

# **Real Life Learning Academy Trust**

## **Meeting of the Board of Directors**

**13th July 2017 6.15 pm**

**Venue: Acton Primary Academy**

### **MINUTES – PART 1**

In Attendance: Laura Leather (LL), (chair), Bev Dolman (BD), Fiona Sloyan (FS), Penny Holding (PH), Jo Edwards (JE), Verity McKay (VM), Nick Brown (NB) , Melissa Parry (MP) and Yvonne Wood (YW)

#### **1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received and accepted from Leslie Latronico, Neil Duncalf, and Liz Ford

#### **2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

VM confirmed that she was an employee of Poole Alcock, and YW confirmed that she is a Director of Bennet Brooks.

#### **3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting were accepted as an accurate record and the chair signed a copy for retention by the clerk.

#### **4. MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising that are not covered on the agenda.

#### **5. DECLARATION OF AOB**

- a) Adding Members to the trust
- b) EHT Report
- c) RE Quality Mark
- d) Report from the Responsible Officer
- e) Data Protection Act
- f) Schools Forum
- g) School Improvement Partner
- SEN Policy (to be taken under policy section)
- Risk Management Policy (to be taken under policy section)

#### **6. MEMBERSHIP**

There were no membership changes to consider.

#### **7. FINANCE**

- a) **To receive a finance update**

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YW presented the finance update; and reported that there were a mix of information items and items for decision.

#### Nursery places

YW informed Directors that take up of nursery places had improved and 8 children had been registered from September.

A discussion took place on the Governments 30 hour incentive.

#### Insurances

YW confirmed that they had continued to buy back with CHESS - the Cheshire East Service package. They have included the 3 year HR gold package and have been given a 3% discount.

Directors needed to make a decision on the level of maternity and teacher absence cover they wanted to take out going forward £3k or £5k?

The EHT had received 3 quotes for the 2 schools. She ran through the quotes and the costs. Of the 3 quotes:

The lower cost quote - did not offer the same level of cover.

The most expensive quote - again did not offer the right cover.

The middle cost quote from AIS provided the best value for money as it provided better cover.

Q. Are all the quotes for the same level of cover?

A. Yes - they were all asked to quote for the £5k level - so that we could understand the maximum cost.

**Outcome:** Directors approved AIS at £5k level of cover.

#### Budget position

YW ran through the final figures for budgets for both schools (current position and to forecast) to 31st Aug. She ran through this for each school and the MAT, and reported a healthy financial position.

A discussion took place on take up of places for the next academic year.

Applications were low, however the EHT explained that this was the case across schools who were usually full. It was a low birth year and most schools are not full.

- b) To receive a report on banking arrangements

This item will be deferred to the next meeting.

- c) Tennis Court up date

A decision was needed on the cost of the use of the tennis court now that it had been agreed to let the community use it.

A discussion took place including the costs of other tennis court hire, how bookings could be taken, and how users would be able to access the facility out of school hours.

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They had explored an online booking facility but the cost of this system outweighed the income the school would receive. Directors were keen to ensure the practical arrangements for use were agreed and robust, as this had prevented its full use in the past. It will be too late for this year - but in the future Directors wanted to explore club use.

**Outcome:** It was agreed that:

- The school would charge a summer membership fee - which would be £20 per family.
- The fee would need to be paid in advance in return for the access code to the box where the key for the court is kept.
- That there would be a book placed with the key to be used as a booking facility.
- That a set of courtesy rules be drawn up for members to sign and understand the rules of use.
- The summer membership will be advertised in the newsletter, and placed on the website.

Q. Are we insured for public use?

A. The EHT will check but feels sure that this had been included.

d) School dinner pricing

YW informed Directors that due to rising costs, dinner money needed to be increased to £2.35.

**Outcome:** A discussion took place and all agreed to increase dinner money by 5p per meal from September.

The Chair led a vote of thanks to YW for the amount of time that she has spent this year on the finance and supporting the school.

## 8. POLICY APPROVAL

- a) To formally approve the Accessibility Policy and Plan which had been circulated via email.

The Chair confirmed that the policy had been emailed and that all had agreed. Directors conformed this at the meeting.

### AOB items for consideration under the Policy Section

**Risk Management strategy:** The Risk Management Policy and strategy had been placed on the portal. The trust needs to have a Risk Management Strategy - this is a process of raising anything of concern before it becomes a problem. They usually cover the risk, the likelihood and the mitigating actions that the trust will take.

The Audit Committee will take the lead but most items are operational and therefore the EHT and her SLT will pick up most of the actions.

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YW reported that she has accessed the National Association of School Business Managers template, and stated that when it is complete, we need to report to stakeholders and available on the website.

**Outcome:** All Directors approved the new policy and asked for this to be kept under watch by the Audit Committee.

**Asset register:** the above item led to a further discussion on the Asset Register and whether this was up to date. YW confirmed that the trust were still in discussions over the land value and which land belongs to the school / church. This is ongoing.

**SEN Policy:** The Chair had reviewed the documents on the website and noticed that the SEN Policy was out of date. She asked the EHT to investigate as the Trust had reviewed policies following conversion.

EHT will report back to the next meeting.

## 9. PARKING UPDATE

There had been no further action since the last meeting and therefore nothing report.

## 10. HOLIDAYS

Directors had approved the 18/19 holidays and these will go out to parents as usually at Christmas.

## 11. EMOTIONAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

- To discuss emotional health and wellbeing within school

The EHT gave a brief update.

Acton, Calveley and Bridgemere Schools had been involved in a 7 school project on Emotional Coaching and Resilience. They had received training and books to support pupil wellbeing. This will be rolled out from September for more staff to access free.

There is an Emotional Healthy Schools group in Cheshire East and Leighton and Shavington schools are the representatives.

The training and support will be added to the SDP this year so that we can measure the impact.

## 12. DIRECTORS' DAY FEEDBACK

- To receive feedback from the latest Directors' Day

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FS reported that there had been another successful day on the 4th July, and the feedback from staff and parents was that they really like it. Directors all find it a useful way to live the school and monitor their specific areas within the Director's Development Plan.

The full report is available for Directors on the portal, and FS ran through the positive comments and actions that need to be taken forward.

Actions to be taken forward	Director comments at the meeting
Use of tennis court by the community	This had been discussed earlier and will be communicated as agreed.
School dinner portion sizes still an issue at Calveley, feel they are not being listened to	Directors thought that this had been addressed - however this now needs resolving as this is the 3rd time that they have seen this. EHT to action
Use of target cards at Calveley, falling out	EHT to action
Some confusion over marking at Calveley	EHT to action
Classroom displays	EHT to action
Ensuring that school council represent all pupils at Acton	More time will be given to pupils to gather views before meetings
Ensure pupils are kept informed of what is happening in relation to MAT growth and the role of Mrs Dolman	EHT to action but also Chair is sending a letter to all parents at the close of term

### 13. GOVERNOR TRAINING

- To review recent training and development

The Chair felt that the Trust was a bit light on training activity lately and highlighted the importance of Directors keeping up to date.

YW felt that more learning needed to be captured that is gained from outside the training room - for example the need to learn about risk management in preparation of the risk management strategy.

**Outcome:** It was agreed that all new learning should be captured and emailed to FS to include in the log.

FS reported that she had emailed training around today that was available on a safeguarding website; and the EHT reported that there will be level 1 safeguarding awareness for all staff, and Directors. This is a basic awareness course which will be take place on 26th September late pm - EHT to send out email. A further date will be needed due to the numbers needing training.

FS reported that she is still needed Director Self Evaluation forms and asked that NB, BD, JE, ND, MP, LLatronico and PH complete and return asap.

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A discussion took place on how the new competency framework would be weaved into the evaluation work that FS was leading. FS confirmed that this will be done, however whilst the competency framework is more complex with more insight into the expectations of Directors, she felt that as a trust board they were well prepared and meeting the requirements.

**Outcome:** Self Evaluations forms to be returned to FS

- Chair's 360 Appraisal

The Chair thanked Directors for completing the 360 - and she had received 8/11 forms. The full results were on the portal along with areas for improvement.

The Chair was particularly pleased that Directors felt that she had a strong vision, and felt that it was great to reflect and learn.

- Directors' plan completion

The Directors Development plan needed to be updated and finalised for the end of year.

**Outcome:** All Directors to view their objectives and send updates through to FS.

The chair confirmed that she will be writing to parents on the progress of MAT, celebrations, SIAMS.

- Personal impact statements

FS reminded Directors that each Director will need to write and submit their personal impact statement and return them to FS by 7/8. FS will send an example out.

**Outcome:** Directors to return their Personal Impact Statements by 7th August.

## 14. SOCIAL MEDIA

- To discuss the use of social media including Facebook

The EHT reported that she had looked into setting up a Twitter and Facebook account, and will make it a duty of the new Heads of School to its monitor use (for content and for language).

Prior to launching the trust will produce an acceptable use statement that all parents will need to sign. The EHT also reported that she will be holding a parent information session.

Directors discussed the use of social media and agreed that this would run as a trial and if there were too many usage issues that they would take them down.

Media and PR

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Directors felt that more needed to be done to promote the school through external media, such as the press and the parish newsletters. The school could also attend local fun days such as Reaseheath.

Pupil numbers are low, and whilst this may be due to a low birth rate year, Directors felt that the school could promote itself better in the community.

A discussion took place on the practicalities and how this could be addressed, given teacher workloads etc.

**Outcome:** It was agreed that:

- Contacts and dates for all parishes and their publication timescales will be sought and assigned as a role for the new Heads of School to regularly promote.
- Material for publication will be gathered by the Staff Directors from September.
- That a Marketing and Communications plan be drawn up - and FS volunteered to draft for September.
- That as the deadline for one of the parish magazines was close - the Bee article would be circulated.

## 15. DIARY DATES

- To set diary dates for 17/18

The following dates were agreed:

<b>Extraordinary FBD</b>	21st September 2017	6.15pm - Calveley School
<b>FBD</b>	18th October 2017	6.15pm - Acton School
<b>Directors' Day</b>	27th November 2017	all day
<b>FBD</b>	14th December 2017	6.15pm - Calveley School
<b>FBD</b>	1st February 2017	6.15pm - Acton School
<b>Directors' Day</b>	7th March 2017	all day
<b>FBD</b>	21st March 2017	6.15pm - Calveley School
<b>FBD</b>	10th May 2017	6.15pm - Acton School
<b>Directors' Day</b>	20th June 2017	all day
<b>FBD</b>	12th July 2017	6.15pm - Calveley School

## 16. BEES

FS shared a picture of young bee keepers at Calveley School, and confirmed that the Bees had now restored at the school and that parents and pupils really excited; in addition two fathers will be supporting. A fascinating discussion took place on the

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bee habitat and how they will be cared for over the summer when the school is closed.

**Outcome:** The school will be including the Bees in their curriculum as they are a fantastic enrichment to the curriculum.

## 17. **AOB**

### **a) Adding members**

Further to the discussion at the last Directors meeting VM wanted to identify 3 quotes for use in the future to add members if it became necessary.

### **b) EHT Report**

Directors were asked to review the report on an exception only basis.

Data: The EHT reported that the greater depth score for current data will be released on the 31st August - but that she is pleased at the positive progress.

Q: Why does the EHT feel that results are more positive?

A. The EHT explained that extra intervention time had been used and also that this is the 2nd year of the new system and teachers are better prepared.

Directors wanted to pass on congratulations to staff for their hard work and the results.

Q - Do we know the results for other schools?

A - No, not at this time.

AGM: The Chair confirmed that this was to be arranged in November.

Sickness: Directors questioned the levels of sickness and that they were particularly high for support staff. It was suggested that the EHT use the Bradford Factor going forward.

**Outcome:** That the EHT will review sickness levels and report next time.

### **c) RE Quality Mark**

It was reported to Directors that the school had been recommended for the Gold Award.

The Directors wished to pass on their thanks to Caroline Middleton for leading the successful work.

### **d) Responsible Officer Report**

The Chair referred everyone to the report on the portal. Directors confirmed that they had read and felt that the ROs name and date needed to be added to the report.

The Chair reported that the actions will be picked up through audit committee

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### **e) Data Protection Act 2018**

The EHT reported that changes in the new DP act were significant. Cheshire West were ahead of the game and had been preparing the Heads. However nothing had been received from Cheshire East.

YW reported that she was attending training on the 20th July and would report back.

JE also explained that husband was a compliance officer and would speak to the EHT to run through the changes.

### **f) Schools forum**

The Schools Forum is the representative body that decides on funding for Cheshire East Schools. There was a vacancy and schools were being asked to put forward members.

The EHT asked if anyone wished to be put forward - to make themselves known.

### **g) School Improvement Partner**

The EHT reported that the current SIP had been with us for 3 years and it is good practice to review arrangements. However the costs that she had been quoted were higher than the schools currently pay. The existing arrangement was more cost effective as it included reciprocal arrangements.

**Outcome:** The EHT will source a 3rd quote and also make provision for it being for 3 schools. can bet send me a sentence on the diocese

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