

Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Directors
held at St Keverne School
on Wednesday 27th January, 2016 at 6.00 p.m.
MINUTES

Item	To be actioned by
<p>1. Present JD JH TH PM WP PR PS CS SBM In attendance: The Revd Simon Cade - Diocesan Director of Education</p>	
<p>2. Apologies CH MM The Board accepted the above apologies</p>	
<p>3. The Meeting had been convened as a Strategy Meeting with a single item agenda to discuss the recommendations made in the final report from Mark Lees. The report was tabled at this meeting in the interests of confidentiality. Responding to a question about what the Board was hoping to achieve from this meeting, the chair replied that it was in order to find a strategy for the way forward.</p>	
<p>4. HT report on progress within the first two recommendations HT tabled a response document of the Keskowethyans MAT Leadership team to the recommendations made in the final report, stating that it had given the Board a focus to tighten up on in some areas. The document is attached to these minutes. The HT went through the points one by one responding to questions accordingly. Responding to the question whether the process which we undertook and the recommendations that were made in the report have helped to do things differently, the HT replied that the process has been very beneficial and made us question what we do. There was some discussion whether the recommendations of the report could be shared with the wider MAT community; this will be for the Board to decide at its next meeting. It was certainly thought that the HTs paper could be shared at this stage, without the third recommendation.</p>	Chair
<p>5. Possibilities outlined in the third recommendation, followed by discussion. The third recommendation in the report suggested two school closures within the next two years, moving to one single Academy from September 2018. For this part of the discussion, the Revd Simon Cade, assisted in the Board's thinking with regard to the future. He urged the Board not to lose sight of its fundamental purpose as a MAT - is the fundamental purpose is to keep the sites open as schools, local communities happy and resourced or best outcomes for the children? The directors indicated that 'best outcomes for the children' was their fundamental purpose, to which Simon Cade added that despite the fact that the next couple of years might be difficult that must always be the focus. However just the financial reality of cash flow and reserves indicates there is a point where you will stop being a going concern. There will be a point where you are unsustainable in the current model. There is considerable political will to stop small school closure, but at the very soonest any legislation is a couple of years away and might be too late for the MAT, so probably not wise just to rely on that. Some of the things that Mark has recommended are good but you are currently not in a position to implement them, but if you had a different structure you might be able to. Reference the present situation on the Lizard, the Co-operative trust and almost all the other schools on the Lizard are moving towards forming a MAT, one large secondary school a number of primary schools – 18 in all and that doesn't include us. May or may not include the other large church school in Helston, but in any event the diocese</p>	

<p>expect to be a formal partner in the MAT. I've encouraged them to have a conversation with you about the whole education economy on the Lizard, but that complicates things for them because it's hard enough already without talking to us as well.</p> <p>Another thing which is a reality is that there are other MATs across Cornwall which you could join, but just joining a bigger MAT won't solve this problem. There are really significant fundamental issues that wouldn't be solved, e.g. really tiny year groups in small schools. Any MAT should be big enough to be self-sustaining.</p> <p>Revisiting the idea to build a new school and in the light of previous understanding that the DfE would not consider such low numbers of pupils, c200 at present, the question was asked whether there was a figure that would be considered. The response was that there are ways round the problem because presumably you would be selling buildings, depending on where you are going to site it you may not have to buy new land. The Commissioner would know that there has to be a school somewhere in this area. However there were no guarantees that all the schools would join, and also, on consultation, parents might prefer to stay with their small schools.</p> <p>The alternative is to find a MAT that you feel you could work with and that has capacity, but underlying all of that is the uncertain question of that potentially making us a single larger entity, but in the end even if we do that I'm not sure we are viable. One particular thing being part of being a bigger MAT is simply about having a business management that is more structured and works well in resourcing funding that might be available. You're not going to increase your TA budget, but there would be training you might want to access. There are lists of MATS available; Browne Jacobson could help with finding a match.</p> <p>It was suggested that the Board might not have the skills and capacity need to move forward with change. The Board has acknowledged that some significant change needs to be made and now needs to review whether it has the capacity to create and implement the change. A skills audit gives a systematic way to address this, working through the key roles of the Board it will facilitate a decision as to how effective the Board is. It was suggested that an appropriate challenge would be to have something worked through by Easter. The diocese can help you with this. It is possible to get people on board to help whatever the challenge.</p> <p>Discussion ensued with regard to the Boards ability to move things forward and whether there was a will to formally move on to engage with other schools. It was agreed that the Board was keen to be part of the wider conversation about education on the Lizard. It was acknowledged that there was a strong argument for doing that either in a formal academy structure or not, but it has got to be the benefit for the children.</p> <p>Reverting to the recommendation with regard to closing schools, Members commented that from the outset of converting to an Academy the aim was to the keep the schools in the communities, but at the time we knew it would probably only buy us a couple of years. Despite this one member emphatically made the point that this MAT did not want to be the first to close a school in Cornwall. It was evident from the members present that there was no will to close any schools at this stage.</p> <p>The Chair of Finance stated that we know what the projection is for the next two years, which is at the very best we stay as we are. He added that he didn't feel we were as close to making closure decisions as it would appear and questioned the need for the urgency in making significant decisions at this stage. Other members generally agreed, but acknowledged the need to do something!</p> <p>Following more discussion reference all of the foregoing, the Board agreed the strategy listed below, the chair thanked Simon Cade for his advice and support and the meeting closed at 8.30 p.m.</p>	<p>Chair</p>
<p>6. Outline strategy to be agreed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participation in a skills audit and further exploratory discussions with potential MAT partners. After the review there will be a need to have recruited more Board members very rapidly Be in a position to be strong to make difficult decisions and to meet some milestones by Easter. Set a date in the diary by which to prepare a plan. Prepare to present the plan to the Regional Schools Commissioner and Linda Pettit (DfE) in the summer. 	

<p>7. Group from MAT to be formed to take proposals further. This will be reviewed following the skills audit and further discussions.</p>	
<p>8. Date of next meeting To be agreed</p>	

Schedule of Action Points

Check with the Board if the recommendations in the Mark Lees report can be shared with the MAT wider community.	Chair
Request a list of local MATs from Browne Jacobson	Chair
Participate in a skills audit	Board
Recruit new members	Board
Set a date in the diary by which to prepare a plan	Board
Prepare to present the plan to the regional commissioner and Linda Petit (DfE) in the Summer	Board

Signed _____
Signed by the Chair – Pam Miller

Date _____