



TRUST BOARD

Minutes of a Virtual Meeting of the Trust Board of South East Cornwall Multi Academy Regional Trust held on Thursday 10th December 2020 at 5.30 pm.

Present	Yes/No	Present	Yes/No
Dr S Brownlow	Yes	Mrs L Lawson	No
Mr D Buckley, CEO	Yes	Mr Newton Chance, Chair	No
Mrs H Casson	Yes	Mr C Piper	Yes
Mr B Cook	Yes	Mr C Stevens, Vice Chair	Yes
Mr J Crisp	Yes		

**In Attendance: Mrs J Lumbard, CFO
Mrs K Williams, Clerk to Trust Board**

1. **Welcome and Format of the Meeting**

Mr Stevens had agreed to chair the meeting in Mr Newton Chance's absence and he welcomed everyone to the meeting especially Mr Piper, recently appointed H&S and Premises Trustee.

2. **Declaration of Business or Pecuniary Interest and Academy-related parties - update on any changes since completion of written declaration**

No.

3. **Apologies for Absence**

Mr Newton Chance sent his apologies in advance of the meeting which were received and accepted by the committee. It was believed that Mrs Lawson is having a period of absence which would need to be confirmed by Mr Newton Chance.

4. **Approval of the minutes of the previous meeting held on 21-07-2020**

The minutes of the meeting held on 21st July 2020, having been circulated in advance, were agreed as an accurate record and will be signed.

5. **Progress of action points and matters arising**

M29. CEO Summary including the Consideration and approval of the reopening of schools in September 2020

m) The Chair suggested that initial approval is given for the plans in place for return in September. Trustees should meet again at the end of August to review in light of any changes in guidance and then reapprove the plans. **A Trustee asked what will trigger an extraordinary review or should this be a default position and cancelled if not needed and nothing has changed.** It was agreed that the Clerk would schedule a further meeting which could then be cancelled if not required.

Update: Complete.

t) 5 Year Strategic plan

The 5-year strategic plan has been circulated on the normal schedule prior to lockdown but work on it had been halted. The plan is normally circulated to Trustees and discussed, half a term before the SDP process completes. As the SDP process has now been moved to after Autumn half term, Mr Buckley will recirculate the strategic plan and update it further if necessary.

Update: Mr Buckley advised that the MAT Strategic Plan has been circulated as requested.

M31. Adoption of Policies:

a) Trustee Code of Conduct - For agreement following annual review

Trustees unanimously agreed to approve. It was suggested that this should be circulated to Members for agreement.

Update: Complete

c) A Trustee asked if the equalities impact assessment could be circulated as it would be useful to see the impact of Covid-19.

Update: Mrs Lumbard has not had capacity to complete this task.

e) The Donations Policy and the 16-19 Bursary Policy were both reviewed by the Resources Committee on 16-07-2020 who recommended their approval. The Clerk will circulate to Trustees by email for approval.

Update: Complete.

M32. Items from Chair_

a) 360 Review of the Trust Board Chair

The Chair advised that this will be circulated to Trustees by the Clerk and could it please be completed in preparation for the Annual Review Meeting in September.

Update: Complete.

b) Skills Audit

A copy of the Skills Audit will be circulated to Trustees and needs to be completed and returned to the Clerk. A draft Trustees report will be required for the end of October and forms part of the final audit report.

Update: The Clerk advised that she is still outstanding some skills audit and asked for Trustees to complete and return.

c) Annual Review Meeting in September 2020

The Chair explained that the purpose of this meeting is to discuss how effectively the Trust Board is operating. In light of discussion, the SoDA (Scheme of Delegation) will need to be reviewed and updated with any suggested changes from this meeting. **A Trustee asked about the Annual Trustees report for the audit report and asked if this can be circulated.** The Chair explained that he will be working with the CEO and it will be circulated for comments.

Update: Completed. It had been suggested during a previous Meeting that the Members should be included in the presentation of the Annual Accounts as part of their annual meeting. Mr Buckley noted that Members prefer not to have just one meeting per year.

M35. Items which were raised at the end of the meeting

a) A Trustee noted that KCSIE (Keeping Children safe in Education) is being updated but they have retracted any major changes. It was recommended that all Trustees to read the document so they are clear on their responsibilities on safeguarding.

Update: Complete. Mr Stevens noted that Trustees must read KCSIE and requested that they confirm that they have read and understood their responsibilities by January 1st 2021. The Clerk will circulate a further copy of KCSIE and if Trustees have any issues or questions, they may contact Mr Stevens directly.

Action: All/Clerk

6. Reports and Recommendations from Committees

a) People/Remuneration (confidential) 22-10-2020

Dr Brownlow advised that the revised plan for the performance management of staff has been scrutinised by Trustees. The role of the Health and Wellbeing Trustee was discussed. The Remuneration Committee reviewed UPS progression and ensured that the pay policy is being applied consistently.

b) Annual Pay Settlement

Mr Buckley advised that the Trust have agreed to align with the support staff national pay award and teachers national pay award. As part of the description of the pay award, we chose to align to the more expensive of the two commonly used models as this is the one that has now been

agreed from this year by all of the Teacher Unions. We also had to agree if we were to back date it.

The Remuneration Committee were minded to recommend the annual pay award to be implemented for this academic year and be back dated to September 2020.

Trustees were in unanimous agreement of the recommendation.

c) Resources 03-11-2020

Mr Cook advised that there were two main issues which were discussed by Trustees; IT provision which has been a source of concern in the primary schools and the second was the impact of Covid. The Covid Catch Up funding remit and the extra costs incurred by catering, cleaning, heating and additional supply staffing costs have been discussed at length. There are potential additional costs of approx. £100k.

d) Learning/Admissions 21-10-2020

Mr Crisp explained that during this meeting there were discussions which included pupil exclusions, home learning provision and strategic direction of the MAT Strategic Plan and SDPs (School Development Plans).

e) MGLG 22-09-2020

Mr Buckley advised that the MGLG had been rescheduled to the start of term where it allowed the chairs an opportunity to have discussions on the arising issues of the pandemic and prepare for the LGC meetings during the autumn term. We were able to make progress on some issues early in the term such as the governors approach to staff health and wellbeing.

- f) A Trustee asked if it would be more efficient and effective for the Chairs of the Committees to provide a short summary page for the Trustees to be read alongside the minutes of the meetings. It was suggested that this could be added below the action summary within the minutes. It was agreed that the Clerk will need to ensure that she captures the reflection of the meeting within the minutes with the input of Trustees at the end of each meeting. Clerk to add to template minutes. This summary page could also be circulated to the LGC chairs for information.

Action: Clerk

7. **Receive recommendation from Audit Committee on draft accounts**

- a) The Audit Committee explained that this was a positive clean account with no key issues and their recommendation is that the audit is endorsed and signed off as accepted. Mr Buckley explained that the audit last year was described to be outstanding with two amber flags and so to have an audit this year with no red or ambers is a remarkable achievement.

- b) *Trustees unanimously agreed to approve the annual accounts.* It was agreed that a thank you letter would be sent from the Trustees to the Finance team.

Action: C Stevens/R Newton Chance

8. **CEO Verbal Update** – For information including strategic planning issues and update on Domestic Abuse stats

a) ICT

Mr Buckley explained that the ICT project is on track which is remarkable given the challenges this year. The anticipated end date is the end of the summer term. Mr Buckley advised that there was an online SMART day in November which has been an outstanding achievement. The ICT team have been under pressure which has been further impacted by changes in staffing and so additional support has been provided. The movement of staff around the schools has caused unexpected problems.

b) Domestic abuse

Mr Buckley gave an update on the data for domestic abuse in the area and explained that he had previously advised that the local police had had the highest increase they had seen in incidences of domestic abuse cases. This data actually was the increase in Encompass reports. The updated national picture is significantly lower with a 7% increase.

c) MAT Strategic Plan

Mr Buckley explained that we are in year four of the 5-year plan. The revision of a 5-year plan is a large piece of work. Mr Buckley advised that he is trying to raise awareness of the importance of a 5-year plan and this is being moved forward to a 3-year plan in the interim. Mr Buckley advised that the key elements of this work starts in April with the MSLT (MAT Senior Leadership Team). At the next Trust Board meeting, which will follow the committees, we will need to agree the headings of the Strategic Plan. Clerk to add to the agenda.

Action: Clerk

d) Staff Absence

Staff absence has improved considerably and we remain below 3%. We are looking at the predictions of a third spike after Christmas so the MSLT will be discussing and writing an exit strategy for post Covid at the start of the spring term. Mr Buckley explained that there is now a vaccine and it is hoped that the next predicted spike will be the last. Confirmed cases have reduced.

e) The update from the government to allow the schools to move an inset from its planned position in the year to next week was not welcomed at such short notice. The Headteachers are being required by the government to respond to Test and Trace and hence work up until Christmas Eve. Mr Buckley wished to commend all of the Headteachers and their continued commitment to their school in preferring to take such calls themselves. They have worked tirelessly this year for staff and students to put measures in place to ensure their health and wellbeing. Staff welfare is still a key concern and staff are looking forward to a light at the end of the tunnel.

f) Recruitment at Dobwalls

There is an upcoming appointment for headship at Dobwalls which may result in a further recruitment process for a deputy headteacher.

g) CBU Restructure

Following the retirement of senior staff, there has been a restructure of the central team and the changes seems to be working well. This will be reviewed again after Covid when staff can move between the schools.

h) **A Trustee queried the capacity of the team to enable them to revise the MAT Strategic Plan and there was a concern for the health and wellbeing of the central business team.** Mr Buckley advised that the team will be working on this over the next 18 months which is realistic and will be measured in stages. **A Trustee noted that we do need to refresh the Trust Boards view on the plan and it might be an opportunity for the Trustees, MSLT and Chairs to come together for an early discussion on priorities when the draft document is ready.** It was agreed that this would strengthen the relationships between key personal.

Action: D Buckley

i) It was discussed that Mr Stevens will contact Mr Newton Chance and agree a letter to be sent to the Headteachers to acknowledge and thank them for their hard work and commitment this year.

Action: C Stevens/R Newton Chance

9. **CFO Summary** – For information

a) Mrs Lumbard thanked Trustees for their earlier comments regarding the finance teams and agreed that they would welcome a letter from the Trust Board. Mrs Lumbard summarised the changes within the teams this year.

b) Mrs Lumbard explained that the government has announced a freeze of public sector pay for 2021. This will affect both teachers and support staff, however the support staff pay increase is due in April 2021. Therefore will be a saving in the budget for 2020/21 but this will negatively impact staff.

c) It was advised that for the Covid Workforce Fund, one of the caveats for being able to claim is that school reserves need to be under 4%. It is possible that there is not a substantial claim that

we can be made but the data is currently being analysed. It was noted that there has not been any specific information on how to make a claim. Mrs Lumbard explained that the deadline for exceptional costs claims from the summer term is the 21st December.

- d) **A Trustee asked about the cost of Covid and if any of this is reclaimable and how much are we overspent.** Mrs Lumbard advised that this needs to be reviewed after Christmas and she will collate this information in preparation for the next Resources Committee meeting. It is not possible to provide this information at the moment because we are still reviewing the projected deficit of catering and numbers could change significantly before the next Resources Committee meeting. The Trust is doing all that we can to ensure that we have a workable solution. Mrs Lumbard explained that the impact of Covid is included in the monthly Management Accounts which are circulated to Trustees by email.

10. **Consider nomination and approve Chairs/Vice Chairs for Local Governing Committees:**

- a) For transparency, Dr Brownlow noted that her partner is Charles Boney who has been elected as Chair at Trewidland.
- b) Dobwalls – Tamsyn Hannah and Rebecca Manning;
Landulph – Clarissa Newell and Helene Ansell;
Liskeard – Ian Williams and David Young;
Looe – Kathy Iles and Penny Prisk;
Saltash – Sam Gardner and Kerry Leslie;
Trewidland – Charles Boney and Geoff Pratt
- c) *Trustees unanimously approved of the Chairs and Vice Chairs for 20/21.* Trustees noted their thanks to the Chairs and Vice Chairs for their continued hard work and commitment.

11. **Adoption of Policies:**

- a) Admissions (reviewed and redrafted - Admissions Committee)
Mr Buckley explained that this policy has needed a change to reflect Brexit. **A Trustee queried the position of the prioritisation of children in care but not those who are in a care system outside of the UK and queried the ethics of this.** Mr Buckley advised that he too had reservations but noted that this is a pragmatic change as we no longer have guiding principles due to Brexit. Mr Buckley advised that if children are in the care system in the UK they will continue to be prioritised but if children are in a care system from outside the UK, there is not a commonality of systems and so there is the possibility of abuse of the system. **Trustees noted concern that there is discrimination to those who are moving to the UK.** Mr Buckley advised that mention of country has been removed from the policy and perhaps our interpretation of “in care” is what we believe this to be. Mr Buckley advised that the policy will not discriminate and was happy to provide reassurance of this.
- b) *Trustees unanimously agreed this policy on the basis that Mr Buckley provided assurance that the policy would not be used to discriminate against those who may wish to join the schools from outside the UK.*

Mrs Casson left the meeting at 18.27.

12. **Items from Chair** – feedback from Trustees about changes to the Scheme of Delegation

- a) The Vice Chair advised that the SoDA has been circulated earlier in the day and the Chair asked for feedback from the Trustees on the changes which have been made and if there should be a subset of information specifically for the LGCs.
- b) **A Trustee asked if Mr Newton Chances comments could be emailed to Trustees and if the changes could be highlighted.** Mr Buckley advised that there have been significant changes to the SoDA and normally there would be tracked changes but in this case it would have made it very difficult for Trustees to read. Mr Buckley advised that he has revised the KPIs in an attempt

to make it easy for those governors who have specific responsibilities.

c) The Clerk has started drafting a governance handbook which is intended to be used alongside the Governor Induction Training which is already in place and it is intended to fill any knowledge gaps. The handbook would reference the KPIs in the SoDA.

d) **A Trustee noted that there are some issues with page numbers and this will need to be updated on the contents table.** Clerk to amend.

Action: Clerk

e) The Trustees thanked Mr Buckley and Mr Newton Chance on their work on revising the document.

13. Feedback for LGCs

a) Mr Piper is the recently appointed H&S and Premises Trustee.

b) Trust Board Committee meetings – The Clerk will be adding a short summary page to Trust Board Committee minutes which will be circulated to the LGC Chairs for information.

c) The Trust received a good clean audit.

d) Work on the MAT Strategic Plan will begin in the Spring term.

e) Trustees unanimously approved of the Chairs and Vice Chairs for 20/21. Trustees noted their thanks to the Chairs and Vice Chairs for their continued hard work and commitment.

14. Agreements made by email:

- a) Safeguarding Policy and review cycle 26-10-2020
- CEO Pay Recommendation 30-10-2020
- Teachers' M Pay Scales 09-11-2020
- SMART COVID Ventilation 09-10-2020
- Audit Committee: Procurement of Electricity 19-09-2020
- Resources Committee: Photocopier tender 17-11-2020
- Appointment of H&S and Premises Trustee, Chris Piper 23-09-2020

15. Minutes of LGC meetings

a) Looe
Liskeard (draft)

Dobwalls – including confidential appendices
Saltash, Trewidland and Landulph – To follow

b) Mr Buckley advised that the Student council have met virtually and they have been asked for feedback from the students on a set of key questions. It would be useful for the Trust Board to ask questions to gain an insight into pupil voice. Trustees welcomed the opportunity to pose questions.

c) The Vice Chair noted that there have been instances of Trusts in the Southwest deciding to suspend LGCs until April with the Trust Board having removed delegated responsibilities to regain full oversight. It was discussed that this is change of model has intended to remove pressure from the Local governors.

d) Mr Buckley advised that this has been raised before but assured Trustees that our mantra is to have “local schools serving local communities” with the schools having earned autonomy. It was noted that our governance model works well and we have invested time into ensuring the governors are professional and understand their role and work on this continues. It was discussed that there are occasions where LGCs may become defunct or where a MAT becomes very large and Trust Boards might need to create hubs or review the governance structure. Mr

Buckley explained that autonomy can be maintained for 10 schools but the central team would need to be “hubbed”.

- e) Mr Buckley added that the Leadership Ladder structures for governors will be in place this year and will provide clear guidance on how governors and LGCs should operate. Mr Buckley explained that support is in place to ensure that LGCs operates as they should and any issues surrounding this have been picked up quickly and dealt with professionally. It was agreed that interaction between the Trustees and the LGCs would need to be reviewed if the Trust were to expand in the future.

16. **Date of next meetings:**

30-03-2021 and 20-07-2021 at 5.30 pm

The Vice Chair thanked the Trustees for attending and wished everyone a happy Christmas. All the staff and students were thanked for their hard work and it was hoped that 2021 is a simpler year. The meeting closed at 19.07.

Action Summary	
<p>M5. Progress of action points and matters arising M35. Items which were raised at the end of the meeting a) A Trustee noted that KCSIE (Keeping Children safe in Education) is being updated but they have retracted any major changes. It was recommended that all Trustees to read the document so they are clear on their responsibilities on safeguarding. <i>Update: Complete. Mr Stevens noted that Trustees must read KCSIE and requested that they confirm that they have read and understood their responsibilities by January 1st 2021. The Clerk will circulate a further copy of KCSIE and if Trustees have any issues or questions, they may contact Mr Stevens directly.</i></p>	Action: All/Clerk
<p>M6. Reports and Recommendations from Committees f) A Trustee asked if it would be more efficient and effective for the Chairs of the Committees to provide a short summary page for the Trustees to be read alongside the minutes of the meetings. It was suggested that this could be added below the action summary within the minutes. It was agreed that the Clerk will need to ensure that she captures the reflection of the meeting within the minutes with the input of Trustees at the end of each meeting. Clerk to add to template minutes. This summary page could also be circulated to the LGC chairs for information.</p>	Action: Clerk
<p>M7. Receive recommendation from Audit Committee on draft accounts b) It was agreed that a thank you letter would be send from the Trustees to the Finance team.</p>	Action: C Stevens/R Newton Chance
<p>M8. CEO Verbal Update – For information including strategic planning issues and update on Domestic Abuse stats <u>c) MAT Strategic Plan</u> Mr Buckley explained that we are in year four of the 5-year plan. The revision of a 5-year plan is a large piece of work. Mr Buckley advised that he is trying to raise awareness of the importance of a 5-year plan and this is being moved forward to a 3-year plan in the interim. Mr Buckley advised that the key elements of this work starts in April with the MSLT (MAT Senior Leadership Team). At the next Trust Board meeting, which will follow the committees, we will need to agree the headings of the Strategic Plan. Clerk to add to the agenda.</p> <p>h) A Trustee queried the capacity of the team to enable them to revise the MAT Strategic Plan and there was a concern for the health and wellbeing of the central business team. Mr Buckley advised that the team will be working on this over the next</p>	<p>Action: Clerk</p> <p>Action: D Buckley</p>

<p>18 months which is realistic and will be measured in stages. A Trustee noted that we do need to refresh the Trust Boards view on the plan and it might be an opportunity for the Trustees, MSLT and Chairs to come together for an early discussion on priorities when the draft document is ready. It was agreed that this would strengthen the relationships between key personal.</p> <p>i) It was discussed that Mr Stevens will contact Mr Newton Chance and agree a letter to be sent to the Headteachers to acknowledge and thank them for their hard work and commitment this year.</p>	<p>Action: C Stevens/R Newton Chance</p>
<p>M12. Items from Chair – feedback from Trustees about changes to the Scheme of Delegation</p> <p>d) A Trustee noted that there are some issues with page numbers and this will need to be updated on the contents table. Clerk to amend.</p>	<p>Action: Clerk</p>