

## Board of Trustees

**Wednesday 27 March 2024, 9.15am**  
**Buckfast Abbey Conference Centre**

Attended:	
Philip Bostock (PB) – Interim Chair	Andy Mulcock (AM) - Chair
Teresa Gardner (TG)	Lee Elliot-Major (LEM)
James Frampton (JF)	Richard Jacobs (RJ)
Moira Marder (MM) – CEO	Ben Manning (BM)
Jade Otty (JO)	Sarah O’Meara (SOM)
Alex Walmsley (AW)	Saxon Spence (SS) <i>Virtually</i>
In Attendance	
Melody Floyde (MF) – Trust Governance Coordinator	Lorraine Mitchell (LM) – Head of Corporate Governance & Compliance
Tim Rutherford (TR) – Deputy CEO	

**Apologies:**

Lindsay Hetherington (LH) Crispin Taylor (CT) Tamsin Frances (TF) – Executive Director of People, Strategy & IT Sue Pym (SP) – Executive Director of Finance & Estates
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## Meeting Minutes

Item No.	Business	Action
1.	<p><b>Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest</b></p> <p>Philip Bostock welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Lindsay Hetherington and Crispin Taylor.</p> <p>Declarations of interest were noted, as follows:            AW: Director, First Federation Trust &amp; Member of Diocesan Education Group            AW, RJ, AM: Directors, Fusion School Services Ltd            JO: Vice Principal, Exeter College</p>	
2.	<p><b>Minutes of Previous Meeting and Update on Actions.</b></p> <p>The minutes of the meetings held on 06.12.23 and 21.02.24 were approved as a full and accurate records.</p> <p>All actions were recorded as complete or in progress.</p>	

3.	<p><b>Matters Arising</b></p> <p>None</p>	
4.	<p><b>LGB &amp; Trust Board Update</b></p> <p><u>Appointments &amp; Resignations</u></p> <p>Trustees reviewed and approved the co-opted Governor Appointments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Martin Redfern, Honiton</li> <li>• Sarah Banks, Honiton</li> <li>• Abi Croot, Lipson</li> <li>• Sawsan Khuri, CEC (subject to completion of all SCR checks)</li> <li>• Jo Hill, St James (subject to completion of all SRC checks)</li> <li>• Pat Patel, MAP Secondary (subject to completion of all SCR checks)</li> </ul> <p>Trustees reviewed and noted the recent Governor Resignations.</p> <p>The new Vice-Chair appointment at Exwick Heights, Rachael Milton was noted.</p> <p><b>Action: Formally confirm Governor appointments by the usual process.</b></p> <p><u>Governor Recruitment</u></p> <p>LM gave an overview of the current governor vacancies across the Trust and the recruitment process. The governor recruitment to date had been very positive with less than 12% of co-opted governor vacancies now remaining across the Trust.</p> <p>It was noted that, where governors were needed from local schools or further/higher education provision, as identified in the terms of reference, this tended to be a slower process due to building links. There would be more work undertaken around this prior to September. The remaining Trust Link Governors would also be appointed in time for the new academic year.</p> <p>Information sessions were being held with potential parent governors in schools, prior to applications being invited, this helped to ensure that any candidates fully understood the remit of the role.</p> <p>LGB effectiveness was being reviewed. It was agreed that it was fundamental for school improvement to have the right people around the table. Trustees noted the importance of having strong local governing boards within the Trust.</p>	MF
5.	<p><b>Policies for Approval</b></p> <p>Trustees reviewed and approved the minor changes to the Trust’s Procurement Policy.</p> <p><b>Action: Update and Publish the Procurement Policy</b></p>	MF

<p>6.</p>	<p><b>Financial Update</b></p> <p>TR gave an overview of the management accounts; these had been reviewed in detail by the Finance &amp; Resources Committee on 06.03.24. LD’s positive work in supporting the finances was noted.</p> <p>Larger deficits in the budget were predicted for 2024-25, although it was noted that TWT was in a stronger position than some other Trusts. These were challenging times for the whole sector.</p> <p>A 5.7% increase in staffing costs was being budgeted for 2024-25, it was noted that additional funding for pupils had not increased at the same rate. It was also noted that Covid recovery funding would no longer be received, this added additional pressure.</p> <p>The Executive were advocating strongly to get the Trust to a long-term sustainable position.</p> <p><i>What impact will the actions being taken by the Trust have on the longer-term projected deficit?</i> Contact ratios and class sizes are areas of focus. We are also looking at reducing PAN where possible. The rhythm of the year is being monitored. Modelling is being undertaken and we need to be clear about how benchmarks are used. We are also getting greater investment returns. Cashflow and management account are well managed. We are well placed, however, the working context is becoming increasingly difficult.</p> <p><i>What is the Trust’s strategy in terms of raising awareness? How much are stakeholders involved in this, they also have an important voice.</i> We have been very good at managing resources. A strategy for lobbying needs to be formalised.</p> <p><i>Is it likely that the impact of VAT being charged for private schools may lead to an increase in student numbers nationally in state education?</i> This is unknown, but this could potentially be beneficial due to the predicted trend of declining pupil numbers.</p> <p>Trustees were content that the Trust’s financial management and reserves were positive in the shorter term. In the longer term this appeared to be a larger problem and it was likely to be several years before additional funding for schools was received. The Trust therefore needed to plan accordingly.</p> <p><b>A full record of the discussion is in Part B of the minutes.</b></p> <p><u>South-West Opportunities Fund (SWOF)</u></p> <p>Trustees noted that it was important for them to have a greater understanding of the intention of the South-West Opportunities Fund and how it would fit into the wider strategy.</p> <p><b>Action: An update on the South-West Opportunities Fund to be added to the agenda for the October 2024 Trust Board Meeting.</b></p>	<p>MF</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p><b>Chief Executive Officer’s Report</b></p> <p>MM gave an update on key themes.</p>	

The Headteacher Study Tour to London had been very successful. It had been a very positive opportunity for leaders to observe excellent practice and to reflect on a range of areas. A summary report of the tour would be circulated for information.

**Action: Circulate the HT Study Tour summary document.**

MF

*Trustees noted that some of the work being undertaken in London schools was at a high cost, and that there were many benefactors who contributed to this. This could potentially be supported in the longer term for TWT by the SWOF.*

MM noted thanks to LM and AW for their support in finding governors to support a PEX panel at another Trust recently. This was a very positive example of cross-Trust working.

Directors of Education Appointments – two new director appointments for the secondary school improvement function (LW and SP) had been made in addition to an assistant director (JF) to lead on the Ted Wragg Institute. These were currently one-year temporary contracts.

MM was confident that there was a strong team in place to support the Trust’s existing schools and to prepare for future growth. There would be longer-term opportunities to provide school improvement support for other schools and Trusts.

Attendance

*Trustees noted that some Trusts were using more innovative means for increasing attendance (i.e. virtual) and queried if TWT was considering a similar approach? The option to allow students to log-in remotely had been piloted at MAP Secondary. This had led to increased attendance, including for SEND students, however it had been from a low baseline. There were many different options being used in schools. MM would be meeting with DCS in Plymouth and Devon to look at options for this going forwards. Some green shoots were being seen; in the future the desire was to invest in community groups to support families. This would cost money and would lead to tough budget choices in schools.*

Trustees agreed that attendance was a long-term issue, this appeared to be moving in the right direction.

*Trustees noted that sport and extra-curricular activities could be positive drivers for increasing attendance and asked if this was a potential area of investment. There are many inter-school sporting activities being held in our schools currently. Schools have increased their enrichment offer.*

*Trustees also noted that careers could also be a positive area of work. Developing strong links within the school education system to include visits, talks and work experience and could lead to increased attendance in the future. It was important to start this young. Research showed that children tended to lose their love of learning from transition year 6 to year 7.*

*Were there any key themes coming out of the student survey? Yes, the summary of responses will be shared with Trustees when in the final format.*

	<p><u>Growth Committee Update</u></p> <p>PB gave an overview of the key points from the recent Growth &amp; Development Committee meeting.</p> <p><b>JO joined the meeting at 10.26am.</b></p> <p><b>A full record of the discussion is in Part B of the Minutes</b></p>	
8.	<p><b>Risk Impact Review (Strategic Risk Register)</b></p> <p>Trustees reviewed the current Strategic Risk Register, noting the updates made following the Audit &amp; Risk Committee.</p>	
<b>For Information</b>		
9.	<p><b>Audit &amp; Risk Committee Minutes 06.03.24</b></p> <p>Noted for information. No questions.</p>	
10.	<p><b>Minutes of LGB Chairs Group</b></p> <p>It was noted that the LGB Chairs Group had been a very positive meeting, there had been high representation, positive engagement and good questions.</p> <p><i>Trustees queried how the Trust thanked the LGBs for their hard work. The termly Chairs meetings were appreciated. Thought would also be given to recognising the work of the LGBs annually. This could be incorporated into the Trust's termly report.</i></p>	
11.	<p><b>Minutes Inclusion &amp; Social Justice Panel</b></p> <p>The minutes were noted for information.</p> <p>The scrutiny panels had been more meaningful and better managed. They remained work in progress but were now moving in the right direction.</p>	
12.	<p><b>Minutes of Education Scrutiny Panel</b></p> <p>Noted for information.</p>	
<b>Any Other Business</b>		
	<p>Meeting closed at 10.43am.</p> <p><b>Date of Next Meetings:</b>          Wednesday 22 May 2024, 4.30pm, Buckfast Abbey Conference Centre          Weds 10 July 2024 (Conference)</p>	

**Signed by the Chair of the Board:**

Signed electronically via Governor Hub

**Date: 22.05.24**