



TRUST BOARD

Minutes of a Virtual Meeting of the Trust Board of South East Cornwall Multi Academy Regional Trust held on Tuesday 30th March 2021 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	Yes
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**

17. **Welcome**
The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.
18. **Apologies for Absence**
Mrs Lawson is still on maternity leave which had been agreed at her appointment. Mr Crisp had a conflict of meetings and so had sent his apologies in advance which was received and accepted by the committee.
19. **Declaration of Business or Pecuniary Interest and Academy-related parties - update on any changes since completion of written declaration**
None.
20. **Approval of the minutes of the previous meeting held on 10th December 2020**
The minutes of the meeting held on 10th December 2020, having been circulated in advance, were agreed as an accurate record and will be signed.
21. **Progress of action points and matters arising**
 - 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 read the document so they are clear on their responsibilities on safeguarding. 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.
Update: The Clerk advised that the majority of Trustees had confirmed that they had read and understood KCSIE by email. Mr Stevens had not received any questions from Trustees.
 - 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.
Update: The Clerk as requested, has provided a summary of the key points for the Trust Board at the

end of the committee meetings minutes and it was considered this was sufficient with no need for further narrative. A Trustee suggested that the summary table is put at the start of the minutes in future.

Action: Clerk

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.

Update: Complete. Mr Stevens added that a letter regarding Safer Recruitment training has been circulated to the Chairs of Governors and Mr Stevens advised that he will be providing safeguarding training videos for governors and Trustees.

M8. CEO Verbal Update – For information including strategic planning issues and update on Domestic Abuse stats

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.

Update: On this agenda.

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.

Update: On this agenda.

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.

Update: Complete.

M12. Items from Chair – feedback from Trustees about changes to the Scheme of Delegation

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.

Update: On this agenda.

22. Election of Chair and Vice Chair of the Trust Board – Nominations to be emailed in advance

Discuss Academy Trust Chair suitability checks and succession planning

a) Mr Newton Chance was nominated for Chair which as the only nomination, he accepted. Mr Stevens was nominated as Vice Chair, which as the only nomination, he accepted. Trustees were in unanimous agreement to both nominations.

b) The Chair discussed his term of office with Trustees and Mr Stevens advised that he would be unable to consider the Chairs position in the future. It was agreed that any further appointments for Trustees would need to carefully consider succession planning.

c) The Chair advised that he has been in contact with the appropriate organisation regarding suitability checks.

d) The Chair apologised that communication about the resignation of Mr Marshall and Mrs Lawson's maternity leave had not been more widely circulated. The Chair advised that it is still proving difficult to recruit a Trustee for the compliance role. It was discussed that Dr Brownlow will move to community but we need to recruit to HR Trustee first. The Trust Board still needs to

recruit an Audit/Compliance Trustee and Trustees also need to take into account diversity of the Board. The Chair asked for Trustees to look at potential Trustees from local networks. **A Trustee asked what adverts and services are used for recruiting Trustees.** The Clerk advised that Inspiring Governance and Governors for Schools, amongst others are used and she has also tried mail shots to local businesses but there has been little interest. **A Trustee asked if it was possible to recruit from the LGCs (Local Governing Committees).** The Chair advised that current guidance recommends a degree of separation between the Trust Board and LGCs, so while not ruling this out, it was not the preferred option.

Mr Crisp joined the meeting at 17.55

- e) A Trustee noted that Academy Ambassadors would be useful to try for recruitment and it was noted that success can be in part due to the location of the Trust. Dr Brownlow suggested a possible lead and Trustees agreed for her to contact and discuss further.

Action: S Brownlow

23. Reports and Recommendations from Committees

a) People and Remuneration (confidential) 23-02-2021

Dr Brownlow noted the key points from the People Committee meeting; health and wellbeing needs to be more explicit in the MAT Strategic Plan; the Risk Register was reviewed and risks were allocated to the Learning Committee and the Remuneration ToR (Terms of Reference) needs to be updated.

b) Resources 03-03-2021

Mr Cook advised that the Resources ToR were reviewed with one minor recommended change which relates to GDPR and Mr Newton Chance will make the necessary changes. It was explained that the Period 6 Management accounts have been circulated. Mr Cook noted that catering costs are a concern along with supply teacher costs and cleaning but these are being managed. Budgeting working is underway and LGCS will be reviewing drafts budgets at their next meeting. A H&S and Premises update was provided by Mr Green and progress is being made in putting systems in place. The Annual Accounts Return was submitted on time and the insurance provision is being reviewed. The ICT project remains a focus and progress is ongoing. Policies were reviewed and are ready for recommendation to the Trust Board.

c) Audit and Risk 03-03-2021

Mr Piper explained that this was a straight forward meeting where check lists were reviewed and it was demonstrated that we are compliant. BCPs (Business Continuity Plans) are being reviewed in the June meeting. The Risk Register was also reviewed.

- d) The Chair added that in term of compliance, making returns on time and balancing the books is a tribute to the team and Trustees noted their hard work and congratulated the Team. It was noted that there is a substantial amount of challenge in the Resources meeting minutes.

- e) Mr Buckley added that we are moving towards a Trust wide provision for ICT with a central budget and a central team with agreement to a five year rolling programme. MSLT (MAT Senior Leadership Team) are in the final stages of agreement. There has been an ICT team restructure and training has been provided. The aim now is that from sept, we will have a trust wide rolling programme.

f) Learning 01-03-2021

Mr Crisp advised that the committee had reviewed the Risk Register and mitigations were agreed. The Committee will be having a further discussion on exams results for 2021 at their next meeting. Remote learning at Looe was discussed at length.

24. Centre Assessed Grades – Dan Buckley

Update and discuss appeals process

- a) Mr Buckley advised that the MSLT engaged in the process to agree the centre assessed grades

policy a few weeks ago. Mr Buckley summarised the process which has been used to draft the policy and which was then circulated for feedback which has been helpful to build a clear understanding of the process by staff, governors and Trustees. Further guidance was released on Friday, which confirmed that assumptions made were correct and no significant changes have been needed, therefore the Trust has been able to maintain the agreed process and subsequent to additional guidance tomorrow, a letter will be sent out to parents.

- b) Mr Buckley advised that time tables are being put into place. The final policy document will need to go to the exam board by 30th April. This policy will need to be ready by the end of the week and submitted ahead of the deadline so that if any further changes are required, there is time to do so.
- c) **A Trustee asked if there are any anticipated problems.** Mr Buckley advised that we need to ensure that parents have realistic expectations. Schools are not able to tell them expected grades and there is a risk of malpractice if we were to advise the predicted grades. Mr Buckley explained that the number of appeals is expected to be high and schools are required to keep a record of parents who are found to be putting pressure on schools. One other concern is ranking which is being used although we cannot share ranking due to GDPR. Mr Buckley advised that a child's potential needs to be taken into consideration for exam grading but guidance suggests that without evidence, the child cannot receive a higher grade despite there being significant impact of lockdown and so this puts pressure on teachers to find the evidence needed.
- d) **A Trustee queried the Trust wide academic reports for students and asked if this a predictive grade.** Mr Buckley advised that only previously published grades can be used and this is being used across the Trust. **A Trustee asked if there is a contingency plan for vulnerable children and the evidence they need within the deadlines.** Mr Buckley advised that there is a plan in place and some students might be required to work right up to the deadlines and will need to be signed off by teachers first.
- e) **A Trustee noted concern about the requirement of evidence and not being able to make judgements and suggested that we have a commitment to do everything thing we can to help generate the evidence needed and we should be able to report the impact of this.** Mr Buckley advised that the guidance is increasingly requesting that for most of the assessments, the whole cohort will have to sit the same assessment where possible. This presents a problem in how we use historic work that may have not been taken under these conditions. The MSLT have considered how we can reduce the number of new assessments and marking workload but have not been able to suggest a possible solution to this yet. Mr Buckley advised that there is a concern about the amount of work that teachers are doing for this so we are taking a measured approach that Heads of Departments will choose the assessments and we need to find ways round this to ensure that workloads don't increase.
- f) **A Trustee queried the appeals process and asked if it will be proportionate and fair.** Mr Buckley explained that the published appeals process has been circulated to parents and schools are waiting for a further update. There need to be measures in place to track admin errors and we need to ensure that the process was applied fairly. The expectation is that schools will need to deal with the first line of complaints and we are waiting for confirmation for stage 2 appeals and the cost of these.
- g) **A Trustee noted the pressure on the children and the effect on their mental health is a concern. A Trustee asked if we are taking on private candidates.** Mr Buckley explained that normally at this stage, if a child was at risk of failure we would remove their entry and it is only if parents wish them to enter privately that we allow it. This year we only have 9 students at risk of a U and so we believe that we can manage to obtain enough evidence for them and so we are not using the option of private entry of candidates.

25. CEO update for information

Including Civic Leadership, Team Around the School, CACE and primary school improvement

- a) Mr Buckley explained that there have been delays to development work due to Covid but there has been a real passion to restart work on the SDPs (School Development Plans) again. Work on the SDPs for September is starting but it is expected that the aims and priorities may in some cases be the same as last year.
- b) School improvement
Mr Buckley advised that the Trust has recruited Ann Bull as Primary School Improvement Lead and she is working with the primary schools two days a week and is already doing an excellent job.
- c) Mr Buckley advised that Jo Yeates has been recruited to an interim position at Saltash to raise achievement. Training is underway to enable her to be the School Improvement Lead for the three secondary schools. Leadership capacity at Saltash has significantly increased. Mr Buckley advised that there has been investment in leadership skills in the business management team at Saltash. Mr Buckley explained that strategic leadership is building.
- d) Team around the School (TAS)
Mr Buckley noted that he seriously considers the civil leadership role of the Trust and explained that this includes all children from pre-birth to employability. He has been working to bring together organisations under the umbrella of TAS. Mr Buckley explained that the TAS initiative is hoping to become the hub for services as it has been identified that there are currently gaps and weaknesses in the information being provided to families and schools. TAS is aiming to bring all the teams together around the three main towns. Everyone who has a stake in the town has been invited to be involved and there has been an extremely positive response to the need for the service.
- e) Mr Buckley advised that SMART is funding the admin and clerking for the first year but longer term, this will be rotated between the different organisations involved. The group will be using a single topic approach for discussion at each meeting, mental health and wellbeing being the first and we will be sharing intelligence on this. This data can then be collected from the meetings and the ultimate goal is to make this information available to the end user.
- f) **A Trustee asked if there is the danger that we might devote resources to such initiatives and stray from our core purpose of education.** Mr Buckley advised that each participant is not committing resources but our schools will be used as a resources although at no extra cost to the Trust. The students really want to be involved in local matters and want to have ownership over their communities and so they are also considered a resource.
- g) **A Trustee queried the impact to management time.** Mr Buckley advised that we have made the commitment to provide the admin but this is not a serious investment. Mr Buckley added that the vast majority of local support networks have been impacted by lockdown. The 2.5-year gap for disadvantaged children can be reduced by interventions earlier in children's lives and we will be providing a hub for the services that already exist and so the investment for this is minimal, but the potential benefits of encouraging wider support for children and their families is immense.
- h) **A Trustee noted that close working with local schools leads to growth of a Trust and asked to what extent this initiative might offer positive connections to other schools.** Mr Buckley advised that he is in contact with the local primary schools and has discussed the role that the community believes that we should have and this has then increased the reputation of the Trust. Trustees noted this is powerful in developing contacts within local communities. Bidding opportunities will also be discussed during these meetings.
- i) CACE Cornwall Association of Chief Executives
Mr Buckley explained that CACE was founded to provide a single forum for CEOs to come

together. The group is looking at common training routes and common systems so that we can work more collaboratively together. The use of the Triad system of professional development is being explored and so we have asked staff who would like to be involved in this approach to get the model operating.

26. **MAT Strategic Plan – Dan Buckley**

Update on process and agree headings

- a) Mr Buckley advised that the last year of the 5-year plan is next year. The aims for the last year of the 5-year plan are included in the pocket guide and SDPs will be aligned with these priorities. This approach has been agreed by the MSLT.
- b) Mr Buckley advised that the fifth year of the plan should always be ambitious. **A Trustee asked for clarification on Hart.** Mr Buckley explained that Hart is a scale of collaboration. SDPs all have Hart references in areas when there is a need to develop skills.
- c) **A Trustee queried the Early Career Framework (ECF) which has recently changed and noted that NQTs (Newly Qualified Teachers) have now been changed to ECTs (Early Career Teachers).** As this is a major change to how schools operate support for early career teachers the ECF should be reviewed by the People and Learning Committee to discuss the changes further. Clerk to add to agendas.

Action: Clerk
- d) Mr Buckley noted that the strategies are already agreed as they are in the MAT strategic plan. Trustees can send any further comments to Mr Buckley by email. Trustees noted that it should not be a local level approach and Mr Buckley advised that “local” as used here is defined as Cornwall rather than at school level.
- e) Trustees were content to approve as presented.

27. **Adoption of Policies**

- a) *Reviewed and recommended for approval by the Resources Committee:*
Capital Allocation policy
Charging and Remissions policy
Counter theft, fraud and corruption policy
Director and Governor Expenses policy
Donations policy and procedure – **A Trustee noted concern that there should be the ability to reject a donation on ethical grounds within the policy** so a wording change was suggested to include “and ethos”. The Chair agreed to revise the wording in the policy.

Action: R Newton Chance
- b) Financial Regulations procedures and policy
Financial Scheme of Delegation
Reserves & Investment policy
- c) **A Trustee noted that a definition of acronyms should be added to all policies.** It was suggested that acronyms are written in full the first time they are used.

Action: Clerk
- d) Trustees were in agreement with policies as proposed subject to the minor suggested changes.
- e) *Reviewed and recommended by Resources and People Committee*
HSW Statement
Trustees were in agreement with this policy as proposed

28. **Items from Chair for information**

Trustee vacancies, changes to structure of Trust Board, update on SoDA review

- a) Trustee vacancies and changes to the Trust Board had been discussed earlier in the meeting.
- b) SoDA (Scheme of Delegated Authority)
The Chair advised that Members have spent time revising their section of the SoDA. The

Governors Handbook has been derived from the SoDA and aims to provide further information and guidance for local governor roles. The Chair added that it is a working document and changes may be needed when required and added that Headteachers recruitment delegation still needs to be clarified within the document.

29. **Items from this meeting for report back to LGCs**

- a) Importance of the Centre Assessed Grades Policy to secondary LGCs.
- b) The importance of the Team Around the School work stream.
- c) The importance of the changes associated with Early Careers Framework.
- d) Thanks for all your good work in these very difficult times.

30. **Agreements made by email – For information**

Legal request for Chairs action – Jan 2021

Agreement of Lateral Flow Testing for primary colleagues – Jan 2021

Elected Home Education Consultation Notice for Liskeard and Looe – Feb 2021

Secondary options for Testing on pupils return on 8th March – 28-02-2021

Centre Assessed Grades Policy – Mr Buckley advised that this policy has been emailed to governors and Trustees for feedback which has resulted in only a minor revision. Trustees have therefore agreed the process and await circulation of the final policy.

Action: D Buckley

31. **Trewidland Local Governing Committee**

- a) Update on Trewidland’s Local Governing Committee.
See confidential appendix.

32. **Date of next meetings**

20-07-2021 at 5.30 pm.

The meeting closed at 19.22.

Action Summary	
<p>M21. Progress of action points and matters arising</p> <p>M6. Reports and Recommendations from Committees</p> <p>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> <p><i>Update: The Clerk as requested, has provided a summary of the key points for the Trust Board at the end of the committee meetings minutes and it was considered this was sufficient with no need for further narrative. A Trustee suggested that the summary table is put at the start of the minutes in future.</i></p>	<p>Action: Clerk</p>
<p>M22. Election of Chair and Vice Chair of the Trust</p> <p>e) A Trustee noted that Academy Ambassadors would be useful to try for recruitment and it was noted that success can be in part due to the location of the Trust. Dr Brownlow suggested a possible lead and Trustees agreed for her to contact and discuss further.</p>	<p>Action: S Brownlow</p>
<p>M26. MAT Strategic Plan – Dan Buckley</p> <p>c) A Trustee queried the Early Career Framework (ECF) which has recently changed and noted that NQTs (Newly Qualified Teachers) have now been changed to ECTs (Early Career Teachers). As this is a major change to how schools operate support for early career teachers the ECF should be reviewed by the People and Learning Committee to discuss the</p>	<p>Action: Clerk</p>

changes further. Clerk to add to agendas.	
<p>M27. Adoption of Policies</p> <p>a) Donations policy and procedure – A Trustee noted concern that there should be the ability to reject a donation on ethical grounds within the policy so a wording change was suggested to include “and ethos”. The Chair agreed to revise the wording in the policy.</p> <p>c) A Trustee noted that a definition of acronyms should be added to all policies. It was suggested that acronyms are written in full the first time they are used.</p>	<p>Action: R Newton Chance</p> <p>Action: Clerk</p>
<p>M30. Agreements made by email – For information</p> <p>Centre Assessed Grades Policy – Mr Buckley advised that this policy has been emailed to governors and Trustees for feedback which has resulted in only a minor revision. Trustees have therefore agreed the process and await circulation of the final policy.</p>	<p>Action: D Buckley</p>