

Minutes of CAST Board Meeting held on Friday 19th September 2025
Via Zoom 10.30am

Attendees:	Ruth O'Donovan (RO)	-	Foundation Director (Chair)
	Steve Hole (SH)	-	Foundation Director
	Deacon Nick Johnson (NJ)	-	Foundation Director
	John Cosgrove (JC)	-	Foundation Director
	John Andrews (JA)	-	Foundation Director (Vice-Chair)
	Graham Briscoe (GB)	-	Co-opted Director
	Alison Nettleship (ALN)	-	Co-opted Director
In Attendance:	Zoe Batten (ZB)	-	CEO
	Rose Colpus-Fricker (RCF)	-	COO
	Leah Paiano (LP)	-	Clerk
	Helen Brown (HB)	-	DSC
	Matt Richards (MR)	-	Potential New Director

1. Welcome and Opening Prayer

ZB welcomed all to the meeting and led the prayer.

2. Apologies and Confirmation of Quorum

KMB, KB and NB. Quorum met.

3. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

RO confirmed she would be willing to continue as Chair. RO left the meeting.

Q. Is there a limit on the length of time to serve as Chair? Not in current Articles.

The Board unanimously approved RO as Chair. RO returned to the meeting.

JA confirmed he would be willing to stand as Vice-Chair. JA left the meeting.

The Board unanimously approved JA as Vice-Chair. JA returned to the meeting.

4. Welcome to New Director

MR introduced himself to the Board. MR left the meeting.

RO asked the Board to consider MR as a Co-opted Director.

HB asked if MR was aware of the uniqueness of being a Director of a Catholic Trust. RO assured HB that MR understands the responsibilities and had researched the Trust.

The Board approved MR as a Co-opted Director.

MR returned to the meeting. RO welcomed MR as a Director subject to the necessary DBS and S128 checks.

5. Minutes of previous meeting 18.07.2025 Part I and Part II

Both sets of minutes were approved as accurate records of the meeting.

6. Action Summary - July 2025

**Decision
/Action**

RO was
approved as
Chair

JA was
approved as
Vice-Chair

MR was
appointed as
a Co-opted
Director

Minutes
18.07.2025
approved

24.50 Link Director role.

Q. Undertake this term's meetings? RO confirmed.

24.49 GB to meet with KMB to review the Heat Map. RO confirmed the drop-down school menu is not working. ZB will take forward.

Q. Each school needs to have a school lead on sustainability but not Trusts, has RCF been able to clarify? Mandate is purely in school settings, but RCF is proposing a lead at school and Trust level. Pick up in December.

7. Chair's Business and Chair's Action (if required)

Good response to parish adverts for new Directors.

ZB and RO have met with two potential Foundation Directors and have one further meeting to carry out, appointments will only be made subject to Diocesan approval.

8. Election of Lead Directors

SEND - JC
Safeguarding - ALN
Health, Safety and Data Protection - GB
RE and Catholic Life - NJ
Statutory Grants – to be confirmed
Estates - SH
Careers – GB
Attendance – JC

E&S
Committee
to appoint a
Lead
Director for
Statutory
Grants

GB confirmed his commitment for the next 12 months.

Statutory Grants – need someone from E&S. SA is willing to support the new Lead Director.

Sustainability – December.

9. Election of Link Directors

6 schools without a Link Director. RO proposed to leave other schools as they are.

RO and MR will discuss accessible schools for him.

RO feels it is useful to have link schools.

Q. Will depend on the new role and fit the model.

Q. At the strategy day we touched upon the question of link Directors and whether we should continue with that role - is that to be discussed again/in more depth? ZB and RCF will continue to work and update Directors in December.

Q. Is anyone asking the schools if they feel it is useful? LCB reviews has given school perspective, which was mixed.

10. Committee Membership

Audit and Risk – GB, SH, NJ.

Education and Standards – ALN and JC. Two potential new Directors.

Finance and Resources – JA, RO and NB. Suggested MR.

Remuneration Committee – RO will contact. Chair of F&R and Chair of E&S. ALN has volunteered to attend RemCom.

Q. Can new Directors attend Committee meetings? Yes, useful for Chair and Vice-Chair to attend, also have access to paperwork.

GB invites F&R Committee to December A&R meeting but happy to extend to all Directors for that meeting to hear discussions on statutory audit.

Advise RO and LP if planning to attend any other meetings.

11. Articles of Association

Para 4b – legal suggestion to include wording and would trigger consent from Charity Commission which could take a further 8 weeks.

Q. Solicitors have a copy of the model Catholic Articles? Migrating 2013 model Catholic Articles to the latest and current version of 2019.

Para 53 – legal status of having two parent governors. Where not 2 and vacant for 6 months. Should have 2 on the Trust Board.

Q. Trustee for Catholic Trust? RCF has requested review of Articles prior to approaching the Charity Commission.

Q. Removal of Abbot? Discussed in July, confirmed with solicitor to retain the wording.

Q. Overall timescales? Priority on legal firm's workflows relating to age range changes.

Q. How practical to get 2 parent Directors if we can't get parent governors? Must continue to campaign, ensure schools are being proactive, people are not willing/able to commit in a voluntary role.

Q. Is that per school? Interpreted as a Board.

KB to email an overview of headline data to the board

12. SATs/GCSE Headline Overview

KB to share via email.

RO requested questions via RO and LP to coordinate.

13. Heat Map

The work on the drop-down menu has been completed but not sure why Directors cannot amend this.

Q. On education ranking for Wool, Canonical inspection was Good but showing as RI? HB confirmed. Will be updated for the next meeting.

SELT are considering how to measure the Ofsted gradings on the Heat Map. The inspection framework has changed so the current format of the Heat Map will not align.

JC confirmed that all categories are limiting judgements which will have an effect on the Heat Map. Previously would be a best-fit judgement but the sub-categories are prescriptive, schools will have a spread of judgements across the strands which will impact schools and will result in schools appearing to go backwards.

Wool Canonical inspection to be updated to Good

Q. Postponed from July, look at December? Yes. Training is being rolled out but is poor. The framework goes live in November so may not have a Heat Map ready for December Board meeting due to the delay in the framework being published.

Q. Can we provide a brief to schools on how we can support schools and their staff if the judgement goes backward? This is felt by SELT and the Diocese, support includes training and preparing people for inspection, training for HTs and school leaders will be provided, external consultant is a qualified HMI and works to quality assure our internal judgements and has offered training to our staff, the SIO Team provides incredible support throughout the inspection and afterwards. Employee assistance line which is open 24/7 and confidential, positive relationships with HTs and school leaders which allow colleagues to be open and seek support.

Q. Important to make parents aware of the inspection process as their perception is key, a Trust result and not the school alone, strength in wraparound, not a personal failure.

Q. Three of four schools inspected in the last year, incredibly impressed at the support from the Trust, as a professional never received this type or amount of support.

RO highlighted the support by the SIO Team and thanked ALN for her support in inspections on behalf of the Board.

GB highlighted the amount of knowledge that is freely available to Directors through GovernorHub and CST.

14. Governance Documentation

- **Scheme of Delegated Authority (SoDA)**
- **Schedule of Accountability**

SoDA has been updated and reissued and is confirmed as the model CES (Catholic Education Service) model.

Q. The introductory paragraphs of the SODA refer only once to the safety of pupils – bullet pt 5 in HTs responsibilities – this may be implicit, but I wonder if it should be referred to explicitly. The SoDA follows the model from Catholic Education Service (CES) so we retain the introductory paragraphs.

Q. Should we consider a duty on the LCB to receive a termly (or half termly) report from the local DSL on safeguarding concerns/issues any steps that need to be taken and if these identify deficiencies in the safeguarding culture or regime at the school? We could look at updating the Schedule of Accountability to reflect the termly or half-termly report from the DSL on SG concerns. KB has confirmed there is a Safeguarding section on the HT report.

Q. This should be interrogated by Governors. There is a Lead Governor for Safeguarding, and it is a standing agenda item. JA highlighted at recent LCB meetings Safeguarding was not challenged. Review the Schedule of Accountability and consider at LCB reviews. Lead Director meets with KB and LP on Safeguarding, audits are fed through with KB and to Directors.

GB highlighted that P22 only talks about the statutory audit and no internal audit requirements.

Schedule of Accountability has been streamlined, removed any areas of duplication, and clarified when to complete and submit Notes of Visit.

Schedule of Accountability approved

NJ left at 11.45am

Q. Autumn 1. Chair and Link Director to receive the summary of the Chair of the LCB. Data collection which RCF will take forward.

Schedule of Accountability was approved with these provisos.

15. 2025-26 Management Plan

Schedule of business has been updated to reflect the new meeting structure.

Approved.

Management Plan approved

16. 2025-26 Policy Review Cycle

No proposed changes but for Directors to have visibility and provide assurance to A&R.

RO will highlight dates within the notes' column.

Approved.

Policy Review Cycle approved

17. Governance – for completion

- **Code of Conduct**

Approved.

- **Annual Review incl Business and Pecuniary Interests**

To be shared for completion.

- **Board Effectiveness Tool (previously Skills Audit)**

To be completed on GovernorHub and share with Directors at December Board meeting.

- **Safeguarding Training/Further training needs**

Advise LP and RO for any required training.

18. Policies

- **Health and Safety Policy**

Approved.

H&S Committee RADON gas has been an issue for another Trust and has been asked to raise at H&S Committee.

- **Allegations of Abuse Against Staff**

Low level reporting is incredibly important. Work with LADO, use CPOMS for children and staff. Proactive at holding LADO to account.

Approved.

- **Staff Anti-Bullying and Harassment**

Approved.

All policies were approved

- **Safeguarding Statement**

Approved.

- **Attendance Policy**

Approved.

- **Suspensions and Exclusions Policy**

Q. Concern at pupil voice and where this is in the Policy?

Directors highlighted that acronyms need checking. Shared comments with LP. Has chaired an IRP. Evidence of Pupil Voice isn't explicit enough in ensuring the outcome is right for everyone. First hyperlink on second page doesn't work.

ZB proposed that Directors approve the Policy and build comments in and share an updated version in due course. Schools require this Policy to be in place.

Approved.

- **Diocese of Plymouth RSE Policy**

Approved.

Thanks for JS for authoring the Policy. Thanks to HB.

HB left at 12.07pm

19. Confidential Agenda Item

Meeting moved to confidential discussion.

20. Close of Meeting

RO thanked all for attending.

Meeting closed at 1.06pm

KB to review and make more prominent the importance of the child's voice. Then send final version of updated policy around

2024-25 Board Meeting Dates – All to be held in person

Day	Date	Start Time
Friday	12th December 2025	10.30am
Tuesday	AGM - 10 th February 2026	2pm
Friday	6th March 2026	10.30am
Friday	15th May 2026	10.30am
Friday	Strategy Day – 12th June 2026	9.30am
Friday	17th July 2026	10.30am