

# Coppice Primary Partnership

## Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

Held on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> December 2021 at 6.30 pm  
Coxheath Primary School

**Present:**

**Members:** Carole Hardy (Chair of trustees), Steve Knowles, Andrew Nursey

**Trustees:** John Edgar, Peggy Murphy, Isabelle Linnet-Drouet, Andrew Maitland, Neil McDonald

**In attendance:** Mark Chatley (Trust Leader), Andy Lacey (Trust Business Manager), Carina Cuddington (Financial Consultant), Sarah Holman (HT LPS), Giacomo Mazza (HT CPS), Beverley Evenden (CPS Deputy HT), Suzie Wenham (governor CPS), Clare Nursey (CoG CPS), Simon Malone (governor CPS), Nicky Wheeler (CPP Clerk), Philip Reynolds (Kreston Reeves)

**Apologies:** Paul Burbidge

Item	
<b>1</b>	<p><b>Welcome and any introductions</b></p> <p>1.1 CH, Chair of Trustees, welcomed everyone to the Annual General Meeting of CPP and thanked everyone for attending. The members introduced themselves and SK explained that he was previously the CoG at CPS. CH confirmed that the purpose of the meeting was for Members formally to receive the Trust Annual Report and Audit Findings, approved by trustees at their earlier meeting on 8 December 2021.</p> <p>1.2 CH introduced Philip Reynolds from Kreston Reeves, the CPP auditors and Carina Cuddington who was a trustee but is currently the trust's Financial Consultant. CH also introduced Mark Chatley and welcomed him to his first AGM as Trust Leader.</p>
<b>2</b>	<p><b>Appointment of Chair for the meeting</b></p> <p>Members unanimously agreed that Steve Knowles would chair this meeting.</p>
<b>3</b>	<p><b>Resignations &amp; appointments</b></p> <p>3.1 CH advised members that following guidance in the audit regarding the separation of members and trustees she will be resigning as a member soon and will remain as Chair of Trustees. She advised that the trust are looking to recruit two new members using Inspiring Governance.</p> <p>3.2 SK invited suggestions for potential members and asked everyone to use networking opportunities to help recruit to the trust board.</p>
<b>4</b>	<p><b>Apologies for absence</b></p> <p>4.1 Apologies were received and accepted from Paul Burbidge.</p>
<b>5</b>	<p><b>Declaration of business interests</b></p> <p>5.1 All members, except PB, had updated their business interest declaration forms prior to the meeting and confirmed they had no new relevant interests to declare.</p> <p>5.2 Trustees had updated their forms and confirmed they had no interests to declare relevant to the discussions.</p>
<b>6</b>	<p><b>Minutes of the last meeting</b></p> <p>Members approved and signed the minutes of the last AGM meeting held 9 December 2020.</p>
<b>7</b>	<p><b>Strategic Overview of the Trust Operation</b></p> <p>7.1 The Chair of Trustees, CH provided an overview of the year to all present on behalf of the Trustees. CH commented it has been another unusual, extraordinary and challenging year with Covid once again affecting all three schools. CH thanked all HTs, SLT teams and staff for their dedication and hard work over the year. Trustees recognised the difficulty of trying to focus on developing and improving standards whilst struggling to keep the schools operating during such challenging times.</p>

	<p>7.2 CH explained that MC joined the trust on the 19<sup>th</sup> April and has experienced an incredibly busy start in his new role. Trustees believe he is a great asset to the trust and has a strong focus on education. Also NM, an experienced Health and Safety specialist, joined as a trustee earlier this year bringing a different perspective to meetings and his skills and knowledge are greatly appreciated by the trust board.</p> <p>7.3 CH also thanked the DfE for their support in the time before MC joined the trust and Rob Carpenter, who leads another large trust, for his support and guidance which has proved invaluable.</p> <p>7.4 CH explained that the trust will be looking to grow in the future and is looking for partners that share the CPP ethos and values whilst bringing extra skills that will work well within the trust.</p> <p>7.5 JE has been leading on a complete rewrite of the CPP Scheme of Delegation in consultation with members, trustees, LGBs and HTs. CH explained that the existing document was written three years ago and needed rethinking to meet the current needs of the trust. The new document includes the provision for a standards committee which will involve people across the trust working together to focus on educational standards.</p> <p>7.6 CH expressed her thanks to all trustees for their help and support over the previous year.</p>
<p><b>8</b></p>	<p><b>School Standards Overview</b></p> <p>8.1 Members received an overview of the year from the Trust Leader, Mark Chatley.</p> <p>8.2 MC echoed thanks to trustees for their passion and commitment to the trust which, despite the many challenges and barriers that trust has faced, leave it in a strong position moving forwards. He also expressed thanks to the HTs for their passion and drive to ensure the best education for all the children in the trust.</p> <p>8.3 MC explained that in Sept 2019, the new Ofsted framework placed a renewed focus on curriculum with a priority placed on children ‘knowing more and remembering more’. As a result the curriculum in all three schools, especially in the foundation subjects, needed reviewing. This process begun in April and has been ongoing ever since and the trust are looking at how to align the curriculums across the schools to support staff and leaders. He explained that the global curriculum is currently being covered separately from the main curriculum, however, it remains important and so is referred to through assemblies and other wider opportunities.</p> <p>8.4 For the second year in a row, MC explained there were no formal assessments for children of primary age due to the disruption of the pandemic. Learning outcomes for children are broadly lower than they would be in comparison to a full year without disruption however, initial information suggests that outcomes in the trust schools is reflective of the national picture.</p> <p>8.5 MC explained that the recovery premium has been used by all three schools to ensure that enough focus is placed on the core elements of reading, writing and numbers.</p> <p>8.6 To align with the curriculum and Ofsted focus on knowledge retention, the trust have invested in a trust wide pedagogy and training package that encourages the use of a shared language.</p> <p>8.7 All of the schools in the trust have strong leadership teams and a focus on developing strategic leaders who lead on specific areas from the school plan.</p> <p>8.8 The trust also have a full complement of staff. Since starting in April, MC said he has had an interesting and inspiring journey and been well supported by the team. The trust Teaching and Learning lead has moved to working for the trust full time and the trust central team has widened to include centralised finance and HR functions.</p> <p>8.9 The trust used the ‘Leadership Matters’ programme to support and develop senior and strategic leaders throughout the last year. Much of this was online and remote due to the restrictions of the pandemic. Although this had significant impact, it was decided that the programme would not be needed to support leadership development in the 2021/22 academic year.</p>

	<p>8.10 External reviews were carried out for all three schools in the Autumn term of 2021/22 which celebrated the positives in all schools and provided useful feedback to support school improvement.</p> <p>8.11 Safeguarding remains effective in all three schools. An online reporting tool is now used in all the schools which has improved the efficiency and effectiveness of reporting.</p> <p>8.12 Due to the pandemic, attendance figures were lower last year than previous years. However, they still compared favourably to national figures, highlighting the strengths that the schools provide.</p> <p>8.13 Despite the disruption faced over the last year, the schools retain a focus on behaviour management and ensure that children know what is expected of them in school and meet the high expectations placed on them. The children’s attitudes to learning in all three schools remain excellent.</p> <p>8.14 MC advised that all three schools focus on health and wellbeing and continue to develop their nurture provisions to support children, especially those who are more vulnerable and/or who struggle to regulate their behaviours.</p> <p>8.15 All schools ensure that diversity and equality is well promoted. Schools were quick to respond to local and national issues (such as the Black Lives Matter campaign and Marcus Rashford and the Free School Meals campaign).</p> <p>8.16 Transition arrangements for children starting the trust schools in September 2021 had to be adapted to ensure that schools could be kept safe. However, all schools worked with their parents to reduce anxieties and give families what they needed to feel confident in starting school. In addition, work was done in school and in liaison with secondary schools to help prepare children moving on for their next stage.</p> <p>8.17 MC advised that Loose (PAN 90) and Coxheath (PAN 60) both were oversubscribed for starters in reception. St Katherine’s (PAN 90) were undersubscribed with only 63 children starting in reception in September 2021. St Katherine’s have reduced one class in Year 2 (2021/22) due to low numbers in that year group.</p> <p>8.18 As a result of positive pupil numbers, Loose and Coxheath have a healthy budget including the three year budget forecast. The lower numbers and falling roll at St Katherine’s means that, year on year, they are using up reserves. The three year budget was not in overall deficit, but reserves were low by the end of year 3 (2023/24) and the situation is being managed carefully.</p> <p>8.19 In summary, MC explained that the main opportunities for the trust are growth to ensure the trust remains sustainable and leadership development opportunities, with the introduction of trust wide roles providing an opportunity for staff to work across schools and help trust development in specific areas, such as SEND, Assessment and EYFS. The new central business structure will help to future proof the business needs of the trust. Also, the new appraisal process provides an opportunity for staff to be more in control of their professional development.</p> <p>8.20 The main threats to the trust include the numbers on roll at St Katherine’s as the budget cannot continue to sustain the falling roll without actions being taken to support balancing it. Also Ofsted inspections as all three schools are in the Ofsted window. As there have been no external tests for two years, all schools are still carrying their last set of data, from July 2019. This is a particular challenge for Coxheath and St Katherine’s who had low data in 2019. This will be used as a starting point in an Ofsted inspection.</p> <p>8.21 In addition, recruitment and retention of staff remains challenging so the trust is taking action to support new teachers and implement an overstaffing policy that encourages initial teacher training.</p>
<p><b>9</b></p>	<p><b>Questions from Members</b></p> <p>9.1 None</p>
<p><b>10</b></p>	<p><b>Trust Annual Report and Audit</b></p> <p>10.1 PR thanked members for inviting him to the AGM and explained that he appreciated the opportunity to meet in person and commended the trust for its open door policy.</p>

	<p>10.2 PR summarised the Annual Report which shows growth despite the difficult year the trust has had and reflects the strong leadership of the trustees, as evidenced by the faith placed in them by the ESFA. He praised the trustees report as it is well written and informative and confirmed that the report gives a clean audit opinion. He explained that net current assets of £847k are evidence of a healthy, solvent trust with reserves increasing as a result of the unique circumstances resulting from the impact of Covid.</p> <p>10.3 PR confirmed that the centralisation of the trust finance function has worked well and resulted in efficiencies and consistency across the trust. Only two adjustments were required to the accounts and these related to the LGPS and the revaluation of land and buildings at St Katherine's.</p> <p>10.4 SK reminded the meeting that trustees, who were appointed by the Members, had responsibility for <i>approving</i> the Annual Report and Audit Findings and it was the Members' responsibility formally to <i>receive</i> these reports, prior to submission to the DfE and ESFA.</p> <p>10.5 SK asked if anyone in attendance had any questions or queries on the reports presented.</p> <p><b>Q : Why are the pupil to teacher ratios different on page 12 of the Annual Report and page 4 of the Audit Findings?</b></p> <p>PR explained that the Annual Report figure uses headcount whereas the Audit Report uses student numbers obtained from GAG funding calculations.</p> <p><b>Q : Why are the total staff cost ratios also different in each report?</b></p> <p>PR advised that the Annual Account is comparing staff costs to total income whilst the Audit Report compares the costs to total costs.</p> <p>10.6 Members unanimously <b>AGREED</b> they were happy to receive the Annual Report and Audit Findings presented at this meeting.</p>
<p><b>11</b></p>	<p><b>Reappointment of Auditors</b></p> <p>11.1. Members thanked PR for joining the AGM.</p> <p>11.2 Members unanimously <b>APPROVED</b> the reappointment of Kreston Reeves as CPP's auditors for 21/22.</p>
<p><b>12</b></p>	<p><b>Publication of minutes</b></p> <p>12.1 There were no questions and no other business to conduct.</p> <p>12.2 Approved draft minutes would be posted on the Trust website as soon as available (not due for signature until next year's AGM).</p>

Signed: Steve Knowles

Date: 7<sup>th</sup> December 2022