

Venture Multi Academy Trust. Company Number 7535379 Board of Trustees meeting minutes.

Monday 23rd May 2022 held via zoom.

Present	Will Johnson - CEO Philip Robinson - Chair Julia Dodson - Vice Chair Harry Hart Ben Jones Andrew Mercer
	Alan Honeybone Ian Raggett
In attendance	Sam Newman - Governance Professional Jo Long - COO Belinda Burton - BSM

	Item	Person
1.	Apologies, welcome and quorum The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, AH had advised that he will be joining us later in the meeting. The meeting was quorate in line with the Venture MAT Terms of Reference.	
2.	Declaration of business and pecuniary interest There were no new declarations of business or pecuniary interests.	
3.	Minutes and matters arising from the last meeting BoT - 28/03/22 TLA LGB - 25/04/22 SIS LGB - 19/05/22 - to be moved to the next meeting.	
	 Matters arising from the last meeting: CEO to bring the updated SEF to the meeting in May. The childline number should also be visible around the schools. CEO to propose a date for the meeting discussing the LGB constitution. All Trustees were happy to agree that the previous minutes were a true and accurate representation of the meeting. The Chair will need to sign off the previous minutes. 	
	CEO will bring the SEF to the July meeting, being able to ensure that the	PR

evaluation tool will be more up to date. Childline numbers have all been updated and added around the school. CEO will need to propose a date for the LGB constitution. A trustee asked the COO about one matter which included data protection and dates for the recommendation to be completed by the end of April 2022. **Answer:** The final meeting of the year will include the KPI's and action plan. 3rd KPI focuses on refresher training, no evidence of signed process - this will be done going forward. Item 7 - COO financial assurance visit happened. The report will come to the next finance meeting, all green on the report. AGM feedback to PR. 4. Trustee appointment for another term of office lan Raggett would like to be considered for another term of office. A trustee *expressed* that although he was a strong asset with a lot to offer, the attendance of meetings was a factor that needed to be considered. Another trustee also *recommended* that we still continue to look at recruitment of more governors, to ensure a diverse range of skill sets. All trustees were in agreement to co-opt Ian Raggett for another 4 year term, however would like a conversation to happen with PR and IR to PR highlight attendance issues. It also needs noting that the trustees' attendance is published annually in the Academy's annual report. 5. Latest Budget Monitoring Report (BB) All papers were distributed prior to the meeting. TLA budget: SEN funding has increased by £9825 in year, based on current EHCP's, the additional £30k has been allocated to a new specialist provision budget. Non GAG of £24889 has been received, contributing to carry forward for the year. ARB staffing - Higher than budget by £8836, this includes a member of agency staff until the end of the term. Site staffing-£8661 saving due to the outstanding post. Harry Hart joined the meeting. SIS have now employed a site assistant for one day a week. TLA were still looking to fill their vacancy, this will be looked at again soon. A trustee *asked* if it was something that could be done via an apprenticeship? Answer: It's difficult to find a framework for that role. A trustee **stated** that there is a maintenance framework for apprenticeship. **Answer:** The COO will look into this further. JL Supply - forecast is £3k over budget, a lot of insurance claims still under review, there is a vast amount of insurance backlog. COO stated that we have overspent with supply staff. Catering - £16k of savings forecast, mainly due to the uptake of FSM only at 72%, when 100% was budgeted for. A trustee *asked* if there could be a possibility of the numbers going up due to the cost of living increasing? **Answer:** We thought it may have been that case, however we didn't see

this.

Curriculum - £30k still to spend.

Computing - £11k additional, from growth funds for iPads.

SIS budget:

Supplementary grant in of £5451, site staff for them equates to £1616, on site now rather than charged to the MAT.

Catering - inline with budget. BB has not forecast over as yet.

Utilities - forecast overspend of £2709, no bills since swapping contracts.

Huge increase next year, their supplementary grant will be used.

A trustee *asked* if there was no government support for this?

Answer: The supplementary grant is the funding.

Wraparound - overspend £748 to date, CP looking at numbers attending and the pricing.

COO and CEO discussed this with CP and he is looking at ways to either reduce the offer or pay more, some days there is only 1 child in the club. Nursery - forecast a small saving of £2410.

Budgeting £1.4m in reserves across the Trust.

Additional ARB banding, teachers pension grants, COO has budgeted for them, but the grants have been additional.

COO explained that it is difficult to balance the budget with the additional grants coming in.

A trustee *asked* if the ARB budget is reflective of it doing over PAN? **Answer:** This is based on 30 pupils, every April they could increase the value of the banding for each child, COO does not know the increase, the school staffs accordingly, or increase through the year if needed, the difficulty is if it is more than you think, it looks like a carry forward, but it is not.

£10k per pupil place, plus banding on top, it can also change in year on moderation, it can make a huge difference.

6. COO Update (Inc. Data Protection)

- Budget update
- ICT and Nursery spend

COO shared the review of identifying savings in the budget, identified spending which should and could be made now to ensure spending the money and not adding back to reserves.

Mainly on ICT, a lot of investment in hardware, looking at both schools, identifying £21k at TLA and £6k for SIS, spending now would be hugely beneficial to both schools.

Replacements of sound system for SIS, desktops, chromebooks, iPads. A trustee *questioned* how this will benefit the schools, other than improving the IT equipment.

One main expense is the replacement of desktops in classrooms, the productivity of the computer switching to chromebooks, board replacement will move so quickly, it is good to have a rolling programme, rather than a huge cost at once.

SIS expenditure usually relies on second hand kit from TLA, this will mean new kit rather than old kit.

<u>Ian Raggett joined the meeting.</u>

Are trustees happy to *approve* the additional spend, not coming from reserves or funds?

Trustees agreed to the additional spend.

A trustee *asked* what happened to the old kit.

Answer: We can offer it out to staff/families that may want it, other kit is recycled.

It is collected and ethically recycled.

The next additional spend proposal was for the outdoor space, the shed

needed purchasing, this would equate to approximately £6k.

COO asked if the trustees were happy to *approve* the additional spend.

Trustees agreed to the additional spend.

The last one to discuss was the new nursery kitchen to be done, this however had already had approval from all trustees previously.

Harry Hart left the meeting.

COO update for the new year's budget.

Currently in the process of setting the budget for both schools, it would be ready for the 4th July finance meeting.

Staffing structure will then be finalised.

Some income streams have not been confirmed as yet.

Absence insurance quotes may go up.

Considering at SIS a potential deficit budget, for a minibus.

Potential deficit of £4k.

That is a 5 year commitment with the lease company.

Minibus required - 1. Their cohort size means they can fit a whole year group on a bus, they spend a lot on hiring coaches, minibuses at TLA, the logistics are difficult.

It could be considered for setting aside a specific reserve going forward if issues were to arise.

Due to it being an investment.

A trustee *challenged* why a 5 year lease not a 3 year lease?

Answer: The cost is lower over 5 years.

The COO asked if all trustees were happy to approve the spend?

All trustees were happy to approve the additional spend.

Alan Honeybone joined the meeting.

COO stated that a survey was done for a new build at the front of the school, estimated cost from surveyor of approximately £270-300k.

He is now waiting for us to let him know if we are happy with it to go to the feasibility stage.

The CEO added that the project was to be used for additional meeting room spaces, confidential meeting space, PPA rooms and the movement of the central MAT team.

In turn this would free up lots of rooms within the school for additional teaching space.

There were no major utilities underground, the size fits in the space, the only issue could be mains drainage, and how could this be overcome.

Are Trustees happy to *approve* the design and feasibility spend?

Trustees agreed to the additional spend.

There is a budget for facilities development, we do need to be showing that we are exploring that development.

7. CEO Update (Inc. Safeguarding, Health & Safety)

- RSC Review feedback
- Staffing update

Staffing structures will be presented at the finance meeting.

Temporary contracts due for renewal in the coming weeks, mostly relating to SEN.

Staffing change - recruiting for maternity cover at TLA.

Looking to strengthen the early years, the MAT cover teacher will look at going into the upper key stage.

SIS - 1 teacher doing their QTS, this cost has been built into the budget also.

The RSC MAT review took place.

Review to look at the risk assessment for finance, quality of governance, safeguarding, recovery from covid.

Wanting to explore what a strong MAT is, what that means for us going forward at VMAT.

The CEO shared the RSC sheet with the trustees.

ESFA did not attend the meeting, congratulated the Trust on being financially strong, background of the current position of the academic history, did discuss the fact that both schools are full and oversubscribed, discussed the growth at SIS from 28 to 80 pupils.

The CEO provided a matrix for attendance, which showed better than the national picture.

MAT was doing a good job in persuading families to attend.

Academic headlines suggest a good recovery.

Remote education was discussed, trustees allowing us to spend money on resources for IT.

Also discussed was the provision offered and taken during the lockdown in the ARB.

Discussed academic performance, what we are experiencing now, emphasising that both schools are set to experience solid results.

Phonics in both schools is in line with normal standards.

KS1 at SIS predicted some strong KS1 results.

TLA hopeful for in-line KS1 results or just below the national average.

Challenges highlighted to them.

Financial health wasn't a huge issue.

One specific question in reference to levels of staff cost, was challenging any high levels of pay within the executive team. Venture MAT does not have that problem.

They asked if we used any other metrics for value for money, we talked to them about benchmarking, the report we look at every spring.

Audits didn't get discussed, they were strong audits.

Happy with the line of accountability.

Happy with the range of skills outlined for the board, delegated responsibilities to the LGB's.

Strengths - Clerking, strength in the fact that the Clerk supports other MAT's also strengthens our governance.

Strategic vision and growth.

What are the 5 years coming up looking like?

What are our thoughts?

Understanding from us that our MAT won't grow.

Our priority is to show strength academically, financial viability and the school of choice within the area.

We needed to demonstrate that we support other MAT's KH, CW and CP from SIS, working with other Trusts.

We work collaboratively with lots of other groups.

Deadline is 2030 for schools being in stronger MAT's.

It would be about us being part of a larger, strong MAT 'family of schools'. RSC looking for structure.

WJ pointed out that there are changes coming up with the secondary schools in the local area, with the aim to look at a more collaborative approach.

RSC was pleased to hear we were thinking correctly.

Quite a lot of SATs are still in the area.

The Trust needs to ensure they continue upskilling staff, providing training for senior staff and continuing with NPQ's undertaken.

Local MATs, we need to look and explore what the best direction is for us, potentially looking at merging rather than joining an existing MAT.

A group of CEO's asked about the transparency of growth, the RSC agreed that it hadn't been very transparent.

The RSC will publish which MATs in Cornwall will be allowed to grow.

A Trustee *challenged* the quote regarding being a dynamic MAT - deemed less efficient if you have not got a small MAT, 7 - 10 schools.

Answer: They agree that the national model doesn't fit Cornwall well, you can have a MAT that is large, not doing well. On more than one occasion the RSC stated that Venture MAT has a lot to offer. No commitment for definition of a strong MAT. A trustee *asked* if the RSC are political appointments? **Answer:** In that regard they are civil servants. A trustee *queried* that in 10 years time, it might be a very different position. A trustee *asked* if there were any MATs in Cornwall that have a secondary and primaries within the same MAT. **Answer:**Yes, and potentially the Trust would look at our local secondary school. IR is part of a likewise MAT. If SIS got another RI, that could potentially dismantle the MAT. Financial collapse is another reason they could look at rebrokering. CEO discussed that the funding and estate funding is all shifting to bigger entities. Philip Robinson left the meeting. 8. Questions / comments from the LGB's No questions from the LGB's. Update on the budget after the finance meeting. BB to present that 9. **Confidential items** Nothing was to remain confidential. 10. Date and time of next meeting Monday 11th July at 5pm, this is to be moved to another date.

Agenda point	Action	Person
3	CEO will bring the SEF to the July meeting, being able to ensure that the evaluation tool will be more up to date.	WJ
3	CEO will need to propose a date for the LGB constitution.	WJ
3	PR to sign previous minutes.	PR
3	AGM feedback to PR.	SN
4	PR to have conversation with IR re; attendance.	PR
5	COO to look into the apprenticeship framework for a site assistant.	JL
8	BB to present the budget to the SIS LGB.	ВВ

Meeting closed by the Vice Chair at 18:58pm

Please note that these are draft minutes until signed off by the Chair at the next meeting.
Date
Print name
Signed as an accurate record