

**Minutes of CAST Board meeting held on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> February 2021**  
**remotely via Zoom from 11am**

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
	Ruth O'Donovan (RO)	-	Foundation Director
	Dan Rogerson (DR)	-	Foundation 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 and Standards
	Sarah Barreto (SB)	-	DSC
	Helen Laird (HL)	-	Clerk

**1. Welcome and Opening Prayer**

Opening prayer by RE.  
AN welcomed RO to the Board as new Foundation Director. All members introduced themselves.  
RO gave the Board a brief introduction to herself and her governance experience.

**Decision/Action**

**2. Apologies and Confirmation of Quorum**

Apologies from Laura Fox.  
Quorum met.

**3. Declaration of Interest**

3.1 Directors were asked to complete the Declaration of Interest and Attendance Register.

**4. Minutes of previous meeting of 11<sup>th</sup> December 2021**

4.1 Minutes including Part 2 approved as an accurate record.

Approved

4.2 Actions  
Status updated on Actions Summary.  
All complete or updated within this meeting.

**5. Chairs Business**

**Approval of Co-Opted Directors**

- AN advised that the new DFE/CES model Articles require co-opted Directors to be re-appointed every year rather than appointed for a 4-year term. AN proposed the approval of appointment for another year for GB, LF and LR. This was seconded by SA and all were in agreement.

Decision – Co-opted Directors appointed for another year

**Succession Planning**

- AN noted the recruitment of RO and talked of the plan to have potential Directors in mind to step in as members retire from the Board.

- GB questioned why there has been the change to yearly approval for co-opted directors and noted that he believed he was appointed for a 4-year term. AN explained this is related to a change in the model Articles which are being worked on for approval by the Board and Members. There is now a requirement for Co-opted Directors to be approved for appointment annually.

#### **Strategic Planning**

- All documents had been sent to Board for the meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> March. There were no questions.

#### **Staff Wellbeing**

- AN noted the need to support the SELT and only contact them with essential business.
- AN asked Link Directors to focus on wellbeing in their contact with their schools.
- ZB highlighted that this must form part of the day-to-day business and will be included in all reports to the Board. The Trust are supporting staff to flourish and to grow. Strategies for pupil wellbeing will also be a focus. This is a national agenda.

#### **Scope of Chair's Action**

- AN reminded of previous discussions and agreement of the Board to make swift decisions in relation to Covid issues.
- AN has created some formal wording based on NGA advice for approval by the Board to cover this which can be included in the SoD.
- LR asked who will determine if a Board meeting is possible and what the quorum would be. AN advised that the Chair would make this determination and preference would always to call a Board meeting if possible, but this action allows a quick decision from the Chair.
- GB noted the times the Chair's Action could be enacted. These would not be show stopping moments but for those times when a quick decision is needed to support the Trust immediately.
- AH supported the action and believes it is fit for purpose. TS also supported.
- All were in agreement and this will be added to the SoD.

Decision – Chair's  
Action wording  
approved

#### **Articles of Association**

- AN updated on the on-going discussions with St Mary's Buckfast and the CES to move this forward.
- AN advised on some issues still being discussed and the response from the Trust so far.
- SB advised she has shared the comments with the respective people for review and is hoping a meeting will resolve these issues to allow the process to move on.
- TS asked why the Members feel a separate SoD would be appropriate. SB responded that this is a change of position and has been a surprise to all. This has been represented for further discussion.

## **6.**

#### **CEO Update**

#### **CEO Report (including CFOO and Education Updates)**

Questions were invited prior to the meeting:

SA - Trust Improvement Plan - Is there an intention to include against each item how we will measure the improvement? If

there is no way of measuring how will we know if the measures are being effective?

- ZB talked of the KPIs which are built in to varying sections of the plans and time frames for achieving certain stages. Evidence can be collated and presented with the plan then RAG rated against progress. ZB added this will always tie into the Board Strategic Goals.

SA - Finance - a year ago (31/1/20) the pension reserve was - £23,756k. The reserve is now -£31,678k. We have lost ground by £7.9 million. The reserve deficit has grown by 33%. Why and will this continue?

- KC advised on this and detailed how the pension schemes are recorded in the accounts based on market performance. This varies every year and is out of the Trust's control. KC noted this looks worse as the Trust has very few assets as the building stock does not sit on the balance sheet. KC advised on what the pension providers are doing in the background when monitoring this and informed that the Trust would not be liable for this shortfall unless it was to fully close.

SA - Bank Balance - this has grown well - is the purpose to fund the maintenance the school buildings need?

- KC advised some of this relates to income received in advance so is ringfenced. Some of the surplus will be used to support building improvements and this will be discussed at the Strategic Planning meetings.
- SA reminded that the ESFA has previously noted the Trust was holding too much money when it should be used for the students now not kept for the future. KC acknowledged this and advised the view is always that 2% held in contingency is acceptable, anything above this will be used as needed.

SA - SCOMIS - We changed to this relatively recently as we were promised reports by school and MAT - it is apparently not delivering - are we taking legal action?

- KB noted that more of what is required has been delivered by Scomis in the past 12 months. There is still work to do to make it work for the Trust correctly.
- KB advised there is also still the need for this to be used more effectively at school level which will see a better use of the data at Trust level.
- KB is not sure it is an appropriate vehicle for delivering exactly what the Trust needs but it is doing much of what is needed for the moment whilst other options are investigated.
- KC added that there are 2 parts to the contract. SIMs is the predominant part but the reporting side is minimal and could be re-considered.
- AN asked when a recommendation for a change would be brought to the Board. KC suggested the new academic year would be the target for implementation of any new system. KC advised this would be brought to the F&R committee before the summer.

AH - What is the rationale for the yellow and pink on the Risk Register? It seems less clear.

- KC updated on discussions at the A&R committee which established she and GB would meet to refresh the register further and develop each area.

- KC advised on the colour coding and confirmed that the RAG system is in place.

AH - in relation to the first risk on the register

How do you propose to mitigate the danger of the ESM, who is part of the leadership of the school, having their judgement clouded by familiarity?

- DR talked of how the A&R committee have had feedback from ESMs in the past helping the committee to be sure the information they are receiving is what they need etc.
- DR noted that with the actions in place to manage the risk, it still shows as a high concern.
- ZB reminded of the line management of KB of the ESM team and the robustness of this. This should give the Board a high level of assurance that there is another level of review.
- KB talked of the work he did at the start of his tenure as DoE last year and the new views he brought with him.
- KB noted that the ESM is not a direct part of the school management but a line manager and support to their Heads. There is a lot of teamwork in place when reviewing all information and data also.
- KB talked of the collaborative work with SB to bring everything together.
- AN asked when the overarching report to the Board will be available. KC advised this will be available for the next Board meeting once the committee have met to review and finalise the register.

DR - What is planned for joint working with Marjon over ITT?

This sounds like a great step.

- ZB advised there is an history of the Trust working with Marjon on this and the plan now is to grow this relationship. Marjon will support recruitment of Catholic Teachers into the Trust by identifying candidates as trainees to the CAST schools. This will be an on-going partnership and enable the Trust to attract strong new Teachers who could go on to be strong Catholic leaders.
- DR noted that it may be hard to identify potential candidates at university age as this tends to be the time when people are not as connected to their faith as perhaps they would be later in life. Looking to capture those who train later in life may also be beneficial.

DR - Which schools are proving more successful in recruiting to PAN? Is there anything we could learn from them?

- ZB advised that the data across the Trust has been received and there are multi-dimensional reasons for good recruitment. Reputation locally is paramount, both the schools and the Headteachers. This is an area to be focused on. A clear strategy at Trust level is needed which translates down to school level. This needs to be a primary focus for the coming years.
- DR noted the Trust needs to support those schools who are now on an upward trend and help to recruit more pupils.
- ZB talked of the work to be done to encourage secondary students to look at a career in teaching.
- SB supported this and talked of the work being done within the South West Hub in this area.

KB updated on the plans for reopening schools from 8<sup>th</sup> March.

- Lateral flow testing will be carried out for all secondary students returning to school and then they will have home test kits. A small test area will be kept in school to support those who struggle to do this at home.
- KB advised the schools are able to invite students in next week to begin testing so that they can return to school from the 8<sup>th</sup> for education. A robust risk assessment statement has been received from the Head of the 2 secondaries, so KB is happy for this to go ahead.
- AN noted the issues there might be if students don't come in for their tests. KB advised an invitation to an allotted time will be sent to all students to manage this and identify those who may need their first test on return on the 8<sup>th</sup>.
- KB advised that all students will be asked to wear facemasks at all times in school when they return.
- GB raised the difference between a facemask and a face shield which was confirmed by KB who confirmed all Heads have been advised that a shield is not to be used instead of a mask, only in addition to when working closely with students.
- KB advised that those staff who are CEV are still required to shield and will be working from home until advised otherwise.
- KB updated on the confirmation on plans for determining GCSE and A Level grades this year, which will be through teacher assessment.
- Exam Boards will manage this through the strength of the school's quality assurance methodology. Sample questions will be produced that can be used by schools for assessments. KWH will be working with other schools in Plymouth.
- All residential trips are restricted until further notice. Even once these are allowed again the trust will be making individual decisions.
- KB will send the update on all of this to HL for distribution to the Board.
- ZB asked if the Board are content that the processes in place are robust for opening of schools.
- All agreed the processes were robust and suitable to allow the schools to reopen safely.

Action – KB to send Trust Update to HL for circulation to all

## 7. **Education and Standards** **Update from Chair of Committee**

The Board received the minutes of this meeting prior to the meeting for review.

- AH highlighted the salient points to the Board, noting the concerns with some of the KS1 data most likely impacted by the pandemic disruptions.
- The lockdown has had a negative impact on the disadvantaged pupils.
- Attendance has been good but there is still a gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils.
- AH updated on exclusions and noted the number of PP students who are involved in these incidents, the majority are boys.
- AH advised that the committee looked at the quality of teaching and the impact this has on achievement. The new Assessment Policy was approved by the committee.

- The committee reviewed the engagement of pupils across the home learning period.
- The committee will receive a session from KB on the curriculum shortly.
- In the secondary schools a reduction in basic predictions was reported but also less exclusions in SBC which the committee were pleased to hear about.
- PP girls at ND are making good progress but the higher attainers are making less significant process. Exclusions are low there.

## 8. Finance and Resources

### Management Accounts to 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021

The Board received these documents for review prior to the meeting.

- KC advised that some areas are better than expected due to the current school closure period, this could change with reopening as additional costs cannot be predicted.
- Cash position remains solid.

### School Future Review Update

Moved to Part II

### St Boniface Land

- AN advised the sale of this land has been rejected and asked for agreement to halt the process to dispose of this land as discussed by the Finance and Resources Committee.
- Approval from all was given.

### Update from Chair of Committee

The Board received the minutes of this meeting prior to the meeting for review.

- All points covered above. No questions.

## 9. Audit and Risk

### Update from Chair of Committee

The minutes from this meeting were not available for circulation with the Board papers due to the meeting taking place only 1 week prior to the Board papers being sent out. HL will circulate once reviewed by the committee.

- DR advised the committee received the plan from the Internal Auditors.
- KC advised on the fee for the External Auditors who will be recommended for appointment at the AGM this afternoon. A re-tender for this contract will take place in the next year.
- SA clarified that this financial year of accounts will be completed with the current Auditors. KC confirmed this would be for implementation next year.

### H&S Update and Incident Report

The Board received the minutes from the December meeting and the Incident Report in advance.

- GB advised a Health and Safety meeting took place 2 weeks ago and these minutes will be circulated when they are ready.
- The following was discussed at the recent meeting:
  - Training of H&S staff
  - Radon in Cornwall
  - Staff Wellbeing

Decision –  
Approval to halt the process of disposing of the land owned by St Boniface

Action – HL to circulate the minutes of the Audit and Risk meeting

- PS has introduced an audit tracker for the committee to ensure they are up to date with what is happening in schools.
- GB advised on the reduction in the number of incidents on the report, this is in relation to lesser numbers of students in schools but also the work being done in schools with SEND students to reduce the levels of incidents.
- GB explained the process of the external company who conduct the H&S reviews, actions are identified and PS has implemented a spreadsheet to monitor these with the schools.

## **10. Governance and Management**

### **Board Improvement Plan Update (Verbal)**

- AH advised a working group has been working on the framework of the plan and added names to actions. This will be finished and sent on to everyone to review. Please look and complete the boxes alongside the actions against your names.

### **Governor Training Update (Verbal)**

- Some governance training has been conducted with LGBs and a briefing took place earlier in the term.

### **Protocol for Lead and Link Directors**

- This document was updated and shared with all Directors.

### **Lead Director Updates – Safeguarding, SEND and Statutory Grants**

- Safeguarding - Reporting mechanism to staff through CPOMS is being focused on.
- KB updated on this and advised adjusted quotes have been received from CPOMs which is much reduced.
- SEND – report from January. Strategies in place and being built on. SEND attendance is improved.
- SG – Work to be done with Disadvantaged Students.

### **Link Director Updates**

Reports shared from all those who have interacted with link schools this term.

- No comments or questions.

## **11. DSC Update**

- SB advised that the RECD is moving at pace and a full update will be presented to the Board at the May meeting.
- Grade descriptors have been shared with schools in relation to the Catholic Schools Directorate and SB updated on the process of these inspections being in place.
- Training for the inspectors will take place over the coming months.
- SB is planning to send a survey to schools to gather information about the SLTs across the schools. She will share this with the Trust SELT.
- GB asked for further information about the South West Hub and asked for reassurance that the CEO will be involved in the Survey before it is distributed.
- SB confirmed she would be sharing the survey with the SELT as noted earlier in her presentation.



- SB advised on the area covered by the South West Hub and clarified that the survey responses will not collect any personal information.
- Aspiring Leaders continues and the final sessions are taking place after the date when it is hoped the country can return to some kind of face-to-face meeting.
- RE thanked KB for his focus on RE and Catholic Life within the schools and asked the Board to give significant weight to this.
- RE proposed that there is a standing item for RE and Catholic Life on the agenda.
- RE referred to the DSEF and the report provided advising on receipt of these from schools.
- RE drew attention to RSE in the schools and encouraged Directors to have this as a focus during their link meetings with schools.
- RE talked of the work being done by both the DSC team and the SELT which will result in more formal reporting in this area to the Board.

**12. Policy Review**  
**Collective Worship**

- Approved

**Staff Wellbeing**

- Approved

**Admissions Policies – for final approval**

- GB noted some discrepancy with some numbering and would advise KB on this outside of the meeting.
- Approved

**13. Close**

Meeting closed at 12.25

**Future Board Meeting Dates**

Friday	14th May 2021	10.30am
Friday	23rd July 2021	10.30am

Minutes approved at the Board meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2021