

INDEPENDENT PROFESSIONAL CLERKING SERVICES

The Board of Directors of St Cuthbert's Roman Catholic Academy Trust

Minutes of a virtual meeting of the Board of Directors
held on 25 March 2021 at 5.00pm

PRESENT: Mr P Fearnley, in the Chair,
Mr C Cuthill, Mr M Davidson, Ms R Dex, Mr M Gallaher, Reverend W Massie,
Mr J Sargeant, Mrs A Ward,

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr G Fitzpatrick, Chief Executive Officer
Mr D Perry, Head of School, St Mary's College
Mrs K Siedle, Chief Operating Officer, Primary
Mrs S Teasdale, Chief Finance Officer

CLERK TO THE DIRECTORS: Mrs M Gibson, Independent Professional Clerking Services

604 OPENING PRAYER. Reverend Massie opened the meeting with a prayer.

605 APOLOGIES. Apologies for absence were received from Mr Davison, and Mrs Dyas who hoped to join the meeting later.

RESOLVED: that consent be given to the absence of the above-named Directors.

606 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS. No declarations were submitted in addition to those already registered.

607 MEMBERSHIP. The Clerk advised that a meeting was planned with the CFO over the Easter break to discuss membership and the implications of impending end of office dates.

The Chair advised that he had received Mr Duffy's resignation as a Director, earlier in the day. He added that the Trust would continue to work with Mr Duffy in his capacity as Diocesan Director of Education.

608 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held on 14 January 2021 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

609 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES. There were no matters arising.

610 MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the following meetings be received for information:

Finance, Audit and Capital Assets Committee meetings held on 21
January and 11 March 2021.
Curriculum, Teaching and Learning Committee meeting held on 23
February 2021.
Human Resources Committee meeting held on 4 March 2021.
Admissions Committee meeting held on 10 March 2021.

611 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES. There were no matters arising.

612 REPORT FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER. The CEO advised that elements of the updates to be presented would be delivered by the COO(P) and the Head of School (SMC).

The CEO reported on the recent Ofsted inspection of St Richard's Primary Academy. He advised that the academy had been judged to be providing effective education and although the criteria for the judgement had been sought, the inspection team (comprising of three HMI, one of whom was a trainee) had been unable to provide this. The inspection had been conducted virtually and, despite the challenge, it had been dealt with well by the St Richard's Team and had provided an opportunity to demonstrate the authenticity of the Trust. The CEO conveyed thanks to Directors who had attended to meet with Inspectors.

Directors noted that Mcauley Academy in Doncaster (currently supported by staff from the Trust) had also been inspected and received a favourable outcome.

Directors were informed that, following the success of the Teaching School Hub bid, two key appointments had been secured: Mr Cooper had been appointed to the post of Director of the Hub and Mrs Fillingham (former PA to the ABSA CEO) had been appointed to provide support.

The CEO advised that expectations of the Hub were being identified and further information was expected shortly. Directors would be kept updated and consideration be given to governance arrangements in the near future.

Directors sought clarification in relation to the way in which the Hub could support other schools and Trusts within the diocese. In response, it was explained that information was awaited to clarify how catholic elements could be added to professional development programmes.

Primary Update – COO(P).

It was reported that pupils had returned to school and had settled well into routines and structures. They appeared to be happy to be back and no obvious concerns had been identified.

Staff had managed the situation well; this had been in part due to the rigorous preparations by the Trust to ensure risk assessments had been conducted and everything possible had been put into place. Staff had commented they had felt safe and were looking forward to the summer term.

The COO(P) advised that the key priority following return, after the well-being of pupils and staff, had been to adapt the curriculum to meet current needs.

St Mary's College Update – Head of School

The return to school had been pleasing with attendance good and students responding positively to return to normal routines. Challenges experienced after the first lockdown had not been evidenced this time although demands on the Pastoral Team remained high.

The Head of School praised staff especially those involved in the testing process; 7000 tests had been conducted with only three displaying positive results; these cases had been dealt with effectively and efficiently.

The Head of School advised that key priorities related to a review of the curriculum and preparation for grade assessments.

Comments and questions were invited.

Directors asked if there had been any concerns raised by parents following the re-opening of schools.

The COO(P) responded that parents had been very supportive and had abided with the requirement to wear face coverings and social distancing.

The HoS reported that there had been no reluctance by students to comply with the requirement to wear face-coverings in class; students had accepted the position and 'just got on with it'.

The COO(P) added that pupils had responded positively to being issued with their own equipment rather than having to share.

Directors commended the positive manner in which pupils had settled back to school; they asked if there were concerns that learning had been lost, particularly in maths and English.

The COO(P) commented that it due to the closure of schools, it had been inevitable learning had been missed. A strategic plan had been developed to support pupils to address knowledge gaps in a professional and structured way without the need for continual testing. In addition, plans were underway to ensure Year 6 pupils were supported for transition to Year 7. The HoS reported that transition arrangements were being supported by SMC staff who had produced excellent resources.

Directors asked if there had been issues with transport arrangements (especially for SMC).

The HoS responded that no specific issues had been reported. There had been pressure at key points during the school day as a result of an increase in the number of parents dropping off and collecting their children as public transport had not been an appealing option for some. This was being managed in the best way possible.

The CEO advised that communication had been received from elected Members to advise of complaints they had received from parents relating to arrangements for pick up. The key issue was the way in which parents were disregarding requirements; options to address this were being explored.

Directors asked if student numbers in the 6th Form had been affected by the current situation. In response, the HoS advised that numbers in Year 12 had stabilised and planning had commenced to prepare them for transition to Year 13, to ensure they were well supported to identify the right pathway.

Directors sought examples of how Year 6 transition would be supported. In response, the HoS outlined the way in which staff would be deployed to support Year 6 teachers to identify skills and learning behaviours. This would be a joint effort to ensure students were secondary ready and prepared for success. The COO(P) reported on an initiative introduced which encouraged pupils to record 11 reads before their 11th birthday, from a good choice of materials. This was a fun way to encourage a focus on reading.

The CEO expressed hope that Year 6 pupils would be allowed to spend some time in St Mary's College during the summer term; this had been a successful strategy in previous years. He outlined the Hull Learning Partnership co-ordinated method to transition which provided a consistent approach across the city.

Directors asked if there had been a reduction in the high standards of behaviour since pupils/students returned. In response, the COO(P) advised that pupils had been well behaved and happy to be back in school. The HoS reported that the position was similar at St Mary's College although there had been increased visibility of staff who were monitoring the situation closely.

Directors conveyed thanks for the information presented.

613 REPORT FROM THE CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER.

i) Capital Plan

The CFO advised that work would continue with the Finance, Audit and Capital Assets Committee to develop a response to the condition funding allocation which would be allocated across the Trust based on priority need. Professional support had been received from Delaney Marling who had submitted revised asset plans for all schools.

ii) Primary Feasibility Project

The work undertaken by Esteem would provide a holistic view and identify the viability and sustainability of the primary estate and develop a medium to long term plan. A detailed scorecard would be produced for each site using weighted settings; the information would be used to develop a scientific forensic plan. The CFO stated that the project was one of the most far reaching and progressive pieces of work conducted on this scale.

Directors asked if there was sufficient funding available to complete work required to maintain the estate to an appropriate standard. In response, the CFO advised that there was sufficient funding to cover planned works however, any unplanned serious issues could create a more uncomfortable position.

The CFO reported that the outcome of the Primary Feasibility Project would be presented to the Finance, Audit and Capital Assets Committee in the first instance, after which it would be presented to the Board.

iii) Lateral Flow Testing

This had been introduced very successfully with 7000 tests being conducted over a ten-day period.

The CFO advised that the testing completed had provided confidence for staff and students however, this could be undermined by the inability of the DfE and NHS to provide home tests for the Easter break. The issue had been raised at the highest level without impact and had been referred to the DfE. It was understood that the issue was not a result of shortage of tests as other schools did not appear to be having the same problem. The CFO reported that testing kits available in school had been re-packaged for staff to use however, it was not suitable to issue them in this format to students.

Directors commended the successful introduction of the testing and acknowledged the way in which the team had responded to ensure its success. They expressed hope that the issue outlined could be addressed without impacting on students on their return after the Easter break.

The CEO commended staff for the diligent manner in which they had worked, especially over the last three weeks to ensure staff and students could return safely.

iv) Staff CPD

It was reported that despite current challenges, staff at all levels continued to access CPD opportunities provided by a number of organisations.

v) Articles of Association

The CFO reported on confirmation which had been received earlier in the day of the DfE's approval of the updated Articles of Association. Directors were asked to recommend to the Member Board that the updated Articles be adopted.

RESOLVED: that Directors recommend to the Member Board that the regulations contained in the printed document be adopted as the Articles of Association for the Company in substitution for and to the exclusion of all existing Articles of Association.

614 REPORT FROM THE CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER (PRIMARY). The COO(P) confirmed she had no additional information to present.

The CEO commended the work of the Chaplaincy Team to support staff and the wider community. He asked that Directors check social media sites to receive updates if they had not already done so.

Directors commended the support provided by the Chaplaincy Team especially the way in which they had arranged the virtual pilgrimage to Walsingham.

615 POLICIES FOR REVIEW. Directors were asked to approve the following policies, copies of which had been circulated electronically in advance of the meeting:

- Anti-bullying policy
- Asthma policy
- Attendance policy
- Child protection policy
- E-safety policy
- Looked after children policy
- Medicines in school policy

RESOLVED: that the above-named policies be approved, as presented.

616 REPORTS FROM DIRECTORS. It was acknowledged that due to the current situation, no visits had been conducted.

617 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETINGS.

RESOLVED: that dates and times of meetings be confirmed as follows:

Summer Term 2020

Strategic Committee:	15 April 2021 – 5.00pm
Finance, Assets and Audit Committee:	6 May 2021 - 5.00pm
Curriculum, Teaching and Learning Committee:	4 June 2021 – 2.30pm
Human Resources Committee:	1 July 2021 - 1.00pm
Finance, Assets and Audit Committee:	8 July 2021 - 5.00pm
Board meeting:	15 July 2021 - 5.00pm

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Signature of Chair

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PART B - NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Confidential items covered by the Articles of Association

618 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETINGS.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held on 14 and 28 January 2021 be confirmed as correct records and signed by the Chair.

619 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES. There were no matters arising.

620 MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS.

RESOLVED: i) that the minutes of the following meetings be received, for information:

Strategic Committee meeting held on 21 January 2021.
Finance, Audit and Capital Assets Committee meeting held on 11 March 2021.

ii) that the minutes of the following meetings be confirmed as correct records and signed by the Chair:

Appeals Committee meeting held on 10 December 2020.
Student Exclusion Committee meeting held on 6 January 2021.

621 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES. There were no matters arising.

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signature of Chair