



An Daras Trust
Igniting Curiosity Growing Capabilities

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CEO: W. T. Hermon

22/03/2023

Minutes
Full Board of Directors Spring Meeting
Wednesday 22nd March 2023 at 9.30am at ADMAT Central Office

1. Welcome and Apologies

Present: Steve Tavener (Chair), Trudy Rudge (Vice), Graeme Barriball, Jon Sharpe, Ian Wilkinson, Claire Paul, Peter Hague, Margaret Savage, Gillian Shippides

In Attendance: Emma Gilbert (CFO), Jo Callow (Ex Officio), Toni Martin (Governance Officer)

In Attendance for Item 1-5 only: Clare Kendle (Education Governance Lead Diocese of Truro)

2. Declarations of Interest/Pecuniary Interests relevant to this Agenda

None declared relevant to this declaration.

3. Confirm Minutes of previous full Board meeting (12th December 2022) and matters arising

- Complete cyber training (all directors). *All complete.*
- Letter to Devon LA from trust board re speed limit outside LT (WH/ST). Letters written to Parish Council who are now lobbying the relevant authorities. It is unlikely to change the speed limit but may lead to a car activated speed prompt.

No actions from confidential minutes. The Board agreed the minutes and a copy was signed by the Chair.

4. Confirm Minutes of previous Extra-Ordinary full Board Meeting (27th February 2023)

Meeting to determine admission arrangements for 2024-2025. No actions. The Board agreed minutes and a copy was signed by the Chair.

5. Update from Diocese of Truro Education Team

Clare Kendle provided an update from the Diocese of Truro Education team including their role, the links and how we work together, school-based leads, foundation directors, corporate members, foundation governors and training, recruitment, and useful member updates. The presentation was made available to Directors for future reference. **You noted an interim Director of Education, but when will that be a permanent position?** It is hoped that this will be sooner than later. WH noted his thanks to Katie Fitzsimmons for help over the last few years.

CK departed the meeting.

6. MAT Vision & Values

Directors met in a Trust Vision and Strategic planning working group on 18th Jan 23. It is noted that Trust Vision of Igniting Curiosity, Growing Capabilities as a strap line is still deemed relevant. Agreed that it is useful to review vision et al annually, but it should not need a whole sale change regularly

or else it probably wasn't suitable in the first place. Trust ethos incorporates Christian Distinctiveness. The trust theological inspiration is 'Act justly, love constantly, live humbly' (OT/Micah 6v8) and 'love your neighbour just as much as you love yourself (NT/Luke 10:25-37 Parable of the Good Samaritan). Current Trust mission 'the growth of capability mature children who are positively engaged, compassionate, competent young people conscious of the part they play in society, who are curious about the world around them and their place in it'. Trust capability curriculum elements; determination, managing feelings, confidence and advocacy, communication, relationships and leadership, creativity [to become part of the 'Lived Experience'?].

Moving on from this working group, further work has been done. WH noted the proposed standardisation of terminology across the schools – Vision, Values, Lived Experience and gave an example of how this might look on a single piece of paper. The schools are conducting a 'light' review of their own vision and values in that none of them need a complete overhaul but a review. A director gave feedback, thanked the trust for the work on this as it is not always so coherent in other trusts and also **noted that it is key that policies link in with the vision and values**. The Board were very content with the work that is being done and the draft new formats. **It is also key that it is imperative that vision and values is communicated at all levels to ensure everyone is working together on the this**. TM noted the governor training session in the summer term on vision and values.

7. Confidential Matters

Trust improvement matters were discussed and recorded at confidential minutes.

8. CEO Report to Board

The report was available to the directors prior to the meeting along with a number of appendices as further evidence. WH took questions from the Board:

Any improvements on attendance and what are we doing about it? WH acknowledged there has been some improvement but noted where attendance has been lower. **What are the main causes of low attendance?** Winter illness, repeat illnesses, longer term illnesses and in some cases, it is lateness, where a child is in school but if they are late, it affects the attendance figures. MS noted that she will unpick attendance issues with the Chair of SSCA LGB at a forthcoming meeting. The directors discussed various issues with illness, cost of living leading to taking holidays out of season to save money, the feeling among some parents that attendance is less important since the children had so much time off over lockdown and other factors. It was recognised that this is a national problem and the trust is going what it feasibly can to improve attendance.

Has there been any improvements on the progress measures and what is the implications for An Daras if this is not improved? WH noted it is a trend over time that is more damaging to the Trust but measures are in place to improve this. He also explained that at SC, for example, they reached good attainment at Yr 6, but the progress of those children from KS1 to KS2 was not as good as it should have been. Some of this across all schools can be partially put down to covid lockdowns, absence, mobility and in some schools, very small numbers which makes the data statistically unreliable. It is recognising the issues and dealing with them that is important and this may vary across the schools.

9. Improvement Plan & Improvement Partnerships

Partnerships covered in item 7. Nothing else to discuss regarding the trust improvement plan has been covered at every committee meeting.

10. Latest Monthly Management Accounts/Current Budget

EG gave a short update on the current management accounts and aside from a few minor issues, the trust is currently on budget. Management accounts for January will be out soon, including the dash-

board. **Will this show the impact of the additional staff costs?** It was agreed that it would. The impact of potential further staff costs were discussed, especially if trusts/schools are directed to find them from within their budgets.

Finance Decisions from Audit Committee

Energy Contract

The latest energy contract offers were provided to Directors and they were notified of the latest costs from the broker.

Firstly, the gas contract costs were discussed and there are 12-month (£33.3K per annum) and 24-month (£34K per annum) options. The latter being slightly more expensive as it is fixed for 2 years. Directors considered that a fixed term contract would protect the trust from any further rises in costs but it also wouldn't allow the trust to exploit any reduction in costs. **As the future picture is unclear, Directors decided to go with the 12-month contract which would allow for fixed costs and secure budget planning in the short term, but allow a re-negotiation in the near future, should prices change for the better.**

Secondly, the electric contract costs were discussed and there are 12-month (£89.2K per annum) and 24-month (£93.7K per annum) options. The latter being slightly more expensive as it is fixed for 2 years. Directors considered that a fixed term contract would protect the trust from any further rises in costs but it also wouldn't allow the trust to exploit any reduction in costs. **As the future picture is unclear, Directors decided to go with the 12-month contract which would allow for fixed costs and secure budget planning in the short term, but allow a re-negotiation in the near future, should prices change for the better.**

Governor Resources Contract

TM presented a number of potential options for external leadership and governance support/resources available to the trust, the comparison of costs and the pros and cons. **The Board agreed with TM's recommendation that this year, the trust should sign up to services provided by The Key at a cost of £2717.28**

Catering Contract

The catering contract information was provided to Directors. After going out to tender, and conducted due diligence, there is now only one potential provider remaining. EG talked through the details, timings and how this potential company will operate. This was discussed in detail by the board. **Do they have a robust system in place for dealing with allergies?** Yes, this is part of their package. **In order to provide some comparison of costs, the Chair asked for comparison of the new contract with current costs.** Annual cost of new contract is £214K compared to current contract of £207K but there are some cost discrepancies which makes the latter more difficult to be accurate on, and it is expected in the current climate that costs will have increased. Also there have been many issues with the current contract. **Have we got any references regarding the new provider?** No formal references but good feedback from other trusts. **Is this 3-year contract at a fixed cost for the next 3 years?** That is the intention, there may be some slight amendments due to cost of food out with the contractor's control. **Directors decided that catering for the trust should be covered by the new contractor Aspens. The CFO will action this.**

Risk Register Allocation of Funding to Risks

WH noted the risk register has been recently updated. Discussion was had on allocating funding to the top 3 risks. (1) Changes to external landscape to education – difficult to manage and identify a figure to put against this, so not considered useful to do so; (2) Critical incident that impacts our ability to operate, this could be allocated funding to deal with an immediate response, especially as the amount is likely to be outside the financial authority of the CEO or CFO. (3) Loss of key leadership

at short notice but this can be covered by insurance and good management of the current leadership.

The board discussed that any agreed funding of risks will come from the reserves. **It was suggested that the reserves policy is amended to ring fence an agreed amount of funds against the critical incident risk. It was proposed that 30K ring fenced and the Board agreed. Amended reserve policy to be presented to the Summer Term FRS committee meeting on 12th June 2023.**

Finally, annual letter to trust's accounting officer from ESFAs accounting officer to be shared with full Board – not yet received.

11. Audited Accounts Action

- Ensure accounts/annual report published on trust website by 31 Jan – **complete**
- Ensure accounts presented to Trust Members – **complete at General Meeting 14 Mar 23**
- Ensure accounts filed with Companies House by 31 May (for financial year ending 31 Aug 22) – **complete, filed on 22 Dec 22**

12. Financial Scheme of Delegation

No changes required at present and approved. However, it was noted that in light of the ring fencing of funds from the reserves for critical incident mentioned in item 10, it maybe necessary to review this again. **Action: FRS to review Financial Scheme of Delegation in light of the ring fencing of reserves for a critical incident, and if any changes, present to the full Board on 12th July for approval.**

13. Financial Benchmarking

As per the Academies Trust Handbook and School Resource Self Assessment, the trust is required to benchmark data, staffing costs and finances against external data. At this point there would normally be discussion about benchmarking trust data and finances against other external data. However, there is currently no suitable benchmarking data available with which to do this.

14. Receive Latest Findings of Internal Scrutiny

Report not yet received yet from internal auditors. More comprehensive process this time, once the report has been received, we will have a chance to respond and then it will be presented to the Summer Audit committee. This is already on the cyclical plan for the summer term audit committee.

15. Actions from Committees

- LSS – None.
- FRS – School Resource Self-Assessment Tool. This was seen by Audit committee as it had to be sent to ESFA on 15 March 2023. No issues to report.
- Audit – see finance decisions in item 10.
- LGBs – SSCA minibus use was mentioned to improve absence figures but this will be discussed in further detail between MS and Chair of SSCA LGB before taking forward.
- Governance Support – MS has met with the Chair of LGB and WH, and then attended the LGB main meeting this term, and is due to meet with the Chair & Vice later this week for a one on one to unpick some of the improvement plan and to look at where governors could improve their challenge. **Given the inconsistencies in numbers and skills at LGBs, is our current model of LGBs sustainable?** WH noted that while it does take a lot of work with regards to recruiting, training and support at the moment, it is sustainable. TM feels that some governors may not wish to stay if a hub model is adopted, and that there will also be work involved in sustaining that model but perhaps for different reasons. The Board agreed that the aim to stay with LGBs if at all possible in future.

16. Complaints and Compliments

WH noted a couple of minor complaints regarding a parent and an accident at school. Both have been or are being resolved.

17. AOB

None.

A visit plan for Director's visits to schools has been disseminated by TM to Directors. More details for each one will be sent nearer the time. ST, TR, PH, IW, MS and GS are visiting CG after this meeting.

18. Date of next meeting

Date of next main meeting is Wednesday 12th July 2023 at 9.30am at central office.

The meeting closed at 11.30am

TJH Martin
Governance Officer

Distribution List:

W. Hermon – CEO Director	J. Sharpe – Director
S. Tavener – Director (Chair)	I. Wilkinson – Director
T. Rudge – Director (Vice)	G. Shippies – Foundation Director
G. Barriball – Director	M. Savage – Director
P. Hague – Director	E. Gilbert – CFO
C. Paul – Director	J. Callow – Ex Officio Observer