



**An Daras Trust**  
Igniting Curiosity Growing Capabilities

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CEO: W. T. Hermon

05/03/2025

### Minutes

**Finance, Resources & Staffing Committee Spring 2025**  
**Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> March 2025 at 9.30am at central office/hybrid**

**1. Welcome and Apologies**

**Present:** Jon Sharpe, Steve Tavener (via zoom), Peter Hague, Claire Paul, Will Hermon

**Not Present:** Ian Wilkinson

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

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

None declared.

**3. Minutes of previous FRS Autumn (2<sup>nd</sup> October 2024) and matters arising**

- Elect committee Chair at full Board (TM). *Complete, JS elected.*
- Payroll policy carry forward to Audit committee (EG). *Policy not ready so carried forward to this meeting. See item 11*
- No actions from the confidential minutes.

Committee agreed the minutes and the Chair signed a copy.

**4. Confidential Agenda Items**

Retirement, payroll and restructuring matters were discussed and recorded at confidential minutes.

**5. MAT Improvement Plan**

Finance elements have been updated and this year is a transition year because of the Duchy finances when they joined this trust.

**6. Review Current Finance**

**a. Income and Expenditure Against Planned Budget**

Latest management accounts provided to directors. WH noted it could look better but there is some cash that we have not yet received but will soon, and the auditors insisted that the finances are recorded in this way so it looks like a deficit with regard to things like the TCAF payments. WH and EG discussed some other impacts on the accounts; transfer implications, IT investment and absence costs – the latter of which are very much higher than last year and higher than expected, and it is localised to certain schools. There also needs to be rationalisation of support staff across the new schools. **Given the inherited budget from Duchy, how do we ensure that the budgeting going forward is more accurate?** EG explained how the software and processes in place will ensure this happens. Various points of detail were discussed. SEND funding was discussed.

- b. **Measure Budget Against Financial KPIs**  
Covered above.
- c. **Virements and other transactions in accordance with the MAT Financial Regulations and Scheme of Delegation**  
None.
- d. **Approval of Expenditure of Sums over agreed Financial Regulations**  
None, less any previously agreed CIF payments.

## 7. Future Finance and Finance Compliance

### a. KPIs

The following were **potential KPIs were discussed for inclusion in next year's budget and will be discussed further at FRS 1 next term:**

- Reduction of costs in central office
- Reduction in costs at Cal
- Reduction in premises costs and support staff in new schools
- Look for reductions in all contracts
- Assess catering costs – contractor versus in house
- Look at falling rolls and staffing structure

### b. Benchmarking

The committee considered benchmarking data against other local schools and it was agreed that our schools were in line with others during the last academic year, but Wer costs are worth further investigation.

School Resource Management Checklist has been completed and will be submitted to full Board for information.

### c. Contracts

Following a discussion on confidential payroll matters, the **Directors agreed to use EduPay as the payroll software** instead of PSP, and this will be migrated to as soon as possible.

Three-year contract for the accounting system was discussed. It was agreed that at least 2 other quotes are required to comply with financial regulations and ensure good value. EG noted that changing systems, which is an option in future, will require much work to implement as it isn't a simple switch from one to the other. **Action: Consider other quotes at FRS 1 and make a decision on the accounting system so this can be included in the budget and the contract renewed/taken up.**

There was a discussion regarding supply insurance and the directors considered and discussed the first quote to be received. It was agreed that we should look at this in more detail, compare our position from last year and also look at other quotes.

**Action: supply insurance for discussion at FRS 1 next term (EG)**

WH noted quotes for electricity; the directors compared the annual price over a 1, 2 or 3 year contract and noted the annual costs are not that different. These quotes have already been benchmarked against other quotes. **It was agreed that due to the current political environment and that it is unlikely to reduce in cost, that the 3-year contract should be taken for stability and will allow effective budgeting in the short term.**

WH noted quotes for gas; the directors compared the annual price over 1, 2 or 3 years. The yearly price over 3 years is cheaper and again this allows for stability. **It was agreed that the 3-year contract should be taken.**

**8. Staff Structure and Budgets**

Restructuring at Cal was discussed and recorded at confidential minutes. Central staff costs already discussed. There is a need to look at structures in all schools due to falling roll numbers, in particular the town schools. WH noted a few forthcoming changes. It was noted that there needs to be a review of structure at each school with staffing implications at the start of the summer term, in a series of short working groups with JC and the relevant Head.

**Action: full Board 2 volunteers to sit on working groups to look at each school structure.**

**9. Succession Plan Review**

The updated succession plan was given to the committee and discussed briefly. It was agreed that at the full Board, volunteers will be sought to sit on a small working group (as before) to discuss the succession plan in more depth with JC and WH.

**Action: full Board 2 volunteers to sit on working group to look at succession plan.**

**10. Premises & Infrastructure**

H&S exceptions reports sent out – issues in premises known about, other than Cal, there are no major projects that require expenditure. The work of the Trust caretaker was discussed. **Where are we with CIF bids?** Still a little work being done from previous ones, some bids have gone in but unlikely to get them this time around.

There isn't a formal plan for IT drawn up yet. There are a lot of factors to consider. Upgrades from windows 10 (which will no longer be supported in future by windows) will be a factor and some hardware may not support anything above windows 10. **Will ICT 4 help with this?** They have completed school audits. It was agreed that **a 5 year plan with costs is needed for the FRS 1 so that this can be considered in the budget.**

**11. Policy Review**

- a. Charging & Remissions (MB) – *no changes. Approved.*
- b. Payroll (EG). EG explained that the staff handbook already includes what is required, but there will be a link in the existing staff and support staff pay policies. There is no need for a separate payroll policy.

**12. AOB**

The ERG governance review report was briefly discussed including the cost.

PH has completed the cyber training.

PH was requested to do the finance directors report with EG next term.

**13. DONM**

Summer Term FRS 1 (Budget only) – Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> May 2025 and FRS 2 (normal agenda) – Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2025, both at 9.30am at central office.

Meeting closed at 11.15 hrs.

TJH Martin  
Governance Officer

**Distribution List:**

J. Sharpe – Director (Chair)  
S. Tavener – Director (Vice)  
P. Hague – Director  
C. Paul – Director  
I. Wilkinson - Director  
W. Hermon – CEO Director  
E. Gilbert – CFO  
J. Callow – Ex Officio Observer