



Diocese of Chelmsford Vine Schools Trust

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Registered in England No 8709542. Registered Office 53, New Street Chelmsford CM1 1AT

## TRUST BOARD MEETING MINUTES

**DATE AND TIME:** Friday, 10<sup>th</sup> February, 2017 at 1.00pm  
**VENUE:** Chelmsford Diocesan Offices

**MEMBERSHIP:**

JCo	Joan Costello+	Director
JCr	John Crane*	CEO
GF	Gavin Flynn*	Director
CH	Caroline Haynes*	Director, Vice-Chair
BL	Bryan Lester*	Director, Company Secretary, Finance Director
DO	Doris Olulode*	Director
BP	Becky Poynter+	Director
PP	Philip Preston*	Director, Chair
TR	Tim Rose*	Director
ES	Elizabeth Snowden*	Director
TW	Terri Wood*	Director

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

KJ	Karen Jones*	HT (MIS)
SP	Sharon Porter*	VT Finance Manager
ASP	Alison Syred-Paul*	HT (GRE)
	Jill Haines*	Clerk

\* indicates attendance + indicates absence

**VINE TRUST SCHOOLS:**

BUL	Bulphan CE Primary School, Bulphan
GRE	Great Clacton CE Junior School, Clacton
HOW	Howbridge CE Junior School, Witham
JCO	St James CE Primary School, Colchester
LAT	Latchingdon CE Primary School, Latchingdon
MBG	St Margaret's, Bowers Gifford
MIS	Mistley Norman CE Primary School, Manningtree
ROL	Rolph CE Primary School, Thorpe le Soken
SAA	St Andrews CE Primary School, Weeley
SJH	St James CE Primary School, Harlow
SMI	Southminster CE Primary School
STC	St Cedd's CE Primary School, Bradwell

1/17 **WELCOME AND PRAYER**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and led a prayer of reflection from the recent Vision Conference.

Two new Directors: Gavin Flynn and The Venerable Elizabeth Snowden were welcomed to the Board.

2/17 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received and accepted from Joan Costello, Brendon Ince (COO) and Becky Poynter.

3/17 **NOTIFICATION OF ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no further business to discuss.

It was agreed to move item 16/17: *Recommendations from the Finance & Audit Committee* to follow Matters Arising.

4/17 **DECLARATION OF BUSINESS INTERESTS/CONFLICT OF PECUNIARY INTEREST**

Business Interest Declarations should be completed by the new Directors.

**SP to send current declaration forms to the Clerk for distribution.**

5/17 **BOARD MEMBERSHIP**

PP reported that there is a desire to make one further appointment to the Board, and bring capacity to 12 to ensure the Board operates with a *balanced and effective range of skills*. Senior personnel at Anglia Ruskin University, Chelmsford, are involved in discussions with PP and CH.

6/17 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 25.11.16 were agreed and signed as a true record.

7/17 **MATTERS ARISING**

*item 136/16 MAT self-evaluation document:*

This document intends to inform Tim Coulson (RSC) about the strategy in place to build capacity as the Trust grows. After discussion it agreed that PP, CEO and CH will meet to complete the task.

Directors received a copy of *Introduction to a MAT (NGA)* and had received electronic links to the *Governance Handbook 2017* and *Strategies for Competency Framework*.

16/17 **TO CONSIDER ANY RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE FINANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE**

The following recommendations were made to the Trust Board:

- i. **Appointment of Terri Wood** to the Finance & Audit Committee which now has increased capacity as follows:

**Caroline Haynes (Chair)**

**Joan Costello**

**Bryan Lester**

**Philip Preston**

**Terri Wood**

**In attendance: John Crane and Brendon Ince**

- ii. **Adoption of 1% Local Government Pay Award** (April 2017).

- iii. A common **Vine Single Pay Policy** to be adopted across the Trust and a commonality of **Job Descriptions**. This recommendation has resulted from a potential new converter from another county and would therefore eliminate the need for provision from more than one pay provider.

- iv. Move to a **single payroll provider**, Essex in the first instance, and a review to be carried out in 12 months.

- v. In some schools there is a repeat of concerns that chargecards continue to be used without adhering to financial procedures (Management Letter 2016). It is, therefore, recommended that a written communication should be sent to all HTs/CoGs to say that **non-compliance regarding chargecard use will most likely result in a disciplinary situation**.

- vi. The Board to be made aware that **difficulties with Thurrock Local Authority may delay**

or halt conversion.

vii. **Ratification of updated Academy Budgets 2016/17** (new/revised):

JCO 1617 initial budget v2.0  
MBG 1617 initial budget v1.1  
GRE 1617 revised budget v3.5i (second revision)  
LAT 1617 revised budget v08.12.16 (first revision)

viii. The following bids were recommended:

SJH: **Audio Visual (Main Hall) for £5k.**  
SMI: **Secondment of outstanding teacher £19k.**

ix. MIS: **Pre-school provision to be arranged 'in house'** subject to a suitable Business Plan. NB it is noted that approval from the HT Board is required to accommodate the extended age-range in school.

x. The date of the next meeting to be changed from 24<sup>th</sup> March to 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2017.

**AFTER CONSIDERATION AND DISCUSSION ALL RECOMMENDATIONS WERE APPROVED BY THE BOARD.**

8/17 **UPDATE ON BEAM PARK SCHOOL, RAINHAM**

The CEO reported that a bid has been submitted for Beam Park (Free School), London Borough of Havering. CEO, BI, PP, Tim Elbourne and Chris Harrison, (HT) of George Carey Primary, had attended the interview at the DfE (9.2.17). A decision should be available before the end of Spring 2.

**DIRECTORS ASKED THE CEO FOR A COPY OF THE BID TO BE CIRCULATED.**

9/17 **UPDATE ON THE APPOINTMENT OF KEY PERSONNEL**

Dawn Watson has been appointed to the Central Team as **Trust Support Assistant.**

A post to lead on Academy Conversions is being re-advertised due to a poor initial response.

10/17 **STRATEGIC PLAN 2016-19**

A **RAG rated update** to the Strategic Plan (v1.2 RAG 2017 Spring 1) had been circulated with the agenda; financial data will be added to future versions.

The plan will remain as a work in progress and the CEO assured the meeting that there is a process in place to monitor and review the plan between meetings.

11/17 **RESPONSE TO THE ACADEMY GOVERNANCE CONSULTATION**

The CEO reported on the outcome of the Governance Consultation. A synopsis of the 10 responses received and a Working Party Proposal had been previously circulated. Everyone agreed that governance should accurately reflect consistency in the clarity of vision, financial probity, evidence of progress and good Church of England outcomes. However, there had been a largely negative response, at local level, to the setting up of Regional Boards. Nevertheless Directors were aware of the difficulties in recruiting and retaining effective governors. It will be essential to provide Trust support and mentoring for governors and clerks at local level. This will also ensure that there is a sense of belonging to the Vine family.

It was, therefore, proposed to proceed *with a mixed economy of different governance structures to be in existence for different academies* with the support of a *Vine Governance Consultant.*

**DIRECTORS AGREED THE PROPOSAL (1 ABSTENTION).**

Further discussion was held about the *Vine Vision and Values* branding and a suggestion that each of the three visual elements could be re-designed to show a more connected reflection of the Christian character and some examples were circulated.

It was agreed that ES will correspond with the CEO to discuss ideas.

## 12/17 **VINE GOVERNANCE PORTFOLIOS**

The Chair had prepared and circulated a document for discussion and invited Directors to add any further support that they could offer to facilitate the aims and purposes of the Trust. The Chair reported that relationships are being mutually explored with Anglian Ruskin University and Chelmsford Cathedral and Directors were encouraged to reach out in their own community.

It was proposed and agreed that, at least one Director, should actively engage with each Vine school.

### **DIRECTORS TO SCHEDULE REGULAR VISITS TO SCHOOLS AND REPORT TO THE CEO.**

## 13/17 **CEO REPORT**

The CEO Report (10.2.17) had been previously circulated and the following matters were highlighted:

### **SIAMS INSPECTIONS**

have taken place at LAT, HOW, MIS and JCO; where outcomes are known all academies received a *good* judgement.

### **RSC VISITS TO SCHOOLS**

Education Advisers from the RSC (Regional Schools Commissioner) visited SAA, ROL, GRE, STO, LAT, SMI and SJH last term with schools achieving a positive outcome; the report had been circulated.

### **NEW CONVERTERS**

The proposed conversion of Bulphan CE Primary School is timetabled for 1.4.17 (due diligence reports had been circulated) and Orsett CE Primary School aims to join the Trust by July 2017; due diligence has been commissioned.

An increasing number of schools, and groups of schools, are currently exploring conversion with the Trust:

Belchamp St Paul and Ridgewell CE Schools are keen to join the Trust together; Ridgewell is now in Special Measures.

**Directors asked if the Trust has capacity to convert these two schools and to provide effective support?** The CEO confirmed this was the case.

### **DIRECTORS AGREED TO THE CONVERSION OF BELCHAMP ST PAUL AND RIDGEWELL CE SCHOOLS.**

Discussions are underway with a further 9 schools.

### **OPERATIONS**

DAS Law is dealing with a claim for unfair dismissal.

### **ISSUES FOR THE BOARD**

#### **i. TENDRING**

Holland Park Primary School, Clacton on Sea, is planning to open a free school for children with

social, emotional and mental health needs; local HTs have been informed that they can purchase places, at a cost of between £3k and £8k, for a fixed period. The CEO had met with Anthony Welsh (EHT) to investigate.

**Directors discussed a desire to support this very needy proposal however, there were some concerns about the level of provision that would be supplied.**  
**IT WAS DECIDED NOT TO COMMIT TO PURCHASE SPACES AT THIS TIME.**

ii. **HARLOW**

- Directors were asked to consider a finance proposal to re-furbish the Caretaker's House (SJH), at a cost of £20k, in anticipation of a rental opportunity at £800-£1,000 pcm.

**DIRECTORS AGREED THAT A MORE FORMAL BUSINESS PLAN AND COSTING STRUCTURE SHOULD BE OBTAINED TO MAKE A MORE INFORMED DECISION.**

- An LA consultation is underway to expand GRE, ROL and SAA. ROL and SAA wished to amend their Admissions Policy and a copy was circulated.

**DIRECTORS AGREED IN PRINCIPLE TO THE PROPOSAL FOR ALL 3 SCHOOLS.**

- Increasing the capacity of the finance function at LAT, SMI and STC by combining some functions was **agreed in principle subject to the HTs being in agreement.**

- Following a recommendation from SMI Executive Board it was proposed that Ola Laniyan (HoS), currently seconded until 31.8.17, should become substantive HT as there is already evidence of improvement following the RI judgement for *effectiveness of leadership and management*.

**Directors asked for confirmation that the pay arrangement will be in accordance with the VT Pay Policy.** This was confirmed by the CEO.

**DIRECTORS AGREED TO THE PROPOSAL.**

- KJ left the meeting to discuss a proposal to appoint her as substantive HT (MIS) following a recommendation from the CEO.

**DIRECTORS AGREED THE APPOINTMENT.**

14/17 **COMPANY SECRETARY REPORT**

There was nothing to report.

15/17 **VINE POLICIES**

The following had been previously circulated:

- Admissions Policy
- Complaints Policy (with stepped procedure)
- E-safety Policy
- Freedom of Information Policy
- Website Policy
- Worship Policy

**ALL POLICIES WERE APPROVED BY DIRECTORS.**

17/17 **CHAIR'S ACTION**

TBA

18/17 **CHAIR'S BUSINESS/CORRESPONDENCE**

Request from the DfE from Tim Coulson for a colleague to attend the Board Meeting in July.

19/17 **ACADEMY CONVERSION UPDATES**

These were discussed earlier (*item 13/17 CEO Report*).

20/17 **ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING**

There was nothing further to include at this meeting.

21/17 **ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

There was nothing further to report.

22/17 **DATE AND TIME OF FUTURE MEETINGS:**

**2017**

**Spring 2**

**Summer 1**

**Summer 2**

**Autumn 1 (17/18)**

**Fridays at 1.00pm**

**31<sup>st</sup> March** including AGM (previously 24<sup>th</sup>)

12<sup>th</sup> May

14<sup>th</sup> July

22<sup>nd</sup> September

**CLOSING PRAYER**

The meeting closed at 3.20pm with a prayer of blessing for the tasks ahead.

<b>SUMMARY OF DECISIONS BY DIRECTORS</b>	
11/17	Approved Working Party Proposal in response to the Academy Governance Consultation
13/17	Approved conversion of Belchamp St Paul CE School.
13/17	Approved conversion of Ridgewell CE School.
13/17	Refusal of offer to purchase spaces at Holland Park Primary (free school).
13/17	Agreed a formal business plan is required for re-furbishment/rental of the Caretaker's House (SJH).
13/17	Approved the LA exploration of an expansion plan for GRE, ROL and SAA
13/17	Approved appointment of Ola Laniyan as HT (SMI)
13/17	Approved appointment of Karen Jones as HT (MIS)
15/17	Approved Vine Trust Admissions Policy
15/17	Approved Vine Trust Complaints Policy
15/17	Approved Vine Trust E-safety Policy
15/17	Approved Vine Trust Freedom of Information Policy
15/17	Approved Vine Trust Website Policy
15/17	Approved Vine Trust Worship Policy
16/17	Approved appointment of Terri Wood to the Finance & Audit Committee
16/17	Approved adoption of 1% Local Government Pay Award
16/17	Approved adoption of Vine Single Pay Policy and commonality of Job Descriptions
16/17	Approved the adoption of a single payroll provider
16/17	Approved a warning that non-compliance of chargecards in schools may result in disciplinary action.
16/17	Ratification of updated Academy Budgets 2016/17: JCO 1617 initial budget v2.0 MBG 1617 initial budget v1.1 GRE 1617 revised budget v3.5i (second revision) LAT 1617 revised budget v08.12.16 (first revision)
16/17	Approved SJH and SMI bids
16/17	Approval in principal of increased capacity of the finance function at LAT, SMI and STC.
16/17	Approved <i>in house</i> pre-school provision subject to Business Plan and HTB approval

	<b>SUMMARY OF ACTION</b>	<b>OWNER</b>	<b>TIMELINE</b>
4/17	BI Declarations to be circulated to new Directors	SP/Clerk	Post meeting
5/17	Membership discussions with Anglia Ruskin University	PP/CH	Post meeting
7/17	MAT SEF compliance	PP/CH/CEO	Post meeting
8/17	Beam Park bid to be circulated to all Directors	CEO	Post meeting
11/17	Vine Vision and Values design	ES/CEO	Post meeting
12/17	Directors to schedule school visits	ALL	Post meeting