



An Daras Trust
Igniting Curiosity Growing Capabilities

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CEO: W. T. Hermon

13/12/2023

Minutes

Full Board of Directors Autumn Meeting Monday 13th December 2023 at 9.30am at ADMAT Central Office

1. Welcome and Apologies

Present: Steve Tavener (Chair), Jon Sharpe (Vice), Gill Shippides, Margaret Savage, Ian Wilkinson, Will Hermon, Claire Paul

Apologies: Peter Hague, Graeme Barriball – accepted by Board

In attendance: Toni Martin (Governance Officer), Emma Gilbert (CFO), Jo Callow (Ex-Officio)

2. Declarations of Interest/Pecuniary Interests relevant to this Agenda

None relevant to this agenda.

3. Elect/Re-Elect Chair & Vice Chair

Under article 82, the requirement to re-elect the Chair annually, ST agreed to continue as Chair and the Board voted unanimously for this. ST noted he is willing to continue as Chair for 2 more years, finishing in December 2025.

As TR has resigned, this left a vacancy for Vice Chair. JS volunteered to be Vice Chair and the Board voted unanimously for this.

ST noted it has been a successful term and asked the Board if they were content with how the trust is progressing. Directors discussed this, and their visits, in particular the excellent work done at Werrington.

4. Confirm Minutes of previous full Board meeting (6th July 2022) and matters arising

- **Update on 3rd party SEND review outcomes to next full Board (WH).** *WH provided the Board with an update including the small steps required to refine the provision. The external review process is deemed positive. It was noted in the improvement plan that an external review of school improvement would be beneficial and WH noted the RDD's wish for this to occur; options were briefly discussed including a peer to peer review with another trust.*
- **Report progress of pre-school project to next full Board (JC).** *JC updated the Board on figures for pre-schools (noting this changes), pre-school funding, costs in comparison with local competitors, the end of year financial viability of all pre-schools noting all are ok less NP (but this is incorporated into the school building) and LPS but the costs include maintaining the school building. JC noted the ratios of staff against pupils and the need for full ratios of children against staff in order to make it financially viable. WH noted a number of variables in the trust pre-schools that make a direct comparison difficult. More funding is now available along with increased hours so the picture is looking more positive generally for most of the pre-schools than it was previously. LPS was discussed further and recorded at confidential minutes. Deficit figures at other pre-schools were challenged but it was noted that funding is always less in the autumn*

period. More funding is due to come in but staff minimum wages also increasing. It was agreed that a termly review of figures should be done for this next year just to see the trend and how it pans out over the year to be sure that all the nurseries are indeed financially viable.

Action: a spring and summer review of pre-school figures for comparison (JC). The use of a TA to discuss absence was discussed. A supply agency can only supply a qualified teacher which is more than required. Employing a TA to cover absence would be more cost effective and when not being used for absence, they can be employed elsewhere in the trust.

- **Draft a Hybrid GAG pooling policy (or section to include in the finance policy) (EG).** Financial policy will be used and a section inserted. **Action: Financial Policy with GAG pooling section added ready by 15 Feb 24 for review by FRS (EG)**

No actions from confidential minutes. Board agreed the minutes and a copy was signed by the Chair.

5. Confidential Matters

A short discussion re potential transfer was recorded at confidential minutes.

6. CEO Report to Board

The Chair thanked WH for his detailed report. WH noted the error on pupil numbers and provided the Directors with the correct figures. It was noted that there is a dip in numbers but this seems to be a trend locally not just within our trust. There are years further up where there isn't spaces but the lower year groups seem to be lower in numbers. CG drop in numbers will affect the way the school is run; WH will be meeting with the Chair of Governors and Head teacher in the spring term to discuss this. Princetown on the other hand has increased from 32 to 46 which is a much more positive picture.

School improvement processes are in place and working well; WH will arrange an external SI Strategy review at some point within this academic year as its likely a requirement for the proposed Duchy transfer. Asset management plan update was given to Directors. It is noted that it requires quite a lot of work but has no practical gain for the schools, even though it is required and will be audited.

Attendance rates have been reasonable even given that the autumn term tends to be lower due to illness. Attendance was discussed, including the use of council funded taxis to get children to school at SSCA. WH noted the deprivation data for our schools and EAL children were briefly discussed.

WH noted the ISDR data, which will be reviewed by Ofsted prior to an inspection. It tells even less about our school standards than previous ISDRs. This was briefly discussed. Discussion regarding future staffing is recorded at confidential minutes. WH noted a raft of new policies that Wolfestans have stated we need to have such as flexible working, adoption and other HR related policies.

WH discussed the latest curriculum framework evolution in terms of wisdom, capability and knowledge; now that the curriculum has been developed, it is important to finesse this now to ensure these 3 strands are fully incorporated.

WH noted a staff grievance re travel. After discussion, there were no further questions.

7. Improvement Plan

WH noted the review of the improvement plan and the directors gave this their consideration. He was thanked for the update and there were no further questions at this time.

8. Latest Management Accounts/Current Budget

Period 2 management accounts were provided by the CFO. Following re-structure of the finance team, it is much more efficient and production of management accounts will be quicker here on in

despite staff shortages. Payroll is now in second year and issues are still being dealt with regarding the system (PSP). The need for succession planning for certain finance staff was discussed. EG noted some catering matters including the charges of subsidies. The catering contract was discussed. EG discussed the KPIs and how they will be broken down in future. Other costs such as staffing costs, SEN costs and processes were discussed in detail. It was agreed that more data is required for SEN figures. **The figures for reserves are noted, how is the figures allocated to each school?** EG explained how this is done. **In the external audit, it was noted that there are £79K underspent on CIF?** EG noted that until all the bills are in and there is work to be done that might be allocated to this. The Chair noted a vote of thanks to SC, EG and the finance team for their work in helping to manage the CIF for the Wer project. Further discussion was had on other CIF projects.

9. **Audited Accounts**

Clean set of audited accounts; no major issues raised. EG noted there were no adjustments to the P12 accounts. The audited accounts and annual report is complete, will be signed by ST and will be submitted to ESFA by 31 Dec 23. TM will publish on the website.

10. **Appoint Internal Auditor**

The audit committee recommend the appointment of Griffin again for the internal audit. It was noted that 3 quotes were requested but only 2 received, and Griffin was competitive. **The Board approved this appointment.**

11. **Christian Foundation/Distinctiveness**

The Christian distinctiveness was discussed, and inclusion of the 'Hopes for a Flourishing School System' recommendations into the trust SEF and other Trust wide improvement documentation. The Foundation Director attended the LGB meeting at SC and gave positive feedback and briefly discussed SIAMS.

12. **Safeguarding**

CP gave an update on safeguarding and some changes that will come into effect. Following a brief discussion, there were no further questions.

13. **MAT Vision & Aims**

Trust and school visions reviewed and aligned last term so no further work is now required. The Board were content with this. NP and Werr have now also completed their Vision and Aims statements – so all trust schools are now aligned with the trust version.

14. **Actions from Committees**

- LSS – None
- FRS – None
- Audit – **Working group to discuss succession planning and other matters in January, Board agreed with this – proposed that ST, IW, JS and MS attend but others welcome. Given financial implications, good idea for the CFO to attend also. It is important to have a terms of reference so that the purpose of the meeting doesn't creep into wider matters. Action: Ascertain viable date in early January and draft a TOR for consideration (TM)**
- LGBs – Leave absence policy to be reviewed to allow paid leave for certain activities like attending graduations (from SSCA). WH noted that this policy is an old policy, and is already under review. **Action: Add Leave absence policy to FRS agenda (TM)**

15. **Complaints and Compliments**

None to report.

16. AOB

Director visit programme has been updated; 78% complete. Will try to complete the remainder prior to the end of this academic year and there may be further schools to visit thereafter.

A staffing matter was discussed and recorded at confidential minutes. WH and JC left the meeting while this discussion took place.

The Chair thanked the Board, committees and staff for all the hard work in 2023.

17. Date of next meeting

Date of next extra-ordinary meeting is Wednesday 28th February 2023 at 9.30am on zoom to determine school admissions policies. Date of next main meeting is Wednesday 20th March 2023 at 9.30am at central office.

The meeting closed at 12 noon.

TJH Martin
Governance Officer

Distribution List:

W. Hermon – CEO Director S. Tavener – Director (Chair) J. Sharpe – Director (Vice) G. Barriball – Director P. Hague – Director C. Paul – Director	I. Wilkinson – Director G. Shippides – Foundation Director M. Savage – Director E. Gilbert – CFO J. Callow – Ex Officio Observer
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