

Dove House School Board of Trustees
Minutes of Meeting Tuesday 30TH of March 2021

Present:	Category:
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)	Interim Headteacher
Apologies:	
Neil Plant (NP)	Co-opted Trustee
In Attendance:	
Jenny Burns (JB) Items 1-6	Finance & Resources Director
Jayne Humphrey (JH)	Governance Lead
Brigid Ryan (MBR)	Interim Head of School

1. Welcome & Apologies.

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

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.

3. Approval of Minutes

Trustees **agreed** that the minutes of the meetings of the 12th of January 2021, the 2nd of February 2021 (also including a confidential set) and the 17th of

February 2021 were true and accurate records and these will be signed by the Chair.

4. **Matters Arising**

No	Action	Update
15/9/20 Action 10 Item 19	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 next meeting.	There was a brief written update from the Finance & Resources Director. Carried forward to the next meeting for a full report. See response below
8/12/20 Action 4 Item 11	The Interim Headteacher and Interim Head of School should oversee the implementation of the elements of this recommendation of the HR review.	CT/BR Agenda Item 7
2/2/21 Action 2 Item 8d	The Governance Lead will obtain quotes from appropriate solicitors for the work involved in swapping to Model Articles.	JH Agenda Item 10c

The F&RD had provided an options paper regarding the Privett Centre which included:

- Keep Privett centre open. Try to find lease option (either short or long term).
- Do nothing. Revisit options post COVID
- Try to sell the Privett centre with the covenant still applied
- Apply for change of use and sell with covenant
- Approach the council to release or vary the covenant

The F&RD invited questions:

Q: [From the conversations you've had with the companies which have been the most favourable in terms of service and towards the project.](#)

A: Most surveyors have been keen to be involved. Savills and Holloway, Iliffe & Mitchell have been very good. In terms of what we need to do I think the best option is to have an open and honest conversation with the council regarding releasing or varying the covenant. From the conversations I've had it has come to light that the covenant was put in place by Hampshire County Council when the property was sold to us in 2017. Our legal adviser suggests that although many companies offer indemnity insurance against legal challenge of covenants they advise that it will be difficult and expensive to obtain cover given the

covenant was only imposed in 2017. If it had been an old covenant they perhaps could take a different view.

I therefore think it would be sensible to speak to the council to advise that the Privett Centre isn't financially viable and to see if they would be willing to release or vary the covenant. If they were, then we could seek to market the property and any benefit could be split.

A trustee advised that she had read the paper and endorsed the F&RD'S suggestion of contacting the council to explore the covenant.

The F&RD further advised that:

- The council don't have to agree to any proposition and by contacting them they could refuse and then be observant to any planning application changes.
- It wouldn't be in the best interest of the village to allow the property to lie empty and degrade.
- The school's lawyer advised that even if the council are willing to vary or remove the covenant the school will still have to obtain Secretary of State approval to dispose of the property.
- Any process is likely to be long and complicated.

Q: Do we know what the property is worth, compared to what we paid?

A: The school paid approximately £85k and a very rough estimate is between £400k and £500k.

A discussion was held which included:

- A view that anything that could accelerate the process should be considered, because of the financial implication.
- That the property is draining resources at present.
- That there has been previous interest from a potential renter/buyer so there might be somebody who would be prepared to buy with the covenant in place.
- That any process relating to staff members who have job roles related to the Privett Centre must be transparent and sensitively handled.
- The paperwork the school holds relating to the purchase of the property which comprises an application for purchase to the Secretary of State that was submitted, but not a signed confirmation from them.

The trustees **agreed** that:

1. The F&RD should approach Hampshire County Council to have an open and honest conversation regarding releasing or varying the covenant.

2. The F&RD should speculatively market the property (with the covenant) liaising with the ESFA/Secretary of State, to do so. The rationale to dispose of the property is that it is not financially viable, it is utilising funds and holding it is a detriment to the school.
3. The F&RD will report back at the next meeting so that trustees can discuss and decide the sale price of the property.

ACTION 1: The F&RD will approach Hampshire County Council to discuss the release or variation of the covenant. The F&RD will liaise with the ESFA/SoS to gain agreement to market the property. The F&RD will report back to the Board at the next meeting.

5. School Resources Management Self-Assessment Tool (SRMSAT) Approval

The Chair advised the trustees that the SRMSAT was drafted by the Governance Lead and F&RD and had been reviewed by herself and the Finance, Resources & Audit committee.

There were no further questions and the SRMSAT was **approved**.

The Chair highlighted that the SRMSAT shows that the school is in the highest 10% of schools for the following areas:

- Spend on teaching staff as a percentage of total expenditure
- Spend on administrative and clerical staff as a percentage of total expenditure
- Pupil to adult ratio

The Chair advised the trustees that there is a School Resources Management Advisory (SRMA) service which assists school to assess their own level of resource management and to consider what potential they have to make improvements.

A discussion included:

- That it has been difficult to benchmark school resources against others because of the inclusion of SCITT staffing.
- That the high ratio of staffing may contribute to the outstanding teaching and learning for pupils.
- Whether this would be a good time to undertake this, before the arrival of a new Headteacher.
- That the service may cause extra work for the F&RD and Senior Leadership Team.
- How staff might view the use of the service and that it would need to be sensitively handled.

- That the school does not have to follow any or all of the SRMA recommendations.
- That the use of an external source gives the school and trustees a “fresh pair of eyes”.

The Interim Headteacher advised trustees that there are a number of areas that could be considered in a review. She noted that:

- Dove House works to a teacher ratio of 1:10 pupils and many special schools now work on a ratio of 1:12 pupils or 1:14 pupils which reduces the staffing costs.
- The Dove House structure has more faculty heads than she has previously seen in other schools.
- Policies are in place however processes aren't always clear.
- Consideration could be given to whether some areas of the curriculum could be delivered differently and more creatively.

Trustees **agreed** that the school will use the SRMA service and tasked the F&RD to organise this.

ACTION 2: The F&RD will make arrangements for the use of the SRMA service and will report back to the Board.

6. Policy Reviews including Approvals

a) Admission Policy

A trustee asked if the policy was a standard format as it read as though it was a mix of a policy document and a reach out to new parents. The Interim Headteacher advised that it was standard policy type for special schools as places are allocated by the Local Authority. She further advised that the school has completed a new welcome pack and is in the process of producing a prospectus.

Q: Should there be anything in the policy that refers to an appeals process.

A: No we don't need to include it as the places are allocated so any appeal will be lodged with SEN Services rather than Dove House.

Q: Is there any risk that we will have a fall in pupil numbers when the new academy opens?

A: No I don't think so as demand outstrips the number of places that are available, even with the new school. SEN Services have already asked if we

would be interested in increasing our numbers to 250 which the new Headteacher will need to consider with trustees.

The policy was **approved**.

b) Finance Policy

A brief discussion was held regarding the section about risk management. This included:

- That the school has a separate risk management policy.
- That the school has a risk register which is compiled by the school and approved by the Trust Board each September.
- That the risk register is reviewed and monitored each term by the Finance, Resources & Audit committee.
- That there is a protocol in place to immediately advise trustees if the school becomes subject to a new high risk.
- That the Trust Board have an internal audit programme to mitigate risk which is set by the Finance, Resources & Audit committee and this is monitored at least termly.

The F&RD advised the trustees that the Risk Register had been reviewed and amended at the February meeting of the Finance, Resources & Audit committee.

The policy was **approved**.

c) NQT Policy

Q: The policy notes that trustees should be satisfied that the school has the capacity to support a NQT and that they should be made aware of the progress of all NQTs at the school. How does this happen?

A: The school doesn't have any NQTs at the moment. We will need to rewrite the policy in the summer term when the Early Careers framework guidance is received as it will include trainee teachers (ITT) , newly qualified teachers (NQT) and recently qualified teachers (RQT).

The Interim Head of School noted that an updated policy will consider well-being, capacity and retention and that there will be implications in terms of costs. She noted that the guidance implies that the process will be funded by the DfE.

KN confirmed that she has recently undertaken training regarding this and that it is fully funded and the policy will need to cover a 2-year period. She offered to share the training resource with the school.

The Governance Lead advised that the DfE required all schools to have a NQT policy from September 2020 and this policy was introduced last March. Previously when the school had NQTs the Headteacher had included progress reports within the Headteacher reports.

The policy was **approved**.

d) Health & Safety (H&S) Policy

The F&RD advised the Trust Board that in reviewing the H&S policy she has used the existing policy but streamlined it. She outlined the changes that had been made, highlighting that the removal of the H&S operational committee as the key change which would simplify things and provide clarity about responsibilities.

Q: The policy noted that many things such as inspections are done "regularly", do we know what the timescales are?

A: (JB) There is a separate operational schedule which sets out the timescales for checks and monitoring.

Q: Do we ever have the fire brigade come in or something similar to assess fire risks in school?

A: (JB) We have an external adviser who visits annually and walks the site to check fire risks and they complete our fire risk assessment.

Q: In the policy it is the H&S Co-ordinator that carries out risks assessments , does this include employee risks assessment such as those that are required for members of staff who are returning to work, needing work adjustments or are pregnant?

A: (JB) It would be the H&S Co-ordinator's responsibility.

Q: What is the process for the selection of the staff H&S Representative – was it open to all staff?

A: (CT) I think it has been the same member of staff for some while and I assume there was an election for it. Staff go to the staff representative if there is an issue and she puts it forward at the termly operational meeting. Normally in schools if there is a H&S issue or defect it would be addressed immediately.

A discussion included:

- That it is everybody's responsibility to report faults and defects as quickly as possible using the defect log.
- That having a staff representative role is an unnecessary position in the H&S structure, which could delay things.
- That there is a system in place for defect reporting and it is the Site Manager and H&S Co-ordinator's responsibility to attend to this, with oversight by the F&RD.
- That having the H&S staff representative role seemed to cause some confusion regarding roles and responsibilities.
- That the school had already simplified the structure by removing the H&S operational committee.
- That the school doesn't have staff representative roles for other key areas.

Q: The policy refers to a number of pieces of legislation. Where do we get updates on the legislation as it could change and where do we get feedback on best practice?

A: (JB) The H&S Adviser provides us with regular updates which includes information about legislation changes and best practice tips. I also take part in a number of forums, which include Health & Safety information.

Q: Does the school have a Corporate Sustainability policy as this is often included within the Health & Safety policy? And , if not is it something we would like to consider?

A: (JB) I'm not aware that we have any policy relating to this but think it's a good idea.

The Interim Headteacher suggested that this could be an initiative that could involve all pupils and be led by Post 16. The Governance Lead asked if it could be considered as one of the school improvement priorities for the next academic year.

Trustees **agreed** that the H&S staff representative role would be withdrawn which would lead to a simplified structure where staff are clear about their responsibilities, and the reporting structure. Trustees **approved** the H&S policy with the removal of the paragraph on page 4 entitled "Staff Health & Safety Representative".

Trustees **agreed** that the school will consider the introduction of a sustainability policy and underlying initiative as an option for a school improvement priority for 2021/22.

Trustees thanked the F&RD for her hard work in putting the comprehensive policy in place.

Jenny Burns left the meeting at 6.16pm

7. Confidential Grievance Item Update

The Interim Headteacher reported that:

- The dignity and respect training has taken place and will contribute towards the change in ethos needed, in accepting change to move forward.
- The Personnel & Pay committee have discussed and contributed to the draft of the updated staff well-being, dignity and respect policy and this will be reviewed at the June meeting.
- The staff well-being questionnaire will be sent to staff after the Easter holiday. It will include the additional questions relating to bullying and harassment.
- There is additional training planned for the Performance Management process.
- There has been an introductory meeting with the school's HR advisory service, Judicium Education. This went well and they will review school policies shortly, to make them more appropriate to an academy setting. They will also provide training about the HR framework to the Senior Leadership team.

8. Interim Headteacher Report

The Chair highlighted the recommendation from the Interim Headteacher that the Board further extends invitations to staff. The Chair noted the benefit of this and suggested that as there are a finite amount of meetings, invitations should be focussed on items relating to the school improvement plan or key areas of monitoring.

KB noted that he has undertaken a trustee visit with Becky Wilson relating to a school improvement priority of pupil wellbeing. He advised that his report will be discussed at the May Board meeting and suggested that Becky Wilson be invited to attend to present to trustees. The Interim Head of School advised trustees that:

- A pupil survey is ready to be distributed.
- That she has recently met with Becky Wilson, Karen Ollive, Jane Love and Jenny Burns to discuss what the school offers in terms of support to staff.

- A flowchart has been prepared to show the practicalities of where a member of staff could be referred to someone if the needed support.
- The school has offered psychological first aid training to some staff and now has a list of those that have completed the training to support staff and /or students.
- Service level agreements have been reviewed to see what employee assistance can be given.

Q: Does the school have an outsourced employee assistance programme?

A: (CT) Yes we do. We currently use the outsourced Hampshire LA service and it appears to be good value for money. Staff can have six free sessions to support them. We have also been investigating free charitable services and what Judicium Education can offer.

Q: Does the school receive anonymous data which identifies what issues are being discussed e.g. financial issues, bereavement.

A: (CT) No we don't as it is entirely confidential. (MBR) I can send details of the issues that staff can discuss whilst using the service.

Q: Is the pupil survey being sent electronically with paper surveys only offered to those who can't access?

A: (MBR) Yes , that's the usual way but I can check and report back.

ACTION 3: The Interim Headteacher will provide details of the Hampshire EAP scheme to trustees and will also confirm if the pupil survey will be sent out electronically.

Q: With the proposed increased numbers at Post 16 for Year 12/13 students to retake their year will this have any Health & Safety implications because of the size of the premises.

A: No, there aren't any H&S risks. There are three large rooms that can be used as classrooms and one small room which could be an office. There is space to accommodate 30 students and we only have 25 students placed at present. (MBR) There is plenty of space for staff at the moment but there may need to be a review and reconfiguration of furniture to use the space more effectively.

Q: Could the attendance information highlight those students that are pupil premium? Are there differences in their attendance for remote learning and does the Pupil Premium grant need to be redistributed to target catch up for these students.

A: (CT) There are differences and we know that there was less engagement amongst pupil premium and/or disadvantaged students during the remote learning period. (MBR) The remote tracker shows which students attended lessons, completed assignments and had feedback. From this we could identify pupil premium students. (CT) Dove House have historically used the Pupil Premium grant for all students because they believe that all students achieve well. I would ask the new Headteacher to review this.

Q: Is there a risk that these students have become more disadvantaged during lockdown, and their learning progress has been eroded more than other students? If so should we consider diverting the Pupil Premium grant that currently benefits all students to only Pupil Premium students?

A: We would need to triangulate the data by seeing who engaged during lockdown and who didn't and which students were Pupil Premium. We would need to compare the September baseline with an up-to-date baseline now they've returned and then see if there has been a skills decay. Finally we would consider the use of interventions to "catch them up".

The trustee asked for reassurance that Pupil Premium students are being appropriately supported. The Interim Headteacher advised the Board that they have booked Matthew Rixson a HIAS Inspector to review the school's progress data in May, to ensure it is a true reflection of the school's findings.

Q: Have all the staff had the opportunity to access a COVID vaccination if they wanted to?

A: Yes they have and between 60% and 65% have taken up the opportunity. Around 51% of staff have taken up the lateral flow testing.

9. Staffing Request

The staffing request was **approved**.

10. Governance

a) Chair's Notes

The Chair reported that in her role, she has:

- Continued to meet with the Interim Headteacher each fortnight, to see how things are in the school.
- Attended a Personnel & Pay committee meeting and a Finance, Resources & Audit committee meeting, which was informative and highly recommended.
- Undertaken Zoom calls with the prospective Headteacher applicants

b) Vice-Chair, Committee and Link Trustee Appointments

Kate Need stood for appointment for the Vice-Chair role and was **unanimously elected** to the position. The trustees thanked her for putting herself forward and undertaking the role.

The Board discussed and **approved** all other appointments as follows:

Juliet Annesley : P&P Committee (Chair), HTPM Committee

Kevin Barwick: FRA Committee (Chair)

Sian Butler: FRA Committee

Andrea Francis: SCITT Executive Board, Safeguarding Trustee

Lisa Goodall: Chair of Trustees

Ollie Killinger: HTPM Committee , FRA Committee

Emma Layzell :P&P Committee SEN/D Trustee

Kate Need: Vice – Chair of Trustees, HTPM Committee (Chair), Post 16 Trustee

Neil Plant : P&P Committee, H&S Trustee

Chris Toner: All committees

c) Governance Structure – Articles

Trustees considered the quotes provided and the model article document and **agreed** that they would proceed to move to model articles. Trustees discussed the three quotations, noting they were provided by legal firms with good professional reputations and that either the school or trustees had previous knowledge of working with them. The trustees selected Browne Jacobsen to undertake the work because they are known to the school, have a good reputation and offered best value for money. The Governance Lead was tasked to move this forward in conjunction with the members.

ACTION 4: The Governance Lead will contact Browne Jacobson to begin the process of moving to model articles liaising with the members.

d) Finance, Resources & Audit Committee (Q&A)

The minutes were noted. There were no questions asked.

e) Personnel & Pay Committee (Q&A)

The committee report was noted. There were no questions asked.

The meeting closed at 6.56 pm.

Signed..... Dated.....

The next meeting will be held on the 11th of May at 5pm

**Summary of Actions from:
Meeting of Tuesday 30TH March 2021**

No	Action	Who?
Action 1 Item 4 30/3/21	The Privett Centre: The F&RD will approach Hampshire County Council to discuss the release or variation of the covenant. The F&RD will liaise with the ESFA/SoS to gain agreement to market the property. The F&RD will report back to the Board at the next meeting.	JB
Action 2 Item 5 30/3/21	The F&RD will make arrangements for the use of the SRMA service and will report back to the Board.	JB
Action 3 Item 8 30/3/21	The Interim Headteacher will provide details of the Hampshire EAP scheme to trustees and will also confirm if the pupil survey will be sent out electronically.	MBR
Action 4 Item 10c 30/3/21	The Governance Lead will contact Browne Jacobson to begin the process of moving to model articles and will liaise with the members.	JH