



**Venture Multi Academy Trust. Company Number 7535379**

**Meeting minutes of the Board of Trustees**

**held via zoom on Monday 29th November, 5-7pm**

<b>Present</b>	Philip Robinson Julia Dodson Ben Jones Harry Hart - agenda point 3 Alan Honeybone - genda point 3 Ian Raggett - agenda point 3
<b>In attendance</b>	Sam Newman - Clerk Jo Long - COO Will Johnson - CEO Belinda Burton - BSO Kirsty Hitchens - Deputy Head Darren Perry - Francis Clark

	<b>Item</b>	<b>Action</b>
<b>1.</b>	<b>Apologies, welcome and quorum</b> No apologies were received, the meeting was quorate in line with the terms of reference. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and also introduced Darren Perry from Francis Clark.	
<b>2.</b>	<b>Declaration of business and pecuniary interest</b> AH declared a pecuniary interest relating to agenda item 9, relating to whole school pay policy - his wife is an employee at Trevithick Learning Academy.	
<b>3.</b>	<b>Accountants presentation - 2020/21 Accounts &amp; Audit (Francis Clark)</b>  All relevant papers were distributed prior to the meeting.  Darren started screen sharing for the Trustees. The Trustees report discussed any messages to get across from Trustees. KPIs are included in the report also, with a narrative on financial review. £3.1 net assets on balance sheet, reduction on last year from £3.9m. Accounts include Reserves Policy, the different reasons and justification for reserves. Comments of plans for the coming year. Governance statement was included, how the school/ MAT is governed, meeting attendance and governance review, there was also a comment	

	<p>as the board met less than the 6 required minimum meetings per academic year, this was explained by the COO as to why this happened. Public funds discussed including how it was achieving value for money, quotes for purchasing and the tracking systems in place. Internal controls discussed, ensuring funds are spent appropriately, with the LFS team doing regular spot checks. Statement of regulatory compliance, accounting officer personal statement for ensuring no non compliance. Statement of trustees responsibilities, in respect of accounting policies and preparation. Two reports were produced from Francis Clark. Audit report on financial statement- belief of true view of the accounts. Compared to last year, it was noted that there is far more narrative, Darren explained that Francis Clark must narrate the work for regulations and compliance purposes. Accounting report also checks compliance with Academy Trust Handbook, nothing of any nature has come to their attention that funds were spent outside the guidance. Statement of financial activities total is at £3.685m up from £3.3m last year, with more capital grant for ARB. Expenditure is at £3.642m up from £3.50m, up £50,000, small surplus of £43,000. Deficit of £32k this year versus £139k last year. Large actuary loss on pension scheme, assumptions about share of LGPS deficit. Owed £107,000 debtors, £1.5m in bank, £223k owed, share of Cornwall Council deficit now stands at £3m according to calculations. There is £318k in unrestricted funds, £1m in restricted general funds, and asset funds spent on fixed assets. Cash Flow statement, gone from £1.3m to £1.4m and explanations were included as to why. Capital grant- £232,000 this year, most was Cornwall Council for ARB works, £14,000 in devolved capital grants, higher than last year. Main educational funding- GAG up to £2.2m, EFSA including teacher pay grant, Free School Meals and Pupil Premium grants, other LA grants include £567,000 EYFS funding, SEN funding and LA growth funds, covid catch up premium of £44,000. £5000 on bank deposits generated, expenditures up £50,000 from last year, £20,000 was in overall staff costs. Staff costs moved slightly from £2.8m last year to £2.82m this year. Staff notes, key management personnel, total cost to the trust of key personnel has reduced this year, and listed personnel are located at the front of accounts paperwork. Contribution of academies to central services discussed. Balance sheet notes include tangible fixed assets, ARB works, furniture £31,000 included fire alarms, play loft and intruder alarm, computer equipment, leasehold improvements including the canopy at St Issey. Debtors cash discussed. Creditors discussed. Deferred income has dropped from last year. Funds- £800,00 GAG funding, £119,000 Covid Catch up, £144,000 LA unrestricted funds. Unrestricted funds are £318,000. Broken down funds by individual schools have been summarised on accounts. Disclosures on operating lease commitment. Pension scheme, in terms of Cornwall Council, the actuary made assumptions on salary, pension rates etc, based on that they estimate your share of liabilities equates to £2.1m.</p>	
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	<p>Related party transactions discussed.</p> <p>A Trustee <b>asked</b> if it would be possible to question the pensions deficit at all, considering it is such a large figure that MAT's seem to have no control over?</p> <p><b>Answer-</b> The actuary works out the share each year, each Academy has had an increase in deficit, because of this the MAT's potential obligation has gone up, relatively little that can be done.</p> <p>Percentage contribution rate and a fixed contribution rate, increasing year on year, are evaluated in April 2023.</p> <p>A Trustee <b>questioned</b> whether it was linked to current members of staff, or previous staff?</p> <p><b>Answer-</b> There is an overall pot for the scheme and is based on the staff numbers, age, life expectancy.</p> <p>A Trustee <b>challenged</b> if there would be a point where it would become a problem?</p> <p><b>Answer-</b> Ultimately it is a very long term deficit, it needs to be there to pay the pensions, the funds need to be found, every local fund scheme is in the same position.</p> <p>COO added that schools that converted to academies more recently have found pension costs much higher than those that converted several years ago..</p> <p>A Trustee <b>questioned</b> that if Venture MAT was to grow, would this cause a bigger problem?</p> <p><b>Answer-</b> Potentially yes.</p> <p>If a new school were to join the MAT, an evaluation would be done and be included in the deficit on the balance sheet and would also feed into contribution rates.</p> <p>Audit completion report discussed.</p> <p>Summary of audit work carried out.</p> <p>Looked at specific risks, fraud, journal entries checked to ensure they were appropriate, grant income streams, irregularity reports test for compliance and how money is spent.</p> <p>When Trustees sign off accounts they are to look 12 months ahead for sign off.</p> <p>The MAT has strong reserves.</p> <p>Actuary evaluation, assumptions used in other benefit schemes to ensure they look reasonable.</p> <p>Summary of adjustments posted in accounts- repair costs, fixed assets on balance sheet.</p> <p>Other adjustments related to LGPS.</p> <p>Keeping reliable information through the year.</p> <p>Feedback, accrued income and expenditures in the same income line- this has now been addressed.</p> <p>The private school fund bank account has not been used.</p> <p>Appendices- independence report for auditors.</p> <p>Surplus is less than benchmark, payroll is comparable, cash balances, above benchmark data.</p> <p>Unrestricted reserves is slightly lower, however GAG funding is not included in this figure.</p> <p>Deficit is considerably lower than benchmark.</p> <p>A Trustee <b>expressed thanks</b> to the COO and BSO for their hard work and dedication this year.</p> <p>JL noted a typo for members at the beginning of the document, this needs correcting.</p>	<p>JL</p>
<p>4</p>	<p><b>Minutes and matters arising from the last meeting (04/10/21)</b></p> <p>All relevant minutes were distributed prior to the meeting.</p>	

	<p>Trustees agreed that the minutes were to be a true and accurate representation of the meeting.</p> <p>Actions to complete were achieved by all.</p> <p>PR to sign off minutes after SN corrects where the meeting was held.</p>	
5.	<p><b>Committee &amp; Local Governing Body (LGB) minutes</b></p> <p><b>a. Trevithick Learning Academy LGB minutes (22/11/2021)</b></p> <p><b>b. Venture F&amp;GP&amp;Audit minutes (24/11/2021)</b> <b>Deferred to the next meeting.</b></p> <p><b>c. St Issey LGB minutes (29/09/21)</b></p> <p>Meeting minutes from the TLA LGB and SIS LGB were distributed prior to the meeting, F,GP &amp; Audit minutes are to be deferred to the next meeting for approval.</p> <p>First face to face meeting for the TLA LGB. Main focus for TLA was safeguarding training, updating their subject knowledge, LGB at St Issey will receive the same training tomorrow.</p> <p>Pupil Premium strategy report agreed for TLA for spending of this year's money and reviewing last years. £180000 for TLA.</p> <p>Review from last year, form has changed to reflect the fact that there is less quantitative data to rely on.</p> <p>Monitoring is on schedule for TLA and assigned to different areas of the SDP, all governors have completed face to face visits this term.</p> <p>St Issey's main focus was the impending SIAMs inspections, and a pre SIAMs visit. Focus for governors was their role and how to support designated monitoring roles for this year.</p> <p>Both governing bodies are in a strong position.</p> <p>A Trustee <b>questioned</b> a comment on the Pre SIAMs report, referring to 'use a shared language'?</p> <p><b>Answer</b> - It is the idea that you can easily demonstrate that your ethos is being used by all stakeholders, including governors.</p> <p>St Issey is in a strong position, these are smaller things to work on.</p> <p>A Trustee <b>challenged</b> whether there was a consensus that some don't share the same values?</p> <p><b>Answer</b>- Not at all, more that it is an opportunity for them to hear it from the governors as well.</p> <p>Policies updated with St Issey as well as TLA, consistent across the MAT.</p>	
6.	<p><b>Performance Management update</b></p> <p>Update that it is complete, the Pay Committee met at the beginning of November.</p> <p>TLA increased the rigour, ensuring more staff are more experienced over time, wanting to progress through the pay grades, ensuring parity of pay between the different roles.</p> <p>WJ CEO performance management has also been completed.</p> <p>Outstanding is confirmation of a pay deal for support staff. Covered in a later agenda point.</p> <p>A Trustee <b>explained</b> that one outcome from the pay committee meeting was the staffing structure of the school for next year, more teachers wanting to go through the threshold as they have reached the top end of their pay scale, discussed whether there is the correct number on the leadership scale, the committee also discussed the Senco and ARB manager roles, and the COO alongside the CEO will look at the roles of</p>	

	<p>both before setting targets, therefore giving them clear direction. Those that applied for the threshold but didn't go through it, WJ has had positive discussions with 2 of them, setting out clear guidance on how they can achieve this moving forward.</p> <p>COO suggested that this discussion needs to be documented, the progression of what needs to be done.</p> <p>A Trustee <b>mentioned</b> the amount of teachers that are great teachers, however not needed to progress any further through in job roles, how is that managed?</p> <p><b>Answer-</b> Yes, this is where they have applied for the threshold, it's difficult for them. The pay freeze did not help the situation. The CEO expressed the need to make the distinction between good teachers and leadership teaching.</p> <p>Look at staffing structure before next year.</p> <p>A Trustee <b>questioned</b> if anything had moved on with the RSC and which direction the MAT is going in, moving forward?</p> <p><b>Answer-</b> In terms of the Camborne, Pool, Redruth merger, a MAT is aimed to be formed between the schools that agreed, the rest of us remain as they are.</p> <p>A change of minister and Nick Gibb going has increased the pressure for MATs to grow or merge, the journey to academisation is going to accelerate, in Cornwall, there is no external pressure for VMAT to be doing anything in legislation for us to merge now.</p> <p>How we plan in the future, growth for small MATs is off the table, unless they merge, the plan needs to be much bigger, we will continue to support schools in other MATs, keeping our interest in school improvement.</p> <p>The Trustees need to be in agreement to accept the recommendations of the Pay Committee Meeting in reference to the performance management pay.</p> <p>All trustees were in agreement for the recommendations from the Pay Committee.</p>	WJ
7.	<p><b>Appointment of Finance and General Purpose Chair</b></p> <p>Alan Honeybone was nominated as the F, GP and Audit Chair at the finance meeting; he was happy to stand for another one year term. Agreed by all Trustees.</p>	
8.	<p><b>CEO Report (including safeguarding, health &amp; safety)</b></p> <p>All relevant papers were distributed prior to the meeting.</p> <p>EHCP's are rising at TLA, 47 in total. 30 in ARB and 17 in mainstream. SEN at St Issey has 1 EHCP. Pupil Premium at St Issey has dropped to 16%. Attendance has dropped in both schools, persistent absence is also rising in both schools, the national average is approximately 88%, far lower than normal - (95%) TLA attendance is currently 96%, St Issey is 88%, both with high persistent absence. Persistent absence is mainly centred around illness rather than covid, along with parents not fully understanding the guidelines, keeping children off due to a family member testing positive. A lot of work was done last week at St Issey in regards to persistent absence and covid concerns included, explaining the importance of attending and highlighting the effect of the amount of school already missed. TLA has 1 child on a reduced timetable and a PRU referral, which has now</p>	

	<p>been completed, with the child moving to a different school permanently. A Trustee <b>asked</b> as the term goes on will the absence levels reduce due to the length of time it is measured by?</p> <p><b>Answer-</b> Yes, naturally it will go down.</p> <p>PR left the meeting at this point.</p> <p>A Trustee <b>questioned</b> that a few schools are sending letters to parents, it seems that the wording can be tricky, trying to motivate parents to bring their children to school, however with some situations it can be extremely difficult to get the child to school, for example if both parents have tested positive and one child, how does the other get to school?</p> <p><b>Answer-</b> Agreed, 1 child in a family with covid whilst the other isn't displaying any symptoms, naturally the school would offer some support in these instances (weekend one day away, keep the child off) (collection of the child for school)</p> <p>A Trustee <b>asked</b> if there would still be any online remote work for children that are isolating?</p> <p><b>Answer-</b> Remote learning will only be offered now, if absence is due to isolation (positive result and or awaiting tests).</p> <p><b>Staffing update</b> - 1 vacancy to fill at TLA, none at St Issey.</p> <p>St Issey has entered into the kickstart programme, this involved young adults that were at risk of long term unemployment, offered a 6 month full funded placement, they have 1 that will be supporting in the nursery. No staff off with covid currently.</p> <p>SDP priorities - CEO discussed the priorities and explained the traffic light system to Trustees - yellow in progress, red - not yet begun, green is under way or completed.</p> <p>Curriculum areas include humanities, TLA is focusing on speech and language, this project is under way.</p> <p>HR strategy for the MAT - red currently, this will be looked at by the CEO and the COO in the new year.</p> <p>Safeguarding update - CS and WJ training the trainer completed. LGB have had the training update.</p> <p>There has been a drop in the number of safeguarding concerns since half term.</p> <p>Number of VISTs to be brought to the next meeting by WJ.</p> <p>Tackling sexual harrasment in the setting, working with staff with what they regard as sexual harrasment within a primary school, policies are robust, relevant curriculum around it, the response from staff was very positive.</p> <p>OFSTED inspections are due at both schools.</p> <p>St Issey is currently a 'requires improvement' rated school- wanting to get to good, planning for it.</p> <p>Some curriculum documents need updating, this is the same at TLA.</p> <p>TLA is currently an 'outstanding' school, also expecting an OFSTED visit.</p> <p><b>Health and safety</b> - The Health &amp; Safety Policy is compliant, there was a recommendation for a new policy.</p> <p>The new policy is ready now. The VMAT policy will dictate to the schools, with the procedures being taken on by the schools.</p> <p>MAT policy is done, TLA Procedures Policy is almost finished, then St Isseys to follow.</p> <p>Health and safety in audit, review of old risk assessments and moving to electronic, Cornwall Council that held them has now closed, with no way of moving electronically to a new one, all will need to be reviewed and rewritten onto the new programme.</p> <p>No reportable accidents at St Issey.</p> <p>1 at TLA, a child with a broken arm, a child fell over another child and landed on their arm, requiring hospital treatment.</p> <p>No further investigation needed.</p> <p>Parent incident filmed on CCTV, one parent wishes to have the footage,</p>	
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	<p>COO consulted with GDPR and police, due to a live court case and the fact that there are other people in the footage, which would all need redacting, other than himself, it was deemed that we were not to hand over any CCTV footage to the parent, the police will be in to collect in due course.</p> <p>The allegedly assaulted parent has decided to seek legal advice for this situation.</p> <p>TLA had hired a third teacher for Reception classes at TLA, the decision was made to make the role permanent, reasons for this include tangible results for outcomes with children with SEN, inclusion of the children with complex needs within the mainstream setting.</p> <p>There is still 1 vacancy in the ARB for an SEN TA.</p> <p>Appointed a new site assistant, started last week.</p> <p>Assistant head is up to 5 days after Christmas.</p> <p>Standards and assessments - writing results suggesting patchy performance across the MAT, TLA disadvantaged children losing learning through pandemic, reviewed writing across the MAT.</p> <p>ARB is moderating tomorrow with 2 other ARB settings.</p> <p>Discussed the banding of the ARB top up depending on the children's needs.</p> <p>Full set of assessments is being done to give parents evening updates.</p>	
9.	<p><b>Policies:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Whole School Pay Policy</b></li> </ul> <p>All relevant paperwork was distributed prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Previously had different policies for teachers and support staff, this has now been merged together.</p> <p>Teachers - no uplifts in salary values, support staff policy wording unchanged, recommendation for F and GP committee was for the value of the support staff pay award.</p> <p>Offer from NJC employers was 1.75% but this has been rejected by the unions. Whilst the situation is on-going, support staff have no pay award, as a trust we had budgeted for a 2% pay increase, and felt this should be offered and implemented and back dated to September in their December pay.</p> <p>Understanding that any offer over and above, would be honoured and backdated if necessary. We could have offered the original 1.75%, however since it had been budgeted for, the pay committee has approved it, as it is a whole MAT policy we have to get full agreement from all trustees.</p> <p>AH declared a conflict of interest for this agenda point discussion.</p> <p>Trustees agreed to the policy. Letters will be sent to all support staff and the relevant trade unions to communicate this decision.</p>	
10.	<p><b>Confidential items</b></p> <p>None</p>	
11.	<p><b>Date and time of next meeting</b></p> <p>Monday 14th February 2022</p> <p>A letter from the trustees to the staff, IR to write this and pass to Jo or Will, also an additional something for the staff rooms as a thank you.</p>	

Item		Person
3	JL to get the members corrected at the beginning of the accounts paperwork	JL

<b>4</b>	PR to sign off minutes after SN corrects where the meeting was held.	<b>PR</b>
<b>6</b>	CEO to document the progression discussion with the teachers.	<b>WJ</b>
<b>6</b>	Look at staffing structure before next year.	<b>WJ/JL</b>
<b>8</b>	Number of VISTs to put in for the next meeting by WJ.	<b>WJ</b>
<b>11</b>	IR to produce a letter to all staff expressing thanks for their hard work.	<b>IR</b>

Meeting closed by Chair at 19:13pm

Signed as an accurate record.....

Print name.....

Date.....

Please note that these are draft minutes until signed off by the Chair at the next meeting.