

BISHOP OTTER ACADEMY TRUST

Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 18th July 2022 at 9:30am

(Held via Zoom)

Present: Jenny Barnard-Langston (JBL) – Chair
Christine Bartley (CB)
Wendy Cooke (WC)
Trevor Cristin (TC)
David Etherton (DE)
Lesley Hurst (LH)
Martin Lloyd-Williams (MLW)
Stephen Paynter (SP)
Claire Rivers (CR)

Apologies: Matt Davis (MD)

(Members' comments / queries are denoted by ➤ followed by the query/comment written in italics)

1. Welcome and Opening Prayer

The Chair opened the meeting and TC started with prayer.

2. Declarations of interest

No new interests were declared.

3. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Matt Davis. SP apologised as he would have to attend a work meeting during this one.

4. Minutes of last meeting

Members reviewed the minutes of the meeting held on 23rd June 2022 and approved that they were a true reflection of the meeting.

• **Minutes approved**

Clerk

5. Matters arising (not covered elsewhere on the agenda)

There were no matters arising.

6. CEO Report

DE presented the report. TC asked if future reports would be structured around strategic priorities once established and DE confirmed that they would be.

Points raised/to note:

2.2 Challenges / Key risks – DE had completed a number of self-evaluations and had had many useful conversations with trustees. Areas that required work had been identified and this all needed to be pulled together by the autumn. As an emerging trust, there was a significant amount to do for the autumn.

➤ *Growth and partnerships with the Diocese and other partners as well. It was essential to ensure we were inclusive, not exclusive.* DE – yes, this had been written before his meeting with CR. Individual plans for growth would have more detail added.

2.3 Strategic Priorities: Focus areas and progress

- *Pull together everything into one plan – need to distill self-evaluation as succinctly as possible for trustees. DE – been extremely thorough re self-evaluation but it was not appropriate to bring it all back to trustees, although trustees were welcome to delve deeper if they wished to do so. DE would include links to documents which trustees may find helpful. JBL agreed that the critical information that trustees needed had to be in a manageable format. DE was aware that there was a huge amount of information in this meeting – this would change over time as the trust became established.*
- *HR Update? The first pay roll had gone through successfully. Bishop Luffa and Every HR had supported us with HR issues. Contracts were in progress and just needed some final formatting.*
- *Do feel we need a strategic development day to identify strategic priorities and have a clearer focus so trustees can support and direct DE in the role. What is our USP? How do we present ourselves – need to be outward-looking and develop partnerships with others. Our communication strategy will inform that.*
- *The 7 priorities could be simplified. It would be difficult to regularly monitor all 7 areas so they could be grouped into Vision, School Effectiveness, Fit for Purpose with fewer bigger action plans. Need to package things so dealing with distinct areas. Brevity and clarity of expression is key. JBL – to make the workload manageable and have a clear direction, could mesh the 7 together. Trustees need to be able to make the decisions about how they want the CEO to work towards these things – the expectations of CEO must be clear and the way to do that is to determine what this is at a strategy day so don't do it as we go along.*
- *Could we have dates against objectives, a timeframe? BOAT is in the setting up phase but also the running phase.*
- *2.3 and 2.4 could be merged into something more coherent as there is an overlap.*

Strategy Day: Friday 23rd September 2-5pm – Church House as a venue?

• Strategy Day – Friday 23rd September 2-5pm at Church House (tbc)

3 Finance & Operations

It was good to have a carry forward to help with sustainability. Finance papers were on the agenda for later in the meeting. Few simple KPIs to start with. JBL had met with the Chair at STNM, they were anxious about ensuring finances matched their expectations about not carrying DE. It was appropriate to keep these KPIs as a framework and these may develop once we have our strategic day.

- *Operational issues: JBL – excellent that the pay roll went through, please keep SP up to date.*
- *When do we set a balanced budget? DE – this is a challenge, particularly for subsequent years – it needed approval today.*

4 School Trust Improvement

Looking at MAT assurance framework – there were many things that we needed to get in place.

- *Feel need more detail on results than just %. DE – B&H had quite a good one-page data sheet per school which AL was currently collating for STNM.*
- *Need to know what action being taken to get those % up. TC recognized that this was just the headline data but it would be useful to see the RWM aggregate – was there a challenge due to writing scores? DE – Yes. Do need to set expectation about what want from STNM – we will want them to be a showcase for BOAT. To a certain extent, would expect them to be above average, which will be what draws other schools in.*
- *Did Ruth C write a report? DE – Yes and he was happy to circulate the full report. JBL noted that trustees should see the full report so they can see how they need to support the school.*

5 HR

CR – a 'People' strategy would cover so many areas including career development, support, flexible working, inclusivity – a complete overview. DE noted it was important how we articulated the HR strategy.

External support – the Performance Management of the CEO could be after the strategy day. Also need to set targets for AL which should be done very soon as teachers' targets often flowed from his targets.

Pension

- *Not TUPEd over when become an academy but the recommendations were to follow WSCC. If trustees agreed to transfer this over, then can get this in place.*

- Things want to opt in or opt out – recommend that follow WS.
- If a member of staff requests to have early / flexible retirement – that comes to trustees for a decision. Likelihood of someone meeting the criteria was very low and could only be one person a year. Could look at costings for an individual on compassionate grounds. Have been through with HR / Pension expert, follow WS guideline, open to request on compassionate/medical grounds. This is just for support staff.

JBL – given that TUPE'd over from WS, recommend that pension rights should be in line with WS. All trustees agreed.

4.4 HR Checklist – safer recruitment and safeguard training for trustees. CB to follow up and how to access training. Identify with each trustee what training they have. All must have safeguarding training.

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| • CB to send out a survey to establish what training trustees currently have and what they need. | CB |
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6 Governance – JBL noted there was a difference between LGB and trustee boards. The Chair of Governors understands this. It was vital to ensure communication was kept open with them.

7 External partnerships – the LA was aware that DE was available for secondment. If something came up, he would consult with trustees. If it involved a church school, TC and LH would be involved anyway. TC – need to be flexible enough to move quickly. CB – if looking at associate schools, need to balance capacity for supporting schools who want to join. Need to be mindful of long-term contracts.

Sussex Coast Schools Alliance – STNM had strong links with the alliance for a number of years. No formal link at Trust level. JBL chairs the meetings and CR is a member. Not a conflict of interest as this was a resource available to all schools across Sussex and wider offering Leadership Development, support for ECT. CR – really good time for staff development.

TCAF – some costs have been covered by this grant. In year 2, if BOAT did not grow, would have to spend more on licences etc, DE less time, so STNM would incur costs of for DE's time. STNM SLT would then have to have more contact time. The worst case was no growth. STNM was in a fortunate financial position but this was not sustainable. Growth and financial sustainability was a long term issue and needed careful consideration. It was important to be realistic and, if the trust did not grow, need to consider whether merge with another trust. SP added that the long-term impact should be taken into account when making any decisions – there was only a certain amount of money and this should be spent on essentials.

There would be some savings due to decreased LA costs, 5% to BOAT; the budget did balance but the main issue for the school was the SLT – if the trust could not afford to employ DE then STNM would pick up the cost. MLB noted that utility increases were huge and we had to be mindful of that.

Trustees noted that this was an excellent report for starting to enable Trustees to take ownership of their roles. Really constructive report to start from.

7. Policies

- Schedule of Policies*
- Charging and remissions*
- Competitive tendering*
- Investment*
- Early Career Teachers*
- Admissions*
- Privacy Notices: Alumni; Job Applicants; Parents & Carers; Pupils; Visitors Additional Privacy Notices*
- Employer Discretions (Pension)*
- Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy*

Trustees approved all the policies above.

8. Finance update

a. *Budget*

There were two budgets – one with little growth to start with and one with growth. Need to be proactive. All trustees approved the budget for 22/23 as presented.

TC thanked WDC for her work as a lot had fallen on her shoulders.

b. *TCAF spend breakdown*: this has been done, just completing final payments.

• **Budget approved.**

CEO

9. Risk Register

DE had done further work on this incorporating LH's comments – circulated for info.

➤ It was very long – could it be simplified ie merge a few documents? DE – the headings were in line with DfE headings, Charity Commission and ESFA which was why it was quite long and detailed. DE would also work with the school to update their register.

This was a live document. The school part could sit with FARC – all agreed.

• **Risk Register approved.**

• **STNM risk register to sit under FARC.**

CEO

10. Communication Strategy

Hone key things that other schools will be most interested in when considering joining the trust. Important to look at this as part of the strategy session. It would be useful for someone to review our strategy ie marketing, website etc.

No funding available at the moment so need to see what can do.

➤ *DE's experience working with other schools was a positive thing which the trust could make more of. There was some money available for a behavioural project which could do in partnership with other schools.*

➤ *Might consider having a STNM rep as a trustee.*

CB would further develop the strategy so can have a document. CR also had some useful comments to add. It could then be on the agenda for the strategy day.

➤ *TC – the Diocese used someone local for PR work – he and Lel will look into costs of this.*

➤ *DE – could survey groups of people eg parents as to why they chose St Nic's*

• **Update Communication Strategy ready for Strategy Day**

CB

11. Board of Trustees

a. *Trustee Development training*: the Trustee Development training session had been scheduled for Monday 10th October 2022, 10:00 am – 1:00 pm. All trustees confirmed availability.

b. *Safeguarding Training (1st September)*: Trustees were invited to attend the safeguarding training taking place on Thursday, 1st September 2022 at St Nicolas and St Mary's. MLW to do a 10min input at 9am.

c. *FARC annual planner*: the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee (FARC) annual planner was presented to trustees for consideration. 22nd November – perhaps move meeting to earlier as deadlines for submissions were December and accounts had to be signed off and approved by Board. SP and Lel to liaise to see if need to move the meeting.

12. AOB

- Glossary of acronyms – circulate to all
- Scout Hut lease – corner of StNM site: bill come through. Governors would pay for it out of their funds.

There was no other items of business.

13. Date of next BOAT meetings

The next trustee meeting is scheduled for Monday, 3rd October 2022, 6pm – 8pm at St Nicolas & St Mary's.

- a. CEO PM – week after Strategy session ie after 23rd September

• *CBy to sort out dates for performance management.*

CBy

- b. *2022/23 Planner*

The 2022/23 Board and Committee meeting dates, times and venues were noted. Trustees discussed the timing of the FARC meetings and agreed to have them in the evening 6-8pm.

If unable to attend any meetings, please send in apologies and look at the papers to see if you want anything raised.

The Chair closed the meeting at 11.25am.

X



Jenny Barnard-Langston
Chair of Trustees