

LIFE MULTI ACADEMY TRUST
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
HELD ON THE 11TH DECEMBER, 2023 AT 6.00PM

VIRTUAL MEETING
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	N
David Gordon (DGO)	Trustee	26.02.2027		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
Vacancy	Trustee			
Vacancy	Trustee			
IN ATTENDANCE				
Gareth Williams (GWI)			Deputy CEO	
Nicola Koncarevic (NKO)			Director of Education	
Chris Tweedale (CTW)			Leadership & Governance Development	
Sarah Mayes (SMA)			Chief Finance Officer	
Paul Maddox (PMA)				
Sian Griffiths (SGR)			Head of Governance	

1. WELCOME & APOLOGIES

The Chair welcomed all present and SMA introduced Paul Maddox who was working with the Trust to provide additional capacity for SMA, Trustees provided an overview of their backgrounds and roles.

The Trustees noted that ANI had resigned after the November, 2023 board meeting due to work commitments

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 additional verbal declarations were received.

3. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The non-confidential minutes of the Board meeting held on the 9th October, 2023 were approved and confirmed as an accurate record.

4. MATTERS ARISING

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

DATE	NO.	ACTION	WHO	WHEN	UPDATES
04.09.2023	6i	Statutory gender pay gap information - to revisit when the Chair of the group has been elected	CPA	ASAP	ONGOING see update below
Update – CPA to find a replacement for ANI who had resigned as a Trustee.					
	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.	GWI/MWA	February Board meeting	ONGOING see update below
Update – MWA to present a report to the February board meeting.					
16.11.2023	4	SOD to cover delegation from the board to the executive	CTW	December Board	COMPLETED see agenda item 4b
	6b	Investment Policy - SGR to set up a meeting between the Finance Committee and SJP.	SGR	ASAP	COMPLETED see agenda item 10d
	6c	Asset Registers - 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 .	CFO	ASAP	COMPLETED – SMA confirmed the costs could be funded from the SCA monies
	6c	Next Finance Committee to look at GAG funding.	CFO	Spring Finance Meeting	COMPLETED placed on the agenda
	6c	SGR to place GAG funding on the Chairs Group agenda	SGR	Spring Meeting	COMPLETED placed on the agenda
	8e	Wellbeing - SGR to place on the Chairs Group agenda.	SGR	November Chairs Group	COMPLETED
	12	Stakeholder feedback - the CEO to ensure the information was available for the December Board Meeting.	CEO	December Board Meeting	COMPLETED see agenda item 4c

b. Scheme of Delegation

The document described the relationship from the Trust Board to the executive. LWA had discussed the document with CTW and some minor amendments had been made. In CPA's absence GWI/NKO did not have any additional comments to make. Trustees were asked if they had any comments to make, all confirmed they did not. CTW confirmed that CPA had reviewed the document and there were no queries/amendments but CTW was happy to check again with CPA.

ACTION: CTW to check with CPA if he has any amendments, any drafting points will be addressed but any substantive amendments would be discussed with LWA.

RESOLVED: the Trustees approved the Scheme of Delegation unless there were any substantive amendments.

c. Stakeholder feedback

In CPA's absence NKO offered to take questions. LWA felt there was too much information which was difficult to absorb and asked if the Trustees could be provided with a summary. NKO asked if any of the data was going to be considered at the School Improvement meeting next week. SDU confirmed that the data would be considered at the meeting on the 13th December, 2023. NKO felt the survey was a useful tool and reflected the current positions within the School. GWI explained this was the first indicator that things were not as good as we thought at one of the Schools and enabled the Trust to refocus. LWA asked whether there would be significant change at TWS following the recent Ofsted judgement. LMCD asked whether the reduction in the number of responses had reduced because the stakeholders did not feel there was any remedial action. LWA asked SDU if the School Improvement Committee could look at the response rates and undertake a deeper dive.

ACTION: School Improvement Committee to look at the response rates.

6.21pm Hazel Cole joined the meeting.

5. CEO REPORT

LWA queried why Braunstone Frith had not made any progress this term was this an error has it not been updated. ASM felt it was good to see TWS on the 4's and 3's and the narrative behind the rag rating.

Q: Braunstone Frith is all yellow when you look at what the colours mean, yellow is static progress whilst red is progressing too slowly, is there an overlap can we have some clarification as its ambiguous why areas are moving from yellow to red?

A: (NKO) it shows where they are making progress, red (all) not good, amber (better), green (good). The rag rating was used at the request of Governors/Trustees to show good or not.

SDU agree to follow this up with Amelia Smith.

Q: Some areas of attendance are rag rated red, do we know why?

A: (NKO) We had some staffing issues but we have put some support in from Ivanhoe. PA had now reduced by 10% and we are confident that trend will continue.

A: (GWI) We have links across the Trust to improve attendance.

A: (SDU) The School Improvement Committee had also discussed attendance and this was also covered when SDU met with LHA.

Q: If Staff absences are reducing, why is the supply Staff costs increasing?

A: (SMA) We need to unpick the cost of covering a vacancy and cover for sickness.

A: (GWI) Since Covid people are less inclined to come into School when they are ill.

Q: Can Staff choose to work from home rather than going off sick?

Q: So we accommodate working from home?

A: (GWI) We would always consider any request.

6. COMPLIANCE

- a. Trustees were informed that the Trust was currently undertaking an admissions consultation. Trustees had received the papers as stakeholders and could provide a response if they so wished. LWA recognised this was a significant piece of work and thanked CTW/SGR.
- b. The Trustees received assurances that the LGB's have -
 - Reviewed the draft pupil premium strategy statement (where applicable)
 - Reviewed the PE and sport premium spending and impact report (where applicable)
 - Evaluated pupil outcomes using relevant performance data from the previous academic year
 - Reviewed and approved SEND (Special Education Needs) information report ahead of publication

SGR explained the Governance Team had populated the spreadsheet, most LGB's have reviewed and/or evaluated the above 4 documents. Two LGB's had not reviewed the PP Strategy Statement which must be published on the School Websites by the 31st December, 2023. One LGB would now approve the PP Strategy Statement via Governor Hub and one had deferred the item until January, 2024. The Governance Team have been advised about the deadlines and this would also be raised at the Chairs Group so everyone understands why the annual planner is important in terms of compliance.

7. TRUSTEE WORK IN ADDITION TO COMMITTEES & COMMUNICATION WITH THE LGB'S

- a. To agree input/areas of responsibility for the Trustee Report for the AGM and monthly work plan for Trustees.
- b. The Trustees noted any visits undertaken since the last meeting, list of visits agreed on the 9th October, 2023 detailed below – any reports to be uploaded in advance of the meeting

LWA explained the board was now working in a different way and the list below covered work outside of the Committees.

TRUSTEE	FOCUS	STAFF MEMBER(S)	Outcomes
Andy Smith Liam McDonagh	Investment Policy	Alex Brown	Follow up from Board meeting. Policy ready for recommendation.
Liz Warren	Ibstock	Sophie Williams	Report
Liz Warren	National Forest Hub	Nicola Koncarevic	Incomplete; further visit 7-12-23 Jan
Sue Dunford Liam McDonagh Liz Warren	CEO Performance Management	Chris Parkinson	Performance Review completed and targets set
All Trustees	Trustee update workshop	Chris Parkinson	Updates on current Trust work
Liz Warren Andy Smith	Attendance to support Bosworth OfSTED inspection	Inspection Team	Confidential

- c. Trustees reviewed how to evaluate communication methods local governing bodies and other stakeholders. SGR explained that some of the stakeholders would be covered in the survey (considered under agenda item 4c) but the Board would need to ensure that LGB's communicated with the wider community. This area would also be covered at the NGA training during the Spring term. LWA asked SGR to look at how other Trusts manage this area.

ACTION: SGR to look at how other Trusts evaluate communications between LGB's and stakeholders.

- d. The Trustees received the LGB action points, recommendation and assurance from Countesthorpe and Bosworth. The issues had also been discussed at today's finance meeting in particular what does monitoring by the LGB look like. SMA suggested sharing the training delivered by AB or ask AB to deliver training to Headteachers. CTW felt it would be better if he met with PMA and SMA and produced a plan to ensure all LGB's and Headteachers operate a consistent approach. Some of the LGB's want to operate as if they were a maintained school which would take the responsibility away from the Headteacher.

8. COMMITTEE UPDATES

- a. The Trustees noted the Chairs Group minutes from the 9th November, 2023.
b. The Audit & Risk minutes from the 28th November, 2023 were considered under finance (agenda item 9a).
c. The Trustees considered the Pay & People Committee terms of reference and change of the committee name. LWA explained that meetings had always taken place but Trustees would now need to consider and review 3 areas as and when required. LWA and ASM as Chair of the Trust Board and Chair of Finance would sit on the committee, Trustees were asked if anyone else was prepared to sit on the committee. LMCD confirmed he was happy to sit on the committee as the areas covered reflected the work he was undertaking in his employment.

RESOLVED: the Trustees approved the terms of reference and membership of the committee.

9. FINANCE REPORT

- a. The Trustees received the CFO's Report, SMA agreed to look at the inconsistencies and rectify for the next board meeting. PMA agreed to speak to Headteachers at tomorrow's meeting and agree the purpose of the report to ensure the advantages outweigh the disadvantages. It may be helpful to circulate the report 3/4 days later to allow the Headteachers to analyse the information. ASM felt it may need to 2, 3 or 4 reports before the LGB's rebuild their confidence in the reporting. GWI was concerned that there was different advice received from the governance team v Chairs training. The deficit had increased and there was no explanation why, GWI was now happy he could go back to the LGB with a degree of confidence. SMA explained the date which had been agreed was the date the system closed down but there had been no opportunity to discuss the date. LWA commented that the must, should, could allowed the LGB to raise with the Trust Board any significant divergence in relation to figures, so the system was working.

LWA also explained that whilst she receives the monitoring reports, there needed to be a process to ensure Trustees were able to review. ASM agreed that as the finance committee only meets once per term there was no formal way to review all the reports. SGR confirmed the Trustees received an alert when the reports were uploaded onto Governor Hub as part of the weekly update.

HCO asked if the report could show pupil numbers as a graph to illustrate trends. Looking at the data the number of pupils at Bosworth had reduced by 100, was this something the School had planned or was it due to demographics. SMA explained the link within the report provides an overview there were also tabs by year group. The decline in numbers related to post 16 students.

Q: Is this planned?

A: (SMA) No.

Q: The numbers at Desford were also reducing, was anyone aware that there was a new housing development estate ?.

A: (CTW) There needs to be some work around post 16 numbers which were decreasing, this would have a significant impact on funding and the curriculum. There were concerns that the curriculum design did not anticipate the decline in the numbers. If this trend continued then this would have a significant impact. Pre 16 was oversubscribed so this was not a problem. This was due to the School benefitting from lots of pupils from Year 11 starting in Year 12 and more joining from outside but the % on both had now decreased. The trend needs to be investigated.

Q: Should we look at whether the School can accommodate those numbers?

A: (CTW) Once we have the right curriculum and staffing we need to look at whether the reduced numbers would be better in particular as there may be a lack of accommodation. We've reviewed bus passes and the costs which were very high compared to other schools. Parents may be looking at facilities nearer to their home. In terms of Desford when they joined the Trust none of the year groups were full. There is an ongoing piece to fill the year

groups which includes the admissions consultation. Desford is a MAT primary feeder for Bosworth and Dove Bank for Ibstock.

LWA asked HCO to feed her local knowledge to CTW and GWI. To approve the Trustee Report & Annual Accounts for submission, including the reconciliation of funds

- b. The Trustees received the recommendation from the Audit & Risk Committee held on the 28th November, 2023 . The committee recommended that the Trust Board should approve the Trustees report and Accounts for submission on the 31st December, 2023. The Trustees also received the External Auditors report.

RESOLVED: the Trustees approved the Trustees report and Accounts for submission on the 31st December, 2023

- c. Investments – the Trustees received a report (uploaded onto Governor Hub) from the Chair, Finance Committee. Following a meeting between the Chair, LMCD and a representative from St. James Wealth Management the Audit & Risk Committee recommended that the Trust Board should approve the Chair of Finances report to move to the Flagstone Deposit Platform.

RESOLVED: the Trustee approved the Chair of Finances report and recommendation.

10. POLICIES

The Trustees considered the following policies, all of which have been available for comment by Trustee via Governor Hub –

- a. Capital Allocation Policy
- b. Charges & Remission Policy
- c. Funds Policy

The 3 policies listed above would be considered at the February board meeting in the meantime the Trustees agreed to extend the review date to the 28th February, 2024.

- d. Accessibility Policy to extend the review date to 31.12.2024
- e. Equality Policy to extend the review date to 31.12.2024

RESOLVED: the Trustees agreed to extend the review date of policies listed under d and e to the 31st December, 2024.

LMCD asked if the policies could be reformatted. SGR agreed to action.

- f. Health & Safety Policy - updated policy and separate note of change for ease of reference
- g. Whistleblowing Policy – rewrite of a previous policy.
- h. Probation Policy - new policy
- i. Sabbatical Policy - new policy
- j. Staff Code of Conduct - new policy
- k. Organisational Change Policy - current policy amends in yellow
- l. Recruitment & Selection Policy - current policy amends in yellow
- m. Recruitment of Ex Offender Policy - current policy amends in yellow
- n. Pay Policy - current policy amends in yellow

CTW explained the process for the HR policies. CTW/ASC/SGR circulate to Schools and Headteachers for revision. The policies are then shared with the Trade Unions, their views are taken following consultation and then redrafted if needed to accommodate any amendment's.

11. GOVERNANCE

The Trustees noted the current board vacancies. LWA explained that HCO had extended her term as a Trustee to the 31st December, 2023 but was unable to extend her term further. HCO had served as Governors and then as a

Trustee since February 2010, 14 years. LWA thanked HCO for all her work in particular during the formation of the MAT.

LWA provided an update on recruitment, SGR and LWAs had contacted numerous companies and the board were asked by CPA not to contact or try and recruit from LGB's. DGO had also contacted work colleagues. It was recognised that there was a national shortage, all boards appeared to be struggling. HCO felt it would be helpful to bring the skills from the LGB's to the Trust Board. The Trust Board should not be nervous about recruiting it was good to have a mix of skills. LWA felt that there were people in the community who may have different skillsets and different layers of governance. There may be professionals who would not want to sit on an LGB. LMCD felt the requirements of Trustee had increased greatly since he had first joined. HCO asked if there was anyone who may be leaving the LGB and may be suitable, LWA confirmed there may at the end of this academic year. DGO commented that the University had used LinkedIn with a good uptake.

ACTION: LWA/DGO/NKPO to meet to agree a way forward to advertise on LinkedIn.

CTW felt the board needed more accountancy skills, there were currently 2 vacancies perhaps a communication from LWA/CPA to stakeholders. HCO agreed and had raised the number of Trustees on the Board, perhaps the Board should look at Associate Trustees, the board can take on CPA's comments about contacting Parents but ultimately the decision lay with the board.

Trustees suggested contacting the Freemasons, Chamber of Commerce, Parish Councils and local newsletter. HCO questioned whether the board needs to look at diversity. LWA confirmed that the Trustees would only need to attend one meeting face to face per year e.g. Strategy Day.

SGR advised that she had contacted the agency the Trust had used to recruit a previous Trustee. The cost was £6,000 for one Trustee and £5,000 for two, with an upfront fee of £2,000.

O. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETINGS

The Trustees noted the dates and times of the remaining meetings –

MEETING DATES 2023 – 2024

DAY	DATE	START TIME	MEETING
Wednesday	13.12.2023	4.00pm	School Improvement
Trustee update	18.12.2023	LWA to contact JME to move the meeting	
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 8.13pm following the conclusion of the confidential business.

