

### Minutes

Title:	LiFE Multi Academy Trust Board Meeting - Directors		
Date:	Monday 10 <sup>th</sup> May 2021	Time:	6.00pm
Chair:	Maria Everley	Location:	Virtual Google Meeting
Clerk:	Mike Armstrong		

### DIRECTORS

Name	Present /Apologies	Name	Present / Apologies	Name	Present /Apologies
Maria Everley (MEV)	✓	Chris Parkinson (CPA - CEO)	✓	Andy Smith (ASM)	✓
Chris Garnett (CGA)	A	Hazel Cole (HCO)	✓	Liam McDonagh (LMcD)	✓
Gareth Williams (GWI)	✓	David Noble (DNO)	✓	Hatle Mehta (HME) (arrived where stated)	✓
Liz Warren (LWA)	✓				

### In Attendance

Name	Present /Apologies	Name	Present / Apologies	Name	Present /Apologies
Mike Armstrong Clerk	✓	Chris Tweedale (CTW)	✓		

### Notes of meeting

<b>1</b>	<b>Welcome and Apologies.</b>
	<p><b>The Chair welcomed</b> Directors to the meeting and reminded them of the confidentiality of the discussions.</p> <p><b>Apologies:</b> Chris Garnett.</p> <p><b>The Chair announced</b> that Chris Garnett had resigned with immediate effect.</p> <p><b>ACTION 1.1: Chair to write a letter of thanks to CG.</b></p>
<b>2</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>
	None
<b>3</b>	<b>Urgent Items for AOB agreed prior to the meeting.</b>
	None
<b>4</b>	<b>Minutes and Matters Arising from the meeting on 8 March 2021.</b>
	<p>The minutes had been circulated.</p> <p><b>Resolved: The minutes of the meeting on 8 March 2021 and the confidential minutes, were accepted as a true record to be signed by the Chair.</b></p>

	<p><b>Matters arising.</b></p> <p><b>Re Governor Recruitment: The Chair wrote</b> a draft letter for the recruitment of Governors which has been shared with the LGB Chairs. Chairs agreed that the letter would remain as a draft with schools adding information about the school and skills required. The draft has been shared in the COG Folder and recruitment pack.</p> <p><b>LWA asked if vacancies on LGB's would be advertised on sites such as Indeed etc.</b>  <b>The Chair replied</b> that it was the responsibility of the LGB and local Clerk to send out the recruitment information and this could include advertising on these websites.</p> <p><b>CTW asked if he could support the process.</b>  <b>The Chair stated</b> that this would be very helpful and he could liaise with the LGB Clerks on the process of recruitment to ensure consistency.</p> <p><b>Curriculum Working Party – The Chair suggested</b> this was put on hold for future consideration.</p>
5	<p><b>Finance</b>  <b>Finance policy</b>  <b>Budget variances</b>  <b>Capital projects.</b></p>
	<p><b>Finance Policy</b></p> <p>The policy had been shared.</p> <p><b>ASM stated</b> the Policy had been edited to ensure it was fit for purpose.</p> <p><b>LWA asked if the changes could be indicated on the front page of the Policy in future.</b>  <b>ASM agreed</b> this would be done.</p> <p>There were no further comments or queries.</p> <p><b>It was proposed</b> by Hazel Cole <b>and seconded</b> by Liz Warren that the Finance Policy was adopted.</p> <p><b>This was approved unanimously.</b></p> <p><b>Resolved: The Finance Policy was adopted.</b></p> <p><b>Budget variances</b></p> <p><b>ASM stated</b> that there were few differences in the February 2021 management accounts to those reported in the last meeting. The period 7 March accounts were in the process of being produced but again show little variance as schools had only been opened for a few weeks. These accounts will be shared.</p> <p>The period 8 accounts will be scrutinised in the next Finance Meeting. The minutes of the meeting will be shared.</p> <p><b>The Chair asked if the key documents could be placed in the meeting folder each time.</b>  <b>ASM agreed</b> to do this.</p>

**ACTION 5.1: AS to ensure relevant accounts and documentation are shared in each meeting folder for ease of access to Directors.**  
**Capital projects.**

**ASM updated** Directors on the work being undertaken as follows: -

**Bosworth**

- Resurfacing and replacing lighting in the Dome.
- Stage lighting.
- 3G pitch.
- Total swim pool agreement refurbishment.

**HCO asked** how the transition to Total Swim was progressing with the TUPE of staff.

**AS replied to** Total Swim had agreed to underwrite pension liabilities from the LA. This has required the agreement to be 6 years rather than the original 5.

**HCO asked if the company were renting a number of hours and the community classes would continue outside of these hours.**

**ASM replied** that there will be time when the pool is open when Total Swim do not have control. However it was planned that this will also come under the control of Total Swim. The community classes will continue in any event.

**HCO asked how it could be ensured that these community classes continued.**

**ASM said** he would liaise with The Headteacher at Bosworth to ensure this would not happen.

- Other projects such as windows, room changes in ADT and installation of dust extraction equipment.

**Countesthorpe**

- Major build continuing.
- Kitchen equipment from Leysland building to Countesthorpe.
- Boilers from Leysland to Braunstone Frith.

**Ashby School**

- Extension to English block.

**Winstanley**

- MUGA resurfaced.

**Kingsway**

- New play equipment.

**ASM added** that the Estates Manager oversees the capital spend and work in the schools will be prioritised.

**The COO informed** Directors that the funding for the Countesthorpe project had been agreed. £140k had been set aside for the furnishings and this will need to be spent.

	<p><b>ASM informed</b> Directors that CIF funding had become the School Condition Allocation (SCA). For the 5 schools, excluding the Ashby schools, £0.5m was expected. However, this will now be £2.2m annually, plus funding for the Ashby Schools.</p> <p><b>The CEO added</b> that the money was now allocated rather than the uncertainty of bids under CIF. This will enable planning to take place to maintain the estates.</p> <p><b>CTW advised</b> that an analysis of the estate would be useful in order to prioritise the maintenance/work required for Directors to base their decisions on where to spend the SCA.</p> <p><b>He offered</b> to share a spreadsheet he had used in a Trust previously.</p> <p><b>HCO asked if this analysis would be transparent for schools.</b></p> <p><b>CTW said</b> the analysis would be transparent. Results of any condition surveys should be published.</p> <p><b>The Chair asked if the Finance Policy had to be published on the website.</b></p> <p><b>ACTION 5.2: ASM to find out if the Finance Policy must be public and, if so, to ensure it is uploaded to the MAT website.</b></p>
6	<p><b>CEO report and Risk Register</b></p> <p><b>CEO update</b></p> <p><b>Risk register</b></p> <p><b>Risk Register</b></p> <p>The risk register had been shared.</p> <p><b>The CEO informed</b> Directors that a full data driven report will be presented at the next meeting.</p> <p><b>The CEO made</b> the following points: -</p> <p><b>Non confidential section</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Risk 1:</b> Braunstone Frith Budget – The indications are that there will be no compulsory redundancies. There may be a voluntary redundancy of a part time teacher of French. Due to a resignation, a teacher of Year 1 or Early Years is required. The risk is ongoing unless pupil numbers can be increased. The spend on leadership is higher than other schools and is not sustainable. There was a higher level of staffing than can be afforded and split year groups might have to be considered in the future. The CEO was coaching the Headteacher through these issues.</li> <li>• <b>Risk 2:</b> Countesthorpe staff attendance – Attendance is not significantly different to other MAT schools and is not a cause for alarm.</li> <li>• <b>Risk 3:</b> Reopening of Schools – There has been a limited number of cases of Covid, all detected through lateral flow testing. The challenge is to ensure families continue to test. There have been more cases caught than false positives. Covid safety protocols will continue in schools. As stated, all the schools are in the Daily Contact Testing (DCT) trial with Ashby being in the intervention group.</li> <li>• <b>Risk 5:</b> Behaviour at Winstanley – The CEO has seen a very positive behaviour culture when visiting. It was hoped to reduce the risk level in the summer term.</li> <li>• <b>Risk 6:</b> Covid costs – Loss in income has been compensated by areas of saving. There was no significant threat.</li> </ul> <p><b>The Chair asked about the attendance information which seemed to indicate Year 9 students had a worse attendance rate.</b></p> <p><b>The CEO replied</b> that there was insufficient data to decide if this was a pattern in all the schools. Data has been tracked on a week by week basis. Some year groups have been affected more by having to be sent home when positive cases in their bubble have happened.</p> <p>There were no further questions on the risk register.</p>

	<p><b>The Chair asked if the Director of Learning for the MAT had been appointed as the current holder had moved to Ashby.</b></p> <p><b>The CEO said</b> the appointment had been made earlier in the day. The new appointment was the Deputy Head at Bosworth as a 1 year secondment, whilst the current Director takes on the Director of Learning for the Ashby Cluster. The Senior Leader Partner positions have also been filled. Updates on this in the summer meeting.</p>
7	<p><b>COO report</b></p> <p><b>Countesthorpe restructuring.</b></p> <p><b>Organisational Structure for the MAT</b></p>
	<p><b>Countesthorpe restructuring.</b></p> <p><b>The COO referred to the risk register and gave the following verbal update: -</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Risk 1 for Countesthorpe regarding financial control has been reduced from a 6 to a 4.</li> <li>● After the restructure, the school will be in a much more stable and sustainable financial position.</li> <li>● The restructure was complex with the number of TLRs being reduced and the faculty structure has been changed with the introduction of new Faculties.</li> <li>● The impact on morale has not been as great as feared. The new Faculty Leadership teams are fully on board with the vision and direction of the school.</li> <li>● A safeguarding audit took place in 2020 and will be done again before the end of term. The audit tool used has been updated to take into account the 'Everyone's Invited' website for all MAT schools.</li> <li>● The safeguarding risk at Countesthorpe is reduced to a 4, as explained with all systems now in place to ensure the accurate recording and reporting of safeguarding issues.</li> <li>● The improvement plan is on track with risk reduced to a 4.</li> </ul> <p><b>Primary SEMH</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Parental feed back for the students in the centre has been excellent.</li> <li>● The leader of the SHINE centre has been supporting the new Leader and she joins the SHINE meetings.</li> </ul> <p><b>Organisational Structure for the MAT</b></p> <p>The updated structure diagram had been shared.</p> <p><b>The COO said</b> the diagram had been split into Trust wide and school based support. All positions were now filled.</p> <p>There were no questions.</p>
8	<p><b>MAT development</b></p> <p><b>Ashby School – Head Teacher appointment</b></p> <p><b>Ibstock and Ivanhoe</b></p>
	<p><b>Ashby School – Head Teacher appointment</b></p> <p><b>The CEO stated</b> that The Acting Headteacher had been in place since Easter. She has found some safeguarding issues as outlined.</p> <p>The appointment of the new Head has been made who is currently the Deputy at a City School. The decision by the panel was unanimous. The process of induction of the new Head has been started.</p>

**The CEO was confident** that the leadership of the Ashby Cluster was in as good position to move forward and the Heads will work very well with the Director of Educational Change.

**The Chair stated** she had met with the Chairs of Governors of the Ashby Schools. There were some very positive comments relayed from the Heads of the schools who said they had been very pleased to have been involved in the two day process and felt that their opinion had been valued.

**She emphasised** that the message received was the Trust was working collaboratively which was of great importance to the schools.

She added that staff at Ashby had commented that they were pleased to have been invited to the presentations and be part of the decision making. The feeling was that it was an excellent appointment.

#### **Due Diligence Ibstock and Ivanhoe**

The Ibstock Community College due diligence report had been shared.

**CTW commented** that the report was very positive. Ibstock was a good school and was beginning to do very well. The current Headteacher had done a lot to change the way in which the local; community felt about the school. However the fact that the Headteacher is retiring at the end of the academic year was a significant risk but the Trust does have a plan to manage this.

**He emphasised** the following: -

- There is a strong Governing Body which provides challenge. However there is a need for the Governing Body to be more supportive.
- The finances are strong. The carry forward is projected at around £460k.
- The intake in September 2021 is 230, which is far higher than previously. As stated, this may mean the school can go onto estimated funding in the current year, if the business case is accepted by the ESFA. This could lead to an extra £300k in the budget for 2021/22.

**HCO asked what the contingency plan was if the extra funding was not obtained.**

**CT replied** that the figures provided do not contain any extra funding. The contingency is therefore within these figures.

**The CEO added** that the age range change will mean in-year funding will be received from 2022.

- The staffing budget is well over the national average. This is not a sustainable position and this was emphasised in the report. Staffing costs will need to be reduced going forward.
- All three schools in the Ashby cluster run Microsoft systems, which will need to be addressed.
- CT referred to the section on the Early Years Centre and the possibility of Sure Start funding provided being clawed back if the building was not used for Early Years in the future.

**CTW referred** Directors to the 6 risks outlined but stated the school would add value to the Trust.

**He therefore recommended** the Board accepted Ibstock Community College as a member of the Trust.

**HCO raised** the issue of the difficulty of transferring IT systems from Microsoft to Google.

**The CEO commented** that schools using Microsoft would not be forced to change. Countesthorpe continued to use Microsoft. However staff were expected to undergo training to ensure they could use both systems to access Trust documents etc.

**DNO stated** he had spoken to the Chair of Governors at Ibstock and his attitude was very positive and hoped the school would contribute to the Trust and looked forward to the collaboration with the Trust and schools.

**The Chair added** that all the three Chairs in the Ashby cluster confirmed a very strong alignment with the ethos, values and collaborative working of the Trust.

	<p><b>CTW commented</b> that both Ibstock (and Ivanhoe) had opted to join the Trust and they had done this for the right reasons and the process has confirmed the decision for them.</p> <p>There were no questions.</p> <p><b>It was proposed</b> by Andy Smith and <b>seconded by</b> Liam McDonagh that Ibstock Community College were admitted to the Trust.</p> <p><b>This was agreed unanimously by a show of hands.</b></p> <p><b>Resolved: Ibstock Community College to be admitted to the Trust.</b></p>
9	<p><b>Governance.</b></p> <p><b>Strategic Planning</b></p> <p><b>Link reports</b></p> <p><b>Directors Action Plan</b></p> <p><b>Joint Chairs of Governors reports in the report.</b></p>
	<p><b>Strategic Planning</b></p> <p><b>The CEO informed</b> Directors that the event will go ahead with the right safety measures in place. However the number of participants will be reduced. A blended event with 60 places will be held. All 8 schools have been offered 5 places each plus the MAT Central Team and some places for Directors. The event will be streamed live on Zoom. The event will take place on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2021 between 8.30 a.m. and 12.30 p.m. at the National Space Centre.</p> <p>Speakers have been confirmed to talk about curriculum design and curriculum for the future job market. In addition a speaker from the Stephen Lawrence Research Centre is planned.</p> <p><b>He added</b> that strategic planning events will continue in schools and Directors were welcome to observe this work on the strategic planning wheels.</p> <p><b>The Chair suggested</b> Directors might wish to attend this event in their link school.</p> <p><b>ACTION 9.1: CEO to share strategic planning dates in schools.</b></p> <p><b>Link reports</b></p> <p>discussed after Action Plan</p> <p><b>Directors Action Plan</b></p> <p><b>The Chair stated</b> that she has now had a conversation with all Directors. All Directors had put forward priorities for them to take forward. She thanked Directors and asked that the priorities were not allowed to lapse.</p> <p><b>Training</b></p> <p><b>The Chair referred</b> to the work done by LW, HC and LMCD with the CEO.</p> <p><b>She added</b> that CT would be an integral party of the planning for Governor Training and asked him to liaise with GDS (LTS). She felt the offer from GDS represented excellent value with a 25% discount agreed. The agreement would cover all the briefings etc.</p> <p><b>The Chair recommended</b> that Directors approved the contract with GDS.</p>

**LWA referred** to the report shared with Directors via email on the outstanding actions from the working party.  
There were no questions.

**The Chair asked if Directors approved the retention of LTS for training as outlined.**  
**HCO suggested** this was approved subject to the CEO's agreement.

**This was approved unanimously.**

**Resolved: LTS to be retained subject to the CEO's agreement.**

**ACTION 9.2: CTW and The Chair to meet with C Woodhouse of LTS to discuss training.**

**Link Reports**

**LWA had shared** a link report from Kingsway.

**The CEO commented** that he found the report very useful as it presented another view of the school which had been related to a director and gave further insight into the issues in the school.

**LWA restated** her view that the MAT cannot offer what all the primary schools need and it was important they had cluster arrangements with other schools not in the MAT.

**The CEO responded** that the MAT had been working more closely with two other primaries. The CEO and the Headteacher at Braunstone Frith were meeting with the GB of a third primary school.

**See Confidential minute**

**The Chair asked** LMCD if he had made any progress on the work regarding the IT monitoring systems across the MAT.

**LMCD said** he had a list of contacts which the CEO had provided to begin the work. The aim was to simplify monitoring reports for Governing Bodies and Directors. It was hoped to pilot a new system with some schools in September 2021.

There were no questions.

**Joint Chairs of Governors report**

The report had been shared in the meeting folder.

**The Chair summarised** that Chairs of Governors had been considering risk registers, self evaluation, sharing good practice and information for Directors. They have also talked about the issues of recruitment in the GB meetings.

**The Chair added** that the recruitment pack for Trustees had been updated and was ready to be used.

**HCO asked** if applicants could be asked why they wanted to join the MAT on the application form.

**Meeting Dates**

**The Chair informed** Directors that CTW would liaise with LGB Clerks to arrange meeting dates to ensure there are no clashes and Link Directors can attend LGB meetings if required.

**ACTION 9.3: CTW to liaise with Clerks on LGB meeting dates.**



10	<b>Succession planning</b> <b>Resignations</b> <b>Applications</b>
	<p><b>The Chair asked</b> Directors to nominally accept Chris Garnett's resignation. The resignation has to be accepted by Members.</p> <p><b>Resolved: The resignation was accepted.</b></p> <p><b>David Noble informed</b> Directors that he had accepted a post in a school in another area and would therefore have to resign as a director. He wished to remain on the Board until the end of the academic year.</p> <p><b>The Chair asked</b> DNO not to resign formally until the end of term.</p> <p><b>The Chair moved</b> on to her own resignation from the end of the summer term which had been communicated via email.</p> <p><b>The Chair asked</b> for Directors to volunteer to interview the applicant for the Board with the aim of him attending the next meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> June 2021.</p> <p><b>It was agreed</b> that CTW would email Directors to determine availability and arrange the interview remotely.</p> <p><b>The Chair stated</b> that Iain Kinnis had offered to step down as a Member to take a place on the Trust Board temporarily.</p> <p><b>The CEO supported</b> the appointment and said that Iain Kinnis would provide the challenge required.</p> <p><b>Resolved: Iain Kinnis to be invited to join the Board of Directors from August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021.</b></p> <p><b>The Chair said</b> that this would leave a vacancy on the Members Board and a recruitment process would be needed to fill the vacancy.</p> <p><b>The Chair stated</b> that the responsibilities held by herself and ASM would need to be covered by other Directors. She had outlined her responsibilities in an email to Directors.</p> <p><b>She added</b> that there would now be 2 hub meeting for Chairs of Governors and she suggested that these could be split.</p> <p><b>ASM and LWA agreed</b> to Chair the COG Hub meetings.</p> <p><b>LWA expressed</b> some concern that she had no background in secondary education but was happy to take the role if Directors felt this was not an issue.</p> <p><b>Directors agreed</b> it was not an issue, as the role was as a Director of the Trust and did not require an educational background.</p> <p><b>The Chair pointed</b> out that ASM, as well chairing the COG meeting of the Bosworth Hub, supported the Chair, chairs the finance group, oversees nursery provision and is a link director at Winstanley.</p> <p><b>She hoped</b> that HME would help ASM as vice chair of finance.</p> <p><b>HME said</b> he would speak to ASM.</p> <p><b>The Chair stated</b> that there would need to be a new link for Countesthorpe, following CGA's resignation and possibly for Winstanley to replace ASM.</p> <p>In addition the safeguarding link role across the MAT will need to be filled following the resignation of DNO.</p>

	<b>The Chair said</b> these issues needed to be resolved for the start of the new academic year in September 2021.
<b>11</b>	<b>Future agenda items</b>
	Not considered.
<b>12</b>	<b>Any Other Business</b>
	None
<b>13</b>	<b>Identification of Confidential Items and Actions</b>
	None
<b>14</b>	<b>Next meeting</b>
	Directors board meeting: 28.06.21 Finance meeting: 21.06.21
<b>MINUTES AGREED &amp; SIGNED</b>	

Meeting closed at 8.37 p.m.