MINUTES OF
TRUST BOARD MEETING

Date: Wednesday 10th December 2025
Time: 10.30am
Venue: Laurus Trust- Boardroom

Clerk: N Burgess
Present: L Magrath, W Mason, T Little, G Turnpenney, R Kumar, D Brown, S McGill, A Gilmour, C Nevin, L Woolley, S Mellor, M Vevers and N Thompson

	Action	Initials
1	Trustees are asked to inform the Clerk of any changes to their register of business interests	All
1	Trustees are asked verify their identification via Companies House	All
1	Update on funding opportunities to be given to Trustees	RK
1	TL to contact Trustees whose term of office is coming to an end	TL
1	New Member to be appointed and update at next meeting	LM
1	Trustees are asked to contact their Link Trust Director to arrange a link visit	All
1	Trustees are asked to complete the mandatory training modules at their earliest convenience	All
2	Update on growth opportunities to be given at the next meeting	LM

Agenda – Part 1

Category		Item	Notes	Action
1	Governance Arrangements	Apologies	Apologies were received and accepted from D Kershaw and J Crawford.	
		AOB items	There were no additional items of business which were not already covered by the agenda for this meeting.	
		Declarations of interest	There were no declarations of interest made in any of the agenda items.	
		Register of Business interests	Trustees were asked to inform the Clerk of any changes to their record of business interests which was circulated during the meeting.	All
		Companies House ID verification	Trustees were reminded on the new requirement to verify their identification at Companies House and to send their unique code to the Clerk as soon as possible.	All

		Minutes of the last Trust Board Meeting	Minutes of the meeting held 1st October 2025 were approved as a correct record of the meeting. Actions: Training reminders will be sent to Trustees Update on funding opportunities will be deferred to another meeting Reminder to send completed records of visits to the Clerk	RK
		Scheme of Delegation	The Scheme of Delegation has been reviewed to ensure compliance and there are no material changes to note.	
		Membership	Trustees noted that the terms of office for D Kershaw and R Kumar were coming to an end. The Chair agreed to contact both Trustees outside of the meeting and will update at the next meeting of the Trust Board.	TL
		Member resignation update	Trustees noted that T Graham had resigned as a Member of the Trust. Trustees discussed potential replacement Members and LM agreed to approach a couple of potential individuals and report back at the next meeting.	LM
		Link Trustee roles and responsibilities	Trustee attention was drawn to the Link Visit overview schedule which is part of the meeting documents. Trustees are asked to contact their Link Trust Directors to arrange their visits, and to populate the meeting schedule.	All
		Link visits since last meeting update	Trustees updated on their link visits since the last meeting: English – CN had visited and met with the Trust Director. A record of the meeting can be found in the Trustee area of Teams. SEND – GT confirmed a visit had taken place with the SEND lead at Priestnall and also M S-F. It is a 5-year plan in place at Priestnall, and during the visit the areas of strength and areas of improvement were discussed. The focus is on attendance. Numeracy is working well and Literacy is work in progress. It was also discussed that the partnership with Inscape is working well. Maths – AG updated that he had met with the Trust	

			Director in October to review the results and the readiness for the year. There were some very pleasing results for some schools, and for others there are action plans in place. It was discussed that students start the year well, but need to better pace themselves in the approach to the exam period. One issue noted was that due to the changes in staffing structures QA time by the Trust Director is reduced. LM commented that at HGHS there has been the appointment of a new Head of Maths and Assistant Head of Maths. Q – Has the appointment of the Head of School at HGHS now been finalised? A – Yes, E Moroney, who has Associate Head of School was appointed and will take up the role fully in January 2026. EM is already doing an excellent job. We have also appointed a new Deputy Headteacher and another Assistant Headteacher, both from CHHS, who will be really strong appointments. We also have a number of Trust Directors based at HGHS this year.	
		Policies for approval	CN confirmed that all policies had been approved by the policy sub-committee and were recommended to Trustees for approval. Trustees approved the following policies: Anti-Bullying Policy (secondary) Anti-Bullying Policy (primary) Appraisal Policy Behaviour Policy (primary) Capability Policy Child on Child Abuse Policy ECT Policy Exams Policy Harmful Sexual Behaviour Policy IT and Cybersecurity Policy Low Level Concerns Policy Medical Conditions in School Policy Online Safety Policy Post Exams Results Policy Safer Working Practice Use of a Word Processor in Formal Examinations Policy	

		Laurus Institute Governance area	Slides from the Conference will be uploaded to the Governance area for Trustees to review. Trustees are also asked to complete their training upon receipt of the reminders.	All
2	Being strategic	Exec Team updates	LM updated Trustees on expressions of interest to join the Trust. The Exec Team had met with a secondary school in Bury LA in September 2025. The school are reviewing a number of Trusts before making a final decision. Members of their SLT and Governors will be visiting Priestnall School in January 2026. The Exec Team had also met with SLT and Governors at a nearby secondary school in another LA. The meeting had taken place last month and have not heard anything back since. **Q – How are the initial connections made?** A – Normally the Head of School or Chair of Governors contacts us. Trustees discussed the content of the two individual meetings and the responses received. Updates on any progression will be given at the next meeting of the Trust Board. LM also updated on a feeder primary school to CHHS who had expressed an interest to join the Trust. **Q – Would there be capacity if both secondary schools were due to join the Trust?** A – Exec Team capacity would need to be considered. It was agreed that all expressions of interest would be reviewed on an individual basis.	LM
		Appoint a subgroup for due diligence reviews	C Nevin, A Gilmour and S McGill were appointed as the subgroup for due diligence.	

		Safeguarding update	DB presented to Trustees the Safeguarding Report which had been circulated prior to the meeting. The report was produced to provide Trustees with assurance of Safeguarding procedures in all schools in the Trust, and details the DSL and DDSL, alongside the Safeguarding Governor. The report links with the Trust Safeguarding Strategy document. Safeguarding is every adult in schools' responsibility, but there are obviously additional responsibilities for DSL and DDSL in schools. There are also additional personnel in schools who have received Level 3 training. Safeguarding training in schools in ongoing throughout the year, and can be adapted in individual schools to reflect local issues. CPOMS categories in all secondary schools have been aligned to allow for trust wide analysis. There is a prevalence of mental health concerns being recorded. DB informed Trustees recording of incidents and issues was essential, to be able to have a proactive approach and to be ahead of issues and to upskill staff. It was noted that staff are very good at recording concerns and know who to refer them to. The report circulated to Trustees has also been useful for the school safeguarding teams. There is the ability to be able to review discrepancies in CPOMS categories between schools and to drill into in detail. **Q – What is a Smoothwall alert?** A – It is an alert sent when a student has accessed something which is of concern. **Q – There is an extensive list of staff training included in the report, can you give some context of the training?** A – In terms of the training programme it is similar for all schools. There is some training which must be done in all schools, and then there is the additional bespoke programme which is reactive to the school specific cohort. There is a long list of training which is not just for the September Inset, safeguarding training is revisited throughout the year, and this includes in the form of the 7-minute briefings which all staff have to read. Safeguarding is a culture in our schools. The work of	

			the Safeguarding teams, DB and DSLs has had a massive impact, and staff are aware of what to look out for and how to report. Staff are not afraid to report issues and concerns. Trustee questions were invited. Q – In the data for the mental health categories does it include suicide and self-harm? A – We have recorded them separately. GT commented that it was vital to empower the staff to be able to deal with the situations they face. There are very difficult conversations to have to have and training is vital. Trustees were informed that the Trust has Mental Health First Aiders available to staff and that the Pastoral Teams in school have training for the students. Q – Are the staff and resource levels correct? A – Yes, we are confident of the level of staff and support available. It is the DSL, DDSL and Pastoral staff in our schools who are trained, it is not just the responsibility of one person. Every member of SLT knows that if the DSL appears and needs to speak to you that this is an urgent priority and takes precedence over everything else. It was also noted that it is vital to have DB as Trust Safeguarding Lead, and L Foden in place for support. Q – Are you aware of Martyn's Law and the timescales for implementation? A – Yes, we do risk assessments before any large events are held and our Critical Incident Plans have been updated. Trustees had no further questions to raise and thanked DB for the comprehensive report.	

		Trust Board committee chair updates	<u>Governance Oversight and Standards</u> CN gave Trustees a verbal overview of the meeting which had taken place 1st October 2025. • Update received on the Academy Committee membership of Norris Bank Primary School • Co-chairs of HGPS had both stepped down. J Crawford agreed to Chair the Academy Committee whilst a suitable Chair is found • J Crawford updated on the Academy Committee at Laurus Ryecroft and the possibility of appointing a new AC Chair during the academic year. The appointment of Associate Governors will also be trialled by the Academy Committee • LW presented a draft survey to assess the effectiveness of the induction process • Update was given on AC Clerking and new appointments <u>Pay and Remuneration</u> GT updated Trustees on the meeting which had taken place on 7th November 2025. • P&R is an annual meeting and is a good opportunity to meet and get to know the Heads of School • The committee received recommendations for pay progression for Secondary, Primary and Leadership • There was one member of SLT who was not approved for pay progression due to performance • Trustees approved the implementation of pay awards – 4% for teachers and 3.2% for support staff • Benchmarking report was reviewed • Eligibility of TPS for non-teaching teachers was reviewed <u>Finance and Resources</u> S McGill gave a verbal update of the meeting which had taken place on 14th November 2025. • The committee had reviewed the position at 31st August, and were now in receipt of the financial statements • There had been an improvement in the position over the year, but it should be noted that some savings were one-off and would therefore not be included moving forward	

			• The position is stable, but there is still the need to be cautious moving forward • Approved the Finance Manual • There were no changes made to the Financial Scheme of Delegation • At the time of the meeting the External Audit was still taking place, and the financial statements and annual report are on the agenda for this meeting • Trustees received a report on the investments made via Insignis, and were pleased to note £145k had been received in interest to date, due to careful investment and maximising opportunities • Capital Projects were approved for refurbishment of toilets at Priestnall £60K funded by SMBC grant, and also roof repairs at Priestnall for £85k funded by SCA grant • Approval was given for Norris Bank Primary School to be added to the Dolce catering contract • Trustees received an update on Community Use and noted that the 3G pitch at Laurus Ryecroft was now open and in use • IT Report was received, the long-term plan is for the Trust to be serverless and not cloud based. There was also an update of Cybersecurity, the move to student multi factor authentication and the upgrade to Windows 11 which had taken place over the summer Q – Are there any indications from the government of future pay awards? A – There was an announcement recently of the potential of 6.5% for teachers over the next 3 years, but we have not received any further details. We believe schools will have to fund at this stage, with no additional funding. It will be impossible to know how we can possibly find any further efficiencies. Audit and Risk AG updated Trustees on the meeting which had taken place on 5th December 2025. • The core part of the meeting was receiving the audited accounts and annual report, including a presentation from the external auditors Cooper Parry • Trustees were pleased to note the clean audit, and thanks were offered to WM and ST and their teams for their work in	

			delivering this • Outstanding audit issues were now tracked on a summary and are being addressed, there are no significant recommendations outstanding • The committee recommend to Members the reappointment of Cooper Parry as external auditors for a further year, this is year 3 of a 5-year contract • The final accounts and annual report are recommended for approval at the AGM • Risk Register was reviewed, 3 areas identified have improved and no risk profiles were raised. It was agreed that although the financial situation had improved it was still retained as a risk • IT was retained at the same risk level due to the roll out of Windows 11 and also the ongoing Cybersecurity updates and training • Risk Policy was updated and moved to a 12-month review cycle • Health and Safety report was reviewed and there are no major items outstanding • Trustees reviewed accident reporting in all schools • Trustees recorded the quality of the information received on financial risks and the audit is excellent. • Audit & Risk committee recommend the final accounts to Trust Board for approval and to be issued to Members for approval at the AGM on 15th December Trustees <u>approved</u> the final accounts and annual report be referred to Members for final approval at the AGM. Q – Who wrote the annual report? A – WM with information from others. Q – How much time did this take? A – There is standard information to update, with 3 pages of free text to add our own information.	
		Confirm Autumn term census completed in all schools	WM confirmed that the Autumn Term census had been completed for all schools in the Trust. Trustees were informed there were 9782 pupils on roll across the Trust schools.	

		Trust Development Plan: Theme: Recognised for Excellence Priority: Parents, carers, pupils and students Priority: Our schools and potential members of our Trust community	Trustees reviewed the Trust Development Plan and Scorecard, and noted there were no changes to the data within the Scorecard at this time. Trustees discussed being recognised for excellence, and what success will look like. School to School support of other schools was taking place via the RISE programme. Trustees noted that MV would be stepping down as a RISE Advisor with effect from January 2026. There had been a delegation of Czech visitors to Trust schools recently, who had requested a visit to see what is done and how. Trustees were pleased that the Trust was being recognised for excellence. LM informed Trustees she had been invited to attend a Heads Regional Roundtable event, which was an opportunity to share the work of the Trust. Trustees were also updated on student application numbers, noting the considerable number of applications for the 1465 year 7 spaces available across the Trust secondary schools. Q – Is there a pattern to the appeals over the years? A – There are always appeals for places and also in-year appeals to be heard. Sixth Form application deadlines are approaching and there is a need to increase numbers in three of the Trust Sixth Forms. Trustees noted that there had been a record number of applications for places at CHHS Sixth Form this year. Primary school applications close on 15th January 2026. Q – Is there anything further Trustees would wish to see on the Scorecard? A – Trustees felt it would be useful to be able to review trends to be able to see progression. It was noted that the Scorecard should be reviewed alongside the individual school outcomes document which is presented at the first Trust Board meeting of the year. It was discussed that the Academy Committee of each school monitor performance and feedback to the Trust Board. Trustees have a more strategic overview. It was agreed that the Scorecard would be referred back to at each meeting.	

		Agree Auditing and reporting arrangements for matters of compliance	WM confirmed that auditing and reporting arrangements were delegated to the sub committees via the Scheme of Delegation and that all matters of compliance were covered. It was noted that the Employment Rights Bill will be coming into place and that it was vital that the Trust was ready for the changes as the employer, and that the HR team are suitably upskilled and have the resources required. Committee chairs confirmed the reports received confirm compliance, whilst allowing for scrutiny, and the quality of the information received is reassuring for Trustees.	
3	Educational performance and staff performance management	Review Careers Guidance with regard to statutory requirements	Trustees reviewed the CEIAG report was circulated prior to the meeting. RK commented it was good to look at the journey from 3 years ago and how careers are changing ongoing. The importance of giving students the exposure to the different careers and opportunities was discussed. LM informed Trustees that Leaders are in discussion with Baker Dearing Trust to introduce a sleeve into a vocational pathway at two of the Trust schools. It was noted that Baker Dearing aim is to have a sleeve available in every Greater Manchester LA. LM will keep Trustees updated on any progression made as the partnership develops. Q – Do you experience any issues in finding suitable work placements? A – Yes. It is now different, there used to be work experience in year 9, which was very complex to safeguard. It is much easier for our Sixth Form students. Work experience is a big challenge nationally. The complexity and availability of quality work experience placements was discussed at length by Trustees. It was agreed that for the next CEIAG presentation J Peet, Trust wide Lead for Careers, would be invited to present to Trustees.	
		Review compliance with SEND Code of Practice	GT, as SEND Link Trustee, confirmed that the SEND Code of Practice covers 0-25 and that she is satisfied that the Trust is fully compliant. It was noted that last year there had been a review of CEIAG for SEND students and that this was covered by the Code of Practice.	

		Confirm approach to directing pupils off-site, exclusions and suspensions	DB confirmed the Trust approach to off-site direction, suspensions and exclusions. All are done as recorded in the Trust policy and statutory DfE guidance. Trustees were informed that off-site direction was used to allow the student to break a cycle of poor behaviour.	
4	Financial performance	Audited accounts submission, internal scrutiny report and auditors report (A&R and AGM)	The audited accounts and annual report are recommended for approval by Members at the AGM on 15th December 2025 and will be signed by TL as Chair of Trust Board.	
		Capital project approvals	Trustee approval was sought for the following projects: HGHS – refurbishment of Technology and Art block. The cost of the project will be £2.2m which will be grant funded from SMBC, AL Elevation and SCA grant. Works are scheduled to commence in June 2026 and be completed for the start of the new academic year in September 2026. LR – The school has been selected by the DfE to be a recipient of the Great British Energy Project grant, for the installation of solar panels. The cost of the project is £274k and is fully grant funded, and will save the school in energy costs ongoing. Trustees approved the two projects which were both grant funded.	
5	AOB		A Trustee is requested for an appeal hearing which will be taking place in the week following this meeting. S Mellor agreed to be a member of the appeal panel.	
6	Meeting dates	Meeting dates	Wednesday 11th February 2026 at 10.00am at Woodford Primary School Wednesday 6th May 2026 at 10.00am Wednesday 8th July 2026 at 10.00am	

Impact of Meeting / Key Outcomes
Membership of the Trust Board was reviewed
Trustees updated on the resignation of a Member and the appointment of a suitable replacement
Link Trustees updated on their visits since the last meeting
Trustees approved 16 policies
CEO updated Trustees on growth opportunities
DB presented a Safeguarding report and update
Trust Board committee chairs gave verbal updates of the recent meetings
Trustees approved the audited accounts and annual report for recommendation to the Members for approval at the AGM
Trustees reviewed Careers Guidance across the Trust

CT updated on the SEND Code of Practice and Trust compliance
DB confirmed the Trust approach to off-site direction, and suspensions and exclusions
Trustees approved two capital projects

Meeting closed at 12.15pm

T Little
Chair of Trustees
11.02.2026