

1. Welcome and introductions

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. This being the first in-person meeting for two years, he especially welcomed those Trustees who had been appointed since March 2020 – BG, JT and the newest Trustee NW. He noted that JT would have to leave the meeting at 7.30pm and said that he would amend the running order of business so that items for decision could be taken early.

2. Apologies – None.

3. Declarations of Interest

ELG declared an interest in the agenda item on support staff pay award/incremental pay awards.

NW reminded the Board that on appointment as a Trustee she had declared interests as an employee of the Diocese of Gloucester Academy Trust (Governance Lead) and of the Diocese of Gloucester (Strategic Lead for Governance).

4. Minutes of the meeting of 2nd February 2022

Trustees considered the draft minutes of the last meeting and noted that they were an accurate record. It was **proposed** by GA, and **seconded** by JT, that the minutes be approved and signed, to be published on the Trust's website. This was **agreed** unanimously.

5. Action point checklist

The Clerk ran through the actions. Trustees noted that the majority of actions from the last meeting have been completed. The CEO reported that the final action (CBAT 211) has also been completed, he has met with the Strategic Improvement Lead at the local authority and the Headteacher at Cam Woodfield Junior School is working more closely with the Infant School.

6. Matters arising

The Chair reported that he is to convene a further meeting of the Organisational Development group to consider executive capacity within the Trust.

He also raised a general discussion point about the impacts of the current cost of living pressures on families locally, and of the Ukrainian refugee crisis. He said that it is important that

Trustees are aware of these broader issues and are taking appropriate and timely action to respond. The CEO described the support currently available through Pupil Premium funding, bursaries, hardship grants, and affordability of school uniforms. In response to questions from Trustees, he said that there are breakfast clubs targeted at Pupil Premium pupils at both primary schools. Regarding school places for children from refugee families he was aware of just one application for a place at MS.

Trustees were keen to get further assurance that the schools are fully sighted on these issues in their local communities and are communicating what support is available. **Action: CEO** to ask Headteachers to ensure that financial support for families is clearly advertised on school websites and via other communications; that Headteachers report back on any local issues they become aware of including from local Councillors; and that the Finance Team monitor the level of applications for hardship funds and other financial support.

7. Decisions taken under Scheme of Delegation

The Clerk reminded Trustees that the following decisions had been taken and recorded since the last meeting:

Date	Decision
04/02/22	To approve the recommendation to Members to appoint Nicki Wadley as a Trustee
09/02/22	To approve the growth of the Marling SLT by creating an additional Deputy or Assistant Headteacher post
14/02/22	To approve a minor change to the Flexible Working Policy
15/03/22	To approve the recommendation from CWJS SDB to reappoint Emma Irvine as Governor when her current term expires on 22/04/22, and to appoint her as the sole Chair of the SDB when Nicola Evered stands down on the same date.
16/03/22	To approve the proposed structure for the central IT team (as set out in the consultation document).
18/03/22	To approve the recommendation from BPS SDB to appoint Amy Critchley as Governor.

8. Trustee resignations and appointments

As noted above, NW had been appointed as a Trustee from 8th February 2022. There had been no resignations since the last meeting.

9. Governance Conference (item 12 on the agenda)

Trustees considered the latest version of the agenda for the Governance Conference to be held on 4th May and reviewed the questions to be discussed by all participants in the breakout session. There would need to be an explanation of a People Strategy and why the Trust is developing one. Participants should discuss some broader questions to start with before getting into the detail. **Action: DB and BG** to further develop the questions for discussion.

The conference will be a good opportunity to listen to the views of the schools and local Governors, and will also provide some headlines and comments that can be used in future communications and marketing. Trustees made various suggestions for editing the agenda and running the breakout session. **Action: Clerk** to revise the agenda to reflect Trustees' comments and updated questions, then circulate to all participants before the event.

10. CBAT Strategic Plan (item 13 on the agenda)

The CEO presented two documents – an evaluation of the 2020-22 Strategic Plan, and a first draft of the 2022-24 Strategic Plan. The former showed a red/amber/green rating of progress against the 22 actions outlined. He noted that actions 1.3 (vertical teams), 2.3 (benchmarking) and 4.7 (school improvement offer) had not been fully completed and this was largely due to managing the impact of Covid. Overall, however, progress against the Plan has been very satisfactory given the challenges of the last two years.

In the draft 2022-24 Plan, section 1 on learning, teaching and assessment has been developed considerably in discussion with the schools. Section 3 on community has also been expanded to reflect the growth of the Trust's school improvement work.

Trustees discussed the documents and agreed that the overall narrative presented a good picture of recent progress, and a stretching but realistic statement of the challenges ahead. The main area that was identified for further work is the link between the Trust's Strategic Plan and the individual School Development Plans: Trustees felt that there should be a strong thread running through them, so that school priorities reflect Trust priorities and there is 'buy in' at both levels. The CEO agreed that some objectives more than others would lend themselves to inclusion in the school plans and said that he would go through and embolden these for ease of reference. **Action: CEO** to revise the draft Strategic Plan to highlight cascading objectives.

Trustees noted that there may be outcomes from the Governance Conference that could be reflected in the final version of the Plan.

11. People (item 16 on the agenda)

- (i) Support staff incremental annual progression: The CFOO circulated proposals for pay grades and points for support staff in the Trust's central teams for the financial year starting April 2022. For 7 posts in the Finance and HR teams the proposal is to move them up by one point, within their existing grade. For 2 posts in the IT team the proposal is to move them up into a higher grade, in accordance with the restructuring agreed previously. For one post in the HR team the proposal is to move into a higher grade to reflect additional responsibilities.

In response to questions from Trustees, the CFOO confirmed that all the staff concerned had had successful performance appraisals, and that the progression now recommended took account of the need to retain good staff. It was then **proposed** by BG and **seconded** by DB that the proposed grades and incremental progression for these 10 posts in the Trust's central teams be approved. This was **agreed** unanimously.

- (ii) Support staff pay award financial year 2021/22: the CFOO reported that the national pay award had finally been approved in March 2022, with a 1.75% increase backdated to 1st April 2021. This is within the amount that had been provided for in the Trust's budget for the 7 months from September 2021 but would be an additional cost for the 5 months from April 2021 to September 2021. Trustees considered the impact on budgets for the two academic years and asked about the approach that auditors would expect to see taken. It was then **proposed** by JT and **seconded** by RH that the national pay award be approved for the Trust's support staff. This was **agreed** unanimously.
- (iii) Indexation of pensions: The CFOO explained the potential negative impact on pensions for teachers whose salary did not increase last year. In order to trigger the intended pension uplift, advice from the Trust's legal and HR advisers supports a view that a £1 salary increase can be awarded to all those affected, taking care not to discriminate on grounds of age. This is also the action that a number of other Trusts are taking. Trustees

asked about the funding of the teachers' pensions, and any potential unintended detrimental affect on individuals. The CFOO explained that teachers' pensions are funded nationally and the Trust does not contribute. The total additional cost to the Trust of the proposed increase would be £130. It was then **proposed** by GA and **seconded** by RH that the CFOO's recommendation that teachers' salaries be increased by £1 in 2021/22, and then reversed in 2022/23, This was **agreed** unanimously.

12. Headteachers' reports (item 9 on the agenda)

The CEO presented the Headteachers' reports for the period to March 2022 and noted that those for CWJS and MS had been discussed in detail with the lead Trustees (RH and JT respectively). He circulated a revised and update version of the Schools Heat Map with two columns for each school so that Trustees can easily see and changes in status. He highlighted a number of changes, particularly in relation to the budget position at BPS. Trustees noted these reports.

The CFOO circulated a revenue budget forecast and actuals summary for the period to the end of February. She noted that the primary schools are now both forecast to have a small in-year deficit for the current year, largely due to increased staff costs including supply cover. MS has received additional income. The CFOO said that the Finance, Audit & Risk Committee would consider the budget monitoring report, and a first draft of 2022/23 budgets, at their meeting next week.

JT left the meeting at 7.30pm.

13. SDB minutes and matters arising

Trustees received and noted the following minutes:

- BPS 16th March (draft)
- CWJS 14th March (draft)
- MS 20th January (signed).

There were no matters arising.

14. Recommendations from SDBs for decision

None.

15. Policies (item 14 on the agenda)

The CEO updated Trustees on progress with the rationalisation of policy management. He continues to work through the list of policies with Headteachers and SDB Chairs, with a view to reducing the number of policies that SDBs have to approve. He said that a Policy Development Group would be set up in the future to work through the list of Trust policies.

16. Safeguarding (item 15 on the agenda)

There were no specific safeguarding concerns or incidents to report. The CEO updated Trustees on progress with installing security fencing and gates at MS.

17. Property

The CFOO reported that the outcome of the CIF bids should be known next week. The CEO reported on work with architects to (i) design additional classroom and reception space at BPS using S106 funding, and (ii) design cladding and roofing for MS East Campus. He said he would discuss options for the MS Canal Field with JG.

18. IT strategy and operations

There was no updates from the IT Strategy Group. The central IT team restructure considered by Trustees at the last meeting has now been approved and implemented.

19. Data protection & privacy

There were no breaches to report. Trustees asked if there had been an increase in cyber-attacks, the CFOO said not but noted that all staff and Trustees would need to undertake the latest cyber-security training. **Action: all Trustees** to undertake cyber-security training via lamCompliant when requested.

20. Beacon Secondary Academy

The CEO reported that the Project Steering Group had been hibernated until required. The local authority had recalculated its basic needs figures and submitted them to the DfE, and a response is awaited.

21. Other growth opportunities

The CEO reported that he is continuing to actively pursue a number of potential opportunities with primary and secondary schools in the county. There is a high level of interest, some are keen to take discussions further and to undertake collaborative work. He drew Trustees' attention to the new Schools White Paper *Opportunity for All* which sets out the government's ambition for all schools to be in or joining a strong MAT by 2030 and noted that this is likely to give further momentum to the discussions he is having.

Trustees considered the potential for voluntary controlled Church schools to join the Trust, NW noted that they are likely to be keen to explore local options. Trustees endorsed the approach that the CEO is taking to growth opportunities and asked that he send follow-up letters to schools now that the White Paper has been published, and to consider further ways of communicating the opportunity to join CBAT.

The CFOO left the meeting at 7.55pm.

22. Support staff incremental annual progression: CFOO.

The CEO said that following a successful performance appraisal, he was recommending that the CFOO progress by one salary point to L16. It was then **proposed** by NR and **seconded** by GA that the proposed incremental progression for the CFOO be approved. This was **agreed** unanimously.

23. Date of next meeting

Tuesday 17th May at 6.00pm at Cam Woodfield Junior School.

The meeting ended at 8.00pm.



17th May 2022