



**MINUTES of a Meeting of the Directors of the Academy Trust,
held via video conference on Thursday 8th July 2021 at 7.00 pm**

Present:

Simon Bamford (SB)	Vicki Hamilton (VH)
Geoff Braham (GB)	Neil McIntosh (NM)*
Will Bromage (WB)	Sarah Parish (SP)
Alan Broomhead (AB)	Jan Seal-Roberts (JSR) – Chair
Linda Burton (LB)	Catherine Roche (CR)
Ken Coveney (KC)	Annie Temple (AT)
Alan Dunstan (AD)	Clive Watts (CB)
Jean-Francois Fava-Verde (JF)	Graham Webber (GW)
Jesse Cleverley (JC)**	

*Left at 9.00pm

**Previously sent apologies that he would have to leave at 9.00pm

Apologies:

Dawn Challis (DC) – School Business Manager
Lucy Phipps (LP)

In attendance:

Jo Cundy (JCu) – Clerk

Governor challenge is shown in red

1. Introduction

- Quorum was confirmed.
- Apologies tendered were accepted.
- No substantive items were notified for AOB.
- No governor declared a material interest in any agenda item.
- As the first point of the meeting JSR asked governors if they were in agreement that this meeting could be held remotely - this was agreed by all governors.

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2. ATB meeting, 13th May 2021

2.1. Minutes which had been circulated were approved as an accurate record, and were signed by JSR. These will be dropped into school for filing.

2.2. Review of Actions/Matters arising: Unless otherwise discussed, assigned actions had been completed. Matters arising not covered by the current agenda were considered:

- Complete Prevent and GDPR training (item 2.2) – JC has nearly completed the training. **Action:** JC to complete by 1st September 2021
- The second Ofsted Inspection Framework informational session will take place in the autumn term.
- Governor expertise skills list – what are the gaps? VH to draw up a list of any real gaps that we might aim to fill (including fundraising, legal expertise, police connections, media and public relations). **Action:** VH
- Unfortunately, the Wolfson Foundation bid was unsuccessful, failing at the first hurdle (item 5). The grant was heavily contested and Langtree simply did not fit the profile.

3. Headteacher's Section: SB presented the report which had been previously circulated. Discussion raised the following points:

- **Will school uniform return to normality in the Autumn?** SB said that the uniform requirements had been relaxed due to Covid, during which time students had been allowed to wear their PE kits into school. The expectation has now moved back to getting changed for PE in school. A number of students have petitioned against this, the main reason cited is loss of PE time. SB will listen to the students; he has directed the issue to the Student Council who will present their case to him.
- Staff and students are very tired, it's been a difficult year. The well-being indicators are generally that they are as well as can be expected. Exclusions seem to have settled down.
- The LADO conducted a safeguarding visit. There were no major concerns regarding the site security.
- There are a rising number of students with EHCPs, with six more expected in September (and two having left in Yr 11). This will obviously stretch the TA support, so two new TAs have now been recruited. **Is Langtree receiving more children with EHCPs compared to other local secondary schools?** Langtree is in line with the national average but, as a small school, there is less on-site provision, such as an Educational Psychologist for example. AT noted that there has been a rise nationally in numbers of pupils with ECHPs. **Does Langtree have the kind of support that these pupils need?** The needs can be very profound but it is the behaviour needs, such as not accepting authority, which tend to be more difficult and requiring more one-to-one support.
- Maiden Erlegh Trust has approached Langtree and Gillotts regarding the possibility of setting up a combined sixth form facility on the Maiden Erlegh site. There appears to be little benefit to Langtree or Gillotts - and this has already been communicated as an initial response from both schools - but we will continue to liaise with them. A coordinated pupil place planning system is overdue to ensure that the right number of pupil places are available in the right location. None was provided in 2020 (due to Covid) but an updated PPP Report is expected in late August 21. Expectations are

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that the number of pupils coming up through primary will be reducing over the coming years will be lower than previously, so this requires careful monitoring. SB will be sharing this report with JSR and AB, and we will raise this for discussion at the Oct FGB meeting. **Action:** SB, JSR and AB to report back in Oct FGB.

- There has been a drop off in student compliance, and also teacher utilization, of Show My Homework (SMHW). Governors with pupils at Langtree agreed that they have noticed less homework is being set via the SMHW platform. AT noted that there have been a lot of assessments taking place in school which some students are struggling with, it is important to find the right balance. **Will the use of SMHW form part of teaching staff's objectives for next year to ensure improved compliance?** It will be for some teachers, yes.

4. Year in review of 2021

- SDP 2021/22 – Initial Thoughts: Governors were pleased to see an additional Priority within the School Development Plan: **Review and develop well-being, personal development and learning behaviours.** Governors noted that this should include staff and suggested that perhaps the Summary page should be re-worded. SB said that behind the SDP top-level summary there are separate actions for both pupils and staff.
- School day consultation: The results from the student, parent and staff consultation regarding the proposed restructuring of the school day were circulated prior to the meeting. Key proposed changes include an earlier start time, shorter lunch break, and ending the school day 30 minutes earlier. SB reported that the proposal has been widely discussed, and that Langtree is working with the local primary school and other key stakeholders. Parents have been consulted, and 51 parent/carers had so far responded (representing 68 students, a response rate of 12.5%). It seemed that the main concern was how students would be collected if parents are working or collecting siblings from other schools, or if a public bus service did not allow immediate departure from school (e.g. the X40 to Reading). SB advised that a homework club will be provided after school to allow for student supervision. The results show that the respondents are generally supportive of the proposal. **Is the expectation that parents/carers who are not happy have spoken out?** Yes. **With a late lunch and one lesson afterwards, will students struggle to continue learning? Should the day be more balanced, with an earlier lunch?** The research from other schools suggests that this proposed model works most effectively. Most pupils have something to eat at break time. There is no plated food available but it does adhere to the school's healthy eating guidelines. SB thought cheesy chips and pizza – arguably not ideal. **During lockdown students have missed out on being together socially, having 10 minutes less at lunch time is disappointing.** JSR said that in view of some of the governors' reaction, and with only 12.5% feedback, it seems that it might be unwise to implement without trying to obtain a wider response. SB proposed to run with the proposal and re-assess at the end of the Autumn Term.

Note added after meeting by JSR: since this, SB has notified governors as follows:

Following the meeting I did send out a request to parents who had not completed the

survey to do so - and as always our parents came through. We have now had 124 responses - representing over 160 of the students - this is nearly a third of the student body given that current year 11 are not affected. I would have preferred a greater proportion of responses - but I think this represents enough of a mandate to proceed. I attach a tracking of the analysis as it has come in.

I also carried out an extremely unscientific discussion with all year groups and they all (with the exception of one lad who preferred the current system) preferred the new structure. I asked directly about the 20 minute later lunchtime and not a single student expressed any concern. They would however, fully support a more nutritious and broader range of food which is something we definitely intend to work on.

Once the new system has bedded in we will carry out a full and honest review and tweak or change the day according to stakeholders' views.

NM and JC left the meeting at 9pm

- What worked well during lockdown:
 - Staff and student well-being was seen as a strength. The keeping in touch teams did great work with their communication with parents and students throughout all lockdowns.
 - The modified timetable was very successful with reduced movement around the school and staggered starts, however the reduced lunch time of 20 minutes wasn't ideal.
 - The Lateral Flow Testing (LFT) was a huge success, and there has been high take-up of LFTs being done at home.
 - The Learning Coaches proved valuable catch-up for students who were behind. The National Tutoring Programme has also been a success - but did decline after the first two months.
 - Huge progress has been made with IT, the video lessons, interactive live lessons and mini whiteboards were all very successful.

Negatives were hard to find, it was a real team effort with everybody chipping in. Areas which didn't work as well during lockdown:

- Visualisers need development with staff
- SDP – due to the need to react to the ever-changing situation during the pandemic, the school did not have good opportunity to move forward as we'd hoped
- Variability in monitoring and feedback and effecting change proved challenging

JSR congratulated SB for managing the situation so well, and remarked that it was very encouraging to see how Langtree was aiming to bring some real positive change out of what had been such a difficult time.

5. School budget 2021/22 – draft for discussion and sign-off

AB reported that the School Business Manager, SB and the Finance committee had worked on the draft budget for a number of months. In summary, there are diminishing in-year surpluses for the first three years, after which there are significant deficits in years 4 and 5. The current assumption is that funding stays level - but that there will be pay rises and rising costs. Capex is also not taken into consideration. The £327,653 deficit in year 5 is largely caused by the bulge year leaving - but even without that, there would still be a serious deficit. In 2022/23 it might be

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prudent to start thinking about what could be done to improve the budget in later years. Nonetheless, we have been in this position before, having many unknowns in future years which cannot currently be easily predicted. The Finance committee had approved the 2021/22 budget for FGB for approval, and AB was happy to recommend it to governors. **Do you have any concerns?** A budget which falls off a cliff is obviously not ideal - but this is how school budgets currently seem to be. **What could be done to prevent the drop off?** At the moment we're not sure what, but any adjustments would need to be significant to save about £250,000 - perhaps curriculum reduction. Sizable reserves are being carried forward. After careful consideration and discussion, governors approved the 2021/22 draft school budget.

6. Governor updates

a) General

- i) Governing body membership – update. Geoff Braham and Will Bromage have both tendered their resignation from the governing board effective from the end of term (22 July 21). Governors thanked Geoff and Will for all they have done for Langtree over the years. There are three governor vacancies to fill, so governors were asked to advise JSR of anyone who might be interested. JSR advised that the senior governors team (SGT) consisting of JSR, AB, VH and GW had met during the previous week for their annual review meeting, which included discussing the Committees, the governing board structure and any succession planning. The overall feeling was that in the absence of anyone else coming forward, all four were happy with the current organisation, and recommended going forward into 21/22 with the present structure and chairs unchanged, if all governors were happy with this. However, it would be good to have some form of self-assessment process, and the SGT will be giving some thought to this in the coming months. JSR thanked the senior governors and the whole governing body for all they have done over the past year.
- ii) School Business Manager – update. Dawn Challis will be taking early retirement. Interviews for Dawn's replacement are taking place next week. Dawn has kindly offered to provide support either before the vacancy fills and/or when the new person is in post.
- iii) A Governor open morning is long overdue, and governors are keen to get back into school – hopefully in Oct 21. **Action:** SB to suggest some dates

b) Committee reports

- i) **Finance and General Purposes:** Minutes of 22nd June 21 had been circulated.
 - The Academy Trust Handbook mentioned an external review of governance. AB has looked into this and Langtree does not need to conduct an external review.
- ii) **Curriculum and Standards:** Minutes of 15th June 21 had been circulated.
 - There were no additional comments as everything had already been covered in 3. Headteacher's report.

- iii) **Pastoral & Community:** Minutes of 28th June 21 had been circulated.
 - Ofsted have produced a report about peer on peer sexual abuse and harassment in schools. The report states that sexual harassment is so common in schools that pupils believe it is pointless to report it. Langtree is taking enormous steps to address any issues. JSR had attended a training session on this earlier that day, and had forwarded her notes to VH (other governors are welcome to request a copy from JSR). JSR said that Langtree is named (along with approximately 1000 other schools) on the Everyone's Invited website, a peer to peer site tackling rape culture. VH advised that this is already on the P+C committee radar for future discussion as a high priority, and SB confirmed that this is on the SDP for 2021/2022.

- iv) Drama studio feasibility study
 - The working group includes AD, AB, JC and SB. The Terms of Reference have been agreed. The group is making good progress, with the first meeting taking place next week. A further update will be provided in October.
Action: JCu to add Drama studio update on FGB agenda

- v) Pupil Premium update/review
 - In the interest of time JF agreed to postpone his contribution to the meeting, and instead to provide an update for the September Curriculum and Standards committee meeting, and then to FGB in October 21. **Action:** JF

- vi) Approval of statutory policies
 - **Designated Teacher For Looked After Child Policy** was presented by the Pastoral and Community committee. Some minor changes have been made to the policy. The full governing body approved the policy.
 - **Staff Code of Conduct Policy** was presented by the Pastoral and Community committee. AT noted that the policy has been amended to ensure there was clarity on the difference between employees and members of staff. Governors felt that 1.2 may need to be re-worded so that it is in-line with the employment contract. CR will seek advice on this point. Governors approved the policy subject to clause 1.2 being amended. **Action:** CR to advise on clause 1.2

7. Langtree 2021-2022

- (a) **Election of Chair and Vice Chair:** JSR and AB confirmed they would be willing to serve as Chair and Vice Chair respectively for another year. Governors thanked them both for their commitment, and the appointments were unanimously agreed, to run for the next 12 months, until the July 2022 meeting. KC noted that it might be a good idea to consider some succession planning, perhaps a second vice-chair, and also to think about the committee chairs for future years.
Action: JCu to add succession planning to October FGB agenda
- (b) **Confirmation of committees, including membership, terms of reference and policy responsibilities:** It was agreed that the same structure and composition of committees will remain for the upcoming year. With GB stepping down, VH will take on the Safeguarding governor role for 2021/22. SB noted that Jan Holroyd will attend

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the Curriculum and Standards committee, Chris Nonweiler will attend the Finance and General Purposes committee (along with SB), and Sarah Burman will continue with the Pastoral and Community committee. **Action:** AB, VH, GW committees to review the Terms of Reference at the first meeting of next year.

(c) **Individual responsibilities:**

- Health & Safety: CW
- Safeguarding: VH
- SEND: SP
- PP: JF
- Careers: NM

(d) Code of Conduct and Register of Interests: The clerk agreed to circulate the code of conduct and register of interest forms with the FGB minutes. **Action:** JCu

(e) Meeting dates: Proposed FGB dates were agreed. Committee chairs will schedule their meetings to align with FGB dates. **Action:** AB, VH, GW

AOB: There were none.

Date of next meeting: Thursday 7th October, 7:00pm

JSR thanked all governors for their time and input, and especially thanked all the school staff attending. JSR closed the meeting at 21:53.

ACTIONS LIST from FGB meeting, 8th July 2021:

Minute	Action	By whom?	By when?
2.2	Complete online Prevent and GDPR training and confirm when complete	JC	Sept 2021
2.2	Governor expertise skills - list of gaps	VH	Sept 2021
5	Draft budget was approved for submission	AB	
6	Suggest dates for Governor open morning	SB	ASAP
6	AD to provide Drama studio update at October FGB	AD/JCu	October 2021
6	JF to provide a PP update to C&S in October	JF/GW	October 2021
6	CR to provide JCu amendment to Staff Code of Conduct policy	CR	ASAP
6	Approved Policies to go on school website	JCu	ASAP
7	Discuss succession planning at October FGB	JCu	October 2021
7	Committees to review and approve their Terms of Conditions at October FGB	VH, AB, GW	October 2021

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7	Code of Conduct and Register of Interest forms to be circulated with the FGB minutes	JCu	ASAP
7	Committee Chairs to schedule committee meetings in line with FGB meetings	VH, AB, GW	ASAP
	Ofsted Inspection Framework Informational Sessions	SB	Autumn 2021
	Arrange briefing on Interpreting Data and Recruiting Teachers	SB	2021/22

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Date