

MINUTES OF THE FULL TRUST BOARD MEETING
HELD ON THURSDAY 5th OCTOBER 2023 at 5.00pm
VENUE: FUTURE GENERATION TRUST CENTRAL OFFICE/ ZOOM

PRESENT: Fliss Dale (FD) – Chair (Zoom) Paul Woodhead (PW) - Vice Chair (Zoom)
Stuart Ayres (SA) - CEO/Accounting Officer Jan Macey (JM)
Chris Steel (CS) Hilary Southern (HS)
Mark Whitehouse - (MW) (Zoom) Lee Bowen (LB)
Peter Farrow (PF) Charlotte Martin (CM)

TOGETHER WITH: Tina Clark (TC) – Head of Operations and Facilities
Julie Burns (JB) – CFO, Director of Finance
Emma Joyce (EJ) – Trust Clerk
Marie Smith (MS) – Director of Education/ Headteacher Etching Hill Primary Academy

APOLOGIES: Natalie Boys (NB)

41.23 CHAIRS OPENING REMARKS

The Chair welcomed all Trustees to first meeting of the academic year.

42.23 APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received and were accepted from NB.

43.23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/ CONFIDENTIALITY

The Chair reminded Trustees of the need to inform the Chair or Clerk if there were any items on the agenda which could be deemed as a conflict of interest.

*LB declared an interest in agenda item 9. IT servers.
PF declared an interest in agenda item 9.IT servers.*

The Chair reminded Trustees of the need to maintain confidentiality. All attendees were reminded that all discussions that take place during the meeting remain confidential to that meeting.

44.23 PREVIOUS MINUTES - FULL TRUST BOARD - THURSDAY 13th JULY 2023

The minutes of the previous Full Trust Board meeting, held on 13th July 2023, having been circulated, were taken as **read** and **approved**.

45.23 ACTIONS RECORD UPDATE

The Clerk informed Trustees that the actions record will be reviewed in the December 2023 Full Board meeting.

The Chair informed Trustees that Mark Davies is the new Diocese Director of Education and stated that she would aim to arrange a meeting with Mark and HS. An update will be provided at the December 2023 full board meeting.

**CHAIR/HS
14 DEC**

46.23 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

The Clerk informed Trustees that it was necessary to appoint a Chair of the Trust Board for the 23/24 academic year. The Chair confirmed to Trustees that she would be happy to continue in the role if there were no further nominations.

The Clerk requested nominations for the position of Chair. There were no other nominations for the position of Chair.

All Trustees voted in favour of FD continuing as Chair for the 23/24 academic year.

The Clerk will ensure this re-appointment is updated on all relevant documents.

**CLERK
13.10**

47.23 APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR

The Clerk informed Trustees that it was necessary to appoint a Vice Chair of the Trust Board for the 23/24 academic year. PW had confirmed to the Clerk that he was happy to continue in the role of Vice Chair for the 23/24 academic year.

The Clerk requested any further nominations. There were no nominations and all. All Trustees voted in favour of PW continuing as Vice Chair role for the 23/24 academic year.

The Clerk will ensure this re-appointment is updated on all relevant documents.

**CLERK
13.10**

48.23 STRATEGY

Trustees had been provided with a report written by SA along with the meeting documentation.

SA took Trustees through the highlights of the report and stated that the trust strategy had been instrumental in allowing the Trust to be in the strong position it was in today. SA stated that to maintain the trust's sustainability it is imperative that we continue to grow. SA also stated that strong finances and good external scrutiny results are the trusts strongest components.

SA said that he was optimistic that the new classroom build at Etching Hill will progress during the 23/24 academic year, along with improvements to the car park of St. John's and the extension to the Central Office building to support growth.

17.09pm PW joined the meeting via Zoom

The Chair invited questions from Trustees.

CM stated that she supports the Strategy and stated that the growth of the Central Team will be key to support the growth of the trust.

SA stated that the top slice is sufficient for the current Central Team costs, and further growth of the Trust would fund future expansion.

CM asked SA if there is an expected number of academies to join during the 23/24 and 24/25 academic year to support growth?

SA said that there was not a set number of academies but in his view, if the trust looked to introduce 'good' schools then there would not be an issue with adding a further two schools this academic year. SA provided Trustees with an update on discussions which are currently ongoing with schools interested in joining.

The Chair stated that whilst the trust have been rightly cautious in previous years of accelerating growth too soon, she feels the current interested schools have strong finances along with good estates and stated that she would support these schools joining FGT if the opportunity arises.

MW asked SA to explain the reasons why a trust could be asked to merge?

SA provided his view on the instances which could occur.

JM asked if there were any further plans for [REDACTED] to join FGT?

SA provided Trustees with an update, stating that they had recently received an Ofsted inspection and the result of 'good' had been achieved.

PW asked if there was any other interest from schools outside of the three schools already discussed?

SA stated that there had been tentative discussions with Headteachers however these had not as of yet developed into further plans.

The Chair invited SA to give Trustees further information of the requirement of a trust having a minimum of 3000+ pupils to be secure.

SA informed Trustees that if a Trust have 3000+ pupils they are unable to apply for CIF funding on an annual basis but are allocated condition funding each academic year. This would allow FGT to introduce a planned and co-ordinated approach towards developing our estate.

PF asked what our current pupil numbers are?

JB confirmed that our current pupil numbers are around 1800.

No further questions were asked in relation to the Strategy Update.

Trustees **agreed to accept** the Strategy update.

49.23 CEO SUCCESSION

A report had been provided to Trustees along with the meeting documentation.

The Chair took Trustees through the reasons for the report and invited SA to take Trustees through the key points.

SA stated that following discussions during the summer term meeting the current Central team structure was working well.

SA stressed that his view is that the new CEO should have a 'teaching' background, and he recommends that the process of recruitment begins early as there is currently difficulties evident in recruiting CEO's to Trust roles.

JM asked SA for his views on why there are difficulties with recruiting for a CEO in the education sector.

SA provided his views to Trustees and reiterated that by beginning the process early we have the best chance of being successful.

PF asked SA if current CEO vacancies across other Trusts are receiving applications from applicants with a teaching background?

SA stated that as mentioned previously, he believes there seems to be a lack of applications across the board.

CM stated that the job description should be written carefully to ensure the culture of FGT comes across and whilst she agrees a 'teaching' background is advantageous we should ensure that we are open to consider all backgrounds.

CM asked if there has been any benchmarking completed on the expected salary?

SA confirmed that there has been a survey undertaken by Browne Jacobson/CST and this information can be shared with Trustees/ the recruitment panel.

**SA
Next Mtg**

PF asked what the contingency would be should there be no suitable candidates?

SA stated that he believes if we adopt the recruitment module outlined in the report provided then there is a strong chance we will be successful in recruiting a suitable candidate.

CM asked SA if he was aware of any recruitment specialist in the field / head hunters?
SA stated that he has received communication from a few and would share this information with CM to allow for her to undertake research on their suitability.

**SA/CM
SPRING
TERM**

The Chair stated that with the above research, we would be in a position if there were no suitable candidates coming forward to consider involving recruitment specialists to support the recruitment process.

The Chair asked all Trustees if they were happy with the proposed timeline outlined within the report. This was agreed by all Trustees.

**MS stated that she recommends that LGB's/Chairs of LGB's are involved and informed of the process to ensure they are fully aware of the plans in place.
JB recommended that this should also include Trust staff.**

CM supported the views of MS & JB and stated that there should be a Communication Strategy developed during the recruitment planning process.

The Chair stated that a recruitment panel needs to be agreed. The Chair proposed that this should include both CM and MW due to their backgrounds in recruitment and employee law.

CM proposed that the recruitment panel also includes the Chair, and consideration should also be given on whether SA or MS are also involved.

This proposal was agreed by all Trustees. It was confirmed that the CEO Recruitment Panel will consist of:

1. The Chair
2. CM
3. MW

It was proposed by LB that should there be a tie during the appointment decision, that the Chair will take the casting vote.

The Chair requested that the Clerk should arrange a meeting for the panel which is in line with the proposed timeline set out on the report.

**CLERK
16.11**

No further questions were asked by Trustees.

Trustees **agreed to accept** the CEO Succession report.

50.23 IT SERVERS

A report had been provided to Trustees along with the meeting documentation which outlined the proposal to replace servers across the trust.

LB provided Trustees with an overview of the process and requirements for the trust.

The Chair stated that following her reading of the report it was her view that a cloud based solution is where the trust needs to go.

LB stated that he would share the view of the Chair but informed Trustees that a cloud based solution heavily relies on a suitable and sufficient internet feed coming into the academies and therefore there should be a second project to look at this in the future,

SA informed Trustees that [REDACTED] have agreed if we proceed to move forward with St. Peter's, should there be any issues arise we can decide to not continue with the contract to roll out to other academies.

CM asked if [REDACTED] support any other educational settings?

LB confirmed that they currently do not.

CM asked what we currently pay for existing servers/support.

MS stated that at Etching Hill this was around [REDACTED] annually.

CM stressed that it will be imperative to ensure that should we proceed with [REDACTED] that they comply with all data protection and security requirements.

LB & PF left the room to allow for a vote on the proposal to take place.

The Chair asked Trustees to vote on whether they support the proposal to go forward with [REDACTED] replacing the server at St. Peter's to a cloud based system.

This was agreed unanimously by all Trustees remaining within the room (i.e. excluding LB & PF)

LB & PF re-entered the room.

The Chair thanked LB on behalf of all Trustees for his work in supporting this project.

No further questions were asked by Trustees.

Trustees **agreed to accept** the IT Server report.

51.23 GOVERNANCE ADMINISTRATION

Trustees were provided with a report along with the meeting documentation written by the Clerk.

Trustees were asked to approve the appointment of Sarah Cotton-Diederich as Chair of LGB at Etching Hill.

This was agreed by all Trustees.

Trustees were asked to approve the re-appointment of Steve Woods as Chair of LGB at Moat Hall.

This was agreed by all Trustees.

The Clerk will ensure LGB Clerks of Etching Hill and Moat Hall are informed of the approval of their LGB Chairs appointments.

**CLERK
13.10**

Those Trustees still to sign their Code of Conduct 23/24 and complete their Business & Pecuniary Interest forms were asked to hand these to the Clerk.

**ALL
13.10**

PW provided Trustees with an update on the LGB Chair network group which had met for the first time on 25th September 2023. PW stated that further updates will be provided in future meetings.

No further questions were asked by Trustees.

Trustees **agreed to accept** the Governance Administration update.

52.23 APPROVAL OF TERMS OF REFERENCE – CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

Trustees had been provided with a ‘tracked changes’ version of the Curriculum Committee Terms of Reference.

PW took Trustees through the reasons for the updated version, and informed Trustees that ‘other’ committee members will be sought, which will consist of one LGB member and one trust SLT member.

CM stated that the proposed change to the terms of reference and the introduction of ‘other’ committee members seems sensible, pragmatic and in her view leverages the use of talent across and for trust academies.

All Trustees agreed to the proposed terms of reference.

SA asked the Clerk to review the reference to the Trust RE policy in the proposed draft before a final copy is saved.

No further questions were asked by Trustees.

Trustees **agreed to accept** the Terms of Reference – Curriculum Committee update.

**CLERK
10.10**

53.23 DIVERSITY INDICATORS

The Clerk had provided the Trust Diversity Indicators data to Trustees along with the meeting documentation. The Clerk asked Trustees to confirm whether they were happy for the data to be shared on the trust website and stated that this was not seen as a statutory requirement but best practice.

It was agreed by all Trustees to share the data on the trust website and the Clerk will arrange for the information to be added.

No further questions were asked by Trustees.

Trustees **agreed to accept** the Link Trustee reports.

**CLERK
20.10**

54.23 FGT POLICIES

The Clerk had provided Trustees with a FGT Policies Update report along with the meeting documentation.

The Clerk took Trustees through the key points of the report which outlined the three policies requiring approval. The Clerk asked Trustees to confirm if they were happy to approve the three policies provided for review.

Trustees **agreed to approve** the policies. The Clerk will arrange for the policies to be distributed to academies where relevant and updated on the FGT website/ intranet.

No further questions were asked by Trustees.

Trustees **agreed to accept** the FGT Policies update.

**CLERK
20.10**

55.23 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Teacher’s Pay

JB informed Trustees that an email had been received from the trust’s payroll provider to outline their preferred process for providing the Teacher pay increases.

These proposals would be subject to final government approval of the pay awards which is expected at the beginning of November. The recommended proposal is to provide Teachers with the normal increment rise of 6.5% with their November pay

which would be backdated to September 2023, and then the performance related incremental rises for relevant employees would be provided in teachers December pay.

JB stated that SA and MS had been informed of this proposal prior to the meeting and were in support of the proposal for the teachers.

This proposal was **agreed** by all Trustees.

JB will liaise with the trusts payroll provider to move forward with the proposal.

JB
06.11

Central Office extension project

SA stated that as previously mentioned earlier in the meeting under agenda item 7. Strategy, there are plans to extend the Central Office to increase space for expanding the Central Team.

This proposal was **agreed** by all Trustees.

56.23 NEXT MEETINGS

16th November - Pay Committee 5pm (FD, MW, CM)

16th November - Finance & Resources Committee (following Pay Committee)

7th December - Audit & Risk Committee meeting 5.30pm

14th December - AGM 5.30pm

14th December - Full Board meeting (following AGM)

The meeting ended at 18.25pm

Signed:

Date: