

**Minutes of CAST Board meeting held on Friday 9th December 2022
at Plymouth CAST Office from 9.30am**

Attendees:	Andy Nicholls (AN)	-	Foundation Director (Chair)
	Ann Harris (AH)	-	Foundation Director (Virtual)
	Deacon Nick Johnson (NJ)	-	Foundation Director
	Steve Hole (SH)	-	Foundation Director
	Sandy Anderson (SA)	-	Foundation Director
	Graham Briscoe (GB)	-	Co-opted Director
In Attendance:	Zoe Batten (ZB)	-	CEO
	Laura Fox (LF)	-	CFO
	Rose Colpus-Fricker (RCF)	-	COO
	Kevin Butlin (KB)	-	DoE
	Helen Brown (HB)	-	DSC
	Sandy Brown (SB)	-	New Co-opted Director
	Leah Paiano (LP)	-	Clerk

The meeting began at 9.30am with a data presentation led by Kevin Butlin. See presentation slides.

Q. The expectation of the pupils, want them to feel they are part of the excellence of a school. Within the EEF toolkit, one strategy is parental engagement, and this will be considered. Launched the Oracy Project is for all children. Meta-cognition and removing the ceiling, key strand of work we are doing.

Q. Report to E&S but given it is a key strategic focus, will require a Board paper following focus group.

Q. Other methods of assessment to track children outside of SATs. At start of academic year, all schools have to set targets for individual outcomes, School Improvement Officers visit to ensure targets are realistic, move to attainment projections, monitor Insight data and challenge schools over gaps between targets and projections.

Q. If a low projection, what intervention? School Improvement Officers look at the data and how to close the gap.

<p>1. Welcome and Opening Prayer</p> <p>Opening prayer by ZB. AN welcomed SB and the Board approved SB as a Co-opted Director. Those present introduced themselves to SB.</p> <p>2. Apologies and Confirmation of Quorum</p> <p>Apologies from RO, JV and ALN. Quorum met.</p> <p>3. Declaration of Interest</p> <p>NJ – wife works for Trust JV – a number of CAST schools being funded by her Trust.</p> <p>Nothing further declared.</p> <p>4.1 Minutes of previous meeting of 7th October 2022</p>	<p>Decision/Action</p>
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Minutes approved as an accurate record.

4.2 **Actions**

Status updated on Actions Summary.

22.12 and 22.11 outstanding, before next meeting
22.02 External A&R – work in progress
21.52 RSE – HB chasing, end of January
21.50 Report of RLW – consider in 23/24 budget, May Board
Set up Task and Finish Group on branding, May Board
21.49 Canonical inspections with AH – arrange a date, end of January
21.47 Staffing with JS and HB – completed
21.45 Census information 0 completed
21.37 Meeting with HB – need to arrange, end of Jan.
21.34 St Boniface funding – RCF working with legal team, March meeting
Website audit - complete

5. **Chairs Business**

- **Directors' Annual Review**

AN explained the Chair carries out the 1:1 review against the proforma, RO will do before the end of January. 360 review of the Chair. Returns to LP so anonymous.

- **Governance Review**

Waiting on NGA to appoint someone.

- **Termly Review with Regional Director**

Positive review, KB, ZB and RO attended. Effective relationship, positive Ofsted inspections within the year, three double RIs schools moving to Good. ZB gave her thanks to KB and his Team for their hard work. Focus on secondaries, good progress, secondment agreement information.

Q. When did the meeting take place? Circulate the letter/review once it is received.

Q. Appropriate for the Board to send a letter of thanks to the schools?
KB to draft a letter on their behalf.

AH left the meeting at 10.50am.

6. **CEO Update**

Governance

Q. There appears to be an inconsistency between SoDA and SOA in how lead LCB governor roles are described (eg; Inclusion in SOA but SEN and Disability, Inclusion& Equality in SoDA). Also, within the SOA there is inconsistency between the main document and introductory bullet points (eg; bullet 3 still has parents and community and statutory grants identified and also identifies SEND rather than inclusion).

Annual review
to be shared.

KB to draft
letter of thanks
to HTs

Q. In the SoDA the Board Director lead role for curriculum and standards has been dropped. Is there a reason for this?
 Noted feedback and LP will review all three documents.

Q. Issued to schools? Not yet, for Board consideration. ZB updated the Board on a recent Chairs' Forum held, introduced the new paperwork, a positive meeting. Introduced to HTs, positive feedback and a supportive tool. Will roll out training sessions for Lead roles.

Q. How to reach the Chairs that didn't attend. Will continue to share through the Clerks' Forum, take a register, share slides and a conversation with schools that are not represented.

Q. Useful for Link Directors to know if their schools are not being represented.

Q. Guidance for Link Directors? LP will share the Protocol.

Q Safeguarding - The CEO has a strong oversight of recruitment. He ensures....? Is this a typo or cut and paste by Ofsted. No typo, CEO of that MAT, the Ofsted report was reporting finding.

Q Previously Outstanding schools - second last bullet - is 16 L/A schools a statistically valid sample by which to make comparisons? A small group of schools but are the published findings.

Q I asked a recent A&R committee whether we knew our vacancy rate to which I was told, we did not have that information centrally. This seems to be an error when shortages of critical staff across the Trust may threaten our safe ends effective operation? Don't have a data set, need to agree parameters, provide a report in March but need to consider internally.

Q HR - How is future Head Teacher succession be developed if we have a dependency on Executive Head model of leadership? Under the EHT model, number of senior leadership such as DHT or Head of School, can gain leadership experience, doesn't depend on EHT, leadership profile can flex in relation to the schools.

Q. When a teacher resigns during an inquiry, as noted, does the case carry on to conclusion? When a disciplinary can't continue as they leave, but work with LADO to consider whether any SG or legal concerns are pursued. Investigation continues but disciplinary ends.

SEF and One Year Operational Plan

It has been updated. A question at Committee:
 Board 5-year goals refreshed in the summer and to ensure fit for purpose, Trust Improvement Plan – three-year period, maps out work to goals, One Year Plan – operational plan for SELT, triangulates with performance management. SELT lead their teams in their areas of the operational plan. Clear plans and processes in place.

Q. How do we deliver and improve, are we on target?

AN asked LP to check the induction pack and share. ZB has offered to have a meeting with new Directors – SH, NJ and SB.

Q. Induction pack – reference to being a Catholic MAT. All core documents contain this golden thread.

7.

Heat Map

First data collection in agreed schedule – December, May and July.

Goal 6 – not yet reported on position, carrying out a data collection with HTs, survey closes in February and will be reported on in May.

LP to review all governance documents to ensure consistent wording/formatting

RCF to provide HR data on vacancy rate to the March Board meeting.

Q. Trust judgement on schools is a long way from Ofsted, what are we saying as a Trust, we believe that 20 of our schools if inspected would not be good or are we saying, according to our standards require improvement. Our judgement if we apply the Ofsted criteria, when receive the call, SIO Team is deployed where there is a need. All inspections prior to Sept 2019 were inspected under the old Framework. Some schools have declined or remained the same, SIO Team are acutely aware of those schools.

LP to share the induction pack.

ZB to have induction meeting with SH and SB.

8. Q. Important to consider the projection of each school.

Q. All financial areas have dropped to red, a reflection on current financial difficulties.

Safeguarding

KB provided an update on items covered in the CEO report.

CPOMS records concerns about children, Staff Safe records concerns about staff.

Handover arrangements at the end of the school day, Reception child left the teacher, past the parent. Processes and procedures have been tightened to prevent it happening again.

Incident at Christingle being investigated, candle being held, melted wax burnt a child's hand and sets hair on fire. Immediate action taken. Risk assessment was in place. Investigation being carried out.

9. Policy updated to reflect conversation with the Diocesan Safeguarding Team, to close the loophole, link between school staff and parish commitments. Appendix to SG Policy and HTs advised.

LA SG audit. Need to evidence the conversation between schools when records are transferred. Didn't apply to the school but could have done. Non-confidential file contained confidential, safeguarding information which hadn't been read. Policy has been addressed with schools.

Received a letter from DfE regarding an anonymous allegation regarding a member of staff. Staff member breathalysed by Police. DfE looked at school website and found Behaviour Policy was out of date. Now have a Letter of Assurance to reply to regarding Safeguarding practices across the Trust. No foundation to this allegation, no concerns about the staff member. Managing with the school to assure ourselves of the allegation, malicious, HT has had to record the information on Staff Safe, Data Cleansing Policy states that information will be cleansed or passed on.

Q. Could that leave the Trust open to complaint from the member of staff. Think it is spurious, clearly noted that is almost certainly a malicious allegation.

Q. Updated once the investigation complete? Won't be any further update.

KB writing the report in response.

The Board discussed the result of being breathalysed by the Police. Taken the decision to log the information and monitor. Risk to the member of staff and the school, no other concerns, or allegations.

The Board expressed their shock at the action taken by the DfE.

Q. Is the staff member aware of where this has come from?
Anonymous. Supporting the staff member.

Q. SG forms that have not been submitted, what action? Given until Friday to submit. Serial non-compliance will be considered, unacceptable and could lead to management letter or disciplinary. All staff see the importance. Working to support.

The meeting moved to Part II.

RE and Catholic Life

HB provided the census data, based on March data. HB provided the headlines. HB asked to include the NPQ data.

HB and LF met to discuss the Schools' Levy. Work has started about the next three-year plan.

CPDF aligned with CAST. Good take up. All welcome to attend any sessions.

Due to Covid, behind with Inspections. Changing from S48 to Catholic Inspections. Able to discuss with SIO Team. HB would like to give a 20minute overview. Keeping to S48 until the Easter term.

10. Looked at inspection outcomes to date, 13 inspections, Catholic Life has come out very strong, Collective Worship, curriculum with RE as a subject, Trying to use Insight more thoroughly, data for RE is about spiritual and academic.

HB and JS are going to offer from January, a bespoke CPD opportunity around pedagogy around understanding and teaching of RE. Offer to individual schools.

Link Director reports to pay reference to Catholic Life of the school, may help to identify any gaps. HB happy to chat with any Directors that are not Catholic.

Had hoped to share Ordos, hoping to get digital copies for each school. Can add to the Portal. NJ explained the Ordo is the diary for the Catholic year.

Q. How many Catholic children in the schools. The Directors discussed the numbers of Catholic children.

Prepared a booklet for HT appraisal.

Health and Safety Update – Chair of A&R

HB to deliver a 20 minute overview of the Catholic Inspection – March Board meeting.

29th June, last full meeting. GB Requested the sub-meetings happen 1 or 2 weeks prior to the Board meeting.

All schools are above 95%.

Actions are reviewed and processed. Two RIDDOR events.

Asbestos program. HSE visits. St Joseph's, Poole was inspected. Documentation was all in place, PS attended to support the HT, visit went well, recommendations focussing on specific site plans, historical record keeping to be made widely-available to personnel. PS has issued a briefing email to all HTs.

Education and Standards

- 11.** No meeting since last Board meeting. Data drop to E&S in February, Board in March.

Finance and Resources

- **Update from Chair of F&R**

AN provided an update to the Board on the focus of the F&R meetings that had taken place.

- **Management Accounts to October 2022**

Flux period of the year, audit has been completed. Slightly ahead of budgeted position. Pay is in line with expectations at this point.

- 12.** Harmonisation consultation needs to be concluded.

Balance sheet position – consistently reporting a negative position. Transferred to a positive following substantial changes to the pension obligations.

13.

Cash flow forecast – three-year position, Board needs to satisfy itself that the Trust will be realistically solvent for the next year. £8.9m as of December next year. Look to keep cash of £5m which covers one month of salary and non-pay. Further announcements of grants from ESFA this week.

- **Updated 2022-23 Budget**

Budget presented at school level. Discussed at F&R.

Three-year budget signed off and submitted to ESFA, had the update of teachers pay of 5% so included, following Board approval the NJC offer £1925 per FTE was more than budgeted for. SBMs were asked to review the 22/23 budget, no ESFA support during the summer, unacceptable year 2 and 3.

SBMs have reviewed Year 2 and Year 3. Been pessimistic, 3% ongoing and support staff 5% ongoing. GAG 1%.

Have been cautious, the Trust is in a better position than others.

School data to be discussed at March Board meeting.

ESFA energy efficiency grant, worth just under half a million to CAST. Bespoke to driving energy efficiency, new schools that are energy efficient will still receive this money. Have a clear view of where we can utilise this money effectively.

Q. Is this money transferrable to school to school. Falls within DFC guidelines, already pool these monies, understanding is that it is fully transferrable. Notification this month regarding additional funding to be paid in April 23. A sound position to be taking forward.

Q. Additional monies, approximation for next year, £20 000 per school? This is the capital allocation plus a figure based on census.

The Board approved the three-year budget.

Audit and Risk

- **Update from Chair of A&R/Committee Minutes**

A&R Committee along with AN. Minutes – review the MUSTS Checklist, census update, H&S, HR guidance for managing industrial action.

Q. Risk of cyber-crime, know of companies who have had data stolen, what are we doing to ensure we are as safe as we can be? Steps have been taken to reinforce this area. In the process of working with a cyber insurance policy WEF April 23, following ND incident, school data is held on secure servers, DPO policies in place, IT working group to consider authentication factors.

The Board approved the three-year budget.

Q. Being locked out? Back-ups are in place.

- **Annual Report and Statutory Accounts**

14.

Governance areas to highlight:

Westcott's are new external auditors, updated Articles of Association from November 2021, Westcott's have confirmed they will issue an unmodified, clean audit report, CFO work alongside ZB as Accounting Officer regularly consult on accounts preparation and audit, met officially on 29th November 2022 to review the outcomes of the audit and to focus on the going concern. Recommendation is that the Trust is a going concern for the next twelve months.

Data is tested data since Covid 19, ZB and LF co-wrote future plans.

SECA report is information collected by PS regarding overall carbon footprint, reporting a reduction on the previous year, due to building management systems and work at St Boniface.

Financial report P3. Surplus/deficit, £1.8m surplus, above our annual target. Following audit, small changes increased to £1.9million. Can go into reserves and be used in the future.

Apply depreciation to fixed assets and pensions, negative £2.7m reported position. (Reported not actual).

Pension adjustment – high inflation has reduced the future obligations, being seen across the industry, auditors not expecting that to flip next year but may be ups and downs.

Net current assets, P5. Pension distortion and Diocese own majority of buildings, negative balance sheet, report on a net current asset. £8.3 million, improvement of £1.4m. Coming through cash, substantial accruals on completion of Harmonisation and support staff payments, that is already included. Good position to be in but accounts are artificially high.

Revenue reserves increased to £8.2m, designated reserves for the first time, £703 000 projects are committed, and work has not yet started, not building up reserves and sitting on money, last year capital reserves have been fully spent.

The Board reviewed and considered the statutory accounts alongside the current pupil census data, the three-year budget, and the three year cash flow and have formed the opinion the Trust is a going concern.

Q. If sitting on £8m, are any actions being taken to realise interest income? Board approved an updated Investment Policy, investing small amounts of money while build up an online platform to generate free unrestricted income.

Q. When expect an update. February. Delay based on the set up.

Three key points raised as a going concern. Directors understood and were happy with the going concern.

- **Westcott's Financial Report**

GB highlighted areas of the auditor's report.

- **Westcott's Report to the Board**

GB highlighted there are no red areas and provided the headlines to the Board.

The Board gave their thanks and congratulations to the Team for a successful, clean audit report.

LF explained a huge amount of work for the HR Team and the Finance Team. The Finance Manager joined the Trust one week before Covid and had to work through outstanding challenges to get to where we are today.

GB asked LF to discuss the Fixed Asset Register. Schools hold operational lists of fixed assets, that is collected once a year, auditors have held FAR previously. In reality, a Trust the size of CAST should be managing their own FAR but is a big piece of work. Investigating various digital systems, pulling together a realistic project plan. Will be reviewed at F&R and A&R.

Q. Implications for insurance, how do we know what assets are in school? Schools should be holding school level information.

The Board agreed the Trust was a going concern, based on the information considered.

Interest income update to be provided in February.

Q. Figure? Land and buildings are not owned, fixed assets are IT based which are written off over three years, depreciation doesn't impact the annual revenue position.

Q. How far are we from a unified information system from the Trust? Good visibility of what we purchased, significant improvement in mass purchasing, missing link is the asset tagging across the primaries.

- **A&R Committee Annual Report**

Approved by the A&R Committee. GB reported his conclusion to the Board.

- **Approve Annual Report and Accounts**

GB highlighted the areas that are covered by the report and their responsibilities. The Board approved the Annual Report and Accounts.

- **External Audit Letter of Representation**

Received every year. GB sought confirmation from the CFO, COO and CEO that there were no updates.

- **Approve Letter of Representation**

Letter approved by the Board.

- **Review and Approve External Auditors 2022/23**

First year with Westcott's, significant change. Feedback to the Board is that this has been a professional service, smoother than anticipated, data gaps but to be expected, no concerns in recommending Westcott's for next year.

Proposed by GB as Chair of A&R. The Board approved the recommendation to take to the AGM.

- **Risk Register Review**

Executive summary provided alongside the Risk Register. RCF provided an update to areas within the Risk Register.

One new risk added regarding industrial action. HR guidance created for schools to use.

- **A&R Terms of Reference**

GB introduced the ToFR. The Board approved the A&R ToFR.

A&R covers 18 months, a rolling cycle. AN thanked GB for his work.

Meeting paused at 13.05
Meeting reconvened at 13.35

Governance and Management

- **Link Reports**

The Board approved the Annual Report and Accounts

The Board approved the Letter of Representation

The Board approved the recommendation to be taken to the AGM.

For information

- **Lead Reports**

For information

- **Governance Lead Updates**

Scheme of Delegated Authority

No substantial changes. Will go to AGM for approval.

Schedule of Accountability

Clear documentation for LCBs on when and how they are carrying out their business.

15.

LCB Meeting Management Plan

Follows on from the Schedule of Accountability. ZB explained this document was already in existence, but this version is more detailed. Lead roles from seven to five. Haven't removed any duties but have reassigned to make more sense and support LCBs who are struggling to recruit.

Hope to be in operation from September 2023. Will be asking for a sample of schools to test this new way of working. More prescriptive but schools can still cover their own areas. Not trying to make schools the same, however, governance is a process that needs to be rigorous and robust.

Q. Link Director protocol and can use these documents to ask questions.

Q. Include a quote from the Gospels, the Pope. Initial impact on who we are.

Summer months to provide training for Lead Governors.

The Board approved the Schedule of Accountability, subject to testing and review if required.

Board Annual Self-Review

LP asked for self-review documents to be returned and responses to be collated.

GDPR Director Lead Role

RCF has carried out further review of this, three key areas:

Assurance that the Trust has a knowledgeable DPO and is registered with the ICO.

Annual Data Protection compliance audit. Awaiting latest report for A&R to consider.

The Board approved the ToFR for A&R

The SoDA to be considered at the AGM

The Board approved the Schedule of

Monitoring the risk of data compliance which is covered by the Risk Register.

Accountability, subject to testing

Q. Concerns on compliance, our understanding is different to someone coming in to investigate, one person is accountable – the Director, need to find someone to be proficient. With the audit process, the audit tracker is considered, tweaked section to refer to the compliance checks.

Directors to submit review documents

Q. Seen externally? First format by DPO but aimed at local level, can recheck with DPO.

SH left the meeting at 1.45pm

Board Management Plan

Has been to previous meeting but has not been signed off. The Board approved.

Policies for Approval

- **Admissions Policy, Devon school with nursery – for approval**
- **Admissions Policy, Devon school without nursery – for approval**

RCF to further review the GDPR Lead Role description

Agreed changes to oversubscription criteria, ready for consultation, working on DCC policies, drafting identical policies for other LAs, same format, three versions of oversubscription (no nursery, with a nursery, secondary schools).

Need to have approval and launch public consultation.

The Board approved the policies.

The Board approved the Management Plan

SA and NJ offered their apologies for the AGM

AN invited Directors to the AGM.

- 16.** AN thanked LF for all her work and commitment as Director and CFO, offered his best wishes.

Meeting closed at 1.55pm

The Board approved the Admissions Policies

Future Board Meeting Dates

All meetings to commence at 10.30am at The CAST Offices, Plymouth.

Friday	10 th March 2023	10.30am
Friday	19 th May 2023	10.30am
Friday	21 st July 2023	10.30am