



An Daras Trust
Igniting Curiosity Growing Capabilities

Central Office
Unit 4 Tamar Business Park
Pennygillam Way
Pennygillam Industrial Estate
Launceston
PL15 7ED
01566 777503
Email: governance@andaras.org

CEO: W. T. Hermon

02/10/2024

Minutes

Finance, Resources & Staffing Committee – Autumn 2024
Wednesday 2nd October 2024 at 9.30am at central office/hybrid

1. Welcome and Apologies/Trust Identity Reminder

Present: Peter Hague, Gill Shippides, Claire Paul, Will Hermon

Present online: Steve Tavener

Apologies accepted: Ian Wilkinson (working in London), Jon Sharpe (illness)

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

In the absence of the Chair, and with the Vice Chair joining remotely, PH agreed to Chair the meeting but as he needs to leave at 10.30am, if the meeting continues thereafter GS will take over as chair.

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

None relevant to this agenda.

3. Governance Code of Conduct

Directors signed a register agreeing to abide by Code of Conduct (this needs to be done regularly and in light of the newly reviewed Code of Conduct 2024). Remaining signatures will be obtained at Audit and Full Board.

4. Elect Committee Chair

As JS is not here presently, it was suggested that this decision is deferred to the full Board, when hopefully JS will have returned and a decision can be made on who chairs the FRS. TM will seek the thoughts of JS in between and requested anyone else wishing to volunteer to chair the committee to make themselves known to her. **Action full Board**

5. Minutes of previous FRS Spring (15th May 2024) and matters arising

- Consider use of capital spending to reduce expenditure elsewhere – update at autumn term meeting (EG). *Ongoing, done whenever it can be. The committee discussed what capital spending can be used for, including IT infrastructure.*
- Duchy Accounts – external auditors to conduct a specific audit and solicitors consulted on this matter (EG/WH). *Duchy accounts are being externally audited presently, up to end of April, which will finalise their accounts up to that period. Then it is proposed that Griffin will take the results of that audit and do a deep dive on the specific question why the finances changed from pre-transfer to post transfer. Otherwise we will be paying Griffin to do an audit that is already being done, when we want them to focus on something very specific. This was discussed at length and ST confirmed that the question is simple; how is it that the pre-transfer accounts are so different to post transfer accounts (@£250K deficit)? He reiterated that this does need to be answered.*

The committee agreed the minutes, including confidential minutes and the Chair signed a copy.

6. Confidential Agenda Items

Staffing and premises matters were discussed and recorded in the confidential minutes.

7. Transfer Matters

None requiring discussion at this time.

8. MAT Improvement Plan

WH noted the correct use of the TCAF funding and the first claim has been made for @£70K. All this has been accounted for in terms of processes and invoices (staffing, training, new systems). Second claim will be Mar/April 2025. The Callington server, IT infrastructure and changes in finance/budgeting systems (such as IMP) and payroll were discussed. Payroll system contract is due to end and EG has been looking at other options (Edupay and PSF options). Awaiting to see the PSF option viability before deciding as this has not been implemented yet and we need to see if it is suitable. It was discussed that the current payroll system will have been used for 3 years this December. **Can we use a system that has some longevity?** This will be looked at as longevity would certainly be useful.

9. Review Current Finance

a. Income and Expenditure Against Planned Budget

WH reiterated that staffing costs sit at @80% and there is not much wiggle room in that. EG was asked to unpick the staffing costs for September 2024 to see how we are doing against the budget set. It was noted that more of the teacher pay rise will be funded by the government than was originally thought. Some of the figures show costs from staff absence. It was noted that there is a pot of £80K set aside to cover staff absence (instead of paying for insurance, as agreed at previous meeting) – some of this will be allocated to offset some of the additional staff costs at schools due to absence. **Would the 2 smaller schools (Lewannick and Boyton) have done better on the Ofsted inspection if they had the finances to spend on staff and covering sickness?** Certainly a consideration but there will have been other factors.

WH discussed each school and some of the issues with staffing. He confirmed this analysis will be done every month. **Can we be sure that if we restructure schools for savings that the schools then won't just keep using agency staff at extra cost, otherwise it will end up being more expensive?** WH discussed this and confirmed that where agency staff have to be used to cover absence, it will be taken from the absence pot. Good absence management is part of this and HR are ensuring that schools are managing absence properly and as per our policies. Overall the additional costs are based around staff absence, agency staff and difficulty in recruiting. **Has the variance taken account of additional government funding?** EG explained and noted that this additional funding can be fed into next month's staffing cost analysis.

The committee reviewed a list of assumptions against the planned budget and this is recorded at confidential minutes.

PH had to leave the meeting and GS took over as Chair.

b. Measure Budget Against Financial KPIs

A brief discussion on some of the costs from last year that will be kept under last year's accounts so there is no knock-on effect to this financial year.

Regarding the nursery costs, is it financially viable to bring in additional 2 year olds, if there isn't the staff to manage it and we have to pay for agency?

All nursery funding goes into a central pot and is allocated to each pre-school as required, while keeping this funding specifically for pre-schools. This will ensure all pre-schools can be managed when numbers increase and decrease. It was agreed preschools are important as feeder to our schools sometimes we have to consider 'short term pain for long term gain'.

c. **Virements and other transactions in accordance with the MAT Financial Regulations and Scheme of Delegation**

None to report.

d. **Approval of Expenditure of Sums over agreed Financial Regulations**

Only payments are CIF bid payments – currently fire systems at SC, LT & PT – Finance Director has signed these off. Fencing at SSCA nearly finished.

10. **Future Finance and Finance Compliance**

a. **Income Generation for MAT**

Relatively little on additional income this year. **Is it worth applying for grants locally?** It was noted that lottery grants and Tesco grants have been applied for previously. GS offered to put a list of options together and apply for any that seem worth doing so for the trust.

b. **Funding Agreement or ATH Updates**

Still working to current ATH until new one issued. WH noted the schedule of musts from the ATH – this has been updated and evidenced. **What is happening with the external review of governance?** The ERG has a scoping meeting on 21 Oct and will continue through the rest of the term. It is being done by the NGA consultant at a cost of £6.5K. The draft trustees report was produced for the committee. Directors were requested to let EG & WH know of any amendments by the end of the week so the draft can be submitted to the external auditors.

11. **Staff Performance Management & Pay**

WH noted the updated new Staff Appraisal guidance from the DfE. We were expecting a new approach but this document is the same as before (and for the last 10 years) which is disappointing. The only thing that has changed is that targets are no longer linked to pay awards. So, our PM processes will remain the same for now.

12. **Premises & Infrastructure**

Ensure capital project priorities established and delegation defined, approve recommendations to BoD for further expenditure/bids for capital funding projects.

WH noted a few premises matters that are being looked at such as the Launceston pre-school building, potential CIF bids and land matters. **Do we own all the land with the 3 new schools?** Most of Callington yes, but Boyton and Lewannick are on LA lease. **Is there an update on the potential land at Werrington?** WH gave an update.

13. **Policy Review**

- a. Lettings (SC) – no changes. Approved.
- b. Performance Management & Capability (WH) – no changes. Approved.
- c. Early Career Teacher (WH) – no changes. Approved.
- d. Pension Discretions (EG) – new policy. Approved. Review period of 3 years going forward.
- e. Payroll (EG) – new policy not yet ready, **carry forward to Audit committee 4th Dec 24.**

14. **AOB**

None.

15. **DONM**

Next meeting will be Weds 5th March 2025 at the central office.

Meeting closed at 11.10am

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