

Uttoxeter Learning Trust Annual General Meeting

Minutes of the annual general meeting of the Uttoxeter Learning Trust held remotely (via Microsoft teams) on Thursday, 1 April 2021 at 5.30pm.

Present:

Members – Prof E Barnes (chair), Mr G Morley, Mr S Rayner

Member and Trustee – Mr S Slater

Trustees – Mrs V Bennett, Mr S Harper, Rev M Sherwin, Mr L Trigg

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) – Dr S Clark

Chief Finance Officer (CFO) – Mr A Storer

Clerk to the Uttoxeter Learning Trust – Mr R Sheldon

Also in Attendance:

Hutchinson Memorial CE(A) First School – Mrs P Snee (headteacher)

Oldfields Hall Middle School – Mr C Gliddon (headteacher)

Picknalls First School – Mrs A Tapp (headteacher)

Ryecroft CE(C) Middle School – Mrs R Baramuszczak (headteacher), Mr O Howlett (chair of governors)

Richard Clarke First School – Mr J Hough (chair of governors)

Thomas Alleyne's High School – Mrs J Rudge (headteacher), Mr M Prescott (chair of governors)

Windsor Park Middle School – Mrs L Wilbraham-Jones (headteacher)

Apologies:

Apologies for absence were received from:

Member – Mr G Handforth

Trustee – Mrs P Livesey

All Saints CE(C) First School – Mrs A Kenny (headteacher)

Richard Clarke First School – Mrs K Hanson (headteacher)

1. Minutes:

Minutes of the annual general meeting held on 30 April 2020 had been previously circulated.

It was resolved –

That the minutes be received and approved.

2. Annual Accounts and Report 2019/2020:

Copies of the ULT's annual accounts and report for 2019/2020 had been previously circulated and the CFO confirmed that the accounts had been submitted to the ESFA, as required, before the deadline. The accounts had been accepted.

The CFO reported that reserves had reduced by around £77K over the year due to pension liabilities. In response to a member's question, Mr Slater confirmed that, as for all academies and MATs, the Government would meet pensions liabilities should it ever prove necessary.

The CFO further reported that the auditors had identified issues around procurement and the need for regulations to be followed. The CFO confirmed that changes had been made to the ULT's Finance Policy and procedures manual to address the issues raised and the auditor was satisfied with the actions taken.

It was resolved –

That the annual accounts and report 2019/2020 be received and noted.

3. Annual report on the Work of the ULT:

Members had been previously circulated with a written annual report jointly prepared by Mr Slater, chair of trust board, and Dr Clark, CEO. Both went through the detail of the report, referring in particular to the following issues:

a) Coronavirus and impact on ULT schools

The chair of the trust board paid tribute to work undertaken by headteachers and staff colleagues to support schools and pupils during what had been a difficult year due to the pandemic. He also thanked the CEO, CFO and trustees for all the work they had also done to help ensure that pupils were kept safe and continued to receive an education.

The CEO further reported that, since the report had been written, there had been three positive covid-19 tests at Thomas Alleyne's High School and that self-isolation requirements were being followed. Thomas Alleyne's and the middle schools had also supported the LAT testing programme.

Discussion followed and members questioned in particular the gaps in pupils' learning and the challenges that lay ahead in addressing this. The chair of the trust board reported that all schools had catch-up plans in place and these had been shared with trustees. The CEO reported that school data was being collated to help identify the issues and that concerns in Maths were particularly noticeable. Support strategies would be in place as necessary to bring about improvement and further DfE guidance awaited regarding this. The CEO further reported that a Trust-wide survey had been undertaken to help develop the remote learning programme should this be necessary in the future.

Mr Gliddon reported that headteachers were targeting support in particular for the pupils most disadvantaged due to lockdown measures. He also confirmed that school recovery plans would remain under ongoing review and updated as necessary.

Mr Harper, trustee, reported that his children attended Oldfields Hall Middle School and wished to acknowledge the education they received through the school's remote learning programme. This experience had helped to ensure that they quickly settled back into school following its recent re-opening.

Mr Prescott, chair of governors, recognised the importance of individual school assessment of pupils to identify where the gaps were and this work would continue during the summer term. Local governing bodies would continue to support and challenge school improvement programmes as necessary.

b) Growth of ULT

The CEO was pleased to report that arrangements continued to be made for Richard Clarke First School to formally join the Trust from 1 May 2021. Work also continued on the new school which remained due to open in September 2022.

c) Oldfields Hall Middle School

Trustees were supporting proposals to build a sports hall and teaching block at the school to respond to a growth in pupil numbers across Uttoxeter and the wider community.

d) Recruitment

The CEO was pleased to report a small increase in pupil numbers for the Trust in September 2020 compared to 2019 and that a marketing/PR strategy was in place to help support recruitment in future years.

It was resolved –

- i) That the chair of the trust board and CEO be thanked for their joint report on the work of the ULT and that it be received.
- ii) That members also record their appreciation for the work undertaken by all associated with the ULT during what had been a challenging year.

4. School Reports:

Copies of individual school reports had been previously circulated and the chair of the trust board reported that all headteachers had been asked to prepare a brief report to highlight the work of their school during the course of the year. The reports had been previously shared with trustees who had recognised the positivity of the reports and the impact of their relationship with each other and the Trust as a whole. Headteachers reported that they welcomed the opportunity to reflect and report on all that had happened over the year. They all agreed that the support they gave each other was of real value and evidence of how well schools in the ULT were working.

It was resolved –

- i) That members thank headteachers for their informative school reports and that they be received.
- ii) That members also recognise, through the reports, how well the schools worked with each other within the Trust for the benefit of pupils and the wider community.

5. ULT Vision:

The CEO reported that the ULT's mission, vision and values statement had been re-worded but the same core values remained at its forefront, particularly in keeping all children safe and the development of learning strategies. Trustees remained committed to growth of the ULT and, through this commitment, was participating as a mentee in a new programme launched by the Regional Schools Commission (RSC) to support the development of multi-academy trusts. The mentor trust had been identified as the Ark Academy Trust. Self-assessment was currently being undertaken against the Trust capacity framework and the ULT development plan would be informed by the outcome of this review and any actions

agreed by the Ark Academy Trust leaders. Members would be kept updated on the agreed development plan to support the ULT's growth.

The CEO also reported that trustees were looking at central services currently available to schools and how they could be improved. A review of IT provision and support was currently being undertaken and others would follow on completion of this review.

It was resolved –

That members fully support strategies to strengthen and grow the ULT.

6. Record of Thanks:

The chair thanked trustees, headteachers and chairs of governors for their attendance at the meeting and the work they continued to do on behalf of the ULT and its schools.

Prof E. Barnes

Signed.....

14 July 2021

Date.....