

LIFE MULTI ACADEMY TRUST
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
HELD ON THE 6TH NOVEMBER, 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	Trustee	31.12.2023		Y
Sue Dunford (SDU)	Trustee	05.09.2025		Y
Liam McDonagh (LMcD)	Trustee	02.09.2024		Y
Andy Smith (ASM)	Trustee	19.09.2026	Vice Chair	Y
Anthony Nichols (ANI)	Trustee	09.10.2026		Y
David Gordon (DGO)	Trustee	26.02.2027		N
Vacancy				
IN ATTENDANCE				
Gareth Williams (GWI)			Deputy CEO	
Nicola Koncarevic (NKO)			Director of Education	
Sarah Mayes (SMA)			Chief Finance Officer	
Chris Tweedale (CTW)			Leadership & Governance Development	
Sian Griffiths (SGR)			Head of Governance	

1. WELCOME & APOLOGIES

The Chair welcomed all present, apologies had been received from David Gordon.

RESOLVED: the apologies were accepted.

2. DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

The Trustees were invited 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. LMCD declared an interest in the business case (agenda item 2a below) discussed in the confidential part of the meeting.

2a. BUSINESS CASE - FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM – SYSTEMS REVIEW

Considered under the confidential business due to commercial sensitivities.

3. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The non confidential minutes of the Board meeting held on the 4th September, 2023 were approved and confirmed as an accurate record.

4. MATTERS ARISING

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

DATE	NO.	ACTION	WHO	WHEN	UPDATES
19.06.2023	16b	CPA would arrange for the contextual data relating to secondary schools to be available for the Trustees.	CEO		COMPLETED see update below
Update – LWA asked for a summary of the data for each School on an A4 sheet. SDU agreed the School Improvement Committee would consider the data and she would ask Ben White (BWH) and Lara Hall (LHA) to produce a 1 page report for the next meeting. ACTION: SDU to ask BWH/LHA for a one page report on the contextual data for the secondary schools.					
03.07.2023	12d	SGR to discuss Investment Policy with SMA and agree a redraft.	SGR/SMA	08.2023	COMPLETED
17.08.2023	7a	SGR to draft the TOR's for the School Improvement Committee for approval at the Trust Board on the 4 th September, 2023. 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.	SGR	04.09.2023	COMPLETED
04.09.2023	6cii	SGR to discuss stepping down as a Member until January, 2024 with HCO whilst she continues as a Trustee.	SGR/HCO	ASAP	COMPLETED
	6f	SGR to place a message on the noticeboard asking Trustees to update their declarations and agree their confirmations by the 23rd October, 2023.	SGR	ASAP	COMPLETED
	6h	SGR to produce a recruitment flyer to circulate to Trustees	SGR	ASAP	COMPLETED
	6i	Statutory gender pay gap information - to revisit when the Chair of the group has been elected	CPA		ONGOING see update below
Update – CPA advised that the election of the Chair was ongoing but would report back to ANI when the Chair has been appointed.					
	6k	Keeping in touch workshops - JMO to send out invites to the Trustees.	JMO	ASAP	COMPLETED
	7b	SGR to put Ofsted training on the Chairs Group agenda for discussion	SGR	ASAP	COMPLETED
	8c	The Central SIP Team would look at the 1:1 devices report and GWI would pick this up as line manager of MWA and CHE.	CPA/GWI		ONGOING see update below
Update – GWI advised the new Head of IT would provide a report for the December meeting.					
	12	SDU/DGO to agree dates for the Standards Committee and advise SGR who would ensure all the pre work was completed.	SGR	ASAP	COMPLETED
		SOD to cover delegation from the board to the executive	CTW	December Board	ONGOING

5. Chair's Update

- a. Winstanley, the Chair felt this was the first opportunity for the Trust Board to celebrate the outcome (good) of the recent Ofsted at the School. On the basis of the contextual data this was the most challenging School in the Trust and in the Leicester area and always required attention, everyone always had to work so hard to achieve and this had been exacerbated by Covid. The School would need to continue to push to improve. An External QA (Quality Assurance) had taken place today the outcomes of which the School would be working on. The outcome of the recent Ofsted was a great team effort, thanks to all at Winstanley. BWH and GWI were onsite

throughout the inspection as well as Margaret Star. The current and ongoing support of the Trust had been a factor in the judgement, the Headteacher advised the School was rapidly improving, this was the real power of the Trust who mobilised 6 Staff to illustrate how the Trust could continue to support and drive school improvement. Ofsted undertook 7/8 deep dives, it was useful to see how Ofsted operated.

LWA thanked ASM for supporting the LGB.

Trustees were informed of the MAT developments –

- Continue to embed the central team structure to deliver effective school support and improvement in line with the trust strategic vision.
- Student Learning: Raise outcome measured in all areas that our curriculum is designed to deliver including in 'end of key stage' national tests and exams.
- Financial and business management: Deliver the improvements agreed in October, 2023

6. FINANCE REPORT

- a. The Trustees received the CFO's Report. The new template had been shared with the Trustees at the September meeting, the current report had been populated by the CFO last week, the link documents would be made available on Governor Hub. The CFO provided some highlights –
 - Period 1, the targets had been met by the Finance Team and the reports were available on Governor Hub. One of the issues which had arisen related to actual costs around salaries, the creation of the journals had taken longer than expected. The Hub Leaders were asked to rerun the Period 1 reports this week and then share. Discussions had also taken place to agree whether Headteachers should have the opportunity to review/scrutinise the reports prior to the Governors receiving the reports. This would be discussed further at the Chairs Group on the 9th November, 2023.
 - Significant variances had been identified including GAG for post 16's, other income e.g. trip income, a reduction in income from the LA as Braunstone Frith was currently separating the DSP income and expenditure from the main school budget to monitor the affordability of the unit and the inclusion of the behavioural unit at Ibstock.
 - The outturn for Period 1 was as expected.
 - The risk register was included in the report and covered changes in pupil numbers, catering within the NFH, reforecasting due to DFE errors which would cost approximately £350,000, teacher pension employers contributions would increase by 5% with effect from the 1st April, 2024 but it was anticipated that the DFE would fund up to 80% the remaining 20% equated to approximately £28,000.
 - The new ICFP had been worked on last week and this week following receipt of the census figures.
 - The Budget Recovery document would include the actions taken and include the deficit figures from July.

Trustees were asked to identify any additional information they felt would be helpful to include in the report. The Chair suggested the Finance Committee should consider and recommend KPI's. The Chair had discussed this with ABL during the Summer. It was recognised that the Trust Board and LGB's have a part to play along side the Hub Leaders and Headteachers. The Chair asked if it was possible to report by exception i.e. red or green areas.

The CFO reported the BFR had been submitted on time, the new payroll system had been run at the end of August but there were a few issues which required further investigation relating to reconciliation by the Finance Team, this may be a training issue.

The Chair felt the Finance Committee needed to review the KPI's on a regular basis, ASM agreed and also suggested reviewing the ICFP's as a starting point. HCO also mentioned looking at percentages of Staff, by groups, within each School. The CFO confirmed the ICFP included that information.

- b. Investments – the Trustees were asked to consider and agree how the deposits/investments were managed in line with the articles. The report and accompanying papers had been uploaded onto Governor Hub prior to the meeting. The CFO explained that work had taken place to ensure the Trustees were compliant in line with the

articles. Discussions had taken place with an advisor from St. James who had recommended using a deposit platform rather than looking at investments, this was due to the high interest rates which were currently on offer.

Q: Who provides the financial advice?

A: The articles define a financial expert, their advice is included in the report.

The Trustees agreed that the members of the Finance Committee should meet with the finance expert.

RESOLVED: ASM/HCI/LMCD to meet with Adam Ellis, St. James.

ACTION: SGR to set up the meeting.

- c. Asset Registers in the Schools – the Trustees considered the request to access external support to produce asset registers for all Schools. The Trust had received quotes from Every to undertake a one off exercise to create an asset register in all Schools at a cost of £40,000. The CFO thought the costs may be recoverable from the SCA funds and would check and would also look at the annual cost for any ongoing work .

RESOLVED: the Trustees approved the quote from Every.

ACTION: The CFO to check whether the costs may be recoverable from the SCA funds and would also look at the annual cost for any ongoing work .

The Chair advised Trustees they would need to review the monitoring sheet from ABL/CPA to look at how the ICFP informs the decision making of the Trust Board. How many people know how key integrated tool, can we look at training on the NGA. The CEO offered to deliver the training. The Chair asked SGR to look at online training.

ACTION: next Finance Committee to look at GAG funding.

The CEO felt the issue with GAG funding needed to be discussed with the Chairs of the LGB's to secure their support. LWA suggested putting this to the Chairs Group at the Spring meeting.

ACTION: SGR to place GAG funding on the Chairs Group agenda in the Spring Term

7. COMMITTEE/GROUP MINUTES/ACTIONS/UPDATES

- a. The Trustees noted the weekly updates/actions uploaded on to Governor Hub and ensure all actions have been completed where possible.
- b. The Trustees noted the Finance Committee minutes of the 9th October, 2023
- c. The Trustees noted the Infrastructure Committee minutes of the 3rd October, 2023
Chairs to be asked if they think its unfair (CHECK)

ACTION: SGR to place GAG funding on the Chairs Group agenda.

- d. The Trustees noted the Chairs Group minutes of the 20th September, 2023
- e. The Trustees noted the School Improvement meeting minutes of the 31st October, 2023. SDU felt the minutes were very concise and reflected a wide discussion including Student outcomes and destinations. The next meeting would be held in person at Countesthorpe, an open invitation was made to all Trustees to attend if they so wish. The governance professional, Nicki Green, was looking at timings of future meetings to ensure they align with school evaluations, internal assessments, etc.

HCO advised Trustees that the Audit & Risk committee during the Spring term agreed that the Trust would ask the Internal Auditors to undertake a cyber audit, this had been paused until this Autumn term. HCO had met with ABR last week and received a request to further delay the audit as the Trust had appointed a new Head of IT and it was more appropriate for that person to assess the current position and then the audit reviews in a few months.

8. LOCAL GOVERNING BODIES

- a. The Trustees noted any LGB Action Points, recommendation and assurance.
- b. After some discussion the Trustees approved the election of the LGB Chairs for the academic year 2023 – 2024 as follows -
 - i. Ashby - Charlotte Sutton
 - ii. Bosworth - Emma Hollis Brown
 - iii. Braunstone Frith - Izzy Reid McKay
 - iv. Countesthorpe - John Taylor & Joe Sheahan
 - v. Desford - Viv Evans
 - vi. Dove Bank - Ann Melville
 - vii. Ibstock - Lee Donaghy
 - viii. Ivanhoe - Mary Webster
 - ix. Kingsway - Lis Stock
 - x. The Winstanley - Tim Rodgers
- c. The Trustees received an update on LGB numbers and vacancies and noted there were a number of vacancies
- d. The Trustees noted the success of Safeguarding Training and subsequent Link Groups being established. SGR had asked for a list of other Link/Lead Governors and would remind Chairs at the meeting on the 9th November, 2023. The CEO suggested that some groups may benefit from staff input.
- e. The Trustees considered well-being and coaching support available to Chairs. The CEO explained that currently Senior Staff and DSL's received supervision from an external company but was happy to arrange a similar offer for any Chair who was under pressure and required support.

ACTION: SGR to place on the Chairs Group agenda.

9. GOVERNANCE

- a. The Trustees noted the vacancies on the Board. The Chair asked if Trustees had been able to share the flyer with colleagues etc. ANI stated he would share again next week and the Chair would speak to DGO and had also spoken to an accountant and would make further contact. In the meantime contact would be made with a recruitment agency Trustees would be kept updated on progress. The Chair advised that Colin Crane had stepped down as a member and had chosen to remain as a Governor at Bosworth whilst HCO would revert to her role as a Member with effect from January, 2024.
- b. The Trustees were reminded to complete the Declaration of Pecuniary Interest and confirmations including KCSIE, 2022 and Code of Conduct via Governor Hub.

10. TRAINING

- a. The Trustees were reminded to complete the statutory training by the deadlines.
- b. The Trustees were invited to attend the Chairs Group training on new Finance monitoring procedures for LGBs

11. TRUSTEE REPORT & WORK PLAN

- a. The Trustees noted the dates of Keeping in Touch opportunities with CPA, the next date was the 20th November, 2023.
- b. The Trustees discussed the update on deployment of Trustees for OfSTED inspections Trustee who were linked with a School would be called, where possible the Chair would also attend.
- c. The Chair advised the work to draft the Trustee report was ongoing and when completed would accompany the accounts and also the report for the AGM.

12. OVERVIEW OF STAKEHOLDERS FEEDBACK

The CEO advised that the Autumn questionnaire had been completed but there was ongoing work, LHA was undertaking a weighting exercise. The Chair felt it would be useful to have some top line data similar to the format of the CFO's report.

ACTION: the CEO to ensure the information was available for the December Board Meeting.

13. POLICIES

The Trustees reviewed the following policies which are current policies with no changes, and agreed a review date of the 31st December, 2025 -

- c. Complaints Policy
- d. Declarations of Interest (Trustees & Governors) Policy
- e. Donations Policy

RESOLVED: the Trustees approved the above policies for a further period until the 31st December, 2025

14. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETINGS

The Trustees noted the date and time of the Board on the 11th December, 2023 at 6.00pm.

MEETING DATES 2023 – 2024

DAY	DATE	START TIME	MEETING
Tuesday	28.11.2023	6.00pm	Audit & Risk
Wednesday	06.12.2023	4.00pm	School Improvement
Monday	11.12.2023	6.00pm	Trust Board
Tuesday	23.01.2024	6.00pm	Finance
Tuesday	30.01.2024	6.00pm	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
Tuesday	14.05.2024	6.00pm	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

The meeting closed at 8.06pm following the conclusion of the confidential business.