

Ethos Committee – Part I Minutes							
Date/Time	8th December 2020 4.00pm	Location		Virtual (Microsoft Team)			
Attendees		Initials			Attendees	Initials	
Morgen Witzel	MW	John Lawlor	JL	Pete Last	PL	Tania Skeaping	TS
Jeanette Savage (from 4.50pm)	JS						

Apologies	Initials	Reason	
Dan Morrow	DM	Work Commitment	ACTIONS
Jane Dumeresque	JD	Family Matter	DECISIONS
Elizabeth Underwood	EU	Work Commitment	QUESTIONS AND CHALLENGES

In Attendance	Initials	Position
Susanne Kiff	SK	CFOO
Hazel Fox	HF	Vice CEO
Melissa Trudgill	MT	Governance Manager

Meeting started at 4.05pm

(The meeting was recorded for the purposes of minute taking and was destroyed on 29.12.20)

1 - Apologies
Dan Morrow, Jane Dumeresque and Elizabeth Underwood gave their apologies for the meeting and these were sanctioned. Elizabeth Underwood would be joining the next Ethos Committee Meeting. MW welcomed PL as new Foundation Trustee to the meeting.
2 – Declaration of Interest
All Trustees present were reminded to declare any conflict of interest that may arise during the meeting.
3 – Agree and Sign off Previous Minutes
Minutes from: Ethos Committee meeting held on 22nd September 2020 were agreed and will be signed as correct by MW, after the Covid 19 crisis.
4 – Matters arising
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MT explained that the AGM 2021 would be more in line with statutory requirements and would not present annual reports from the Trust Board Committees. • Annual HR Report – this action has been moved to the Full Trust Board and Gill Tremain will be submitting an annual HR report for the next Full Trustees Meeting on 21.1.21. Q MW asked if there was any aspect of this which should be discussed by the Ethos Committee? SK responded in the negative, but added that in her recent CFOO report, she

had included data and information on staff absences. She reminded the meeting that staff well-being was a priority at the moment. HF added that further capacity for all staff to have supervision/mentoring/coaching was being developed, whilst recognising that everyone was an individual and individual responses were called for. **Q MW asked who was providing the confidential supervisions and counselling?** HF said that an external professional service was being used for the Headteachers and that she was looking at a Devon County provision or a 'train the trainer'/school to school provision. Jane Lake is running Mental Health Forums.

- **Q MW asked if there were any specific issues which were troubling SK and HF at the moment?** HF said they have had union requests regarding the extremely clinical vulnerable in work settings. Their approach has been on a case by case basis for these staff, as they have been quite stressed since lockdown has finished; individual circumstances have been looked at and where flexibility can be offered, it has been.
- **Q MW suggested a buddy system which could offer support to staff within their schools to call on in times of need?** HF said this could be looked into. Some of the existing groups which are currently in place are growing, strengthening and providing support outside of meetings. HF also thinks that the change in MIS with Arbour will enable easier monitoring of staff absence without adding to workloads by asking for data. Patterns will be clearer to spot and hence issues can be addressed more quickly. MW reminded that it was not just about absenteeism, but also presenteeism, where people are turning up for work when perhaps mentally or emotionally they should not be.
- **Q MW asked who carries out those reviews of staff mental health?** SK said it would depend – stress risk assessments will be done by the line manager, but more sensitive, complex matters might be carried out by Gill Tremain or SK. JL added that the AC Chairs were a vital support for Headteachers and it has been left that the Headteachers can call the Chairs if needed.
- **RE/PSHE Report** – report submitted by HF, but carried forward to next Ethos Committee Meeting (March 2021). JL suggested a deep dive into smaller clusters of schools.
- **Student Charter** – HF has a Trust Champion who could lead on this with pupils and Headteachers. Revisit in January.
- **Environmental** – Environmental Leads will be discussed as part of the governance restructure as ideally this will be embedded in this process. HF said this was a live and active agenda item and all schools had signed up to the Ashden Award and zero carbon promise. JL added that an environmental report will be included in the Annual Trustees Report (approved by Audit Committee).
- **FSM provision** – this is being provided by DCC via vouchers during the Christmas break. **Q MW asked if there was a plan B if this does not run smoothly?** SK said there was not a quick Plan B in place as to get vouchers, they have to be ordered 7 days in advance. HF said a letter was going out to parents with clear guidance and contact points for parents during the holidays where they could get a response from the Trust as a central point where they could be signposted to help. MW had concerns that as the Trust had been the providers of the support previously, there could be blame directed at the Trust if the DCC operation fails.

5 – Matters brought forward at the direction of the Chair

- MW raised that there is a need to look at mechanisms for how the committees report back to the Full Board, particularly when the new governance structure is likely to re-establish numerous committees. TS and MW suggested mini reports to cover actions or main points from the Chair of the Committee, which should be submitted with Full Board papers 7 days before the meeting. Care should be taken to not repeat the business of the committee meeting and to avoid duplication, but questions can be raised and recommendations brought forward. MW said the meeting schedule also needs to be looked at carefully and there should be a standing Full Board agenda item for committee and link trustees' reports.

6 – Welcome to Elizabeth Underwood - discussion on Ethos and Values - Three Hares Cluster.

This agenda item will be deferred to the next Ethos Committee Meeting.

7. To receive verbal HR report re feedback on staff absences and the reasons.

See above within discussion.
8. Environmental Concerns:
<p>1. Reporting on steps being taken towards reducing carbon footprint and making schools more environmentally accountable</p> <p>2. Steps being taken towards embedding environmental issues in the curriculum.</p> <p>These matters will be covered in the CEO Report presented to the Full Board Meeting on 10.12.20.</p> <p>Guidance Notes for Non-Church Schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘We will now require every Church School to have a SIAMS committee’ – change to ‘ask’ (less directive language). • TS asked for the Cohesion Strategy WG (governance) to be aware of how to incorporate the Ethos Committees which are operating, as some schools are running these regularly. HF also confirmed that it is a requirement for Church Schools to have an Ethos Committee (not a SIAMS committee) and have continued to have these remotely. Some of the stakeholder meetings, which had originally been started as part of the co-operative ethos became Ethos Committees. Ethos Committees (with minutes) will need to be included in the new plans so there are meetings on every site (in particular Church schools as it is a requirement). TS said that a lot of work had gone into setting these committees up and on some sites, these were still working well; they should not be overlooked in the new restructure plans. MW said consideration will need to be given for the church schools which have to operate a school specific Ethos Committee but the Three Hares has set up a joint ethos/parent forum which covers all 3 schools and a discussion ensued whether this fulfilled the need for Chagford to meet the requirement for SIAMS. JL felt that a separate group would not be needed as long as it was incorporated within the group agenda representing all schools in the cluster. <p>ACTION: HF will check the parameters and clarification regarding the new governance structure and church schools from the Diocese from Ed Paulson and Sue Lockwood</p>
9. To report back on their discussions on democratic fellowship and how to incorporate ideas into strategic planning for January.
See in above discussion.
10. Discuss Student Charter proposal
See in above discussion.
11. Self-Evaluation/Review –
<p>11.1 Monitoring performance and ethical standards</p> <p>Q MW asked if the new MIS would assist with this? HF suggested that the ethical framework which gives nationally recognised guidance, can be benchmarked against and incorporates the co-operative elements and SIAMS.</p> <p>ACTION: HF and MW to organise a meeting to explore performance and ethical standards further with a Foundation Trustee, DM and or a Trust Champion.</p> <p>ACTION: HF to circulate the ethical framework information to all Trustees.</p> <p>11.2 Self-evaluation of Trustee Board – methods and approaches</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MW informed the meeting that GB had a self-evaluation questionnaire which could be used and MW has circulated a paper outlining the self-evaluation methods which Libraries Unlimited has recently used. • MW reminded that the purpose of a good self-evaluation is about improving the quality of the Board overall so that it can improve its function. He said that good practise is to undertake a self-evaluation exercise once a year. • The Committee agreed that MW’s paper was very helpful and PL said it would be good to undertake it alongside the annual skills audit for the Board, measure ourselves against our mission statement and it was about getting better. • MT added that once the Board evaluation has been completed, the exercise could be rolled out to the ACs following any amendments to the process, which may be required. It was important that the Board is seen to be evaluated as a first step.

- JS agreed that we should be seen to be willing to go first and she liked the simplicity and requirement to self-reflect in MW's information. JS agreed with PL's point around the vision of the Trust, including providing local education for ALL of our children, is one she feels very passionate about and would like it to be included in the reflection process.
- JL said it was important that the evaluation process does not become personal and it is a risk when considering evaluating individuals such as the Chair. JL suggested a group discussion at first and TS said if it is all undertaken in the spirit of our kind, considerate and co-operative values it could be effective; it cannot help but be personal and we do need to develop as individuals, as the Board and as a Chair.
- MW said that the 2 frameworks can be compared and a working group of three trustees could be created which can decide which approach to take forward. MW suggested that he and GB should step back as they had suggested the 2 frameworks. PL offered to be on the working group. It was agreed to undertake it in the Summer Term and put the proposal forward to the Full Board in March.

ACTION: Trustees to volunteer for the self-evaluation working group.

ACTION: Working Group to provide a proposal for the Board self-evaluation to the Full Board meeting on 18th March (self-evaluation to be carried out in the Summer Term).

11.3 Monitor communications between DMAT, ACs, pupils, parishes and local communities in light of the Covid crisis

- HF reported that she speaks to Headteachers with a pre-arranged call every week for a professional discussion where Covid is discussed. A Leadership Update bulletin has been introduced which channels emails etc in a weekly communication and which can be shared with SLTs in schools.
- **Q MW asked if anything has been learnt so far as a positive to continue after the pandemic?** HF said the opportunity to have more streamlined meetings over Team have been positive, but the human aspect of meeting people has also been missed. HF and SK are reflecting with the Headteachers and Operations Team and analysing what has been good, what has been learnt and these experiences will shape the future. HF said that communication will always be worked on and improved.

11.4 Monitoring progress/achievement of DMAT pupils including underachieving groups (SEND/PP etc)

To be covered at Full Board Meeting on 10.12.20.

11.5 Discussion of safeguarding and behaviour policies

HF said that the schools still have separate behaviour policies and it is a priority to have a Trust wide policy, which can contain appendices for school context. Additional facilities such as the Holditch Centre will need to be included in future policy updates.

HF said that Jane Lake keeps the Trust current with Safeguarding policy updates.

11.6 Review of corporate governance and stakeholder governance at DMAT

- MW reported that one of the impressive aspects of the Cohesion Strategy Task and Finish Group is how well the different layers have worked together i.e. headteachers, governors and trustees and there have been some full and frank discussions which have been very useful and increased understanding of the relationships within the Trust.
- The meeting agreed that when it was possible, it would be positive to restart the governance conferences with a focus on networking opportunities and where all have the opportunity to contribute, lead the agenda and raise the issues that are concerning to them.
- The support staff conferences had been well organised and appreciated. SK will be organising a support staff conference as soon as was possible.
- Suggestions were to reconvene governance conferences from the Autumn Term and plan for them twice a year. However, a virtual option could be considered when the governance restructure was in place.
- HF said a digital conference had been investigated by herself and IT Team, but it had been decided that currently the size permissible would mean many be excluded.

12. Minutes of Ethos Committees across DMAT

- Notes from the last Ethos Leads Meeting had been circulated. MW checked on the progress of: Email Protocol (MT), Staff Handbook (HF).
- MW said training for governance and staff had been discussed but felt that more induction work was needed. MT has introduced a buddy system for new governors and will roll it out further in January. She will also be organising a new governor meeting for all new governors across the ACs.
- **Q. PL asked HF who was the Lead Head for Church School and asked if the role still existed and who was it?** HF said it was Elizabeth Underwood who had volunteered for this role last year. PL said he had started to have teams' meetings and phone calls with the Headteachers of the Church Schools but was mindful of the current pressures on schools.

13. Mental Health/Wellbeing

Addressed under item 4.

- HF added that although there is the development of a mental health champion in each school, there is no-one officially who has this area of responsibility within the central operations or in the school improvement team meeting and she will be looking at this next year perhaps with one of the Trust Champions.
- The Staff Charter Promise will be worked on and it may be that the ownership of mental health has to be the responsibility, owned by and discussed by all of us. SK said she will be working on this jointly with HF and that HR is one of her priorities within the operations reorganisation and it will be strongly embedded within the HR solution. They will work with the Trust Champion to ensure the message is spread out to all schools.
- **Q PL asked whether the Executive Team can access the same level of supervisory support which is available to Headteachers as they have also been under a lot of pressure in these challenging times?** HF said that if she needs support she feels that she can talk to SK and DM and has been offered a name of a recommended coach. SK and HF have also supported each other well. MW said it was important that SK and HF had someone they can talk to as a person as well as someone on a professional level. HF said that the CSG Monday meetings were also a safe space where issues can be aired confidentially.

14. Risks identified/forthcoming changes

MW raised the risk of breakdown in communication and we must all be mindful of this. The risk register will be brought to the Full Board Meeting on 10.12.20.

15. Date of Next Date of Next Meeting

4th March 2021

The meeting ended at 5.46pm.

Action Table from 08.12.20

SK/GT	Trustees requested an annual HR report by the end of the year.	Moved to Full Trustees
SK/GT	To give verbal updates on wellbeing and mental health of staff (especially around Covid and absences)	8.12.20
HF	To report back to the next Ethos Committee on how ethos is being brought into the curriculum in particular areas surrounding black lives matter and racial issues.	Report submitted but c/f to next meeting 4.3.21
HF/MW/DM	To put a proposal together for a Student Charter with the suggested mechanics to get this to work and then MW/HF can speak to AC Chairs, Student Council and Headteachers.	Jan 2021
MW/HF	To check that other religions and ethnicities are embedded in the values of the schools and then potentially change the TOR to reflect what we have in existence.	Jan 2021
MW	To invite pupils to have an input at future ethos committee meetings.	Next Mtg?

HF	To introduce the use of icons in her next Vice CEO report to highlight where ethical standards are addressed.	Autumn Term
MW	To discuss with ACs the idea of nominating Environmental Leads/individuals could be found within schools i.e. people who have a genuine interest or expertise in this area which could be shared.	Spring Term
HF	To email to MT a copy of the SIAMS log for Trustees information	DONE
MT	To add this item to the next agenda - Guidance notes for non-Church Schools	DONE
DM/SJ/HF	To report back to the next Ethos Committee on their discussions on democratic fellowship and how to incorporate ideas into strategic planning for January.	DONE
MT	To include JD's sentence about the green agenda and place on next agenda for approval.	DONE
MW	To ask at the next Ethos Leads Meeting, how Schools and ACs would like the ethos of the Trust to be more visible and reveal all the positive things taking place.	FEB Mtg
SK	To check that FSM children and families are being supplied with meals whilst off school and also to report back on the provision intended during holidays.	MOVED TO FULL BOARD ACTION 21.1.21
MT	To ensure with the Clerks that all schools had added the appendices on to the Behaviour Policy and that they are up to date on school websites.	ASAP
MW	To place on the agenda the idea of parent trustee at next Full Board Meeting and consideration of staff trustee when there becomes a vacancy on the Board	SPRING TERM (after governance restructure)
HF	To check the parameters and clarification from the Diocese from Ed Paulson and Sue Lockwood regarding the new governance structure and church schools.	ASAP
HF/MW	To organise a meeting to explore performance and ethical standards further with a Foundation Trustee, DM and or a Trust Champion.	
HF	To circulate the ethical framework information to all Trustees.	
All Trustees	To volunteer for the self-evaluation working group.	ASAP
Board Self - Evaluation WG (GB, MW & PL)	Working Group to provide a proposal for the Board self-evaluation to the Full Board meeting on 18 th March (self-evaluation to be carried out in the Summer Term).	18.3.21 (Full Board Mtg)