



## Whinless Down Academy Trust

### Board Meeting

**Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> February 2020**

Executive Headteacher: Mrs Anne Siggins

#### **Minutes of the Trust Board Meeting**

**Held at Priory Fields School on Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> February 2020 at 5pm**

**Board Trustees Present:** Anne Siggins (EHT), Alison Mackintosh (CoTB), Tricia Sherling (VCoTB), Vicky Smith, Carol Rayfield, Mike Ashley, David Mellon (via Skype)

**Others Present:** Rachel Appleby (HoS St Martin's), Helen Seeley (HoS Priory Fields) and Kelly Brown (HoS Vale View), Anthony Welch (member)

**Clerk:** Claudia Sawyers

<b>1</b>	<b><u>Welcome, Introduction and Apologies</u></b> Chair welcomed everybody to the meeting. Anthony Welch is a new member of the WDAT and introductions were made.  Apologies have been received from Vicky Smith and Michelle Noden, which were accepted.  <b>Resignations</b> Clerk has received a letter from Michelle Noden expressing her intention to resign from the trust board. EHT explained that MN was originally a trustee when the WDAT was formed to ensure there was a full complement of trustees. It has been highlighted previously at meetings and by the RSC (Regional Schools Commissioner) that the separation of duties needs to move forward to ensure accountability is rigorous and the Academies Financial Handbook does recommend that there are no staff trustees. MN will still continue to attend meetings, in her role as the Academy Business Manager. Trustees unanimously accepted MN's resignation.  Clerk has also received an email from Kathy Howell expressing her intention to resign from the trust board. Trustees discussed whether this could be accepted, as they would need to ensure there is a sufficient number of trustees. If KH's resignation was to be accepted, there would be seven trustees. EHT commented that the RSC does find 7 to be acceptable, trustees also feel that an odd number is necessary for voting purposes. Trustees unanimously accepted KH's resignation. <th data-bbox="1254 1055 1481 2020"><b><u>Actions</u></b></th>	<b><u>Actions</u></b>

	<p>Due to KH's resignation, this leads the position of Trustee responsible for Safeguarding open. The responsibilities of trustees was consulted, most trustees already have two areas of responsibility and it was felt that due to TS stepping down from the FSAC and with her knowledge and skills, she would be suited to this position. TS accepted.</p> <p>Letters to be written on behalf of chair to thank resigning trustees for their service.</p>	<p>Clerk to draft letter on behalf of chair</p>
<p><b>2</b></p> <p><b>3</b></p>	<p><b><u>Minutes from meeting in Term 2-</u></b></p> <p><b>Approval of Minutes</b></p> <p>Previous minutes were distributed to Trustees prior to the meeting. The minutes have been agreed by all trustees and signed by the chair.</p> <p><b>Matters Arising</b></p> <p>-VS and CR still to tour Vale View. It was suggested that AW could also attend as he is newly a member. CR is going to co-ordinate a time with VS and let clerk know, who can see if AW is available.</p> <p>-Vision and Values to be added to each agenda as a footer. <i>It was also suggested they should be put up in the hub.</i></p> <p>-Laminated cards for trustees have been done- <i>still to be distributed.</i></p> <p>-Roles and responsibilities- <i>Chair asked whether the role and responsibilities of the trustees along with corresponding governors at each LGB can be devised on to one document.</i></p> <p>-Recruitment- A trustee asked whether Kent Teach has been updated so that all vacancies are advertised under WDAT rather than each school. <i>This is an action that ABM is still working on, it is not as straightforward as changing the name.</i></p> <p>-Safeguarding policy to be updated so that KH is not identified as the Safeguarding trustee and updated to show TS name.</p> <p>-Safe disposal of assets-EHT has spoken with the Priory Fields ICT Technician who is responsible for asset disposal, who has confirmed that hard drives/memory is removed from any device before it is disposed of and physically destroyed by himself if it cannot be reused in school. A trustee asked whether the new ICT Technician is also aware of this process, VV HoS confirmed that he is yet to dispose of any assets but will be made aware of the process when the time comes.</p>	
<b>4</b>	<p><b><u>Register of Business and Pecuniary Interests</u></b></p> <p>Trustees were given the opportunity to update their business interest forms, there were no updates. Anthony Welch has completed a new form as a Member.</p> <p>There were no interests declared against this agenda.</p>	

<p><b>5</b> <b>5.1</b></p>	<p><b><u>EHT Report</u></b></p> <p>The report was sent to trustees prior to the meeting to read. EHT explained that the response to the new Ofsted criteria has been a challenge as the focus on subject leadership appears to be a more secondary school model, where teachers are specialist in their subject. Primary school teachers are often not specialist in the subject they lead and must teach all curriculum subjects, trustees agreed that could be a challenge for primary school subject leaders to have the in depth knowledge that secondary school teachers have who often only teach that one subject.</p> <p>Trustee TS has been working alongside EHT and Sheila Wilding in conducting learning walks and holding discussions with a small number of subject leaders to develop their knowledge and skills, particularly at Vale View (as they are due an inspection). TS reported that the subject leaders are responding extremely well. The subject leaders who are part of the current focus presented at their respective LGB meetings this term, to discuss the progress they have made in their subject and how they are having an impact; the governors/leadership present at those meetings were impressed by their development.</p>	
<p><b>6</b> <b>6.1</b></p>	<p><b><u>MAT Strategic Plan</u></b></p> <p>The MAT strategic plan was sent to trustees prior to the meeting and the plan links to EHT report. The Autumn milestones have been reviewed.</p> <p>A trustee commented that the 2018-19 key priorities highlights GAG pooling for consideration, but this is not carried forward in the next years. EHT explained that the idea of GAG pooling is still on the wider agenda for the trust to consider alongside other models. The advantage of GAG pooling is that the budget can be distributed within the trust where there is most need and it is prudent to start thinking about a reserve/contingency pot. EHT gave the example that if St Martin's boiler broke down beyond repair or needed expensive remedial work, the budget for St Martin's would not allow for that. This led to a discussion regarding the contingency plans for if the CIF bid is rejected. Trustee DM asked what cause was cited for the most recent failure of the boiler and whether a quote has been obtained for a full replacement. EHT explained that the most recent breakdown was due to failure of a part that was able to be replaced. A quote has been obtained in the past by ABM. The project management who have submitted CIF bids on behalf of the trust have had successes with previous bids, but the bid system is point based so the boiler replacement has not scored enough points to be eligible in the past. DM volunteered to liaise with ABM due to his professional background he may be able to offer some assistance.</p> <p>A trustee commented that the upcoming plan for recruitment of a Leader of Learning is positive; EHT explained that the appointment will be made for Key Stage 2 initially and due to budget constraints, it will not yet be possible to consider a Leader of Learning for KS1 yet.</p> <p>On the subject of recruitment, a trustee asked whether there is a set criteria used for when a role is advertised e.g. should being open to using IRIS be a criteria. EHT explained that a person specification is written for each role before it is advertised, so criteria is thought about and this would be a good addition. The recruitment policy is</p>	

	<p>followed when advertising for a role and safer recruitment guidelines are incorporated in to the policy. The recruitment process is now more rigorous.</p> <p>A trustee asked whether plans have started to take place for succession of the key roles in the trust. EHT explained that it has been the topic of several discussions in school and at the RSC and ideas have been thought about. A trustee asked whether there is a 'corporate knowledge' file, which would include things such as contacts and written processes. Trustees agreed this would be a good idea to develop. This topic ties in with growth of the trust and it would be useful to hold a separate meeting to discuss the ideas of growth and succession.</p>	<p>Meeting to be arranged on topic of growth and succession planning.</p>
<p><b>7</b></p>	<p><b><u>Trust Review Letter</u></b></p> <p>A letter has been received by the chair and EHT following their meeting at the RSC office. A copy of the letter was distributed to trustees. Chair reported that the questioning at the meeting was rigorous and challenging, particularly around outcomes. As the letter states, outcomes were below national at St Martin's and Priory Fields, contributing factors were discussed at the meeting.</p> <p>Progress is highlighted as the main area for focus and thorough assessment linked in with the new Teaching and Learning strategy will aid this. Teachers are no longer appraised on attainment targets so the pressure on this has been removed.</p>	
<p><b>8</b> <b>8.1</b></p>	<p><b><u>Finance Update and FSAC Feedback</u></b></p> <p>The draft minutes from the 2 month monitoring FSAC meeting were sent to trustees prior to the meeting to read, along with actual finance monitoring figures, reports, cash flow and balance sheets.</p> <p>The FSAC chair reported that during the FSAC meeting, the in-year variances of the rollover were discussed and there is a negative in year variance at Vale View and St Martin's to the original budget figure. FSAC Chair explained that the committee was not overly concerned as the monitoring early in the year often shows a negative figure because the budget setting is based on May monitoring figures and there are often changes that have a financial impact (such as staffing) which cannot be predicted at budget setting. The committee will continue to closely monitor the budget.</p> <p>ABM has produced a 3 month monitoring report which was distributed to trustees, which gives an update further to the 2 month monitoring.</p> <p>The cash flow and balance sheets were discussed. Trustees felt that the cash flow and balance sheets are difficult to understand without having an accountancy background and suggested that some further training could be beneficial.</p> <p>FSAC chair reported that the key audit findings from the internal and external audits were discussed at the FSAC meeting and the feedback from the audits were extremely positive, with only two minor recommendations found.</p>	<p>ABM to contact Kreston Reeves to see if they can offer training.</p>

9	<p><b>Staffing <u>CONFIDENTIAL</u></b> See confidential minutes</p>	
10	<p><b><u>Risk Management</u></b> Following the action plan being reviewed at the last meeting and trustees taking the plan away to review and bring up any questions or new risks, a trustee suggested that environmental risks could be considered as a risk in the future. Responses to environmental changes and building control legislation could affect the trust financially if new measures are needed to be implemented.</p>	
11	<p><b><u>Premises Update</u></b> A written premises update report was written by ABM and sent to trustees prior to the meeting. Due to the conversation regarding St Martin's boiler earlier in the meeting, there were no further comments regarding the report.</p>	
12	<p><b><u>Contracts</u></b> There are two contracts which are due for renewal: <b>Cantium</b> This is the ICT provision across the trust. Previously, each school had subscribed separately but ABM has obtained a discount to combine the contract under the WDAT. This is a three-year contract at £82,949.85 in total (annual saving of £3426.18). This includes SIMS remote backup and financial support, disaster recovery, antivirus, KLZ platform, broadband and curriculum support at Vale View. <b>SPS/Intepay</b> This is the personnel and payroll provision that the trust subscribes to. Previously, each school had subscribed separately but ABM has obtained a discount to combine the contract under the WDAT. This is a two-year contract at £21,322 in total (annual saving of £3918). Both services have been found to be supportive and risk-free. Trustees agreed to the contracts.</p>	
13	<p><b><u>Minutes from LGB Meetings- Term 1 and 2</u></b> The Minutes from the minutes in term 1 and 2 were sent to governors for information, all the minutes have been agreed by the LGBs. A trustee highlighted that in the St Martin's LGB minutes, it was discussed that the election of their vice chair needed to be agreed by the trust board. Since then, the delegation of function has been consulted and the LGB can appoint their own vice chair so it does not need to be discussed and agreed by the trust.</p>	

14	<p><b><u>Policies</u></b> All policies were sent to governors prior to the meeting to review.</p> <p><b>SEN</b> This is an annual renewal of the SEN policy. The SENCOs have reviewed the policy alongside DfE guidance and updated the policy. There are no major changes. Trustees agreed the policy.</p> <p><b>Investment</b> EHT has reviewed this policy and no changes were necessary. Trustees did not have any questions and have agreed the policy.</p> <p><b>Procurement and Tendering</b> EHT has reviewed this policy and no changes were necessary. Trustees did not have any questions and have agreed the policy.</p> <p><b>Gifts and Hospitality</b> EHT has reviewed this policy and no changes were necessary. Trustees did not have any questions and have agreed the policy.</p> <p><b>Whistleblowing</b> EHT has reviewed this policy and no changes were necessary. Trustees did not have any questions and have agreed the policy.</p>	
15	<p><b><u>KMA Training</u></b> A package of training is being devised by the KMA, with the first event booked for Monday 16<sup>th</sup> March at 6pm at Pilgrim’s Way Primary School. All levels of governance are invited to this.</p>	
16	<p><b><u>Confidentiality</u></b> Item 9- Staffing. See confidential minute.</p>	
17	<p><b><u>Date of Next Meeting</u></b> The next meeting will be on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> May</p>	
18	<p><b><u>AOB</u></b> The date of 18<sup>th</sup> June was agreed for the WDAT Event. All levels of governance will be invited to this.</p>	

<b><u>Action Points</u></b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Clerk to draft letter on behalf of chair to resigning trustees.</li> <li>2. Meeting to be arranged on topic of growth and succession planning.</li> <li>3. ABM to contact Kreston Reeves to see if they can offer training.</li> </ol>

Minutes taken by Clerk Claudia Sawyers

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