



**Whinless Down Academy Trust**

**Board Meeting**

**Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> July 2020**

Executive Headteacher: Mrs Anne Siggins

**Minutes of the Trust Board Meeting**

**Held via Zoom on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> July at 5pm.**

**Board Trustees Present:** Anne Siggins (EHT), Alison Mackintosh (CoTB), Tricia Sherling (VCoTB), David Mellon, Mike Ashley

**Others Present:** Rachel Appleby (HoS St Martin’s), and Kelly Brown (HoS Vale View), Michelle Noden (Academy Business Manager), Anthony Welch (member), Claire Jones (member), Stacey Wells (FSAC)

**Clerk:** Claudia Sawyers

		<u>Actions</u>
<p><b>1</b></p>	<p><b><u>Welcome, Introduction and Apologies</u></b></p> <p>This meeting is being held virtually due to COVID-19, via Zoom Secure Video Conferencing. Chair welcomed Claire Jones and Anthony Welch who are joining the meeting as members.</p> <p>Apologies have been received from Vicky Smith, which were accepted.</p> <p><b>Resignations</b></p> <p>Carole Rayfield has regrettably resigned from the trust board due to work and personal commitments; trustees agreed to the resignation as there are still 5 non-employee trustees, which is specified in the Articles of Association.</p>	
<p><b>2</b></p>	<p><b><u>Minutes from meeting in Term 2</u></b></p>	
<p><b>2.1</b></p>	<p><b><u>Approval of Minutes</u></b></p> <p>Previous minutes were distributed to Trustees via email prior to the meeting. The minutes have been agreed by all trustees; due to this meeting taking place virtually it was agreed that the chair can send an email to clerk confirming the minutes are agreed and this can be attached to a hard copy of the minutes until it is possible to meet in person to sign a copy.</p>	

	<b>Matters Arising</b>	
2.2	A letter has been written to resigning trustee by clerk, chair would like to see the letter then it can be posted.	Clerk to send letter
2.3	Vision and Values have been added to the agenda.	
2.4	The catering analysis has been completed and will be sent to trustees.	ABM to forward catering analysis to clerk to send out
2.5	The roles and Responsibilities of each individual member of the LGB and Trust Board has been devised on to one document and this was sent to trustees prior to the meeting. It was agreed that this will be looked at in the autumn term along with the terms of reference.	
2.6	Due to budget constraints, it has not been possible to input the desired counselling role in to the staffing structure, but it will remain an aim for the future.  There are still some actions from the last meeting that have not yet taken place due to COVID-19:	
2.7	Tours of the schools have not been able to take place, visitors are not being allowed in to school at present.	
2.8	The estates strategy is still in the process of being done but there has not been the opportunity/scope to continue this with the priority being for risk assessing COVID-19 and the reopening of the schools.	
<b>3</b>	<b><u>Register of Business and Pecuniary Interests</u></b>	
3.1	Trustees were asked whether they need to update their business interest forms (which would be done at an appropriate time when social distancing is eased) there were no updates.  There were no interests declared against this agenda.	
3.2		
<b>4</b>	<b><u>Members</u></b>	
4.1	Carol Rayfield, who has resigned as a trustee, has expressed an interest in becoming a member of the trust and the clerk has emailed all members, who have agreed to this. To allow for further separation of duties, it was agreed that Tricia Sherling will step down as a member to allow Carol to take the place.	
<b>5</b>	<b><u>Trust/Governors Term of Office</u></b>	
5.1	<b>Term of Office for Trustees</b> The following trustees are due to complete their first term of office: Alison Mackintosh Tricia Sherling Vicky Smith Anne Siggins As per the Articles of Association, trustees have been re-appointed for a new term of 4 years.	

	<p><b>Election of Chair/Vice Chair</b></p> <p>Alison Mackintosh and Tricia Sherling have been elected to continue a new term as chair and vice chair. All trustees agreed. Succession planning for the role of vice chair will need to be considered, as TS expressed that she will be looking to retire her role at the end of this term of office.</p>	
<p><b>6</b></p> <p><b>6.1</b></p>	<p><b><u>LGB Restructure</u></b></p> <p>It is proposed to the trust that the Vale View and St Martin’s LGB join together to form one governing body. Discussions have been held with the governors from both LGBs and they have agreed that they would be happy to join.</p> <p>The reason for joining is that there are common grounds between the two schools and it is felt that discussions are often had twice, so it would be time efficient to join the meetings. There have also been issues with recruiting and ensuring there is quorum at meetings. Trustees felt that there would be the need to be mindful of ensuring that the meeting time is equitable between both schools.</p> <p>Trustees agreed to join the LGBs.</p>	
<p><b>7</b></p> <p><b>7.1</b></p> <p><b>7.2</b></p> <p><b>7.3</b></p> <p><b>7.4</b></p>	<p><b><u>COVID-19 Update</u></b></p> <p>EHT has written a report to update trustees, along with an extensive risk assessment (agenda item 15) which have both been sent to trustees prior to the meeting. EHT invited questions from trustees to be sent in prior to the meeting. No questions were received but the following points were discussed:</p> <p>Additional year groups have returned at each school alongside years R, 1 and 6 children. The accommodation of the additional year groups has been extremely successful and the response from children has been very encouraging. There has been transition activities in place for all children so that they can still meet their new teacher, including children who have not attended school being invited in. New teachers joining in September have also been involved with transition arrangements.</p> <p>All schools are fully staffed for September. Zoom interviews took place for teaching vacancies and senior leaders involved felt that they went well and feel that strong candidates have been secured. A teacher from Priory Fields has moved in to the role of senior manager at St Martin’s. The current Schools Direct placement teacher has been offered full employment from September as an NQT.</p> <p>A trustee asked what communications have been relayed to parents for September. EHT explained that there has been a great deal of communication with parents via email and by post to keep them informed of the arrangements, such as information about their new teacher, staggered start times and arrangements for how the schools will minimise risks. There will be a more extensive programme of transition for children going in to year 1 in the first three weeks, as it is felt that it is important to ensure a smooth process. The new EYFS will start later in the term to accommodate this.</p>	

<p>7.5</p> <p>7.6</p> <p>7.7</p> <p>7.8</p> <p>7.9</p>	<p>There will still be staggered start and finish times from September. With all children due to return, this is the only way to enable social distancing to be in place as much as possible. There have been no parental complaints about this.</p> <p>With regards to the curriculum, there have been meetings with staff via zoom about expectations and the aim will be to assess where children are at and where the gaps need to be filled. It is acknowledged that a full 'catch up' of the lost three terms of work is not possible and more time may need to be apportioned to maths and English.</p> <p>A trustee asked what are the plans or expectations for moving through autumn in to winter where there are naturally more illnesses. EHT explained that guidance will continue to be followed and testing will be used. There have already been some referrals made for tests to be conducted for children where symptoms have been reported and they have all been negative. It is acknowledged that attendance records will be difficult to maintain.</p> <p>Chair would like to send thanks to all staff from the trust for their hard work and flexibility over this time.</p> <p>A trustee asked how will lunches and clubs work, which are situations where children from different classes would usually mix? EHT explained that there will be no mixing of class groups until it is safe to do so. This means that the lunch hall will not be used and lunches will be taken in classrooms. School meals will be offered in 'takeaway' style, with a mixture of cold and hot offerings.</p> <p>With regards to clubs, after school club will not be on offer. It will be possible to operate a breakfast provision, in the form of a 'breakfast box', which children can have in their classroom. This will only be offered to children who previously accessed the provision (usually due to parent work commitments) initially.</p>	
<p><b><u>FSAC Business</u></b></p>		
<p>8</p>	<p><b>Election of Chair/Vice Chair</b></p> <p>The chair of the FSAC has resigned from her post as a trustee. It was agreed by all that Mike Ashley will be the chair and Stacey Wells will be the vice chair.</p>	
<p>9</p>	<p><b>Finance Monitoring</b></p> <p>The 9 month budget monitoring was sent to trustees prior to the meeting along with the management accounts: cash flow, balance sheets and a variance to original budget report. Trustees felt that the variance to budget report was extremely thorough and there were clear explanations for the variances.</p> <p>A trustee asked whether there is a potential water leak at St Martins, as the budget is overspent by £500. ABM explained that checks and readings are done regularly and there has not been any issues highlighted. ABM will ask for more readings to be taken and will investigate. A trustee asked whether it would be expected for the water usage to drop in the next bill given the school was closed for 2 months, or has water usage now increased given the</p>	

	<p>extra handwashing and cleaning. ABM explained that the bill for the period of closure has not been received yet and this could be an estimated bill, so will look in to this.</p> <p>The CIF bid has been successful for the St Martin's replacement boiler. A Trustee asked whether there will there be additional costs outside of CIF funding? ABM explained that there will not be, it is all taken in to account with the funding which includes contingencies.</p> <p>There is a deficit for St Martin and Vale View in year balance. EHT explained there is always a deficit in year and the only way to reduce this would be to reduce staffing levels significantly. The bulge year at St Martin's may make a difference and staffing has been reduced for next year. Vale View's in year deficit could be contributed to the removal of MDIF funding which initially helped to pay for staffing such as the Assistant Headteacher. The schools are not over staffed, but reductions would be made if needed.</p> <p>A trustee asked whether there are any areas where you would expect to see longer-term change in the budget forecast e.g. higher cleansing materials? EHT explained there will be some increase to these materials for some time however it would not be significant. However some savings have also been made during the time that the schools were closed. As a trust, PPE has cost approx. £5000 including some things that wont need to be repurchased such as thermometers and lidded bins, so there will be some ongoing costs such as gloves and sanitiser.</p> <p>There were no comments to the Priory Fields monitoring, trustees felt that the explanations written on the monitoring report were concise and there were no queries.</p>	
<p><b>10</b></p> <p><b>10.1</b></p> <p><b>10.2</b></p> <p><b>10.3</b></p>	<p><b><u>New Budget Agreement</u></b></p> <p>A trustee asked whether additional 'catch up' funding that has been suggested by the government has been included. £39 per child has been suggested by Kent. ABM confirmed it has not been as there has been no official release regarding this. If this funding is received, it will be important to highlight and record where this money is spent and it's impact.</p> <p>See Confidential Minute</p> <p>Trustees acknowledged that each year, when reviewing the forecasts for three years, the third year budget doesn't ever balance but it is felt that when the third year comes around, it does always work out. One of the financial aims is to operate without an in-year deficit. A trustee asked whether a push on pupil numbers could help funding. HOS at VV and SM both commented that they are generally full or almost full in each year group except for the bulge year at St Martin's. The new year R will be full in September at VV and SM. At Priory Fields, it is approx. 50 (out of 60 spaces) but it is not uncommon to get late applications at Priory Fields from EAL parents. The effects of Brexit on EAL families may also have an impact on roll numbers.</p> <p>A trustee asked whether the possibility of pooling people/skills to help with the salary cost and whether growth of the trust could make this more viable. EHT explained that the centralisation</p>	

	<p>of the trust staff could mean streamlining back office which could help with staffing costs. EHT agreed that attracting a school to join will need considering too.</p> <p>Budgets agreed by all trustees. EHT explained that only one year is being submitted to the DfE as they do not require three years due to the current circumstances.</p>	
<b>11</b>	<p><b><u>Audits</u></b></p> <p>The report highlights a very positive audit with full assurance on all four values. One advisory was for there to be an ‘agreed suppliers’ list, so that three quotes are not needed to be obtained for continued suppliers.</p> <p>Trustees thanked ABM for another clean and compliant audit.</p> <p>ABM highlighted that the academies handbook has been updated to say that the external and internal audit cannot be done by the same accountants. ABM is working with Kreston Reeves for an agreed list of who they work with who can do the internal audit.</p> <p><b>Teacher pension audit</b></p> <p>ABM reported that this was agreed and approved and uploaded by the accountants to the pension website.</p>	
<b>12</b>	<p><b><u>Risk Management Update</u></b></p> <p>Postpone to next meeting</p>	
<b>13</b> <b>13.1</b>          <b>13.2</b>	<p><b><u>Staff</u></b></p> <p>Staffing structures were sent to trustees to review, they were also reviewed at the last trust board meeting in May and have not changed since.</p> <p>A trustee asked whether there are fixed term contracts in place at St Martin’s, so that redundancies are not necessary next year. ABM confirmed they are.</p> <p>Head of School position will be advertised for January and will be advertised for Vale View.</p> <p>There are two TA vacancies at Priory Fields, they have been offered to the two fixed term contract TAs at SM. Both of them refused the PF position, however one has since changed their mind and will take the position.</p> <p>Trustees agreed final staffing structures.</p> <p><b>Appraisals</b></p> <p>Appraisals have been postponed as they would usually be reviewed this term, however it has not been possible due to COVID, so they will take place next term along with setting new appraisals. It was discussed earlier in the year that appraisal targets for TAs could be grouped to be key stage based, this is because all TA targets are usually the same and it is not</p>	

13.3	<p>compulsory to do individual appraisals for support staff. Individuals will still be assessed individually. This has been agreed to proceed from September.</p> <p>EHT appraisal will continue to be done by chair and vice chair, along with Sheila. Clerk will contact Sheila for dates.</p> <p>See confidential minute</p>	Clerk to contact Sheila Wilding
14	<p><b>Academy Financial Handbook</b></p> <p>To be postponed to the next meeting due to time constraints, along with Eileen Milner letter received today.</p>	
<b><u>Trust Board Business</u></b>		
15	<p><b><u>September Opening</u></b></p> <p>This has been discussed earlier in the meeting (item 7). There will be operational challenges to ensure the school is safe and distancing is observed. The risk assessment has been shared with staff, VV HOS has had feedback from staff that they are grateful for the thought that has been put in to the risk assessment and relay their thanks.</p> <p>There will need to be monitoring of the risk assessment and this will be ongoing through the leadership team in schools.</p> <p>Trustees agreed the risk assessment is very comprehensive and thorough.</p> <p>A trustee asked whether an external person could come in to check off that the risk assessment is being implemented. This could be thought carefully about how this could take place safely, however minimising visitors to the school is a priority.</p>	
16 16.1  16.2	<p><b><u>Premises</u></b></p> <p><b>CIF Funding</b></p> <p>As discussed previously in the meeting, St Martin's bid for the new boiler has been granted and the works will commence in the summer holiday.</p> <p>The Vale View bid for replacing the mobile unit was rejected but the scoring has not yet been released, once this is obtained an appeal may be possible depending on the points scored.</p> <p><b>PSBP</b></p> <p>The sign off for the Priory Fields site is almost due and ABM has been chasing updates for the last phase, there are still issues such as the cracks in the demolition site slope. DM volunteered to draft a response for the defects liability period if ABM would like to send information over to him.</p>	
16.3	<p><b>Estates Management Plan</b></p> <p>Postponed to next meeting.</p>	
17	<p><b>GDPR Update</b></p> <p>There was one breach in GDPR this year, where a small piece of pupil information was released to the incorrect parent. The DPO, Mike Ashley, was notified and an investigation was held. A</p>	

	<p>meeting was also held with the relevant parents who were satisfied that it was a mistake through human error and did not wish to pursue further action. The incident was reported to the ICO via the correct channels, the ICO has responded to say that no action is needed.</p> <p>It was suggested that an ad hoc audit could take place next year.</p>	
<b>18</b>	<p><b>Meeting Dates</b> Meeting dates for next year have been distributed and agreed.</p>	
<b>19</b>	<p><b>Confidentiality of Proceedings</b> Item 10.2 and Item 13.3</p>	
<b>20</b>	<p><b>AOB</b> None</p>	

<u><b>Action Points</b></u>
<p>2.3 Clerk to send letter 2.5 ABM to forward catering analysis to clerk to send out 13.2 Clerk to arrange Sheila Wilding for EHT appraisal</p>

Minutes taken by Clerk Claudia Sawyers

Signed by Chair of Whinless Down Academy Trust: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Alison Mackintosh