

Uttoxeter Learning Trust Annual General Meeting

Minutes of the annual general meeting of the Uttoxeter Learning Trust held remotely (via Microsoft teams) on Thursday, 28 April 2022 at 5.30pm.

Present:

Members – Prof E Barnes (chair)

Member and Trustee – Mr S Slater

Trustees – Mrs V Bennett, Mr S Harper, Rev M Sherwin, Mr C Haswell, Mr M Welton

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) – Dr S Clark

Chief Finance Officer (CFO) – Mr A Storer

PA to CEO – Mrs C Gallimore

Also in Attendance:

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

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), Mr P Johnson (chair of governors)

Richard Clarke First School – Mrs K Hanson (Headteacher), Mr D Hindhaugh (assistant Headteacher), Mr J Hough (chair of governors)

Thomas Alleyne's High School – Mrs J Rudge (headteacher), Mr M Osbourne-Town (vice Chair of governors)

Windsor Park Middle School – Mrs L Wilbraham-Jones (headteacher), Mr D Goodfellow (chair of governors)

1. Apologies:

Apologies for absence were received from:

Trustee – Mrs P Livesey

Ryecroft CE(C) Middle School – Mrs A Grattage (headteacher)

2. Minutes:

Minutes of the annual general meeting held on 1 April 2021 had been previously circulated.

Mr Slater offered an amends for Item 2. **Annual Accounts and Report 2019/2020**

“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 hopefully meet pensions liabilities should it ever prove necessary.”

No other amends were offered and the minutes were approved.

3. Annual Accounts and Financial Report 2020/2021:

Annual reports were shared prior to the meeting and all in attendance were reminded that reports can also be found on the ULT website.

Mr Storer informed members that the audit report and financial statements are unqualified and for the assurance report on irregularity there is nothing to report. Therefore, both reports are positive and clear. These were submitted to ESFA and the copies are available on the ULT website. In summary the reports show the asset funds and reserves have increased throughout the year ending August 2021. The Fixed asset reserve also increased throughout the year, the combined increase was £1.2 million. This increase has been offset by the allowance of the pension provision which is £1.8 million therefore overall showing a reduction of £650,000. The pension is underwritten by the Government and will not be a Trust liability. Reserves across the schools as a whole have increased.

Mr Osbourne-Town enquired whether all schools currently have reserves? Mr Storer directed Mr Osbourne-Town to Page 66 of the accounts which breaks down each school. One academy currently has a shortfall and there is a plan in place to address this during the next financial year.

Mrs Rudge asked whether any schools had drawn on central funds. Mr Storer confirmed none had for the financial year ending August 2021.

Mr Slater thanked Mr Storer and Members accepted the financial reports.

4. Annual report on the Work of the ULT 2021/2022:

Dr Clark reported to Members on the challenging year schools had faced with the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic. The ULT is extremely proud of all the staff, families and students who have pulled together during this difficult time.

The Uttoxeter Learning Trust was very happy to welcome The Richard Clarke First School as a full member of the Trust following a period as an associate member. Their experience can now be used as a case study for prospective schools who are considering becoming part of the ULT.

The ULT are excited for the opening of the Bramshall Meadows First School in September 2022. During the year Mrs Cairns was appointed executive Headteacher across Bramshall Meadows and All Saints CoE First School.

There are also plans for a new sports hall and teaching block at Oldfields Hall Middle School. At a cabinet meeting in September 2021 the project was approved and a steering group has been established.

Dr Clark was pleased to report there has been considerable interest from several schools in Stone interested in joining the ULT. The dialogue with schools is ongoing and Dr Clark will be sure to update members as it progresses.

The central team and the services it can provide have been under review. The IT provision was strengthened across the Trust with the support of a MSP provision to work alongside the talented IT technicians within the Trust.

The examinations and outcomes at the end of the last academic year, which were based on teacher assessment, showed a pleasing set of results. At Thomas Alleyne's High School, Year 11 and Year 13 showed improvements compared with 2019 in relation to English and Maths 5+ and attainment 8. At post 16 the average point score had progressed from an average of C in 2019 to a B- in 2021.

Outcomes for key stage 2 attainment exceeded the national comparison across the middle schools for reading and SPAG. Additional work on writing and maths is required following the challenges of the pandemic, these have become a priority for this academic year.

In the first schools the phonics result had again exceeded national averages. Windsor Park Middle School had a successful section 8 Ofsted inspection in September 2021 and the ULT was very pleased with their outcome.

Hutchinson CoE First school also had a section 8 Ofsted inspection and have retained their 'Outstanding' judgement. Hutchinson will expect a section 5 inspection within the next 12 months.

There was a ransomware attack on one of our schools within the MAT. This was addressed quickly and along with an external cyber response company the IT team addressed the issues. The ICO have confirmed that no regularity action is required.

A key priority across the MAT, as a mixture of non-faith and faith schools, is to ensure the Christian ethos is developed across the Trust. This is incorporated into appraisal policies and objectives for key members of staff. The leadership team at Windsor Park Middle school has been supporting schools and providing training for Governors from feeder schools and developing plans in relation to SIAMS. Thank you to Rev. Margaret Sherwin who has supported the schools with visits and guidance during the last year.

With recruitment and staff development during the last year at Ryecroft CoE Middle School, there was a leadership opportunity and Mrs Rudge was appointment as executive Headteacher for Ryecroft Middle School and Thomas Alleyne's High School. This has provided opportunities for senior leaders within those schools to step up and take on additional responsibilities. We are pleased to welcome Mrs Annie Grattage to the team at Ryecroft CoE Middle School as headteacher after the Easter holidays. Mrs Rudge will support Mrs Grattage in the role for the first term.

The ULT is pleased to welcome a new trustee Mr Colin Haswell who brings with him his expertise in HR. The ULT plans to carry out an external review of Governance in the near future.

The Trust articles of association have been updated in relation to the latest model of Church of England minority articles these have now been approved by the Dfe.

Safeguarding and well-being remains a key priority across the Trust. An online platform, MyConcern, has been procured for use in all school across the Trust. A priority going forward is producing a staff well-being charter and we were very pleased that Picknalls First School achieved a Silver mental health award from Leeds Beckett University. In addition, Windsor Park, Oldfields, Thomas Alleyne's and All Saints are all successfully applying to the senior mental health training plan.

Following the internal audits Dr Clark and Mr Storer discussed with school strategies to strengthen provision and improve performance.

A number of successful CIF projects have been taking place this year, including mechanical refurbishment projects at Picknalls First School and All Saints, roof replacement at Hutchinson and also a fire reform project at Thomas Alleyne's High School. A number of bids have been submitted this year and we expect the outcome in the summer term.

The redundancy consultation, which began in January 2020 and was paused during the Covid-19 pandemic, is being revisited with staff.

Professor Barnes enquires on the impact of losing teaching school status and what has that meant for the Trust?

Dr Clark informed that the impact of this change is still unfolding. The ULT has close links with the John Taylor Teaching Hub and Mrs Rudge sits on the strategic board for the teaching hub. The ULT is looking for further opportunities to develop across the Trust and tier meetings for headteachers have been key. The ULT is also aware that further discussion with Governors and headteachers is required to ensure we can capitalise on the expertise within the MAT.

Mrs Rudge also informs that there has been a drop in funding as a result of losing teaching school status. There was also a change of staffing at Thomas Alleyne's as the posts which were directly linked to the teacher school were removed.

Mrs Rudge informed Members one of the impacts is the loss of regular staff CPD which now seems to be missing. The teaching school hub will take this on but is still in the process of growing this provision.

Mr Slater informed Members that the ULT are aware of this loss and are keen to develop support in this area to ensure all gaps are filled. The point of staff training is also a key issue raised in the White paper.

Mr Osbourne-Town congratulated Oldfields Hall Middle school on securing the funding for their sports hall and new teaching block.

Mr Osbourne-Town also asked Dr Clark to elaborate on the ongoing redundancy consultation? Dr Clark informed members of the process the redundancy consultation has taken since it had begun in January 2020. Dr Clark informed members that following the consultation process with both colleagues and unions the proposed offer of 2 times capped has been communicated with colleagues.

Mrs Rudge highlighted to members that although the data for exam results show an increase, Mrs Rudge would like to voice her concerns that there should be caution when making comparisons between 2019 and 2021 for both A level and GCSE's.

Mr Slater, on behalf of members, would like to thank all for their contributions to the annual report.

Mr Slater, on behalf of Member, accepts the annual report.

Mr Slater, on behalf of Members, would like to thank all Headteachers, Governors, Trustees and Staff for their hard work, commitment and determination during a very difficult year.

5. Strategic Plan and Priorities

Following the recent publication of the white paper in which MAT's are advised to aim for 10 schools or 7000+ students, the MAT have been working towards expanding as it currently sits at 9 schools, 3000+ students.

The Uttoxeter Learning Trust is focused on moving forward with expansion plans and Mr Slater highlights the importance of finding schools which fit with the ULT beliefs and ethos.

Dr Clark highlights other areas of ULT focus including ensuring a continuous cycle of school improvement across the Trust, further engaging with our community and workforce and ensuring that we are addressing workload, embedding and developing strategic Governance and ensuring strong financial management.

Mr Osbourne-Town feels that becoming a larger MAT will combat the issue of the ULT becoming too insular. Mr Osbourne-Town felt that the presentation to Stone schools was very professional and received well.

Dr Clark summarised the meeting with 8 Stone schools during which Mrs Hanson also presented on Richard Clarke's experience of coming into the Trust recently. All felt the meeting was positively received. There will be further meetings arranged over the coming weeks with the high school and a number of other schools.

6. School Reports

Mr Slater, on behalf of Members, would like to thank schools for their reports. Mr Slater invited any questions on the received reports.

Mr Gliddon would like to highlight the support he has received from colleagues across the MAT particularly during the pandemic. Mr Gliddon highlights it has been a particularly challenging time and the effects of the pandemic are still being felt within schools with pupils requiring additional support for mental health and well-being. Mr Gliddon would like to pass on to Members how impressed he has been by the response in schools which has enabled schools to maintain a high level of education and support to pupils.

Mrs Rudge and Mrs Cairns also echo the importance of the support they have received from the Trust during the pandemic which has been invaluable.

7. Member and Trustee Vacancies

Colin Haswell has been appointed, through the Ambassador’s programme, as a new Trustee. Colin has a background in HR and the Trust are grateful to welcome him.

There are currently vacancies for 2 Members and a finance and audit Trustee.

Mr Slater informed Members that Mr Oldham has also tendered his resignation from the Trust Board due to work commitments therefore there will be another vacancy within the Trust board.

Mr Slater invites Members to contact him directly should anyone have any suggestions of possible candidates.

8. Any Other Business

Professor Liz Barnes, on behalf of Members, would like to thank all those who were in attendance.

9. Date of Next AGM: Thursday 30th March 2023, 5:30pm

Signed.....

Date.....