



An Daras Trust
Igniting Curiosity Growing Capabilities

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CEO: W. T. Hermon

20/03/2024

Minutes
Full Board of Directors Spring Meeting
Wednesday 20th March 2024 at 9.30am at ADMAT Central Office

1. Welcome and Apologies

Present: Steve Tavener, Peter Hague, Claire Paul, Jon Sharpe, Ian Wilkinson, Gill Shippides, Margaret Savage, Will Hermon

Apologies: Graeme Barriball

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

2. Declarations of Interests relevant to this Agenda

None declared relevant to this agenda.

3. Confirm Minutes of previous full Board meeting (13th December 2023) and matters arising

- It was noted that although there are peaks and troughs, the financial viability of pre-schools over time is sustainable. **A review of summer pre-school figures for comparison at next board (JC).** By way of an update, the latest picture is fairly secure. All are viable, including the smallest ones. The one that struggles slightly is the Launceston Pre-School because of the building costs. JC gave an update and a discussion was had on the potential of moving the pre-school to the WHA site and selling the building. **Propose a feasibility study for moving the pre-school; an evaluation on Launceston Pre-school and an in-depth survey for potential building work at WHA (JC)**
- Financial Policy with GAG pooling section added for review by FRS (EG). *The Gag pooling section will now be included in the Reserves policy not the financial policy – see item 7 below.*
- Ascertain viability of date for staffing and succession working group in January and draft TORs (TM). *All done, working group complete and confidential notes made. Decisions ratified at FRS.*
- Add Leave Absence Policy to FRS Agenda (TM). *Done and approved, including new sections.*

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

4. Confidential Matters

None.

5. CEO Report to Board

The Chair thanked WH for a robust CEO report.

WH began by discussing the TCAF funding; a grant of @£300K was applied for against a set number of objectives. We have had agreement for £152,800.00 but against the requirement to deliver the same output; each of the projects have a figure against them to deliver which is considerably less than what is actually required. **We need to ensure it is focussed on what matters and isn't spread too thinly.** WH agreed that it will not be beneficial to spread thinly. **Have we budgeted for any of this work already and can this be re-allocated against that?** The funding has given us options but

will have to be managed within constraints to achieve maximum effect. The Board agreed that it is not ideal to receive just half the funding with much to achieve, but at least we will be receiving some funding.

WH noted that pupil numbers are looking ok for next year. WH noted some of the issues at the new schools. **Can you highlight these issues and what your plans are?** WH noted capacity, staffing, improvement processes, teaching initiatives, behaviour and other issues that will require improvement; a discussion was had on these matters. There are areas to prioritise on before the next inspection for the two RI schools. **What will happen with performance management for their staff?** This will TUPE over and will change over time. **Are we looking after their staff welfare?** Yes we are, but part of that is supporting them to get things right in the schools as well as the general welfare and it was agreed that this will be easier when they are part of the trust from 1st April. **Are you giving yourself a date to know when things are on the right track?** We should have a better idea by June/July whether things are on track. WH discussed the leadership plans. The Chair asked what the Board can do to help. It was noted that the committee meetings and full Board meeting next term should be sufficient to deal with any issues that crop up.

WH discussed training from both Diocese, the visit from Jo Hunter from the Diocese of Exeter to LT school for a SIAMS visit. Attendance figures are looking ok so far. National average is 93.2% and we are at 93.9%. **Do we know what attendance is like at the Duchy schools?** No problems that we are aware of, although it was noted that attendance hasn't been the same since Covid. CP explained the processes for unauthorised attendance, the law and the new guidance that is coming out from Sep 24. This was discussed, using the statutory guidance the attendance policy will be reviewed in the Autumn term. **Review attendance policy with regard to new statutory guidance in Autumn term (JC/CP)**

MS gave some feedback on the governance support role and the work she has done with the Chair and Vice at SSCA with regard to the school improvement plan and crafting sufficiently challenging questions. The meetings and the minutes have improved, and the Chair has improved in both knowledge and confidence. The Governance support document has been very useful and just needs tweaking of some of the protocols including reasons for attending an LGB meeting, the Chair feeding back to the Headteacher and so on. **Action: TM will meet with MS to discuss, and then amend the document (TM)**

6. Improvement Plan

Trust Improvement Programme update from JC (*re item 13 action from LSS*). JC gave an update on the improvement plan progress. Metacognition and learning; thinking matters training has started in the schools and is already showing an impact. Improve attainment of vulnerable groups including attendance; training has taken place regarding improving attendance in vulnerable children, initiatives such as pack lunch boxes, de-escalation and restraint training. Curriculum; evolution 2 has gone out, assessments of subjects and work with Duchy schools ongoing. The impact for the structure we provide for the curriculum was positively commented on at the Princetown School Ofsted. It should be noted that the curriculum is not set, it is a framework. Flourishing schools work has continued; training and initiatives have been put in place, training with the diocese is ongoing. Rights respecting schools; 3 schools engaged with 'community in practice' with Cornwall Council, all schools progressing with this work. Trust quality descriptions; evaluations done each term. Sustainability; going well, trust event with various speakers conducted and seem to be ahead of the game with this work. The Diocese Creation Care Officer (sustainability lead) was impressed with the work going on at SC. Behaviour; policies in schools are reviewed regularly. Governance and leadership work; already discussed. Budget fidelity; covered later in meeting. School improvement work continues and also includes some work with other schools outside the trust. WH thanked JC for leading on trust improvement as WH has been focussing on the transfer work. **We need to ensure**

that while the focus is on the Duchy schools, that we need to ensure the current schools are supported going forward. This is happening and plans are in place.

7. Latest Management Accounts/Current & Future Budget

Discussed by exception as detailed discussions have already taken place at FRS and Audit. Feb 24 management accounts were made available prior to the meeting. The virements for the teachers' pay grant and staffing will be done, insurance money for absence through an agency has had an impact and some Duchy expenditure will be covered with grants; so the year-end picture is looking better than it was. **We need to maintain a focus on the staffing issues with the budget and how this is accounted for?** This work is ongoing. **The staffing expenditure is showing £197K overspent after 6 months, where is this going and what are we doing about it?** EG explained that this will improve as there are some staffing changes, and some virements to do, so the picture should improve. It would be useful to have a projected figure so plans can be made going forward.

Proposal for summer term to hold an earlier FRS with one agenda item – the budget (scrutinising the issues and making decisions on where priorities should be and so on) and then the usual FRS later in the term to review the final budget before it goes to full Board. The Board agreed to this.

Reserves & GAG policy (EG) – including actions from FRS. It was clarified that we are only GAG pooling the reserves. **The in-year deficit section needs to be properly managed and not allow schools to draw on reserves just because something hasn't been managed properly.** Policy approved.

8. Final Approval of Duchy Transfer

All financial matters and liabilities are known. The Commercial Transfer Agreement has been checked by the solicitors and signed by Duchy Trust. Various information required to transfer from 1st April has been obtained. Staff personnel files will transfer to us on 1st April. Payroll information received. All necessary paperwork has been done. All stakeholders on board. Presumably their accounts have to be reconciled and closed? EG confirmed this will be done on 31st March and then transfer over to us. **Have they been audited?** End of year done last autumn and an interim audit will be conducted now. This will be monitored so we have our 'eyes open' to all issues that arise. **Has there been any history of non-compliance over the last few years?** A few years ago re CIF but noting none identified since. Policies were discussed; some HR policies will be used for TUPE purposes.

Duchy Transfer approved by the An Daras Trust Board.

9. Audited Accounts

Accounts and annual report were published on trust website in December 23 [by 31 Jan 24]. Accounts and annual report were provided to all Trust Members and discussed at their General Meeting on 13th March 2024. Audited accounts for financial year ending 31 Aug 23 were filed with Companies House on 31 Dec 23 [by 31 May 24].

10. Approve Written Financial Scheme of Delegation

Current version approved but will be reviewed in the summer term again when the Duchy school s have joined the trust. **Add to summer term agenda (WH/EG)**

11. Financial Benchmarking

The trust when benchmarked against other Trusts is doing well, despite the difficulties in managing the budget. This was discussed in detail at the Audit committee on 13th Oct 24.

12. Safeguarding

This was discussed briefly, but no issues to raise. Confide will be implemented into the Duchy schools after 1st April. They already use My Concern. The new staff will be added to our online training system SSS.

13. Actions from Committees

- LSS – Trust Improvement Programme brief by JC (covered in item 6).
- FRS – Possible options for Deputy Child Protection Officer (CP). CP has identified someone to approach.
- Audit – On-line Safety Policy (CP) – approved. Internal audit verbal update (EG) – looked at management accounts and budgeting. No detailed feedback yet but will be discussed at next term Audit committee. A discussion took place on leasing equipment.
- LGBs – None.

14. Complaints and Compliments

No complaints. Very positive report for Princetown Ofsted.

15. AOB

None. It is noted that MS and PH have completed Cyber Security training.

16. Date of next meeting

Date of next full Board meeting is Wednesday 10th July 2024 at 9.30am at central office.

Other meetings:

LSS – Weds 8th May

FRS – Weds 15th May – detailed budget meeting

FRS – Weds 19th June

Audit – Weds 26th June

The meeting closed at 11.20am

TJH Martin

Governance Officer

Distribution List:

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