

Uttoxeter Learning Trust (ULT)

Minutes of the Meeting of the Trust Board held in a virtual setting on Monday 28 March, 2022 at 5.30 p.m.

Present: Mr. Slater (Chair), Dr. Clark (CEO), Rev. Sherwin, Mr. Harper,
Ms. Livesey, Mrs. Bennett, Mr. Haswell

In attendance: Mr. Davies (Clerk to the Trust Board)

1 Welcome:

Trustees were welcomed to today's meeting by the Chair. A special welcome was extended to Mr. Haswell who was attending his first Trust Board meeting in his new role. There were a number of items to move through at today's meeting with the Chair ensuring discussions moved at a fairly rapid pace to ensure all key decisions were made and minuted within this forum. The Clerk/CEO had ensured any relevant documentation had been shared with Trustees in advance of today's meeting along with a clear and purposeful agenda.

The meeting was quorate.

2 Apologies:

Resolved: That apologies for absence be received and accepted from Mr. Storer and Mr. Sutcliffe.

3 Chair Power to Act:

The Chair confirmed he had taken the following actions on behalf of the Trust Board since the last meeting:

- Approached Mr. Haswell about taking up the role of Trustee within the ULT.
- Signed the Funding Agreement for Bramshall Meadows First School. It was confirmed that Mrs. Bennett had also added her signature to this document.
- Discussed with the CEO the steps that needed to be taken to put in place an Independent Review Panel at Thomas Alleyne's High School to review a permanent exclusion decision. The CEO outlined the various protocols that need to be adhered to in terms of this panel hearing which all need to be completed within a very short timeframe.
- Investigated whether the Trust could tap into the School Rebuilding Programme. Unfortunately, it was reported that the Trust does not meet the eligibility criteria for this particular funding stream.
- Supported the recruitment and selection process for a new Headteacher at Ryecroft C of E Middle School. It was reported a successful appointment has been made to this key leadership post.
- Attended a meeting with the Regional School's Commissioner (RSC) on 01.03.22. The Chair confirmed the discussions were positive with the Trust potentially benefitting

from an SRMA visit in the near future as well as receiving some support around the Trust's future strategic growth. Trustees welcomed these developments.

- Agreed to a tender for an external review of governance. It was confirmed the last external governance review was undertaken by Entrust in December 2018.

Resolved: That Trustees fully endorse the actions taken by the Chair of the Trust Board in each of the identified areas.

4 Declarations of Interest:

No declarations of interest were made by Trustees in respect of any items appearing on today's agenda.

5 Minutes of the Previous Meeting:

Resolved: That the Minutes of the Trust Board held on Thursday 10 February, 2022 (including Confidential Appendix) be approved as an accurate and true record.

Resolved: That the Minutes, Agenda and all reports and other papers considered at the meeting be made available for inspection if required.

The Clerk will sign and date the ratified minutes on behalf of the Chair. This task is important to ensure the PA to the CEO can ensure there is an electronic copy of historical minutes, retained for future reference and audit purposes.

6 Matters Arising:

The CEO was invited to provide a brief verbal update of any matters arising from the February minute record. The following summary points can be noted:

1.1 – CIF Bids

It was confirmed that the outcomes of the various CIF bids submitted by schools will be known in the coming weeks.

1.2 – Asset Management Planning and School Rebuilding Programme

The latter of these two areas has already been referenced in these minutes. The CEO confirmed a provider has been secured to support the Asset Management Planning process with dates for surveys currently being shared with schools.

1.3 – All Saint's Roof

The CEO confirmed the CIF bid has been resubmitted with a report including quotes from Entrust imminent. The details of the proposed term of loan for the roof repair were shared.

1.4 – Articles of Association

Trustees were informed that the final few steps have been taken in terms of approving the recent updates to the 'Articles'. The necessary information has been shared with the Charities Commission which is the last stage prior to them being formally considered fit for purpose.

1.5 – Cyber-Security Attack

The various actions that have been taken since the publication of the report by 'CyberClan' were shared. Notable updates included the ICO confirming regulatory action is not required; the generation of an action plan to strengthen a future response to an attack and an awareness that RPA insurance will include cyber-security provision from September 2022.

1.6 – ULT Central Team

This item was covered later in the meeting.

1.7 – School Resource Management Self-Assessment (SRMSA) Checklist

It was confirmed this checklist has been completed and submitted by the required deadline.

1.8 – Ryecroft C of E Middle School

It was reported that the formal appointment of the new Headteacher after Easter has been confirmed. There was a discussion at this point about the structure of the leadership team in the mid to long-term – **see Confidential Appendix.**

7 CFO Finance Report:

In the absence of the CFO, the Chair and CEO took Trustees through this particular agenda item.

1.1 – Review of Central Team

The Chair confirmed that the necessary due diligence around this issue had already been carried out at committee level where some good challenge-based discussions had taken place. The following posts as approved by the Finance and Audit Committee were put to the Trust Board for formal ratification at today's meeting:

1. That the post of CFO be increased from 0.6 to 1.0.
2. That a post to support First School Finance functions to be appointed, and expected to in the region of 0.4 FTE.
3. That a full-time post be advertised with a premises/facilities and health and safety operating remit. This post will be accommodated within the Central Team in the first instance.
4. That the post of PA to the CEO be increased from one to two days a week for the next academic year, during which plans for the permanent appointment could be reviewed.

Resolved: That all recommended posts be ratified with immediate effect.

The CEO and Chair will now look to put in place the relevant recruitment activities where they are needed. The implications for the top slice and a possible increase will be discussed as will the timeframes for when these uplifted/new posts will take effect.

Resolved: That the CEO/Chair liaise over next steps as needed. Trustees can expect an update on how these matters have been progressed at the next Trust Board meeting.

1.2 – Gender Pay Report

The CEO confirmed what the Trust is expected to document and publish each year around this core theme. Trustees can expect to receive the relevant reports around gender pay before they are published online from the CFO. This point was noted by Trustees.

8 Risk Register:

The CEO confirmed that the necessary scrutiny has been applied to the Trust Risk Register at committee level. Other than to confirm the notable tweaks that have been made to this document since the last Trust Board meeting and reflecting on the degree to which health and safety is a current risk (until the necessary mitigation has been put in place) there were no specific challenges from Trustees at today's meeting.

9 CEO Report – Other ULT Matters:

The CEO was asked to report on any other ULT matters that needed to be brought to Trustees' attention at today's meeting.

1.1

The CEO confirmed a point that had been highlighted at the Education Committee – i.e. the Trust has agreed with HR/SCC that staff do not have to face Covid-related absence impacting on their Bradford score when restrictions around the pandemic come to an end on 1 April. This message is currently being shared with all school. There was also confirmation provided that despite the easing of restrictions on 1 April, school leaders will continue to adopt existing practices for at least another month until the position is then reviewed again on 01.05.22. The rationale behind this decision was shared, with the Trust keen to support this transition period for school leaders as some sense of normality starts to return. Trustees also shared their perspectives from their professional roles in terms of how the easing of restrictions is playing out across the private/public sector.

1.2

The CEO confirmed the actions that have been completed to date in terms of carrying out a Wellbeing Survey across the Trust. Headteachers have been suitably engaged in this process with the outcomes to be shared with Trustees at a future meeting. There was also confirmation that the Trust will be looking to work towards the education staff wellbeing charter in the coming months that is a declaration of support for, and set of commitments to, the wellbeing and mental health of everyone working in education. As progress is secured in this area, updates will be shared with Trustees.

1.3

The CEO confirmed that some work is going on behind the scenes on securing a greater consistency around curriculum intent across the Trust and securing some external CPD to support Subject Leaders with deep dives into their respective curriculum areas. Various lines of enquiry are being pursued at the present time to ensure that any CPD that is delivered is as impactful as possible.

1.4

Various actions that have been taken in relation to Bramshall Meadows First School were shared. These actions included staffing appointments, promotional activity around school places and arranging for the handover of the building which is still on track for the end of June.

1.5

The CEO confirmed that a meeting date with the JNCC and Karen Groom (Senior Insight HR Advisor) has been agreed to take place on 29.03.22 to discuss the Redundancy Scheme. She also informed Trustees that she is seeking further advice if the revised offer (outlined by the Chair) is not accepted. An update on these discussions will be provided at a future meeting as schools will need to be informed.

1.6

The CEO confirmed she has contacted the Stone schools to gather some feedback on the promotional pitch that had been delivered to secure prospective new academy partners. Trustees were informed that the ULT has now been invited to a follow up meeting to present its offer in more detail. When a date is finalised, the CEO will be reaching out to Trustees for support in this particular area.

10 Impact of ULT:

The following areas were discussed:

1.1 – Feedback from Trustees in relation to Impact

The Chair reiterated his request that Trustees email him three ways that Trustees and board-related activities have impacted on the ULT in a positive way over the course of the last 12 months.

Resolved: That Trustees respond to this request.

The Chair confirmed how the responses from Trustees and additional engagement from Headteachers in this area will feed into the AGM and the annual impact statement that will be produced.

1.2 – Link Trustees

This matter has been discussed at a previous meeting and the Chair was keen to firm up two particular aspects at today's meeting – firstly, the nature of any relationship with a linked school and secondly, whether Trustees were happy with their assigned strategic area of responsibility. On the first point, there was some good discussion around the nature of any future engagement with Rev. Sherwin confirming she was happy to draft some words around the Link Trustee's remit that can be shared with all schools.

Resolved: That Rev. Sherwin take account of this action and share any output with the Chair.

On the second point, Trustees confirmed they were happy with their allocated areas of strategic responsibility. The CEO and newly appointed Trustees will discuss an area to which they can be assigned.

Resolved: That the CEO/Mr. Haswell progress this action.

1.3 – Training for Trustees and Governors

The CEO confirmed that Boards at a local level are being asked to carry out skills audits so any training needs can be identified. From a Trustee perspective, all attendees are aware that they need to access any relevant CPD when instructed to do so. The CEO will continue to monitor this area closely to ensure any statutory requirements are being met.

11 Committees:

The Minutes of the Education Committee (23.11.21 and 01.02.22) and the Minutes of the Finance and Audit Committee (01.12.21 and 08.02.22) had been shared with Trustees in advance of today's meeting.

Resolved: That all circulated minutes be ratified with immediate effect.

The Chair of the Education Committee (Rev. Sherwin) and Vice-Chair of the Finance and Audit Committee (Mrs. Bennett) then provided a verbal update on the key headlines that had come out of the Education Committee (14.03.22) and Finance and Audit Committee (24.03.22) respectively. These minutes will be available for the next Trust Board meeting. Trustees noted the supplied information.

12 Policy Ratification:

There were three policies/documents that needed to be formally ratified at today's meeting:

- ULT Pay Policy
- ULT Governors and Trustees – Code of Conduct – Spring 2022
- ULT Complaints Policy.

The CEO confirmed where any tweaked had been made to the circulated documents/policies. Other than to suggest some small amendments to the wording in the Code of Conduct, Trustees were happy to formally ratify these documents.

Resolved: That the policies/documents be ratified with immediate effect.

As an aside, there was a discussion around the minimum requirement in terms of Trustee attendance at meetings on an annual basis. There was also some discussion around the protocols for signing the Code of Conduct given many meetings are still taking place in a remote capacity.

Resolved: That the Chair/CEO take these matters away for further consideration outside of today's meeting.

13 Any Other Business:

There was no additional business on this occasion.

14 Confidentiality:

Trustees were asked to identify if there were any items/materials which needed to be excluded from any Agenda, Minutes, reports or other papers discussed at the meeting which would normally be made available for inspection following the meeting.

Trustees were also asked to identify any items included on the Agenda which require recording in a Confidential Appendix to the Minutes.

Resolved: That it be identified that the following item needed to be recorded in a Confidential Appendix to the Minutes:

- Minute 6 – 1.8.

There were no items/materials identified for exclusion.

15 Dates and Times of Future Meetings:

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Tuesday 17 May, 2022 at 5.30 p.m.

All that was left to do was for the Chair to thank all Trustees for their attendance and contributions to today's meeting,

The meeting was brought to a close.

Mr. Slater
PP P. Davies – Clerk

17.05.22

Chair

Date

Uttoxeter Learning Trust (ULT)

Minutes of the Meeting of the Trust Board held in a virtual setting
on Monday 28 March, 2022 at 5.30 p.m.

Action Matrix

Minute	Owner	Action Required	Action Update
3	CEO	Make February minutes available if requested.	
3	Clerk	Sign February minutes and email them to PA of CEO.	
7	CEO/Chair	Progress recruitment-based activities linked to agreed new posts.	
10	Trustees	Email Chair with thoughts on Trustee/Board impact over course of last 12 months.	
10	Rev. Sherwin	Email some thoughts on Link Trustee's operating remit to Chair.	
10	CEO/Mr. Haswell	Determine area of strategic responsibility.	
12	CEO/Chair	Take away issues (attendance/signing of Code) and determine next steps.	

Date of next meeting: Tuesday 17 May, 2022 at 5.30 p.m