

Coppice Primary Partnership Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

Held on Wednesday 9th December 2020 at 6.30 pm
Via Zoom

Present:

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

Trustees: Carina Cuddington (Interim Accounting Officer), John Edgar (CoG SKPS), Peggy Murphy (Interim CEO), Isabelle Linnet-Drouet, Andrew Maitland

In attendance: Andy Lacey (CPP Chief Financial Officer), Sarah Holman (HT LPS), Giacomo Mazza (HT CPS), Ruth Powell (HT SKPS), Ben Farley (LPS Assistant HT), Liz Webber (CPS Assistant HT), Beverley Evenden (CPS Deputy HT), Sean Johnson (LPS Assistant HT), Sarah Aikenhead (Deputy HT SKPS) Assistant HT Caroline Loveland, Jessica Burman (LPS Assistant HT), Samantha McMahon (CoG LPS), Suzie Wenham (governor CPS) David Jones (governor CPS), Sam Sanders (governor LPS), Emily Moon (CPP Clerk), Liz McLaren (LGB Clerk) Mark Chatley, Susan Robinson (Kreston Reeves)

Apologies: Clare Nursery (COG CPS), Anita Makey (LPS Head of School), Dominic Tweddle (Assistant HT SKPS)

Item	
1	<p>Welcome and any introductions</p> <p>1.1 Carole Hardy, Chair of Trustees, welcomed everyone to this second Annual General Meeting of CPP and thanked everyone for attending. She 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 9 December 2020.</p> <p>1.2 CH introduced Susan Robinson from Kreston Reeves, our auditors and Carina Cuddington who was until very recently was a trustee but is currently the trust's Accounting Officer. CH also introduced Steve Knowles, chair of members and Mark Chatley, the new Trust Leader who joins CPP on 18 April 2021.</p> <p>1.3 MC introduced himself to all attending and thanked everyone for the opportunity to join the AGM. MC has been the HT of Palace Wood Primary School in Maidstone for just over 5 years. He commented he was excited to join the trust and carry on with the great work already done, and his views and values on education mirror that of the trust which is what made it such an attractive position.</p>
2	<p>Appointment of Chair for the meeting</p> <p>Members unanimously agreed that Steve Knowles would chair this meeting.</p>
3	<p>Resignations & appointments</p> <p>3.1 Members noted the resignation of Jane Prideaux on 24 November 2020.</p> <p>3.2 CH advised members that she had been in contact with Brachers solicitors to see they can provide a trustee or member as part of the solicitor's development programmes they have and will be following up with them in the new year for an update.</p>
4	<p>Apologies for absence</p> <p>4.1 All Members present.</p> <p>4.2 Clare Nursey (CoG CPS), Anita Makey (LPS Head of School) and Dominic Tweddle (Assistant HT SKPS) had sent apologies for absence.</p>
5	<p>Declaration of business interests</p> <p>5.1 Members had updated their business interest declaration forms prior to the meeting and confirmed they had no new relevant interests to declare.</p>

	5.2 Trustees had updated their forms at their last board meeting and confirmed they had no interests to declare relevant to tonight's discussions.
6	Minutes of the last meeting Members approved the minutes of the last AGM meeting held 11 December 2019.
7.	Strategic Overview of the Trust Operation 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 the most unusual, extraordinary and challenging year. The trust lost a charismatic and professional leader Darren Webb suddenly in March, and a week later covid19 and lockdown hit. The staff had not had time to reflect on losing DW but have been fantastic. CH thanked all HTs, SLT teams and all staff for all their dedication and had stayed open throughout lockdown. The trustees would like to recognise the hard work of the schools and sent sincere thanks to them all and CH said that DW would have been very proud of them all. 7.2 CH explained how the trust had been run for the last year, from calling the Department of Education after DW's passing and not knowing how to proceed. Thankfully the DfE were happy with the trustees suggestion being three trustees being PM, CC and CH who have collectively undertaken the role of the CEO, CC with finance and PM with school experience. CH explained that the DfE wanted the trust to find a new EHT immediately but trustees felt this was inappropriate, so the DfE confirmed they approved to continue on the above basis until September. The trust had issues in regards to the Accounting Officer, which is usually the EHT and the DfE had only given permission to use a trustee until September. To solve this, CC kindly stepped down as a trustee is acting as our Accounting Officer until April when MC joins the trust and then CC will revert to being a trustee. There has been much corresponding with the ESFA and the DfE and CH thanked them for their support and willingness. CH said it is interesting to note that the EFSA have since rewritten the rules in regards to the Accounting Officer so no one would be able to do as the trust had again. 7.3 The trust has had a successful year with new contracts and systems in place ensuring that the CPP with its ethos and values continues into the future. 7.4 CH sent her thanks to all trustees, particularly PM and CC for the enormous amount of work they have undertaken and felt those thanks would also come from the members and parents if they knew the sheer amount of work they have undertaken. SK agreed with CH and the appreciation and that thanks should go to all staff at CPP.
8	School Standards Overview 8.1 Members received an overview of the year from the interim CEO, Peggy Murphy. 8.2 PM wanted to convey a massive thank you to CH on behalf of everyone who has been holding everything together and supporting the trustees throughout. 8.3 PM commented that the 2019/2020 year has been difficult and for that reason wished to report pre March and post March. Pre March the year commenced positively. SKPS officially joined the trust in November 2019 and confirmed all three schools were fully staffed and a 3 year plan was being worked on to increase nurture provision across the trust. The global curriculum was launched which focused on curriculum innovation and development and the curriculum leaders worked closely with the school improvement lead to support the delivery of it. 8.4 She confirmed that attendance across the trust was 97.4% and met the KPI for attendance and the financial KPIs were also being met. Both external and internal reviews had shown strong provision at all the schools. 8.5 PM explained that post March was met with DW's devastating death on 9 March and was then followed by covid19 lockdown shortly after. PM explained that two schools remained open throughout the lockdown supporting key workers and vulnerable children. As advised by KCC, CPS and LPS worked together during this time and the executive leadership team and SLT worked tirelessly keep the schools safe following DfE and KCC's advice.

	<p>8.6 She explained attendance percentages have dropped but was expected and the innovation started earlier in the year had been put on hold, however the school leaders continue to develop the schools and PM's recent internal reviews showed this has not stopped.</p> <p>8.7 As a result of lockdown, there were gaps in the children's learning and this had been assessed and evaluated with ways to bridge these also identified. Recruitment had also continued.</p> <p>8.8 Overall it had been a very difficult year for all and staff had not had time to grieve DW and had been extremely hard for everyone. The staff and HTs have kept the children at the centre of their decisions and it would have made him very proud.</p>
<p>9</p>	<p>Trust Annual Report and Audit</p> <p>9.1 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. If anyone in attendance had any questions or queries on reports presented, these could be discussed later in the meeting or informally after the meeting.</p> <p>9.2 Members unanimously AGREED they were happy to receive the Annual Report and Audit Findings presented at this meeting.</p>
<p>10</p>	<p>Questions from Members</p> <p>10.1 PB felt it would be sensible to have this section before the Trust Annual Report and Audit section and it would be noted to change this for future AGMs going forward.</p> <p>10.2 PB also expressed concern at seeing a deficit for the LGPS, although it guaranteed by the government could KR confirm that the trust shouldn't be concerned by such a large deficit in the accounts. SR confirmed the trust did not have to be concerned and would expect to see this for any academy school at the moment. CC also commented that employer's rates have been set for the next 3 years so therefore the trust is aware of these values up until April 2023.</p> <p>10.2 PB noted that the deficit had reduced and queried whether the trust is under any obligation to contribute towards this if the trust has reserves to do so? SR confirmed it did not, the amounts paid each year are agreed The work involved from all the teams must be recognised and appreciated as many parents were supportive and happy to put their trust in the schools to care for their children during this pandemic there is an actuarial review every 3 years which will decide what is required at that stage. SR confirmed there is nothing extra required from the trust at this stage to reduce the deficit figure. CC commented that considering the circumstances with covid19 the trust has managed to make a £375k in year surplus. £50k of the surplus budget was inherited from SKPS however CC confirmed that every school had made a surplus in year which was important to note. The trust has £553k of reserves carried forward into the year 2021 which has left the trust in a very healthy position and wanted to give thanks to the HTs for the excellent management of their budgets. CH added that in year surpluses were kept within the individual schools so they can roll this forward to use for the following year.</p> <p>10.3 PB asked whether there has been any decrease in income to the contractors resulting in difficulties for the trust in making up any shortfall. CC said she believed this was in relation to a covid related query where contractors which the trust received funding for had to be continued being paid. The trust receives funding for free school meals and universal free school meals therefore the contractors had charged the trust based on the average number of school meals taken prior to covid. CC confirmed there was no detriment to the schools as they had already received funding, also hampers were provided and sent home to those children who received free school meals.</p> <p>10.4 AN asked whether the reserves in each school can be moved by the trust between the three schools or are they only specific to the school they apply to? CC stated legally it is the trust's monies to use however it chooses, conversely there is an agreement with the schools</p>

	<p>that they keep their own reserves. Reserves held at trust level can be used however the trust chooses and CC confirmed that the trust has a contingency pot held at trust level for the Trust Leader to decide how to spend.</p> <p>10.5 AN also queried the Key Audit Findings and the benchmarking data tables. AN said the tables are quite 'sterile' and doesn't show value for money, such as those spending less but getting better results or another trust spending more and achieving less. He felt it would be useful for the table to show a comparison. SR confirmed the benchmarking reports is just a preliminary opportunity to prompt discussions and that the more detailed benchmarking report would come out at the end January and will have a lot more information and comparable. SR did agree with AN however it is important to think about value for money and to have more detail.</p> <p>10.6 CH wanted members to note that trustees have already commenced discussions at the last trust board meeting and would be discussed further at the next meeting in February in regards to these figures and on receipt of the benchmarking report from KR. CH said that the trust does not see itself as one that must collect lots of schools to be optimum in terms of efficiencies and opportunities. DW had talked about what the trust's expansion would look like, possibly taking in a couple more schools and to then be able to offer those advantages to staff and pupils. Although on hold at the moment the trustees would like to return to that conversation in the future.</p>
<p>11</p>	<p>Reappointment of Auditors 11.1. Members thanked SR for joining the AGM and left the meeting. 11.2 Members unanimously APPROVED the reappointment of Kreston Reeves as CPP's auditors for 20/21.</p>
	<p>OTHER</p>
<p>12</p>	<p>Publication of minutes 12.1 There were no questions and no other business to conduct. 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). <i>The meeting closed at 7.25 pm.</i></p>

Signed.....

Date.....