



ACES ACADEMIES TRUST

Minutes of the Board of Trustees Meeting held on Tuesday 21st April at 5.15 pm
Via Zoom

Present:

Directors

Mr Brian Message (BM), Chair
Mr Paul Fenney (PF)
Mr Cliff Fluet (CF)
Mr Gary Weston (GW)
Mr Andy Rankine (AR)
Mr Ian Phillips (IP)
Mr Bev Curtis (BJC)

In attendance

Mr Andrew Goulding (AEG), CEO
Mr Dave McMillan (DRM), Finance Director
Mrs Debbie Warner (DW), Clerk

1.	Apologies for absence
	There were no apologies for absence.
2.	Declarations of interest
	No conflicts of interest were declared.
3.	Minutes of meeting of 09/12/19
	Minutes of meeting were considered to be an accurate record of proceedings.
4.	Matters Arising
	The Chair advised the key governance points from the recent Members Meeting. It was unanimously agreed by the Members to increase the number of Trustees to the Board. They also identified that the sub-committees now need to be fully implemented and noted that Standards & Innovation, Audit & Risk and HR committees were yet to meet. Members would also like to see better rotation of the Trustees.
4.	CEO Report (AEG)
	The CEO's report had been made available to the Trustees ahead of the meeting. Key points from the report were discussed: Acceptance from the Board is required to proceed with acquiring the two schools within OLT. Recent due diligence was discussed amongst Trustees. Trustees asked questions regarding the proposed acquisition. Action: <u>The Board to meet (via Zoom) in 2 weeks' time to receive an update from the CEO regarding advice from ACES solicitors and OLT's progress on negotiations on the lease – CLERK</u> The CEO advised the Board that he had received no clear indication of when schools were likely to re-open due to COVID-19 pandemic. Q: How is education being delivered? A: The CEO advised that the Head of Hinchingsbrooke School and the Head of Cromwell are sending regular communications out to parents. At HBK, Heads of Departments had met to discuss how to deliver examination grades for GCSE and A level. Cromwell Academy have set up a Covid-19 Facebook page for parents, pupils and staff to showcase children's work. There are some heart-warming posts and a positive spirit. Q: Have surveys been sent to parents to gauge how schools are performing? A: The CEO was aware that Hinchingsbrooke had sent out surveys but had been specific in nature and agreed that a more generic survey would be appropriate. Action: <u>Liaise with Principal of Hinchingsbrooke School regarding school surveys - CEO</u> A Trustee acknowledged the good communication that had been sent to parents of Hinchingsbrooke School.
5.	Finance Report (DRM/PF)

	<p>The Finance Director advised that budgets in some areas are not being spent due to school closure. The commercial aspect of Hinchingsbrooke School, namely HSSP, is funded by the government and staff have therefore been retained. Kids Club at Cromwell and HBK Leisure, which are funded by parental payments, have been furloughed. The Trust has agreed to pay furloughed staff a 20% top up. He estimated that, due to the temporary closure, Kids Club will lose about £15,000 this year.</p> <p>Q: A Trustee enquired whether the cost of the 20% top up to furloughed staff was necessary?</p> <p>A: The CEO and Finance Director felt that it was morally the right thing to do.</p> <p>Q: A Trustee asked what the cost will be to the Trust as hospitality businesses are likely to be the last type of business to re-open.</p> <p>A: The Finance Director has assumed in his calculation that these staff will be furloughed until August but should government initiative cease in June, the cost is likely to be in the region of £23,000 for HBK Leisure and £15,000 for Kids Club. It was acknowledged that this would be more significant to the Trust.</p> <p>It was agreed that the Trustees should monitor this and receive regular updates.</p> <p>Action:</p> <p><u>Provide Trustees with information on cost of furloughed staff – FINANCE DIRECTOR</u></p> <p><u>Monitor the cost of furloughed staff up until August 2020 - TRUSTEES</u></p> <p>Q: Will money be refunded for all trips?</p> <p>A: Some trips have already been rescheduled and money has been refunded for other trips, although not the deposit. The Risk Protection Agency will cover deposit money which is currently being claimed for.</p> <p>It was noted that business continuity insurance does not cover HBK Leisure.</p> <p>The Chair referred to the forecast showing a profit, including furloughing. The Finance Director explained that unspent budgets for the Site team, IT team and other departments, have gone back into the budget and have been added into the forecast thus bolstering the reserves.</p> <p>Q: When do we receive detailed forecasts for next year?</p> <p>A: Budget forecasts have been cancelled this year together with school summer census.</p> <p>The Finance Director has started work with Cromwell Academy regarding working on next year's forecast and some preliminary work has also been done with OLT. Trustees will receive a first cut of the budget before it is submitted to ESFA in July 2020.</p> <p>Q: Is there a redemption in the exam fees?</p> <p>A: There will be no redemption in exam fees and this is the same for the cleaning contract up until the end of the year. Chartwells contract, however, is at nil cost to the Trust.</p>
6.	<p>MAT Development and Strategy</p>
	<p>The CEO had prepared a strategy document outlining possibilities for the future of the Trust for Trustees to consider and this was discussed in detail.</p> <p>It was agreed that the CEO and Chair will discuss further outside the meeting.</p> <p>It was agreed that, given the extraordinary circumstances, an additional Board meeting should be scheduled for the end of May.</p> <p>Action: <u>Schedule additional Board meeting for end of May - CLERK</u></p> <p><u>Schedule conference call after update from Winckworth Sherwood/OLT (CF to be included in this call) – CLERK</u></p> <p><u>Desktop exercise to be carried out to determine options for ACES - CEO</u></p>
7.	<p>Trustees Skills Audit Report (All)</p>
	<p>A skills audit had been completed by all Trustees. The CEO thought it indicated a lot of expertise with minimal gaps and will serve as a helpful recruitment tool in the next phase of the MAT development. After discussion, it was agreed that an application should be made to the Academy Ambassadors to recruit Trustees on to the Board.</p> <p>Action: <u>Application to Academy Ambassadors - CEO</u></p>
8.	<p>Risk register update (AR)</p>
	<p>AR provided a risk management report and advised Trustees of the conclusions from this report:</p> <p>The current software package is not being fully utilised and contains a number of out of date documents. He advised that the Trustees need to consider risk when discussing proposals and can be evidenced in the papers provided on the due diligence of potential MAT partners. Risk awareness is also well documented in the financial planning and reporting is now being produced. These risks have not, however, been collated together</p>



	<p>and reviewed and monitored separately. This means the strategic objectives of the MAT (and schools) is at an unknown and undocumented level of risk. The documented sources of risk should be collated and recorded in GRC One. These documents should then be reviewed and a first draft of the Risk Register created. Existing controls should then be cross referenced to the risks captured to evidence mitigation. The Audit, Compliance and Risk Committee should be initiated and a governing board statement on Risk Management generated. This statement should confirm that, with reasonable confidence, we ensure that levels of risk and the evaluation of these risks are in line with the MAT's vision and strategic priorities, as well as individual School Development Plans.</p> <p>Action: <u>Top 10 risks facing the MAT to be presented at each Board meeting - AR</u> <u>All identified risks to be added to the Risk Register - AR</u> <u>Arrange training for staff responsible for completing risk assessments – FINANCE DIRECTOR</u> <u>Set timeline for Audit and Risk Committee meetings – AR/FINANCE DIRECTOR</u> <u>Management/update of current software package – AR/FINANCE DIRECTOR</u></p>
9.	AOB
	<p>The Finance Director advised that both schools are now registered for FSM vouchers. He is waiting for further information on the provision of laptops and 4G dongles for identified students during the lockdown.</p>
9.	Date of next meetings
	<p>TBA (end May 2020) 7th July 2020, 5.15pm</p>

Meeting finished at 7.30 pm