

Minutes

Title:	LiFE Multi Academy Trust Board Meeting - Trustees		
Date:	Monday 6 th September 2021	Time:	6.00pm
Chair:	Liz Warren	Location:	Bosworth Academy
Clerk:	Mike Armstrong		

TRUSTEES

Name	Present /Apologies	Name	Present / Apologies	Name	Present /Apologies
Liz Warren (LWA)	✓	Chris Parkinson (CPA - CEO)	✓	Hatle Mehta (HME)	✓
Hazel Cole (HCO)	✓	Gareth Williams (GWI)	✓	Darren Brumby (DBR)	✓
Andy Smith (ASM)	✓	Liam McDonagh (LMcD)	✓	Iain Kinnis (IKI)	✓

In Attendance

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

Notes of meeting

1	<p>Convene the Board of Trustees Election of Chair Election of Vice Chair Confirm the roles and responsibilities of Trustees</p>
	<p>The Clerk welcomed Trustees to the meeting.</p> <p>He stated that he had received one nomination for the Chair of the Board of Trustees which was Liz Warren, nominated by Hazel Cole and seconded by Hatle Mehta.</p> <p>There were no further nominations.</p> <p>Liz Warren was appointed as Chair of the Board of Trustees unanimously by a show of hands.</p> <p>The Clerk asked for nominations for the Vice Chair. The current Vice Chair was Andy Smith. He stated he was happy to step down if there was another Trustee nominated.</p> <p>Hazel Cole was nominated by Hatle Mehta and seconded by Liam Mc Donagh.</p> <p>There were no further nominations.</p> <p>Hazel Cole was appointed as Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees unanimously by a show of hands.</p> <p>Liz Warren took over as the Chair.</p>

2	Welcome, Apologies, Resignations Welcome and introductions to new Trustees
	The Chair welcomed Trustees to the meeting. She welcomed Darren Brumby and Iain Kinnis to the meeting as newly appointed Trustees.
3	Declaration of Interest
	None
4	Any urgent Items or AOB agreed with the Chair prior to the meeting
	<p>Safeguarding Training for Trustees and LGBs. LW New build VAT options. - ASM safeguarding Issue update - CEO</p> <p>The Chair asked about safeguarding training for Trustees and Local Governors. AS said all Trustees and Governors attended training in 2020. Jo Measom would have kept the details. The Chair suggested Emma Brown be contacted to see if she could arrange the training.</p> <p>This was agreed.</p> <p>ACTION 4.1: Chris Tweedale to contact Emma Brown re safeguarding training.</p>
5	Minutes and Matters Arising
	<p>The minutes had been circulated.</p> <p>Resolved: The minutes of the meeting on 28 June 2021 were accepted as a true record to be signed by the Chair.</p> <p>Actions and Matters arising.</p> <p>ACTION 6.1: Complete ACTION 6.2: Complete ACTION 9.1: Complete ACTION 9.2: On going ACTION 9.3: On going ACTION 9.4: On going ACTION 9.5: Complete</p>
6	Exam results Results snapshot and impact on next steps for students incl appeals Post-16 intake Morale
	<p>The CEO said the picture in the schools was similar to that nationally. There was a significant grade inflation compared to 2019, the last year of external examination results.</p> <p>The schools, except for Ashby, use SISRA (Service for Improved Schools' Results Analysis) for the analysis of the results. This gives an idea of the progress 8 (P8) score but this cannot be compared with 2019.</p> <p>The P8 scores, when adjusted for comparison with '21 data by SISRA, and before the results of any appeals were known were: Bosworth +0.25.</p>

Winstanley -0.1.

Countesthorpe -0.4.

The CEO emphasised that this data cannot be used by any external body to judge a school.

The CEO added that Winstanley have shown a significant improvement on the 2019 results, where P8 was -1. A good proportion of this improvement was genuine. One factor could be that examinations affect the students at Winstanley more negatively than in other schools.

The KS5 outcomes were analysed through ALPS (A Level Performance System)

Bosworth 2

Countesthorpe no value provided to date but the value added is positive.

Ashby 3.

The CEO informed Trustees that there were currently 15 appeals at Bosworth, 2 at Countesthorpe, 0 at Winstanley and 20+ at Ashby.

Some of these appeals have been judged by the centre at stage 1. Parents can then appeal to the exam board at stage 2 if the school judges the grades awarded were justified. A number of appeals have been elevated to stage 2 but no outcomes have been received to date.

A full report will be available to Trustees in the October meeting.

The CEO commented that there will still be a legacy for the students of the 2 year loss of education if there is a return to the normal examination system in 2022. The extent of the loss being dependent on the engagement with home learning.

The CEO stated that morale in the schools was generally high. However there was a degree of nervousness that 45% of vaccinated adults can still become infected if exposed to a high level of the virus.

The schools have risk assessments in place and were awaiting the Carbon Dioxide monitors. It is likely that the Trust will buy these monitors, which check ventilation in rooms.

HME asked what would happen in 2022 with exams.

The CEO replied that it was likely that 12 to 15 year olds will be vaccinated. This will mean there would be a very strong chance that examinations will be reintroduced. He felt that there would however be a blended model with TAGs submitted for the parts of the course which had not been taught.

HME asked if the students were aware of these possibilities.

The CEO replied that each school had a clear plan and were operating on the fact that the students in year 11 will take exams in 2022. The priorities were quality of learning and identifying the gaps in knowledge. The schools will respond and adapt to the assessment model when it was known.

IKI asked what measures would be used to demonstrate progress in the schools and how to communicate this to stakeholders.

The CEO replied that the work had started to look at measures not previously used, these have been called additional proxies to success' in Headteachers' reports. Attainment and progress will be measured as always. Each school will define its own measures for improvement and these will be shared with the other schools. One definition of success in the Trust is that schools are 'leaders in the community' and ways to measure this will need to be reported. Examples from the lockdown include the provision of food parcels, engagement with parents online etc. Winstanley will report progress on the aim to improve reading ages at KS3.

IKI asked if the budget was able to support the additional measures and activities proposed such as carbon dioxide monitors.

The CEO replied that there was sufficient contingency to cover these costs.

The Chair asked about primary school data.

The CEO said he would have data to report in the October meeting.

7	<p>Governance</p> <p>Application from Sue Dunford</p> <p>Using an agency for recruitment</p> <p>Induction processes for new Trustees</p> <p>Pecuniary interests – to be completed</p> <p>Code of conduct – to be completed</p> <p>Trustees remit – for review by January</p> <p>SoD changes – to discuss or schedule discussion</p>
	<p>Trustee Link Roles</p> <p>The Clerk had circulated the list of Trustee Link Roles required and asked Trustees to consider which roles they would be interested in filling.</p> <p>Appointment of Iain Kinnis</p> <p>The Clerk stated that IKI had been recommended for appointment as a Trustee by the Board in its meeting on 10th May 2021.</p> <p>IKI stated that the Members had approved his appointment as a Trustee.</p> <p>IKI was therefore elected to the Board of Trustees from 1st September 2021.</p> <p>Application from Sue Dunford</p> <p>The application documents for Sue Dunford had been shared.</p> <p>CTW reported that SDU was very keen to join the Board.</p> <p>Hazel Cole proposed that Sue Dunford was recommended to the Members for approval to become a Trustee. This was seconded by Andy Smith.</p> <p>This was agreed unanimously.</p> <p>ACTION 7.1: Clerk to forward Sue Dunford’s documentation to Members to request approval for her to join the Board of Trustees.</p> <p>Using an agency for recruitment</p> <p>The CEO reported he had been contacted by an agency who recruited Trustees for MATs. The cost was £1500 fee to start then £1500 when a Trustee was accepted.</p> <p>The Chair suggested that the Board looked for Trustees first before using an agency.</p> <p>The CEO commented that the Board had a responsibility to uphold the values of the schools by ensuring the Board was better representative of the diversity in the schools. The need for the correct skill set was still the first criteria, but the Board of Trustees does not represent the diversity in the schools. This was being addressed in the leadership of the schools but needs to be addressed at Board level.</p> <p>An agency would work with a particular brief to source Trustees from a wider pool.</p> <p>He concluded that the Board should be looking to succession planning to construct a Board based on the values of the Trust and the diversity in the Trust schools.</p> <p>HME felt that the Board should use the non agency route in the first instance through media sites such as Linked In to source Trustees. If this was unsuccessful then an agency should be commissioned to source Trustees.</p> <p>HCO added that there were a lot of parents with the skills required who would represent the diversity of the schools.</p>

	<p>The CEO expressed concern that that Board did not have the capacity to get the recruitment right to attract the skills and the diversity required.</p> <p>LMD and HCO commented that there were experienced Governors in the LGBs with the skills to move to the Board and this should be considered.</p> <p>The Chair suggested a small group of Trustees worked together to produce a recruitment strategy.</p> <p>The Clerk suggested a new skills audit was completed. This was agreed</p> <p>ACTION 7.2: Clerk to circulate NGA Trustees skills audit for Trustees to complete in 1 week.</p> <p>CTW stated that the appointment of SDU would give 8 Trustees. He recommended that the Board should be no more than 10.</p> <p>Induction processes for new Trustees</p> <p>ACTION 7.3: CTW to organise the induction for Trustees, including IT access.</p> <p>Pecuniary interests Code of conduct</p> <p>The Clerk reminded Trustees to complete the online declarations.</p> <p>ACTION 7.4: Clerk to circulate link for pecuniary/business interest declaration and code of conduct acceptance.</p> <p>SoD changes – to discuss or schedule discussion</p> <p>The CEO stated that there were some changes expected in the Schemes of Delegation of the schools which had recently joined. Ivanhoe and Ibstock would have the same SoD as Bosworth.</p> <p>See confidential minute</p> <p>He said he was happy to operate the SoD for each school as they stood currently.</p> <p>Trustees remit – for review by January</p> <p>MEV had produced the document outlining the roles/links required for Trustees to express an interest. The Chair said the role of the Safeguarding Trustee required filling immediately. Darren Brumby agreed to consider taking on the role. The Chair added that she would contact SDU about the role.</p>
8	<p>Board Review Revert to Trustees Planning towards External Review Discussion about changing nature of Board's role as number of schools increase Effective use of CEO's report, tabling questions before the meeting</p>
	<p>The Chair stated that a discussion was needed on the content of the data the Board required in the CEO's and Principals' reports.</p>

ASM commented that the reports have improved and been upgraded and have become more standardised across the schools.

The CEO agreed and added that there was now two Headteachers acting as coordinators for primary and secondary education in the Trust working for 1 day per fortnight. Their work for the Autumn term was to

Achieve clarity on the format of the reports and most importantly present KPIs which are important to the values as discussed and are also useful to the schools themselves in driving school improvement.

The difficulty was in measuring if the value statements of the Trust and schools, such as the warm relationships, outlined in the behaviour policy, were being upheld by the students. These have been reported through commentary in the past but there has been no data to support the statements.

IKI agreed that some subjective things were very difficult to measure numerically and that a balanced scorecard method could work in schools. The Trust Board requires an overview across the MAT whilst recognising the differences between the individual schools and that every report will not be identical. As the CEO stated the KPIs produced must be useful to the school.

He added that if no decisions had been made by the Board on the metrics reported in the previous year, then these metrics should not be reported in the current year.

HME stated he had found it difficult to understand what the vision of the MAT was. He expected that the Board would look at the high level data to drive the MAT forward. He felt much of the discussions were more operational than strategic. He felt the Board required the high level financial information and other key KPIs relevant to the schools.

He added that there was too much information for Trustees to consider. He expected to receive a slide deck for each school plus one for a summary across the MAT outlining the key financial information and other key data with a commentary to be challenged.

IKI stated that the link between budget and ambition was very important. There also needed to be a clear difference between the work of the Board and what the LGBs were expected to undertake.

The Chair agreed and added that the Board was presented with too much information and it was difficult to pick out the strategic information required.

HHO commented that all the information received should be that which was being used in the schools. The reports required an executive summary of the high level information. Trustees had to read too much information to discover the headlines for themselves.

The CEO asked for clarity on the information required. A slide deck per school would result in far more information. He queried whether an executive summary was required for each school individually or for the Trust as a whole.

HME replied that the Board required financial information on each school to be able to challenge in the meetings.

The CEO commented that the Headteachers felt they had been giving an executive summary of what had been going on in their school.

The Chair said she had several examples of a format for the reporting which she will share on the drive for Trustees to view and make comment.

The CEO stated that the format of the reports had changed during the pandemic as there were certain aspects which could not be reported on meaningfully. More information was given on how the schools were supporting the families and the vulnerable children.

He added that there was a template for each school's report, with a section for data. Trustees must decide on the template and what information was required. Finance can be included in the reports but this had been within the remit of the finance committee.

He suggested that the Board considers forming committees to deal with sections of the reports.

ASM agreed and suggested a Teaching and Learning committee be set up.

IKI suggested that the reports continued as at present in the short term with the expectation that the Board would look to improve the efficiency of reporting. It was important that leaders were not spending significant amounts of time producing reports just for the Board of Trustees.

CTW commented that the five schools had got used to a reporting format. This could be adjusted and become more standardised. The same report should also be used for the LGBs. The CEO needs to agree with the Board to produce an executive summary to highlight the key KPIs, which are doing well and which are cause for concern with narrative on cause and actions.

He agreed that the Board needed to look at financial data at a higher level, such as the cash flow situation. The Board will also need to make decisions on the priorities for spending the capital funding.

IKI stated that the Board should pass on actions to the LGBs to manage and resolve.

Link Trustee Roles

The Chair felt that the model of having link Trustees for each school was a good model but was difficult to work. She wanted the link trustee to be informed enough about their school to be put in OFSTED discussions. This was a concern.

ASM said the links were set up originally for one Trustee to have an intimate knowledge of one school.

The CEO agreed that there was a need for a Trustee to be an advocate for the amazing things the school does. The importance of a link trustee is that they get to know the school, talk to the Headteacher, staff and students so that they see, understand and monitor what has been written in the reports. This must start again after the pandemic.

HCO was concerned that as the MAT increases in size there will be insufficient Trustees to link to each school and taking on more schools was not feasible. There was also a concern that this might be bypassing the LGB whose role was to monitor the school. The Chair of Governors would be the person to have discussions with OFSTED.

The CEO agreed the Chair of the LGB will be fully involved in the inspection but advised that there was a wide range of skills sets involved. However, the overriding responsibility of governance cannot be fully delegated to an LGB. Any failings in governance are the responsibility of the Board of Trustees.

The Chair suggested the role of the link director was more clearly defined.

The CEO agreed but added that this must take into account the time required for Trustees. He would not expect Trustees to visit schools more than twice per year for a session. It was important for the Chair of the LGBs to have a named Trustee to discuss issues with.

IKI asked what the ambition of the Trust was in terms of growth.

CTW said the MAT had the systems in place to run a small MAT. These systems need to be adjusted to cope with more schools. There was a clear need to consolidate the systems as the three schools had just joined.

GWl, as Executive Head at Countesthorpe, stated that the school was due an OFSTED Inspection from the summer term 2022 onwards. There was currently no link trustee. The visit made by the previous link had been very useful. He felt a link trustee was very important in supporting the LGB and being involved in the inspection. It had been proved at Winstanley that the presence of a knowledgeable trustee in OFSTED discussion was invaluable.

	<p>IKI referred to the time each trustee had to offer and posed the question if it was better to have sub-committees such as teaching and learning etc, or to have link Trustees.</p> <p>DBR said he could read and understand all the reports but would not have the in-depth knowledge and understanding of a school and its culture and this was really important.</p> <p>He also felt a teaching and learning committee was in danger of telling Heads what they should be doing.</p> <p>The CEO said there was little pressure on the link trustee for Ivanhoe and Ibstock as inspection was at least 7 terms away. However, Kingsway was highly likely to be inspected in the current term and the link trustee needs to be prepared for this.</p> <p>The Chair summarised that the link trustee remit would be reviewed and she would work with CTW to produce a draft remit. This will be forwarded to Trustees for comment.</p> <p>ACTION 8.1: LWA to forward link governor draft remit to Trustees.</p> <p>Meeting Procedure</p> <p>The Chair asked if Trustees could table questions before the meeting after reading the reports by mailing the questions to all Trustees, CEO etc.</p>
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9	<p>Identification of Confidential Items</p> <p>Date of next meeting</p> <p>Directors board meeting</p> <p>Finance meeting</p>
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10	<p>AOB</p> <p>ASM New build VAT options</p> <p>Confidential Safeguarding Issue</p>
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	<p>New build VAT options</p> <p>ASM informed Trustees that a new Sports Hall was being built at Ivanhoe. The VAT options was to pay the VAT as a capital asset or charge VAT on each letting. Advice was being sought.</p> <p>It was agreed that the lettings option was taken, subject to the advice.</p> <p>Confidential Safeguarding Issue</p> <p>The CEO updated Trustees on the historical safeguarding issue.</p> <p>See confidential minutes.</p>
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11	<p>Meeting Dates</p> <p>4 October 2021</p> <p>IKI asked if there was an up to date calendar for all meetings.</p> <p>CTW said he was working on this, which will include the LGB meetings.</p>
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MINUTES AGREED & SIGNED

Meeting closed at 8.30 p.m.