



**MINUTES of a Meeting of the Directors of the Academy Trust, held at Langtree School,  
Woodcote, RG8 0RA on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> March 2025 at 7.00 pm**

**Present:**

Deborah Allen (DA)  
Emma Ashley (EA)  
Simon Bamford (SB)  
Andy Lowe (AL)  
Sarah Parish (SP)  
Martina Platts (MP)

Catherine Roche (CRo) – Chair of Meeting  
Christine Reeves (CRe)  
Jan Seal-Roberts (JSR)  
Hayley Scott (HS)  
Clive Watts (CW)

**Apologies:**

Kathryn Foster (KF)  
Alan Dunstan (AD)  
Victoria Vaughan (VV)

**In attendance:**

Jo Cundy (JC) – Clerk

*Trustee challenge is shown in red*

**1. Introduction**

- Quorum was confirmed.
- Apologies tendered were accepted. CRo said that Linda Burton has made the decision to step down as a Trustee, effective as of today. Linda will remain as a Member and continue to be involved with Langtree. Trustees thanked Linda for her hard work and commitment to Langtree over the years.
- No trustee declared a material interest in any agenda item.

**2. ATB meeting, 6<sup>th</sup> February 2025**

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

Signed .....

Date .....

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

- Numerous events have taken place within the last few weeks including Creativity Day, the production of 'High School Musical', and 'Langtree's got Talent' evening.
- The next Trustee Open Day is proposed to take place on the 15<sup>th</sup> May, there will be a focus on the Year 9 Options process and Careers advice.
- CRe congratulated Langtree for being in the top 10% of all schools nationally in a recent Sunday Times article which pooled data to judge the happiness of secondary school students. **Action:** JC to share Sunday Times article with Trustees.
- There is an Ofsted Framework review currently taking place nationally. The proposal, based upon the principle of a report card and a five-tier rating system, has not been well received by the unions and educational press.
- A Curriculum and Assessment review – Interim Report has also been published this month. A large range of items have been looked at. Some upcoming changes may include a broadening of KS3 but a reduction in content, in addition to a reduction of content at KS2.
- Mobile phones and social media, including school policies, have again been in the media. Langtree is aware of possible negative effects of smartphones and the algorithms that control what turns up in the "Feeds" of young people but currently prefers to deal with these issues by educating students and parents. The national debate, and impact social media is having on students, continues to be closely monitored. **With this in mind has the PSHE curriculum been changed?** No, these issues have always been addressed. **What provision does Langtree have to empower girls with a safe forum?**  
**Action:** SB to look into this

CW joined the meeting at 7.20pm

- **Pupil Premium (PP) Focus:** SB presented a number of slides explaining the definition of disadvantaged students and vulnerable students, and summarised the demographic breakdown. **Why aren't Young Carers shown as a statistic?** SB said that it is not a formalised statistic reported to the DfE, the concern might be to not dilute the PP information.  
The EEF has identified five key strands as barriers of entry to closing the PP/non-PP gap; these include robust data on attendance, behaviour and wellbeing, in addition to student's access to tech and curriculum materials. Home circumstances are the biggest issue as this is where schools often have the least impact. **Is the biggest investment therefore being spent on home circumstances?** It is very difficult to address but a lot of PP money goes towards trips, visits, text books, arranged trips to universities, etc.  
Langtree's 2024/25 PP Strategy's intended outcomes includes: Ensure academic progress, increase attendance rates, develop teaching practices, enhance parental engagement, increase reading age. **Is the self-esteem of PP students looked at?** Langtree does regular wellbeing surveys, results show that there is not a big differentiation between PP and non-PP. **Why does the gap between PP/non-PP students increase in years 10/11?** The students polarise more, work gets harder and

resilience is often lower for PP students. Assessment is more rigorous so gaps are more easily identified. Typically, PP students achieve ½ grade lower than non-PP students.

#### 4. Trustee Approval

- **Proposal – Members and Trustees Working Together:** Member, Alan Broomhead (AB), has drafted a paper outlining the evolving way that Trustees and Members will work together now that there are Members who are not also Trustees. The role of Members is to account for effective governance of the Trust. To help ensure the objectivity of Members, the aim, eventually, is that Members are not Trustees. CRO noted that Members recently met to consider whether there was enough challenge and if they should invite a new, external Member, onto the Board. It was agreed that, at this point in time while they are still finding their feet, the Board would not benefit from more change. A couple of trustees said that they believed that an additional, external Member would challenge the ‘group think’ and would be positive for the Board. JSR said that the Board is still finding its way, Members who are still Trustees are likely to take a step back from the Trustee role in the near future which will help with objectivity. This is perhaps something that should be revisited in the future. CW noted that AB’s paper states Members are to receive a brief report from the SBM on the performance of the auditors however, the paper also states that Members will not interact directly with staff. CW therefore recommends that the report on auditors’ performance should be sent to Members via the F&GP committee. Trustees agreed with the paper documenting the proposal as a starting point but for it to be reviewed periodically.
- **Corporate Sponsorship:** CRO highlighted the challenging financial environment that we currently live in. As well as the science lab requirements, Langtree has further needs with regards to estate management. AD is therefore proposing to get behind an effort for fundraising and look at corporate support from within the Reading area, the hope is that there may be people connected to Langtree who know people that can help. A five-year plan, with an idea of the amount of money required, would be helpful in addition to having a particular project in mind. ***Is there a specific resource that is needed on a regular basis?*** SB said that computers for all is something that Langtree aspires to. ***Who, and how, is the project going to be managed?*** AD is going to lead the charge, CRO will also be involved. There should also be wider benefits for students such as work experience, etc. Trustees agreed with the idea in principle but it was noted that a plan with specifics is needed.
- **Updated 2024/25 Board Objectives:** CRO said that a number of the originally agreed objectives have been completed, AD has revised the list by adding two new objectives. Trustees unanimously agreed.

#### 5. Trustee Updates

- New Chair of F&GP: EA has kindly agreed to take on this role.
- Risk Management & Audit – Risk Register Review: CW said that a Risk Management Policy, and Risk Register, are now a requirement for every Academy Trust. The Risk Register is broken down into four main categories: Finance, Compliance, Strategic and Operational. The F&GP committee reviews the Risk Register three times per year,

considering the 'risk scores'; the calculation for which is Likelihood x Impact + Impact. Current key risks include falling birth rates/student numbers and increasing numbers of students with EHCPs. Many of the risks can't be managed, such as a reduction in government funding for example, but awareness and a plan to address risks is important. It was suggested that committees reviewed the top 10 risks at first and then, if they have appetite, to look at the additional risks which have been deemed not as important. **Action:** Committees to review the Risk Register and feedback to F&GP

Careers: HS, Careers Link Trustee, meets with Careers Lead Iain Wakefield every term, the minutes of the meeting have been circulated. Most recently the discussion was focused on the Year 10 Creativity Day; feedback from the students was really positive. Work experience was also discussed, Iain clarified that the responsibility is for students to secure work experience but that it is not solely down to them. There is also a spreadsheet which has priority for PP students, school helps with these contacts. Iain would like to offer a lunch time drop-in session for students interested in talking through particular career paths and what requirements there are.

Trustee training (standing item) – HS thanked Trustees who have recently completed training, in particular the GDPR and Cyber Security training via Smartlog. HS clarified that Safeguarding training should be done via the NGA - 'Essential safeguarding for governors and trustees' and this should be done every 2 years, which is different to staff who must do it annually. Trustees thanked Hayley for all her efforts so far.

## 6. Committee Reports

a) **Finance and General Purposes:** Minutes of 6<sup>th</sup> March 2025 had been circulated.

- EA said that the committee reviewed the P5 Report to Trustees and the 5-year forecast. Finances for the next two years continue to be challenging, the 24/25 GAG funding is now included resulting in £64,500 adverse impact. Increases to NI rates are believed to impact the budget with a loss of £20,000. On the positive side, the 28/29 year is showing a surplus of £72,900 which meets the 5% reserve requirement.
- The Estates Management Condition survey was reviewed, this report will be used to help prioritise funding going forward.
- The Science laboratory CIF bid tender process is progressing well. April is the submission deadline; the outcome should be delivered in May.
- CW provided a Health & Safety update; there are no outstanding actions from the last H&S audit.
- Policies approved were: Business Continuity, Freedom of Information & Privacy Notice, Lettings, CCTV Code of Conduct.

b) **Curriculum and Standards:** Minutes of 11<sup>th</sup> March 2025 had been circulated.

- HS provided a Careers update and Susannah Wood, SENCO, then updated the committee with the most recent SEND metrics. Attendance was discussed, as well as the growing number of students with EHCPs.
- SB provided an update on the Fischer Family Trust (FFT) report. There are not many changes since the last report. The P8 score is +0.65 which is very good, SB feels

confident with how the school is performing.

- Policies approved were: Internal Appeals, Non-Exam Assessment

**Pastoral & Community:** Minutes of 12<sup>th</sup> March 2025 had been circulated.

- Sarah Burman provided the committee with her usual Operational report on Behaviour, Attendance, Safeguarding, etc.. Each term there is a dedicated theme on behaviour, this time it is punctuality. Attendance of PP students is currently 89%, only a little below 93% for non-PP students which is very positive.
- There has been a marked increase in referrals to the school raised by outside agencies, with no clear single driver. This is possibly due to changes within the NHS, all integrated care services are having to cut or reduce their services.
- Young carers will be a focus at the summer committee meeting.
- LB noted the sad death of a young person who was a former Langtree student and who has a sibling at school. Support is in place for any students who might need it.
- Policies approved were: Complaints.

## 7. Approval of statutory policies

There were none

## 8. AOB

CRo reminded Trustees that AD is stepping down as Chair, a plan for succession is needed. SB noted huge thanks to CRo for sourcing the computers. It has been revolutionary for the TAs.

Finally, AD thanked SB and all trustees for their time and input, and closed the meeting at 21:08

**Date of next meeting:** 15<sup>th</sup> May, 7:00pm

## ACTIONS LIST from ATB meeting, 27<sup>th</sup> March 2025:

Minute	Action	By whom?	By when?
1	Revise Trustee info. re. LB on school website	JC	April
3	Share Sunday Times happiness article with Trustees	JC	April
3	Look into what Safe Forum provision is provided for female students	SB	May
5	Committees to review Risk Register and feedback to F&GP	Committees	April
	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