

**Dove House School Board of Trustees**  
**Minutes of Meeting Tuesday 2nd February 2021**

<b>Present:</b>	<b>Category:</b>
Juliet Annesley-Gamester (JAG)	Parent Trustee
Kevin Barwick (KB)	Community Trustee
Sian Butler (SB)	Community Trustee
Andrea Francis (AF)	Community Trustee
Lisa Goodall (LG) (Chair)	Parent Trustee
Ollie Killinger (OK)	Community Trustee
Emma Layzell (EL)	Co-opted Trustee
Kate Need (KN)	Co-opted Trustee
Chris Toner (CT) Item 2 onwards	Interim Headteacher
<b>Apologies:</b>	
Debbie McLatch (DM)	Community Trustee
Neil Plant (NP)	Co-opted Trustee
<b>In Attendance:</b>	
Jayne Humphrey (JH)	Governance Lead
Karen Ollive (KO) Items 2-4 only	Assistant Headteacher/DSL
Kelly Richens (KR) Items 1-3 only	SCITT Programme Director
Brigid Ryan (BR) Items 1-11 only	Interim Head of School

**1. Welcome & Apologies.**

The Chair welcomed trustees to the meeting. Apologies were received and accepted from Neil Plant and Debbie McLatch.

**The meeting was quorate. It was noted that the agenda and papers had been provided in advance of the meeting.**

**2. Pecuniary Interests**

No interests were declared in the agenda item.

Trustees confirmed that they did not have any new declarations to make.

*Chris Toner joined the meeting at 5.02pm and Karen Ollive joined the meeting at 5.03 pm.*

### **3. SCITT**

#### **a) Progress Report**

The SCITT Programme Director provided a verbal update:

- That she is enjoying her role and is passionate about ensuring the next generation of teachers enter their career feeling enthused, as well as professional and competent.
- There have been 2 trainee deferrals and 2 trainee withdrawals so far and 25 trainees remain.
- She is very pleased with the cohort and how they have adapted to the changes of the COVID 19 environment, recognising how difficult it is for them to teach in a different way.
- There are 15 partnership schools and they have been excellent in ensuring that the trainees are teaching with adapted timetables.
- Twelve trainees have already secured employment and she is confident that all will have roles before the end of the academic year.

The SCITT Programme Director invited questions:

**Q: How is recruitment for next year progressing?**

A: It's going well. We have already secured 3 trainees for PE, 3 trainees for English and 1 trainee for Modern Foreign Languages. Next week we are holding 7 further interviews which include History, Maths and Art.

We have a target of 15 definite trainees for April and are aiming for 25 trainees in total. Recruitment is buoyant and we recently held a busy online open evening where we had 17 potential applicants, so we are confident that we will achieve our target numbers.

**Q: Do you think all the trainees in this cohort will succeed?**

A: I think it is likely that all will succeed. We have one trainee that is currently being supported, so it is difficult to say. I am conscious of the well-being of the trainees at the moment and contacted their mentors to check. The feedback was extremely positive, saying that trainees are working hard and asking for more teaching. There were no concerns raised.

**Q: Are all the partnerships schools providing teaching remotely now and the support required for them?**

A: I have checked with our partnerships schools and they are all offering remote learning for their pupils, so our trainees have teaching timetables and are teaching remotely.

Q: What do you think is working well for the trainees?

A: We do try to be as buoyant and positive as possible and also think that really effective communication between all parties is key to success. We ensure that we offer support all the way through, to everybody involved.

### **b) Partnership School Consideration**

The SCITT Programme Director advised the Board that The Cove School had requested to join the SCITT as a partnership school last autumn. She referred trustees to the written proposal which included all of the information required to consider the proposal.

The SCITT Programme Director invited questions:

Q: Do schools sign up for a certain amount of time?

A: No, the partnership schools sign up each year and have a new agreement each September.

Q: What do the other partnerships schools think about the idea?

A: We haven't asked them. The proposal was discussed at the Executive Board and following that I reverted to The Cove School to obtain more information to better understand that this was a good proposal for us.

Q: Will this school be the only one outside of the area?

A: No we also work with Yateley, Fernhill and Toynebee schools who are outside of the Basingstoke area.

Q: When trainees sign up ,are they aware they may have to have a placement that is further afield?

A: We can flag that to trainees , but I would try to take their own personal circumstances into account.

Q: Having completed your extra research, is the balance now beneficial to the SCITT?

A: Yes, I believe it is beneficial for us.

Q: You have told us that The Cove School is already working with other providers, do you think there could be any conflicts because of this?

A: No I don't think so. I discussed this and was advised that they offer PGCE placements to different providers, such as Reading, Southampton and Winchester universities. Some of our other partnership schools also do this and I believe it provides a richness for all trainees in their subject areas.

Q: Do we have a process for measuring the success or effectiveness of adding new schools to the partnership? I would like to understand what supports our decision making and how we know what's working well.

A: It's a symbiotic relationship where each party stands to benefit because we all have a common purpose. The SCITT wants good quality placements and the partnerships schools want good quality newly qualified teachers. In terms of data, I would need to investigate whether we have ever withdrawn from a partnership school.

**ACTION 1: The SCITT Programme director will investigate whether the SCITT has any data that measures the effectiveness of the relationship with the partnership school and if the SCITT has ever withdrawn from a partnership school.**

Q: If a partnership school received an Ofsted judgement of "Requiring Improvement" what impact assessment would you have in place for the trainee to manage that, to ensure they aren't disadvantaged?

A: Some of our Basingstoke schools are "Requiring Improvement" and we still send our trainees to them.

Q: Does that affect the quality of their placement and experience?

A: I don't have hard data. Having personally worked in a school that received that grading, I recognise that there will be much more to any school than just the Ofsted judgement so my feeling would be that the quality of placement isn't affected. In Basingstoke it is recognised that the quality of education in the area could be better, hence the positive local collaboration to produce good quality teaching staff and raise standards.

Q: Is there an ideal number of partnership schools, to accommodate the number of trainees?

A: I don't think we would want to increase the number of partnership schools much more. We check with our schools each year to see what mentorship they can offer and this varies year to year depending on the school's circumstances at the time.

The Chair asked trustees to vote on the proposal. It was **unanimously agreed** that the Cove School should join the BASCITT as a partnership school.

### **c) BASCITT Policy Reviews**

BASCITT Complaints Policy

**This policy was approved unanimously.**

**This policy was approved unanimously.**

*Kelly Richens left the meeting at 5.32pm*

#### **4. Safeguarding**

The Designated Safeguarding Lead provided a very brief update on matters that have arisen since her report was issued, noting that they will be reported formally in her next update.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead provided assurance to the Board that having just completed a webinar regarding safeguarding during the COVID 19, that the school is compliant with the majority of what had been suggested. She noted that there were a couple of additional suggestions that can be considered and she will raise these with the Senior Leadership Team.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead highlighted that:

- The well-being/safeguarding telephone calls have led to some instances where additional support has been provided to the whole family.
- That actions are ongoing from the safeguarding audit. She raised concern that it might be difficult to undertake the online safety audit because of the COVID 19 circumstances.
- Children's services are not taking up as many of her referrals with many of them being dealt with by the early Help Hub. Despite the school pushing back, Children's Services are very reluctant to accept the referrals.

The Interim Headteacher advised the DSL that there is a process for the school to follow to escalate concerns if they feel that Children's Services are not being responsive enough.

**Q: Does Children's Services say we aren't meeting the criteria threshold?**

A: No, and this appears to be in line with the national picture as data shows that there are fewer referrals accepted across the country. This could be due to the COVID 19 pandemic as fewer social workers will be going out. I've also noticed that there have been more case closures during lockdown.

**Q: If children's Services aren't accepting the referrals, how is that impacting on workloads in school?**

A: It increases the workloads here as we have to ensure the support is in place. We are using the Deputy DSLs to complete some of the referrals and offer support to the families, so it doesn't all fall to me.

Q: How do the numbers of incidents etc compare to previous periods. Are the numbers flat, increasing or decreasing?

A: It's about the same. Domestic abuse and violence cases are increasing for us and that is also a national trend.

Q: Do you look at trends, to see if the data shows a good position or not and consider why?

A: The school could review data from the same period to see if there is a trend. At the moment we don't have any pupils with a child protection notice and only one pupil under "child in need" so it is extremely quiet from that perspective.

Q: In terms of the remote learning and live lessons, have these gone smoothly from a safeguarding perspective?

A: Yes they have. Policies have been updated, training and guidance has been provided and CPOMs is being utilised. I believe it is as safe as we can make it.

*Karen Ollive left the meeting at 5.51 pm.*

## **5. Approval of Minutes**

Trustees **agreed** that both set of the minutes of the meeting of the 8<sup>th</sup> of December 2020 were true and accurate records and these will be signed by the Chair.

## **6. Matters Arising**

<b>No</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Update</b>
<b>15/9/20 Action 10 Item 19</b>	Consideration of the Appraisals Option for the Privett Centre: Updated narrative within the minutes from the meeting. Action now sits with JB to progress further. <b>Item carried forward to the 02/02/21 meeting.</b>	There was a brief written update from the Finance & Resources Director. Carried forward to the next meeting for a full report.
<b>8/12/20 Action 1 Item 6</b>	HT Report: The Governance Lead will send thank you emails as directed to Post 16 and staff that cleaned during the absence of cleaners.	Completed. No further action.
<b>8/12/20 Action 3 Item 7</b>	SIP: The Acting Headteacher will amend the monitoring dates and rag rating for those sections of the plan that require it and will include the staff well-being questionnaire.	Completed. No further action.

Confidential Matters Arising were discussed under Agenda Item 11 and reported through the confidential minutes of this meeting.

## **7. Headteacher Update**

The Headteacher was asked to provide a brief update on the progress of remote learning and live lessons. The trustees were advised that:

- School policies have been updated and the remote learning agreements for staff, pupils and parents have been issued.
- That the remote learning has been well received by pupils and parents now it is live and the school have had positive feedback.
- The school is engaging with parents to provide guidance about how they can interact and support their children.
- There have only been occasional minor technical issues, which were quickly addressed.
- There is an increasing number of lessons being delivered live.
- Last week the school delivered 140 lessons with 45 of those being delivered live. This will increase again this week.
- It is difficult to plan lessons as teachers have to consider what materials a student may have access to at home. This is particularly important for lessons such as Art or Food Technology. PE and Dance has been difficult.
- The proportion of core subjects being delivered live is higher.
- (BR) A survey of the Support Staff indicates that they value the live content of the tutor times. We are moving forward to canvas their opinions to see what the increase in time would look like.
- (BR) Within the Teams function there is an application called Insight which will allow teachers to obtain data about how many pupils have accessed and taken part in their work. This would then allow us to understand barriers to engagement. It is the nearest we have to an identifiable tracking tool.
- Most of the core subjects are delivered in the morning, with preparation for recorded lessons and work packs etc being completed in the afternoon.
- We have supplied technology to pupils where necessary and the Interim Head of School is supporting parents in families where they are struggling with the technology.
- The Teams platform is not intuitive and the school is considering a "how to" leaflet that is simple and straightforward.
- The school are also considering some live meetings where parents could meet the Interim Headteacher and Interim Head of School as part of a training session

**Q: Is Post 16 included within the tracking?**

**A:** I am visiting them tomorrow to see what's happening there and to support them to be able to track their pupil engagement.

Q: You mentioned before that you would provide a survey for stakeholders to understand how successful remote learning is. When is this planned?

A: We've only delivered three weeks of live lessons, so it's a little early at the moment, but a live session of "what's working well and even better if" would be helpful. Either just before or after half-term we could seek feedback through Tucasi.

The Chair expressed her view that it would be helpful for a survey to be offered as there may be a more balanced opinion of the remote learning within the school community.

Q: How is the school assessing the year 10 & 11 pupils in relation to their GCEs and how are pupils and parents engaging with this?

A: Ofqual have completed a survey of staff and they are beginning to provide information about how things will be measured.

Next week we're bringing back Pod 7 and then Pod 8 after half term. This will include Year 11 pupils and I need to consider how we're going to organise this to get their coursework completed. About 66% of the staff have had their first COVID 19 vaccinations with second vaccinations booked, so we may be able to increase capacity further. This will be a balancing act because as we increase learning capacity in school, we will need to decrease our remote learning.

EHCPs show predicted grades using quarter 2 data. When pupils start the recovery programme they will have their data from last term and core subjects will be okay, but we are aware that some pupils may not have completed their rotations in other subjects. We will not report on these subjects.

(BR) We had a discussion amongst staff as the Year 10 reports are currently being drafted for despatch in March, about how we could put in any quantitative data, but the pupils only had a term before lockdown. With only one term it is difficult to have sufficient data for a robust assessment and therefore crucial to get the pupils into school so that we can baseline or reassess their progress and look at any gaps. English functional skills accreditation are complete and the English team are working with the students who are taking GCSEs.

Q: Are the school confident that the pupils that have been provided with IT equipment are able to use the equipment?

A: We have been phoning to check how pupils are getting on and have given instructions and guidance to support pupils and their parents. We will continue to do so to ensure they are engaging and using the equipment regularly.

The Interim Head of School reported that she has been very impressed with several staff who have specifically coached pupils and parents in how to use Teams.

## **8. Governance**

### **a) Chair's Notes**

The contents were noted. No questions were asked.

### **b) Finance Resources & Audit Committee**

The minutes were noted. No questions were asked. The Chair of the Finance Resources & Audit Committee advised trustees that a meeting of the committee had taken place on the previous day. He reported that:

- The committee had reviewed the November Financial Report.
- That the December Financial Report was available.
- That the internal audit monitoring agenda item could not proceed as the committee were not quorate.
- That the budget appeared to be tracking a break-even position.
- That there are reserves of £1.5m available.

### **c) Consideration of Hampshire Governor Services SLA**

The trustees noted that the service provided good value for money and **agreed** to renew the service level agreement at a cost of £1465 for the year.

### **d) Review of Governance Structure**

The Chair advised the Board that:

- In line with AFH contractual requirements the Board should carry out a governance review annually.
- This agenda item had been discussed at the recent Members meeting to gain their views.
- The Members could see the advantages of proactively moving to Model Articles to make governance more robust, and would recommend it, but wished to do so in agreement with the Trust Board.
- The Members tasked the Governance Lead to obtain quotes from appropriate solicitors for the work involved in swapping to Model Articles and a Model Funding Agreement.

A trustee expressed the view that the removal of the staff trustee category could be a concern as she felt it is important for staff to be involved. The Chair acknowledged that historically most governing bodies were set up using a local authority model with different categories of governors. She noted the DfE'S position that they have a "strong preference for no other employees to serve as

trustees” except for the Headteacher and that even the Headteacher is not automatically a trustee. The Chair noted that Dove House staff trustees have sometimes found it difficult to balance the workload and the potential conflict that the role brings. The Chair noted that staff feedback could come through avenues such as the surveys and forums that the school undertake.

Q: If we decide to go down this route, will we have to change our documentation or do we just not appoint another staff trustee?

A: Because the Members are recommending we investigate this, it makes sense to pause the election process for a replacement staff trustee as the Board may reconstitute and they wouldn't then have a space.

A trustee expressed the view that it is sensible to investigate the Model Articles as her experience of previous boards is that there has been more segregation between strategic and operational, therefore she could see the benefit. She acknowledged that the Board would need to ensure that they have mechanisms in place for staff engagement.

The Interim Headteacher said that she believes the “Dignity & Respect” policy will help the Board develop their relationship with the staff so they needn't feel reliant on a staff trustee. She asked that trustees take part in the launch meeting of the policy so it becomes a “collective” of stakeholders where barriers are broken down.

A trustee noted that strategically it is right that there should be separation between the Board and Senior Leadership Team and that there is representation because the Headteacher is part of the Board. He noted that it is important that staff do not approach trustees individually to voice concerns as there are formal routes that can be used.

The Chair advised trustees that the current Articles automatically mean that she is the Chair of the Members. She noted that this felt uncomfortable and could be perceived as the Chair holding too much influence and a potential conflict of interest. In her view she thought there should be more separation in the roles and highlighted that she could still be invited to attend Member meetings to report on items and answer questions.

Q: What are we obliged to do as an Academy Trust?

A: (JH) As a Board you have done as much as you can to make governance as robust as possible within the Articles that you currently have.

Q: The document notes we should be undertaking governance reviews annually, and I would want to complete a review internally so that it could feed into this process so we can be sure that what we choose helps us to be efficient and successful.

A: (JH) There are two strands here. The Members are “eyes on, hand off” but have a duty to ensure that governance is as robust as possible in the school and this is what they are looking at here, the framework for governance. Secondly it’s recommended that the Board undertake a governance self-review exercise to judge how well they are doing and consider what improvements can be made. There is a date already in the calendar to undertake this later in the academic year.

The trustees **agreed** that the Governance Lead should obtain quotes from appropriate solicitors for the work involved in swapping to Model Articles, with a view to moving forward.

**ACTION 2: The Governance Lead will obtain quotes from appropriate solicitors for the work involved in swapping to Model Articles.**

**e) Governance Action Plan Update**

The updated action plan was noted. There were no questions.

**f) Data Protection Action Plan Update**

The Chair noted two whole school tasks within the Data Protection Action Plan which also form part of the School Improvement Plan and asked what progress is being made in achieving these. The items are:

- To dispose and destroy ex-pupil and ex-personnel information
- To review and purge unnecessary electronic files

The Governance Lead advised trustees that she intends to work with the Interim Headteacher and Interim Head of School to plan how to tackle the tasks and because staff will need to be directed to complete the work involved.

The Governance Lead advised the Board that in her view the school has an embedded culture of retaining unnecessary paper and electronic documents, which has hardly changed despite guidance and the offer of 1-1 assistance to staff. She believes it requires a whole school approach led by the Senior Leadership Team, in line with the School Improvement Plan. The Interim Headteacher noted that in her experience other schools have similar issues.

**Q: Could the archiving facility be a fire hazard?**

A: (JH) The archiving facility is an outdoor metal storage container with no heat sources so the risk is likely to be minimal.

**Q: Could the school ensure that pupil’s exercise books are given back to students rather than keeping them in school?**

A: The school policy was changed last year so that teachers are expected to give all books and coursework back to pupils unless it needs to be kept for a specific purpose. Staff were reminded about this via email last term.

## **9. Link Trustee Reports**

### **a) Health & Safety Visit**

The Chair noted that there was a visit report from Ryan Williams who had been the H&S link trustee until recently. She noted that at present the Trust Board does not have a Link Trustee for H&S and asked if a trustee would consider undertaking the role. There weren't any volunteers.

A trustee noted that the report indicated that there didn't appear to be a mechanism to resolve necessary building repairs and maintenance , which also linked to the photographs that the Headteacher had recently sent through. She raised concern as to whether items that are raised as a possible H&S issue are being addressed and whether there could be better feedback to the staff involved.

The Chair acknowledged this and agreed that it was a concern, citing the recent window repairs which had been outstanding for some years without trustees being made aware. She noted that the school should have a rolling maintenance and repair programme to upkeep facilities and advised that the Finance, Resources and Audit committee have been waiting for this for some while

The Interim Headteacher advised that:

- There is no pro-forma that covers all of the site as the school currently uses a very old-fashioned plan, which doesn't encompass everything. It is a RAG document and will then be used to produce an action plan which will be brought to trustees.
- The chairs shown in the photographs are unsafe.
- The Finance & Resources Director, H&S Coordinator and Site Manager will be involved to understand their roles and responsibilities for site safety and the update and management of the plan.
- It is important for the environment to be attractive for pupils so they respect their environment.

*Kevin Barwick left the meeting at 7.01 pm*

## **b) Post 16 Visit**

Kate Need reported to trustees that:

- She had been pleased to hear that Kate Read is enjoying her new role and has received excellent support from the SLT and the Post 16 staff.
- That the curriculum is being adapted to give the pupils as positive experience as possible during the pandemic, but they aren't taking part in work experience at present.
- The lease for the Post 16 premises expires in 2022.
- That Post 16 would like to consider running a social enterprise again but with proper governance.

Q: With regards to Post 16 premises, it has been raised before that the premises aren't suitable and has defects so should we be considering this as an action for the Board.

A: (LG) This will be operational for the school and will come to trustees, as necessary.

## **10. Policy Reviews**

### **a) Accounting Policy**

The policy was **approved**.

### **b) Pupils with Health Needs Policy**

The policy was **approved**.

## **11. Confidential Grievance Item**

This agenda item was recorded under a separate confidential minute.

*Brigid Ryan left the meeting at 7.21 pm*

## **12. Any Other Business**

Following her earlier email, the Chair advised the Board that Debbie McLatch had stepped down from the Headteacher Recruitment Panel and asked for another trustee to join it. The Chair outlined the time commitment to the role and the meetings it is likely to involve.

Andrea Francis volunteered to take part and trustees **approved** her appointment to the panel.

The meeting closed at 7.24 pm.

Signed.....

Dated.....

The next meeting will be held on the 30<sup>th</sup> of March at 5 pm.

**Summary of Actions from:  
Meeting of Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021**

<b>No</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Who?</b>
<b>15/9/20 Action 10 Item 19</b>	Consideration of the Appraisals Option for the Privett Centre: Updated narrative within the minutes from the meeting. Action now sits with JB to progress further. Item carried forward to the 02/02/21 meeting. <b>2/2/21</b> There was a brief written update from the Finance & Resources Director. Carried forward to the next meeting for a full report.	JB
<b>2/2/21 Action 2 Item 8d</b>	The Governance Lead will obtain quotes from appropriate solicitors for the work involved in swapping to Model Articles.	JH