

**Minutes of CAST Board Meeting held on Friday 5th December 2025
in person at the Council Chamber, Okehampton from 10.30am**

Attendees:	Ruth O'Donovan (RO)	-	Foundation Director (Chair)
	Deacon Nick Johnson (NJ)	-	Foundation Director
	Steve Hole (SH) (virtual)	-	Foundation Director
	John Cosgrove (JC)	-	Foundation Director
	Nick Baldwin (NB)	-	Foundation Director
	Graham Briscoe (GB)	-	Co-opted Director
	Alison Nettleship (ALN)	-	Co-opted Director

In Attendance:	Karl Murphy-Barnes (KMB)	-	CFO
	Rose Colpus-Fricker (RCF)	-	COO
	Kevin Butlin (KB)	-	DoE
	Leah Paiano (LP)	-	Clerk
	Helen Brown (HB)	-	DSC

1. Welcome and Opening Prayer

RO welcomed all to the meeting and led with a prayer.

RO updated Directors on ZB's return to work and offered her congratulations to NJ for his involvement in the Bishop's installation. HB recommended looking at the Diocesan Newsletter which contains prayer for Bishop Nicholas from each CAST school.

2. Apologies and Confirmation of Quorum

ZB, JA, MR. Quorum met.

3. Welcome to New Directors

- **Ingrid Quaife**
- **Alison McDonald**

RO welcomed IQ and AM to the meeting, and everyone introduced themselves.

4. Minutes of previous meeting 19.09.2025 (Part I and Part II)

Minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

5. Action Summary - September 2025

25.05 RO reminder Directors to complete and record visits to schools in readiness for any future MAT inspection.

25.04 LP to chase outstanding forms. NB is a registered Companies House agent if required for verification.

24.50 Link Director role – continue with Protocols in current form, review and refine for next academic year. HB asked for Link Director to include Canonical Inspection and RE and Catholic Life in visit reports.

24.49 SOAP ranking. Looking at changing the Heat Map, March Board meeting. Driven by the education framework changes.

24.45 To have a further meeting with HB. Update at March Board meeting.

Decision / Action

Minutes
19.09.2025
approved

24.34 RCF explained there has not been a quorate meeting with the unions since June 2025 and asked if the Real Living Wage (RLW) remained a live action due to budgetary conversations. Live action until the impact of the minimum wage increases are known. Discussed at RemCom, review in the future. Ongoing action. Need to consider the reduction in pupil numbers. A Board decision previously and need to consider. Need to keep it as an active action in line with Catholic Social Teaching.

Single sex and transgender actions are ongoing. Discussed transgender at summer conference, need to consider how to approach it. Jeremy (Catholic Education Office) can give a talk. The biggest issue is admissions to single sex schools, governed by the law, don't exclude but embrace as a Catholic community.

Q. If info is available but not definitive can we say completed? No. But there is training available.

Q. Rating on these actions to reflect importance? Some are included in the Risk Register.

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

- RO term of office as Chair

RO confirmed she was appointed 4 years ago in February, last February reviewed Articles which state 3 years only, but the Board approved one year more. With the current make-up of the Board, and with succession planning, RO suggested staying until the end of the academic year as hard to pick up during the year. The incoming Chair could be Chair Elect during the summer term and become Chair from September.

Would need to extend RO's term by a further 5 months. Proposed by GB and seconded by SH. Directors unanimously approved RO to remain as Chair to the end of the 25/26 academic year.

Q. Want to remain as Chair for longer? No, plus the new Articles 4-year term plus one year extension.

- IQ and AM - New Directors

IQ and AM left the meeting at 11am.

RO recommended their approval and to join the Education and Standards Committee. Approved.

Q. Formalised induction plan with three new Directors? HB highlighted the induction with the Diocese regardless of Foundation or Co-opted.

SH offered to provide information to RO regarding his induction along with NB's information.

IQ and AM returned 11.02am

RO welcomed IQ and AM back to the meeting and invited them to join the E&S Committee. RO will allocate a mentor for support. Noted that as many Directors in Cornwall as schools. Consider potential conflict of interests.

- **Term of Office - NJ**

Would welcome NJ to a second term. Unanimously approved.

- **Link Directors**

RO to contact Directors for link schools.

RO to remain as Chair for 25/26 academic year

IQ and AM to join the E&S Committee

SH to share induction info with RO

Mentor to be allocated for IQ and AM

NJ to serve as Director for a second term

- **Use of acronyms, grammar, and spelling**

RO requested that all acronyms are expanded.

Q. Accessibility of documents. MR highlighted the accessibility issues with some documentation via email. The Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) hasn't raised these issues. RCF has met with MR and AP. MR has offered to sit on the JCC. Action for RCF. Tables when put into documents as cut and pasted makes it difficult to view, direct links are better.

RCF to consider accessibility of documents

- **Thanks to SELT and Teams**

RO gave thanks to SELT and Teams for covering in ZB's absence despite their heavy workloads, including DE and LP.

7. **CEO Report**

Pupil Numbers & Strategic Planning

Q. Could we receive an update on current pupil roll trends across the Trust, particularly identifying schools that may be vulnerable to demographic decline? Budget planning process anticipates future pupil numbers, already out of date as numbers change. Will send information around.

KMB to share pupil numbers data

Q. Would it be possible for the Board to see a 3–5-year strategic forecast for pupil numbers, including financial implications and sustainability modelling for each school? Part of the budget planning process, the information will go to the June F&R Committee then Board. Set out an executive summary with high level synopsis for each school for the next three years. Will talk in F&R about particular schools.

Q. F&R meeting, KMB shared a paper on pupil numbers which highlighted the loss of £1.3m next year, need to take a step back and provide a strategic view of the next 3-5 years. This is already a focus for SELT, and the Board needs to be aware of what the Trust looks like in the next 3 years.

Q. Also has implications for schools that may need adjustments and associated capital costs and ongoing maintenance issues. Part of SELT discussions.

Q. In light of these trends, is the Trust developing a long-term strategy that considers options such as restructuring, shared leadership models, changes to PANs, or potential school reorganisation where necessary? Long term strategy being developed is costing hub models and the potential for schools and the Central Team including workloads, responsibility. SELT conversations on GAG pooling has started but had to pause due to year end workload, in-depth paper coming to the Board.

Q. Data isn't nuanced enough, fall of 13%, drop reported in Dorset is 40%, Wool is one school, 80 000 vacancies in England and 50 000 new school places, not alone but need to benefit from ZB's connections with Catholic Trusts, providing Catholic education is a fundamental question and need the Bishop to be included.

NB thanked KMB for highlighting this at the F&R Committee and for his work.

Q. Could pupil numbers, roll forecasts, and sustainability indicators be included as a standing item in future CEO reports? Yes, if the Board would like.

Pupil numbers, roll forecasts, and sustainability indicators to be in CEO report

Leadership & School Improvement

Q. How are current acting or interim leadership arrangements being affected by changing pupil numbers, and what are the medium-term plans to ensure sustainable leadership capacity across the Trust? Acting and interim for a variety of reasons, try not to react to financial pressures. F/T non-teaching HT at Wool as the school needs the focus, the school is vulnerable due to pupil numbers, have managed through acting positions via an agency. Have considered the options for shared leadership but there aren't any, no potential for executive headship. Other schools have executive leadership positions in place to drive school improvement forward. KB gave examples of successful leadership, reaching the end of the temporary arrangement and will have to work with the Diocese to identify solutions but both leaders are Catholic. Previous EHT solution led the school improvement progress which has allowed the schools to have their own HTs. KMB allows the SI Team to ensure leadership levels are supportive.

Recruitment of leadership posts is an issue, not always able to recruit Catholic leaders but with a new Bishop will need to have that conversation to identify potential leadership solutions going forward. Non-Catholic leaders are fixed-term solutions.

Previous EHT models put in place for cost-saving, but it doesn't save as there needs to be an executive leadership solution as well. Nuanced and flexible. Want permanent and Catholic HTs in our schools. Not increasing the EHT model, but the Hub model will be a transformation as not only leadership will be shared but other areas as well.

Q. The 66% White British pupils in our schools compares to 60% nationally (DfE 2025) and 53% in state funded Catholic schools in England (CESEW 2024 census). We could guess that this comparatively high figure is to do with the largely rural nature of our Diocese, but this would not apply to our secondary schools which have 75% White British. CES Census data shows very little difference in the percentage between primary (53%) and secondary (53.2%). Do we know why these figures for our schools are so high? KB has a lot of information and data, reflects our demographic in terms of coastal, rural, Plymouth, secondary and primary, isn't anything going on in terms of not being inclusive.

Q. Do we have comparative figures for other schools in other LAs, Plymouth stood out as a large city, worth reviewing as other secondaries provide the context, Catholic schools are more welcoming and have a more ethnic mix? Our Diocese is not typical of other Dioceses. Huge numbers of white families, eastern European, concentration of non-white families. Our numbers reflect that, our schools are more welcoming and inclusive, non-Catholic families are choosing our schools. KB will share the information with JC.

Q. Talking with a Nigerian man and asked why children aren't in our schools, and he thought Catholic schools are fee-paying. Directors held a discussion on having a standing item in the newsletter, and to advise that the schools are not fee-paying.

Q. OLOTA has an addition to the Parish Newsletter and includes each week.

Q. The % for pupils eligible for PP is lower than the % eligible for FSM and Ever 6 FSM. Is this correct and if so, how does it come about? KB confirmed he is in touch with SIMS for an answer on why this figure is lower, as it shouldn't be.

Q. Do we have figures for LAC PP? National estimate – between 1 and 3%. Primaries – 48 children, which is 0.9%. Inclusive of CLAC and PLAC (Current Looked after Children and Previous Looked after Children) as doesn't differentiate.

Q. Don't always know if PLAC, and HTs need to be aware of families for funding.

KB to share the ethnic data with JC

Q. Do we have figures for Armed Forces PP? Forces are good at telling parents, schools need to be aware and promoting. 0.5% nationally, primary 73 children which is 1.4%. ND 5%, SBC 5.4%. Figures would be what we expect for Plymouth. Secondaries run a special club for forces children. Staff will know when parents are on active duty and support.

Q. Increased the funding for forces children last year and GB will share with LP.

Q. Am aware of a hotel being used for immigrants and the local school has gone above PAN and has attracted Govt funding, does this apply to any of our schools? Not currently but will discuss with SIOs to pick up. One school is adjacent to women's refuges which has an impact but no additional funding.

GB to share funding information with LP

Estates & Capital

Q. Given the move to emergency-only capital works, how are we aligning estates investment with longer-term pupil number projections to avoid investing in space that may be underutilised? Discussed.

Q. Most schools were designed for an intake of 210 pupils, some are down to a third capacity, has implications for heating and lighting costs and pupil numbers being down doesn't bring a cost saving as having to heat the whole school. Any areas of schools to be closed off? Being discussed in F&R Committee.

Priory Speech & Language Hub Proposal

Q. Could we have confirmation on whether the external funding is expected to cover the full cost of the proposed works, and an outline of any long-term implications for site use given emerging demographic trends? More of a multi-agency hub, RCF at a meeting at Priory and reviewed the space identified, verbally grant funding would cover the cost, has submitted the application, recognises the requirement for Diocesan approval as landowners, and have requested the grant information. Want to provide a similar offer at SMC, potential third-party use. Longer term implications, HT has confirmed the school would benefit from the capital expenditure.

Procurement & Compliance

Q. For the PPM and statutory testing tender, could the Board have an overview of how bids are being evaluated and any risks around transition to a new provider? Planned and Preventative Maintenance (PPM) and statutory testing. Evaluation and Recommendation Report to be circulated to F&R Committee.

New Directors

Q. We are in the process of increasing the number of directors; is there a formal induction process to bring new directors up to speed with the workings of the Trust Board and assist their understanding? Discussed.

Strategic Governance & Assurance

Q. Which 5 strategic risks do we consider most urgent and how are they being tracked and mitigated at executive and Board level? Strategic risks will be RAG rated and highlighted within the new Heat Map and also contained in the Risk Register. A column on the Heat Map includes SELT focus. The position of schools is RAG rated in the CEO report.

Q. When will the Articles migration be completed? RCF has been liaising with the solicitors and provided an update to the Board on the latest response. RCF will share the email and Articles for review. HB asked to be copied in. Charity Commission will need to be consulted.

Q. Can we adopt a "Top Five Actions" tracker for Board papers to eliminate multi - year drift?
Discussed.

RCF to share update on Articles and copy HB in

Workforce, HR and Wellbeing

Q. What is the plan to address HR team capacity and pensions workload? Discussed at F&R Committee. RCF has liaised with AP, doesn't feel the HR Team requires support at this stage and the new SAMpeople will save time.

Q. Aware the offer is there? Yes, and she was grateful for the Directors' support.

8. Recruitment and Training of Catholic Teachers

RCF provided an overview, she is working closely with HB and Diocesan team. A specialist at a recruitment agency is actively seeking Catholic candidates.

Research through a leadership and succession survey. Applied to all leadership roles in schools. 34 people completed the survey, 14 identified as practising Catholic. 5 indicated a strong interest in Formation training. Need to consider the Formation pathways to nurture home-grown talent. Consider leadership development. SEND specialists and indicated the SENDCo qualification.

Opportunities and conversations on Catholic pathways and discuss with HB to formalise, need to provide opportunities for these staff. Develop how to work in alignment with Catholic schools. NPQs and CPD Pathways, standalone focussing on professional but not spiritual and how to work together.

RO highlighted positive and good to ask the questions of staff.

Meeting moved to Agenda Item 10.

10. RE and Catholic Life

DSC report provided to the Board. RO thanked HB for her report.

Q. Has research been undertaken on where Bishop came from in dealing with schools? Remit in London was Formation and Evangelisation. Bishop wants to engage with schools, likes to visit schools, and always prepares for his visits. He would also love to have an invitation to the Board meeting. Has also led on the synodal process, a personal invitation by the Pope. In Rome was responsible for educational priests. Has already engaged with two schools.

Q. Foundation Governors and shortages, anything we can do? CAST and Diocese, work in parish newsletters, can all do our bit in the local community, add to the newsletter consistently.

Q. Parish Priest allowed a Director to address the congregation on Education Sunday, perhaps a script for next year. First Sunday in September. Could focus on a weekend earlier in the year. RCF to take as an action.

RCF to consider Education Sunday and how to support schools

9. Safeguarding

Report provided to the Board. Biggest challenge is for schools and the amount of work. The Hub model will support this. The HT is often the DSL, Safeguarding is increasing and HTs want to focus

on T&L. Provide additional support through Parent Support Workers, Admin Support for Safeguarding and SEND, increased amount of non-contact time for HTs.

Early Help (EH) is a stage of intervention of family support, 40% are subject to Early Help. Each EH case will have at least one meeting per term and then have the CP and CiN meetings.

Sustained a non-teaching HT and DHT to help spread the load. The Hub model will allow us to quantify an amount of DSL time required and appoint people to support our schools.

Training in schools is positive, Lead Director work is positive, current theme is managing allegations against staff. An increase in allegations and complaints, some possibly due to an increase in a complaints society, but know that management of allegations has not been carried out correctly, addressing it through meetings, Safeguarding Reviews, DSL Forums, and Safeguarding training for Governors. Every child must be listened to, the default position for some is that "she's always making things up" which makes the child even more vulnerable particularly if they have challenging parents.

Allegations have to be reported to SIO and KB, must go to LADO as well at the point of allegation. This hasn't happened in one school and has been addressed directly.

KB provided an update on the legal case. RCF is working with PLMR for statements, representation from Central Team in court, ex and current staff have been called as witnesses. Allegations are historical as an LA school. May lead to further claims coming forward. Working closely with the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer.

Q. Why are some of the amber ones not green when NFA? Remaining risk. Have reached out to the person making the allegations, nothing we can do to close it down, awful statements will arise again, tainted the member of staff. Do everything we can to support the members of staff but have to listen to the children. Support staff when we have to refer to LADO.

RO reminded all Directors that they are not to comment. A short sentence will be provided to Directors to respond.

As SG Lead Director, ALN assured the Board that SELT has taken all possible decisions, robust Safeguarding culture is in place, and her next report will outline the actions.

Meeting moved to agenda item 11.

11. Education and Standards

11.1 Update from Chair of Education and Standards

Impact statement provided to the Board along with the minutes. RO thanked ALN for the impact statement.

HB left at 12.19pm

11.2 Committee Terms of Reference

Need to have information on where pupils/students move to for their next schools. ToR approved.

ToR approved

12. Finance and Resources Committee

12.1 Update from Chair of Finance and Resources

Impact statement provided to the Board along with the minutes.

12.2 Committee Terms of Reference

Approved.

12.3 Management Accounts to October 2025

Management accounts. Focus has been on income and staffing costs. Full school level forecast in January covering Period 4 which will be discussed at F&R. Confident there will be an in-year surplus for 25/26, and schools should be recognised for the hard work.

Already forecasting a significant increase in income due to SEND funding including funding for staffing a specialist provision in school which is offsetting a staffing increased cost. Hover between £9m and £10m which equates to two months of expenditure.

Q. Two months' money and recommendation is one? Yes. Too risky to have one month.

Q. On the national benchmarking of staff costs? Most recent Kreston Benchmarking report is now out of date, hover around the 15% mark which puts us in the second category. 5% of Trusts nationally have deficits which has not happened before.

Q. Staff employed with additional funding on temporary contracts and KPIs to evidence impact for funding in Years 2 and 3? Temporary yes, KPIs are in place and schools cannot apply for EHCPs for those children. Two LA officers have been reviewing the offer and report on them, SI Team have written a set of standards, KPIs, and review documents. The Trust SEND Lead has been deployed to attend all before Christmas to assess the viability.

Q. Can we request this of other LAs? Not receptive to it currently, setting up internal APs in schools and using our own standards and documents, but having to fund ourselves.

Q. National SEND review has been pushed back to 2026. Government is potentially going to be funding the national black hole of SEND funding, but what does this mean in terms of other school funding? 1.5/2% GAG funding increase per pupil is the potential risk.

Q. Implications for Government for SEND funding, LAs have been notoriously slow to approve SEND, will more be approved through the LA system as not having to fund it? Don't know the potential impact yet.

12.4 Pupil Numbers and MOU

The MOU is an additional document to the Articles. MOU is between Buckfast Abbey and the Diocese, not Buckfast Abbey and CAST. Wanted to make it more robust around the funding and assurance that funding would only be applied to St Mary's, Buckfast core funding.

SELT wording has been added but for Buckfast Abbey and the Diocese to agree.

Pupil numbers have already been discussed at the F&R Committee and A&R Committee. Funding impact and a Trust-wide risk. On the Risk Register. Important to bring to the Board's attention.

Two elements – impact at school level and what that means in terms of affordability and structures going forward. Doesn't change the process, discuss with school leaders, SIOs, SBMs, budget planning process, will be impacted due to lagged funding, know what pupil numbers will be funded. Numbers are significantly lower than anticipated, difficult to anticipate but lower than we thought.

Causes concern Trust-wide in terms of funding projects. Anticipating a drop of 150 when set the budget plans, won't affect 2025/26 but will 26/27, significant to 273. Drop in funding £750 000, but

approximately £1.3m. Hub model will help to address, year on year change but also the impact of the lost income of unfilled places.

13 Audit and Risk

13.1 Update from Chair of A&R (incl. Minutes 28.11.2025)

Internal Audit report, Statutory auditors to the Board, GB Committee report.

Internal audit report and agreed plan of work for next year. Report covered three schools and websites. KMB asked for these reviews. The identified recommendations have been applied to all schools.

Discussed GB's Committee report. Looked at the MUSTS Checklists.

Reviewed three policies – ICT, Digital Strategy, AI Policy.

13.2 Committee Terms of Reference

No change to the ToR. Approved.

13.3 Internal Audit Annual Report

Comprehensive summary and shows the level of actions identified. All actions are on the Risk Register.

Q. Frustration with IA? Resolved. Decision to continue with IA is a committee decision and has been agreed.

13.4. Annual Report and Statutory Accounts - Introduction

Part of an annual rolling program. Fits with SORP for Charities (Statement of Recommended Practice).

KMB summarised the document. All acronyms have been changed and identified areas have been updated.

13.5 Westcotts Financial Accounts

Fourth year of external audit. Went smoothly, a time-consuming process, also focused on HR, governance, procurement. A positive report for the Trust.

Adjustments to the accounts – provisions, set aside £119 000 for two particular areas, £19 000 for SWW bills, £100 000 for potential dismissal case. Raised as a management control point as Westcotts believe the provision could be removed but understand why it remains. Prior to next year-end, F&R and the Board will need to agree if it is removed or not.

Accruals – sample testing, auditors expected not to accrue for. Amount is extrapolated and a figure applied. Deemed immaterial when compared to the Trust figures.

Westcotts have agreed reserves are in a healthy place at £8.8m. Have asked to release some reserves for capital and school improvement. Trust continues to trade as a going concern.

Q. Management letter and draft accounts, can we be assured they will be up to speed next year due to errors and typos? KMB confirmed it has been raised.

ToR approved

13.6 Westcotts Report to the Board

4 recommendations. Accruals, deferred income, website disclosures.

Q. Fixed asset register? Use a system called Asset Tiger which records all assets irrespective of value, need to reconcile to the fixed asset register that Westcotts use. KMB will work with Westcotts to do this.

Q. Lot of bookkeeping errors, support for the job? A small team and hindered a little bit this year, some of the issues are not big issues, hoping it won't be an issue going forward. A good team of 4 people and know they will implement the relevant changes.

The Board approved Westcotts report.

KMB will upload the corrected report and RO will sign it. The report will require ZB's approval.

KMB to upload corrected report

RO to sign

ZB to approve sign

13.7 A&R Committee Annual Report

GB's report. Summarises the IA and Westcotts annual report. Document name to be updated by LP. RO thanked GB for his comprehensive in-depth report.

A&R report to be renamed

13.8. Annual Report and Statutory Accounts

The Board approved the Annual Report and Statutory Accounts

13.9 External Audit Letter of Representation

The Board approved the External Audit Letter of Representation

13.10 Review and Approval External Auditors 2025/26

A summary was provided and the External Auditors were recommended for the following year. The Board approved the External Auditors.

Meeting paused 1.05pm
Meeting reconvened 1.32pm

13.11 Risk Register Review

RCF talked through the Executive Summary and updated the Board on risks with an increased rating. A&R supported the changes to Risk Register.

JC returned at 13.34

13.12 Evolve (external visits and school trip system) Data

Three reviews which have demonstrated poor compliance and not in line with Policy.

Working proactively to provide HT retraining to reinforce principles and understanding. An Educational Visits Coordinator (EVCO) in each school, RCF and LP are working on this to ensure each school has an EVCO and has been trained within the last 18 months.

Auditing and reporting to A&R Committee in Feb 2026.

Targeted management letters will be sent, have delivered training and refreshers, all have the tools to do the role.

Compliance report to A&R meeting in Feb 2026

Q. Around for 6-9 months. GB has been pushing at Board level for this focus, thanks to RCF for her reporting.

Q. Cornwall schools under the same? Use Devon County Council (DCC) H&S Team through a Service Level Agreement (SLA) but supports all schools in the Trust.

RO thanked RCF for her diligence. GB confirmed A&R will be looking for reports on this.

14 Remuneration Committee (RemCom)

14.1 Update from Chair of RemCom

Impact statement provided to the Board.

RO provided an update on behalf of the Committee Chair. Benchmarking reviewed, outliers skewed the median values, have asked for further information on how to track and benchmark pay. There is no clear advice of the requirement for an External Advisor.

Academy Trust Handbook (ATH) states a Trust Pay Policy is required and will be presented at next RemCom meeting.

14.2 Committee Terms of Reference

Adjusted to detail the CEO's position on the Committee due to a potential conflict of interest so clarified a non-voting Director.

Approved.

14.3 Ratification of Headteacher and School Improvement Officer (SIO) Pay Progression

Previously increments would be ratified by RemCom but HTs now automatically increment. RemCom would only need to consider an increment not being awarded but this does not apply this year. Increments awarded or HT and SIO on top of pay scale.

14.4 Ratification of Senior Executive Leadership Team (SELT) Pay Progression

RCF, KMB and KB left the meeting 1.45pm

ZB makes a recommendation about SELT colleagues. All members of SELT have passed their appraisals with flying colours. The Board approved ZB's recommendations.

RO carried out ZB's appraisal and updated the Board on her success. The Board approved.

RCF, KMB and KB returned at 1.48pm.

RO advised SELT the Board had unanimously approved the recommendations and thanked them for their ongoing hard work.

15. Trust Board Governance

15.1 Link Director Reports

Using the current Link Director Protocol. Potential to link to Hub structure in due course. RO reminded all Directors the focus of meetings is to review governance.

ToR approved

SELT pay
recommendations approved

ALN highlighted recent issues trying to contact schools which other Directors had also experienced. RO confirmed need to record making the effort.

15.2 Lead Director Reports

Lead Director for Careers. Hoping to include on Internal Audit this year, attended a training event and identified a review and hope to include through A&R activities.

RO reminded Lead Director reports are required.

NJ highlighted the difficulties he faces. Potential to ask questions on all Link Director visits. Anxious that he can't fulfil the role. RO, NJ, ZB and HB to meet next term.

RO, ZB, HB and NJ to meet next term for RE Lead Director role

16. Policies

- **Trust Model Behaviour Policy**

KB requested a two-year review which would be December 2026. The Board approved.

Model Behaviour - two yearly review

- **Finance Policy and Regulations**

KMB confirmed the annual review. The Policy had been agreed at the F&R meeting. All changes were highlighted in yellow.

Finance Policy approved subject to one amendment

NB left the meeting at 1.55pm

KMB provided an overview of changes including the addition of Appendix G Plymouth CAST Venue Hire Policy which limits costs.

Q. Statement 6.2 External Auditors, confirmed annually by Board, Members approve auditors at the AGM? KMB will confirm and add to the Policy.

The Board approved the Policy with this amendment.

17. Sustainability Strategy

The Strategy was circulated in advance of the meeting and training was provided.

The 2025 version holds true to aspirations of the 2023 version but recognises the financial and staffing limits in place. Includes spiritual need and working with the Diocese.

Now have the DfE Sustainability Strategy which is included.

RCF provided the headlines which highlighted the successes to date of the work of schools and the Central Team which needs to be recognised.

RCF to speak to SH regarding Lead Director for Sustainability

Start reporting to Committees from July 2026.

Governance. Would like a Lead Governor for each school, and a Lead Director someone who is sponsoring the strategy and a point of contact for the Governor and the Central Team. Links to Estates and RCF to discuss with SH.

LP to add all Directors to the H&S Group on GHub

Q. Solar panels, are they in CAST ownership? CAST ownership but Diocese permission required as landowners.

The budget was approved 2023 and only draws down from this existing allocation.

RO Sustainability training carried out, and the recording is on GovernorHub.

A network has been set up for H&S Lead Governors, GB requested that all Directors be added to the group on GovernorHub.

Meeting moved to Part II Confidential discussion.

RO thanked all for attending.

18 Close of Meeting - 2.20pm

2025-26 Board Meeting Dates – All to be held in person.

Day	Date	Start Time	Location
Tuesday	AGM - 10 th February 2026	2pm	Buckfast Abbey
Friday	6th March 2026	10.30am	Council Chamber, Okehampton*
Friday	15th May 2026	10.30am	Charter Hall, Okehampton*
Friday	Strategy Day – 12th June 2026	9.30am	Buckfast Abbey
Friday	17th July 2026	10.30am	Council Chamber, Okehampton*

*Council Chamber and Charter Hall, Okehampton are in the same building