

**LIFE MULTI ACADEMY TRUST
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
HELD ON THE 4TH SEPTEMBER, 2023 AT 6.00PM**

NON CONFIDENTIAL

COMPOSITION OF THE BOARD

NAME		END DATE OF OFFICE	DESIGNATED ROLE	ATTENDANCE
Liz Warren (LWA)	Trustee	29.06.2024	Chair	Y
Chris Parkinson (CPA)	Trustee		CEO	Y
Hazel Cole (HCO)	Trustee	30.09.2023	Vice Chair	Y
Sue Dunford (SDU)	Trustee	05.09.2025		Y
Liam McDonagh (LMcD)	Trustee	02.09.2024		N
Andy Smith (ASM)	Trustee	19.09.2026		Y
Anthony Nichols (ANI)	Trustee	09.10.2026		Y
David Gordon (DGO)	Trustee	26.02.2027		Y
IN ATTENDANCE				
Gareth Williams (GWI)			Deputy CEO	
Nicola Koncarevic (NKO)			Director of Education	
Sarah Mayes (SMA)			Chief Finance Officer	
Sian Griffiths (SGR)			Head of Governance	

1. WELCOME & APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from Liam McDonagh.

RESOLVED: the apologies were accepted.

2. DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

The Trustees were asked to declare any potential pecuniary interest or conflict of interest between an individual and the Trust Board as a whole with the business to be discussed during the meeting. No verbal declarations were made.

3. ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR FOR 2023 - 2024

- a. The Head of Governance confirmed that no nominations had been received prior to the meeting for the Chair of the Trust Board role. Liz Warren confirmed she was happy to continue as Chair for a further term of one year but would then be stepping back but planned to continue as a Trustee and/or perhaps step into the Vice Chair role.

RESOLVED: the Trustees approved Liz Warren's election as Chair for a further term of 1 year.

Liz Warren took the Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

- b. The Head of Governance confirmed that no nominations had been received prior to the meeting for the Vice Chair of the Trust Board role. As there had been no nominations LWA suggested nominating a Trustee on a rota for the 6 remaining board meetings throughout this academic year should the need arise to cover for the Chair.

Q: Is there a requirement to have a Vice Chair?

A: I don't think so but I'll check although it may cause difficulties if the Chair wasn't available and there was no Vice Chair to step up.

ACTION: SGR to check if there is a requirement to have a Vice Chair.

ASM offered to take on the role for 1 year but would not want to become Chair when LWA steps down. SGR asked if Trustees would want to look at some training and have more information about the role and perhaps look at 2 Vice Chairs. DGO confirmed training would be helpful. HCO advised during her tenure as Vice Chair she had regular discussions with LWA to provide a better understanding of the direction LWA wanted the Trust to move to. The discussions were not lengthy and the role had not carried a huge workload but was more about 'could you step in as Vice Chair at short notice if the Chair was unavailable'. LWA confirmed SDU had covered and would continue to cover the Ofsted visits should the need arise and although HCO attended the Chairs Group this would not be a requirement in the future. HCO felt the Chairs Group was useful to have a better understanding of how the Chairs of the LGB's worked within the Trust. DGO agreed to have a discussion outside of the meeting to discuss the role of Co Chair and/or Co Vice Chair further.

RESOLVED: the Trustees approved Andy Smith's election as Vice Chair for 1 year.

6.16pm Sue Dunford joined the meeting.

4. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The non confidential minutes of the Board meeting held on the 3rd July, 2023 and 17th August, 2023 were approved and confirmed as an accurate record.

5. MATTERS ARISING

The Trustees reviewed and updated the action log from the previous meetings –

DATE	NO.	ACTION	WHO	WHEN	UPDATE
06.02.2023	11b	Public Sector Equality Duty, CPA/ANI to look at the narrative around anti racism and bring any improvements to the next Board meeting.	CPA/ANI		COMPLETED
ONGOING – CPA advised the Trust was not required to update until 2025. ANI was working with the equity groups within the Trust to strengthen the KPI's and this would be revisited in the Autumn Term					
27.03.2023	13e	Admissions Policy - SGR would circulate to Schools with a request to include the specifics to the School. CTW would then forward the final policies to the LA with a 7 day deadline for comment	SGR/CTW		ONGOING – See update below
Update – SGR/CTW had met with the LA Appeals Admission Manager who raised concerns about the current policies, CTW explained this was frustrating as the policies had been reviewed by the LA. SGR had drafted a model policy and was waiting on feedback from the Appeals Manager. The agreed template for Secondary and Primary Schools would then come to the Trust Board for approval in the Autumn Term. 03.07.2023 – waiting on response from the LA.					
19.06.2023	6b	LWA asked Trustees to complete the Skills Audit, Chairs 360 and Self Evaluation Matrix by the 3rd July.	Trustees	09.2023	COMPLETED
		F & I and A & R Committee – Chairs. ASM/HCU to discuss and decide who will Chair each Committee and report back to the Board.	ASM/HCU	09.2023	COMPLETED
	7b	Trustees to make contact with Chairs of the LGB's to discuss Trust Contributions as follows – ASM – Ashby & TWS (completed needs writing up) HCO – Bosworth (completed) HCU – Ibstock SDU – Countesthorpe LMCD – Braunstone Frith DGI – TBC mentored by LWA who has 3 with one to ANI	See list		ONGOING – see update below

<p>Update – Reports for Ivanhoe and Desford had been completed. Countesthorpe’s report had been drafted and was waiting on the LGB Co Chair to provide any comments. Bosworth’s Report had been completed but HCO agreed to make contact with the Headteacher for a further update. LWA invited ANI/DGO to join her during future visits. It was recognised that these reports were useful for any future Ofsted visits.</p> <p>CPA confirmed that TWS was due to be inspected this term and Bosworth by June, 2024 but there was variability with the Schools in the NFH. This could be due to the age range changes as the guidance deem this to be a significant change which may extend the deadlines. Braunstone Frith was also due as the last visit was in February, 2018.</p>					
03.07.2023	8	SGR to contact LHA to agree when the stakeholder survey data would be available.	SGR	ASAP	COMPLETED
	9	SGR to redraft the Scheme of Delegation to include the amendments.	SGR	09.2023	COMPLETED approved on 17.08.2023
	11a	CFO to review the levels of delegation and report back to the September meeting.	SMA	09.2023	ONGOING See below
	11b	SGR to add in 3 additional meetings to cover Infrastructure.	SGR	09.2023	COMPLETED see list under agenda item 11
<p>Update - GWI had been asked to lead on these meetings, CHE would also be asked to attend, GWI agreed to action this. ASM advised that a pre meeting would take place with the Premises Leads to discuss the agenda and the terms of reference.</p>					
	11c	SGR to check availability with HCO, HCU for the Board Meeting on 17.08.2023 and set up the meeting via zoom.	SGR	ASAP	COMPLETED
	12d	SGR to discuss Investment Policy with SMA and agree a redraft.	SGR/SMA	08.2023	ONGOING, SMA to seek advice around wording 30.08.2023
17.08.2023	3c	SMA agreed to review the thresholds and report back to the Board Meeting on the 4th September, 2023.	SMA	09.2023	See agenda item 7a.
	4a	The CFO to submit the budget for 2023/2024 and 3 year forecast to the ESFA by the 31st August, 2024.	SMA	31.08.2023	COMPLETED
	6	October Board meeting SGR to agree dates with LWA/CPA/SMA and then circulate a doodle poll to other Trustees.	SGR	04.09.2023	6th or 13th November, Trustees to agree date tonight
<p>Update – the Trustees agreed to move the October meeting to the 6th November, 2023. ACTION: SGR to resend amended calendar invite to Trustees.</p>					
	7a	SGR to draft the TOR’s for the Standards Committee for approval at the Trust Board on the 4th September, 2023.	SGR	04.09.2023	ONGOING
<p>Update – LWA had asked DGO and SDU to sit on the committee. Draft Tor’s had been produced to cover the remit usually covered at the Board meetings. CPA/LWA agreed there would be further discussions around the TOR’s.</p>					

6. GOVERNANCE

- a. To note the Trustee vacancies and receive an update on recruitment – covered under point h. below.
- b. The Trustees approved the reappointment of Hazel Cole as a Trustee for a further period until the 31st December, 2023.
- c. The Trustees approved the following appointments and membership –
 - i. Finance & Infrastructure – Andy Smith (Chair); Hazel Cole, Liam McDonagh
 - ii. Audit & Risk – Hazel Cole (Chair); Andy Smith; Liz Warren

SGR advised that HCO should step aside as a Member for the period of her extension of office as a Trustee to avoid any perceived conflict of interest.

ACTION: SGR to discuss stepping down as a Member until January, 2024 with HCO whilst she continues as a Trustee.

- d. The Trustees appointed the CEO Performance Management Panel as follows – Liz Warren, Sud Dunford and Liam McDonagh. David Werry and the CEO had confirmed they were both available on the proposed dates.
- e. The Trustees reviewed and approved the Trusts Code of Conduct, 2023 for Trustees and LGB's by adopting an adaptation of the NGA model.
- f. Ensure all Trustees have completed the Declaration of Pecuniary Interest and confirmations including KCSIE, 2023 via Governor Hub.

ACTION: SGR to place a message on the noticeboard asking Trustees to update their declarations and agree their confirmations by the 23rd October, 2023.

- g. SGR confirmed both the Trust Website and Get Information about School (GIAS) was compliant.
- h. The Trustees considered the Annual Board Effectiveness Review including the Trust Board Self Evaluation, annual review of the Chair and Skills Audit. LWA advised that the majority of scores were 3 or above. LWA/SGR agreed to review the outcomes however Trustees noted that the skillset will change as and when HCO leaves. The current priority for the board was to recruit individuals with finance and/or an audit background to sit on the finance and audit and risk committee preferably with previous governing board experience. To progress recruitment LWA/SGR were contacting local firms as well as the ICAEW and other professional organisations. DGO advised he may know some suitable candidates, a suggestion had been made to share the information at Parents evenings but it was felt this may conflict with the Schools who were recruiting for governors. SDU also offered to make contact with individuals who had accountancy backgrounds and may know of specific networks which the Trust could link into. ANI has a connection to a national group for NHS Finance Managers and offered to share the flyer with members for the group.

ACTION: SGR to produce a recruitment flyer to circulate to Trustees.

- i. The CEO confirmed the report on statutory gender pay gap information ahead of publication was available on the Trust Website. The report confirms the Trust was in a better position than last year but there was also room for improvement. The Equality and Diversity group would work on this.

ACTION: to revisit when the Chair of the group has been elected.

- j. The Trustees received an update on the response to the new DfE paper on Good Trusts a copy of which had been shared on Governor Hub. LWA/CPA had attended a seminar, the documents provides an overview and evidence (under 5 pillars) required to define what a good Trust looks like and by implication which Trusts would therefore be offered the good schools. The Executive Team were currently undertaking a piece of work on the 5 pillars in particular reviewing the LiFE MAT Instructional handbook to align with the 5 pillars, this would also include the SEF.
- k. The Trustee considered a proposal for Keeping in Touch workshops for Trustees. LWA meets with CPA weekly and felt it may be helpful if other Trustees joined the calls to have other people's views. If Trustees were interested in joining the calls JMO would send out invites perhaps monthly, the calls were scheduled at 4.30pm for 1 hour. CPA suggested perhaps the calls could be slightly longer and have a larger agenda. ASM agreed that a more informal meeting format would be helpful to run alongside the meetings with a more formal agenda.

RESOLVED: the Trustees agreed to adopt the new model and join calls with the CEO on a monthly basis.

ACTION: JMO to send out invites to the Trustees.

- I. The Trustees reviewed the terms of reference for the Audit & Risk, Finance & Infrastructure and the Standards Committee. SGR confirmed the Audit & Risk terms of reference were based on the ATH, the Finance and Infrastructure based on the previous terms of reference but also aligned with any requirements of the ATH. The Standards terms of reference were ongoing as reported under agenda item 5, 7a above.

7. TRAINING

- a. Arrangements for Safeguarding Training for Trustees and Governors
- b. To note meeting with NGA with representative Chairs and Governors.

SGR advised that there were ongoing discussions with the NGA who had drafted a questionnaire which would be considered at the Chairs Group on the 20th September, the outcome of that meeting would be feedback to the NGA. Dates had been agreed and would be circulated to all Trustees and Governors, with further information regarding the format and content to follow. In terms of Safeguarding training the Trust would be using the National College and everyone was expected to complete the training by the 23rd October, 2023.

Q: Do you want Ofsted training for Governors?

A: (CPA) It just depends on how confident the Governors feel, the Executive Team will support and lead on with Schools including the Chair and also LWA, it's something we need to ask the Chairs e.g. some Chairs have experience of Ofsted whilst others not so much.

ACTION: SGR to put Ofsted training on the Chairs Group agenda for discussion.

8. FINANCE/OPERATIONS

- a. Levels of Delegation – the Trustees were asked to approve changes to reflect discussions from the Board meeting on the 17th August and any expenditure which requires Trustee approval. The paper, shared with Trustees, had been drafted by SMA and ABL had made some minor amendments. At the last meeting SMA had raised some concerns around capital expenditure, the revised document provide clarity to address those concerns as follows –
 - i. the limit has been increased to £30,000 within the budget.
 - ii. under £100,000 could be approved by SMA
 - iii. above £100,000 by the Chair of the Finance committee.
 - iv. The Estate Leads would have the same level of approval as Headteachers i.e. within projects budget up to £75,000, SMA and any amount about £250,000 would need to be considered and approved by the Finance and Infrastructure committee. Up to now the Estate Leads were only able to approve under a £30,000 limit which had significantly slowed the process down.

ASM felt this system was quite workable and would be a focus within the Infrastructure meetings who would continue to monitor spending.

RESOLVED: the Trustees approved the levels of delegation.

- b. The Trustees received the new template for the CFO's Report. SMA explained that SMCK/ABL had suggested looking at changing the format of the CFO Report. The template was based on a template which ABL had shared from another Trust, SMA had made some amendments and added links into the report. The Trust Board needs to review and decided whether this meets the needs of the Trust.

The feedback from Trustees was positive, they felt the report was clear, comprehensive and succinct.

Q: Do you have to populate the report or can you copy and paste in?

A: We're looking at a new finance package this year so hopefully it will populate the data over.

Q: The narrative is helpful, is this a similar format for the LGB's do the Hub Leaders provide a narrative?

A. (SMA) I'm looking at this with ABL to ensure we have a report which works for everyone, this is the best format at the minute and provides a narrative but hopefully the new package will be better. It would be helpful

to have a steer from Trustees on the KPI's (ABL/SMA have made suggestions).

A: (CPA) There are a few other documents in the agenda for Trustees to review and consider and decide on our strategy.

Q: Could the Executive propose some KPI's and then the Trustees could add/amend to provide some context e.g. primary v secondary also location of the school, is the benchmarking data national?

A: (CPA) Yes we need to decide whether we have by School or across the Trust.

ACTION: CPA/SMA to look at a proposal and ASM/HCO review and then considered at the Audit & Risk and the Finance & Infrastructure.

c. 1:1 devices, June 2023

The paper followed a question from HCO at the Finance & Infrastructure as to how equitable the Schools policies were in relation to device for the pupils. This was a fantastic report which would need to go to the Finance & Infrastructure but was useful to gauge cost effectiveness but not the impact on SIP. CPA was of the view that this report should sit with the SIP team.

Q: Is the link between the Business team and SIP team as good as it could be?

A: (CPA) I think it should be the SIP team who decide on cost effectiveness. Whilst it does show cost effective is cost neutral the challenge for Trustees would be where we use 1:1 device how do we measure the benefits, one question to consider is why aren't we bold enough to roll out across the whole Trust.

Q: At the Finance & Infrastructure we discussed why some Parents pay more than others?

A: (CPA) I think it's more about having a plan to get us to that point where we have a consistent approach e.g. Bosworth and Countesthorpe had to make a significant investment.

Q: Should we be looking at some of our surpluses to provide the 1:1 technology, there are huge benefits as it allows pupils to continue education without too much disruption e.g. Covid/RAAC. I'm not sure why we're charging Parents?

A: (NKO) We need to ensure a consistent level of access to 1:1 devices at all schools but this will not be immediate.

Q: Will IT be part of the overall strategy to ensure consistency for all pupils and schools so many benefits to add into this report, far more benefits than just finance?

A: (CPA) I don't think Head of IT is in a position to be able to look at from the SIP perspective.

7.28pm DGO left the meeting.

ACTION: The Central SIP Team would look at the 1:1 devices report and GWI would pick this up as he line manages MWA and CHE.

9. DATA – KS2, GCSE'S AND A' LEVELS –

The headlines for GCSEs and A levels had been shared with Trustees and uploaded onto Governor Hub prior to the meeting the Trustee agreed that a full report would be considered at the next meeting of the Standards Committee. CPA advised that BWH was coordinating the top line data, the results from 3 of the Schools were better than 2019. The School where the results had not been as good was due to unprecedented issues due to Covid, there had been progress at the top end and there was also evidence of significant work around interventions.

10. OVERVIEW OF STAKEHOLDERS FEEDBACK – moved to November meeting

11. POLICIES

- a. The Trustees received an update from CPA/ANI who had reviewed Equality Policy. CPA explained that work needed to take place to bolster the matrix, the race equality group was going to lead on this and then take to the other equality groups. The Trust had appointed to the Equality Lead role who would look at some case studies rather than just the data and percentages, how do people feel working in the Trust and their Schools. ANI felt this was really useful as this would help measure impact and show the Trust was achieving what it wanted to achieve e.g. a safe inclusive space.
- b. Finance Policy – the policy had been shared with Trustees prior to the meeting.

- c. Anti-Fraud, Corruption, Bribery & Related Party Transaction Policy 2023 - the policy had been shared with Trustees prior to the meeting. A possible typo had been highlighted SMA agreed to check whether the years should be 2022 -2023 or 2023 – 2024.
- d. Fraud Response plan - the plan had been shared with Trustees prior to the meeting.

RESOLVED: the Trustees approved policies/plan listed above b, c and d.

- e. KCSIE, 2023 and Summary of Changes - the Trustees noted the new guidance and summary of changes.
- f. Accessibility Policy to extend the review date to the 31st December, 2023.

RESOLVED: the Trustees agreed to extend the review date to the 31st December, 2023.

- g. Equality Policy to extend the review date to the 31st December, 2023 - Trustees to approve extension of review date yes.

RESOLVED: the Trustees agreed to extend the review date to the 31st December, 2023.

12. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETINGS

The Trustee noted the date and time of the meetings (listed below) for the remainder of the year. The Trustees considered the dates for the Standards committee and agreed to 2 meetings for the Autumn term this would be reflected in the terms of reference. CPA advised that BWH would lead on behalf of the Executive.

ACTION: SDU/DGO to agree dates for the Standards Committee and advise SGR who would ensure all the pre work was completed.

MEETING DATES 2023 – 2024

DAY	DATE	START TIME	MEETING
Tuesday	26.09.2023	6.00pm	Finance & Infrastructure
Tuesday	03.10.2023	6.00pm	Finance & Infrastructure
Monday	TBC	6.00pm	Trust Board
Tuesday	14.11.2023	6.00pm	Audit & Risk
Monday	11.12.2023	6.00pm	Trust Board
Tuesday	23.01.2024	6.00pm	Finance & Infrastructure
Tuesday	30.01.2024	6.00pm	Finance & Infrastructure
Monday	29.01.2024	5.30pm	AGM
Monday	05.02.2024	6.00pm	Trust Board
Tuesday	27.02.2024	6.00pm	Audit & Risk
Monday	18.03.2024	6.00pm	Trust Board
Tuesday	07.05.2024	6.00pm	Finance & Infrastructure
Tuesday	14.05.2024	6.00pm	Finance & Infrastructure
Monday	20.05.2024	6.00pm	Trust Board
Tuesday	11.06.2024	6.00pm	Audit & Risk
Monday	01.07.2024	6.00pm	Trust Board

7.48pm GWI, NKO and SMA left the meeting

