



Diocese of Chelmsford Vine Schools Trust

The Diocese of Chelmsford Vine Schools Trust is a company limited by guarantee.
Registered in England No 8709542. Registered Office 53, New Street Chelmsford CM1 1AT

TRUST BOARD MEETING MINUTES

DATE AND TIME: Friday, 31st March, 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:

MCT	Mark Carter-Tufnell*	HT (STO)
BF	Belynda Fellows*	HT (JCO)
SP	Sharon Porter*	VT Finance Manager
	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

- 23/17 **WELCOME AND PRAYER**
The Chair opened the meeting with a welcome and a prayer of reflection from Education Sunday.
- 24/17 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
Apologies were received and accepted from Joan Costello, Gavin Flynn, Caroline Haynes and Terri Wood.
- 25/17 **NOTIFICATION OF ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**
There was no further business to discuss.

It was agreed to move item 43/17: *Recommendations from the Standards & Performance Committee* to follow Board Membership Update.

26/17 **DECLARATION OF BUSINESS INTERESTS/CONFLICT OF PECUNIARY INTEREST**

There were no new Business Interests to declare. However, there were verbal reminders of an interest in the agenda as an employee of the Diocese (BL, ES) and as a Consultant to the Diocese (PP).

27/17 **BOARD MEMBERSHIP UPDATE**

PP and CH have continued discussion with senior personnel at Anglia Ruskin University, Chelmsford, and it is anticipated that a further appointment to the Board will be confirmed shortly which will bring membership of the Board to 12 Directors.

28/17 **SET UP OF STANDARDS AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE/TO CONSIDER ANY**
43/17 **RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE STANDARDS AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE**

BP (Interim Chair) reported on the outcome of discussions at the committee meeting which was held earlier today:

i. **Membership of the Committee:**

Caroline Haynes **Elected Chair**
Doris Olulode **Appointed Vice-Chair**
Joan Costello
Becky Poynter
Elizabeth Snowden
Jackie Williams **Trust Lead**

ii. The following statement was agreed as a purpose and guidance towards the approval of **Terms of Reference:**

The purpose of the Standards and Performance Committee is to enable the Vine Trust Board to fulfil its purpose of holding Headteachers and local governing bodies to account for the achievement and attainment of the children in their care.

The CEO will provide a report to the committee that will provide specific data for each school in the Vine Trust. The data will compare performance, as measured against national standards, for the expectations as laid down by the DfE, the Headteacher Board and Ofsted. Recommendations to the Board, by the committee, will be made for schools that require immediate, vigorous action, for schools that need support and for schools to be commended and invited to share good practice.

Model Terms of Reference (Nexus Multi Academy Trust) had been circulated and the committee agreed to adopt the document subject to the amendments noted:

- 2.1: It is authorised to request any information it requires from any employee of the Trust **as deemed appropriate** and all employees are directed to co-operate with any request made by the Committee.
- 2.2: The Committee is authorised to obtain any outside legal or independent professional advice it considers necessary **after consultation with the CEO and Chair of the Board as appropriate.**
- 3.1: **Is it the CEO or Chair of Standards Committee who writes the report.**
- 4.1.3: The educational needs of the pupils attending the Trust's Academies – **need the Trust's vision statement or reference of church status.**
- 4.2.1: The Ofsted framework, providing challenge and **support**, recommending remedial actions where required in line with the School Improvement Plan.
- 4.4.3: **Delete last sentence – Co-opted members of the Committee will have full participation rights. Give guidance rather than have a vote.**
- 4.4.7: The Chair of the Standards Committee will be appointed by and from **the Board**

annually. Delete the Board annually and replace with the members of the Standards Committee.

If the Chair is absent from a meeting the Board shall choose another Board member to act as Chair for that meeting. Amend this sentence to read: If the Chair/Vice Chair are absent from a meeting the Standards Committee shall choose another Board member to act as Chair for that meeting.

- 4.4.8: **Delete sentence in brackets (in the event of there being co-optees on the Committee)**
- 4.4.10 Administrative support will be provided by the **CEO**.

29/17 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 10.2.17 were agreed and signed as a true record.

30/17 **MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters to discuss that did not already appear on the agenda.

31/17 **UPDATE ON BID DECISION FOR BEAM PARK SCHOOL, RAINHAM**

Although a response to the bid for Beam Park (LBH Free School) had been anticipated before the end of Spring 2 there was nothing to report.

32/17 **UPDATE ON THE APPOINTMENT OF KEY PERSONNEL**

The CEO reported on a decision not to progress further with the appointment of an Academy Conversions Officer due to a poor response; this will result in the role being managed *in house* for the time being.

Directors asked for a brief outline of the role and suggestions as to why the position had not been filled to date.

This is a key role with a job specification to advise and support schools, both pre and post conversion, alongside management of the day-to-day conversion process; training would be required. It is anticipated that the poor response is a reflection of the skills required when compared with the salary offer.

There was further discussion about the challenge of under resourcing, especially in consideration of the current workload for Trust personnel, balanced with the need to ensure consistency in the delivery of good service to all stakeholders.

33/17 **STRATEGIC PLAN 2016-19**

The Strategic Plan (v1.4 RAG 2017 Spring 2) RAG rated version had been circulated for review and noted the inclusion of financial data; the CEO highlighted that there is a continuing investment from the Diocese.

34/17 **ACADEMY GOVERNANCE CONSULTATION**

The outcome of the governance consultation had resulted in a decision to proceed with a mixed economy of different governance structures for different academies. Where appropriate, new Schemes of Delegation have been circulated to LGBs.

35/17 **VINE VISION AND VALUES BRANDING**

An enhanced *Vine Vision and Values* branding has been created to more accurately reflect an *outward facing* and *resilient Christian character* whilst providing *excellent education*.

36/17 **VINE GOVERNANCE PORTFOLIOS update**

The Chair encouraged all Directors to contribute further support to the portfolio to facilitate the aims and purposes of the Trust.

An updated document will be able to reflect the ongoing Finance, Audit & Compliance Committee and the set-up of a Standards & Performance Committee; new links with Anglian Ruskin University are also taking shape and, in due course, Board members will reflect personal links with

specific schools.

37/17 **CEO REPORT**

The CEO Report (31.3.17) had been previously circulated and the following matters were highlighted:

An updated **MAT SELF EVALUATION** had been circulated.

GOVERNANCE

The Board discussed a growing concern around the recruitment of quality governors with the necessary skill set to serve on LGBs. Members agreed that poor governance provision must be addressed and it was agreed to promote and advertise the role of the School Governor in local communities and churches. *As well as being part of Ofsted's judgement on leadership and management, the need for effective and committed governors is stressed in the Department for Education's (DfE) competency framework for governance.* It was suggested that Mike Simmonds (Trust Governance Adviser) could prepare a strategic framework for governors which could include a quality induction process for new governors.

NEW CONVERTERS

The proposed conversion of **Bulphan CE Primary School** is now timetabled for 1.6.17 and **Orsett CE Primary School** (1.7.17); **Ridgewell CE Primary School** is awaiting an Academy Order. It was noted that the delay with Thurrock Local Authority has not yet been resolved.

Belchamp St Pauls is expected to convert on 1.8.17 at the earliest.

Two Villages CE Primary School has indicated a desire to convert to the Vine Family. However, this is a PFI school, which will probably extend the time scale for conversion by 6 months.

DIRECTORS AGREED TO THE CONVERSION OF TWO VILLAGES CE PRIMARY SCHOOL IN PRINCIPLE.

ISSUES FOR THE BOARD

It was noted that **Tuck Shops** will end if the Trust becomes completely cashless. For some schools this is a matter for concern and will remain as a discussion item on the Finance & Audit Committee agenda.

Directors had previously agreed in principle to the expansion at a number of academies and the CEO confirmed that the process is now underway.

38/17 **VISITS TO SCHOOLS BY MEMBERS OF THE BOARD**

The Chair proposed that there should be a formalisation of visits to schools. The NGA document *Knowing Your School* had been circulated and was recommended as a guide to visiting etiquette.

The Board recognised the importance of effective working relationships between the Trust and individual schools and the need to guard against this being exercised remotely. It was recommended that Directors should know each school in context and develop some formality to visits thereby showing the human face of the Trust.

At this meeting the following arrangements to visit were arranged:

PP	Howbridge	19.4.17
CH	Mistley Norman	28.3.17
	St James Colchester	18.4.17
TW	St James Harlow	22.5.17
BL	Bulphan	
TR	Great Clacton and St Osyth	

ES	Latchingdon, St Cedds and Southminster	
DO	St Marys Bowers Gifford	
GF	Rolph and St Andrews	3.7.17
RP	Colne Valley region	

Jackie Williams left the meeting at 2pm.

39/17 **COMPANY SECRETARY REPORT**

The Trust is currently consulting on an Information, Consultation and Facilities Agreement with Unions which had been circulated. The Agreement aims *to set out the processes and mechanisms used within the Trust for informing and consulting with employees and to provide clarity on the types of issue that may be the subject of information or consultation.*

The next JCC meeting is planned for 16.6.17.

40/17 **VINE POLICIES**

There was nothing to report. However, a number of policies will require to be ratified at the next meeting.

41/17 **CHURCH OF ENGLAND VISION FOR EDUCATION – Implications for the Trust**

PP reported on a discussion with Revd Tim Elbourne (DDE) regarding a desire for the **Church of England Vision for Education** to permeate the Vine Vision. Copies of the document (Autumn 2016) were distributed and the Chair urged all Directors to become familiar with the objectives of this version of the educational vision: *making education that is deeply Christian, serving the common good, a priority now and in the years to come.*

Directors were informed that electronic copies of the CE Vision have been circulated to all Headteachers and a copy of the document is available on the Vine Trust website.

42/17 **TO CONSIDER ANY RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE FINANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE**

The following recommendations were made to the Trust Board:

- i. It was recommended that there is sufficient control in place for **Finance Officers to be a signatory on Bank Accounts.**
- ii. **Charge cards** must be subject to 100% compliance before the next scheduled RO visit or they will be withdrawn.
- iii. A project to be initiated to **plan and systematise Finance & Audit roles** across all schools and **appoint a Project Leader.** GF to be approached to take on this role.
- iv. Delegation of scrutiny of individual academy Risk Registers to the Committee Working Party and **content to receive the Summary Dashboard.**
- v. A **review of the Risk Registers identified three new risks** to be included on all academy Risk Assessments in future:
 1. Assess risk to public, pupils and parents from traffic around and outside premises.
 2. Assess risk associated to public, pupils and staff on school grounds from motor vehicles.
 3. Assess personal injury to staff associated with cash handling and paying money into the bank.
- vi. Directors agreed to **set a deadline for Every Business Management to be populated by May half-term and to inform the Trust by the end of April if this is unrealistic.** Accordingly, the CEO, supported by the Chair, will send a letter to all schools to this effect.

vii. DIRECTORS AGREED TO CONTINUE ADOPTING THE EXISTING NFF MODEL FOR THE TIME BEING FOR 2018 ONWARDS.

Funding Forecast Strategy:

1. Continue adopting existing NFF for the time being for 2018 onwards.
2. Continue to apply a 1% cost of living rise annually.
3. Increase Employer's Pension liability annually until a 25% ceiling is reached.
4. Continue reducing pupil weighted funding by 1.5% pa.
5. Introduce an inflationary element and reduce funding by .5% pa.
6. Introduce an Apprenticeship Levy factor.

THE BUDGET FORECAST RETURN TIMETABLE WAS RECOMMENDED FOR CIRCULATION TO ACADEMIES.

UPDATED REVISED BUDGETS 2016/17 HAD BEEN CIRCULATED AND WERE RATIFIED:

DIRECTORS AGREED TO CONTINUE TO ADOPT THE CURRENT RESERVES POLICY MODEL WITH A REVIEW DATE OF 12 MONTHS.

viii. The following bids were recommended:

MIS: **Positive Behaviour Management resources £800.**

JCO: **Update to I pads £27k.**

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

43/17 TO CONSIDER ANY RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE STANDARDS AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE

See item 28/17

44/17 CHAIR'S ACTION

There was no urgent action to be reported since the last meeting.

PP informed the meeting that the CEO is approaching completion of his first year in post and a Performance Management meeting will be arranged in due course (PP, CH and JCr).

45/17 CHAIR'S BUSINESS/CORRESPONDENCE

None recorded.

46/17 COMMUNICATION BETWEEN TRUST BOARD MEMBERS AND TRUST LEADS

The COO reported that due to a system error Vine email accounts for all Board members are not yet available.

47/17 ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

- i. There was nothing to add for discussion at the next meeting.
- ii. CH (VC) will chair the next meeting on 12.5.17.

48/17 ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

There was nothing further to report.

49/17 FUTURE FULL BOARD MEETINGS to be held on Fridays at 1.00pm preceded by lunch at 12.15pm:

2016/17

AGM

Summer 1

TBA

12th May

Summer 2 14th July

2017/18

Autumn 1 22nd September

Autumn 2 24th November

Spring 1 9th February

Spring 2 23rd March

Summer 1 11th May

Summer 2 13th July

2018/19

Autumn 1 21st September

CLOSING PRAYER

Archdeacon Elizabeth closed the meeting at 2.30pm with a prayer of continued blessing on the Board's commitment to deliver effectively the Vine Vision and Values.

	SUMMARY OF DECISIONS BY DIRECTORS
37/17	Approved to conversion of Two Villages CE Primary School
42/17	Recommendation that there is sufficient control in place for FOs to be a signatory on Bank Accounts.
42/17	Recommendation that charge cards must be subject to 100% compliance or will be withdrawn.
42/17	Recommendation that a project be initiated to plan and systematise F&A roles across all schools. Appoint Project Leader.
42/17	Agreed to the delegation of scrutiny of individual academy Risk Registers to the Committee Working Party and content to receive the summary dashboard.
42/17	Recommendation that a review of the Risk Registers identified three new risks.
42/17	Approval to set a deadline for Every Business Management to be populated by May half-term.
42/17	Approval to continue to adopt the existing NFF model for 2018 onwards.
42/17	Approval to continue to inflate base salaries with 1%.
42/17	Approval to increase Employer's Pension Liability annually until a 25% ceiling is reached.
42/17	Approval of cumulative adjustment to funding.
42/17	Recommendation that the Budget Forecast Return Timetable is circulated to Academies.
42/17	Ratification of revised budgets for STO, GRE and SJH
42/17	Approval of adoption of current Reserves Policy model with a review date of 12 months.
42/17	Recommendation of grant requests for MIS and JCO.

	SUMMARY OF ACTION	OWNER	TIMELINE
37/17	Preparation of a strategic framework for governors (Mike Simmonds).	PP/CEO	Post meeting
38/17	Directors to arrange visits to schools and report to the CEO	ALL	Post meeting
41/17	Directors to be familiar with CE Vision for Education	ALL	Post meeting
46/17	Vine email accounts	COO	Post meeting