



**MINUTES of a Meeting of the Directors of the Academy Trust,
held via video conference on Thursday 3rd December 2020 at 7.00 pm**

Present:

Simon Bamford (SB)
Geoff Braham (GB)
Alan Broomhead (AB)
Linda Burton (LB)
Ken Coveney (KC)
Jesse Cleverly (JC)
Alan Dunstan (AD)
Jean-Francois Fava-Verde (JF)

Vicki Hamilton (VH)
Neil McIntosh (NM)^{***}
Sarah Parish (SP)
Lucy Phipps (LP)
Jan Seal-Roberts (JSR) – Chair
Catherine Roche (CR)^{*}
Annie Temple (AT)
Clive Watts (CW)
Graham Webber (GW)^{**}

*Joined at 8.10pm

** Left at 8.35pm

*** Left at 8.55pm

Apologies:

Duncan French (DF) - currently on 6-m leave
Will Bromage (WB)

In attendance:

Dawn Challis (DC) – School Business Manager
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.

Signed

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2. ATB meeting, 8th October 2020

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) - Not yet completed by one governor.
Action: JC to complete by 28th January 2021

- Governor training/school involvement recording document has been set up in Google Drive. The link will be circulated with the minutes for governors to complete whenever they attend governor training or work with school.
Action: JCu to circulate link

- AB/AD/JC to meet and discuss Drama Studio Plan
Action: AB/AD/JC to arrange meeting

4. **Proposal for Catherine Roche to join FGB:** Catherine, who is a parent of a year 7 pupil, is a qualified teacher, has been a KPMG management consultant, and is CEO of Place2Be, a children's mental health charity which works directly with 400 schools. Governors unanimously approved Catherine joining the governing board as a parent governor.

Action: VH to conduct new governor training, MTL do DBS check.

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

- There are currently five students who have recently left or are in the process of leaving, all for very good family reasons. SB advised that this number is not abnormally high for this time of year, and the school is confident of replacing them.
- Have seen an increase in low-level racial incidents which is often the case this time of year with tired students. All incidents have been dealt with.
- Exclusions have increased slightly. Students and staff are tired, school is cold (due to having to keep windows open for ventilation), year groups are continually on the move causing disruption and more conflict. There is one child in Yr 8 who is proving to be particularly challenging who has an EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plan) and was admitted via appeal. Plans are being put together to request additional funding for this student. **How much of an impact is this child having on the class and peer group?** The child has a TA who spends most of school time with them, and because of their needs, they tend to be outside of class most of the time. **Is there a risk of violence to other students and staff?** The child is with the TA almost full time, and is getting a lot of support from the school ELSA and Oxford County Council. We are doing everything we can do to keep everyone safe. Risk assessments are in place and we are following them.
- Staff wellbeing. It's a difficult time, and although staff are doing all they can, wellbeing is probably at the lowest that it has been for a long time. A half-termly wellbeing audit has been carried out, and the findings are being utilised to inform planning. The Whole Staff Development Meeting was cancelled, and instead staff were encouraged to use this time for an activity to promote their own mental health. Staff are being offered a morning or afternoon off (on a rota basis, usually in their non-contact time) to promote their mental health. A Staff Wellbeing Week is being held this week (wc 30 Nov), and are investigating buying into a confidential counselling scheme for any staff who feel they need it.

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- The year 11 assessments have shown that, generally, students are where they should be at this time of year and are on course to achieve grades in line with cohorts in 'normal' years.
- **School Recovery:** Langtree has been allocated £49,760 to fund its covid recovery programme. This money will be ring-fenced for curriculum and well-being support. Some of the money will be spent on graduates (£12.6k), one English and one Science/Maths, who will be in school full time helping with interventions, mentoring and support. Will also be buying into the National Tutoring Programme (£3k) which will provide small group tutoring to students who have fallen behind during lockdown. Sam Learning, a highly regarded online platform which provides independent learning and assessment activities, will be used to help promote remote learning (£5k). *If the recovery money isn't spent will it be taken back?* Probably, yes.
- Unfortunately this year's annual Awards and Certificate Presentation event has had to be cancelled. However, we are planning to hold a combined prom, reunion and awards evening as soon as it is safe to do so.
- **Pupil Premium (PP) review 2019/20:** SB explained that the disadvantaged pupil gap is very real across the country and although there has been a huge push from central government, with a lot of money spent, it's disappointing to see that the gap hasn't necessarily been reduced. Langtree focuses a lot of effort on the PP students – although due to covid, not all of the actions from last year's PP strategy have been met – school was closed to most students for many weeks, also the ability to work one-to-one has been difficult. The PP Strategy for 20/21 should be ready to present to governors by the January FGB meeting. Jean-Francois Fava-Verde agreed to be the PP Link Governor.

Action: JCu to update Governor Website documents to show JF as PP Link Governor

4. Governor update

- **Induction training and Skills audit:** VH noted that The Key, an online governor resource, now has a very informative governor induction training and encouraged governors to use it as a reference tool. Governors not already signed up to The Key have been invited to join via email. The last Governor Skills Audit took place about 18 months ago. Governors agreed that it would be beneficial to repeat this exercise at the end of this academic year.

Action: VH to organise after Easter 2021

- **School Audit Report, 2019-2020:** AB advised that all of the audit documents are saved in the Google Drive. Items to note: There has been a rise of 10% in staff costs, which has been checked and is correct. Critchleys, the auditors, referred to the balance sheet as 'healthy', the deficit for the year is about £42,000 – slightly more than anticipated due to two end-of-year adjustments. The Management letter notes only one issue relating to the Financial Manual – that this should better explain the tender process for large expenses. Three risks from last year were also noted as Critchleys felt they hadn't been fully rectified and therefore required some tweaks. *Were there any material concerns other than those already raised?* No. On this basis, governors approved the Audit outcome, and thanked AB, Dawn Challis and her team for all their work on this.
- AB reported that Critchleys hadn't performed particularly well this year. It was thought that this was partly due to the established contact having left the firm. Written feedback has been provided to Critchleys asking for assurances that Langtree can expect an improved service in

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the future. Governors agreed to wait for a response before reappointing them, and recommended that a search was conducted to identify potential replacements from 2021.

- **Annual Safeguarding Audit Report:** GB reported that the report being presented was very similar to last year's, but with a few additional questions. It has been reviewed by the pastoral team and, in most cases, all actions have been completed. There was a point that had been noted regarding a consultation with the LADO team – but GB had been assured that the appropriate governors had been made aware of this matter and that the issue had been satisfactorily resolved/closed. Overall, the report indicates that Langtree has continued to make progress in this area over the last year, and the preparation of this Safeguarding report did not identify any major new concerns. **The report says that Langtree has a written policy for restraint – but does it?** The use of restraint is actually referenced in the Behavior policy, and some staff have had physical restraint training. **Have you any concerns on the Safeguarding Report?** No, it's a fair reflection of the current situation, factually correct, and is recommended for approval. Governors approved the Safeguarding Report, and thanked GB and the Pastoral team for all their work on this.

5. Committee reports

- **Finance and General Purposes:** Minutes of 17th November 20 had been circulated.
 - The updated budget report shows a surplus of 51k which is an improved outlook. It was noted that if the current grants for pensions and pay are taken away in years 4 and 5, a huge deficit will then open up. However, without the grant being removed, which is hopeful, the deficit looks more manageable – and there seems little point in taking steps to address only 'possible' issues this far in advance.
 - Lettings had obviously ceased during the period of lockdown but were due to start again tomorrow (4 Dec 20) which will hopefully provide more income.
 - Capitation, the section of the budget devolved to departments for purchasing educational supplies has been increased – and thus teachers will have more to spend than expected at the beginning of the year.
 - **Has the water leak been fixed?** AB and DC advised that it still remains likely that there is a leak in school, primarily on the basis of our consumption, even though the water company can't find any physical signs of it and therefore can't fix it (and to investigate further would be at our cost). In addition, the caretakers have advised that water coming from the taps in school is sometimes brown, and there is a problem with hot water reaching certain parts of the school. Dawn has since undertaken some benchmarking work to check our water consumption vs. Gillott's – which indicates that Gillott's are using less than us, even though we are a smaller school. Going forward, the plan to replace the pipework will hopefully solve the leak, and also ensure that hot water and heating reaches parts of the school.
- **Curriculum and Standards:** Minutes of 17th November 20 had been circulated.
 - Kate Shakespeare, head of English, had attended the meeting, and her input had been very well received. Kate discussed the department development plan, noting that the English team are feeling quite positive about the students' position post lockdown. Although some students had fallen behind in reading, corrective action had since been taken.
 - A new reading scheme for KS3 and 4 is being researched, and library visits have been restarted.

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- There has been a reduction of enhanced learning because of lack of extracurricular activities which has had some impact. The departmental development plan has been impacted by covid but the team continues to keep sight of the priorities.
- **Pastoral & Community:** Minutes of 16th November 20 had been circulated.
 - The committee welcomed another staff wellbeing survey taking place.
 - The committee reviewed various Employee Assist Programmes and whether the school might benefit from one. The staff survey might inform on this.
 - They discussed having a Staff Champion: apparently there is already an informal Staff Champion in place – although the person in this role prefers to remain anonymous.
 - SP (SEN Governor) met with Susannah Woods (SENCo) and had a positive meeting. Among other things they discussed: it would be advantageous for all TAs to have a school laptop; there are fewer TAs now compared to a few years ago; the issues around students with summer birthdays and on School Action Plus - SP will be follow the progress of these two groups.
 - It had been noted that informal teacher meetings, which provide a valuable form of peer support, are not able to happen at the moment – which was impacting negatively on staff morale andwell-being.
- **Approval of statutory policies**
 - The Complaints Policy was presented by the Pastoral & Community committee. There had been no changes from last time, except for clarifying that the School Proprietor is the Board of Trustees. The Complaints Policy was ratified by the full governing body.
 - The Critical Incident Plan was presented by the Finance & General Purposes committee. AB explained that this was a standard Oxfordshire County Council model policy and had been reviewed by SB and the F&GP committee. This was ratified by the full governing body.
 - The Freedom of Information Policy was presented by the Finance & General Purposes committee, which they had reviewed and approved. The Freedom of Information policy was ratified by the full governing body.
 - The Exams Policy had been reviewed and approved by the Curriculum and Standards committee, and then forwarded to all governors for approval between FGB meetings in the interests of time (with prior agreement). It was formally confirmed that this policy had been approved via email on 1st November 2020.

AOB: None

Date of next meeting: Thursday 28th January, 7:00pm

Finally, JSR thanked all governors for their time and input, and closed the meeting at 21:55

Signed

Date

ACTIONS LIST from FGB meeting, 3rd December 2020:

Minute	Action	By whom?	By when?
2.2	Complete online Prevent and GDPR training and confirm when complete	JC	20 th January 2021
2.2	Circulate governor training records link	JCu	ASAP
2.2	Meet and discuss Drama Studio plan	AB/AD/JC	January 2021
4a	Catherine Roche induction and DBS checks	VH/MTL	ASAP
3	JFV agreed to be the PP Link Governor, update website governor documents	JCu	ASAP
4b	Skills audit to be conducted	VH	May 2021
4d	Safeguarding Report was approved, submit to OCC	GB	31 st Dec 2020
5.5	Approved Policies to go on school website: Complaints, Critical Incident Plan, Freedom of Information, Exams	JCu	ASAP
	Ofsted Inspection Framework Informational Sessions	SB	Summer 2021
	Provide update on LEAF's student initiative	JSR/DC	Summer 2021

Signed

Date