

## Minutes of Full Trustee Meeting

Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> December 2022, 7pm, held via zoom

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

**Opening prayer** led by Janet Bunker.

**1. Apologies:** Matthew Pettifer, and nothing new under **Declarations of interest**

**2. Minutes of previous meeting** (29<sup>th</sup> June) were approved as an accurate record of the meeting

**Outstanding actions (Paper A)** IR advised that items listed as 'completed' will be shown for one meeting and then removed. Many 'in progress' items have been raised in other committee meetings.

### 3. Items for discussions

#### a) Trustees (Paper B)

##### **Annual Declarations, Appointments & Vacancies**

KC reminded trustees that an annual declaration needs to be completed. CJ will send this to trustees in January, any questions on this should be sent to CJ. IR outlined the 2023 appointments and confirmed that TP has already been elected by trustees to take over as Chair. KC offered to become vice-chair, JB agreed to join the Education committee, IN offered to join the Spirituality Committee and GA volunteered to be the Compliance Trustee. The Committee Chairs for 2023 will be AD for Education, GA for Spirituality and AM for Finance & Premises. Trustees unanimously agreed to all these appointments. It was agreed that the Link Trustees will remain the same for 2023 and KC outlined the importance of this role in linking with the schools and parishes. KC referred to appendix 3 of Paper B which lists current trustees and vacancies. IR has an applicant for the South Deanery Synod position and is awaiting confirmation on this appointment. TP suggested a skills audit in the New Year so that the Trust can advise appointing bodies which particular skills are required.

**ACTIONS: CJ to send annual declaration to trustees in January, 2023 appointment sheet to be sent out with the minutes and IR/TP to look at a skills audit to be considered by the Exec**

#### b) Vision/Strategy (Update from Exec) (Paper C)

KC gave an overview of the Exec Away Day session and conclusions of this which are detailed in Paper C. The conclusions are not decisive but possibilities for the future of the charity, which will ultimately involve changing the Charity objectives with the Charity Commission. Any comments from Trustees are very welcome and should be sent to KC, TP and IR. TP suggested a meeting with TP, IR, JB, AD, IN and RB to discuss ways to better engage with local Churches and communities. Trustees need to decide how to best support the 4 CSoC schools as well as neighbouring schools with a possible change to the area of benefit. KC outlined the changes for schools with academisation and greater responsibility for governing bodies. JB questioned if changes to the schools bill had reduced the need for academisation, AR/KC confirmed schools are still expected to academize but are no longer under a time pressure. Trustees preferred the idea of a Federation. AR suggested a vulnerability for CSoC schools is a misplaced perception that they can be funded by the charity. AM advised that the LA have been promoting their own academy trust. TP pointed out that Norwich Diocese have been successful in federating schools so it would be useful to meet with them as they have attracted both Church and community schools. Trustees acknowledged that the Trust would need to work with partners to decide how to move forward. It was agreed that TP, KC and AR will meet to discuss how CSoC can work with the Diocese.

**ACTION: TP, IR, JB, AD, IN, RB to meet, TP, KC & AR to meet to discuss working with Diocese, arrange meeting with Norwich Diocese.**

#### c) Committee Updates (Paper D)

##### **Education – TP**

TP referred to the report in the Paper D and explained that the committee had reviewed the strategy of deploying resources to support children and teachers and aims to explore how the trust can add value to a child's education. TA support has been provided and proposals were invited from schools for strengthening leadership at all levels to

help with succession planning. Literacy is a national priority, so the committee is exploring the possibility of giving each child a book or book voucher with a book plate to mark the King's coronation. Trustees were supportive of this idea. A clear process for applying for grants has been created but needs some embedding with the need to be flexible and not make things too onerous on the schools and CSoC staff. Trustees felt the CSoC grant application process is already much simpler compared with others. The committee wants to support disadvantaged children and will be reviewing the hardship fund. IR detailed the grant tracker which is used to keep track of the all grants given by CSoC including financial and monitoring information. IN asked if the leadership fund could be used for inspiring Christian leaders. TP outlined how this funding has been used in the past and AR outlined the EDRA programme and explained this is a subtle way of keeping in touch with schools with an emphasis on what it means to run a church school. IR pointed out that the leadership fund is new and evolving with 2 applications received so far, budget is available in 2023 along with a budget for new Heads leadership development.

#### **Spirituality – CL**

CL outlined VG's sessions in schools which are popular. KC noted that VG has done well to find other ways of engaging with schools during the pandemic. There have been some interesting Special Project grants which the committee want to use to gather information to share with other churches to help with projects they may be considering e.g. what works well. The aim is to employ someone to engage with churches and progress this. IR confirmed there had been 10 Special Project grants agreed this year and VG is developing good relationships with schools and delivers sessions in both church and non-church schools. KC thanked CL for all her work as Chair of the committee.

#### **Finance & Premises – AM**

AM confirmed the updates from the F&P committee are included in the budget items on the agenda and building works are included in the Director's report. AM invited questions from Trustees, but there were none.

KC thanked all three Chairs for their work on the committees.

#### **d) St Philips section 106 project – update (Paper E)**

AM outlined the background of this project for IN and RB. The LA recently contacted KC to advise that there was a proposal to remove the funding from this project which went to the Children and Young People Committee a week later. The Trust, Governors and parents wrote to the committee ahead of this meeting, however the package this proposal was part of was passed (7 votes for, 6 against), however there was an expression of discontent at how this had been dealt with. The money will instead be used to offset debt, rather than an alternative project, however Cambridge City Council will have to agree for the money to be used elsewhere and it's not clear how straightforward that process will be. The Committee had urged the officers to consider if any of the works at St Philip's can be retained due to the money already spent on design. Fran Cox, who will produce ideas for St Philip's works, and Jonathon Lewis will visit the school on 6<sup>th</sup> February and AM asked for representatives from CSoC and the Diocese to join this meeting. Fran has asked to speak with IR to understand CSoC's role as AM says there is a view that the Trust can financially support the school. KC thanked AM for his work on this and offered the Trust's support for St Philip's. **Action: IR to contact Fran Cox**

#### **e) St Bedes update**

AD updated the meeting advising that the school has just received their best GCSE results ever, especially in sciences. They are 17<sup>th</sup> best state secondary school in the country and best performing state school in Cambridgeshire. Staff are happy and professional, but the school acknowledge that not having a sixth form is a vulnerability. AR advised DfE are unwilling to invest in the second school which has been delayed due to issues with the access road to the proposed site. AD suggested the trust send a congratulatory note to the Head regarding the exam results.

**ACTION: KC/TP to send letter to St Bede's Head congratulating exam results success**

#### **f) Compliance Update (Paper F)**

CL and SH have ensured the charity is compliant. CL thanked SH for her work creating drafts of the necessary documents and advised that the charity is in a better place with safeguarding and data protection and ready to respond to any future changes. The meeting agreed to the revised handbooks and policies along with the data protection policy and noted the actions outlined in Appendix 1. The meeting also agreed to SH sending an annual link to Trustees on Trust policies and handbooks. **ACTION: SH to send link to policies and handbooks to trustees**

#### **g) 2023 Budget (Paper G)**

AM advised that the budget is shown in a spreadsheet, set out like formal accounts as well as pie charts which gives an easier view of spending. Some projects can spread over 2 years so money for these is shown as committed in one year but spent in the next. The expected income is secure at £381K, with planned expenditure of £414K. Investments have grown faster than inflation, so the last 5 years gain on unrestricted funds (not permanent endowments) over and above inflation is available to spend, which is £413K. The amount brought forward this year is lower as inflation is higher and investments have been hit, but the expected spend is still within the available funds. KC confirmed the Exec have already seen this and were fully supportive. All trustees agreed the proposed 2023 budget.

#### **4. Operational standing items**

##### **a) School updates – Link Trustees (Paper H)**

KC thanked link trustees for their written reports which were useful and informative.

##### **St Pauls – DF**

Feedback from the school is largely positive and things are improving after the ‘Good’ Ofsted in 2021. CSoC funding for the 6<sup>th</sup> class has significantly helped numbers to improve and long-term the aim is to return to 7 classes. The school are thankful to CSoC for their support. School activities are returning following Covid and IN has been into school. IN advised that staff are unaware how to engage with the Christian faith of school as there is concern if they push a Christian identity they will get less applications so IN is helping the Head to celebrate the Christian identity whilst still being inclusive.

##### **Park Street – AD**

The Head provides a distinctive Christian identity, and the children are happy. The school had good results and writing has improved with the majority meeting the expected level. KS2 greater depth is not as good as hoped but the school is working towards this. KS1 phonics results were significantly above national average. The school is not quite full due to a lack of communication between the LA and parents.

##### **St Luke’s – GA**

The school is in a better place but much smaller with only 4 classes including just one for KS1 which is very demanding for the teachers. A new Deputy is due to start in January and a new SENCO after Easter. KS2 results were good even after the disruption of Covid and staff changes. There are new TA’s being funded by CSoC. There are a growing number of children from Ukraine and Hong Kong arriving at the school. There is a lot more to do but the school is in a stronger place with a hard-working Head. KC acknowledged there had been significant progress which should be celebrated. AR updated that DEMAT recognises the input of the Trust. Cambridge is more sensitive than other areas to parental perspective of Ofsted results so the school really needs a ‘Good’. There is worry for the numbers at St Luke’s with new schools planned in Cambridge.

##### **St Philip’s – AM**

There has been lots of staff sickness, stress and anxiety and 2 class teacher positions remain vacant. There are also TA vacancies with some off due to stress related issues. RB has been involved with the school which is positive and supporting wellbeing. The Head, who was the driving force behind the ‘Good’ Ofsted is leaving at the end of the term. The school is looking forward to welcoming a new Head, Helen Coleman, in January, who has been visiting and spending time in the school. There are a high number of SEND children and extreme behaviour which takes up staff time and has led to some staff absence as they struggle to cope. The school is grateful for CSoC funding a TA until February. Beth Flett has left but her work will help with the expected SIAMS inspection. RB suggested a project that could be considered is one around staff wellbeing and counselling. TP confirmed the Diocese provide a wellbeing project as well as EDRAs and the Education committee have received a new wellbeing proposal from the Diocese which will be reviewed at their January meeting. Both AM and RB felt that despite the pressures the staff work hard to make the school a safe place for the children. AM confirmed there will likely be a £50K overspend due to staffing issues.

##### **b) Foundation Governors (Paper I)**

IR reminded the meeting that CSoC appoint half the Foundation Governors at St Pauls, Park Street and St Philips with the Diocese appointing the others, St Lukes is different as a DEMAT school as all governors have foundation responsibilities. If Trustees notice any mistakes in the circulated governing body lists then please contact CJ/IR.

**c) Director's Report (Paper J)**

IR outlined the sections of the report. Any trustees interested in seeing the staging site of the website should contact CJ for the details. IR meets the 4 Heads together termly as well as having separate conversations, she is arranging a meeting for the spring term to include Helen. Heads have been speaking about working together collaboratively. Please contact IR for any further information on listed projects including school property ones. KC thanked IR for her summary of the Trust projects, there are lots of achievements to celebrate. IR thanked the trustees on behalf of the staff.

*(MR left the meeting at 21:14)*

**d) 2022 Spend Update (Paper K)**

AM confirmed that less had been spent in 2022 than budgeted but some spend will be carried over into 2023. SH has provided notes on individual items in Paper K. There were no questions from trustees. KC thanked AM and SH for well-maintained accounts which meant the audit was straightforward.

**e) Risk Register (Paper L)**

The Exec has suggested some changes to assess the main risks. Trustees were invited to comment on this. TP suggested looking at risk categories and risks within those, then an assessment on which risks need to be kept.

***ACTION: Risk Register review to be added to Feb Exec meeting agenda.***

**f) Safeguarding Reporting**

CL confirmed there are no issues to report. There were no questions or comments.

**g) 2023 Meeting Dates (Paper M)**

KC confirmed the hope is for the next full trustee meeting to be face to face with a CSoC school as a venue.

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

**6) AOB** - TP thanked CL on her last meeting as a trustee and KC on his last meeting as Chair of the Trust.

**7) Date for next meeting** – Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> June 2023

Meeting closed with Grace at 21:23.