

Hope Learning Trust Board of Trustees

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 21st July 2021 at 6.00pm
Via Zoom

Present: Tony Myers (Chair of Trustees) Olivia Seymour
Philippa Gowland [*left the meeting from 6.30-6.45pm*] Karen Osborne
Ian Thomson

In Attendance: Helen Winn (CEO, Hope Learning Trust)
Wendy Munro (COO, Hope Learning Trust)
Simon Bryan-Smith (Finance Director, Hope Learning Trust) [*to 7.15pm*]
Helen Dowds (Executive Principal, Hope Learning Trust) [*to 7.15pm*]
Allyson Buckton (Headteacher, Forest of Galtres Anglican Methodist Primary Academy) [*to 7.15pm*]
Jess Swarbrick (Governance Advisor & Clerk)

		Action
1.	<u>Welcome & Opening Prayer</u> The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, which opened with a prayer.	
2.	<u>Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest</u> Apologies were received, with consent, from Andrew Simpkin. Julie McGonigle was absent. 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.	
3.	<u>Minutes from the meeting held on 19th May 2021, Action Plan and Matters Arising</u> Previously distributed. The minutes were agreed to be a true and accurate record. With reference to the Action Plan: <i>1. 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. The CEO reported that this action had been progressed through the Distinctiveness Committee, and would be developed and delivered through chaplaincy rather than through Trustees.</i> <i>2. 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. Completed. The Chair noted that one of the suggestions raised through this discussion was to provide clarity on the Trust website about the origin of the names Hope and Sentamu, and their reference to two former Archbishops of York. The CEO added that the Values video which had been shared with children in the Trust did explain how the two names of the trusts would come together.</i> <i>3. The COO agreed to feed back information on catering contracts to the LGC Chair at Poppleton Ousebank via email. Completed.</i> <i>4. The COO agreed to feed back discussions around the Vale of York budget to the LGC Chair. Completed.</i>	

	<p>5. Trustees were asked to consider taking on the role of Pupil Premium Trustee and contact the Chair and CEO to advise. It was noted that Philippa Gowland had expressed an interest in taking on this role, and had agreed to talk to the Chair to discuss what was involved.</p> <p>ACTION: Confirm Pupil Premium Trustee role for start of autumn term.</p> <p>6. The Chair and CEO agreed to review suggested dates and venues for a strategy session and circulate this to Trustees. Completed.</p> <p>With reference to the concerns expressed by Poppleton Ousebank LGC regarding the pooling of reserves and GAG funding, the CEO confirmed that she had discussed this at length with the LGC Chair and he had been very supportive of the situation. She advised that these concerns did now appear to have been resolved.</p> <p>Trustees asked what the plans were for having a standardised survey focusing on wellbeing, and whether this needed to be something which was picked up by the Distinctiveness Committee. The CEO advised that she and the Secondary School Improvement Director would be working with an external company which produced standardised surveys including focus on wellbeing. She advised that pupils, staff and parents/carers would be given the survey in the autumn term to provide a baseline and this would then be repeated on an annual basis.</p> <p>Update on Central Team Restructure The COO shared a copy of a presentation for staff on the new Central Team structure, which had now been confirmed. She advised that she was delighted to confirm that Simon Bryan-Smith would be remaining with the new Trust as Chief Finance Officer. It was noted that other vacancies had now been filled, with interviews for the Facilities Lead taking place the following day. Trustees noted that details of the restructure had been discussed in detail by the Oversight Committee.</p>	PG
4.	<p><u>Report on Chair's Action</u> The following items were noted as having been approved using Chair's Action since the previous meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Appointment of Assistant Vice-Principal at George Pindar School on Monday 24th May 2021 - recommended by the interview panel which included Helen Dowds (Executive Principal), Gerry Swain (Governor) and Philippa Gowland (representing the Board of Trustees). * Approval of Managing Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy 24th June 2021 (attached for information under item 10) 	
5.	<p><u>Committee Updates</u></p> <p>5.1 Resources Committee – 5th July 2021 Minutes from the meeting held on 5th July had been circulated with the agenda for information.</p> <p>Ian Thomson, Resources Committee Chair, provided an update following on from discussions at the meeting regarding a curb on any additional expenditure for the rest of the financial year. He advised that the latest management report for Period 10, indicated that the budget was on track to end the year without a deficit, which was really positive news.</p> <p>5.2 Distinctiveness & Personal Development Committee – 30th June 2021 Minutes from the meeting held on 30th June circulated with the agenda for information.</p> <p>Philippa Gowland, Distinctiveness Committee Chair, remarked on how encouraging the meeting had been, and how much detail had been covered. She highlighted in particular the</p>	

	<p>presentation from Chris Mulqueen on alternative provision at Compass and Aspire Academies, which had been really inspiring.</p> <p>5.3 Standards Committee – 12th July 2021 It was noted that minutes from the meeting held on 12th July would be circulated as soon as they were available. Karen Osborne, Standards Committee Chair, highlighted the progress which had been made over the last year, and the amount of work which had been covered. She also noted that papers being submitted to the committee were now much more data driven and clearly showed outputs and impact over time. It was noted that this meeting had also been attended by Jane Lewis, SALT Trustee, and was the first opportunity for Trustees to look at all schools’ data across both trusts together, which had been really helpful.</p> <p>5.4 LGC Chairs’ Meeting – 24th May 2021 Trustees noted the minutes from the meeting held on 24th May, which had been circulated with the agenda for information.</p>	
6.	<p><u>Approval of 2021/22 Start Budget</u> The start budget presentation (incorporating requirements raised by the Resources Committee following scrutiny on 28th June) and minutes from the Resources Committee meeting held on 28th June had been circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>Trustees noted from the minutes of the Resources Committee, the amount of work which had gone into the scrutiny of the budget. Ian Thomson advised that the most significant issue for consideration was the fact that over the three year projection, Trust reserves were diminishing, which had been raised as a concern by the Resources Committee. Trustees on that committee had therefore asked the CEO and Finance Director to review this forecast and look at what could be done to ensure that over these three years, the budget projection did not drop below reserves level.</p> <p>Ian noted that the budget presented for approval was for Hope Learning Trust, not the merged Hope Sentamu Learning Trust. He advised that following the merger, there would be a lot of work to bring the two budgets together, and monitor these moving forward.</p> <p>Ian highlighted the significant spend within the budget which had been requested by the CEO relating to school improvement and growth strategy. He advised that this was covered within the budget, which should allow the Trust to make positive steps forward in the next year.</p> <p>The Finance Director advised that following scrutiny by the Resource Committee, around £900,000 had been taken out of the start budget over three years – some from school budgets where there was additional contingency and some from the central budget. He advised that in some schools, there were efficiencies to be made which could not be realised within twelve months, but should improve the position in years two and three of the forecast.</p> <p><i>Trustees asked whether there was a clear plan to address the projected deficit, aside from the detail noted above.</i> The CEO advised that she had identified a number of areas where efficiencies could be made, but some of these would need a longer period of time to come through beyond the next twelve months. She advised that currently, although there were parameters in place, schools had autonomy over their budget, whereas the Trust would be moving to a position where all funding was pooled by September 2022. She advised that from that point, budgets would be allocated to schools for what they needed to operate, allowing the Trust to invest in providing central resources as required.</p>	

	<p>APPROVED: Trustees approved the 2021-22 start budget, as recommended by the Resources Committee.</p> <p>Trustees expressed their thanks to the Finance Director, COO and other colleagues for their work in producing the budget.</p>	
7.	<p><u>Clifton Community Library</u></p> <p>A copy of the presentation from City of York Council (CYC) to the Resources Committee had been circulated with the agenda, along with a letter relating to the former Clifton without Junior School site from CYC to the Trust.</p> <p><i>[Philippa Gowland declared an interest in this item, due to her role at CYC, and left the meeting at 6.30pm whilst discussion and decisions took place]</i></p> <p>The COO reminded Trustees of the situation with CYC regarding the Arts Block (former Clifton without Junior site) at Vale of York, noting that previous statements and agreements about development of the land and compensation to the Trust had not been forthcoming. She advised that CYC now wanted to develop the site as a community facility, including a library and community hub. There was also a plan to build a limited amount of social housing on the site. The COO advised that CYC had offered £150,000 no strings attached as a minimum payment to the Trust, with 50% of the net proceeds if this amount was greater.</p> <p>The COO advised that her professional recommendation would be to draw a line under what had happened in the past, and to accept this offer from CYC. She advised that she and the CEO had been working to build relationships with the LA and move on from this issue.</p> <p>Trustees agreed that the situation needed to be brought to a conclusion, and noted that this was a positive way forward for the community as much as for the Trust and the school. Trustees agreed that supporting the proposal would be a good step forward. However, it was also noted that no firm commitment could be given until the proper legal documentation was presented for approval.</p> <p><i>A question was raised as to why the LA's basic needs funding for Manor CE Academy's expansion had been included as part of the letter. Trustees asked whether there was an indication from CYC that if the Trust did not agree to the proposed development of the Clifton site then this funding would not be provided.</i> The COO advised that she had not got that impression, but she agreed that it was strange that the Manor expansion had been included in the letter relating to the Clifton site. She advised that basic needs funding was something that the LA were required to support in any case.</p> <p>The CEO advised that CYC were trying to provide as much concrete information as possible for Trustees to agree to. She noted that an email had been received from CYC to advise that they would be going out to consultation on the site, though they had pushed the date of this back to allow time for Trustees to consider and respond before plans were made public. The Chair advised that Resources Committee Trustees had challenged Maxine Squire, CYC Assistant Director of Education at the meeting on 5th July. The Chair added that the other element which had been discussed at that meeting was a request from CYC to commit to the purchase of land adjacent to Manor and the leasing of this back to the Trust.</p> <p>Trustees agreed that they were supportive of the proposals, but required two separate letters from CYC, one relating to the Clifton site at Vale of York and one relating to Manor's expansion and the purchase of adjacent land.</p>	

	<p>AGREED: Trustees agreed that based on the information provided, they were happy to support a move to the next stage of consultation relating to the development of the Clifton site as a community hub. Trustees further agreed that the offer from CYC needed to be legally enforceable before it could be formally approved.</p> <p>ACTION: The COO agreed to request that two separate letters be provided, along with a draft settlement agreement for Trustees to review.</p> <p>Trustees agreed that when the consultation was made public, it would be helpful for the Trust to respond formally to this, to show that Trustees were supportive of the proposals.</p> <p><i>[Philippa Gowland re-joined the meeting at 6.45pm]</i></p>	WM
8.	<p><u>Updates from Local Governing Committees</u></p>	
	<p>8.1 Items raised by the LGC for the attention of the Trust Board</p> <p>Trustees noted the points raised from LGCS for the attention of the Board, which had been circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>With reference to issues raised by both Manor and Barlby governors regarding the removal of working groups outside of LGC meetings, the CEO reported that she had discussed this with both LGC Chairs. She advised that they were both supportive of the direction of travel, but had asked for more detail on how this might work in practice, particularly still ensuring the right level of scrutiny and challenge.</p>	
	<p>8.2 LGC Membership Update</p> <p>The following re-appointments had been proposed for Trustee approval:</p> <p>Forest of Galtres – Sue van Hout Burton Green / Skelton – Elaine Boyes</p> <p>APPROVED: Trustees approved the re-appointments unanimously.</p>	
9.	<p><u>Trust Development Plan Update</u></p> <p>Previously distributed. The CEO noted that there were still some elements of the development plan which would run up to the end of the academic year, but that a full review would be undertaken in light of the strategic sessions which had taken place with Trustees and headteachers in the last week. The CEO noted that the plan reflected the enormous amount of work done and progress made over what had been an incredibly challenging year.</p> <p>Trustees noted their formal thanks to all colleagues across both trusts for their efforts and work over this year.</p> <p>Trustees asked for clarification on the small number of points which had no RAG rating or comments on the plan. The CEO advised that these were actions which had not yet been addressed due to timing issues, and noted that these would be refreshed in the new plan.</p> <p>It was noted that a key would be added to indicate colour coding in relation to school grading judgements on page four.</p>	
10.	<p><u>CEO Report</u></p> <p>Questions were invited on the CEO's Report, which had been circulated with the agenda.</p>	

	<p>The CEO provided an update on the situation in schools following the government’s move to Step 4 and removal of Covid restrictions. She advised that schools had been instructed to stop contact tracing from 19th July, and to use NHS Track and Trace only. However, this had resulted in concerns about pupils and staff being put at risk where all potential close contacts were not being identified. The CEO advised that she had attended a number of meetings over the weekend and there had been no clear solution to the issue. She advised that the Trust had taken the position to go with NHS Track and Trace, but also call parents/carers where possible to advise that their child could be deemed as a close contact. Parents/carers were then able to exercise their right to keep children at home, and where this had happened, absence had been authorised.</p> <p>The CEO advised that Public Health England had asked schools to support them with track and trace, due to continued high rates of infection. She noted that it was a serious concern that in some of the meetings she had attended, Public Health England had not been advised of the implication of changes in guidance from the DfE, and there was a clear element of risk in this.</p> <p>Trustees asked what implications there would be for risk assessments in September, with the proposed removal of bubbles and continued challenges around track and trace. The CEO advised that the Trust used the North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC) model risk assessment, which followed government guidance, and was tighter in some places. She advised, however, that decisions could not be made about September at this point, given the rapidly changing picture and the uncertainty of what the situation may look like by then. The CEO did note that within the new guidance, schools may be required to revert to bubbles and other restrictions if case rates were high. She advised that the Trust were in close contact with Public Health England, the relevant LAs and the unions on this matter and would ensure that everything possible was in place for a return in September.</p>	
11.	<p><u>Safeguarding</u></p> <p>The CEO reported that Graham School had received an Ofsted safeguarding inspection on Tuesday 20th July. She advised that feedback from the inspection would be provided to Trustees as a confidential item at the end of the meeting.</p> <p>Trustees noted the report from the Trust’s Inclusion Lead, Anouska Gardner, which had been circulated with the agenda. Trustees formally thanked Anouska for her commitment and drive, and noted the progress and development work which had been realised since her appointment. It was agreed that this had really enhanced safeguarding provision across both trusts, and had made them better and safer for all.</p> <p>Trustees noted that the report highlighted recommendations for Single Central Record (SCR) training, which had been completed so far by 62 members of staff across both trusts. Trustees asked how many colleagues were yet to receive the training. The COO reported that training had been delivered in priority order, and that the target group had been met in terms of requirements now. She advised that steps were in place for the small number of staff whose training was still outstanding.</p> <p>Trustees also asked whether there had been any barriers to the implementation of recommendations, and what the level of engagement and compliance had been from staff and governors. The CEO advised that the biggest barrier around training was time commitment, particularly for governors. She advised that thought needed to be given to how to ensure that training was delivered smartly and effectively, to ensure it had the proper impact. The CEO advised that a short test would be built into the safeguarding training to check where this had been understood properly, and to identify where follow-up training may be needed. Overall, she advised that engagement from both staff and governors had been really</p>	

	<p>positive. The COO added that she was working with the Governance Advisor to produce a list of training requirements for governors from September, to support a more structured approach to development. She noted that being mindful of governors' time commitments, these were expected to be delivered through a mix of online modules and Zoom sessions.</p>	
12.	<p><u>Policy Review</u></p> <p>* NEW Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (for September 2021) Trustees were asked to review and accept the updated policy, with the understanding that a formal review would take place as a priority in September to reflect the Keeping Children Safe in Education updates and to reflect the merged Trust.</p> <p>* Managing Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy (amended and approved under Chair's Action - attached for information)</p> <p>* Conflict of Interest Policy: a six month extension to the renewal date was requested.</p> <p>* Charges and Remissions Policy: a six month extension to the renewal date was requested.</p> <p>* Complaints Policy It was noted that the policy had been amended to include reference to record keeping in-line with an update to the DfE model policy.</p> <p>* Mental Health and Well-Being Policy: It was noted that additions had been included which required approval</p> <p><i>APPROVED: Trustees approved the above policies and requests. It was agreed that Chair's Action would be used as required to ensure that the most up to date policy was in place for 1st September 2021, as well as a number of other policies which would be reviewed over the summer to reflect the newly merged Trust. All approvals under Chair's Action would be reported back to the Board meeting on 15th September.</i></p>	
13.	<p><u>Thank You to Trustees</u></p> <p>The Chair noted that this would be the last Board of Trustees meeting for Olivia Seymour and Julie McGonigle, who would be stepping down.</p> <p>On behalf of Trustees, the Chair thanked Olivia for her commitment and support to the Trust and its schools during her time as a Trustee, particularly her expertise and challenge around church schools and SIAMS. Olivia thanked Trustees and wished them well for the future. She noted that she would still be involved with the schools through her role as Diocesan Advisor.</p> <p>It was noted that Julie was not present at the meeting, but Trustees formally noted their thanks to her as well. It was agreed that her forensic analysis from an educational perspective had been a real asset to the Board, and Trustees were grateful to her for being part of the Trust's journey.</p> <p>The Chair thanked all Trustees for their commitment, and for giving of their time freely and voluntarily. The CEO thanked Trustees for their support to her and the Trust over the year.</p>	
14.	<p><u>Any Other Business</u></p> <p>14.1 Updated Admissions Code Information on changes to the Statutory Admission Code of Practice had been circulated with the agenda.</p> <p><i>APPROVED: Trustees approved the changes to the Statutory Admissions Code of Practice, and noted that all school admissions policies would be updated to reflect these changes from 1st September 2021.</i></p> <p>14.2 Letter from ESFA</p>	

	<p>Trustees noted the letter to accounting officers from the ESFA, which had been circulated with the agenda for information.</p> <p>Trustees asked what protections and training were in place regarding cyber-crime. The COO advised that she was working with Vital to ensure all systems were robust and effective, and two-step verification was also being discussed. It was noted that one of the biggest risks around cyber-crime related to staff, and the COO advise that the Trust would be increasing awareness of this to support further training.</p> <p>14.3 Trust Values The CEO reported that following a consultation and vote including all stakeholders, the new Hope Sentamu Learning Trust values had been agreed: Respect, Teamwork, Kindness.</p> <p><i>[Simon Bryan-Smith, Helen Dowds and Allyson Buckton left the meeting at 7.15pm]</i></p>	
15.	<p><u>Confidential Items for Discussion</u></p> <p>15.1 Confidential Minutes from the meeting held on 19th May 2021 Previously distributed. The minutes were agreed to be a true and accurate record.</p> <p>15.2 Oversight Committee Update Trustees noted the summary of discussion and actions from the Oversight Committee meetings held from May to July 2021 which had been previously distributed.</p> <p>A question was raised as to whether a further formal resolution was required from the Board regarding the merger. It was noted that the Board of Trustees had reviewed detailed information on due diligence from AVEC in the previous academic year (2019-20) and had passed a resolution to continue with the merger, delegating the detailed work and decision making to the Oversight Committee.</p> <p>15.3 Primary Update <i>This discussion has been recorded as a separate, confidential minute.</i></p> <p>15.4 Graham School Inspection Feedback <i>This discussion has been recorded as a separate, confidential minute.</i></p> <p>15.5 School Improvement Team Appointments The CEO reported that interviews had been held on 21st July for the roles of Executive Principal for Primary and Director of Primary. Mandy Watson, HR Director for SALT, the CEO and Olivia Seymour had formed the panel for interviews.</p> <p>Olivia reported that the interviews had been really positive, with one candidate being interviewed for each post. Both candidates had shown passion and expertise, and a real focus on developing high quality provision for the primary phase. Olivia noted that it had been great to see the vision and values of the Trust being lived out in the evident drive for wanting the best for the school communities.</p> <p>The panel had been unanimous in their agreement to recommend appointment by the Board of Trustees as follows:</p> <p>Ash Atherton – Executive Principal for Primary. Gill Williams – Director of Primary.</p>	

	<p>APPROVED: Trustees unanimously approved the appointments of Ash Atherton as Executive Principal for Primary and Gill Williams as Director of Primary.</p> <p>The CEO also requested Trustees' approval of Helen Dowds' appointment as Executive Principal at Archbishop Sentamu Academy (ASA) from 1st September 2021. It was noted that Helen was already Executive Principal for the Trust, but currently working as Consultant Principal for ASA.</p> <p>APPROVED: Trustees unanimously approved the appointment of Helen Dowds as Executive Principal at ASA from 1st September 2021.</p> <p>15.6 Central Team Restructure <i>The following discussion has been recorded as a separate, confidential minute.</i></p>	
<p>16.</p>	<p><u>Items / Issues to Report to LGCs</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Trustees approved the 2021-22 Start Budget, as recommended by the Resources Committee. * Trustees agreed to support City of York Council's proposal to consult on development of the former Clifton with Rawcliffe school site (adjacent to Vale of York Academy) as a community hub. * Trustees approved the re-appointment of the following governors: Sue van Hout (Forest of Galtres) and Elaine Boyes (Burton Green/Skelton). * Trustees reviewed updates on the Trust Development Plan, noting that this would be fully reviewed for the start of the next academic year. * Trustees discussed continuing challenges relating to the pandemic in light of the government's move to Step 4 in lifting restrictions. It was noted that all schools would continue to review their risk assessments, and decisions about arrangements for September would need to be considered closer to the time, depending on the situation at that point. * Trustees noted their thanks to the Trust's Inclusion Lead for her work in strengthening safeguarding practice and procedures. An update was provided on training requirements moving forward. * Thanks were formally noted to all staff and volunteers across both Hope and SALT for their support and commitment over what had been an incredibly challenging year. 	
<p>17.</p>	<p><u>Dates and Times of Future Meetings</u></p> <p>Wednesday 15th September 2021, 6pm Wednesday 3rd November 2021, 6pm Wednesday 15th December 2021, 6pm (Approval of Final Accounts and Annual Report) Wednesday 19th January 2022 (Following AGM) Wednesday 16th March 2022, 6pm Wednesday 25th May 2022, 6pm Wednesday 20th July 2022, 6pm</p> <p>2021/22 meeting dates had been circulated for information.</p>	

The meeting closed at 8.00pm

These minutes were approved by the HSLT Board of Trustees on 15th September 2021

Action Points from the Hope Learning Trust Board meeting held on 21st July 2021

	<i>ACTION</i>	<i>AGENDA ITEM</i>	<i>WHO</i>	<i>WHEN</i>
1.	<i>Confirm Pupil Premium Trustee role for start of autumn term.</i>	3	<i>Philippa Gowland</i>	<i>15/09/2021</i>
2.	<i>The COO agreed to request that two separate letters be provided, along with a draft settlement agreement for Trustees to review.</i>	7	<i>Wendy Munro</i>	<i>31/07/2021</i>

APPROVED