

Meeting of the Trustees of All Saints Schools Trust

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 10th December at 4.30pm at Laxfield Primary School

In attendance

Melanie Barrow	MB	Trustee/CEO	Present
Garry Deeks	GD	Trustee	Present (part to item 6)
Nancy Ford	NF	Trustee	Present
James Hargrave (Chair)	JH	Trustee/Chairman	Present
Amanda Hull	AH	Trustee	Present
Isobel Hunter	IH	Trustee	Present
Thomas Jarrett	TJ	Trustee	Present
Peter Robinson	PR	Trustee	Present
Jill Wright	JW	Trustee	Present
Paul Parslow-Williams	PPW	Executive Head/ Deputy CEO	In attendance
Karen Preece	KP	CFO	In attendance
Odile Wladon	OW	Clerk	In attendance

Meeting Attendance record:

Date	JB	MB	GD	NF	JH	AH	IH	TJ	PR	JW
02/09/19	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	n/a	X	✓	n/a	✓
01/10/19	n/a	✓	✓	✓	✓	n/a	✓	X	n/a	✓
10/12/19	n/a	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Total	0/1	3/3	3/3	3/3	3/3	1/1	2/3	2/3	1/1	3/3

		Action
1	<p>Welcome The Chairman welcomed Amanda Hull and Peter Robinson as Trustees and introductions took place.</p> <p>Apologies for Absence There were no apologies for absence.</p>	
2	<p>Declarations of Interest TJ as Board Member for Suffolk Local Government Pension Scheme New Trustees completed declaration forms.</p>	
3	<p>Meeting held on 1st October 2019 The minutes were approved as a true record of the business conducted, with an amendment removing an incomplete sentence in the policies section (5).</p>	

	<p>Action List and Matters Arising (not otherwise on the agenda)</p> <p>AP.2 c/f</p> <p>AP.32 completed</p> <p>AP.37 Review of Fressingfield deficit has taken place and is no longer an issue. GD raised a question regarding individual schools' reserves and the possibility they would need to be used should another school fall into deficit. GD suggested this should be communicated to all schools as part of the briefing. It was noted that all schools' reserves are safeguarded as long as other schools do not set deficit budgets.</p> <p>It was noted that the Finance Committee approved a Reserves Policy that will be shared with the schools as part of the briefing.</p> <p>AP.38 complete</p> <p>AP.39 ongoing</p> <p>AP.40 MB has spoken to SCC and been advised to use County standard policy.</p> <p>AP.41 Completed</p> <p>AP.42 HR committee has not formally met. IH and NF were thanked for their work producing the HR policies over the course of the year.</p> <p>AP.43 combined with AP.44.</p> <p>AP.44 ongoing, will be shared with LGBs together with growth plan. CEO to send to Heads to update LGBs.</p> <p>AP.45 completed.</p>	
<p>4</p>	<p>Risk Register</p> <p>Trustees noted the areas of change within the Trust risk assessment, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School and Pupil performance downgraded to 4 • Staffing downgraded to 4 • Curriculum and resources downgraded to 4 • Finance (12) revised to reflect centralisation • Governance revised following recruitment of additional Trustees 	
<p>5</p>	<p>Finance:</p> <p>(1) TJ thanked KP and the Finance Staff for their work on the on the year-end audit.</p> <p>(2) TJ presented the Statutory Accounts prepared by Larking Gowen and noted the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The audit process and documentation guidelines are published by EFAS as part of the academies handbook. b. P.27 Balance Sheet – the 2018 comparator covered only 5 months. c. Fixed Assets is a paper exercise as most assets are leased land. The figures exclude Wave 2 schools. d. Pension fund is for support staff only. Trustees noted that the change in the fund is large however the valuation the ASST have to pay is actually going down. e. P.46 Trustees noted the central services charge f. P.49 Trustees noted the creditors in note 18. g. P.51 Trustees noted the statement of funds. h. P53. Trustees noted the statement of funds; and the note concerning 	

	<p>Wortham.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IH raised the matter of management accounts for individual schools. Trustees were assured that now the centralised finance function had bedded in; management accounts can be produced. Trustees were asked to remember that the finance team will need to report to 6 local governing bodies and finance cttees alongside reporting to ASST Trust Board. • TJ pointed out that the addition of Great Whelnetham has led to the Trust being much better off. The purpose in establishing the Trust was to protect small rural schools, keeping them open and running for the benefit of local children. This has been a success. • The Trust has taken on board the previous advice from auditors and the central team has expanded during the year, with new advisors appointed, new finance and budgeting software installed. There has also been a huge amount of HR work undertaken. • Trustees noted that ASST was in a much stronger position now than it had been 12 months ago by undertaking these changes. • MB reiterated that the 3 schools who joined last year were financially unviable at the time and have now been saved . <p>(3) a. TJ presented the Audit Findings Report and drew Trustees attentions to the key audit findings, particularly the advice on related party transactions.</p> <p>b. Trustees noted that ASST has previously used, and will continue to use, the services of Acorn Trees Psychology and Consultancy Services (Amanda Hull), Stradbroke Media (James Hargrave) and Alpha Inclusion (Amy Ware – Member). Heads will be advised to contact KP prior to any work being undertaken to enable EFSA to be notified.</p> <p>c. Trustees discussed the findings of the report and noted that the audit is a snap shot of a moment in time. Some transaction took place after the year end and therefore the Statutory Accounts may not reflect the management accounts subsequently produced. Trustees noted that the flow of information may not have been perfect but to produce timely management accounts all information needs to be added to the system accurately and on time.</p> <p>d. TJ suggested that a timetable for finance procedures and deadlines will be useful in the moving the process forward.</p> <p>e. PPW advised that the Leadership team had discussed ensuring that payments are finalised by the end of May to reduce the volume of</p>	
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	<p>traffic which could lead to a faster audit process.</p> <p>f. KP stated that now there is a centralised team, they are able to learn from the experiences in the latter half of the year and put procedures into place. The finance team will continue to visit schools to look at budgets and forecasts.</p> <p>g. CEO reminded all that the Trustees act on behalf of the Trust Board and at times difficult questions may be asked of individual schools. It was noted that the communication process works both ways and that this may be an area that can be improved.</p> <p>h. GD pointed out that the ASST has only existed for 5 academic terms and had come along way. Some of the issues discussed appeared to be procedural and timing delays and this could be relayed back to schools during finance visits.</p> <p>i. Trustees thank TJ for his presentation of the documents.</p> <p>j. Trustees voted to accept the Statutory Accounts and Audit findings.</p> <p>(4) Other matters:</p> <p>a. Trustees noted that the SRMSA was signed and submitted ahead of the deadline.</p> <p>b. The ASST's management accounts for September and October were reviewed at the finance cttee and signed by JH.</p> <p>c. A revised budget for Gt Whelnetham was approved.</p>	
<p>6</p> <p>(1)</p> <p>(2)</p>	<p>Reports:</p> <p>CEO</p> <p>a. See confidential minutes.</p> <p>b. Trustees noted the updates on Gt Whelnetham and the progress made.</p> <p>c. Governors at Gt Whelnetham will be invited to the start of the next ASST Board Meeting as it is taking place at the school.</p> <p>d. MB is preparing CIF bids and liaising with Paul Kirman</p> <p>e. Annex G for MDIF has been completed.</p> <p>f. Trustees noted the SEN funding benchmarking and noted the variances between schools. This has been reviewed at leadership meeting; Heads should share this data with LGBs.</p> <p>CHAIR</p> <p>a. The brief for the governance review has been sent out and expressions of interest are awaited.</p> <p>b. JH pointed out that the workload on the CEO and DCEO was huge given that they are also the Executive Heads of 6 of the 9 schools in the Trust. A review of leadership across the Trust will be on the agenda of the first meeting in the Spring term 2020.</p> <p>c. Trustees unanimously agreed to appoint PR to the Finance and Audit Committee and AH to the HR Committee.</p>	
<p>7</p>	<p>Policies</p>	

	<p>The Trustees noted that the Business Continuity Plan for Gt Whelnetham was approved as part of the FMGS return.</p> <p>The Trustees approved the following policies:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Health & Safety Anti-bullying with changes recommended by NF Draft Equalities Policy – which has been shared with Heads to take to LGBs. <p>Trustees noted that the Finance Committee had approved the following policies which KP will share with schools:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Financial Regulations Investment Management ASST Central Cost Recharge Accounting Purchase Card Reserves Charging & Remissions Procurement 	
8	<p>Dashboard Data</p> <p>Trustees reviewed and noted the data produced and noted the inclusion of exclusion figures.</p> <p>JH commented that this was very useful.</p> <p>TJ commented that it was an excellent document and suggested Trust totals be included when next produced.</p>	
9	<p>School Improvement</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Trustees noted the 3 “mocksteds” that have taken place and noted that it is anticipated all schools will be reviewed by February. The outcomes of the reviews will be analysed to see if there is a common thread of issues across the Trust. Trustees noted the minutes of the Leadership meeting. MD reported that the Leadership Team had revised the Trust Charter and this will be presented at the next meeting. 	
10	See confidential minutes	
11	<p>HR Committee dates</p> <p>To be arranged via email.</p>	AP.45
12	See confidential minutes.	
14	<p>Items for next agenda:</p> <p>AGM</p> <p>CEO Report</p> <p>Management Accounts</p> <p>Trust Charter</p> <p>Leadership Review</p>	
15	Date of next meeting: Tuesday, 10 th December 2019, 4.30pm @ Laxfield	



Meeting closed at: 7.30pm

Actions from current meeting and items from previous meetings:

Action Point	Reference		To be completed by:
AP.2	17/04/18 Item 9	Local Governing Body Terms of Reference: amendment to Section 3.1.3.	JH to complete
AP.39	1/10/19 Item 4	It was agreed that an extra line will be added to each school for risk assessment of property.	PPW
AP.40	1/10/19 Item 5	NQT Induction Policy required. <i>Update received December 2019, advice received that SCC policy should be used for consistency.</i>	MB
AP.44	10/12/19	CEO to share report, data dashboard and growth plan with Leadership team for them to circulate to their LGBs	MB
AP.45	10/12/19	HR Committee dates to be arranged	IH

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Chair