

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Minutes of the meeting held at 4.00pm on 13 December 2019

Present:

E D'Souza (Chair)	S Daley (Vice Chair)
C Higgins (Vice Chair)	A Maltpress
S Howard	S Clarke
R Inman	K Points
C Ridgeon	D Wildridge
N Savvas (CEO)	

In Attendance:

- S Jones, Chief Financial Officer**
- S Graham, Interim Group HR Director**
- K Haisman, Chair of Abbeygate LGB (Observer)**
- J Bridges, Trust Secretary**

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**

Apologies for absence were received from J Wakelam, S Healey Pearce and J Gazzard.

3 **Minutes of the meeting held on 8 July 2019**

The minutes of the meeting (minute book pages B754-B761) were agreed as a correct record. **Proposed** by S Clarke and **seconded** by D Wildridge.

4 **Matters arising from the meeting held on 8 July 2019**

The matters arising from the meeting were summarised in the report (minute book page B762) and all actions reported had either been completed or, where appropriate an update had been provided on progress elsewhere on the agenda.

It was agreed that the Safeguarding Lead for the Trust will be taken on by K Points and the arrangements for this are to be determined.

5 **Membership**

Trustees received and considered the report (minute book pages B763-B764).

Membership of a Local Governing Body must comprise not less than 9 and not more than 15 Local Governors. Since the last Board meeting the LGB of One Sixth Form College has actively sought to recruit to the Board and Parent Governor, Vanessa Wood and Maninder Sohi, were duly appointed at the LGB meeting held on 28 November 2019. The appointment of Maninder Sohi is subject to the approval of the Trust Board.

Membership of the LGB of Abbeygate Sixth Form College is now 9. The LGB has approved to appoint Staff Governor, Kate Brown, Parent Governor, Louise Nash and a third parent governor has also been interviewed and subject to LGB approval it is proposed that Llewela Selfridge is also appointed. The Trust Board is asked to approve the appointments of Henry Nydam and Betty

Action

Milburn and endorse the appointments of Kate Brown, staff governor, Louise Nash and Llewela Selfridge, parent governors.

The LGB appointments to One and Abbeygate Sixth Form Colleges were **approved** by the Trust. **Proposed** by S Howard and **seconded** by C Ridgeon.

6 Committee Chairs' Summary Reports

6.1 *Finance Overview*

Trustees received and considered the report (minute book pages B765-B766).

Overall, the financial position is positive albeit very early in the financial year being only month 2. It was noted that if no adjustments are made then a prudent forecast contribution to reserves of £137K is predicted for the Trust.

The Board was informed that there are no emerging issues of financial concern for the year and cash balances are healthy. Work also continues with the DfE and ESFA to facilitate a shared working platform with West Suffolk College and the top-level business plan submitted with our application to the DfE was shared with the Board for information.

6.2 *Audit Overview*

Trustees received and considered the report (minute book pages B767-B768).

The Academies Financial Handbook places more emphasis upon the Audit Committee to ensure that all categories of risk are being adequately identified, reported and managed. The Audit Committee of the Trust therefore requests to change its name to the Audit and Risk Management Committee in order to publicly show its commitment to their risk management undertakings. The Board **approved** the change of name. **Proposed** by R Inman and **seconded** by D Wildridge.

The risk register was shared with the Board and this currently identifies two red, two amber, two yellow and six green status risks. The Trust Secretary was complimented on the work of assurance mapping and developing integral processes for the Committee and its work.

6.2.1 *Audit Planning Memorandum*

Trustees received and considered the memorandum (minute book page B769).

At the request of the Financial Auditors the Audit Planning Memorandum was to be shared with all Trustees, not just shared with the Audit Committee. The Trust Secretary confirmed that this had been circulated to all Trustees by email on 18 October 2019 and Auditors were copied in and they, and Trustees, have confirmed their safe receipt.

6.3 *Related Party Transactions Overview*

Trustees received and considered the confidential report (minute book pages B770-B771) under article 125(c) of the Articles of Association.

6.4 *Property Overview*

Trustees received and considered the report (minute book pages B772-B774).

The Trust considered the proposal to establish a Property Committee and appoint D Wildridge as Chair. The Terms of Reference of the Committee were shared with the Board. The purpose of the Committee would be to formulate guidelines for and oversee the discharge of the Academy Trusts' responsibilities for the proper management of the estate and assets of the Academy Trust, and any of its Academies. The Board **approved** to establish

a Property Committee and appointed D Wildridge as Chair. **Proposed** by S Clarke and **seconded** by S Daley.

It was noted that the Board would like to receive update reports on the progress of the Abbeygate new build and any future property strategy developments for One Sixth Form College. These will be reported back to the Board through the Committee Chair summary reports presented at each meeting.

7 Statutory Compliance Reports

7.1 One Sixth Form College

Trustees received and considered the report (minute book pages B775-B776).

The report provided the Board with an update on Health and Safety, Equalities, Safeguarding and GDPR at One Sixth Form College.

Health and Safety

The main dust extraction plant in Engineering has been overhauled with pleasing compliance results. The classroom reorganisation project over the summer was well managed and where required, appropriate fire provisions and fire stopping was reinstated. Statutory inspections continued over the reporting period and remedial actions taken by specialist contractors as needed. Work to improve swift fire evacuation practice is underway and a wider compliment of fire marshals likely to be needed for the 2020/21 academic year.

Equalities

Key data is collated as part of recruitment processes and this is reported to the Local Governing Bodies at each of their meetings in the year. Reports provide the workforce data profiled by age, race, gender, disability, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation protected characteristics.

Safeguarding

The number of overall concerns reported by students has risen particularly with regard to Mental Health, suicidal thoughts, wellbeing, welfare and home issues. This is a continual focus for the student services team.

GDPR

On 7 October 2019 the Trust, One and Abbeygate Sixth Form Colleges had a

GDPR Impact Assessment carried out by the DPO Centre. The report and recommendations from this assessment were received and a summary of the RAG actions for each organisation were shared.

One Sixth Form College has experienced four reportable breaches although it was noted that these were not reportable to the ICO.

7.2 Abbeygate Sixth Form College

Trustees received and considered the report (minute book pages B777-B778).

The report provided the Board with an update on Health and Safety, Equalities, Safeguarding and GDPR at One Sixth Form College.

Health and Safety

As Abbeygate is located within West Suffolk College for its first year, they are covered by the policy and practice in place at the College. There were no reportable events of concern.

Equalities

Analysis of student data under the disadvantaged groups does not indicate any anomalies or concerns.

Safeguarding

All staff have undertaken the mandatory safeguarding training. Abbeygate has introduced MyConcern for the recording and tracking of safeguarding concerns. There were two disclosures in the reporting period and students are being supported by external agencies and staff. Both are reported to be doing well with their studies.

GDPR

Abbeygate has no reportable breaches to report.

8 One 2018/19 Self-Assessment Report and 2019/20 QIP

Trustees received and considered the 2018/19 Self-Assessment report and 2019/20 Quality Improvement Plan (minute book pages B779-B800).

In summary the grade profile has been agreed as Outstanding overall effectiveness; Outstanding Quality of Education, Outstanding Behaviour and Attitude, Outstanding Personal Development and Outstanding Leadership and Management.

The 2019/20 QIP has been produced to improve a number of curriculum and support service areas and details the success criteria and interventions needed to improve. It was noted that there are some support function areas for improvement that are to be removed from the QIP.

9 2018/19 Audit Committee Annual Report

Trustees received and considered the report (minute book pages B801-B809).

The Audit Committee presented its annual report to the Trust which details the audit activities in the year.

The report details the reporting period, membership, meetings held in the year, terms of reference and sections covering the core elements comprising; recommendation tracking, assurance mapping, fraud, irregularity and whistle blowing cases and value for money. It is the opinion of the Audit Committee that an effective internal control framework has been in place for the year and that the framework is based upon effective risk management.

The Audit Committee recommended the report to the Board. The Board **approved** the report. **Proposed** by R Inman and **seconded** by S Clarke.

10 Audit Findings Report

Trustees received and considered the report (minute book pages B810-B840).

The report has been considered and scrutinised by the Audit Committee ahead of the consideration of the Trust Board. It was noted that based on auditor's conclusions they have not made any modifications to the audit report and will issue a clean, unqualified opinion. Furthermore, there are no changes to their preliminary assessment of potential ethical threats to audit independence that they are required to communicate with the Trust.

In summary, auditors found no irregularities and a clean unqualified audit opinion has been received.

The Board noted the four regularity and internal control observations (section 04 of the report), three of which are resolved and/or actioned satisfactorily, the remaining observation proposed to be resolved, subject to the approval of the Trust Board. It was **proposed** that a process be created to ensure that Trust Staff seek the written approval of the Accounting Officer to undertake paid employment or consultancy during working hours. In such circumstances, it was further agreed by the Board that the remuneration or income receivable be paid directly to the Trust but at the discretion of the Accounting Officer, payments may be made by the Trust to the individual undertaking the work but that it must be both proportionate, in keeping with sector remuneration, and is subject to approval and documented in advance by the Trust Board. **Proposed** by D Wildridge and **seconded** by C Higgins.

Subject to this resolution the Board was content to **approve** the Audit Findings Report. **Proposed** by R Inman and **seconded** by S Howard.

11 Audited Accounts and Financial Statements for the period ended 31 August 2018

Trustees received and considered the Annual Accounts and Financial Statements (minute book pages B841-B842).

The Board reviewed the financial statements for the period ended 31 August 2019 noting that the Finance Committee had requested the insertion of some supplementary words on pages 10 and 36 to explain the variance between the operational surplus reported and the year-end deficit in the Financial Statements. It was further noted that the page numbering is to be adjusted before signing so that the contents page mirrors the actual page numbers throughout.

The Trust were content to **approve** the financial statements as presented. The Trust Board was content to permit the Chair of the Board of Trustees and Accounting Officer to sign the accounts and the letters of representation for the Financial Statements and Regularity Audits for return to the ESFA by the December 2019 submission date subject to the amendments as detailed above. **Proposed** by C Higgins and **seconded** by D Wildridge.

12 *CEO's Briefing*

Trustees received and considered the report (minute book page B843-B849).

The CEO's report provided an overview of the activities of both Abbeygate and One Sixth Form Colleges within the Trust.

Abbeygate Sixth Form College

The report detailed the awards, enrichment activities for students, engagement with schools, promotional events/media presence/digital activities and horizon scanning/strategic matters that they have been recently been involved in.

In addition, it was reported that over 700 students attended the Open Event in October 2019 and Abbeygate has also been part of the College open events held in November 2019 and continues to actively promote its courses and increase its social media presence.

The new build is progressing well and on time with the hope that it will be watertight by Christmas. Handover is still on target for the end of June 2020.

R Inman left the meeting at 4.40pm

One Sixth Form College

The report of One Sixth Form College also informed the Board about the awards received, enrichment activities for students, the school engagement work, promotional activities and strategic matters encountered since September 2019.

13 Governance

Trustees received and considered the report (minute book pages B747-B752).

R Inman joined the meeting at 4.45pm

13.1 *Register of Interest*

The Register of Pecuniary Interests has been updated. In accordance with the Articles of Association all Trustees are required to complete the register to confirm their continued eligibility to serve on the Board. The register is available for public inspection on request and a similar Pecuniary Register of Interests for SAT Members, Governors of the Local Governing Bodies of One and Abbeygate Sixth Form Colleges and Senior Staff and Budget Holders has also been completed and updated across the Trust.

13.2 *Strategic Conference*

The Strategic Conference this year will be held at the West Suffolk College on Thursday 23 January 2020. The format of the day is currently being planned and more details once finalised will be shared with the Board. We will be welcoming fellow Governors of West Suffolk College, SAT Members and Governors of the Local Governing Bodies of One and Abbeygate Sixth Form Colleges.

14 Any other business

It was agreed that under the CEO's Briefing a update will be provided for with regard to West Suffolk College activities.

15 Date of next meeting

Friday 27 March 2020 at 2.00pm.

The meeting closed at 4.50pm

NSavvas