

## Uttoxeter Learning Trust Members' General Meeting

Minutes of a general meeting of the ULT Members held remotely (via Microsoft teams) on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2021

<p><b>1. Attendance and Apologies</b></p>	<p><b>Present</b> Prof. E Barnes (Chair), Mr G Handforth, Mr M Welton (Present until 18:30)</p> <p><b>Also in attendance</b> Member and Chair of the Trust Board - Mr S Slater Chief Executive Officer - Dr S Clark, PA to Chief Executive Officer - Mrs C Gallimore.</p> <p>Mr S Rayner - Retired</p> <p>Welcome, and thank you to all who are in attendance.</p>
<p><b>2. Election of Chair</b></p>	<p>Mr S Slater nominates Prof E Barnes to remain as Chair, Mr G Handforth seconds. Prof E Barnes agrees to continue as Chair.</p>
<p><b>3. Declarations of Interest</b></p>	<p>No declarations of interest were given for agenda.</p>
<p><b>4. Minutes of Previous Members' Meeting – 14<sup>th</sup> July 2021</b></p>	<p>The minutes of the Members' general meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2021 had been previously circulated.</p> <p>It was resolved –</p> <p>That the minutes of the meetings be received and approved.</p>
<p><b>5. Matters Arising</b></p>	<p><u>Redundancy Scheme (Minute 79(a) refers)</u> Trust board has agreed to move forward with the redundancy scheme. CEO informed that this would be taken to the professional associations once further legal advice had been taken.</p> <p><u>Growth of ULT (Minute 79(b))</u> Richard Clarke has now joined the Uttoxeter Learning Trust as a full member. Bramshall Meadows draft funding agreement has just been received and circulated to Trustees. Mrs Andrea Kenny has been appointed as interim executive Headteacher for 2 years across Bramshall Meadows First School and All Saints First School in Church Leigh. A recruitment event for Bramshall Meadows was held in November with 19 families in attendance, closing date for applications is 15<sup>th</sup> January 2022.</p> <p>CEO and Chair of Trustees have been pursuing some potential schools. ULT has been invited to do a presentation in the new year.</p> <p><u>Articles of association</u> During the process of the Bramshall Meadows project the DfE have requested that the articles of association are updated in line with the Church minority articles. Following further advice from the DfE some additions from the majority articles have been processed via solicitors. Due to the change in articles it has been agreed that members have to agree to new schools joining the Trust. Draft articles were sent to Clare Shaw, diocese member and Steve Rayner, CECET. It was confirmed that there should be 5 members.</p>

	<p>Members were happy with articles of association as presented, which will now be reviewed by Trustees.</p> <p><u>Review of IT</u> A managed service provider has now been contracted to support at Windsor Park Middle School due to a short notice vacancy. There is a second managed service provider contracted to work supporting the first schools. The IT network manager is liaising with the MSP's and the schools, and this has been in place since October half term and early reports from Headteachers are positive.</p> <p>Members raised the point that centralising a lot of these services; IT, Finance, HR, would overall reduce risk and leave the Trust in a much stronger position when dealing with staff absences, tendering, cyber-attacks. CEO is in agreement however some advice will need to be <a href="#">sought</a> <del>out</del> with regards to some HR aspects in order to implement these changes.</p> <p><u>Ryecroft Middle School – Leadership</u> Mrs Julie Rudge had been appointed as executive head across Ryecroft Middle School and Thomas Alleynes High School. Trustees have agreed to appoint a permanent Headteacher at Ryecroft Middle School with Mrs Rudge resuming her full time position at Thomas Alleynes High School (TAHS). The position has been advertised with a closing date of 7<sup>th</sup> January 2022.</p> <p><u>Joint Training Sessions (Academies Handbook) – Members and Trustees</u> Academies Trust Handbook – update from Mazars (external auditors) any further training for members can be addressed in the New Year.</p>
<p><b>6. Covid-19</b></p>	<p>Overall it has been a challenging term with several Covid-19 cases in schools across the Trust.</p> <p>Risk assessments and contingency plans have been followed and there has been invaluable support from local authority. Face coverings at middle and High Schools have been reinstated following Government announcement of new variant and pupils will have lateral flow tests before returning in January.</p> <p>In terms of finance, the main costs at the moment have been due to staffing. There are possible routes to claim funding to support this however as the Trust has healthy reserves this impacts our qualification for some funding streams.</p>
<p><b>7. Minutes of Other ULT Meetings</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trustees' Board 30/06/21, 09/09/21</li> <li>• Education Committee 15/06/21, 21/09/21</li> <li>• Finance Committee 05/05/21, 23/06/21</li> </ul>	<p>Dates of meetings of the Trust Board, Education committee and Finance and Audit committee had been made available to members and the CEO confirmed that all ratified minutes of meetings could be accessed through the ULT website (<a href="http://www.uttlt.org">www.uttlt.org</a>).</p> <p>It was resolved –</p> <p>That the dates of all ULT meetings, and accessibility of minutes, be noted.</p>

<p><b>8. Chair/ CEO Report</b></p>	<p><u>Ofsted section 8 inspection Windsor Park Middle School</u>  Mr Slater highlights the aspects of the inspection. One key note was that himself, CEO and the link Trustee were interviewed together and the chair of the WPMS local Governing board was interviewed alone. There were some issues raised with the single central record (SCR). CEO and WPMS staff worked through the SCR with remote support from Insight HR to ensure all errors were rectified by Windsor Park Middles School before Ofsted left site.</p> <p>Following the inspection all LGBs were provided training on scrutinising their single central records which was led by Karen Groom director/ senior HR consultant, Insight HR. This was attended by Headteachers and Chairs of LGB. CEO will also attend all schools to perform an inspection. This has been completed for all schools except TAHS at this time. Mr Slater would like to thanks CEO for hard work in rectifying these errors and then arranging training and inspections.</p> <p>CEO has reinforced to Headteachers that it is their responsibility to ensure the SCR is accurate and up to date and completed correctly. This is not something the Trust feels they can micromanage. There will be an external safeguarding audit within 2 years and CEO will perform spot checks when there is the capacity to do so.</p> <p><u>Safeguarding and Well-being</u>  My concern, safeguarding software used to record and manage safeguarding concerns has now been implemented across the schools which was procured centrally and then recharged to schools.</p> <p><u>Trust Performance</u>  As the Trust grows, consideration will need to be given to whether its current structures and arrangements are still fit for purpose or whether fundamental principles currently informing how it operates need to change. Currently on the cusp of becoming a larger Trust and therefore there may be a need to develop the central team to become more effective.  <i>ACTION: CEO to produce report to highlight how the Trust is having an impact on schools and adding value.</i></p>
<p><b>9. Financial Update</b></p>	<p>Financial statement and external audit draft version has been presented to the finance and audit committee with the final version due to be presented to the Trust board 8<sup>th</sup> December 2021. It will be circulated to members following the trust board meeting.</p> <p>Feedback from external audit has been that the trust is a going concern with healthy reserves. Although the reserves look healthy at the moment there are plans to use them across the MAT schools.</p> <p>Internal audit of individual schools again flagged up some minor issues which raise the questions whether the central team is big enough? As CFO does not have capacity at the moment to perform spot checks.</p> <p>Discussed Hutchinson Memorial First School as is currently in deficit. Provision can be made for loans for ULT. Mrs Paula Snee, headteacher at Hutchinson Memorial First School, has met with Andy Storer, CFO and Sarah Clark, CEO to discuss plan to get school out of deficit.</p>

<p><b>10. Risk Register</b></p>	<p><u>Risk 1 – MAT Development</u> Expansion of Trust as a risk is moving forwards due to recent discussions with 2 Staffordshire schools. – risk is decreasing</p> <p><u>Risk 3 - Compliance</u> Areas of inconsistency and ensuring compliance across the Trust, systems, processes and consistency will need to be embedded. CEO has shared a paper with the finance and audit committee and CEO and CFO plan to prioritise this in January 2022. SRB meetings are proving invaluable allowing an open channel of communication with the Governing boards of all schools.</p> <p><u>Risk 6 – School performance</u> Succession within Ryecroft Middle School's senior team, this has now been addressed through the decision made by the Trust board. The advertisement for a Headteacher at Ryecroft has now gone to press with plans to have the new Head in position for the Summer term.</p> <p>Currently within TAHS there is one Deputy Headteacher and 7 Assistant Headteachers. There is, however, a limit to the level of support Mrs Rudge receives in terms of the assistant heads being in a position to support her and run the school. Mrs Rudge has proposed reducing the number of Assistant Headteachers within TAHS and instead employing 2 Deputy Headteachers.</p>
<p><b>11. Member and Trustee Recruitment</b></p>	<p><u>Vacancies within the Trust board</u> Les Trigg (Chair of Finance and Audit Committee) is due to finish at Christmas and there are also vacancies on the Members board. A ULT newsletter was sent to all schools which contained an advertisement for these vacancies and we have received a couple of responses. New School Network, School Ambassadors Program, which will offer long term support in recruiting trustees once the process of setting up has been completed.</p> <p>Mr S Slater has had a preliminary conversation with the applicant who is a qualified accountant who owns an accountancy firm in Stafford. He has also been a finance Governor at a private school for 3 years. Currently awaiting the applicants pen portrait which will be forwarded to Members once received.</p> <p><i>ACTION: Begin discussions around recruiting 2 members to replace Mr Morley and Mr Handforth.</i></p>
<p><b>12. Any Other Business</b></p>	<p>The Members Board and the ULT Trust board wish to thank Mr Handforth for his support throughout the years and wish him all the best as he moves on.</p> <p>The Members Board and the ULT Trust Board would also like to thank Mr R Sheldon, Clerk to Trustees, for his support throughout the years and wish him all the best as he moves on.</p>
<p><b>13. Date of Next Meeting</b></p>	<p>Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> April 2022 – 17:30 (Annual General Meeting – venue TBC)</p>

