

Uttoxeter Learning Trust Annual General Meeting

Minutes of the annual general meeting of the Uttoxeter Learning Trust held remotely (via Microsoft teams) on Thursday, 30 April 2020 at 5.30pm.

Present:

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

Member and Trustee – Mr S Slater

Trustees – 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

Apologies:

Apologies for absence were received from:

Member – Mrs C Shaw

Trustee – Mrs V Bennett

1. Minutes:

Minutes of the annual general meeting held on 11 April 2019 had been previously circulated.

It was resolved –

That the minutes be received and approved subject to the following amendment:

Minute 2 - Annual accounts and report had been received for the year 2017/2018 (not 2018/2019).

2. Annual Accounts and Report 2018/2019:

Copies of the ULT's annual accounts and report for 2018/2019 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 expenditure for the year was greater than the income but that this was due to the accounting procedures for CIF bid funding. He further reported that there were no issues in the accounts to cause concern and that the issues outlined in the annual report, relating to the use of school credit cards and hospitality, had been addressed as necessary.

It was resolved –

That the annual accounts and report 2018/2019 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

All schools remained partially open for vulnerable children and children of NHS staff and other key workers. All other pupils were being supported by distance learning programmes. School safeguarding policies had been revised as necessary to ensure the health and well-being of all staff and students in school. On-line safety policies had also been implemented in accordance with local and national guidance.

Discussion followed and consideration given to the arrangements made by schools to support pupils through distant learning programmes and associated problems with pupils being able to access the appropriate technology. The CEO reported that this was a challenge although schools were doing everything possible to supply pupils with technology support where necessary. Mr Handforth and Mr Morley talked about their understanding of this matter and identified companies that could perhaps offer some support for the ULT. The importance of connectivity with pupils, not just access to equipment, was recognised. The CEO undertook to follow this up and would keep trustees informed.

b) New School

A project board had been established for the new school and meetings continued with the local authority and DfE as necessary. The new school was scheduled to open in September 2021 but that may not prove possible due to current building restrictions. As such contingency plans were being considered, including delaying the opening of the new school in September 2022.

The CEO further reported that the Admissions policy for the new school had been agreed and the local authority had agreed to release £11K to support initial work. Trustees would continue to monitor progress, with a focus on opening in September 2021 if possible.

c) Growth of ULT

The CEO was pleased to report that the governing body of Richard Clarke First School had agreed to join the ULT on a permanent basis and that arrangements were in hand to complete this as soon as possible.

The continued growth of the ULT remained a key priority and the CEO reported that a marketing and PR strategy was being developed with support from SERO, a company with expertise in this field. Trustees were currently identifying appropriate strategies and would go out to tender for work as necessary.

d) School Performance

School performance was being closely monitored by the ULT Education committee and tracking systems in place to identify where improvement strategies were necessary. The CEO would work with headteachers to develop appropriate improvement plans and that trustees would monitor the impact of those strategies. Mr Slater and Mr Sutcliffe (trustees) had undertaken a review of the 6th form at Thomas Alleyne's High School which had been useful in helping to identify improvement strategies.

e) School Inspections

Members were informed that Ofsted inspections had been undertaken at the following two ULT schools since the last AGM:

- Thomas Alleyne's High – good
- Picknalls First – good with outstanding features

External reviews were being undertaken at other ULT schools in preparation for forthcoming Ofsted inspections.

It was resolved –

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.

4. ULT Vision, Values and Strategy:

The chief executive officer confirmed that the ULT's vision, values and strategy remained a key priority and, as previously reported, marketing and PR strategies were being developed to make the ULT attractive for both students and schools to join in the future. Members would be kept updated on the impact of the strategies.

It was resolved –

That members fully support strategies to strengthen the identity of the ULT and how it is viewed by others.

5. Record of Thanks:

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

Signed.....
Prof E Barnes

Date.....
16 July 2020