



MINUTES OF TRUST BOARD MEETING

Date: Wednesday 8th July 2026
Time: 10.00am
Venue: Laurus Trust Boardroom

Clerk: N Burgess
Present: D Brown, D Woolley, D Kershaw, A Gilmour, C Nevin, M Vevers, W Mason, L Magrath, J Crawford, L Woolley, T Little, R Kumar, G Turnpenney and S Mellor (via Teams)

	Action	Initials
1	Trustees are asked to inform the Clerk of any changes to their register of business interests	All
1	Trustees are asked to contact Trust Directors to arrange their link visits	All
1	Link to the record of visits template folder to be sent by the Clerk	NB
1	Training reminders to be sent by the Clerk	NB
5	Template for committee effectiveness evaluation to be sent to Chairs	AG

Agenda – Part 1				
Category	Item	Notes	Action	
1	Governance Arrangements	Apologies	Apologies were received and accepted from N Thompson and S McGill.	
		AOB items	There were no other items of business which were not included in 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
		Minutes of the last Trust Board Meeting	Minutes of the meeting held 6 th May 2026 were <u>approved</u> as a correct record of the meeting and there were no outstanding actions.	

		Governance arrangements	LW presented the assurance framework actions document which had been completed following the self-review undertaken at the previous meeting. Actions and timescales had been updated and Trustee comments and questions were invited. TL commented he felt the document was useful to be able to monitor against the actions and would be updated and reviewed again in the future.	
		Scheme of Delegation	The Scheme of Delegation for 2026-2027 has been updated with reference to CST guidance and to ensure compliance by the Exec Team. Trustees <u>approved</u> the Scheme of Delegation.	
		Schedules of Business	The Schedules of Business were presented to Trustees for approval. <u>Trust Board</u> The SoB for Trust Board has been updated to include opportunity for the Exec Team to report in detail on progress towards the thematic goal. <u>Finance and Resources</u> No changes. <u>Audit and Risk</u> No changes. <u>Governance, Oversight and Standards</u> No changes. Meeting 3 of this committee will be moved to after the TB strategic planning meeting in May. <u>Academy Committees</u> The Schedule of Business for Academy Committees has been updated to reflect the specific context items unique to Laurus Grace. Trustees <u>approved</u> the five Schedules of Business for 2026-2027.	
		Role descriptions	Following feedback from induction, and also Chairs and Clerks, a suite of role descriptions has been produced. The roles have been checked against NGA and CST guidance. It was felt the role descriptors would be useful to Chairs of Academy Committees as there are a number who are new in the role.	

			The roles are to be reviewed by Governance Oversight and Standards committee and are presented at this meeting for Trustee information.	
		Membership and succession planning	Trustees noted that N Thompson would be resigning as a Trustee with effect from 31st August. AG raised that there was a vacancy on the Audit and Risk committee and that there is a gap in skills in terms of Health and Safety. It was agreed that this would be considered when recruiting a new Trustee. Thanks were offered to Trustees for their work as part of a committee.	
		Policies for approval	The policies have been reviewed by the policy sub committee and recommended to Trustees for approval. Q – In terms of the AI Use Policy, what are the guidelines? A – Staff are only able to use Copilot which has data protection built in and data is deleted after 31 days. No other additional AI programmes can be used unless approved by the Trust Director of Compliance. Q – Can you monitor Copilot? A – Yes, via Office 365. We do still have working groups in place across the trust. Q – What are the feelings of colleagues across the trust with regards to AI? A – They use but with caution. They are able to see the benefits, but also the disadvantages. They know it is important to keep the human in the room. Staff are aware that for admin tasks it can save time and provide efficiencies, but it is not useful for lesson planning and interactions. We will continue to monitor and proceed with caution. Science are currently trialling Running Paper, where colleagues are looking at trialling A Level Science marking. It can be used to review long answer questions, following the trial it will be reviewed again in small groups. There is a need to consider does it work and how much time is saved. Q – What about student use of AI? A – Our licence is for over 16s only so it is only students in the Sixth Form who can use Copilot. We	

			are aware that some students have used AI in homework. It has to be used as something meaningful and not just copied from Copilot. Q – Is there a specific set of “don’ts” in the policy? A – We keep it simple and just use Copilot, staff are also very vigilant. It is part of the national curriculum and we have to use Sandbox proxies for AI. Q – Can it be done as extra-curricular? A – No, this is due to licencing. Q – Is the controlling authority DfE? A – It is the law and beyond. We teach about sensible use of AI but we cannot allow the students to use it. CN informed Trustees that the Risk Register had been updated to include AI use, and that it would be monitored as a separate risk. Trustees <u>approved</u> the following policies: - AI Use Policy - Anti Bullying Policy - Asbestos Policy - Assessment, Recording and Reporting Policy - Child on Child Abuse Policy - Children Looked After (Pri) Policy - Children Looked After (Sec) Policy - Code of Conduct for LT Trustees and Governors - Consent Policy - COSHH Policy - Drug, Alcohol, Tobacco and Vape Policy - EAL (Pri) Policy - EAL (Sec) Policy - Exclusion Policy - EYFS Policy - Fire Procedures Policy - First Aid Policy - Harmful Sexual Behaviours Policy - Health and Safety Policy - Legionella Policy - Lone Worker Policy - Medical Conditions (Pri) Policy - RIDDOR Policy - RSE (Pri) Policy - RSE (Sec) Policy - Working at Heights Policy - Complaints Procedures	
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		Link Trustee roles and responsibilities and updates	Trustees were asked to arrange their link visits with Trust Directors. TL, AG and RK confirmed that they had arranged link visits immediately following this meeting. Trustees were reminded that SEND and Safeguarding meetings are termly and all others are at least annually. PSHE – JC had completed a link visit and will complete the ROV as a follow up. JC had met with both primary and secondary Leads. Currently work is taking place on producing guidance which will include to parents and carers. A discussion took place around the ROV templates and it was agreed the Clerk would send a link to Trustees for the ROV template folder.	All
		Laurus Institute Governance area	Trustees were reminded that mandatory training would be completed following the first meeting of the next academic year. The Clerk will include a link to training in the agenda and will also send out reminders.	NB

2	Being strategic	Exec Team updates	MV updated Trustees on the progress of TGPS joining the Trust and this will likely be in the Spring of 2027. LVO has been appointed as Executive Head of School for CHPS and TGPS. There has also been an approach by two other primary schools local to CHHS and this is in the very early stages of initial conversations. Q – Who is driving the interest? A – It is coming from the Trustees and Governors of the schools. Q – Do they feed into CHHS? A – Yes, they do. Q – Is the interest positively received by the Headteachers? A – Yes, it is. Q – What stage are the negotiations at? A – We have had several meetings but they are also considering other trusts. Q – What is the benefit of considering other trusts if they are a feeder for CHHS? A – It is good practice to do so as part of due diligence. Q – Would it be helpful for us to have a list of non-negotiables so schools expressing an interest in joining the Trust are aware as a pre-requisite? A – We have moved on and progressed. We have had several meetings and we are on the same page with the expectations. We will continue negotiations and will update further at the next meeting of the Trust Board. <u>Rise Project</u> Trustees were updated on the proposed support for another Stockport secondary school. An Advisor had visited the school in the week prior to this meeting and there will be no further updates given now until September.	
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		Trust Board Committee Chair updates	<u>Audit and Risk</u> AF updated Trustees on the meeting which had taken place on 5th June 2026. • External audit approach had been approved • Financial planning report from internal audit was reviewed and there were no issues – a copy of the report has been sent to the Chair of Finance and Resources for information • All risks are well managed • The committee had received an excellent presentation on Cyber Security and the risks. It was noted that there was a requirement to commit funding to update the software to be able to manage the risks. <u>Finance and Resources</u> In the absence of SMC WM updated Trustees on the meeting which had taken place on 3rd July 2026. • The committee had recommended the budget to August 2027 and 3-year budget forecast to Trustees for approval at this meeting • Trustees reviewed the treasury management funds invested via the approved platform • Pupil numbers for primary schools were reviewed • The committee approved capital projects between £50k and £100k • Trustees were updated on the 3 major projects at LCH/CHPS, DHS and HGHS • Trustees were pleased to note that a settlement had been reached to rectify the staircase build issues identified at DHS • Trustees received and reviewed the Community Use report • Comms team report was reviewed including the trust wide project of updating the websites • The deep dive was HR and Trust Director for HR attended to present. A copy of the report presented is in the files for Trustees information	
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		Safeguarding update	DB confirmed the appointment of a Lead DSL for the Trust and informed Trustees this post would add capacity to the team as the trust has grown. An additional the remit of the role will be to co-ordinate trust wide policies and practice. Over the summer the KCSiE document will be updated and published and the trust will update practices in accordance. Working together to safeguard children is a new document which has come into force this year and this has informed some changes to pastoral care systems and teams in the schools. It was discussed that pastoral teams are seeing an increased volume in attending external meetings to support the most vulnerable of our students and are being requested to take the lead in the process. DB wished to raise this as an issue which will be monitored and reviewed. It was noted that education is not a statutory partner in safeguarding. A long discussion took place on the systems and processes in place in education, and the lines of accountability. It was noted that accountability for schools in the process is increasing. A concern for Leaders is the accountability levels and the workload of pastoral staff when working with multi agencies. DB is currently reviewing patterns of work and time spent. Q – Do Trustees have any weight to communicate? A – It may be the case in the future as we are not a statutory partner. We will not take the lead at present. We have to always consider the needs of the young person. Q – Can you document and escalate concerns? A – Yes, we can do where necessary. DB is on the Executive Safeguarding Board. Q – Are they sympathetic to what is said? A – Yes, education staff are highly thought of. The issue is that the system and staffing is stretched and cuts can mean that sometimes cases do not necessarily meet the threshold. DB confirmed he is working with the schools to review the issues and will report back to Trustees at a future meeting.	
		Confirm Summer term census completed in all schools	WM confirmed that the summer census had been completed and submitted for all schools in the trust.	

		Trust Development Plan: Theme: Our people Priority: Attraction and recruitment Priority: Valuing and investing	<u>HR report</u> Trustees reviewed the HR report which had been circulated prior to the meeting. Director of HR had presented the report to the Finance and Resources committee. Q – On the Employee Engagement survey all questions scored highly, but what about those who didn't complete? A – We know all questions did score highly, but we were disappointed with the level of response. Trustees felt they would have expected a 70-80% completion rate. It was agreed that leaders would review ways to encourage more staff to engage with the survey. Trustees offered thanks to the Director of HR for the comprehensive report. Q – What about sickness absence rates? A – The sickness absence has reduced but there are still several staff on long term sickness absence which does impact the numbers. Comparison within the sector shows that our absence is lower and there are no trends in the data. Absence is well managed within the Trust and training has been delivered by HR for Heads and Managers. Q – The report is very positive, is the data given to the Heads of School to be able to challenge any nuances? A – We give regular feedback to the Heads of School. Some of our schools are on a journey. We are also mindful of the workload of our Heads. The data is provided to Trustees for assurance that we are monitoring. <u>Trust Development Plan</u> Trustees reviewed the Trust Development Plan in its new format – Stable Core and Agile Edge. There are not significant changes in the direction of the trust and the aims. The differences have been highlighted in the report for Trustees reference. KPIs have been added and will be reviewed as to how these can be measured. MV and WM are reviewing the format as to what will be most beneficial to Trustees. <u>Thematic Goal</u> The thematic goal will be reviewed regularly and updated as appropriate. As part of the TDP the goal	
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			needs to be to stabilise. The changes in leadership of the trust should ensure the stable core remains and the agile edge will be a part of this. Trustee comments and questions were invited. SM liked the structure of the documents and the format for the long-term strategy. AG agreed with the comments of SM and felt it was a good plan and welcomed the addition of KPIs. Trustees looked forward to reviewing again in the future. Q – to MV – how do you see yourself working with staff? A – I will have regular individual meetings with all members of the Exec Team. I will also be meeting with the Primary teams and attending SLT at Secondaries in September. I have also been attending the Central Services leaders meetings. The long handover has been very useful to be able to ensure stability. Trustees had no further questions and offered their best wishes and support to MV.	
3	Educational performance	Safer Recruitment processes	DB confirmed that all safer recruitment processes are in place and followed by the Trust.	

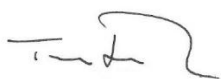
4	Financial performance	Budget for year to 31 st August 2027 and 3-year budget forecast (BFR)	<u>Budget to 31st August 2027</u> WM confirmed that the budget had been reviewed and scrutinised by the Finance and Resources committee and was recommended to Trustees for approval. WM gave Trustees a brief overview of the position which was based on what is known at this point in time. In summary the Trust should be in a position to return to 5% reserves at the end of the year due to an in-year surplus and after ring fenced funding for planned essential resurfacing of 3G pitches. Teacher pay award has been announced as 3.5% with 1.7% funded. The budget included an assumption of 2% unfunded, a decision was taken not to revise the budget as this was not fully funded for a generic school. Support staff pay award has not yet been agreed but the offer is 3.3%, backdated to April 2026, with 1.5% funded. It was noted that no budget changes could be made until any award was agreed. Teachers pension contributions are currently 28.68% and will reduce to 17.6% in April 2027. There are no changes proposed to the budget now, but this position may change once reviewed again before the submission deadline. Trustees were informed the deadline for submitting the budget has been moved from 31st August to mid-September due to the late notifications. <u>BFR</u> Year 1 reflects a small surplus and years 2 and 3 will be more challenging. WM detailed the challenges in budgets of individual schools and the reasons behind this. Trustees felt the position was good in terms of the year before and wished for their thanks to be recorded. SM commented a good job had been done to manage a difficult position over the last 2 years and that it was excellent that reserves would be back to the level they should be. Q – Is there any government information of future pay awards? A – It was initially meant to be 6.5% for teachers over 3 years. We did plan for this but now it is 3.5% and	
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			we have not had any confirmation for future years. Trustees had no further questions and <u>approved</u> the budget to 31st August 2027, and the 3-year budget forecast.	
		Capital projects over £100k	Trustees <u>approved</u> Endpoint Protection service for a three-year agreement at a cost of £150,000. The proposal had been recently reviewed by the Audit and Risk committee and was deemed an essential requirement to manage the risk of cyber-attack. Trustees also <u>approved</u> £50,000 refurbishment project of the student toilets at CHHS, funded by reserves.	
5	AOB		Committee self-evaluation was discussed as this is something which had recently been completed by the Audit and Risk committee. The revised questionnaire had worked well for the committee to be able to review the skills and how the committee can work together. The evaluation will be undertaken every two years. A suggestion from Audit and Risk committee is for other committees, and also the Trust Board, to complete a similar assessment. AG agreed to circulate the template which can be adapted to be more relevant to the committee.	AG
			Trustees offered their thanks and best wishes to L Magrath on her retirement from the Trust.	
6	Approvals	Approvals	Summary of Trustee approvals at this meeting: • Minutes of the meeting held 6th May 2026 • Scheme of Delegation 2026-2027 • Schedules of Business for 2026-2027 for Trust Board, Finance and Resources, Audit and Risk, Governance, Oversight and Standards and Academy Committees • 27 policies • Budget to 31st August 2027 • 3-year Budget Forecast • Endpoint protection service 3-year agreement at a cost of £150k • Refurbishment of student toilets at CHHS at a cost of £50k	

7	Meeting dates	Meeting dates	Wednesday 30 th September 2026 at 10.00am Wednesday 9 th December 2026 at 10.30am Wednesday 10 th February 2027 at 10.00am Wednesday 5 th February 2027 at 10.00am Wednesday 7 th July 2027 at 10.00am	
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Impact of Meeting / Key Outcomes	
Scheme of Delegation for 2026-2027 was approved	
Schedules of Business for Trust Board, all committees and Academy Committees were approved	
Trustees reviewed role descriptions	
Trustees approved 27 policies	
Verbal updates of committee meetings were received	
DB gave Trustees a Safeguarding update	
Trustees reviewed the HR metrics report	
Trust Development plan and thematic goal were approved by Trustees	
Budget to 31 st August 2027, and 3 year BFR were approved for submission	
Trustees approved 2 capital projects	
Thanks and best wishes were offered to L Magrath on her retirement	

Meeting closed at 11.55am



T Little
 Chair of Trust Board
 30th September 2026