

**Annual General Meeting**

**Minutes: 22 July 2019  
21/2019**

**Present:**

Members: The Ven Douglas Dettmer  
Dr Gillian Golder  
The Revd Prebendary Julian Ould

Trustees: Isabel Cherrett (in the chair) Peter Bethel  
Nicola Dunford Mike Fisher  
Roy Gillard Jason Hayward-Jones  
Cheryl Mathieson Fiona Walters

Local Board Chair: Anna Neville

In attendance: Becky Ames - Clerk  
Matt Matthew – Trust Business Manager  
Sue Howard – HR Officer

On behalf of the Board, the Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**Apologies:** Lynda Cooper, Chair of the Newton & Teign Local Board  
Jo Carter, Chair of the Woodleigh Local Board

1. **Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 16 July 2018 were approved and signed as an accurate record.

2. **Matters arising**

Item 4 – Age range at Yeoford has been extended for children aged 3 – 11, the Chair reported the pre-school has been successful.

3. **Appointment of the Trust's External Audit Service**

The Trustees' Audit Committee had conducted a tender exercise for the External Audit Service during 2017-18 and the Members had approved the recommendation to appoint Bishop Fleming LLP for a five year period to 2023-24, subject to a break clause in 2022-23.

In accordance with the Articles of Association, the appointment is confirmed annually. The Board of Trustees recommends that Bishop Fleming LLP be appointed to carry out the External Audit for 2018-19, the results of which must be with the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) by 31 December 2019 and subsequently with Companies House. All Members and Trustees agreed.

4. **Report of the Chair of the Board of Directors for 2018 - 2019**

The Chair provided a comprehensive report that was made available prior to the meeting,

- Griffin Accountants – The Chair reported that there is now much more emphasis on internal auditing and asked that the Audit Committee map out the audit plan for Griffin Accountancy for 2019-20 to provide the assurance on internal controls required by the recently published Academies Financial Handbook.
- The Chair reported that Jo Carter had been elected as the Chair of the Woodleigh Board which was welcomed by all.

- Douglas Dettmer challenged the Trustees about what the MAT's key priorities are for the next year 2019-20. The Chair questioned the position of the Government's Education budget given the pending withdrawal from the European Union, change of Prime Minister, potential for a General Election and unrest in the Middle East. She confirmed the focus remained on the financial stability of the Trust. Ms Dunford (CEO) reported that the Trust continues to look for more schools to join. Following the Board's detailed interrogation of the budget for 2019-20 and financial forecasts for the following three years, the Government had announced a 2.75 per cent pay increase for teachers 0.75 per cent the assumption made within the MAT sector. Whilst this was well deserved, there was a lack of clarity about the extent to which this would be funded, including the Employers' Contributions to the Teachers' Pension Scheme ((TPS).
- The CEO reported that the pupil numbers are currently meeting the Published Admission Number (PAN) and that the provisions of Early Years have had a positive effect on maintaining pupil numbers.
- Dr Golder challenged the CEO about where we may find other schools to join the MAT, The CEO informed the Board that we are currently working alongside one slightly larger school and are building a very positive relationship with them. From the initial six schools, the Trust had increased to nine with a further three in Management Partnership, scheduled to convert on 1 October 2019.
- Anna Neville was invited by the Chair to give her opinion on how the MAT was operating from the Local Board context and potential expansion. She confirmed that she is reassured that each of the schools within the MAT have maintained their individual characteristics, something that is key to the MAT and parents. She recognised the importance for growth in order to help sustain the future of the MAT.
- The CEO reported that there is greater emphasis on the importance on Local Governors noted in the Academies Financial Handbook and with OFSTED.
- Dr Golder asked the Board about its recent OFSTED results and whether the Link was prepared for the new OFSTED framework for Academies. The CEO advised that we are working alongside all of our schools to ensure that we can be successful with future inspections.

## 5. **Governance**

### 5.1 **Members**

It was noted that the Bearnas Educational Trust must continue to source a suitable representative to be appointed as the fifth Member of the Link Academy Trust, following Mrs Short's resignation in 2018. The CEO and Ven Douglas Dettmer agreed to follow this up outside the meeting.

The Chair reported Julian Ould is due to retire in March 2020. The Archdeacon agreed to take this up with the Exeter Diocese Education Network (EDEN) to consider the options for appointing a successor.

### 5.2 **Trustees/Directors**

#### 5.2.1 **Resignations**

The Members formally noted the resignations of Miss Tracey Cleverly and Mr Simon Niles, both Foundation Directors

#### 5.2.2 **Appointments**

The Chair and Mr Gillard had met with Ms Jane Collings, currently a Governor at Broadhempston in early July. The Board of Trustees had agreed to the recommendation that she be appointed as a Foundation Director/Trustee, given her

wide experience in the education sector and as a National Governance Leader with Babcock. A copy of her Expression of Interest had been circulated and the Chair quoted from the two references which had been followed up.

The Members formally approved the appointment of Ms Collings which would now be submitted to EDEN for consideration.

Mr Hayward Jones asked whether the Trust's Board is currently at full capacity Mrs Cherrett explained the requirement to maintain a majority of Foundation Trustees up to eight Foundation and six Non-Foundation plus the CEO to give a maximum of 15. Ideally, the next appointment should be a Foundation Director and the Board would agree on the areas of expertise to be sought. Isabel Cherrett confirmed that she will not be seeking a full second term in March 2020 but has agreed to continue working as the Chair until December 2020 to provide sufficient time to seek another Chair. The Board of Trustees thanked Isabel Cherrett for this.

6. **Finance**

A copy of the Income and Expenditure Statement and of the Balance Sheet from the published accounts for 2017-18 had been circulated. The Members formally noted this. Mrs Cherrett added that the Members would receive a link to the 2018-19 accounts when these had been approved, as required by the Financial Handbook.

7. **Proposed changes to Funding Agreements**

The Members noted that the Village Pre-School at Cheriton Bishop will close in August 2019; the Trust will take over this provision and thus will be seeking an extension to the current age range. The Members welcomed this in recognition of the importance of growth and pupil numbers within our Academies.

8. **Election of Chair and Vice Chair of the Board of Directors**

The Clerk had received one nomination of Chair from Mr Roy Gillard for Mrs Isabel Cherrett and one nomination of Vice Chair from Cheryl Mathieson for Mr Jason Hayward Jones. Isabel Cherrett is appointed unopposed as Chair. Jason Hayward-Jones is appointed unopposed as Vice Chair.

9. **Any other business**

Dr Golder asked about the Link's relationship with the Teaching School Alliances. The CEO reported that we are currently working with the South West Teaching School Alliance plus others through connections with different schools.

10. **Date of next Annual General Meeting**

Monday, 20 July 2020 at 6.pm, Landscope School.

Mrs Cherrett thanked everyone for making the time to attend.

23 July 2019

BA/IJC