

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

**Minutes of the meeting held at 4.30pm on 21 March 2016**

**Present:**

<b>I Morgan (Chair)</b>	<b>M Wagner (Vice Chair)</b>
<b>M Humphreys</b>	<b>E D'Souza</b>
<b>A Whatley</b>	<b>H Lay</b>
<b>C Gibson</b>	<b>C Higgins</b>
<b>N Savvas (Chief Executive)</b>	<b>A Whittaker (Principal)</b>

**In Attendance:** **S Jones, Chief Financial Officer**  
**A Clark, Minute Taker**

**Action**

- 1 Declaration of Interests**  
Trustees confirmed that they had no conflicts of interest to declare in relation to the items of the agenda.
- 2 Apologies for Absence/Notice and Quorum Requirements**  
Apologies for absence were received from J Bridges, Clerk to the Board of Trustees.
- 3 Minutes of the meetings held on**
  - 3.i 14 December 2015**  
The minutes of the meeting (minute book pages A547-A550) were agreed as a correct record.
  - 3.ii 25 February 2016 (Extraordinary Meeting)**  
The minutes of the meeting (minute book pages A551-A552) were agreed as a correct record.
- 4 Matters Arising from the meetings held on:**
  - 4.i. 14 December 2015**  
The matters arising from the meeting were summarised in the report (minute book pages A553-A554) and all actions reported had either been completed or, where appropriate an update had been provided on progress elsewhere on the agenda.
  - 4.ii 25 February 2016 (Extraordinary Meeting)**  
There were no matters arising from the meeting.
- 5 Principal's Briefing**  
Trustees received and considered the summary report (minute book pages A555-A559).

The Spring Term Progress Review has been completed and the indicators are very positive. The College's Self-Assessment Interim Review will also be completed in March 2016, with College Lesson Observations Profile at 83% of lessons being graded as Good or Outstanding.

The EFA has not supported the business case for in-year growth. Although disappointing this was not unexpected. However, the significant increase in student numbers this year has had a very positive effect on the budget for 2016/17. To date 1666 applications have been received for next year. Applications are lower than the same time this year, however, this is balanced by an expected improvement in the retention rate across the Academy from Level 2 to 3, which will contribute to healthy student numbers in September 2016.

Health and Safety inspections for critical engineering have been completed and other inspections are booked. The Annual Fire Assessment took place this term and a report and action plan has been received. It was noted that during the Fire Assessment it had proved difficult to access databases and files to validate that tests on fire extinguishers etc had been conducted. These files are maintained by CBRE – the Hard Facilities Management Provider so a follow up meeting with them has been arranged this month to confirm compliance.

Trustees commented that the results of the recent Staff Survey had been exceptionally good considering a turbulent 2015/16 academic year for staff. The Principal confirmed that tremendous results in the year together with the ‘Outstanding’ Ofsted grade boosted staff morale and Trustees agreed that the results of the survey was testament to the leadership, and handling of such difficult circumstances to ensure that staff felt secure and remained positive.

Trustees were pleased to learn that students of the Academy have achieved the highest value added scores for all three indicators; A Level, Vocational and Academic, across all providers in Suffolk and Norfolk.

**6 Vision for the Future of SAT**

Trustees received and considered the report (minute book pages A560-A561).

Positive feedback has been received to the recent application submitted to the DfE on 2 March 2016 to open a new 16-19 A Level Sixth Form in Bury St Edmunds through the Free School programme. An interview with DfE officials will take place sometime between 9 May and 22 July 2016. Five representatives will be invited to attend. From previous experience Trustees were informed that the interview process is likely to take the format of a discussion with the DfE around the structure and capacity to deliver a successful Free School. It was agreed that when the key areas for discussion are defined the five representatives will be determined and briefed and a ‘mock interview’ convened.

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Trustees agreed to establish a Task and Finish Group to ensure that all necessary work is carried out in preparation for the interview. A balance of Trustees and Executive Officers to the Board will be fielded for the interview process and as soon as the dates is known, Trustees will be informed.

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The official notification of approval of the application for the Free School to open in September 2018 would not be expected to be confirmed by the DfE before September of this year. At which point a DfE Project Director would be appointed to acquire the site and draw up the Heads of Terms and invite tenders. The DfE would build the School and fund the project with the input and support of the Trust and the Principal Designate to lead on the design and build.

Trustees were pleased to learn that there appears to be a real appetite from local head teachers to join local, smaller trusts from both secondary and primary schools. It was agreed that Suffolk Academies Trust should continue to explore potential members to join the Trust, and that the Free School Application should not overshadow such opportunities. Trustees were keen to use the Strategy Day set aside on 11 July 2016 to explore growth of the Trust. Trustees were reminded that there is a need to evaluate what opportunities exist but to remain resolute about the Trust's purpose; to deliver excellent education. There may be other sixth form schools aspiring to convert to academy status and primary and secondary clusters seeking quality and financial support and Trustees recognised that it was important to keep an open mind at this stage of the opportunities that may exist before exploring what resources may or may not be needed. On balance all agreed that there was the need to be quite conservative and that the Trust should not grow for growths sake. It is important to explore opportunities but all factors must be considered, with the ultimate aim being to deliver excellent education and not to the detriment to the current success of the existing Academy within the Trust; Suffolk One.

## **7 Financial Overview**

Trustees received and considered the report (minute book pages A562-A564).

Overall the Trust has made a good start to its first financial year and the new processes and systems of working as an Academy are settling into place.

Formal confirmation has been received from the EFA to commence repayment of the legacy debt with effect from 1 April 2016 as opposed to 1 September 2015 as initially anticipated. Therefore the forecast for the year end is a surplus of £24,575 compared to a budgeted surplus of £516 (after the repayment to the EFA for the legacy debt).

Trustees recognised the importance of building reserves but commented that this needs to be balanced against budgeting adequately for infrastructure and maintenance costs. The Chief Financial Officer will consider the appropriate policies (Reserved, Cash in Hand etc) that may need to be drawn up for the Trust.

SJones

Trustees also asked that consideration of the staffing budget is made alongside infrastructure costs to ensure that the 'Outstanding' level of teaching can be sustained and delivered by the Academy. It was noted that some teaching areas are experiencing larger class sizes which could impact quality and student success plus it is recognised that equipment will require replacement as it edges toward the end of its useful life. The Chief Financial Officer confirmed that all of the curriculum budget demands are currently being assessed and discussed in order to inform the 2016/17 budget and a report is to be prepared and presented to the Finance Committee of the Trust outlining any proposal or recommendation for investment.

## **8 Revised Financial Administration and Control Handbook**

Trustees received and considered the Handbook (minute book pages A565-A637).

Subject to amending the word 'parent' in the document to read 'primary carer of the child', Trustees **approved** the revisions made to the Financial Administration

SJones

and Control Handbook. **Proposed** by I Morgan and **approved** by a show of hands.

**9 VAT Policy**

Trustees received and considered the Policy (minute book pages A638-A643).

Trustees asked the Chief Financial Officer to draw up a template for Policies to indicate the date of approval and the date for future review.

Trustees **approved** the amendments as documented. **Proposed** by I Morgan and **approved** by a show of hands.

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**10 Lettings Policy**

Trustees received and considered the Policy (minute book pages A644-A654).

As only one Academy exists within the Trust currently it was agreed that the policy was accurate however as the lettings described were unique to Suffolk One, Trustees asked that this be clarified in the policy. Subject to this amendment Trustees **approved** the policy. **Proposed** by I Morgan and **approved** by a show of hands.

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**11 Any other business**

None.

**12 Date of next meeting**

Monday 16 May 2016 at 4.30pm, Suffolk One Board Room.

The meeting closed at 5.50pm