



**Address:**  
 Waterton Academy Trust  
 The Grove  
 Walton  
 Wakefield  
 WF2 6LD

## Waterton Academy Trust

### Minutes of a Trust Board Meeting

<b>DATE:</b> 13 <sup>th</sup> October 2020	<b>TIME:</b> 6pm	<b>LOCATION:</b> Held via video conferencing (Microsoft Teams)
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#### Attendees

<b>Chair:</b>	B Cook	
<b>Trustees</b>	S Bates	S Johnson
	P Beaman	L Rowlinson-Brown
	D Dickinson (CEO)	
	A Goudie	
<b>Clerk:</b>	L Clark (MAT Governance Officer)	
<b>Apologies:</b>	J Shaw	
<b>Attendees:</b>		

ITEM		ACTION
1.	<b>Welcome</b>  The Chair welcomed all to the meeting.	
2.	<b>Apologies for Absence</b> Apologies of absence were received from J Shaw. It was noted that P Beaman was running slightly late but will join the meeting shortly.	
3.	<b>Declarations of Interest</b> The standing register of declarations of interest was noted. The Governance Officer provided an update that the usual annual update of the Register of Interests will be completed shortly, electronically. Also, the recent updates to the Academies Financial Handbook state that the Register of Interests should be reviewed regularly and updates provided. The Governance Officer will put this in place.  (P Beaman joined at 6:05pm)	LC
4.	<b>Minutes of the previous meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> August 2020 and matters arising</b> Trustees reviewed and approved the minutes of the meeting held on 25 <sup>th</sup> August 2020. It was agreed these would be signed in person by the Chair once restrictions had been lifted.	Chair

ITEM	ACTION
<p>Actions from the meetings had been undertaken and it was agreed that all had been completed in a timely manner.</p>	
<p><b>5. Risk Register and Conditions of Care</b></p>	
<p>The Chair introduced the item, and the CEO directed Trustees to the report and provided a brief summary. Trustees noted that the Conditions of Care continue to be met, and that the Risk Register is up to date, relevant and includes effective management of the mitigation of risks.</p>	
<p><b>6. Covid 19 Update</b></p>	
<p>The CEO provided an update on covid-19 and the reopening of schools. The Trust have followed all relevant Government Guidance in relation to reopening. All Risk Assessments have been completed and all have been sent on to Unions for review with no challenge. Tweaks to protocols have been made as required, but there have been no major changes. There have been a small number of bubbles having to be closed, but these have all been managed well and appropriate processes followed, including consulting with the DfE for clarity on specific cases such as when a member of Forest School staff tested positive (this was outside in a socially distanced environment and no further action was required). Guidance has also been issued to staff due to the contact tracing app as there was a situation at one school following a member of staff testing positive where phones were in the same room, but staff had not been in contact.</p> <p>In response to questions and through discussion it was noted that the management of supply staff and bubbles can be a challenge but is being managed well to date. A Trustee with a child at one of the academies raised a query that the communication to parents with regards to a class closure could have been clearer – the CEO explained that DfE templates have been used, but he will check with the school and ensure clarity is achieved in all communications. A question was raised as to whether the Trust are having staffing issues with staff needing to be at home due to them having school aged children whose class bubble has closed? The CEO explained that staff are continued to be paid whilst at home and to date there have not been any significant staffing issues due to this. It was noted that the Trust are not asking for a negative test result before returning to work, but are continuing to ensure the guidance with regards to isolating and symptoms are being followed closely. There have been some schools with challenging situations where pupils from a class bubble which had been sent home to isolate were then outside school trying to interact with pupils on their breaks. The Headteacher followed this up with communications to parents reiterating the isolation period.</p> <p>It is a challenging time, but staff are working extremely hard. Trustees recorded thanks to all staff for the safe reopening of schools and for the hard work, dedication and commitment of staff. The CEO will be writing to all staff and those involved in governance thanking them for their continued hard work.</p>	<p>CEO</p>
<p><b>7. CEO Headline Update</b></p>	
<p>The CEO provided an overview of the report, highlighting the key piece of work regarding partnerships – the full details of which are contained with the CESO (Chief</p>	

ITEM	ACTION
<p>Educational Standards Officer) particularly the One Wakefield Project which is a collaborative partnership between Wakefield System Leaders and Doncaster Research School supported by funding from the Education Endowment Foundation and Wakefield Council. The Trust are taking the Primary Project Lead. Trustees commented very positively on this and asked for an update in due course. The CEO highlighted that the positive reputation of the Trust is continuing to grow.</p> <p>A brief overview was provided on the actions to date detailed in the report including the CEO writing to the ASCs of WEA (West End Academy) and WPA (Walton Primary Academy) to clarify positions and statements made. The CEO also confirmed that once the reports required at WPA are produced he will be attending an extraordinary meeting of the WPA ASC to review the reports, answer queries and move forwards.</p> <p><i>(A discussion was deemed as confidential and moved to the set of confidential minutes)</i></p> <p>The CEO updated Trustees that the work so far from the Centre for Excellence is extremely positive. All TAs (teaching assistants) will be undertaking appropriate training and development, including maths and English through the Centre, and a specific course which will support learning in primary schools and which will be undertaken through their workplace. There had been some challenge about whether all TAs will be required to undertake the course, but it had been communicated that this was essential training for TAs and will continue their own professional development and work towards bettering the outcomes for children across the Trust. Trustees confirmed that the ethos of the Trust is about staff being the best they can, all working towards the common goal of improving outcomes, and therefore it was important all TAs undertook the training offer.</p> <p>The CEO is undertaking the Headteachers' performance management at present, and feedback to date is very good. A statement has been added in all performance management reports that an assessment against last year's objectives is not being made due to the disruption of covid-19 and the deviation from the norm. The performance management process has been re-shaped and for example includes new objectives such as the implementation of blended learning.</p>	
<p><b>8. Governance Officer Headline Report</b></p>	
<p>The Governance Officer provided a brief summary of the report, highlighting the key updates to the WAT Governance Code of Conduct which had been reviewed in line with the NGA document to ensure accessibility to all and to streamline the Code. It also now includes reference to virtual meetings. Trustees commented positively on the updated Code of Conduct and approved this, and the planned governance schedule for 2020-21.</p> <p>An update was provided that until further notice all boards will continue to meet remotely. One request to meet in person had been turned down, as the Trust have a duty of care to the well-being of all. Support on virtual meetings is in place and will remain so.</p>	

ITEM	ACTION
<p>It was noted that virtual sessions and updates were being provided for new Headteachers on the governance structure and the role of the ASCs, or indeed any involved in governance if required.</p>	
<p><b>9. CFO Headline Report</b></p>	
<p>The CEO provided an overview of the report, highlighting that although it has been an extremely challenging year the finance team have worked very hard and the Trust are in a good financial position. There are some positives to report including the money saved from not requiring supply agency staff and the staff absence insurance not requiring renewal. Both created significant savings. Building upon this, the work undertaken to set up the teaching pool is also realising further savings. The Trust's decision to furlough staff (those staff who are funded by external income such as breakfast/after school clubs) also realised savings of £118K.</p> <p>Attention was drawn to the detailed documents available to Trustees on WES which complement the headline report. The ESFA have extended the deadline for the accounts, and therefore the draft accounts will be finalised prior to Christmas and presented at the AGM on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2021.</p> <p>To alleviate cost pressures, schools can apply for funding to cover exceptional costs associated with covid-19 up to the end of the summer term. However, there is some uncertainty with this as the ESFA will look at the reserve position and may decline the application.</p> <p>The key changes in the Academies Accounts Direction (AAD) 2019/20 and Academies Financial Handbook (AFH) 2020 were highlighted. It was noted that the Trust are already adhering to the majority of these requirements which, up until now, have been recommended practice.</p> <p>Trustees reviewed the significant piece of work undertaken with regards to the procurement of the MIS system, and were reassured by the robust process carried out which was overseen by the CEO.</p> <p>At the end of 2019/20 existing reserves will be profiled to each academy and formal applications to spend reserves will be made to the relevant local Hub Board. It was noted that these will only be considered for investment in buildings, IT, and other capital projects. Trustees discussed and agreed with this approach. There had been no applications to date.</p> <p>In response to questions and in discussion it was noted that the outturn shows an overspend on the Centre for Excellence, but this will be offset by the income generated throughout the year and staff costs will be paid from this fund.</p> <p>A question was asked whether there had been any reduction in EYFS numbers in September following the pandemic as this will effect funding, but the CEO explained that there had not been anything significant but he will look into it and confirm to the Chair.</p>	

ITEM	ACTION
<p><b>10. COO Headline Report</b></p> <p>The CEO provided a brief summary to Trustees of the detailed COO headline report. It was noted that plans to extract the Trust from the HR system were halted due to lockdown and then the risks associated with extraction and not having the data available were too great. Negotiations are continuing and the supplier has admitted in writing that the reporting suite is not fit for purpose. The invoice is still on hold and no further funds released, and alongside this discussions are ongoing with the potential new MIS provider on how this system can support HR in order to review the longer term strategic direction.</p> <p>The snapshot of compliance was reviewed and noted, as well as the capital works undertaken during the summer period. The CEO highlighted the success of the extension project at AMD (Ackworth Mill Dam) to support the increase in the PAN. Phase 1 was completed ahead of schedule, and Phase 2 is currently in planning to extend the existing Early Years building (funding has been granted).</p> <p>A question was raised whether there were any barriers to compliance, but the CEO confirmed it was purely timing as to when work had been scheduled and there are no concerns as work is on track to meet the planned deadlines.</p> <p>As previously explained to Trustees, urgent unplanned work due to a structural failure has been required at SCS (Sharlston). Further investigational work is required and an appeal with the insurance provider is ongoing. Trustees questioned the safety of the site, and the CEO confirmed that a structural engineer has been involved and has inspected the site to provide reassurance on its safety. There is currently a teaching space within the hall, and there may be the need to install modular classrooms. In addition to this, there are issues with the boiler which have been dealt with. Trustees discussed whether further analysis should be undertaken to provide detail on the potential cost of a new building versus the amount required to make the structural repairs required and the likelihood of further structural issues, and the overall safety of the school.</p> <p><i>(A discussion was deemed as confidential and moved to the set of confidential minutes)</i></p>	
<p><b>11. CESO Headline Report</b></p> <p>The CEO provided an overview of the CESO (Chief Educational Standards Officer) report highlighting the detailed, forensic work which has been undertaken by the School Improvement Team. The team are working extremely well together and supporting schools virtually, establishing school priorities for development and improvement. The team have also carried out an extensive body of research analysis and evaluation in order to write comprehensive 'Delivering Excellence' guides, to support improvement and consistency in delivering quality practice.</p> <p>Trustees reviewed the attendance figures which are above national in the main, and commented positively on them.</p> <p>The challenges particularly in the East Hub were discussed and the work which is being undertaken in order to address these. CTA (Cherry Tree) and KMA (Kings</p>	

ITEM	ACTION
<p>Meadow) are particularly challenging environments and the SI team are working hard with these schools to drive improvement.</p> <p>The CEO explained that due to covid-19 outcomes are not being published. This half term has focussed on assessment to determine where the children are. It has been noted that some children have accelerated progress due to their home environment during lockdown, and others have had factors which have been a barrier to home learning and children have struggled. Schools are working closely with the SI team on this.</p> <p>In response to questions, the exclusions data was discussed, and further detail provided on CTA (Cherry Tree) and NJA (Normanton Junior). It was noted that the issues at CTA continue to relate to the historical alternative provision setting which was situated at the school and which was disbanded due to failings, including; management, levels of staffing, and budget. Work is ongoing and some children have been moved to a more appropriate setting, appropriate punishments are in place, and support staff have been brought in and there are signs of improvement. At NJA, there had been some concerns but there has been a re-shaping of how year 3 operate and this is working well, and a specific member of staff has been appointed to deal with issues and this has also improved behaviour.</p> <p>It was also highlighted that the CEO has had a meeting with a pre-school provider from London to look at the pre-school model they operate, with a view to preparing a proposal for the Trust Board relating to the growth of the Trust pre-schools. Trustees were also updated that an advert is out for the substantive Headteacher post for NJA.</p> <p>The CEO and Trustees concluded that the report shows an overall positive picture despite the turmoil of the covid-19 pandemic. Feedback from schools has been very positive about the work of the SI team and the support they provide.</p>	
<p><b>12. Policy Updates</b></p>	
<p>Trustees reviewed the policies, noting the summary of changes and all were approved.</p> <p>A question was raised about the reference of the removal of external consultants being part of Headteacher's performance management. The CEO explained that this had come from discussion at the Headteacher's Group meeting as it had been felt that this did not add value to the process, and that since there was cost incurred to the Trust for this, it did not seem like an appropriate use of resources. The invite was there to include an ASC Chair should this be required / requested.</p>	
<p><b>13. Any Other Business</b></p>	
<p>None.</p>	
<p><b>14. Feedback to / from Hub Board and ASCs – Questions, Concerns, Comments</b></p>	
<p>S Bates (Chair of the East Hub Board) commented that he and the East Hub Board had been impressed with the CESO at the meeting and of the comprehensive report provided. It was noted that WEA (West End Academy) had raised queries at their</p>	

ITEM	ACTION
<p>summer ASC meeting to which the CEO had responded in order to clarify the position with regards to home learning and contact during the pandemic, and the work undertake on the single tenancy to assist with this.</p> <p>S Johnson (Chair of the West Hub Board) commented that Sports Funding had been discussed and some information requested pre-covid had not come through as yet from schools but this will be followed up on.</p> <p>Trustees were also provided with a summary of a matter at Crofton Infants' School where a decision had been made to keep a gate closed to prevent the unauthorised use of school playground equipment, and due to safeguarding concerns with members of the community taking shortcuts through the school grounds. There had been some community backlash to this action. The CEO fully supported the Headteacher's decision, which was made to protect the welfare of Waterton pupils.</p> <p>The Hub Boards had both provided feedback that there was a significant team effort from all staff at the Trust in the September reopening of schools and it had been a very good start back for everyone. Trustees also endorsed this.</p>	
<p><b>15. Identification of Confidential Items</b></p>	
<p>A discussion under item 7 and item 10 were deemed as confidential and moved to the set of confidential minutes.</p>	
<p><b>16. Confirmation of Date and Time of Next Meeting</b></p>	
<p>The Clerk confirmed the date of the AGM as 13<sup>th</sup> January 2021, and the next Trust Board meeting as 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2021, as per the agreed governance schedule. Dairy invitees will be sent out.</p>	

**MEETING CLOSED 7:30pm**

**SIGNATURE:**

**DATE:**

**Actions from the Trust Board meeting held on 13 October 2020**

Agenda Item N°	Summary of Action	Who?	When?
3	Annual declarations of interest, and ongoing review	LC	Asap and ongoing
4	Sign minutes when safe to do so	Chair	When appropriate
6	CEO write letter to all staff and those involved in governance thanking them for continued hard work	CEO	asap
16	Diary invites for AGM and Trust Board meeting to be sent out	LC	asap