

*Our partnership of nurturing schools equips children with life skills for the real world.  
Together we build a firm foundation for their future, giving them the self-belief,*

## **Real Life Learning Trust**

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

**14th December 2017 - 6:15 pm - PART 1, Calveley School**

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), Yvonne Wood (YW), Neil Duncalf (ND), Liz Ford (LF) and Lesley Latronico (LLA)

#### **Financial Accounts**

YW introduced a representative from Howard Worth, who have produced the accounts for sign off by the chair. She was at the meeting to answer any questions that Directors may have.

Q: Are there any changes to the previous versions that Directors have seen?

R: No significant differences.

YW explained that Howard Worth had reviewed and produced a report with three issues on it:

- Capitalisation policy - There is a need to be more systematic at recording all capital items.
- Local Authority buyback needs to be broken down in the accounts.
- Staff contracts - all staff should sign a contract - this has been taken up with HR.

**Outcome:** All Directors were happy with the accounts, and LL the Chair signed the necessary letter.

This will now be ready to hand out at the AGM, and published on the Website.

All Directors felt that the report was a very comprehensive picture, and thanked YW for all her work with the accounts over the last year.

<b>1</b>	<b>APOLOGIES</b>  All Directors were in attendance
<b>2</b>	<b>DECLARATION OF INTERESTS</b> VM confirmed that she was an employee of Poole Alcock, and YW confirmed that she is a Director of Bennett Brooks.
<b>3</b>	<b>MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING</b>  The minutes of the previous meeting, with the exception of a couple of typing errors were approved as an accurate record.

**MATTERS ARISING**

Item 8 – BD developing new framework and timetable which she will bring to next meeting for approval and relevant policies.

**Update:** this has been completed

Item 9 – EHT Performance management

**Update:** PM took place and all targets met; new targets agreed for this year. BD had been asked to consider further professional development for executive leadership in multi academy trusts. She had investigated and presented Directors *with 3 options plus* costings. Directors were asked to consider which one.

Q: Have you got time, and what impact will it have?

R: BD felt that it would assist with a strategic view.

Directors felt that as the MAT is planning to grow it is something that the trust need to consider but need to think of the right timing.

Q: Is it worth waiting 12 months and seeing what the feedback is on the courses - as they are new?

Directors looked at the content of the courses, and proposed that BD enrol for January 2019. Add to agenda for the summer term agenda.

*Perhaps this would be more appropriate in Part 2?*

Item 12 – Parent Council had raised the situation about car parking at Acton. BD informed Directors that a parking meeting took place with the Landowner, who was keen to permit usage of his land but is having further conversations with other parties. LL said that car parking continues to be a problem and as the situation with the potential new carpark is taking a time, that a short-term solution is needed.

Q: Did the police ever respond.

R: No

Q: What happens if there was an accident

R: this would be a matter for the police

Outcome: BD will contact the police and Cheshire East again.

Item 14 - BD was asked to investigate the use of the Survey monkey staff questionnaire, and report back to the next meeting

Update: NB had conducted the survey and is waiting for all responses - due by end of the week. Nature of the questions were on wellbeing, workload, and if that there is someone who cares.

Item 16 – Epi pens

**Update:** FS remains concerned due to Bee Keeping and would like access to a pen if children are allergic.

**Outcome:** A risk assessment will be carried out.

Item 16 - Photos for board

**Update:** No further action to report, FS to email photos that are currently used on the website to BD for further action.

Item 16 - Sharing Directors Day report with Staff

**Update:** report has been added to the portal and Staff Directors will share with staff.

5	<p><b>DECLARATION OF AOB</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risk register</li> <li>• Diocese</li> <li>• PE Sports Premium</li> <li>• Logo</li> </ul>
6	<p><b>FINANCE</b></p> <p><u>a. Responsible Officer report</u></p> <p>LL asked if all had seen the Responsible Officer report. All Directors confirmed that they had, and discussed the recommendations made.</p> <p>1. cover in the office once a month to focus on payroll</p> <p><b>Outcome:</b> discuss with item in Pt 2</p> <p>2. small delegation needed for HOS to relieve the pressures on HT</p> <p><b>Outcome:</b> - All agreed to a £300 limit, YW to action</p> <p><u>b. Accounts for approved and sign off</u></p> <p>Accounts had been signed off at the start of the meeting.</p> <p><u>c. Update from Finance Committee</u></p> <p>A finance meeting took place on the 1st Dec. YW gave verbal feedback.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MAT seems to be ahead of the curve in its accounting and had received positive feedback from Howard Worth on the current budget situation.</li> <li>• Nursery Provision - numbers are increasing and on Tuesdays and Thursdays there are six Nursery children and six Reception children. Three more children are wanting places in January and are we are awaiting the days they would like to register, if these are Tuesdays and Thursdays this could go over the limit of 13 children. In preparation for this YW had prepared costs and talked Directors through these.</li> </ul> <p>It was agreed that we should offer the places and once the number of children go over the limit for one teacher, a TA will be employed. In the short term this will be covered with current staff until we have been able to recruit.</p> <p><b>Outcome:</b> All Directors approved the recruitment of an additional support worker for nursery.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A discussion took place on the costs for a ramp outside the door, and quotes have been sought.</li> <li>• The Bad debt log has been completed. Bad debts up to £100 have been written off by BD. Anyone with a history of bad debt will not be allowed credit going forward, therefore any Residential or school meals will need to be paid before they take place.</li> </ul> <p>Q: What happens if a child does not bring a lunch, and despite being asked the parents do not bring in?</p> <p>R: Directors discussed this and were concerned that meals would not be provided for children if they forgot their packed lunch, and no credit allowed. BD explained that all concerned had been made aware that credit is not allowed, however some continue to abuse the support of the school.</p> <p><b>Outcome:</b> BD to keep Directors informed</p>

- Imprest accounts - amounts need to be paid to close accounts, this had been overlooked by Cheshire East Council at sign over to the trust. Impressed accounts are similar to an overdraft. Calveley = £638.91 Acton = 1168.27.

**Outcome:** All Directors approved the payment of the two amounts.

- Pensions - the trust needs to consider its pension arrangements.

YW ran through the discussion by the committee, which had discussed the alternatives to the LGPS pension fund. Nest is a workplace pension set up by the government. It's free for employers and easy to set up. Minimum contributions by Apr 2019, will go up to 8% of which 3% will be paid by the employers.

The MAT is currently paying employer contributions of 28.3% to the LGPS fund.

It was suggested new support employees will be offered the following choices depending on the hours per week.

1. Supervisory Posts– eg Middays & Out of School offered Nest only.
2. Other Support Staff & Educational Support– eg TA's & Admin offered Nest workplace pension + 5% enhanced salary **OR** LGPS pension only
3. In addition anyone in the LGPS should be given the option of having a 5% enhanced salary and nest workplace pension if they want to opt out of the LGPS.

PH was concerned that offering an extra 5% in salary will encourage staff to not take a pension. A discussion took place on the financial reasons for doing the changes and the deficit

**Outcome:** All Directors approved item one above

**Outcome:** all but one Director approved item two above

**Outcome:** All Directors approved item three above

Directors also agreed that staff should be allowed to return to LGPS for options 2 and 3 but agreed a 5 years timeframe.

- Top slice policy for the MAT Asked by DfE, however the trust does not do this currently - instead it allocates each expense for its use. The committee had considered what it would look like for new schools, and they had suggested an 8% top slice. This would be reviewed each time a school joined.

**Outcome:** All Directors agreed, and a new draft policy will be brought to the next meeting.

d. To discuss and approve the Reserve policy approval

**Outcome:** All Directors approved the policy

**EXECUTIVE HEADTEACHERS REPORT PT1**

All Directors had received the report and were invited to make comments or ask questions.

The following were discussed:

- Attendance - 5 children below 90% - is that a problem? BD reported that is not unheard of but parents will be getting a letter and schools can now fine.
- Results and league tables - BD reported that both schools had performed very well.
  - Calveley was in the Telegraph's top 1000 schools for Greater Depth ( 238/1000).
  - In the Cheshire East table, Acton was 3rd and Calveley was 15th .
  - The Trust had also been awarded two national awards for art.

A discussion took place on promoting this, and NB and MP will send this through to parish newsletters. A banner will also be produced.

Pupil Numbers: numbers in Acton are still low; Calveley have been more proactive in advertising the school and it has had an impact, and in the nursery.

Q: Do we ask and record the data about what marketing has had an impact?

R: Not currently.

BD will ensure that Acton increases its promotion to improve pupil numbers.

Policies - BD had listed all policies in a matrix to keep on top of reviewing them at the correct time. As policies are approved by different parts of the trust, it was agreed to add in an additional column to indicate who the policy had been allocated to: e.g. Head Teacher, Finance or standards committee or full FBD.

**Outcome:** BD will finalise matrix and update all policies in the folder, and send to ST (Clerk) who will ensure that policies are added to the correct agenda.

**Outcome:** All Directors to look at Admissions, Staff leave of absence and Attendance Policies. Comments to BD on the Attendance Policy by 21st December.

<p>9</p>	<p><b>DIRECTORS PLAN</b></p> <p>Directors ran through the Directors Plan, item by item to check for progress. The following observations and actions were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Website - The vision for Calveley is in two places; and there is inconsistency between Acton and Calveley sites - BD to investigate.</li> <li>• MAT website being created that links to both schools.</li> <li>• The application to become a sponsor academy is at the panel in January.</li> <li>• Original Governance structure may need to change from just having one board for all; as the trust grows, may need to introduce Local Governing Boards - LL to think through.</li> <li>• <i>Increased marketing had led to an increase in numbers at school - Calveley doing open days, social media and banners , Calveley nursery are now on Google maps.</i></li> <li>• Acton need to do more PR.</li> <li>• Scheme of Delegation needs putting on the website - BD to action.</li> <li>• Nolan principles had been sent round to Directors.</li> <li>• Safeguarding training carried out; a Trust Data and ASP meeting will take place next term.</li> <li>• Parent governor vacancy - no applications received; thought will be given to potential candidates.</li> <li>• AGM is going ahead on the 11th January 2018.</li> <li>• Director Days are good and make Directors more connected to school.</li> <li>• ND had initial discussions with staff about improving communication.</li> <li>• A Director had attended all parent councils.</li> <li>• Both schools now have social media accounts.</li> <li>• Directors are keen to build connections with local businesses, Snugburys, Cheese, Reaseheath BD and LL to discuss</li> </ul> <p><u>Report on Directors Day</u></p> <p>FS gave a verbal report of her Directors Day summery which is on the portal. Some issues remain which will be investigated. Directors discussed one item in particular, this was regarding changing facilities for older girls for PE. BD explained that the school is small however attempts are made to assist. Directors asked whether a curtain could be installed. BD will investigate.</p> <p><u>Report on Parent Council Acton</u> - meeting held 29th November, and FS attended. Nothing significant to report from this one - next meeting 31st January - ND to attend.</p> <p><u>Report on Parent Council/FROCS Calveley</u> - PH attended the last meeting which had a low turn out. One of the items discussed was on Forest Schools. BD reported that the school is not a designated Forest School and therefore there had been no action. They had also asked for more lunch time clubs. Next meeting 2nd Feb - YW to attend.</p>
<p>9</p>	<p><b>GOVERNOR TRAINING</b></p> <p>FS verbally reported on the need to set a date for the data / ASP meeting. this will be done via email. She also told the Directors of the new Inspiring Governance Programme being run nationally and that it seeks to place governors that are aspiring to be chair, This may be useful for the trust's succession planning.</p>

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**AOB**

Risk register - BD had produced a register, which Directors complimented her on.

Q: Do we have plans in place for the amber items

R: Yes, this mainly covers the disaster recovery plan, and GDPR which will be moved on after the training early 2018.

**Outcome:** All Directors approved the Risk Register.

Diocese: Chris Penn had visited both schools, and was very positive about the ethos of both schools.

Sports Premium - a SP discussion took place to ensure that Directors were fully aware of their responsibilities and the impact of spending. SP is a major priority for the government as data reports that children will live 5 years less than their parents. BD reported that she is keen to involve the children in understanding what sports and activities they want so that she can ensure that their efforts are sustained and children become confident at sports for years to come.

BD proposal to reduce lunch by 15 minutes and use the last 15 minutes to enable school to deliver the requisite the 30 mins of activity per day. This will mean a restructuring of the day so that the last 30 minutes can be used for whole school activity; also possibility to get parents involved.

**Outcome:** Proposal was noted by Directors.

Logo

Copies of potential logos were handed around to Directors. Directors fed back their comments.