

**Hope Learning Trust Board of Trustees**

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2021 at 6.00pm  
Via Zoom

**Present:** Tony Myers (Chair of Trustees) Andrew Simpkin  
Philippa Gowland Olivia Seymour  
Julie McGonigle

**In Attendance:** Helen Winn (CEO, Hope Learning Trust)  
Wendy Munro (COO, Hope Learning Trust)  
Helen Dowds (Executive Principal, Hope Learning Trust) [to 7.30pm]  
Allyson Buckton (Headteacher, Forest of Galtres Anglican Methodist Primary Academy) [to 7.30pm]  
Jess Swarbrick (Governance Advisor & Clerk)

		Action
1.	<p><b><u>Welcome &amp; Opening Prayer</u></b> The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, which opened with a prayer.</p>	
2.	<p><b><u>Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest</u></b> Apologies were received, with consent, from Ian Thomson and Karen Osborne.</p> <p>In relation to discussions regarding City of York Council (CYC), Philippa Gowland declared an interest as a CYC employee. In relation to discussions regarding the Diocese of York, Olivia Seymour declared an interest as a Diocesan employee.</p>	
3.	<p><b><u>Minutes from the meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2021, Action Plan and Matters Arising</u></b> Previously distributed. The minutes were agreed to be a true and accurate record.</p> <p>With reference to the Action Plan:</p> <p>1. The CEO agreed to raise the question of removal of ballot places with the Diocese of York before asking the Principal of Manor to produce a paper for consideration and approval by the Board. Completed. To be discussed under item 6.1.</p> <p>2. The CEO agreed to forward potential meeting dates (for sign-off of the Teacher Assessed Grades protocols) to the Governance Advisor, for circulation to Trustees. It was agreed that members of the Standards Committee should attend if possible, but the invitation should be extended to all Trustees, to ensure enough attendees to support a robust scrutiny and debate before approval. The CEO advised that due to time pressures and the requirement for all headteachers to submit a signed centre policy for the TAG process, she had overseen this. It was noted that a further update on TAGs would be provided under item 8.</p> <p>3. The Governance Advisor agreed to work with the COO to produce a summary list of agreed actions from the Oversight Committee which could be shared with Trustees. Completed.</p> <p>4. The COO and Governance Advisor agreed to review the Complaints Policy and update the wording as appropriate under section 3 to ensure clarity. Completed. It was noted that the finalised Complaints Policy had now been shared with all schools and published on the Trust and school websites.</p> <p><b>Trustees asked for a further update on Year 11 students and bridging courses.</b> The CEO advised that formal lessons and timetabling for Year 11 students would end at half term. After</p>	

	<p>this, a series of activities had been set up in each school, some on site and some online. These included careers interviews, as well as preparation for A-levels and next steps in their study and education. The CEO advised that schools had also been in contact with post-16 providers. She noted that she had provided feedback to the DfE on the proposed plans for Year 11 students and they been pleased with what had been put in place. The CEO advised that attendance for Year 11 was tracking slightly lower than other year groups at present, but not significantly.</p> <p>There were no other matters arising.</p>	
4.	<p><b><u>Report on Chair's Action</u></b></p> <p>The following items were noted as having been approved using Chair's Action since the previous meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Update to the Exclusion Policy <i>Covid addendum</i> to reflect the extension to the Covid arrangements. It was noted that Appendix B only had been updated, and approved via Chair's Action on 14<sup>th</sup> April 2021.</li> <li>* Approval of the appointment of Heather Wright to the seconded post of Trust Director of English (5<sup>th</sup> May 2021).</li> </ul>	
5.	<p><b><u>Committee Updates</u></b></p> <p>Minutes from each of the committees had been circulated with the agenda.</p> <p><b><i>5.1 Resources Committee – 26<sup>th</sup> April 2021</i></b>  <b><i>With reference to the COO report regarding a number of complaints at Barlby High School, Trustees asked whether there was an underlying issue relating to this.</i></b> The CEO advised that all complaints had been addressed in-line with the Trust procedure, and these were also backed up with a lessons learned review. She noted that two complaints had also been escalated to the ESFA, who had checked the processes followed and had found no issue with these. The CEO advised that trends and patterns were monitored in terms of complaints, in order to identify any recurring issues which may be arising in schools.</p> <p><b><i>5.2 Standards Committee – 10<sup>th</sup> May 2021</i></b>  Helen Dowds reported a factual inaccuracy in the minutes, noting that Archbishop Sentamu Academy (ASA) had moved to a two year Key Stage 4 in September 2020, not September 2021. The Governance Advisor agreed to amend the minutes accordingly.</p> <p><b><i>With reference to TAGs, Trustees were conscious of the significant increase in pressure on staff and headteachers, and asked what additional support was in place in the Trust for this.</i></b> The CEO agreed that the situation had been incredibly stressful, with an increased workload as well as pressures of time and process. She advised that the steering group led by Helen Dowds had established tight systems and structures for all schools, and any concerns of staff were fed back to this group, providing a collaborative forum in which to discuss and determine consistent solutions. The CEO advised that the group had also been effective throughout this process in pre-empting challenges before issues arose, and ensuring that processes were in place to address them. The CEO advised that an additional training day had also been set at the end of this half term to allow staff time to complete the process. Moderation would take place across the whole Trust for all subjects, and the CEO noted the enthusiasm of staff who had been asked to take part in this. She advised that staff involved in moderation would be paid for this time, or given a day off in lieu before the end of the summer term.</p> <p><b><i>Trustees were encouraged with the work which had been done by the CEO and steering group, led by Helen Dowds, in ensuring that planning and preparation had been effective to address the formal Ofqual requirements when these were published.</i></b> Helen Dowds highlighted</p>	

power of having a group of colleagues being able to come together, a forum to ask questions and share practice which had minimised the workload in each centre.

**Trustees recorded their formal thanks to all staff involved in this process for their commitment and hard work in the preparation of TAGs.** The CEO advised that she would be emailing all staff at the end of this half term to thank them for their work during this period, and she would pass on the gratitude of Trustees as well at this point.

**With reference to the curriculum vision which had been shared at the Standards Committee meeting, it was noted that the first paragraph did not mention physical development.**

**Trustees asked whether this had been missed out for a particular reason, or whether this was an oversight.** The CEO advised that an amendment was needed to the values at the start of the curriculum vision, to change this to the newly agreed Hope Sentamu Learning Trust (HSLT) vision – “life in all its fullness, a place to thrive”. The CEO agreed to review the statements to include a clearer reference to physical development as well.

### **5.3 Distinctiveness & Personal Development Committee – 5<sup>th</sup> May 2021**

Philippa Gowland, committee chair, asked for feedback from Trustees on the question of a prayer offer from Trustees to schools. She advised that this had been discussed at the meeting, and it had been agreed that careful management was needed on how to proceed, to ensure that it was perceived in the right way and was not considered proselytising. Philippa noted that it had been suggested that the Chaplaincy might be a more appropriate vehicle for offering this type of support, but asked for comments and thoughts from Trustees on this matter.

The CEO advised that Simon Barber, Principal of Manor CE Academy, was leading on Christian distinctiveness with colleagues in the Trust, and it would be helpful to involve him in this discussion along with other church school headteachers. She agreed that communications around this matter needed to be considered carefully.

**ACTION: It was agreed that the idea of a prayer offer across the Trust should be picked up with Simon Barber and the CEO, along with Philippa as Distinctiveness Chair, and brought back to the next committee meeting for further discussion.**

HW / PG

It was suggested that providing a list of calendar events and/or pressure points may be a helpful pointer in terms of focusing prayer, however requesting prayer pointers from individuals was a different matter. It was also agreed that communicating this on an elective basis rather than across the whole Trust may be appropriate, so that it went out only to those who were open and willing to be part of it.

### **5.4 LGC Chairs' Meeting – 24<sup>th</sup> March 2021**

A copy of the presentation on the future of governance had been circulated with the agenda for information. This included details of the development of the assurance model, as well as information on the plans to pool reserves and GAG funding centrally. The CEO reported that the meeting had been well attended and overall positive, and there had been a number of useful questions raised. She advised that she had subsequently had individual discussions with a number of LGC Chairs following the meeting, to clarify points and concerns raised.

The CEO noted that Sentamu Academy Learning Trust (SALT) had been pooling school reserves for some time, meaning that changes to LGC practice in this area would be fairly minimal. She added that in some of the LGCs in Hope, there were still additional sub-“committees” or working groups in place, in addition to the formal LGC meetings. The CEO advised that moving forward, the aim would be to have the formal LGC meeting only, strengthened by governor visits to school to triangulate the information provided by the headteacher. She emphasised

	that any discussions and governor monitoring needed to be evidenced through LGC minutes, so that the level of scrutiny was recorded properly.	
6.	<b><u>Updates from Local Governing Committees</u></b>	
	<p><b>6.1 Items raised by the LGC for the attention of the Trust Board</b> Trustees noted the points raised from LGCS for the attention of the Board, which had been circulated with the agenda.</p> <p><b>Barlby High School</b> Governors had asked for further guidance on the Future of Governance presentation. The CEO confirmed that a version of the presentation including a voice-over had now been circulated to all governors.</p> <p><b>Forest of Galtres Anglican Methodist Primary Academy</b> A concern had been raised regarding the name of the newly merged Trust from September, specifically the inclusion of the name “Sentamu”. The CEO advised that she had discussed with Allyson Buckton, Headteacher at Forest of Galtres, how the governor who had raised the query wanted this to be addressed. Allyson noted that she had discussed with the CEO the vision and values work which was in development ahead of the merger, and that a further explanation of this may help to placate any concerns around the new name.</p> <p><b><i>It was noted that both Hope and SALT had been named after a former Archbishop, and moving forward it was appropriate to retain both of these names, reflecting the history of both Trusts.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>ACTION: The CEO agreed to contact the governor at Forest of Galtres directly to feedback Trustee comments, and respond to any further concerns regarding the new Trust’s name.</i></b></p> <p><b>Manor CE Academy</b> With reference to concerns raised regarding future governance structures within the LGC, the CEO reported that she had met with the Chair and Principal today and had confirmed that sub-“committees” or working groups were not needed in future. She noted that the discussion had been really positive, and the Chair was supportive of the vision for governance moving forward.</p> <p><b>Poppleton Ousebank Primary Academy</b> Governors had raised a query regarding the continued payment of the catering contract during the wider school closures over the year due to Covid. The COO advised that the Cabinet Office had released a procurement note in March 2020 which had made clear that contracting authorities in the public sector needed to continue to pay their contracts. She further advised that as a Trust, it had been decided that top-up payments would be made for any staff who had been furloughed. The COO advised that the Principal at Poppleton Ousebank had made the decision to go outside of the wider Trust strategy for supplying food during the wider closures, and had kept the school kitchen open and providing hot food for all groups in school, which had led to a £12,000 overspend on catering.</p> <p><b><i>ACTION: The COO agreed to feed back information on catering contracts to the LGC Chair at Poppleton Ousebank via email.</i></b></p> <p>Trustees also noted the concerns and strong words expressed by governors at Poppleton Ousebank around the pooling of reserves and GAG funding. The CEO advised that she had had a number of discussions with the LGC Chair regarding this, and he had been incredibly supportive of the direction of travel and understood why the Trust was moving forward in this way.</p>	<p>HW</p> <p>WM</p>

	<p><b>Vale of York Academy</b> Governors had raised concerns regarding overspend on the budget due to costs relating to Covid. The COO advised that she and the Finance Director had discussed the budget with the Principal in detail, and had looked at specific areas where this had been affected by Covid.</p> <p><b>ACTION: The COO agreed to feed back discussions around the Vale of York budget to the LGC Chair.</b></p> <p><b>6.1.1 Manor CE Academy Ballot Places</b> A proposal regarding the removal of ballot places from the Manor CE Academy Admissions Policy had been circulated with the agenda, following discussion at the last Board meeting. The CEO confirmed that she had also consulted with the Diocese of York on this proposal and they had made no objections.</p> <p><b>APPROVED: Trustees unanimously approved the proposal to remove the ballot places criteria from the Manor CE Academy Admissions Policy for 2023/24.</b></p> <p>The CEO confirmed that this would be taken forward in time for its inclusion in the relevant admissions policy consultation in the autumn term.</p>	WM
	<p><b>6.2 LGC Membership Update</b> There were no updates or appointments for approval.</p>	
7.	<p><b><u>Trust Development Plan Update</u></b> Previously distributed. The CEO reported that the Trust continued to make good progress against the development plan, despite the additional pressures of the TAGs process, continuing Covid restrictions and the merger. She advised that a RAG rating column had now been added into the plan, in order to show progress and impact for each action and priority. The CEO advised that she also planned to include a section within the impact report on curriculum, as quality here along with compliance had a direct impact on other priorities, and it therefore needed to be clearly shown as a focus at the front of the plan.</p> <p>Trustees agreed that the colour coding was very helpful, and enabled them to pick out areas for question and challenge. It was further agreed that the brief explanation of why points had been RAG rated in a certain way was also very useful. The CEO noted that further fine-grading of the RAG rating was also planned, in order to demonstrate where judgements were borderline, with descriptors for different areas.</p> <p><b>With reference to the impact page, Trustees asked whether more detail could be included here around values and wellbeing, based on the success criteria already set out in the plan.</b> The CEO advised that more detail could be added, but there was a difficulty in measuring impact in terms of wellbeing and ethos in a quantifiable way. She proposed using the personal development and wellbeing sections of the school Self-Evaluation Frameworks (SEFs) as a starting point for this. The CEO also noted the need for a standardised survey across the Trust for pupils, parents and staff, with a focus on wellbeing, as a way to measure impact and success.</p>	
8.	<p><b><u>CEO Report</u></b> Previously distributed. The CEO reported a number of updates for Trustees which had not been confirmed at the time the report was published.</p> <p><b>Summer Schools</b> The CEO advised that the DfE had confirmed funding for summer schools, specifically targeting pupils moving from Year 6 to Year 7. She advised that she had asked for headteachers' views</p>	

on this, as the running of programmes over the summer would be voluntary. In Scarborough, both Graham and George Pindar Schools would like to run a full summer school for a week for the whole cohort, whilst other schools were looking at running this for the most vulnerable pupils or those concerned about transition. The CEO advised that she had discussed with the Chair of the Board the element of financial risk of running a programme which children did not then attend. However, she advised that because of the overall funding formula, it was felt that this risk could be mitigated.

The CEO noted that there was no significant evidence to show that summer schools made an impact on students' progress, though there was no data as to how children would respond after a 16 month pandemic. She noted that it was positive that schools were keen to run the programmes, and would be looking at bringing in external providers, for example around sport and drama, to support this.

***Recent Announcement from the Secretary of State***

The CEO referred to her report, which included an update on the recent announcement by the Secretary of State that he wanted all schools to be part of strong trusts as a family of schools. The CEO noted that there was currently no definition of what a strong trust looked like.

The CEO advised that as part of this, the Trust had taken up the offer of a National Leader of Education (NLE) to work at MAT level with schools within a specific category. She noted that there were eligible schools within both SALT and Hope, and she had therefore requested double the support for this. The CEO also advised that she had requested that the NLE assigned to the Trust be experienced in complex and large mergers, and also that they had worked in schools in challenging circumstances.

Questions were invited on the CEO's Report.

***With reference to the consultation on a new set of values, Trustees asked whether these would flow from the newly merged vision for the new Trust.*** The CEO confirmed that the new vision ("Life in all its fullness – a place to thrive") had been agreed by Trustees on the Oversight Committee. She advised that a consultation would go out to all pupils, staff, trustees and governors to choose three values for the Trust. This would then be launched at the point of merger at the start of the next academic year. ***Trustees agreed that this was a good way to encourage engagement and collaboration at all levels.***

***Trustees asked for feedback on the recent Ofsted monitoring visit to Compass Academy.*** The CEO reported that the school had done very well. As with the other alternative provision Aspire Academy, behaviour, student engagement and relationships at Compass were incredibly strong. The CEO noted that there were some lessons to be learned around articulation of the curriculum which had been highlighted during the visit, but that the Trust were aware of the need for a culture shift in this area in all schools. The CEO also noted that the HMI had observed lessons remotely, and had been rigorous in their judgement. Overall, the feedback was that Compass was on track to get a judgement of Good at their next inspection, which was really positive.

The CEO highlighted that a key theme around reading at secondary school level was also coming through. She advised that the integrated programme Read Write Inc (RWI) was being set up for all primary schools from September, with a further focus on reading in upper primary and secondary moving forward.

***With reference to curriculum intent, Trustees raised a question about whether there needed to be a clearer statement about the holistic development of the whole child, to hold the***



**Trustees asked whether there was any risk of non-compliance by granting an extension to the review period.** The COO advised that in relation to GDPR, all policies requested for an extension had been checked against the Brexit information. Referring to the HR policies, she confirmed that there were no legislative changes which needed to be taken into account. The COO therefore confirmed that there was no risk to compliance in the requested deferment of review.

**APPROVED: Trustees approved the proposed extension to the review date for the following policies:**

Data Protection (GDPR) Policy  
Freedom of Information Policy  
Subject Access Request Policy and Procedures  
Trust Privacy Notices  
Whistleblowing Policy  
Disciplinary Policy  
Grievance Policy and Procedures, plus Manager's Toolkit  
Appraisal Policy  
Capability Policy  
Pay Policy (returning to JNCC for further consultation)  
Code of Conduct  
Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedures  
Restructuring and Redundancy Policy and Procedures

The following policies had been circulated with the agenda and were presented for approval.

#### **10.1 Equality Objectives**

Previously distributed. Reviewed at Distinctiveness Committee. It was noted that Philippa Gowland had agreed to review some minor refinements around wording with the Inclusion Lead.

**APPROVED: Trustees approved the policy subject to the above note. It was agreed that any significant changes arising from this review could be approved via Chair's Action.**

#### **10.2 Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy**

Previously distributed. Reviewed at Distinctiveness Committee. It was noted that Philippa Gowland had agreed to review some minor refinements around wording with the Inclusion Lead.

**APPROVED: Trustees approved the policy subject to the above note. It was agreed that any significant changes arising from this review could be approved via Chair's Action.**

#### **10.3 Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions and Administering Medication Policy**

Previously distributed. Reviewed at Standards Committee. It was noted that before implementation, the Trust would ensure that all staff had received appropriate training as required in line with the policy.

**APPROVED: Trustees approved the policy.**

#### **10.4 Managing Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy**

Previously distributed. The COO reported that the updated policy had been circulated to school leaders to review in terms of ease of following instruction. She noted that the SALT Board of Trustees had highlighted that the policy did not mention claims against Central Team members or governors. As a result of this, the COO advised that she would add in a reference table listing the category of staff or volunteer, and who to report to.

	<p><b>APPROVED: Trustees approved the policy subject to the above note.</b></p> <p><b>Trustees asked how the volume of documents such as these was managed in relation to supply staff, particularly those working short-term.</b> The COO noted that setting out steps around this as part of the induction process would be helpful, particularly in relation to key safeguarding information and the process for reporting concerns.</p>	
11.	<p><b><u>Any Other Business</u></b></p> <p>There was no other non-confidential business to report.</p> <p><i>[Helen Dowds and Allyson Buckton left the meeting at 7.30pm]</i></p>	
12.	<p><b><u>Confidential Items</u></b></p> <p><b>12.1 Confidential Minutes from the meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2021</b> Previously distributed. The minutes were agreed to be a true and accurate record.</p> <p><i>The following discussion has been recorded as a separate, confidential minute.</i></p> <p><b>12.2 Oversight Committee Update</b> Trustees noted the summary of discussion and actions from the Oversight Committee meetings held from February to April 2021 which had been previously distributed.</p> <p>The COO noted for the minutes the helpful support which had been provided from the Diocese of York through Claire Graham-Brown with regards to the Articles of Association.</p> <p><i>The following point has been recorded as a separate confidential minute.</i></p>	
13.	<p><b><u>Items / Issues to Report to LGCs</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Trustees received an update on the Teacher Assessed Grades process, the protocols and procedures and the work of staff to support this. Trustees expressed their formal thanks to all staff, school leaders, trust colleagues and the CEO for this huge piece of work.</li> <li>* Trustees noted a number of queries raised by LGCs, and reviewed and responded to these. It was noted that these responses would be communicated to respective LGC Chairs as soon as possible if this had not already been done.</li> <li>* Trustees approved the proposal from Manor CE Academy to remove the ballot places from their admissions criteria for the 2023/24 policy.</li> <li>* Trustees reviewed and discussed updates relating to the Trust Development Plan.</li> <li>* The CEO provided an update on DfE funding for summer schools focused on Year 6 children moving up to secondary school. She outlined how schools in the Trust would be using this funding to run programmes for students over the holidays.</li> <li>* Trustees discussed the work to develop a set of values for the newly merged Hope Sentamu Learning Trust, and the consultation with children and staff from across both trusts to involve them in this process.</li> <li>* Trustees received the 2021 Gender Pay Gap Report and agreed to delegate further scrutiny and discussion on this to the Resources Committee.</li> <li>* The CEO provided an update to Trustees on the merger process.</li> </ul>	
14.	<p><b><u>Dates and Times of Future Meetings</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Wednesday 21st July 2021 at 6pm</li> </ul> <p>2021/22 meeting dates had been circulated for information.</p>	

The meeting closed at 7.45pm

Signed: Tony Myers  
Tony Myers (Chair of the Trust Board)

Date: 21/07/2021

**Action Points from the Hope Learning Trust Board meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2021**

	<i>ACTION</i>	<i>AGENDA ITEM</i>	<i>WHO</i>	<i>WHEN</i>
1.	<i>It was agreed that the idea of a prayer offer across the Trust should be picked up with Simon Barber and the CEO, along with Philippa as Distinctiveness Chair, and brought back to the next committee meeting for further discussion.</i>	5.3	<i>Philippa Gowland, Helen Winn</i>	23/06/2021
2.	<i>The CEO agreed to contact the governor at Forest of Galtres directly to feedback Trustee comments, and respond to any further concerns regarding the new Trust's name.</i>	6.1	<i>Helen Winn</i>	07/06/2021
3.	<i>The COO agreed to feed back information on catering contracts to the LGC Chair at Poppleton Ousebank via email.</i>	6.1	<i>Wendy Munro</i>	07/06/2021
4.	<i>The COO agreed to feed back discussions around the Vale of York budget to the LGC Chair.</i>	6.1	<i>Wendy Munro</i>	07/06/2021
5.	<i>Trustees were asked to consider taking on the role of Pupil Premium Trustee and contact the Chair and CEO to advise.</i>	8	<i>All Trustees</i>	07/06/2021
6.	<i>The Chair and CEO agreed to review suggested dates and venues for a strategy session and circulate this to Trustees.</i>	8	<i>Tony Myers, Helen Winn</i>	07/06/2021