



## PUBLIC MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

### MINUTES

**DATE** : Tuesday, 14 December 2021  
**TIME** : 17:00pm  
**LOCATION:** : Virtual

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Trustees are hereby notified and requested to attend a meeting at the above time on the above date to transact the business set out below.

The meeting will be open to the public, except where exempt information is being discussed as noted on the agenda.

TRUSTEE	END OF TERM OF OFFICE
<b>AC</b> Asha Choolhun	29 April 2023
<b>CAD</b> Clive-Anthony Douglas MBE	20 November 2024
<b>PM</b> Philip Minns	20 November 2024
<b>NP</b> Nina Panayis	29 April 2023
<b>JR</b> John Rolfe MBE	22 August 2022
<b>RT</b> Rosemary Tehrani	26 February 2022

#### IN ATTENDANCE

<b>TC</b> Tom Canning OBE	Chief Executive Officer
<b>SL</b> Sarah Lack	Deputy CEO and Director of Primary
<b>SGL</b> Steven Lock	Chief Finance and Operating Officer
<b>RN</b> Rose Nelson	Finance Specialist
<b>AA</b> Angela Ainsworth	Judicium Clerk

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The Code of Conduct for Trustees requires Trustees to be honest and open with regard to conflicts of interest (either real or perceived). Trustees must not use their position for personal gain in business, political or social relationships. Therefore, a Trustee who has, or may be perceived to have, such a personal interest in a particular matter under consideration should declare that interest, withdraw from all discussions relating to it and take no part in any vote on such matter.

Items marked \* are those in which a majority of Trustees may have an interest because of some shared attribute. When considering these items, Trustees should aim to achieve a balanced view, paying particular attention to the sources of information and advice, and remind themselves of their duties as Trustees and to act in the public interest.

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**1. MEETING OPENING**

- 1.1 The chair welcomed members to the meeting.
- 1.2 Apologies were received and accepted from Carly Clarke, Mohammed Mamun and Patricia Regis.
- 1.3 The meeting was confirmed as quorate,

**2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS, PECUNIARY OR OTHERWISE IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

- 2.1 No pecuniary or personal interests were advised for any agenda item for this meeting.

**3. CONSTITUTION AND MEMBERSHIP LIST**

- 3.1 No item to report.

**4. PUBLIC MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS BOARD MEETING AND ACTIONS ARISING**

- 4.1 The public minutes of the Board of Trustees meeting held on Tuesday 19 October 2021 were approved by the Trust.
- 4.2 The confidential minutes of the Board of Trustees meeting held on Tuesday 19 October 2021 were approved by the Trust.

**5. MAIN BUSINESS**

- 5.1 The Board to receive the recommendation of the FARM Committee in regard to the contract extension of Academies Finance for both financial management support service and Internal Audit Services. **[Chair of FARM to report back]**

CAD noted RN contract was extended at FARM.

- 5.2 Finance Specialist admitted into the meeting.

- 5.3 The Board to receive the CEO's report. **[appendix 3]**

At the recent Standards meeting the outcome of the external partner and Sir Robin Boshier reports were shared with members.

Overall, all schools are doing well, 5 schools have imminent Ofsted inspections, 3 schools have been inspected and had successful Ofsted outcomes.

The Clara Grant School is new to the Trusts and through the SIP work undertaken by SL it has become apparent the school is more fragile than anticipated. Gaps in learning in some years were a barrier to a successful Ofsted, the curriculum did not meet the Ofsted framework.

The team at The Clara Grant is keen to work with the Trust and is committed to improving, TC advised that SL will be placed in The Clara Grant for 2 terms. The team trusts SL and will work with her.

Sir Robin visited last Friday and confirmed root and branch renewal was required.

Post pandemic the Head was concerned with teacher wellbeing so closed the school at 12:30 on Friday afternoon for teacher PPA. Currently, teachers do not need to remain on-site however, this means students are at home on Friday afternoon which is a safeguarding concern. There is also a concern that statutory teaching hours are not being met.



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TC asked for Trustees support to ensure the school is open full five days. The school will be given a half term to address the early closure on Fridays.

Financially the school is forecast to be in a deficit of £198k, staff absence levels are high across both teaching and support staff with associated high Agency supply costs.

TC asked Trustees for support to put a brake on spending from Friday and that all future spending be approved by SL, SGL or RN.

SL will prepare a matrix of staff to student needs as the impression is there may actually be a staff surplus.

RN noted that the overspend is driven by Agency staff costs.

NP noted that there had been a long discussion at the Standards committee around the school and it was identified as a real area of concern.

The following was noted and agreed by Trustees in relation to The Clara Grant School

Trustees want to see a new curriculum, pedagogy, and timetable in line with the Ofsted framework.

Trustees advise that the school needs to be open 5 full days to ensure the safeguarding of students.

Trustees have agreed to put a brake on spending without authorisation by The Trust Executive and further that no Agency staff are used without the express permission of RN or SL.

Q: CAD asked what was the contingency plan if the Headteacher pushes back against the changes?

A: TC replied that he hoped that the heavily collegiate approach will win out but if not then, in that case, difficult conversations will take place. TC expressed confidence the Head will rise to the occasion.

Q: AC asked whether there were any financial implications associated with the school opening 5 full days?

A: TC responded that yes there will be as all PPPA was moved to Friday afternoon, but the assumption is that lower Agency costs will offset this. The school is currently spending £6K pwk on Agency

It was noted that The Clara Grant School had asked to extend the school hours Monday to Thursday to allow the Friday afternoon closure, but the safeguarding concerns remain.

5.4 The Board to receive Management Accounts from the Finance Specialist. [tabled on the day]

It was noted that:

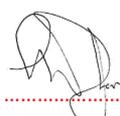
The accounts are available on the GovernorHub each month.

For the November period, the in-month surplus was £110k against a budget £83k.

The current staffing surplus will be ringfenced in case of any change to teacher pension funding

There is some higher expenditure due to high energy costs, front-loading of education supplies and a catering accounting error which will be resolved in December.

The Teaching School Hub funding is delivered in a different pattern to the budget, and this will be resolved from December onwards.



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RN confirmed that as a Trust we are looking at a consolidated surplus position, the financial position remains strong and within our reserve policy.

RN is confident in the Trust's financial position.

Q: CAD Why is there a discrepancy in the top slice?

A: RN this is due to software issue. There is no discrepancy in the total annual top-slice, however, the software issue is not allocating it correctly over the 12 months period. This is being resolved and will be reflected in Decembers management accounts.

Q: AC You have said there was front loading of education supplies by some schools but are all schools not working to same accounting format

A: RN Yes there is common accounting practices across the trust, however, schools use different suppliers and so some may be offered discounts to front load their orders.

AC As a Trust should we look at maximising discounts from suppliers.

RN Yes, the Trust is looking at maximising the efficiency of services across schools.

RN confirmed the Trust have 3 catering suppliers.

5.5 The Board to receive the recommendation of the FARM Committee regarding the one-off Teachers' Pension uplift of £1.00 per Teacher. **[Chair of FARM to report back]**

Noted and approved by the Trustees.

5.6 The Board to receive the recommendation of the FARM Committee regarding the annual audited accounts (August 2021) and formally ratify.

Noted and approved by the Trustees.

5.7 The Board to receive and approve Executives (CEO, DCEO and CFOO) Performance Review and targets for the 2021 academic year.

Noted and approved by the Trustees.

## 6. STANDING ITEMS

6.1 The Board to receive a verbal update from the Chair of the Finance, Audit and Risk Management Committee since the last meeting.

Regarding the external audit report, the issues raised requiring resolution will be dealt with by RN.

It was noted that the internal audit report showed an improved position.

On the risk register, it was confirmed that all the items under the Trusts control were in hand.

6.2 The Board to receive a verbal update from the Chair of the Standards Committee since the last meeting.

Confirmed concerns discussed regarding The Clara Grant School.

Extensive discussion at the meeting in relation to phonics and the impact of lower pupil numbers.

Extensive discussion around the quality assurance of the School Hub.

An update on the reaccreditation process with DfE was received.

Update from Martin was requested and agreed upon for the next meeting.

6.3 The Board to suggest items for future agenda discussion.



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**7. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

7.1 None.

**8. DATE, TIME, AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING**

8.1 The date of the next **Board of Trustees** meeting will be held on Tuesday 8 February 2022 at 16:00 via Microsoft Teams.

Meeting ended at 17:52pm



CHAIRS SIGNATURE

08.02.22

DATE