

The Auriga Academy Trust

*Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Trustees held as a Virtual Meeting
using Teamshare on
Wednesday 26th May 2021 at 6.30pm.*

Membership and Attendance

Harry James (HJ)
Jo Dixon (JD)
Gaelle Newland (GN)
Paul Roberts (PR)

Charlotte Flack (CF)
Lorna Goodwin (LG)
Mike Harlow (MH)
Paul Hodgins (PH)
Vacancy

Apologies

Prem Kalia, John Watkin, Charlotte Flack

Absent w/o apologies

None

Also, attended

Helen Bridge (HB – Clerk), John Kipps (JK – Clarendon Head), Ivan Pryce (IP - Trust CEO & Strathmore Head), Susie Connor (SC - Trust FD), Andy Whiteside (AW – Chair of Governors Capella House School), Eleanor Bukht (EB – Deputy Head Strathmore School)

Bold = Absent

Meeting Minutes

All meeting attendees agreed to conduct the meeting as a virtual meeting.

1. Apologies/AAT Register of Interests

- 1.1. Prem Kalia, John Watkin & Charlotte Flack sent their apologies for the meeting.
- 1.2. Trustees were asked to declare any interests relating to any item of the agenda for this meeting. None were declared.
- 1.3. Trustees agreed to send any updates to the AAT Register of Interests to the clerk.

Action: ALL

2. Minutes of the Meeting of 24th March 2021

- 2.1. There were no changes to the minutes of the trust board meeting held on the 24th of March 2021 and they were agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting and were signed by the chair.

Matters Arising

- 2.2. 4.2 – Trust board declarations - Trustees reminded to indicate that they have read/indicate their acceptance of AAT Code of Conduct/KCSIE/Academies Financial Handbook on Governorhub – remaining trustees to action.
Action: MH/PH/PR
- 2.3. 4.3 – Actioned
- 2.4. 4.4 – Trust workplan – to be reviewed/updated at committee level – carried forward for F&R committee. Governors noted that there needs to be one programme of work for the trust – there are currently 2 in circulation – carried forward.
Action: F&R
- 2.5. 6.5/15.2 – On agenda
- 2.6. 6.7 – ELG meeting to be arranged to discuss format of a trust board meeting.
Action: ELG
- 2.7. 8.3/15.3 - Actioned

3. Strategic Review & Proposed Structure of the Trust

- 3.1. A paper on the trust structure was circulated in advance of the meeting (Attached at A).
- 3.2. Trustees extended their thanks to the CEO for all his hard work and effort on the revision of the AAT Scheme of Delegation.
- 3.3. The chair noted that the trust is a legal entity and the trust board is responsible for the standards and operations of all schools within the trust as well as the safeguarding and quality of education of all children within the trust.
- 3.4. The chair noted that the trust needs to have a settled structure however the Scheme of Delegation (SoD) will evolve over time and will be amended/improved.
- 3.5. CEO – the chair noted that the term of the CEO finishes at the end of the academic year (2020/2021). He proposed that the CEO continues in this role for 3 days per week for the next academic year (2021/2022). This was agreed by trustees.
- 3.6. The chair proposed that he bring a paper to the board at the beginning of the next academic year with a number of options with impact/consequences regarding the future of the CEO role. Trustees agreed with this.
Action: HJ
- 3.7. Scheme of Delegation –
The CEO noted that the revised AAT Scheme of Delegation was circulated in advance of the meeting taking into account suggestions and comments from trustees and chairs of governors (Attached at B).
The SoD is clear about where responsibilities lay. There may be some actions that arise which have not been previously considered – responsibility for these will be discussed and agreed with the CEO as and when required.
The terms of reference at the end are in need of revision and these will be completed before the next trust board meeting in July.

There will be 2 committees – one focussing on pupil achievement and wellbeing and the other on personnel. For the 3 areas of finance, premises health & safety and safeguarding, the LGB’s will appoint a lead governor and deputy to focus on each of these areas. This will be consistent across all 3 schools which gives opportunities for networking and governor development.

Within the trust board, there will be 3 groups – audit risk and effectiveness committee, personnel committee and the board will be the overseer of finance (the FD will meet monthly with headteachers to go through management accounts and this will be fed back to the board at board meetings 6 times per year).

Q: Is the ELG needed as a separate group within the trust?

MH noted that the trust board should be supporting and overseeing the performance of the 3 schools and the central administration function as well as the performance of the CEO. If this is done well then there should be no need for a separate group which is effectively an extra layer of governance. The chair noted that the group was established when there was a part time CEO and the trust board didn’t meet that often and they took direction from the board and acted as an implementation group. They also fulfilled the statutory duty of scrutinising finances. This needs to be reviewed in light of the increasing role of the CEO as well as in light of the proposed increase in number of board meetings per year.

3.8. *Q: How will the SoD be used as a board and how does the trust support the schools in their achievement of the higher level objectives, with the required level of oversight and responsibility in accordance with DfE guidance?*

The CEO noted that the school self-review document will be critical as a method of reporting. School heads have agreed an identical template to be used across all schools for self-review and school development plan documents. Headings on the CEO report will also need to be agreed.

Trustees noted that Hammersmith and Fulham are developing a common school score card that they can share with the trust before the end of term which could be useful for feeding into the reporting process.

The chair noted that the trust should be holding schools to account for providing the best education for its pupils and there needs to be meaningful reporting to demonstrate this.

The CEO noted that the board should be holding the individual schools to account for improving the outcomes of their pupils – they should not be seeking a common measure of pupil outcomes as they are very different across the 3 schools.

The CEO agreed to meet with MH to discuss and produce a format for the CEO report.

Action: IP/MH

3.9. Trustees agreed to the revised scheme of delegation and for it to be passed on to the school local governing bodies.

4. Strategic Business Plan

- 4.1. The AAT Strategic Business Plan (updated May 2021) was circulated in advance of the meeting (Attached at C).
- 4.2. The chair noted that the plan has been updated and next steps are that the strategic high level objectives at the end of the business plan need to be turned into clear actions with responsibilities, accountabilities and timelines.
- 4.3. ***Q: Will the actions/responsibilities/accountabilities be reviewed on a six month or annual basis?***

The chair noted that the plan will be reviewed on an annual basis however timelines on the actions themselves may dictate shorter review dates.
- 4.4. The chair noted that the board sets strategic objectives and the CEO is accountable for delivering these objectives through the schools. The CEO's role is to expedite and facilitate.
- 4.5. Trustees agreed that more is needed to be done at board level to turn the objectives into deliverables and to determine priorities.
- 4.6. The chair agreed to set a date for the board to discuss and agree objectives with responsibilities and timelines – this meeting should ideally be face to face.

Action: HJ

5. Risk Management

- 5.1. The AAT Risk Register was circulated in advance of the meeting (Attached at D).
- 5.2. The trust FD noted that the trust risk register has been revamped – the 3 headteachers still need to grade risks however the document is now being used by trust and FGB committees. After half term, the risk register will be uploaded to Auriga SharePoint on office 365 to be updated centrally by the risk owners.
- 5.3. The trust FD noted the major risks finance risks relating to Capella House School and banding values. There has been a lot of work on the Gateway health and safety risk issue however this is still work in progress.
- 5.4. ***Q: Did the Gateway refurbishment happen at Easter?***

The FD noted that the local authority has agreed to pay for the refurbishment. It was late in starting due to a breakdown in communication between the LA and the company involved – the Ashley Group – the FD has escalated this with the LA and additional funding is due to be approved. The refurbishment is due to finish after half term.

- 5.5. ***Q: Is there an update on the numbers for Capella House Primary?***

The CEO noted that the KS2 class is looking like it will be nearly full however he noted that AfC have committed to block funding as a class. The FD highlighted the risk that AfC have agreed to block fund but haven't yet informed her of the level of funding despite them having been provided with a budget.. 4 children have been identified to date for the infant assessment provision. The CEO noted he had a positive meeting with a HRCH speech therapist who is requesting that the provision extends to nursery age children as she is confident that there is a need for this. CHS secondary is place funded however AfC have indicated that the school will be full in September with 28 pupils.

5.6. Q: Is there an update on the banding issue?

This is an ongoing issue. The FD noted that the trust has been audited twice by the SMRA. Clarendon and Strathmore has been benchmarked against other special schools by AfC and questions were raised about staffing levels - the trust has provided more information on this. The CEO is also to review the staffing model at Dysart school (a school with similar outcomes and support needs) as a comparison. Trustees noted the extended staffing costs of multiple sites. The FD noted that banding values may be redistributed however this will not solve the long term problem – support staff salaries have not had an inflationary increase for 8/9 years and the funding of this is depleting Strathmore reserves.

5.7. Q: When is resolution needed on this issue?

The FD noted that a 3yr budget needs to be submitted to the DfE by the end of July. If there is no update on banding values from AfC by then, existing banding values will be used and Strathmore will be presented in a deficit position and trustees will be asked to sign this off. AfC have indicated that they will not let a school go into deficit and will inject emergency funding although have not confirmed the methodology of doing that.

5.8. The chair requested that the board be regularly updated on the banding values issue.

Action: SC/IP

6. Policies

6.1. The AAT Redundancy Policy and an amendment to the AAT Pay Policy 20/21 were circulated in advance of the meeting (Attached at E).

6.2. AAT Redundancy Policy – see confidential note attached.

6.3. AAT Pay Policy amendment –

The FD noted that for CHS the deputy headteacher pay grouping goes up to L20. There needs to be a differentiation between deputy head and headteacher so it is therefore proposed that the headteacher pay grading groups should start at L21.

The other pay policy amendments are in accordance with the new trust structure. Trustees agreed to all amendments.

7. AOB

7.1. Trustees extended their thanks to the CEO for conducting 3 recruitments in 3 weeks for Capella House.

8. Date of Next Meeting

8.1. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 13th July 2021

The meeting ended at 8pm.

Signed by the Chair _____

Date _____