

Minutes of Full Trustee Meeting
Wednesday 29th June 2022, 7pm, held via zoom

Present: Keith Carne (Chair) - KC, Andrew MacLellan – AM, Andrew Day – AD, Andrew Read – AR, Cheryl Lowe – CL, Gill Ambrose – GA (*joined 19:08*), Janet Bunker – JB, Marguerite Roberts – MR, Tricia Pritchard – TP, Isobel Rawlinson (Director) – IR, Sarah Helme (Finance & Compliance) – SH, Claire Jameson (Administrator) - CJ

Opening prayer led by Andrew Day

1. **Apologies:** David Farrer, Matthew Pettifer and nothing new under **Declarations of interest**
2. **Minutes of previous meeting** (7th December) were approved as an accurate record of the meeting and the **Outstanding actions (Paper A)** are either completed, ongoing or on the agenda.

3. Items for discussions

a) 2021 Annual accounts and audit (Paper B)

AM invited questions on the circulated accounts and explained that Prentice had been asked to restate last year's accounts due to a disproportionate amount being allocated to the permanent endowment. The value of investments in the accounts reflects the value in December 2021, since then the value has dropped by 10%, however this is still good performance. AM confirmed there had been no adverse points in the audit report. KC advised that the Exec and F&P have seen the accounts and are supportive of them. Trustees unanimously approved the accounts and agreed that AM could sign a letter of representation on behalf of Trustees. Trustees thanked SH for her work keeping the accounts in order. **ACTIONS: AM to sign letter of representation and accounts to be submitted to the Charity Commission.**

b) Trustees (Paper C)

Vacancies, appointments, succession planning & strategy

KC outlined the issues facing trustees including the length of service and the need to consider new possible trustees. As this is KC's last year as Chair, a new Chair will need to be elected. TP and AM have both put themselves forward and KC noted that both would be excellent in the role. TP and AM both outlined why they had put themselves forward as Chair (statements shown in appendix 1). TP and AM will send these statements to CJ who will circulate them to all Trustees. Trustees will individually email CJ with their vote by Friday 8th July. AR pointed out that a new Chair of Governors at St Philips will be needed soon and questioned if AM were to be Chair of both the governors and CSoC would that appear as a conflict. AM advised that matter has not yet arisen. KC advised the Exec are planning to hold a strategy session and will report back to all Trustees, everyone was happy with this. IR confirmed there are 11 active trustees with 2 ex-officio positions to be filled by September. AD is helping to fill vacancies for the North and South Deaneries and AR is aware of the DBE vacancy. **ACTION: CJ to circulate TP & AM statements for Chair vote, all trustees to individually email CJ with their vote by Friday 8th July.**

St Bedes Trustee representation

There was a discussion around the different inputs from AD as governor, AM as trustee and AR. AD noted that the input of CSoC is acknowledged at governor meetings. It was agreed that AD, AM & AR should think about how the trust can be more involved with the school. AR advised that when a MAT is formed, the DBE has given up a place on the board so CSoC can have a position which will need to be closely linked to the Diocese and would make CSoC a shareholder of the trust. AR outlined that other schools could join the MAT meaning CSoC could be shareholder of a Trust with more than just St Bedes and could include schools outside the CSoC area of benefit. It was acknowledged that there may be a future change in the CSoC area of benefit to reflect that of the Diocese.

Trustee Register of Interests – 2022 – Trustees should email any changes to IR and CJ.

c) Committee Updates

Spirituality – CL

Bibles for year 6 leavers and It's Your Move leaflets have been given to schools in the CSoC area of benefit. Lots of children's grants have been approved, with special projects including a holiday club, St Andrew's Cherry Hinton working with Ely Cathedral's learning department, supporting youth work at Northstowe and a project reaching out to support community schools with RE teaching which Beth Flett has supported as part of her CSoC work. Victoria is continuing to deliver sessions in schools.

Finance & Premises – AM

Finances and accounts are covered under other items on the agenda. There are SCA works at St Philips and Park Street which are summarised in the Directors report (Paper F).

Education – TP

TP thanked JB for joining the last two Education meetings as the third trustee. There is still work to do embedding processes and ensuring that proposals are received on time. The committee have asked schools to focus on aspiring leaders for the leadership development fund, with coaching funded via the core grant. There were sound proposals from St Pauls and Park Steet for the Additional Educational Support fund. The committee would like to see clear feedback reports from schools which reference the original proposal.

d) St Philips section 106 project – update

AM advised that progress is slow, and the contract is not value for money. There is no scope for major works to the front of the school due to budget constraints. The architect and contractor will visit the school next week to meet with senior leadership. The replacement of the mobile classroom, which is no longer in use, is not feasible based on the contractors estimate. The school would like to replace it with a factory built eco classroom, so is meeting with the LA to take this out of the contract and make it a separate item, meaning the budget will be more realistic. The total budget is £1.65 million, but the construction budget is only £1.25 million as abortive costs of a previous project to expand the school have been included in this budget. AM suggested that CSoC could consider contributing of 10% of the total costs.

e) St Bedes update – discussed under item 3.b)

4. Operational standing items

a) School updates – link Trustees

St Lukes – GA

There are still low pupil numbers at the school which impacts budgets and will mean less classes from September. Staff turnover is a huge concern with 4 staff, including the Senco, leaving by the end of the year. Children are well behaved and imaginative during weekly assembly run by GA/JB. GA and IR met with the Head to discuss CSoC grants, and IR confirmed a proposal for the Additional Educational Needs fund has been submitted and will be reviewed by the Education Committee before the summer holidays.

St Pauls – IR on behalf of DF

Head has thanked the Trust for additional funds for the teacher costs and Additional Educational Needs. There has been more interest in the school since the Good Ofsted rating as well as work to promote the school, meaning there are promising signs with numbers. The school has a dedicated governing body.

Park Street – AD

The school is in a good place with areas of concern fixed. The school is now full and there is positive feedback from parents, staff and children. CSoC grants have helped the school reach a place where the budget can now sustain the extra teacher. Staffing is stable, with TAs the only area of issue. The Additional Educational Needs fund will help support vulnerable children with additional use of the Senco and an extra TA.

St Philips – AM

The Good Ofsted rating came just before the deadline for primary school applications, so was too late to help the numbers for September which are down. There will need to be 2 small reception classes and funding the extra staff means the budget is in deficit. Several staff are looking to leave, including the Head who will leave at the end of December. The Year 6 SATS results look promising, although the year 2 results are more of a struggle.

KC noted that all 4 schools are showing progress.

b) Foundation Governors (Paper E)

IR advised that the Exec have approved Felicity Higginson to replace Sophie Buchanan as CSoC governor at St Philips from July as well as the reappointment of Hilary Aldred at St Pauls and Andrew MacLellan at St Philips (from July 2022). All trustees approved these appointments. AD noted there are 2 vacancies at Park Street, although there are some possible replacements, one of whom may be a useful Trustee for CSoC.

c) Director's report (Paper F)

IR asked Trustees to consider joining the Education Committee as the third member. CL advised she is stepping down as a CSoC trustee in December so more trustees will be needed on Spirituality Committee. IR advised that if trustees need information on any projects that is not included in any reports or meeting papers, then they can contact IR or CJ for this. KC feels that this report is a good summary, and the grants tracker is useful to assess which grants are successful. **ACTION: Trustees to consider joining Education or Spirituality Committees**

d) Risk assessment – update (Paper G)

SH advised that actions have been updated to show progress. SH and IR have reviewed the HR policies, these will be circulated once they have been signed off. As the Diocese have changed the number of years between DBS checks from 5 to 3 years, some trustees need a new DBS sooner than expected. SH has contacted all those who are affected and asked that those trustees please reply to her if they haven't already done so.

ACTION: Trustees contacted by SH regarding DBS to respond ASAP, if not already replied.

e) Safeguarding update (Paper H)

SH confirmed there are no issues to update. As CL, who is the safeguarding trustee, is stepping down, a replacement will be needed. CL thanked IR and SH for keeping on top of the policies.

ACTION: Trustees to consider taking over as Safeguarding Trustee

f) Spend vs budget 2022 - update (Paper I)

AM confirmed there were no unexpected items and the information given in the meeting paper has notes against anything that requires an explanation. KC questioned the low solar panel income, SH explained that the payment only covered 3 schools as a photo of the meter at Park Street was required so the next payment will include the Park Street payment.

5) Reports for information - No comments or questions were raised.

6) AOB

AD advised he has been approached by Westcott House regarding training for Ordinands regarding the Act of Worship and Governance in schools and thinks this may be an opportunity to find potential governors so could mention CSoC. CL confirmed this is something the Spirituality Committee would want to be involved with so it was agreed AD and CL would discuss this further. **ACTION: AD and CL to discuss**

7) Date for next meeting – Tuesday 13th December 2022

Meeting closed with Grace at 20:50.

Appendix 1

Statements of Interest for the role of CSoC Chair

Tricia Pritchard - Expression of interest for the role of Chair of CSOC

I have worked in education throughout the whole of my working career and continue to devote my energies to education in a voluntary capacity. In my working life, I have been headteacher of a small CE voluntary aided primary school near Oxford, very similar to Park Street, and of a large maintained school in Oxford, and also acting headteacher of a medium sized primary school in crisis also in Oxon. I was an HMI for 10 years which culminated in being appointed policy lead for the inspection of initial teacher training across England. I have worked for the Diocese of Ely as Diocesan Director of Education and led the setting up of the DEMAT, the multi-academy trust. I also had a one-year secondment as an LA adviser to lead on the strategy for inducting newly qualified teachers. I have also worked for the DfE as an adviser, mostly in Norfolk and for the National College for School Leadership.

Currently, I am the independent chair of the Fenland and East Cambridgeshire Opportunity Area Partnership Board for the DfE with a key focus on improving social mobility across the area and this starts with the Early Years right through to post 16. The OA programme officially ceases at the end of August and the DfE has asked me to continue as independent Chair of the Fenland and East Cambs Priority Area Board which is replacing it and being convened at the moment. I am also in my final year as independent Chair of the Woodard Academies Trust Board. If appointed as Chair of CSOC, I would seek to adopt the same independent chair approach as Keith has also done to avoid conflict of interest.

I have been a trustee of CSOC for 9 years—firstly in an ex officio capacity as Director of Education for the Diocese of Ely and now the university is my appointing body. I chair the newly formed education committee.

So....why have I put myself forward as Chair?

I believe that the Church Schools of Cambridge Trust is at an exciting crossroads. It has a lot going for it and a firm foundation on which to build following Keith's leadership during the last six years. We are in a good place to think big and think laterally as well as to continue with much of the work we are doing already. Our finances are in good shape thanks to Andrew's and the finance committee's efforts on the Trust's behalf and our schools are also in a better place than they were.

We now have an education committee and a spirituality committee with clear terms of reference to clarify accountability and guide our decision making. We have a clear process for inviting applications for additional funding providing they are referenced to clear priorities in schools' improvement plans. We now need to embed those processes and ensure that they are being followed while also planning timely reviews to ensure they are fit for purpose. We have link trustees who report to the Board. We also need to continue to work with heads and governors to ensure that that we deploy resources where improvement is needed most and above all to support those who work and learn in our schools. But....we can go further than this so perhaps it might be helpful if I set out my thoughts and vision for the Trust since, in choosing a new Chair, trustees will want to know whether the new Chair's vision chimes with their own or is worthy of exploring further.

A key question is "How can CSOC optimise adding value to the education and life chances of all those who live and work in their schools?"

So... what must we preserve at all costs? What must we do differently? What must we invest further in because what we are doing is working so well? What do we ditch?

We are in a fast-moving educational environment....How can CSOC support schools to drive and enact change?

Below are a few practical ideas:

- We continually evaluate how effective we are at deploying our resources to meet. The Objects of the Charity and at measuring the impact of the initiatives we are funding. We could commission some research from the university to help us unpick this.
- We are in a unique position to explore ways of adding value to a child's education and enable schools to make best use of the cultural opportunities that Cambridge offers.
- We explore establishing a central CSOC learning and professional development centre which becomes a beacon of excellence for Church School education beyond the boundaries of the Trust. I have ideas of where this could be.
- We appoint a spirituality adviser to work across all schools.
- We focus on strengthening community links and links with the local churches—it is often said that schools are at the heart of the mission of the Church but is that true of our schools?
- We consider funding parent support workers in our schools to assist with meeting the pastoral, attendance and educational needs of the most vulnerable pupils in a school. I know from first-hand experience what a difference family support workers make but most schools can't afford to employ one.
- Bearing in mind that parents have an important role to play in supporting the education of their children, we explore ways of involving parents more. In the Opportunity Area, we are running a very successful parent power project in conjunction with the University and I could see ways of replicating the model for CSOC.
- We recognise the challenges and advantages of encouraging schools to collaborate and work in partnership with one another and don't give up on trying to achieve that goal. We consider offering incentives to enable this to happen. I think there is scope to explore opportunities when issues arise and often this means exploring ways of collaborating more with schools in the locality.
- We work closely with the Diocese and explore whether CSOC could play a role in supporting the Diocese to implement the changes resulting from the White Paper.
- We establish good links with the University and commission research, possibly into Church School distinctiveness and how to measure the impact of a Church School education.
- Some years ago, we talked about possibly applying to open a free school for alternative education. This is a long term aim but could well fall within the remit of the Trust and especially as Cambridgeshire has been identified as an Education Investment Area.
- We explore ways of assisting schools to make best use of technology to strengthen learning networks.

To end, I quote from the Book of Proverbs: "Without ambition, people perish." If appointed chair I would want us to continue to be an ambitious Trust—ambitious for every child regardless of ability or background. I don't underestimate the challenges that schools and families face particularly at the moment. It is a golden opportunity for the Trust to make a difference and we have the financial resources to do so. We need to support schools to build their capacity to overcome barriers to learning and thereby transform pupils' lives.

Our strategy day in September will be pivotal to our forward planning and to formulating a strategic plan to set the Trust's direction of travel for the next five years. I am an optimist. "Approach the future with optimism and trust" is my motto.

Tricia Pritchard
June 29th 2022

Andrew MacLellan

Background

I trained as an engineer and in management and first moved to Cambridge to work for Cambridge Consultants. In the last 25 years of my career I was director of a group of companies in the renewable energy industry. I was a founding director and later Chairman of the Renewable Energy Association.

With that kind of background my approach to things is very practical - seeking to apply available skills and resources to best effect. I also, from experience, appreciate the importance of strategic planning; but still more the importance of being flexible and ready to adapt and respond, quickly if necessary, to circumstances and opportunities.

Work with CSoC

I have been a member of St Philip's church since moving to Cambridge and, appointed by the church, have been a CSoC trustee for many years. CSoC and its work has developed very substantially over that time and I have had the privilege of getting to know the schools and contributing to that process, including:

- Initiating the annual grant to schools.
- The incorporation of the trust (establishing it as a legal identity) and consolidation of the trust's investments in its own name in a growth-oriented investment fund.
- Negotiation of the sale of the St Andrew's site (which tripled our income and made much of what we do today possible).
- Revision of the trust scheme, with the wider area of benefit.
- Proposal to employ a director and administrator (prior to that activity was limited as the trustees did everything themselves).
- Proposal to utilise excess investment gains as a school improvement fund.
- Proposal to establish what is now the Education Committee to focus on school support and improvement initiatives.

I also represent CSoC as a trustee of St Bede's and working with the diocese brokered an arrangement that enabled the building of the £4m block containing the Chaplaincy facility.

I am a governor at St Philip's school and retired from my job in order to be able to commit to fulfilling that role alongside my wider work for CSoC. I have no other school or organisation competing for attention, my commitment is solely to CSoC and its schools.

Some Thoughts on the Future

The one constant in the life of the trust and our schools, and the environment they operate in, is change, be it political, professional, financial or technology.

We need to plan and be prepared for change, not just reacting to it. We have not always been good at this and can end up with an outcome we would not have chosen or as bystanders to events.

As a result of current government policy, we have to anticipate that change is coming for our schools, and potentially an opportunity for CSoC. We are approaching a fork in the road and have to choose which way to go – there is no straight-on option! With the government's new Education Act it is planning that all maintained schools become academies in a multi-academy trust in the next 2 years – and Cambridgeshire is one of the 'Education Investment Areas' part of the first wave.

The question for us is whether we wish to be part of that and more involved in the destiny and management of our schools, or whether we step back and become less involved – probably as a simple grant-making trust. For most of its 300 plus years CSoC not only owned but also managed its schools, providing free schooling to those who could not afford it long before state funding. We have the opportunity to return to our roots and restore support for our schools that was lost through ‘Local Management of Schools’ and the subsequent diminishing role of the Education Authority.

In the meantime, I believe we should build our relationship with the governors we appoint, with training and support where appropriate in the more significant decisions they have to make.

We have many capable and talented staff in our schools and the better we get to know our schools the better we will be able to work with them and support them, particularly in our areas of focus which can enable the schools to be distinctive, going beyond what would be expected from a good county school.

Much good work has been done by the schools in recent years to improve the quality of education – in the cases of St Paul’s and St Philip’s restoring the important ‘Good’ rating from Ofsted. However, I would perceive that Christian Distinctiveness – beyond ticking the boxes SIAMS – is at a low ebb in most of our schools, in contrast with past experience. There are relatively few class teachers who are practicing Christians, which no-doubt impacts this.

On a larger stage I have thought about whether CSoC could encourage and contribute to the church nationally promoting teaching as a Christian vocation – and church schools as a place for practicing that vocation.