



An Daras Trust
Igniting Curiosity Growing Capabilities

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26/03/2025

Minutes

Full Board of Directors Spring Meeting

Wednesday 26th March 2025 at 9.30am at ADMAT Central Office

1. Welcome and Apologies

Present: Steve Tavener (Chair), Jon Sharpe (Vice), Graeme Barriball, Peter Hague, Claire Paul, Gill Shippies, Margaret Savage, Will Hermon, Ian Wilkinson (on zoom)

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

The Chair welcomed everyone.

2. Declarations of Interests relevant to this Agenda

None declared relevant to this agenda.

3. Confirm Minutes of previous full Board meeting (11th December 2024) and matters arising

- LSS to continue monitoring PPG and smaller cohorts. *In hand, will be discussed as appropriate at meetings.*
- Succession plan review at spring FRS. *See item 7.*
- Review of IT replacements and costs at spring FRS. *A 5-year draft plan will be produced by JC for FRS 1 so that it can be factored into the budget planning. PH noted the use of Windows 10 and devices that might be able to be made suitable.*
- Foundation Director to attend LT & SC governor meeting. *Not done for personal reasons, will be attended in summer term.*

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

4. Confidential Matters

Leadership matters will be discussed at the working groups noted in item 7.

5. CEO Report to Board

JC gave an update on key points from the CEO report. Breakfast club provision at SC & LT have achieved additional provision. WHA have received a Cornwall Council grant to supplement breakfast club. TCAF funding finishes on 31st March 2025 so the last subject leader training will be completed by then. Environmental health visits to kitchens all received 5 stars so that is positive news. Planning permission received to build pre-school at WHA, now just need DfE approval to go ahead and a plan of how to finance it along with selling the current building and finding space for the children. Impact of SEN costs noted; this continues to be a challenge to the budget. The impact of IT infrastructure and payroll costs were also noted.

Action: Pre-school at WHA on to FRS 2 agenda in summer term.

The Chair challenged that the biggest risk to the risk register is currently the number of items on the risk register. It was agreed that the register needs to be reviewed again and some items removed or prioritised.

The Small Schools' strategy was discussed and the Trust sustainability strategy was noted. Data is currently in line with national; Wer is being monitored. JC explained the context behind some of the figures. **At what point do we become concerned about Wer?** The Improvement teams visits suggest that the quality of learning is good, the previous Ofsted was good and the pastoral care is very good. However, the numbers of children are small, there is high mobility, SEND and pastoral issues that make the situation challenging. Callington was also discussed as this needs to be monitored too. Although these 2 schools are not wildly different from national, it is enough to warrant a closer look and ensure that the provision is as good as it can be.

JC noted the GAG funding and it was also noted that the impact of this year's lower rolls will not be realised until next year. **Where are we at with the ERG recommendations?** TM noted that this was discussed at the Audit meeting and it is an action to be updated at the next Audit committee.

As per the requirements of the Academies Handbook, the CEO and Chair of the Trust Board met with the RDD's office on 4th March 2025. This included consultation on the resignation of the current CEO and the succession plan for the interim CEO (JC) and the RDD's office were in agreement with this plan. **What were the outcomes of this meeting?** ST briefed the Board that it was a positive meeting and no adverse outcomes. **Was there any discussion on the future of trusts with the current political environment?** There are limited options for expansion and the feeling is that the RDD's office is looking at merging trusts. However, it was considered that they did not really have an in-depth understanding of issues currently affecting schools. The financial implications of government funding was discussed. **What is the policy going forward on expansion of trusts as it seems very messy? We need to be aware of the political situation and how that affects us.** This was discussed. It was agreed that we should maintain a focus on pre-schools as feed into our schools.

6. Improvement Plan

JC noted updates on the improvement plan and the provision of a 90-day plan for Cal. The Board were content with the progress on the plan.

7. Finance

The following matters were discussed under finance.

Latest Management Accounts/Current & Future Budget

Discussed by exception as detailed discussions have already taken place at FRS and Audit. EG visited Cal and discussed a plan with the Head; the Head is keen to make one round of cuts as necessary and not have to do it over again. One staff member at Cal has agreed to voluntary settlement. Awaiting the second teaching role agreement. The catering staff provision is also being looked at, as is the caretaker work and IT provision. EG noted the need to build relationships at Cal to ensure they feel supported within the trust. **We need to ensure that we have a handle on the situation at Cal and we manage it properly going forward, so we can highlight issues and deal with them quickly, even if internal special measures need to be put in place.** A discussion was had on PSF and the need for 2 further quotes before making a decision; due to be discussed at FRS 1. **Have we received funding to cover the additional NI contributions?** This was discussed in detail.

Working Group to consider staff structure at each school (action from FRS)

JC, ST, JS, MS & EG will be included in this working group. Date will be confirmed.

Working Group to consider Succession plan in more depth (action from FRS)

Will be included in the same working group as above.

Approve Policy

Reserves & GAG policy (EG) – no change. Approved.

School Resources Self-Assessment Tool

Completed and submitted by 14th March 2025. Provided to Directors for reference.

8. Audited Accounts

Ensure accounts and annual report is published on trust website by 31 Jan 25. Completed on 10 Jan 25. Ensure accounts and annual report is provided to all Trust Members. Complete at the Members General Meeting on 12th Mar 25. Ensure audited accounts filed with Companies House by 31 May 25 (for financial year ending 31 Aug 24). Filed at Companies House on 22 Jan 25.

9. Approve Written Financial Scheme of Delegation

The current version has names rather than appointments. So the only recommended change is to replace names with appointments. JC will automatically take over WH's authorities on 1st May 2025.

10. Financial Benchmarking

Financial benchmarking data provided to the Board. Discussed at FRS and Audit. We are a reflection of what is happening nationally with the same issues.

11. Safeguarding

CP noted that the Cornwall 157 return is now an online system and has to be done by 30 June. This will be done collectively with CP and all the Heads to ensure we are consistent. KCSiE will be out in September and there are major changes expected; so there will be measures that need to be in place ready for September. No major issues with safeguarding processes as they are all sound.

12. Actions from Committees

a. LSS

Leadership and DEO role discussion – see item 7.

b. FRS

Volunteers for 2 working groups (staff structure & succession plan) – see item 7.

c. Audit

None.

d. LGBs

None.

13. Complaints and Compliments

None to report up to this date. An update was sought re the previous GDPR court case. This was briefly discussed and any outcomes will be at no cost to us.

14. AOB

ST has completed the GDPR update training.

The Chair noted that it is WH's last meeting and wished to say huge well done and sincere thank you to him on behalf of the Board. He described WH as thorough, diligent, enthusiastic and caring and thanked WH for helping to build a strong trust. The Chair presented him with a leaving gift from the Board and TM.

WH noted that what makes this trust great is the way we all work together and the Board's vision, and the fact we ignore the 'nonsense' in the periphery and get on with the job that needs doing – that being providing a good education to our children. We have, and always have had, a strong leadership team with a strong and supportive Board. He thanked the Board for their support, they have always been supportive while maintaining a critical eye.

The Board welcomed Jo Callow to the role of interim CEO from 1st May 2025.

15. Date of next meeting

Date of next full Board meeting is Wednesday 9th July 2025 at 9.30am at central office.

Other meetings:

LSS – Weds 7th May 2025

FRS 1 – Weds 14th May 2025 – detailed budget meeting

FRS 2 – Weds 18th June 2025 – usual agenda

Audit – Weds 25th June 2025

The meeting closed at 11am.

TJH Martin
Governance Officer

Distribution List:

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