



**MINUTES of a Meeting of the Directors of the Academy Trust, held at Langtree School,
Woodcote, RG8 0RA on Thursday 6th February 2025 at 7.00 pm**

Present:

Emma Ashley (EA)
Simon Bamford (SB)
Linda Burton (LB)
Alan Dunstan (AD) – Chair of Meeting
Kathryn Foster (KF)
Andy Lowe (AL)

Sarah Parish (SP)
Catherine Roche (CRo)
Christine Reeves (CRe)
Jan Seal-Roberts (JSR)
Hayley Scott (HS)
Clive Watts (CW)

Apologies:

Deborah Allen (DA)
Martina Platts (MP)
Victoria Vaughan (VV)

In attendance:

Jo Cundy (JC) – Clerk
Carolyn Ventress (CV) – School Business Manager

Trustee challenge is shown in red

1. Introduction

- Quorum was confirmed.
- Apologies tendered were accepted
- No trustee declared a material interest in any agenda item

2. ATB meeting, 12th December 2024

- 2.1.** ATB minutes which had been circulated were approved as an accurate record. The minutes will be signed by AD and filed in school.
- 2.2.** Review of Actions/matters arising. Unless otherwise discussed, assigned actions had been completed.

Signed

Date

4. Trustee Approval

Science Lab Refurbishment – Reserves impact. AD said that the Science Lab Refurbishment was extensively discussed at the January F&GP committee meeting. The two science labs are presenting an increasing risk of failure due to their age and the reduction of services such as water, gas and electricity; the science department is finding it increasingly difficult to operate. The defects are evidenced by multiple independent professional sources. If the CIF bid is unsuccessful, work on the science labs still needs to go ahead but Section 106 money won't be quite enough to cover all costs. ***Is this CIF bid different to last year's bid?*** CV said that the required work is the same. A different consultant is being used, it's a really strong bid, but it's subjective. AD said that last year the RAAC issue came up and it is believed that funding for RAAC was prioritised. If Trustees approve the work now then the ground work can be started and the bulk of the project can be predominantly done over the summer holidays minimising disruption to school. Work will likely take three months, from July to September. It has been made clear that there will be no more Section 106 money. Langtree's Reserves policy states that there should be 5% in reserves, if the CIF bid is unsuccessful the required work will take reserves just below 5%. However, there are factors that can change reserves level positively, for example, staffing levels may possibly be reduced, by the end of the academic year. There are currently two pupil spaces which we are confident will be filled bringing £12,000 of additional funding. ***If Langtree goes below 5%, does this present any challenges for the summer months?*** CV said that a funding agreement with OCC exists, the Business Plan has been approved. Once the invoice has been completed, we will have £50,000 immediately. ***The paper shows two and three labs, how many are being planned?*** CV said that if the CIF bid is successful then three will be done, if not and Langtree has to fund the development, only two will be refurbished. CR said that she has always been impressed with CV's probity and trusts that appropriate due diligence has taken place. CV said that the level of challenge at the F&GP committee is strong and ensures that the case is strong. ***How confident is Langtree that the contingency plan is accurate?*** CV said that they are using a very experienced contractor who has been recommended by two people, it is more likely that he has built in too much contingency rather than too little. ***Is the science lab development the highest priority in terms of school infrastructure?*** Yes, it is fundamental to the delivery of the curriculum. ***What are the sorts of things that could come out of the woodwork which would increase costs?*** CV said, asbestos. There is an asbestos register, we know it is there but don't know what type – testing will be carried out during the Easter holiday. Hopefully, this would be within the contingency.

Proposal from the Finance & General Purposes (F&GP) Committee – if the current Condition Improvement Fund (CIF) bid is unsuccessful for the refurbishment of Science Labs SC3 and SC4, the school should make a strategic decision to proceed with the refurbishment of SC3 & SC4, funded with Section 106 resources of circa £400,000, and a contribution of circa £89,000 from reserves, to complete the works. To allocate the contribution from reserves it was understood that at 31st August Langtree's reserves would fall below the recommended 5% level, set out in the Reserves & Investment Policy, forecast to be 4.4%. Trustees unanimously approved.

In addition, the F&GP Committee proposed that if the CIF bid is successful, work on the refurbishment of SC2 should commence in parallel with SC3 & SC4, funded from Section 106 resources of £224,000. There were no objections to this approach, Trustees unanimously approved.

CV left the meeting

Trustees noted what a thorough job CV and the F&GP committee have done with regards to due diligence of the science lab refurbishment project and thanked them for all of their hard work.

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

Discussion raised the following points:

- Admissions 2025 Report: Langtree appears, again, to be significantly oversubscribed in the first round of applicants for the upcoming Year 7 intake, with 167 first choice for 120 places. ***Is there a fall in numbers with the local feeder primary schools?*** Due to falling birth rates the numbers at local primary schools are dropping off a little.
- Y11 Mocks and Predictions: The recent mock results were better than predicted. There are about 10 pupils who are a grade away from where they should be, this is usually around 30 pupils. Full post GCSE progress data will not be possible as these students did not take SATS (due to covid).
- MEND the Gap have funded some local environmental and community projects: A large canopy will be erected at the back of the car park along with a banked seating area to be installed behind the DT studio. Pupils had put together a bid for the projects and presented it to MEND the Gap.
- ***Is there any update on the recent Permanent Exclusion?*** This was formally rescinded today. The trustee panel will still meet to discuss the case to ensure that correct procedures were followed.
- ***The FFT data shows that there are a lot of pupils doing well. Pupil Premium and SEN are areas that Langtree is focusing on, it would be helpful to have information on how those two groups are progressing, and what is being put in place to help them.*** SB said that the link on the first page of the report includes a breakdown of information for these groups. ***It would be helpful to highlight the areas so that this is front and centre on the report.*** **Action:** SB to look into this.

5. Trustee Updates

Trustee training (standing item) – AD informed Trustees that HS has kindly taken on the Trustee Training and Development Link Trustee role, in addition to the Induction of new Trustees which she took on in December. A central training folder has been created, which should be easier to find, where trustees can continue to log any relevant training. The Trustee Training Programme, which includes recommended role and committee training as well as mandatory training has also been updated and improved. This will help enable the board to identify any gaps in training and also provide evidence for future Ofsted inspections.

6. Committee Reports

a) **Finance and General Purposes:** Minutes of 22nd January 2025 had been circulated. CRo chaired item 6a.

- AD said that it is frustrating that the government has still not notified of any funding increases following the October budget announcements.
- The new cleaning tender is complete and there will be a new contractor. Costs will increase but management are confident that the service quality will be significantly improved.
- The five-year forecast was discussed. A close eye will be kept on projections and forecasts.
- CW said that Risk Assessment for school trips has been reviewed. Niki Smith, SB and CV have done a brilliant job with developing a new trip risk assessment. The new procedure includes a signed, fit for purpose, risk assessment, without which teachers running the trip do not get paid.
- Three policies - Business Continuity, Freedom of Information and Lettings were deferred to the March meeting.
- Policies approved were: Teaching Staff Pay

b) **Curriculum and Standards:** Minutes of 21st January 2025 had been circulated.

- Mark Vitty, Head of Maths talked about the department going from strength to strength, the staff are the best he's ever had. Boys tend to perform better than girls but the gap is slowly closing. PP pupils are doing relatively well. Langtree have done some fact-finding missions into other schools to see if anything can be learned from. So far, they are yet to find another school doing anything in Maths better than Langtree are already doing.
- The Department's Development Plan was discussed. Mark said that results could be further improved with smaller class sizes but this would bring significant cost and space implications. Students who achieve lower than grade 4 tend to be those who have low attendance. CW said that not achieving a grade 4 can have a huge impact on a pupil, a pupil that is likely to get 4 should sit the Foundation paper and not be given the option of the Higher paper. SB said that only students who might achieve a 6 or higher are considered for the Higher paper.
- Iain Wakefield has taken on the Careers Lead vacancy, a great appointment.
- Thank you to KF for her work on communications for Langtree within local publications such as Checkendon News and Goring Gap.
- Policies approved were: Remote Learning

Pastoral & Community: Minutes of 22nd January 2025 had been circulated.

- Thanks to CR for working on local corporates and successfully securing 20 Surface Pros which arrived at Langtree today.
- Attendance and Behaviour was discussed. Attendance currently stands at 93.48%, the annual target is 94%. PP students are a little below at 88.36% but this is still good compared to the national average. Sarah Burman visited the OCC Attendance Officer who noted that she has no concerns with Langtree. Overall numbers of patrols have increased by almost 50%, this is due to the embedding of the more effective graduated system, and is aligned with the Behaviour Policy. Langtree is now more pre-emptive rather than

reactive. Patrols are going into classrooms and checking in, helping out with additional movement breaks, etc. 'Zones of Regulation' have also been introduced.

- Thank you to AL who has kindly agreed to be the Safeguarding Trustee Link.
- In-school support services such as ELSA support, Nomad and Reach were discussed. These are embedded in routine activity and are working well.
- An update on some of the Alternative Provision and its effectiveness was given by Sarah Burman. The committee agreed that it would be useful for Sarah to provide a 'value for money review' of the Alternative Provision once a year.
- Equality Information and Objectives draft report was discussed. Questions were raised over the average pay differential between male and female staff. Trustees were assured that this was due to the large proportion of females in part time work compared to males.
- Policies approved were: Anti-bullying, Drugs and Substance Misuse, Supporting Students with Medical Conditions, and Suspensions and Exclusions

7. Approval of statutory policies

- The Teacher's Pay policy had been reviewed and approved by the F&GP committee. The policy was approved by the ATB.

AOB

LB: Now that AB and VH are no longer Trustees they are not listed on the Trustee details document on the school website, but they should be noted somewhere. JC said that they are listed in the Trust's Articles of Association which is on the website however, she will add them to the bottom of the Trustee details document. **Action:** Add AB and VH to the Trustee details document and rename it.

Finally, AD thanked SB and all trustees for their time and input, and closed the meeting at 20:52

Date of next meeting: 27th March, 7:00pm

ACTIONS LIST from ATB meeting, 6th February 2025:

Minute	Action	By whom?	By when?
3e	Look into adding PP breakdown data highlights 'Front and Centre' on HT Report	SB	March
AOB	Add Members to the Trustee details document	JC	March
	Add PP Presentation to March ATB meeting	JC	March
	Include Trustee Training as a standing item on each agenda going forward	JC	Ongoing
	Approved Policies <i>to go on school website:</i> N/A		
	Committees to review the ATB Scheme of Delegation at the start of the Academic year (alongside Terms of Reference)	Committees	September