

Minutes of CAST Board meeting held on Friday 10th December 2021
remotely via Zoom from 10.30am

Attendees:	Andy Nicholls (AN)	-	Foundation Director (Chair)
	Sandy Anderson (SA)	-	Foundation Director
	Deacon Richard Edwards (RE)	-	Foundation Director
	Ann Harris (AH)	-	Foundation Director
	Ruth O'Donovan (RO)	-	Foundation Director
	Dan Rogerson (DR)	-	Foundation Director
	Graham Briscoe (GB)	-	Co-opted Director
	Les Robins (LR)	-	Co-opted Director

In Attendance:	Zoe Batten (ZB)	-	CEO
	Laura Fox (LF)	-	CFO
	Rose Colpus-Fricker	-	COO
	Kevin Butlin (KB)	-	Director of Education and Standards
	Sarah Barreto (SB)	-	DSC
	Leah Paiano (LP)	-	Clerk

1. Welcome and Opening Prayer	Decision/Action
AN welcomed all to the meeting. Opening prayer led by RE.	
2. Apologies and Confirmation of Quorum	
Apologies from JV. Quorum met.	
3. Declaration of Interest	
None declared.	
4. Minutes of previous meeting of 8th October 2021	
4.1 Minutes were approved as an accurate record.	Minutes of meeting on 8 th October 2021 were approved.
4.2 Actions	
Status updated on Actions Summary.	
5. Chairs Business	
Members' Agreement and Articles of Association - AN updated the Board to confirm that the Members Agreement had been signed covering the protections for St Mary's, Buckfast and had been put on GovernorHub for Directors' visibility and that the Articles had now been finalised. AN will share the final version of the Articles with LP for circulation. An MOU is in the process of being drafted and will be finalised in the new year covering operational agreements with Buckfast trustees that do not impact on the Articles.	LP to circulate final Articles of Association.
GDPR – AN explained to the Board regarding potential GDPR issues being able to download and print reports from GovernorHub. AN proposed that any reports that referenced people (HR), including the CEO report should all be protected. DR	CEO report and reports containing HR references

confirmed that any information regarding senior and middle leaders should be included. The Board agreed that any report containing HR references including the CEO report would be locked on GovernorHub (able to view but not download and print).

would be locked on GovernorHub.

Director Induction – Following AN’s 1:1 discussions and 360 reviews, the quality of the Director Induction Process was discussed. AN and AH have looked at the Induction Pack and felt it was comprehensive. AN asked RO regarding her induction. She felt it was helpful and having SA as a mentor and accompanying him on a Link Director visit was beneficial. LP will add the Pack to GovernorHub and share with Directors.

LP to add Induction Pack to GovernorHub.

Link Director Role – AN is happy with the revised protocols but is keen to retain the informal link with HTs. ZB updated the Board with the recent open forum session with the LGB Chairs, explaining it was helpful to connect, a fairly good turnout and feedback reflects the appreciation of the Link Director role and connecting the LGB and the Director. The role will still connect with the HT and holds the LGB to account. AH felt Governors are going to really appreciate feeling part of the Board. AN asked if all Link Directors were receiving ESM reports. KB will confirm with ESMs. Link Director Notes of Visits are to be shared with HT and ESM.

KB to ensure all ESM reports are being shared with Link Directors.

Note of Visits to be shared with HT and ESM.

Succession Planning – AN explained that Deacon Richard would be leaving the Trust. RE explained that following recent times, he will be retiring and relocating closer to family. He appreciates his time with the Trust, working with all Directors and will keep CAST in his prayers. AN gave thanks on behalf of the Board to RE for his input and commitment and will be sorry to see him go. RE confirmed he will stay until a replacement is found, depending on the Diocese as Canon Mark is considering replacements and formal links to the Diocese. AN confirmed that PM has also resigned as her personal circumstances have changed and she is unable to commit to the time required to sit on the Board. Academy Ambassadors have not found a replacement for TS yet.

AN to liaise with SA prior to responding to letter.

Letter from St Nicholas CoG – ZB explained she had received a letter addressed to the Board challenging the internal assessment of the school as RI. It was a well thought out letter and has raised issues which require a response. AN will respond to the points regarding communication between the Board and LGB, Link Director roles and awareness of needing an improvement. KB/ZB will need to respond to the operational points of the school being considered as RI. SA (Link Director) asked AN to liaise with him before responding.

KB/ZB to respond to operational points in letter.

6. Chief Executive Officer Update

Questions provided in advance of the meeting:

* CEO Report, page 10. Senior Management Recruitment outlines three key leadership appointment plans. Have these been discussed and agreed in advance with the Diocesan Schools Commissioner; is the DSC actively involved in supporting CAST in its efforts to develop leadership structures and the appointment

of Catholic leaders in these Reserved Posts; have any proposals for Interim appointments, that may be of Non-Catholics, been raised with the DSC and advance approval from the Bishop been sought before plans are developed?

ZB confirmed she had been working closely with SB and Canon Mark and had discussed the interim solution, which would provide time to consider the viability of the schools. RE referred to a previous situation where an interim solution became permanent. ZB explained that was a different situation and these schools are fragile schools, in Torbay and that it would be wrong to employ someone when there could be potential closures. SB confirmed it was particularly sensitive regarding future viability, could advertise for a position for schools that may not be viable, there are concerns regarding timing and staff had had an interim position already but the schools were too fragile. RE thanked ZB and SB for the background information and asked about the previous interim timescales. ZB confirmed she would need to liaise with HR regarding that. RE asked to return to this outside of the meeting.

* DES Report, page 28. Academic Targets. RE targets and attainment were to be included in the academic reporting from September. When will we see the first data being reported? Reference is made to Reading, Writing, etc, but no reference to RE. KB confirmed that RE targets and assessments will be included in the new Insight systems, the data window closes today.

* Minutes of the last E&S Committee, that due to an admin error I was not notified of and could not attend, refer to discussions about the recruitment, appointment and retention of Catholic teachers, particularly for the teaching of RE but also to enhance the Catholic Life aspect of all our schools. It was noted that a report on this would be submitted to the Board, when will that happen as there is no reference to it in the week's papers? KB confirmed this was included in Section 4 of the DoE report to E&S but asks RE to advise if more is required. KB is happy to work with RCF and the HR Team to evidence the recruitment of Catholic teachers. RE felt there should be a measure for all schools, an important view for the Board.

* There is an excellent detailed list of the status and current Trust grade. Of the schools listed the ones causing the greatest concerns are:

St Boniface College
St Joseph's Newton Abbot
St Mary's and St. Joseph's Wool
Our Lady and St Patrick Teignmouth
St Mary's Poole

What needs to be done to turn these schools around from a declining performance to an improving one?

KB – St Boniface, priority improvement project being funded by DfE for the second year and structural changes are being made to oversee the strategic aims of the school. SA asked what else is needed, as five years since the Inadequate rating. AN felt that there two issues – now and the long-term issues, having sat in on an LGB meeting there needs to be a working group to focus on this in the new year if ZB and KB agree. KB confirmed the

ZB to liaise with HR and RE regarding previous interim positions.

KB to work with RCF and HR Team to evidence Catholic teacher recruitment.

medium and long-term plans are in place, highly focussed support plan is in place currently but the largest issue is the structure. KB gave details of the difficulties faced and when the support package ends at Easter there may be cost implications to drive the school forward. AN the short-term focus is on the structure and wellbeing of the Exec Head and the Board should regroup to discuss the long-term position. GB felt there was a lot of information in the report and it is the up to management to address as it is operational. DR the Vision of the Trust is to ensure a Catholic education is being delivered and of a particular standard and feel uncomfortable that children have experienced five years of secondary education that is not of the standard it should be. SA felt that the Board should meet to discuss this at a separate time.

KB – St Joseph’s, Newton Abbot, viability issues, falling pupil numbers, reduced leadership in school, HT under enormous pressure with increased teaching time and reduced SENDCo time. The Trust has reduced the financial requirements in order for the school to have more money to focus on school improvement. KB felt it was like the HT would be lost this year, need to balance the financials with school improvement, double RI school but improvements have been recognised.

KB – St Mary’s and St Joseph’s, Wool, in 2020 went from Outstanding to RI. It is vulnerable, not making progress, excellent ESM is challenging the school and effecting change. KB and ESM had a review day with clear actions and frank conversations regarding the capacity within the school.

KB - OLSP, Teignmouth, current Exec Head is moving on which has unsettled staff. The new Exec Head will need to develop the culture and alignment with the Trust, staff turnover has been an issue, the ESM is delivering difficult messages. AN asked KB to continue this discussion at E&S. SA it is the responsibility of the Board to address the challenges as more than operational.

The Board discussed the agenda, feeling there should either be a business focus or standards focus for each meeting as there was too much information included in the pack this time. AN will revisit the Board cycle and agenda.

AN to revisit the Board cycle and agenda.

RE expressed concern over the Trust’s current situation with many operational issues and not having the capacity to address them. He explained it was not a criticism of ZB, KB and the staff on the ground. ZB gave a detailed picture of the challenges faced by all schools – reintegration of the curriculum around Covid, staff absence and fatigued staff, ongoing pressures, financial impacts, ability to move forward at pace, Ofsted framework, twenty-five Ofsted live schools, many pressures being acutely felt. KB explained the list of vulnerable schools needs to be kept in context, St Boniface is a very different situation to the other schools, majority of schools show that staff have enabled them to move forward, financial situation makes it challenging but doesn’t apply to all vulnerable schools highlighted, the RSC was complimentary about the offer. AN felt from a Board perspective, there were two key issues: St Boniface, and Priory and SMC. AN asked for AH to focus on this in E&S. AH highlighted the issue

that KB presented the Board with information that hadn't been discussed at E&S, due to timings.

* The visibility of Plymouth CAST with parents is almost non-existent - What recommendations are being made to address this?

* The return of Questionnaires was very poor - Why? What should be done to ensure that a better return is made? AN surveys are included in the pack for an in-depth look along with RCF's summary. AN asked for a follow up action plan and for RCF to bring to the next meeting. AN agreed the questions raised were valid ones.

* The heat-map needs to be down-loadable - I cannot read it as part of the Gov.Hub. AN the heatmap will be discussed later in the meeting, Agenda Item 9.1.

* Insight is an extremely powerful aid to Heads and line management in monitoring and developing their schools. There should be a MAT version of the reports to enable the board to carry out its monitoring function. When will this be available together with training? KB explained Insight was introduced this year, to ensure all schools had an effective reporting system, the data window closes today, and reports will be generated for E&S in January, KB confirmed he has no issue with the Board having access if they wish. SA confirmed he had spoken to Insight and there are reports designed for MAT Boards. KB reiterated the data window had not closed and that reports will be provided to E&S.

* It was agreed at the last Board meeting that ESMs would share their NOV's with Link Directors. Has this been arranged? Already discussed.

* The Trust aims to be carbon neutral by 2030. How does using TDA for estates work in the East fit with this aspiration? Value for money seems to be an issue since schools report that by the time TDA have travelled they have a short day. RCF explained that TDA are investing in electric vehicles, the contract makes provision for VFM and the Trust does not pay for travelling time. RCF will discuss the expectations with staff.

* The Parent Survey reveals a lack of real understanding of the Trust. A range of strategies are suggested in the documentation distributed. Where do we start? What are the top three strategies? When will they happen? Just to give a context, how many parents replied? Already discussed.

* The report on the disposal of St Catherine's, Wimborne doesn't make it clear who holds the £469k received for the playing fields. Could someone explain? LF explained that the land was leased to the Trust by Dorset Council on a peppercorn rent. There was no money to move, effectively a paper exercise.

* The difficulty of recruiting Foundation Governors is evident in almost every school. What is happening to support LGBs? The LGBs have met with ZB and AH, a range of strategies have been discussed – well connected to parishes, lots of advertising, raised with Diocese and potentially a letter from Bishop Mark encouraging support in local communities. SB confirmed the

RCF to create an action plan and bring to the February Board meeting.

RCF to discuss expectations of staff regarding TDA.

letter has been drafted and will go to all schools, asking for support. ZB is continuing to look at other structures of local governance and the MAT review will look at this area, high quality local representation. AH was pleased to hear the Bishop was supporting. GB questioned if having an LGB for every school was right or should clusters be considered.

* How is the updated national autism strategy being aligned with our SEND strategy and who has the lead for that. There was no mention of this in Suzi Franklin's report. KB has spoken to Suzi Franklin, and this has been picked up as part of her ongoing focused work including the SENDCo network, high level audit of pupils, attainment, attendance, specific focus on autism and training on autism awareness. AN asked if the SEND Strategy would be updated to reflect this. KB confirmed once all the findings have been pulled together, at the end of the academic year.

RCF explained that some schools are suffering significant pressures from staff absences due to Covid self-isolation and some Trusts are limiting or withholding pay when voluntarily unvaccinated staff are absent, there is possibly scope for pay arrangements but would need legal advice. SA asked the size of the problem and the amount of teacher time being lost. KB confirmed it is a small problem, only raised by one HT. The Board agreed to keep this under review, if required.

7. Safeguarding

KB confirmed the Safeguarding forms are being returned. There were two incidents to report. An eighteen-month-old child at Orchard Nursery was dropped by a member of staff. There has been a full investigation which has resulted in a disciplinary. It has concluded this week but no further details at this stage. The incident has been reported to Ofsted and they are satisfied with the Trust's actions. The outcome will be reported to the LA, and they will report to Ofsted. A Reception child at St Mary's, Falmouth attended an after-school disco but was able to leave the school grounds and was found and brought back to school by another parent. Paul Stewart will carry out the investigation and the procedures have been changed already. The parents have reported this to Ofsted and as the school is Ofsted live it may be included in an inspection. The likelihood of this happening again has been reduced. GB was concerned that he had not been notified of the second incident as H&S Lead Director. RE asked about the mechanism for sharing the outcome with all schools. KB confirmed that all schools were requested to review procedures, to ensure they were fit for purpose, and it has been tabled as a care study at the next DSL network.

8. Schools of Concern

LF's paper was presented for information. Decisions have been taken at F&R. Budgets are set at 1.5% surplus and schools that have requested support are considered on a case-by-case basis. The wider position of the full year will be known in due course. The paper details the risk. St Catherine's, Bridport has a

challenging budget for next year but is being managed by SELT and the school currently. AN asked if all were happy with the decisions taken by F&R. The Board agreed.

The Board agreed with the decisions taken by the F&R Committee.

10. Consultation on reduction of PAN at St. Boniface's College

RCF thanked the Board for allowing a verbal update for approval and explained that a report was not possible as based on meetings this week with the RSC and LGB. The proposal is to reduce the PAN from 136 to 80. This was attempted twelve months ago but RCF was not able to evidence the consultation had taken place. The decision was approved by the LGB in 2019 but with the new SoDA, the decision to vary admission arrangements lies with the Board. RCF proposed the six-week consultation is carried out now, to reconsult for the 23/24 Admissions Arrangements. The Board approved the proposal.

The Board approved the consultation and PAN reduction at St Boniface

11. Consultation on removal of Sixth Form at St. Boniface's College

RCF explained this needs to be considered as in breach of the funding arrangement. There is no provision within St Boniface's College. Need to submit a significant change for approval to the Advisory Board in March. Boys are entitled to continue their education at Notre Dame, the RSC stated need to remain compliant with funding agreement as the boys are on roll at Notre Dame and not St Boniface. It is essential for the Trust to manage the PR to ensure boys can continue their education. The consultation to close is a significant change process and there would also need to be a consultation to amend the Notre Dame admission arrangements to admit the St Boniface boys to the Sixth Form which needs Board approval for these processes. The Board discussed the current arrangements for Sixth Form and asked RCF to work with the RSC regarding other routes to ensure compliance with funding arrangements.

RCF to liaise with the RSC for options to become compliant.

12. Audit and Risk

12.1 Update from Chair of Audit and Risk Committee

DR asked for any questions. DR was grateful to F&R for attended the audit feedback. There were no questions.

12.2 H&S Incident Report

RCF referenced the incident at the Nursery but there was no paper.

12.3 H&S Report

RCF asked for any questions. The H&S minutes were not available for the last Board meeting but have since been approved by the H&S Committee. There were no questions.

12.4 Internal and External Audit Reports

AN asked for comments and questions. GB confirmed all actions from the internal audit review and KIDD are entered onto the Audit Tracker and monitored by the A&R Committee. SA questioned the Bishop Fleming statement "performed a limited assurance and don't have sufficient evidence on financial regularity". DR explained they have carried out the usual process

and the language used is legal wording with a caveat they haven't carried out a deep dive. GB confirmed the requirements of the ESFA changed, that all auditors work to, they do the work but not as deep as previous years. AN confirmed the Board had reviewed and were happy with the reports.

The Board were happy with the Audit reports.

12.5 Statutory Accounts

AN asked the Board if they were happy with the accounts. GB reminded those present they were approving the financial reports and for AN to sign on our behalf. AN thanked GB for the reminder. The Board approved the Statutory Accounts.

The Board approved the Statutory Accounts.

13. Education and Standards

13.1 Update from Chair of Education and Standards

AH explained the next E&S meeting is in January, last meeting was October 15th.

13.2 Draft Minutes

Strands from the minutes: Notre Dame and St Boniface, SEND and detrimental effects of teaching HTs and reduced SENDCo time and KS2 outcomes. There were no questions.

14. Finance and Resources

14.1 Update from Finance and Resources Committee

14.2 Draft Minutes

The minutes were in the pack and there were no questions.

14.3 Management Accounts to October 2021

LF presented the accounts for September and October, accruals are going in/out, income chosen to roll forward in the accounts as in receipt of recovery funding and tutoring funding which has not been budgeted for, a strong picture but this will level out as those funding streams end. LF flagged the underspend in teaching which was budgeted for the 2.5% inflation. This will be redirected within the budget for the harmonisation project. SA had asked a previous question about the 2.5% teacher inflation and the actual amount. LF confirmed this as £451 151 which will be ringfenced for harmonisation. SA thanked LF. No further questions.

15. Governance and Management

15.1 SoDA – approved out of Committee

15.2 Governor Handbook

AH confirmed an early draft was circulated and she has been working on it and will circulate in due course. AN felt a good set of documents were in place.

15.3 LGB Chairs Appraisal – For Information

15.4 Governor Checklist – For Information

16. Lead Director Reports

RE and Catholic Life Report

RE and SB to lead on this. A joint report for the Board, no written report but will be when the data has been finalised. RE updated the Board regarding Canonical Inspections: Cathedral was good, very pleasing and testament to work of staff, Priory was RI, second time, not a surprise based on pre-assessments but indicates how Canonical Inspections are going to be a challenge to MATs. SB updated the Board that she was meeting with two potential Directors on Monday and explained the National Schools Singing Program which the Bishop supports. There are various grants available, and SB detailed the success criteria for the project, an exciting and beneficial program for music. Free training and resources from Rainbows for loss counselling for schools in Plymouth. SB updated that Canon Mark had visited schools and there were some real strengths and lots of evidence, need to be aware of the funding available. Canonical Inspections have a five-year cycle. If looking like RI in Ofsted, likely to be RI for Canonical Inspections. If a school achieves less than Good, the inspection cycle moves to every three years. A double RI school means there is a cost to monitor and an implication for extra support. The grant is only given every five years, £550 and doesn't cover the cost of the inspectors. SB gave examples from recent inspections and discussed the importance of RE and Catholic Life featuring on the SIP and must be a priority for all schools and an agenda item for all Board meetings.

17. Policy Review

17.1 Allegations Against Staff

17.2 Local Government Pension Scheme Discretions Policy

17.3 Governor Induction Policy

17.4 Governor Visits Policy

17.5 Plymouth CAST Exclusions Policy

AN asked if all policies were approved. SA wanted to clarify a point on the Exclusions Policy regarding ESM should not be a member of the panel but Trust School Improvement Team should, does it mean ESM but not school's ESM. KB confirmed this was a significant change due to a conflict of interest as ESM could be supporting HT in lead up to any exclusion so is not part of the panel.

All policies were approved by the Board.

All policies on the agenda were approved by the Board.

9. Strategic Goal Monitoring

9.1 Heat Map

AN asked for comments on the Heat Map. SA not possible to read it so can't comment. GB was unable to read it and AN feels it doesn't reflect the position of the Trust. AN felt the Board needed a separate session for the Heat Map as not in a position to use in earnest in this meeting. AN requested Directors to forward comments ahead of a meeting to be arranged in January.

Directors to forward questions or comments to LP on the Heat Map.

9.2 Trust SEF – not covered

9.3 CAST Monitoring and Tracking Framework – not covered

LP to arrange a meeting in early January to discuss Heat Map.

18. Date of Next Meeting

AN next Board meeting is 25th February but is during half term. Need to re-arrange. LP to send a Doodle Poll with alternative dates.

Meeting closed at 1.05pm.

LP to confirm date of next meeting.