

Minutes of CAST Board meeting held on Friday 11th December 2020
remotely via Zoom from 10.30am

Attendees:	Andy Nicholls (AN)	-	Foundation Director (Chair)
	Sandy Anderson (SA)	-	Foundation Director
	Terry Stockley (TS)	-	Foundation Director
	Deacon Richard Edwards (RE)	-	Foundation Director
	Jacqui Vaughan (JV)	-	Foundation Director
	Ann Harris (AH)	-	Foundation Director
	Dan Rogerson (DR)	-	Academy Director
	Graham Briscoe (GB)	-	Co-opted Director
	Les Robins (LR)	-	Co-opted Director
	Zoe Batten (ZB)	-	CEO
	Canon Mark O'Keeffe	-	Member
In Attendance:	Karen Cook (KC)	-	CFOO
	Kevin Butlin (KB)	-	Director of Education
	Sarah Burreto (SB)	-	DSC
	Helen Laird (HL)	-	Clerk

1. Welcome and Opening Prayer	Decision/Action
Opening prayer by Deacon Richard	
2. Apologies and Confirmation of Quorum Apologies received from Laura Fox. Quorum met.	
3. Declaration of Interest DR and JV confirmed their standing interests	
4. Confirmation of out of meeting vote Interim Chair and Vice Chair Election All Directors were in support of AN becoming Interim Chair and SA Interim Vice-Chair when the out of meeting vote was conducted by email. The decision was ratified at this meeting. All were in agreement.	Decision – AN elected as Chair and SA as Vice-Chair
5. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CEO Update CEO Report (including CFOO and Education Updates) ZB responded to the questions received from Directors in advance of the meeting. JV – <i>Has the formulation of the TIP gathered contextual wisdom from further afield than just ELT i.e., head teachers or has this been confined to just this group?</i> ZB has talked with Headteachers and sent an all-staff survey to understand the picture across the trust on how staff are engaged with the mission etc. ZB has reviewed the Board 5-year goals, which will be refreshed in the spring term with members of the Board. ZB advised that functional plans will be developed. ZB is currently fact finding to understand how this will all come together. There will be clear processes for monitoring so that the Board can RAG rate. AN – <i>Within the educational standards report the poor performance of disadvantaged pupils is highlighted. This has been a priority for a few years and clearly the impact</i> 	

of COVID has made the issue even more challenging. However, apart from giving focus to the issue I do not see any specific actions to address what is a major concern. Is there anything more specific that can be provided so that the effectiveness can be monitored over time?

- KB responded that everything the Trust is doing is about catching up on the education missed. Precision is a focus for the ESM team and within schools to enable focus on specific groups and using data effectively.
- Generic work is being done to make the work of the ESMs more precise in terms of analysing the quality of teaching. Rosenshine Principles were launched in September 2019 and the ESM teams are ensuring these are being used. The Trust Assessment Policy is weak, so this is being re-written. KB detailed the questions that need to be asked to make a forensic judgement on interventions and requirements.
- KB advised that the tools the ESMs are using are being sharpened up to give an immediate overview of attainment and progress which is now being reviewed more effectively. Understanding of this data is key.
- ESMs now also have more involvement in School Improvement Plans.
- KB has spent a lot of time with KWH reviewing the Secondary Pupil Premium Plans as these were weak in terms of precision.
- AN suggested this needs to be a key focus of the Board and should be reported on frequently.
- AH - *In the educational standards report it states that only one of our schools is projecting that PP children will reach the national average for all children. Since PP funding is intended to close the gap, what work has been done to assess the impact of this funding across the Trust?*
- KB advised that very similar strategies were being used across schools and many had little impact. Quality of teaching and learning is paramount. Where assessment is being used precisely and Rosenshine is being used the impact is strong.
- KB detailed some of his experience with these discussions.
- AN - *Can an update to the secondary joint LGB be provided at the meeting please. How many governors do we now have, and do we have a Chair designate identified?*
- KB advised there is a good LGB now in place for January. The work of Graham Johnson and Jackie Eason is superb and there is confidence in the structure moving forward which includes a very clear detail of responsibility.
- AH - *Understandably, staff absence is exasperated by COVID-19. This has had a significant impact on a number of schools but one, Sacred Heart, Brixham has been congratulated by Torbay Local Authority and Public Health England on the headteachers management of risk assessment and control measures. Have we looked at the detail of what has been done to understand what*

exactly has made the difference? If so, have the findings been shared?

- KB advised there had been a superb response from school staff to this issue and they continue to work hard. Torbay council contacted KB to note the response by one of the schools to an outbreak and PHE were very impressed with the way this was dealt with. The approach is a standard one across the Trust. 3 schools who have had the need for staff to self-isolate due to a breach of the procedures in school. These have all be dealt with appropriately and staff reminded not to become complacent.
- GB noted his surprise at the amount of requirement and compliance that is coming from the Government regularly. Noted the administration of this must have an impact. Also noted that the Local Authorities do not appear to be supporting schools and MATs are stepping into do this for schools currently not in one in some areas.
- ZB acknowledged this is happening and talked of her experience in her last MAT who were asked to support schools outside of the Trust by the Local Authority.
- GB noted that the Trust is not in a position to expand due to the requirement of schools to be Catholic. Perhaps a wider discussion on this is needed at another time. ZB responded that an eye must be kept on sustainability and being a Catholic MAT does not prevent working with other schools and MATs. There is provision in the Articles to include CoE schools.
- SA noted the level of support from KB for schools which has been fed back to Link Directors.
- KB advised that the Trust has made the decision not to shut the schools on 18th December as recommended by the Government due to short notice for the parents regarding childcare and the loss of a good inset day which will be needed later in the year for staff development.

Scheme of Delegation – Changes Summary attached

The document was circulated prior to the meeting and questions invited in advance.

- SA - *Scheme of delegation (SOD) - I had hoped that we would only have one scheme of delegation i.e., no special scheme of delegation for Buckfast, to that end we need to reflect the requirements agreed with Buckfast in this SOD. Appointment / removal governors - need to include the right of the Abbott regarding Buckfast*
Appointments - need to include the right of the Abbott to be involved with the appointment of the head at Buckfast.
- ZB acknowledged that this will be part of the SoD but discussions are still on-going so these elements will be added in once confirmed. ZB detailed the key points that need to be clear relating to appointment of leadership, involvement with governance etc.
- ZB noted the recommended changes SA has suggested and advised these will be done.

- *LGBs should also carry out 360-degree performance review of the chair. (HL added)*
- *Budgeting and financial control - there should be an "X" in the LGB column. (HL amended)*
- *Procurement - there should be an "x" in the LGB column. (HL amended)*
- *Relationship and sex education - should be included in responsibilities of SLT.*
- *Suspensions and dismissals - should be an "x: in LGB column (HL amended)*
- *Data Protection - I think there needs to be a D.P. officer appointed in each academy - can't be the head should be reflected somewhere. (HL added)*
- KC asked if this SoD is now for agreement or if it for approval to move forward for agreement on the St Mary's Buckfast elements. AN confirmed the second of these and the Board agreed for this to move forward.
- GB noted that the language changes between "schools" and "academies". The decision on one or the other needs to be made. ZB agreed and will ensure this is done.
- AH noted what a great report this was. AN asked if everyone was happy with the revised format. All agreed the report should follow this format going forward.

Decision –
Revisions to the
Scheme of
Delegation agreed
for move forward
to incorporate
Buckfast points

CEO left the meeting at this point

6. Minutes of previous meeting of 9th October 2020

6.1 All agreed the minutes to be accurate and approved.

Approved

6.2 Actions

Status updated on Actions Summary.

7. Chair's Business (Oral)

Memorandum of Understanding Approval

- AN advised the draft document was sent to the RSC for information but although not requested they had responded with some comments and suggestions. The document has been updated to reflect those comments agreed with the CEO/DSC as appropriate. AN detailed the changes.
- AN asked if the Board felt further time is needed to review prior to this being agreed and signed by both parties. All were content with the changes and confirmed it could be signed and in place. HL to arrange.
- AN noted this is the strategic document and now a working level document is envisaged. It was proposed SB and ZB meet to determine the content of this. This would then come to the Board for review. TS was not sure this is what the vision was. AN explained that most of the issues raised previously are picked up in the MoU, but that some further detail at a working level needs to be clarified.

Decision – MoU
approved for
signing by AN and
SB.
Action - HL to
arrange

Articles of Association

- Articles have been re-written and reviewed by AN, SA, ZB and KC. Some recommendations will be sent back for further amendment. The revision incorporates the

Buckfast issues; the Abbot would become a Member of Plymouth CAST; they will have own Governing Board and involvement in appointment or change to terms of reference for the Headteacher. They would also have involvement over land discussions. The Trust would guarantee that money put into the school by the Abbot is protected. There would also be Diocese involvement.

- AN advised the group that the intention is to bring the draft document to the Board once this is ready.

RSC Meeting Update

- AN advised this was a positive meeting with them following JB's departure to provide an update and reassurance of stability. They are content with the plans in place and happy with the progress being made. Next review is in February.
- RE congratulated AN and others for the way this was handled.

Succession Planning

- AN advised there are 2 potential candidates to become Foundation Director and the Diocese has identified a third candidate. All candidates have potential to become Chair at the end of this academic year.
- An application form and process are now in place.
- AN would like to bring 1 or more onto the Board in the new year to give them time to embed before determining the potential Chair.
- TS asked if there is specification on the background of the person to take the Chair position. AN noted there is not a specific background requirement but the skill set is important. Chairing experience etc is important.

Strategic Planning Meeting

- AN is looking to arrange this in early March so that it can be done in a face to face meeting. HL will put a tentative date in place.
- TS asked how the Trust Improvement Plan fits with this and the functional plans. KC to take this back for discussion.
- LR asked if there is a framework for the Strategic Plan. AN noted this should be detailed in the Trust Improvement Plan. There is a high-level Strategic Plan in place which then should feed through to the TIP to ensure the elements are fed back to and reviewed by the Board.
- LR asked if the SELT have experience of this. KC advised she has some experience of this from her previous roles. ZB comes from a school improvement position so blending these is the challenge. Welcomed support from LR if he can offer it. SB advised that the RSC has a framework that could be used.

Document submission

- AN noted a number of documents have appeared in GovernorHub late this time and asked all those providing these meet the deadline of 1 week before for circulation. Anything to come in after this point must be by authorisation of the Chair.
- AH noted that the process of providing questions prior to the meeting works well and suggested this should be the way forward. All agreed.

Action – HL to plan Strategic Meeting Date

Action - All to ensure documents are submitted to HL at least a week prior to the meeting for distribution

8. Finance and Resources

Management Accounts to 31st October 2020

- KC advised that the issues starting to come through are related to staff absences and cover costs. It is a concern that this is likely to continue and possibly get worse in the new year. Noted the majority of the contingency has already been consumed. Details of this will come to the Finance Committee in January.
- AN asked if the additional Covid funding will offset this. KC advised that the conditions on being able to claim the funding are very restrictive which may mean that claims cannot be made. Still awaiting confirmation on whether this is at Trust or school level. If at Trust level a claim is highly unlikely. Awaiting further guidance.

School Future Review – moved to Part II

St Boniface Land Sale Update

- KC advised that the DfE are pushing back on the disposal of the land as detailed in the paper provided to the Board prior to the meeting.
- The DfE are not happy with the transfer of the income to a private organisation, which they see the Diocese to be. Further discussions directly are needed.
- A proposal can still be made but the discussion on if the work should be done if the outcome will not be what is wanted is needed.
- TS asked what the position is with the prospective purchaser. KC advised they are aware that there are a number of approvals needed and this may take some time.
- It was agreed further discussion would be needed on this once KC had spoken more directly with the DfE.

9. Audit and Risk

Statutory Accounts

Annual Accounts and Trustee Report

- KC noted the errors in the draft report and confirmed these have been picked up for amendment.
- KC acknowledged the strong surplus position within the accounts.
- KC asked for any notes to be sent to her that day so that these can be finalised.
- GB drew attention to the new Carbon section. Pg. 15 intensity ratio of 0.18 and asked what this means, where is the Trust on the spectrum? KC responded that this is a new scheme and in comparison, the trust appears to be sat in the middle of the spectrum. Concern is that this judgement is in a year that is not usual for travel and utility needs. It is unlikely there will be an improvement next year due to this. A statement could be added to this section to provide further context.

KIDD

- DR advised this was discussed fully at the A&R meeting.
- Some questions were received regarding this from SA prior to the meeting - *Capital Grants - I seek assurance that all capital subject to clawback if not spent by March 2021 will be spent and therefore not clawed back.*

KC detailed how the funds are recorded and reported. This will be more explicit about the split coming in going forward. Invoices have now been received for works begun before the end of year so much of these funds have been used now.

- *Reporting of statutory grants on school websites. When will all the websites have been reviewed? What will be the penalty for failure to update them? I have reviewed a number and certainly the sports grant reporting is not being properly completed putting us at risk of having to repay the grant.*

KC advised on the work being done by the Trust to ensure schools have published their statements correctly and in the same format. This will be done by 14th January.

- AN acknowledged the much-improved position of the Trust. DR agreed and fed back on the 3 orange areas which are being addresses, noting a much better picture.

Letter of Representation

- No further points were raised on this.
- The Board approved the Statutory Accounts and supporting documents with the few amendments discussed.

Internal Audit Annual Report

- DR advised on some on-going work with governance information and inventory recording to address the concerns within the report.
- KC advised that the A&R committee recommend not to change External Auditors this year but to look to re-tender next year. KC will be discussing the fee in relation to the new automated information transfer process coming into play this year. The Board agreed with this decision and supported a re-tender process next year.

Annual Report from Chair of Audit and Risk Committee

- The Board received this report detailing the key work of the committee prior to the meeting. There were no questions.

H&S Update and Incident Report

- GB informed that the committee met last week and updated on the key discussions.
- GB talked of the RIDDOR reportable incident which the Board were made aware of at the time it happened.
- There has been some slippage with Devon Partnership carrying out H&S audits.
- AH sent a question prior to the meeting - *The H and S report identifies 17 incidents characterised as 'violence by students'. How is this being followed up? What efforts are being made to bring this figure down?* KC talked of the questions to be asked at school level in relation to the violent behaviour of pupils and how this is reported. Looking at further training to help staff deal with these situations.
- TS asked about the 13 schools who have not made an incident report this year. GB noted this has been picked up and is being looked into. Some schools are not reporting in the correct way.

Decision –
Approval of
Statutory
Accounts

- TS asked if data is shared with all schools so they can see what others are reporting. KC noted this could be picked up at Heads meetings with KB.
- GB confirmed an asbestos issue had been resolved.

10. Governance and Management

Skills Audit and Board Self Evaluation

Board Improvement Plan

- AH thanked all for their involvement.
- Suggested a small group works on this plan to develop a functional plan. SA, GB and JV confirmed they would be happy to work with AH on this.

Link Director Updates

- AN encouraged Link Directors to make contact with their schools even if just by telephone or zoom at the moment. AH added the usefulness of these interactions.
- Link Director Reports were shared on GovernorHub for all to review.

Safeguarding Lead Report

- JV apologised for the lateness of her reports.
- No questions and the Board were happy with the details within the reports.

11. Policy Review

Admissions – consultation

- The Board reviewed these policies out of meeting, and they have now gone for consultation.

Pupil Welfare

- To be reviewed out of meeting and responses by 18th December.

12. Close

Meeting closed at 12.40

Future Board Meeting Dates

All meetings to commence at 10.30am at the Plymouth CAST Offices

Friday	26th February 2021	AGM at 10.30am 11.30am
Friday	14th May 2021	10.30am
Friday	23rd July 2021	10.30am