

LUNESDALE MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST / BAY LEARNING TRUST
Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors
held at 4.30pm on Thursday 30 March 2017 at Ripley St Thomas CE Academy

Present: Rev Canon P Ballard, Mrs D Cheetham, Prof J Crewdson, Revd M Gisbourne, Mrs N Gomersall, Mrs E Nicholls, Mrs J Watson, Mr R Webb, Cllr Mrs V Wilson

In Attendance: Mr A McKinnell (Director of Business & Finance), Mrs J Garnett (Vice-chair of Governors RST), Mrs J Rees (Clerk)

The meeting opened with prayer.

1. APOLOGIES AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no apologies or declarations of interest.

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

It was agreed the minutes of the previous meeting held on 28 February 2017, having been circulated, be approved and signed by the chair as a correct record.

3. MATTERS ARISING

- The Directors noted the change of name of the Trust to the Bay Learning Trust
- Item 4: the Articles of Association had been agreed by the Church of England nationally, not just by the Diocese.
- Item 7: Robert Webb is to be installed as the County High Sherriff. Because of his duties in this role he will not have the time to chair the Audit committee. Valerie Wilson agreed to chair this committee instead.

4. MEMBERSHIP

Mrs Jane Watson was introduced and welcomed. She will be joining the Board of Directors as a co-opted member.

5. DUE DILIGENCE PROCEDURES

The draft Due Diligence document had been circulated. This is being used to evaluate Carnforth High School.

It was suggested that a check of a school's IT infrastructure be included. It was noted that the MAT has no obligation to take on a failing institution. Following due diligence checks a report would come to the Board for a decision as to whether a school can join the MAT.

Hill Dickinson were formally approved as the MAT's Legal and HR advisors. CWR were formally approved as the Accountants for the MAT.

Mrs Nicholls reported that the Headteachers of all local Church Primary Schools have been invited to a meeting at Ripley on 12 May to ask them what they would want from a MAT.

6. COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

The titles of the three committees are to be:

- Quality and Standards

ACTION

EN/AMcK

- Audit
- Finance and Resources

The Scheme of Delegation needs to be amended to show the new titles.

Each committee will have a quorum of 3 members. Others can be co-opted to the committees – they do not necessarily have to be Board members.

It was agreed that Andrew McKinnell will be the Company Secretary.

7. DRAFT FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

There was discussion around the document that had been previously circulated. This document is a work in progress. The Board members were asked to send any comments to Andrew McKinnell (email [REDACTED] or tel 01524 [REDACTED])

8. REGIONAL ACADEMY GROWTH FUND

An application for a grant of £100k had been submitted to the Regional Academy Growth Fund. Mrs Nicholls was pleased to confirm that we have been granted £60k for the period ending 31 March 2017.

9. GOVERNANCE (COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK)

The Directors noted the contents of the DfE document detailing the knowledge, skills and behaviours needed for effective governance in MATs.

10. SCHOOL JOINING THE TRUST (CARNFORTH OFSTED REPORT)

The Ofsted report of the short inspection of Carnforth High School had been circulated. The school has been rated as good. The school is not full and its budget reflects that. We are awaiting their 3 year projection. A condition survey is being undertaken. They have a sixth form of 60-80, which is unsustainable – the DfE say the minimum size for a viable sixth form is 200. There was discussion about Carnforth's swimming pool which is leased from the LCC and which is very expensive to run.

Mrs Nicholls made the Board aware of the financial situation at Ripley. Following the issue of our budget for 2017-2018, the academy now finds itself in a very challenging situation and is projected to have an £800,000 deficit by 2020. This will use up the reserves.

The reasons why this has happened are due to cost pressures and reductions in funding as follows:

- Flat cash over the last four years
- Rising pension and national insurance costs
- Unfunded pay awards and Incremental drift (£100,000 - £150,000 per year)
- Loss of the Education Support Grant (£370,000)
- Loss of Education Support Grant protection (£31000)
- Loss of the 6th form entitlement grant (£144,000)
- Apprenticeship Levy (£15,000)
- Increases in the LGPS deficit (£12000)
- Reduction in sixth form numbers (£96,000 reduction this year with a further reduction next year)
- Reduction in sixth form funding (from 138% of a year 11 pupil to 78%)
- The National Funding Formula (£200,000)

- Increasing numbers of maternity leaves each year (5)

Ripley finds itself at the centre of a perfect storm – a school with low deprivation attracting very little additional funding, a sixth form with significantly reduced funding, a younger staff moving up the pay spine, a punitive reduction via the National Funding Formula and a school large enough to attract the Apprenticeship levy. The Headteachers’ association, in a recent response to the DfE, stated that “Schools with low levels of deprivation will almost certainly have insufficient funding and many will become insolvent.” Ripley is in exactly this position. Ripley has been well managed financially over a number of years with significant monies being allocated to capital projects to improve the estate; procurement has ensured best value with new energy efficient lighting and heating systems installed and staffing is at 77.5%, exactly where it should be. The academy has very healthy reserves of ca £900,000 but these will rapidly disappear. The reductions outlined above do not take into account any rises in costs of utilities and of increased compliance costs. Scope for saving money is limited with large class sizes already the norm. Teachers are obviously the greatest expense with the average salary at Ripley ca £37000 (£48100 including on costs).

Mrs Nicholls stated that an urgent response to this situation is necessary and restructuring will need to begin in September to ensure that reductions take effect quickly.

11. AOB

Mrs Nicholls will be retiring as Principal of Ripley at the end of this school year. She will remain as the CEO of the MAT. The Local Governing Body (LGB) will be responsible for the appointment of a new Principal. Board members are not required to be involved, however, if any member is willing to sit on the Panel they should let Mrs Rees know (email [REDACTED] or tel 01524 [REDACTED]).

Directors

The position will be advertised externally. A meeting of the LGB has been arranged for 2 May to discuss the job specification and timescales. If an external applicant is appointed the earliest they would be able to take up the post is January 2018. The LGB will have to consider what arrangements would be put in place in the interim.

12. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting was arranged for Thursday 22 June 2017 at 4.30pm in The Hive.

The meeting closed with The Grace at 5.45pm

I confirm that the minutes have been agreed as a correct record of the meeting.

Signed.....(Chair)

Date