



**Minutes of the Southerly Point  
Co-operative Multi-Academy Trust  
Annual General Meeting**

**Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> January 2020, from 6.00pm,  
in the Trust Conference Room.**



<b><u>ATTENDING :</u></b>		
Simon Cade [for Askel Veur] Ian Luke Andrew North Donna Bryant Alan Horne Kristin Pryor Susan Reynolds Tony Sanders Kevin Thomas		SCa Ilu ANo DBr AHo KPr SRe TSa KTh
<b><u>In Attendance</u></b>		
Richard Lawrence Sean Pinhay Karen Teague		RLa SPi KTe
<b><u>APOLOGIES :</u></b>		
Sean Davis Alan Hinchliffe Pam Miller Simon Tregoning		SDa AHi PMi STr
		<b><u>ACTION</u></b>
<b>3.</b>	<b><u>WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS</u></b>	
	ANo was re-elected to the role of Chair and welcomed all those present. Attendees were invited to introduce themselves to the group.	
<b>4.</b>	<b><u>APOLOGIES AND QUORUM</u></b>	
	Apologies were received from SDa, AHi, PMi and STr. The meeting was determined to be quorate.	
<b>5.</b>	<b><u>DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS</u></b>	
	Declarations of Pecuniary Interest were invited. No additional declarations were forthcoming.	
<b>6.</b>	<b><u>APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING</u></b>	
	The minutes of the previous meeting were <b><u>approved</u></b> by Members and signed by the Chair.  Under Matters Arising, the following points were noted:  <b>Health and Safety.</b> It was reported that Health and Safety was a running item on the Trust Board agenda. In response to a query around current issues, Members were advised a hole had appeared in the field used by [but not part of] Sithney School. However, this matter was under investigation, the hole had been fenced off and the area	

<p>was not being used so the risk was being managed. SPi was talking with the land owner around next steps and the ESFA have advised the Trust that money could be put into remedying this situation subject to certain conditions. Backlog maintenance work in respect of Garras septic tank was now coming back on stream and Cornwall Council were due to complete this by the end of April 2020. Members noted it was good to see the Central Team were on top of these issues.</p> <p><b>Disadvantaged pupils.</b> A subgroup of the Standards Committee had been set up to look at the secondary provision for disadvantaged pupils. Headteachers, key staff and Pupil Premium Governors at both of the Trust's secondary schools had taken part in a review of pupil premium. Trustees had found this extremely helpful in terms of better understanding the context / the scale of the challenge and had been hugely impressed by all that staff were doing to support vulnerable pupils. The subgroup had observed the schools were doing all they could in this area – including focussing on quality first teaching and cultural capital, whereby pupils had opportunities to join in that they would not otherwise have – but it was acknowledged this was an area that should be kept under review and that further work was needed on addressing the gap for these pupils. In terms of the gap between Trust disadvantaged figures and national at primary level, the Trust schools compared favourably and, in larger settings, were doing well against national. It was acknowledged it was important for the Trust to continue to be ambitious but it is was very difficult to close the gap.</p> <p><b>Trustee portfolios.</b> AHi had stepped into the role of Safeguarding Trustee which had become vacant with the resignation of CBi and was already fully involved in this aspect of the Trust's work. For Pupil Premium, it had been decided that, rather than appointing an individual, a subgroup would hold this portfolio. Similarly, a subgroup would hold the portfolio for SEN provision and outcomes. This would ensure more eyes on these areas. A SCA subgroup had been set up previously and was due to meet again shortly.</p> <p><b>RAG ratings on the Trust Plan.</b> DBr advised Members the Executive Leaders had just begun their review of Autumn Term 2019 and RAG rating would be reintroduced from there. It was suggested that, as RAG rating could be rather blunt as a system, another approach might afford greater clarity. For example, the School Improvement Plan for Helston Community College included a summary page with key headings and a matrix against time as to whether something was being introduced, implemented or embedded. This better allowed for those items which could be there for an extended period. In HE, GAP analysis was often employed. Various models would be considered.</p> <p><b>Reasons to celebrate / challenges within the Trust.</b> Members asked if the reasons to celebrate / challenges within the Trust noted in each CEO Report could be shared with Members over the course of the year. Having sight of the areas identified and how these were dealt with would allow Members to be more fully aware of what Trustees understood and what they had achieved. Trustees were reminded these reasons to celebrate and challenges faced should come from Trustees themselves as well as from the Executive Leaders.</p> <p><b>Action: Share reasons to celebrate / challenges within the Trust with Members</b></p> <p>Members advised that having conversations about what the big challenges were likely to be over the next twelve months helped Trust Boards to be strategic and to plan appropriately. Relating this work back to the core values etc was also then helpful for Ofsted. Members requested sight of the Trust Development Plan, in order that they might look ahead as well as back, and asked if a section could be included on the effectiveness of the Trust Board so that Members could fully assure themselves the Board was effective.</p> <p><b>Action: Add the effectiveness of the Board to the Trust Plan and share this with Members via Google.</b></p> <p><b>Pen Portraits for Potential Governors and Trustees.</b> The Trust had further tightened up on its procedures around Pen Portraits and the wider recruitment process for potential Governors / Trustees. Examples of this were shared with Members for their information. [See also Item 10 below.]</p>	<p>DBr / RLa</p> <p>DBr / KTe</p> <p>DBr RLa</p>
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	<p><b>Move from Hub Leader to Deputy CEO model.</b> RLa had been duly appointed to the role of Deputy CEO. The transition had been a smooth one and the new arrangement was working well.</p> <p>Any further questions from Members were invited but none were forthcoming.</p>	
7.	<p><b><u>ANNUAL REPORT AND AUDITED ACCOUNTS FOR PERIOD ENDING 31 AUGUST 2019</u></b></p>	
	<p>Questions or comments on the Annual Report and audited accounts, which had been shared with Members and Trustees prior to the meeting, were invited.</p> <p>SCa pointed out the list of Members on page one of the Annual Report and Audited Accounts for the period ending 31<sup>st</sup> August 2019 referenced SCa as an individual where this should properly have stated that SCa represents the corporate member, which is Askel Veur. He explained that it would be necessary for him to decline to receive the accounts on future occasions if this was not correctly stated so SPi was to follow up on this in readiness for the next year.</p> <p><b><u>Q. Is it fair to say that hidden here is a challenging financial situation? Is there a plan in place for the next 3 to 5 years?</u></b></p> <p><b>A. Fundamentally, the current financial position is very challenging for all schools, including ours. Put simply, the school system needs more investment and is facing a lot of additional pressures with no additional funding - for example, the teachers' pension increase of 7% and the price of living rise for all staff dictated by the nationally recommended teachers' pay rise of 2.75%. Both these extra costs have been funded but one significant area of cost increase that has not received any additional funding has been the impact of the living wage increases over the last 5 years, which impacts on a large section of our support staff. To put this into context, the living wage five years ago was £6.70 and from April 2020 this will be £8.72 per hour. On top of this increase, the associated employer's on costs also increase and these currently stand at 32%. Overall, this does not make for an ideal position for our Trust but these are pressures all schools are currently experiencing. The Finance Team do their utmost to ensure schools run the most efficient staffing models possible and the staffing allocated to each school is constantly reviewed. No school can make a staffing change without it first being authorised by the Central Team. On top of these underlying pressures, the current pressure point relates to the demand created by an increasing number of SEN children. As we have a number of smaller settings, these schools tend to attract parents of SEN children, thereby creating a disproportionate cost pressure on the smaller settings. No decisions taken are taken in isolation, as both financial and educational needs are considered. The next piece of work planned is to produce a budget for each school which costs the ideal staffing model for a setting of the school's size and then compare this to the actual expenditure in order to identify any anomalies.</b></p> <p>SCa informed Members / Trustees he was hearing the same message at every Members' meeting so it was important for Trust Boards / Trust Leaders to be asking themselves whether there was an existential risk and, if so, when this might be and what plans would they need to put into place around this.</p> <p>TSa, as Chair of the Trust's Finance and Resources Committee, recognised Members were absolutely right to raise these questions. He added he was very impressed with the controls of the Trust finance system, and he was confident that operationally everything was in place and well embedded. A measure of its strength was that it had taken on four schools from a struggling Multi-Academy Trust and successfully absorbed these. SPi advised members that a recent SMRA inspection confirmed that the current actions being taken were appropriate for the current financial situation of the Trust.</p> <p><b><u>Q. Should the Trust be doing more to make a stronger case – lobbying and so on?</u></b></p> <p><b>A. The Trust has submitted budgets which have all indicated that reserve levels are dropping and will become critical between years 3 and 4. Initially, this did generate an SMRA review but unfortunately the SMRA only confirmed what we already knew, which was that we are doing as much as possible given the current situation. Beyond that, the review offered only 2 practical suggestions, both of which we had</b></p>	SPi

already planned to implement. It was felt that, until the budget is broken, the ESFA will not intervene. We have lobbied the Government through parents and Headteachers / unions are doing a good job of lobbying but this is a hugely challenging context as the level of demand around SEND etc is simply not understood.

It was noted that, whilst it is never possible to have full assurance, Trustees / Executive Leaders were confident there was not a great deal more that could be done in addition to what was being done already.

KTh added that, in a constantly changing financial climate, the only certain gift in the remit of the Trust Board was to do everything possible to keep numbers up and therefore funding up by ensuring Trust schools were the schools of choice.

**Q. Is there anything you are learning from other MATs that our Trust could learn from?**

**A. The way in which the financial situation is communicated to parties such as the ESFA is key. Increasingly these parties are going to be the gate keepers for some of the potential remedies, such as emergency funding, and for other changes a Trust might want to make. Therefore, Trusts have to be seen to be robustly engaged with challenges if they want to be seen as a safe place for other schools and so on. It is important for Trust Boards to have a conversation around what their strategy is for the next two to five years and what their plans are for if or when crisis point is reached. This should include full consideration of all options, including financial viability of the existing footprint. Members can then be assured a Trust Board has the level of competence to engage in these conversations and make the necessary decisions.**

TSa thanked Members for their good counsel. It was agreed that the wisdom was in having a plan.

**Action: Create a plan for the next AGM showing a list of scenarios / options.**

SPI / DBr

SCa advised Trustees he would be happy to share any expert knowledge or experience he might have in this area.

**Q. Where does the responsibility sit for assessing future policy which could accelerate the critical point?**

**A. The current problem with assessing the future is that the information from government regarding funding is sketchy. In turn, this makes longer term predictions difficult to produce. A traffic light budgeting system will be considered to provide the Trustees an opportunity to review a number of probable scenarios, which in turn would inform them of future policy around budgeting, expenditure, income, etc. The budgeting scenarios could then include some of the less palatable options but, if any of these are to be acted upon, they may require the support of other Trusts as to stand alone on this type of policy change would be extremely challenging for a single Trust.**

DBr informed Members she had recently taken up the role of Chair for Cornwall Academy Chief Executives [CACE]. Part of the remit for CACE was to challenge the local authority around strategy and funding for SEN, alternative provision, transport, etc. Meredith Teasdale [Strategic Director – Together for Families] and Kate Evan-Hughes [new Service Director for Education] had attended the last meeting, where in depth discussions had taken place. It was hoped a joint strategy could be created whereby joint decisions could be made as these issues were affecting all schools.

Members were also advised that many apprentices had been taken on across the Trust schools, as the Trust had embraced the apprenticeship strategy as best it could to maximise funding and capitalise on the monies available.

**Members unanimously received the audited accounts for the period ending 31<sup>st</sup> August 2019.**

ANo suggested Members agree to give advance notice of any key issues they wished to raise in future meetings, to allow Trustees / Trust Leaders an opportunity to prepare their answers and to facilitate the smooth flow of the meeting, and Members indicated their agreement.

	<b>Action: advise the Clerk of any key issues to be raised in advance of future meetings.</b>	<b>Members</b>
<b>8.</b>	<b><u>RE-APPOINTMENT OF BISHOP FLEMING AND CORNWALL COUNCIL AS AUDITORS</u></b>	
	<p>Members unanimously <b>approved</b> the re-appointment of Bishop Fleming as external auditors and Cornwall Council as internal auditors. As this was year three of a three year contract, there would be a procurement exercise during Summer Term 2020.</p> <p>There was a recommendation that an alternative partner within the firm should take the lead if Bishop Fleming are considered during the procurement process.</p> <p>Members stated they had been reassured by reading the Key Issues for Discussion Document [KIDD]. They had been particularly impressed by the manner in which the Trust had taken on the former Keskowethyans' schools and successfully managed their integration.</p>	
<b>9.</b>	<b><u>APPOINTMENT / RETIREMENT OF MEMBERS</u></b>	
	Not applicable on this occasion.	
<b>10.</b>	<b><u>APPOINTMENT / RESIGNATION / RETIREMENT OF TRUSTEES</u></b>	
	<p>Members were informed AHi had been appointed to the role of Trustee on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2019. He had proved a good fit for the Board and his background as a former secondary headteacher / former HMI had made him ideally suited to strengthen the educational aspect of the Trust Board.</p> <p>Unfortunately, it had been necessary for CBi to offer her resignation on 12th September 2019 due to capacity and TSa was also to step down from the role of Trustee due to other commitments.</p> <p>Members extended their thanks to those Trustees standing down.</p> <p>No retirements had taken place to date.</p> <p>Members unanimously <b>ratified</b> all appointments.</p> <p><b>Q. What is being done to fill the gap?</b></p> <p><b>A. Trustees are conscious of the need to re-strengthen the financial aspect of the Trust Board. The most recent Trustee appointment came about as a result of a recommendation from an Enterprise Careers advisor so they are to be approached again. TSa is also looking within his university for candidates with this particular area of expertise. Another potential Trustee with a strong background in education has been identified.</b></p> <p>As part of the open and transparent process for appointments, it was suggested it might be useful for the Trust to have a protocol for this on file. DBr reiterated the Trust had a robust process for the appointment of Trustees Governors – including application forms, references, interviews, DBS checks and so on - and Trustees undertake skills audits in addition to work undertaken with the NGA but creating a protocol would help the Trust to better articulate the wider context for these procedures.</p> <p><b>Action: Contact Bex Couch at the Diocese of Truro to ask if she would share her pro forma for this protocol.</b></p> <p>ANo asked SCa if he would also kindly feed in the names of any potential Trustees or Governors he might come across through his role within the Diocese.</p> <p><b>Action: Feed in the names of any potential Trustees or Governors identified through this role.</b></p>	<p>DBr / KTe</p> <p>SCa</p>
<b>11.</b>	<b><u>ANY PROPOSED CHANGES TO ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION</u></b>	
	Not applicable on this occasion.	

<b>12.</b>	<b><u>ANY CHANGES TO FUNDING AGREEMENT</u></b>	
	Not applicable on this occasion.	
<b>13.</b>	<b><u>ANY BUSINESS WHICH TRUSTEES HAVE ASKED MEMBERS TO CONSIDER</u></b>	
	<p><b>Forums</b></p> <p>All schools were now holding Forum meetings. Attendance varied but often this came down to the way in which the meetings were badged. Notes of the meetings were reported back to Governors and Trustees through a standing item on LGB meeting agendas and feedback had been discussed at Heads' Group meetings as part of a wider effort to move this forward.</p> <p>The principal difficulty had proved to be how to reach a point where it would be possible to appoint Forum Partners and a Forum Member. Informality was attracting people but it would nevertheless be necessary to have a process in place for these appointments.</p> <p>DBr sought Members' agreement that the Trust was on the right track in this respect. Members agreed that informality can work best in terms of engagement. The Articles were there to promote good Governance but also to help Trustees deliver what they needed to deliver. It would be highly costly if the Trust were to ask for the Articles to be amended, as this would mean having to adopt standard articles in place of the current set of Articles amended by the Schools Co-operative Society and the Church to fit this Trust. It would therefore be best to stay within the current Articles and there was nothing to suggest to Members that the path followed was not staying true to the essence of the Articles. Trustees were encouraged to persevere in this task, as the Forums could be one of the real bonuses of the model, having their roots in the communities the Trust schools are serving. It would be hard to make it work but the potential was definitely there. If Trustees were confident that everything that could be done to make this work was being done, then that was as much as could be asked.</p> <p>Any additional questions on this matter were invited but none were forthcoming.</p>	
<b>14.</b>	<b><u>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</u></b>	
	There were no further matters to be raised at this time.	
<b>15.</b>	<b><u>CLOSING REMARKS</u></b>	
	<p>The Chair concluded it was evident how much progress was being made and that, behind that, a huge amount of work was being undertaken. Members extended their thanks to all those involved.</p> <p>The meeting was brought to a close at 7.20pm.</p>	
<b>16.</b>	<b><u>DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING</u></b>	
	To be determined as soon as the meeting schedule for the coming year could be finalised.	

Chair's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_