

Minutes of Full Trustee Meeting
Wednesday 28th June 2023, 5pm
Michaelhouse, Cambridge

Present: Tricia Pritchard – TP (Chair), Andrew MacLellan – AM, Andrew Day – AD, Andrew Read – AR, David Farrer – DF, Gill Ambrose – GA, Imogen Nay – IN, Janet Bunker – JB, Marguerite Roberts – MR, Matthew Pettifer – MP, Ruth Barry – RB, Sarah Helme (Finance & Compliance) – SH, Victoria Goodman (Spirituality Officer) – VG, Claire Jameson (Administrator) - CJ

Opening prayer led by Andrew Day.

1. Apologies: Keith Carne and Isobel Rawlinson. Trustees sent their good wishes to Isobel and her family.

Declarations of interest: nothing new

2. Minutes of previous meeting (13th December) were approved as an accurate record of the meeting, but the day of the meeting needs amending from Wednesday to Tuesday. **Action: CJ to amend**

Outstanding actions (Paper A) TP, IR and Ex-officio Trustees will aim to meet in the autumn. Arranging a meeting with Norwich Diocese will be discussed at the next Exec meeting. AD confirmed he has delivered training for Ordinands in Acts of Worship and Governance at Wescott House and this will continue next year. All completed actions will be removed from the list.

3. Items for discussions

a) i) 2022 Annual Accounts and audit (Paper B)

AM invited questions on the circulated accounts and explained that the investments are showing a reduction over the year, but they have recovered since December. IN and RB requested that they are updated on the Trustee list from Mrs to Reverend, as well as AR to Canon and TP to include OBE. AM confirmed the Letter of Representation will be amended to reflect that not every Trustee has seen the accounts. Trustees thanked AM and SH for their work on the accounts. Trustees unanimously approved the accounts and agreed that AM could sign the Letter of Representation on behalf of the Trustees.

ii) Financial Delegation Approval

AM outlined the minor changes made including IR's delegated sign off amount which has increased from £500 to £750, which Trustees agreed was a sensible decision. For Committee budgets, up to a 10% increase in a budget line can be authorised by the Exec, but anything above that needs to be approved by Full Trustees. Trustees unanimously approved the updates.

Actions: SH to make requested updates to Trustee names on accounts, AM to sign letter of representation and accounts to be submitted to the Charity Commission.

b) Vision and Strategy (Paper C)

TP outlined previous strategy discussions as well as the current and proposed draft vision statements. There was a discussion on this with various ideas and amendments suggested. It was agreed to remove 'a' and make environments plural as there are 4 CSoC schools and amend Christian values to Christian faith and values. The reference to the Foundations of the Charity means they need to be easily accessible and it was suggested these could be linked on the website. Other suggestions included inspiring rather than stimulating and loving rather than happy as this links to the Christian faith. It was agreed this feedback should be used to update the draft vision statement and circulate this via email to be agreed by trustees.

TP then outlined the possible priorities for the Trust which are detailed in Paper C and asked Trustees to consider where do they want the Trust to be in 5 years? What are the key priorities? If the Trust were to consider a MAT, it would be in partnership with the Diocese. If CSoC schools join a MAT that the Trust is not involved with then influence will be lost. RB suggested that as the charity was established to provide education for all, the Trust could focus on SEND children, which is an area of education that is struggling and where CSoC could add value. Trustees generally felt that now was the time to be bold and do more. It was agreed that the Exec should use the points raised at this meeting to produce a paper to establish priorities and what to do next, considering the importance of timescales. AR advised that it takes 9 months, at an absolute minimum, to establish a MAT.

Action: CJ/TP to circulate updated draft vision statement for agreement by Trustees, Exec to produce a paper on priorities and next steps.

c) Church Schools – the National Picture and local context

AR advised that a new national schools document titled 'Our Hope for a Flourishing School System' has been produced. The PDF of this document will be circulated to trustees next week. On a local level the structural sustainability of schools is a concern and schools are being encouraged to think about their structure, including academies, as standalone schools are struggling. The Trust needs to consider how we can make the CSoC schools stronger and must not forget that St Bede's is included in the Trust.

Action: CJ to circulate national schools document PDF via email.

d) Trustees Terms of Office (Paper D)

TP outlined the Exec discussions on this. It was agreed that a recruitment drive and strategy is needed as new trustees can bring diversity. Succession planning needs to be put in place so that not all trustees step down at once and consideration is given to the skills and experience needed. If a trustee reaches the end of two terms with no replacement, they could be appointed on a yearly basis after that until a suitable replacement is found. The majority of trustees agreed to actively explore the options of rewriting the trustees terms of office. It was agreed that good relationships with appointing bodies is needed to get trustees with appropriate skills and work was needed to promote the Trust and schools with Churches. It was agreed that this would be added as an item on the next Exec agenda to create a scheme with guidance. AM advised that including this as a recommendation in the Charity Rules is simpler and avoids the legal route of the Charity Commission's change of scheme.

Action: Trustees term of office to be added as an item on the next Exec agenda

e) Director's Report (Paper E)

TP invited questions. Trustees felt the report was comprehensive and thanked IR for the report. It was noted that the Heads are more appreciative of the Trust due to IR's work and communication with them. Any questions on the report can be sent to IR via email.

4. Items to Note

TP thanked the Link Trustees for their school reports, which are useful for thinking about how to strengthen links with the schools. TP suggested the possibility of a Trustee Away Day to allow time for more in depth discussions. RB pointed out a typo in the Education Committee minutes – Health has been omitted from Mental Health First Aider course, CJ will amend this. RB commented that it would be useful for VG to notify the vicars of her sessions in their link school at the beginning of a term.

AM raised the issue of the fencing and resurfacing of the outside area at St Philip's which is used by the SEN children, with the work to be completed over the summer. The school is in the process of getting 3 quotes for the work which is estimated to cost around £30,000. The school are asking if CSoC will underpin this amount and recover the cost from the DFC for the school in future years, as has been done for other schools previously. It was agreed that AM should put a proposal for this in writing to be circulated to Trustees via email due to the timescale of the works.

Actions: CJ to amend Education minutes, AM to circulate proposal for St Philip's fencing and resurfacing works.

5. Close

TP thanked MR on her last meeting as a CSoC Trustee for all her work for the Trust and for always reminding trustees to think about 'What's in it for the children?'

6. Date for next meeting – Wednesday 13th December 2023, 7pm

Meeting closed with Grace at 18:27.