



COPPICE PRIMARY PARTNERSHIP

PUBLIC MINUTES FOR THE 2023/2024 MEETING OF THE TRUST BOARD HELD ON WEDNESDAY 6th December 2023

Trust Board present at the meeting held on 7th February 2024 approved these minutes as a true and accurate record, and signed on Governor Hub electronically

PRESENT

Carole Hardy (CH), Chair	John Edgar (JE), Vice Chair
Isabelle Linney-Drouet (ILD), Trustee	Carina Cuddington (CC), Trustee
Andrew Maitland (AM), Trustee	Neil McDonald (NM), Trustee
Peggy Murphy (PM), Trustee	Mark Chatley (MC), Trust Leader
Annamaria Potgieter (AP), CFO (Chief Financial Officer)	

IN ATTENDANCE

Andy Lacey, Governance Professional	
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Yellow highlighted text demonstrates challenge / questions to the Trust representatives

PART A – PUBLIC DISCUSSION

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE *(led by Chair)*

1.1 Welcome: CH (Carole Hardy) welcomed all parties to the meeting.

1.2 Apologies: PM joined the meeting at 1635

1.3 Quorum: The meeting was declared as quorate.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST *(led by Chair)*

2.1 CH gave all parties the opportunity to declare any additional declarations of interest against the agenda to which none were declared.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES AND ACTIONS OUTSTANDING

3.1 Approval of Minutes; Both the public and confidential minutes were approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting that took place on the 18th October 2023.

Clerk action: AL to mark term 1 minutes as signed on Governor Hub

3.2 Actions Outstanding; Trustees noted the completed actions from previous meetings (recorded in the actions table). Other actions were discussed under specific agenda items, or below:

- LPS pilot of governor monitoring – JE had received an update that he had shared with MC, who in turn had recently discussed with HT's. CC asked if she could receive an update for use with the new St Katherine's LGB in T3.

4. TRUST MATTERS

4.1 Annual Accounts and Financial Statements

- Trustees received and approved the Annual Accounts and Financial Statements as recommended by F&A.

4.2 Summary Audit Report

- Trustees noted the Summary Audit report provided by UHY, which would be published with the Financial Statements.

4.3 Scheme of Delegation (SoD) and Terms of Reference (ToR)

- It was noted that following the previous discussion, the SoD and ToR had been updated to reflect that a) the Education Committee would be referred to as an Advisory Group, and b) Delegation of responsibilities from the Trust Leader (MC) to the Teaching & Learning Lead.

Trustees approved the amended SoD and ToR.

ACTION: AL to publish on the Trust website.

4.4 Trust Leader written report for Trustees

- Trustees commented that they liked the revised format of the report, which was linked to the KPI's. CC asked when would there be a review of the KPI's? MC advised that this would be done mid-year.

Remainder in confidential minutes

5. FEEDBACK FROM LGB'S AND SCHOOL SPECIFIC MATTERS

5.1 Feedback from LGB's:

- Loose – JE informed trustees that TN has very clear ideas and expectations of staff, and for the delivery of the curriculum.
- St Kath's – CC commented that it is outstanding to see what RL has achieved in the short time that he has been at the school.
- MC said that alignment and consistency in the way the curriculum is planned and prepared is essential.

5.2 Coxheath Expansion project

- MC provided feedback to Trustees following the recent public consultation meeting held at Coxheath School regarding the proposed expansion. It was noted that no parents of pupils attended and those present were from local schools. Local schools expressed concern that the expansion of Coxheath would lead to a reduction in the demand for places at their schools. It appeared that in some cases, the local schools were not aware that it was the LA who had initiated the discussions concerning the proposed expansion of Coxheath and not the trust or school.

ACTION: MC to

Bullets 2 and 3 in confidential minutes

5.3 Loose SEND development

- It was noted that the LA had not provided the design and costings as requested by F&A. Item to be carried forward to T3.

ACTION: AP to provide Trustees with the project details.

6. STRATEGIC OVERVIEW

6.1 KPI's and Growth Targets

- MC advised that he was codifying the actions and would report in T3.

ACTION: MC to report to Trustees in T3.

6.2 Trustee and Executive Leadership Team (ELT) strategic discussion:

- MC had discussed the proposal to hold a strategic discussion involving trustees and governors with Headteachers. It was considered that these should take place twice a year starting at 1630/1700 ideally on a Wednesday. ILD asked that once arranged, that in future years these meetings should be included on the governance calendar.

2nd bullet in confidential minutes

7. POLICIES AND KEY DOCUMENTS

7.1 Trustees reviewed the amendment policies and approved subject to the following amendments:

- Governors Code of Conduct and Guide to Governance: JE to advise AL should any changes need to be made to reflect latest SoD and ToR. AL to amend date on Guide to Governance.
- Risk Register: NM noted that safety was now split across various headings and asked whether the issue of H&S was sufficiently recorded in the risk register? MC said it was registered under separate headings.

NMC agreed to review the risk register and advise JE / MC if he thought there were any issues not recorded.

ACTION: NM to review risk register and inform JE / MC of any H&S omissions.

- CC asked if the risk register was compliant? JE thought that if the previous one was considered compliant then the new version should be.

ACTION: MC to send the revised risk register to the auditors for a view as to whether it was compliant.

- Trustees accepted proposal to delete Information for members, trustees and governors as this had been superseded by the SoD and ToR.

7.2 Pupil Premium Reports

- MC informed Trustees that the schools had not yet published their PPM reports.

ACTION: MC to ensure the PPM reports are published by the 31st December 2023 deadline.

8. FINANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

8.1 October 2023 Management Accounts & Budgets:

- **Management Accounts:** AP provided an overview of the management accounts information provided to Trustees. In summary, the key points were: Year-end Trust forecast reserves at £1.5m were slightly down compared to last month at £1.6m but remained £370k above budget. Main reasons for the above budget forecast were: year-end balances brought forward, additional HNF and PPM grant.
- **2023/24 Budget:** AP advised Trustees that F&A had considered a revised budget forecast based on the October 2023 management account, and was recommending such to the Board for approval, which Trustees approved.

8.2 Estate Management

- **CiF bids for December 2023:** MC explained the reasoning behind the suggested Trust contributions for some of the CiF bids to be submitted later this month.

JE asked if the projects were the result of recommendations from Eddisons? MC said 'yes, as the company are engaged on a 'no win/ no fee' basis so are encouraged to submit bids that are more likely to be approved.

St Katherine's drainage scheme - CH asked whether the proposed drainage scheme at St Katherine's would solve the ongoing flooding problem, and had Eddisons carried out a survey of the school? MC advised that he had not yet seen the bid proposal. ILD said that surveys should have been carried out to determine the programme of works, and NM asked for confirmation that the proposed project would solve the flooding issue.

CH asked that trustees should be provided with more information on the flooding issue, the project proposal and how it seek to resolve the matter.

ACTION: MC to provide trustees with details of the proposed drainage improvement works at St Katherine's.

Coxheath safeguarding works – CC expressed a view that £110k for the project seemed low. MC advised that the project was much smaller than the previous as focused on the front of school including the reception area.

ILD asked how were the trust / school contributions funded? CC advised that the contributions came from school reserves and that the £33k for Coxheath safeguarding had been set aside in 2022/23. If the project was unsuccessful this year, the school contribution would be used to carry out improvements to the main reception.

CC asked if there was a priority list for the CiF projects, and that there needs to be a five-year plan. MC advised that the LPS project bids were the result of conversations with TN.

Trustees agreed to the projects being proposed for LPS and CPS, and that relating to the Fire Safety improvements at StKaths but MC was asked to provide more information in respect of the drainage scheme to JE and NM before proceeding.

ACTION: MC to present a proposed 5-year estates plan to Trustees

- **RAAC:** MC informed Trustees that following the recent surveys St Katherine’s had been given the all clear but that in addition to Coxheath School, an area in Loose School also required further investigation. Both would incur costs which can be claimed back from the DfE.

8.3 Cleaning Contract: MC provided Trustees with a summary of the F&A discussion recommending that the cleaning contract is awarded to Churchill. **Trustees agreed to awarding the contract.**

8.4 Report from F&A Chair:

- **Reserves:** AM informed Trustees that a key issue for Trustees to consider related to the level of reserves, which were considered to be excessive. It was recognised there is a future need to hold reserves due to funding pressures but that there was scope for spending on both trust wide and school specific priorities.

MC advised that he, AP and BT had considered the matter post F&A and were recommending that £300k could be spent at this would leave c£900k in reserves at Year 3, and the guideline of having at least 1 month’s payroll would be covered at this is c£600k. Proposals for the £300k would be presented to Trustees in due course.

ACTION: MC to present proposals for spending £300k of reserves.

- **Investment Strategy:** *confidential minutes*

9. GOVERNANCE

9.1 St Katherine’s School – future governance arrangements

- Trustees agreed to dissolve the IEB with effect from 2nd January 2024 and replace with a Local Governing Body.
- It was noted that three parents had applied for the governing body with two being elected. Trustees agreed to appoint the third parent applicant as an Associate Governor
- Trustees noted that a staff governor has still to be appointed.
- Trustees were informed that Phil Reynolds was unable to continue as a governor at St Katherine’s, but the remaining had confirmed their wish to be appointed to the LGB. Trustees agreed to appoint Carina Cuddington (CC), Laura Payne (LP) and Ruth Epps (RE) as co-opted governors to the LGB, with CC as Chair.

ACTION: AL to confirm appointments to Headteacher and arrangements for re-establishing the LGB.

9.2 Loose LGB - Trustees confirmed appointment of Samantha McMahon (SM) and Richard Benjamin (RB) as Associate Governors.

ACTION: AL to confirm appointments to SM and RB, and update the membership list and GIAS.

9.3 Member appointments

- Trustees agreed to recommended to Members that Phil Reynolds be appointed a member when his appointment as a Governor on St Katherine’s IEB ends on 2nd January 2024 when the board is dissolved.

ACTION: Members be asked to approve PR’s appointment at the AGM

- *See confidential minutes*

10. SAFEGUARDING AND HEALTH AND SAFETY

10.1 MC informed Trustees that all DSL’s had completed their refresher training.

10.2 *See confidential minutes*

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

11.1 PM offered her apologies for the T3 Board meeting as would not be able to attend.

12. CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS AND ACTION POINTS

12.1 Trustees confirmed that the following items were also considered confidential: 4.4 (part), 5.2 (part), 6.2 (part), 8.4 (part), 9.3 (part) and 10.2

13. Meeting close and future dates:

13.1 Next meeting on Wednesday 7th February 2024 to be held at Loose Primary School will start at 1730.

13.2 Future meetings all commencing at 1730 will be held at Loose Primary School (staffroom) on:

- Wednesday 20th March 2024
- Wednesday 22nd May 2024
- Wednesday 10th July 2024

13.3 CH thanked all attendees for their contribution to the meeting, and wished everyone a merry Christmas. The meeting closed at 1800.

14. Meeting Outcomes: Against the agenda items, what have we achieved against the three core functions:

14.1 Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction?

14.2 Holding the executive leaders to account for educational performance of the schools

14.3 Overseeing the financial performance of the schools ensuring money is well spent?