

MINUTES OF TRUST BOARD MEETING

Date: Wednesday 22nd March 2023
Time: 10.00am
Venue: Laurus Trust- Boardroom

Clerk: N Burgess
Present: C Nevin, G Turnpenney, T Little, R Kumar, W Mason, J Crombleholme, A Gilmour, D Woolley, S McGill, and D Brown

	Action	Initials
1	To update the Register of Business Interests	NB
1	Trustees are asked to inform the Chair if they would like to express an interest in the SRE Link Trustee vacancy	All
1	Trustees are reminded to send their completed Record of Visits to the Clerk for retention	All
1	To confirm Trustees on committees should be non-executive	WM
2	Send the Trust Wellbeing award application to AG	WM
2	Copies of the brochures for each Sixth Form to be available to Trustees	NB
2	Individual breakdown on social media followers to Audit Finance and Resources committee July meeting	WM
2	Trust Development plan to be reviewed following the end of the current 2-year plan	LW
3	To discuss the support available to Heads of School following an Ofsted inspection	LM
3	To record Trustee thanks to Heads of School and their teams following Ofsted inspections	TL
3	QA and Safeguarding at Scale to be presented to Trustees at the July meeting	DB
3	Trust Director of HR to be invited to the July meeting to discuss Safer Recruitment	WM

Agenda – Part 1

Category	Item	Notes	Action	
1	Governance Arrangements	Apologies	Apologies were received from L Magrath, L Woolley, M Vevers and D Kershaw	
		AOB items	There were no other items of business which were not included in the agenda for this meeting.	
		Register of Interests	The Register of Business Interests was circulated and the Clerk will update with the reported changes.	NB
		Minutes of the last Trust Board	Minutes of the meeting held 1 st February 2023 were approved as a correct record of the meeting.	

	meeting	<p><u>Matters arising</u> The role of Primary Link Trustee will be discussed at the meeting. Link visits are in progress and Trustees will send their completed record of visit proformas to the Clerk. The progress of another secondary school joining the Trust will be discussed in detail at this meeting.</p>	
	Trust Board Committee Chair Updates	<p><u>Audit Finance and Resources</u> S McGill gave Trustees a brief overview of the meeting which had taken place 10/03/2023.</p> <p>Director of Capital and Estates Strategy attended to present to Trustees the Estates report. Sustainability and Accessibility were the main focus.</p> <p>Trustees discussed the tender process for the appointment of External Auditors. WM updated Trustees present today on the progress of the tender to date. A full and detailed process has taken place and 2 companies presented. Currently the Trust are awaiting references, as per the framework, and it is proposed that the current external auditors, UHY, will be recommended to members for approval.</p> <p>Q – How long is it good practice to have the same audit company? A – The current auditors were appointed in 2018. It is good practice to review and run a tender process every 5 years. There is no reason why the same company could not be appointed in succession. The external audit will be reviewed again, in line with Trust growth, at the end of the next 5-year period.</p> <p>Trustees also reviewed applications data at the meeting.</p>	
	Link Trustee updates	<p>Following a discussion J Crombleholme agreed to be appointed as Primary Link Trustee.</p> <p>There will now be a vacancy for SRE Trustee. Trustees are asked to let TL know should they wish to express an interest in this vacancy.</p> <p>Trustees updated on the progress of their visits to date:</p> <p><u>Maths (AG)</u> – an introductory meeting has taken place to clarify the structure of Maths and how it is taught across the Trust. AG had observed 2 lessons and had found it very interesting to see theory applied in practice. An ROV was not completed for this visit but</p>	All

			<p>AG will send a note of the meeting to the Clerk. AG had found the meeting to be most interesting and a follow up is planned for early May.</p> <p><u>English</u> (CN) – a meeting has been arranged for 19/04/2023</p> <p><u>Science</u> (RK) – RK confirmed that Trust Director JP is passionate about Science and that this shows in his work. The number of Science lessons delivered across the Trust is phenomenal. A discussion took place around how teaching is standardised across the trust.</p> <p><u>MFL</u> – (SM) – an initial phone conversation has taken place but the scheduled meeting was postponed. An update will be given at the next meeting.</p> <p>Q – How many teachers do not have a teaching timetable? A – Only Heads of School and Pastoral Deputies.</p> <p>Q – How do we allow them to still feel connected to the classroom? A – There are still lots of opportunities including ARC and FPL. There are also walkabouts where we visit classrooms, which means we do not feel separated. This is definitely something which has been considered.</p> <p><u>Humanities</u> (DK) – DK was not present at the meeting</p> <p><u>CC&R</u> (TL) – A meeting took place in the Autumn term</p> <p><u>PE & Sporting Excellence</u> – (WM) – A meeting took place last term. To allow time to be dedicated to GCSEs a lesson observation is planned for the Summer term. WM commented that the curriculum is aligned across the Trust but there is some flexibility where the facilities differ.</p> <p><u>Safeguarding</u> (TL) – TL regularly meets with DB. The Single Central Record has been reviewed and TL commented this is a particularly impressive document, which holds all the safer recruitment check information.</p> <p><u>SEND</u> (GT) – GT had attended a link event for SEND Lead Governors from each school in the Trust. GT had found the event very useful and had focussed on the approach, vision and individual support plans. It was reassuring to see that every student is looked at as an</p>	
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			<p>individual. A further meeting with the Trust Directors of SEND is planned before the end of term.</p> <p>Q – Do they feel they are adequately resourced? A – There is always the need for more as SEND also includes SEMH and Literacy and Numeracy, but the overarching view was not of wanting more.</p> <p><u>SRE</u> – (JC) – JC had met HB in the Autumn term and planned one more visit before the end of the year.</p> <p>Q – Do we know what is taught by external providers? A – In accordance with our visitor protocol there is always a member of staff in the room. Delivery from an expert can be more powerful than from a teacher. We always monitor every visit and would not hesitate to intervene if we thought something was not appropriate.</p> <p><u>CEIAG</u> – (RK) – the meeting has been rearranged for next term</p> <p><u>Primary</u> – (JC) – JC had met with LW and visited Woodford Primary School. Staffing as the primary sector of the Trust expands will need to be reviewed going forward. There is the need to have the correct staffing structure in place to be able to plan ahead to sustain the growth.</p> <p>Q – How many teachers have been recruited for primary this year? A – 3 to date, one for Woodford and two for Cheadle Hulme Primary School due to the year group additions. There may possibly be further recruitment as staff move on or for maternity cover.</p> <p>The challenge in the primary sector at present is for the recruitment of non-teaching staff, for example wraparound care and LSAs.</p> <p><u>Safeguarding/SEND Record of Visit proformas:</u> Q – How are we planning to use these documents going forward? A – The proforma will document the checks completed and any actions arising. This will then be retained as a record. The document will be used at both Trustee and Academy Committee level.</p> <p>GT commented that the SEND proforma had been very useful at a recent meeting as it had provided structure</p>
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			<p>to the visit.</p> <p>Trustees were reminded to complete their visit proformas as soon as possible and send to the Clerk for retention.</p>	All
		<p>Meeting and Committee Arrangements from September 2023</p>	<p>A document detailing the proposed changes was circulated prior to the meeting.</p> <p>The Academy Trust Handbook states that Trusts with an annual income of over £50m <u>must</u> have a dedicated audit and risk committee, separate from the normal finance and resources committee responsibilities. The audit and risk committee must meet 3 times per year and the Chair of the Audit committee must be different to the Chair of the Finance committee.</p> <p>The document circulated shows a suggested meeting structure but WM requested suggestions from Trustees.</p> <p>A long discussion took place and it was agreed, from September 2023:</p> <p>Audit and Risk Committee – 3 meetings per year. Chair JC and AG, TL and CN</p> <p>Finance and Resources Committee – 3 meetings per year. Chair SM and RK, DK and GT</p> <p>Pay and Remuneration Committee – Chair GT and JC and TL and CN as Executive Pay Committee. It was agreed that this would be kept as separate committees.</p> <p>WM agreed to check that Trustee membership on the committees was non-executive Trustees only.</p> <p>Trust Board – 5 meetings per year.</p>	WM

2	Being strategic : Theme: Influence	<p>Priority: Deliberate communication of our value proposition</p>	<p>A copy of the Trust Development Plan was circulated prior to the meeting.</p> <p>In terms of value of our proposition, indicators of success were reviewed, including employee retention rates, approaches from other schools to join the trust, social media followers and school admission numbers.</p> <p>The employee retention figures will be further updated in May 2023 and will be presented to the Audit, Finance and Resources Committee at the meeting in July. It was noted that recruitment has been more of a challenge than ever before. There has also been an increase in the number of staff requesting career breaks and sabbaticals.</p> <p>The Trust has been shortlisted for Wellbeing Trust of the Year – the awards ceremony will take place in London in June. AG requested a copy of the application for the award.</p>	WM
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		<p>Priority: Trust expansion</p>	<p><u>Development approaches</u> WM updated Trustees on initial expressions of interest in joining Laurus Trust. There have been 20 school approaches in the last year.</p> <p>Currently leaders are currently in discussion with 3 primary schools and one has progressed to undertaking initial desktop due diligence.</p> <p><u>Application data</u> Trustees were given application numbers for Reception, Year 7 and Sixth Form places across the Trust.</p> <p>It was noted that there was a concern, nationally and locally, of primary school numbers lowering. This is not a concern to the Trust at this stage as all schools are currently oversubscribed.</p> <p>In terms of Sixth Forms the Director of Sixth Form and the Marketing team have worked tirelessly to promote the Sixth Forms across the Trust, in particular at DHS as all applicants will be external. The final numbers for each school will be known in August when the students enrol after receiving their GCSE results.</p> <p>Trustees discussed the number of applications for Laurus Ryecroft Sixth Form. In Tameside the culture is currently that students leave school and go to college for their post-16 education.</p> <p>Q – How do you change this mindset to attract students? A – The recent Ofsted report will certainly help and our Unashamedly Academic vision. There is work being done to show students that there is also a life beyond school within the Sixth Form.</p> <p>Q – How do you reach your audience? A – We have our marketing to our own students and also to external students. We have visited local secondary schools to present assemblies and to attend parents evenings.</p> <p>Q – Unashamedly Academic is what we are, but there is also our strength of pastoral care, how do we market this altogether to extend our proposition? A – When we receive an application we always give the student an interview and point out our full value proposition. We show all of the additional we can offer in terms of Electives and wider opportunities.</p>	
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			<p>Trustees will be given copies of the prospectus for each of the Sixth Forms at the next meeting.</p> <p>Reflected in the application data is that CHHS is obviously more well-known but Didsbury and Laurus Ryecroft will take time to establish and grow. This was the case when CHHS originally opened the Sixth Form.</p> <p>Trustees were interested to see that some Laurus students had applied to more than one of the Trust Sixth Forms, 2 students have applied to all 4.</p> <p><u>Expansion</u> Crown Street building is in progress and is due to open in September 2024. The Section 10 consultation for admissions is due to commence.</p> <p>Planning permission for Laurus Grace AP School was submitted 20th March 2023. There had been concerns from a number of local residents as to the type of students the school would be for and leaders have worked hard to reassure residents. Subject to planning permission it is anticipated that the school will open in January 2025.</p> <p>Three new Sixth Forms will open in September 2023 at HGHS following the rebuild, and DHS and Ryecroft.</p> <p>There have been expressions of interest from 3 primary schools, and if these were to progress, the schools would join the Trust from September 2024.</p> <p>Another local secondary school joining the Trust was discussed in detail at the last meeting. An updated document was circulated prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Leaders are in discussion with representatives from Stockport LA regarding funding for urgent projects at the school. Governing Body minutes suggest that funds had been allocated but LA minutes show that no funds have been committed and the school is not considered to be high on the list in terms of capital funds for building condition.</p> <p>There is basic needs funding available due to the number of places required. The school have agreed to take 15 more students above the PAN in every year for the next 5 years. It was been agreed that £1m funding will be given as a lump sum to be able to carry out essential work on the building.</p>	NB
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			<p>Q – To put into context what will the £1m funding cover?</p> <p>A – The results of the site condition survey reports anticipate the work required to be in the region of £3.4m. All of the work identified does need to be done and we are working to identify the priority work. We are still in discussion with Stockport LA regarding some of our other schools taking on additional pupil numbers above their PAN.</p> <p>There has also been funding of £1.3m to support a Resource Base for students with additional needs. Currently there are 8 students who will be coming into year 7 at the school in September 2023.</p> <p>CFO confirmed the Trust would be comfortable to proceed in terms of the capital funding committed, but that a big concern is the building needing to be safe and compliant by September. The LA have confirmed that the building will be handed over in a safe and compliant condition. Trustees were reassured to hear this. There is currently no ongoing inspection regime in place in the school and the Trust Estates team would plan to go into the school from May 2023 to establish the checks.</p> <p>Q – Are there expectations that the school will be a Trust style school and how do you manage those expectations?</p> <p>A – LM, DW and MV had attended an event for parents and reassured them that the building would be clean and there would be a new behaviour and pastoral structure in place. A big question from parents was “what will my child see?”</p> <p>Investment will happen to be able to deliver the curriculum, eg Media. There will also be painting of corridors and classrooms and lighting and ceiling tiles replaced. LM was honest with parents that the changes will not all happen overnight and will be ongoing.</p> <p>There will be a 100-day behaviour plan. Behaviour is the first issue to look into as this came out in the consultation as a big concern.</p> <p>A School Improvement Plan will be formulated and will focus on building element and staffing element. There will be appointments made to strengthen the leadership team of the school and key departments. WM will work on developing the plan and budget to be</p>	
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			<p>approved at the next meeting of the Audit, Finance and Resources Committee meeting in July.</p> <p>Q – How does taking on the new school compare to HGHS joining the Trust? A – We agree this is a bigger project than HGHS joining the Trust and parents are aware of this. Some of the key findings of the due diligence were shared with parents.</p> <p>Q – How do the teachers feel about their school? There are a large number of staff who have been at the school for a considerable length time. They have been blown away by the opportunities for FPL which will be available to them and are welcoming of the changes ahead.</p> <p>Q – Of the planned works, which will cost £3.4m, as stated earlier in the meeting, how much will be for the sports facilities? A – The Sports Centre is operated by Stockport LA and is used by the school during the day. The LA preference is that the school take over the running of the facility. The building is in a poor state of repair and a condition survey will be completed over the Easter holidays.</p> <p>Q – Will Stockport LA pay for the remedial work, will they RAG rate the works and format a 5-year plan? Is there any further information available to us regarding the urgent works and when they will do done? A – The reports commissioned will show what is absolutely critical at present. This will form part of the buildings being handed over in a safe and compliant condition.</p> <p>There has been no maintenance done to the school building for a number of years. For example, gutters have not been cleaned which have caused blockages and leaks. There are obviously jobs which are a bigger priority and maintenance will be done over time. Estates will be formulating an action plan for the maintenance works.</p> <p>A bid will be submitted to LFET for Electives, Apertura and sports facilities.</p> <p>Q – When the surveys are done, how invasive will they be? A – We are confident they will cover all spaces and will be done during the Easter holidays when the school is</p>	
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			<p>closed.</p> <p>Q – What happens if something is discovered later, is there any recourse?</p> <p>A – We can go back to Stockport LA. Funding has already been allocated to other Stockport schools for this year but we could open up a new discussion if it is not feasible to be done by September 2023.</p> <p>Q – Do we have liability insurance?</p> <p>A – Yes, anything after 1st September would be our issue but we will have our liability insurance.</p> <p>Ultimately the transfer of the school to the Trust will not happen until it has been signed off completely. Leaders are looking for a commitment to go ahead to be able to commence recruitment in the school.</p> <p>Q – Are you optimistic this can all be done by September?</p> <p>A – Ultimately it will be a 5-year plan. A budget will need to be completed before the July Audit, Finance and Resources Committee meeting. We may need to adjust our priorities and use some of our reserves, but reserves have been built for a school improvement project.</p> <p>Q – Will there be some capital costs to the Trust over the summer?</p> <p>A – Yes, for example IT will have to be in place ready for September. Equipment will need to be ordered in July.</p> <p>Subject to any further questions, Trustees took a vote to proceed and run a recruitment process and start the school improvement plan for the school to join the Trust.</p> <p>Q – What about the risk of management capacity to take the school into the Trust and carry out the school improvement plan?</p> <p>A – WM has a proposal for LM around Central Services team capacity. There is succession planning in place to backfill roles.</p> <p>All present <u>voted unanimously</u> to Priestnall School joining Laurus Trust.</p> <p><u>Social Media</u></p> <p>Trustees were pleased to note that the Trust social media channels currently had 25,514 followers across all the main accounts for schools and the Trust. If</p>	
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			<p>figures were to include sub brand accounts, for example individual year group accounts, then the total is likely to be over 30,000.</p> <p>Q – Where does the 30,000 come from? A – This has massively increased, following successful promotion of the schools and Trust on social media, from when we only had 2000 followers.</p> <p>Trustees asked for a more individual breakdown of social media followers at the next meeting of the Audit, Finance and Resources committee meeting in July.</p> <p><u>Sixth Forms</u> Application data for Laurus Trust Sixth Forms was circulated prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Q – Is Laurus Ryecroft Sixth Form going to be financially viable due to the lower application numbers? A – Not initially, but we are confident numbers will increase. Reserves have been built up to plan in advance for this.</p> <p>Trustees noted that the Trust Development plan was coming to the end of the 2-year period and would need to be reviewed in time for September 2023.</p>	<p>WM</p> <p>LW</p>
3	Holding to account	Ofsted inspections	<p>The Ofsted outcome reports for Laurus Ryecroft and CHPS, and the post inspection action plan for CHPS, were circulated prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Trustees were very proud of the achievements of both schools.</p> <p>Q – How can you assure Trustees that the support is there for Heads of School after inspection? A – Support is in place for Heads and this will be deferred to LM to discuss in more detail at the next meeting.</p> <p>Trustees recorded their thanks to both schools on the excellent outcome reports.</p>	<p>LM</p> <p>TL</p>

		<p>Safer Recruitment – DBS and Section 128 checks</p>	<p>DB confirmed to Trustees that all safer recruitment checks in are in place, including DBS, Section 128 and Right to Work.</p> <p>The QA and Safeguarding at scale document will be discussed in more detail at the July Trust Board meeting.</p> <p>SM indicated she would welcome a further discussion around previous employment references. It was agreed this would be covered when the Trust Director of HR presented to the Audit, Finance and Resources Committee meeting in July. Trust Director of HR would also be invited to the July meeting of the Trust Board for a further discussion around Safer Recruitment.</p> <p>The level of detail in references was briefly discussed and DB confirmed that any concerns are followed up and that the Trust will also request a third reference.</p>	<p>DB</p> <p>WM</p>
		<p>Policies</p>	<p>Trustees approved the following policies:</p> <p>Bullying and Harassment Policy Complaints Policy (Altius) Assessment, Feedback and Marketing Policy IT & Cybersecurity Acceptable Use Policy Managing Change and Employee Reductions Policy Minibus Policy CCTV Policy</p>	
4	<p>Ensuring financial probity</p>	<p>DfE Revenue Funding Settlement for next academic year</p>	<p>All statements have now been received. WM is in the process of checking the Sixth Form funding.</p> <p>Funding is in the region of 3% higher than last year but this figure does not take into account any unfunded pay awards. A more accurate projection will be done in the coming months.</p> <p>The support staff pay award is still in negotiation and when agreed will be backdated to April 2023.</p>	
5	<p>AOB</p>		<p>There were no other items of business to discuss at this meeting.</p>	
	<p>Meeting Dates:</p>	<p>Meeting dates to note:</p>	<p>TBM5 Wednesday 03.05.2023 at 10.00am TBM6 Wednesday 05.07.2023 at 10.00am</p> <p>Please could Trustees advise the Clerk, at the earliest opportunity, if they are unable to attend a meeting.</p>	

Meeting closed at 10.55am

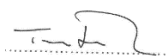
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Impact of Meeting / Key Outcomes
Chair of the Audit Finance and Resources Committee gave Trustees a brief overview of the March meeting
J Crombleholme was appointed as Primary Link Trustee
Trustees gave updates on their link visits
Safeguarding and SEND Record of Visit proformas were reviewed prior to being issued to Trustees and Academy Committees
Trust Board and Committee arrangements from September 2023 were reviewed and revised
Trustees were informed the Trust have been shortlisted for the Wellbeing Trust of the Year award. The awards ceremony will take place in London in June
WM updated Trustees on development approaches from other schools
Application data for all schools and Sixth Forms was reviewed
Trustees were updated on expansion opportunities across the Trust
Trustees voted unanimously to Priestnall School joining Laurus Trust from September 2023
The number of social media followers across the Trust was discussed
Ofsted outcomes at Cheadle Hulme Primary School and Laurus Ryecroft were reviewed. Trustees wished to record their thanks to Heads of Schools and their teams on the outcome reports
DB confirmed to Trustees that all safer recruitment checks were in place
Trustees approved 7 Trust level policies
WM confirmed that all funding statements have been received and budget planning is now taking place

Meeting closed at 10.55am



T Little
Chair of Trustees
03.05.2023