

**Polaris Multi-Academy Trust
Annual General Meeting
11 November 2021 at 5.00pm**

MINUTES

Present at the Meeting: -

Directors:	Duncan Brundell	(Chair)	DB
	Andrew Tatham		AT
	John Sharp		JP
	Nick Midgley		NM
	Jackie Nellis		JN
	Karen Bowron		KB

Attendees:	David Whitehead	(Clerk)	DW
	Steve Evans	CEO	SE
	Sarah Laverick	CFO	SLA

Satisfaction of Quorum Requirements

8 Directors: Quorum equals 4
6 Directors in attendance; therefore, the meeting was quorate.

1.0 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were noted and accepted from Ian Philp & Sam Priestley

2.0 Declaration of Interest for items upon the agenda

Presented by: Clerk

There were no declarations of interest.

3.0 Appointment of Chair

Presented by: Clerk

DB was nominated for the position of Chair of the Trust Board

Proposed: AT Seconded: JS

DB was unanimously elected as Chair.

He welcomed all to the meeting particularly JN and KB and introductions were made by all.
The Challenges ahead as a Trust Board were summarised.
Andy Mahon was noted as being a prospective Trust member and will be attending the next Trust Board meeting.

4.0 Appointment of Vice Chair

Presented by:	Chair
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Ian Philp was nominated as Vice Chair of the Trust Board

Proposed: DB Seconded: AT

Ian Philp was unanimously elected as Vice Chair.

5.0 Articles of Association

Presented by:	Chair
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The Articles had been circulated prior to the meeting for information.
These will be formally accepted by Members on 6th January 2022.

6.0 Scheme of Delegation

Presented by:	CEO
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The Scheme of Delegation was summarised by SE and had been circulated prior to the meeting.
He advised that this is a model document and is used by many MATs.
He explained the format to Directors.
The Policies which are included in the paperwork will be uploaded to the Trust Portal and any new policies/amendments to past policies will be highlighted.
The role of the Trust in oversight of the policies was explained.

The policies below were noted and accepted by Directors:

- Admissions
- Charging & Remissions
- Complaints
- Expenses
- Health & Safety
- Premise Management
- Data Protection
- Freedom of Information

The implementation of academy level policies which are the responsibility of the LGBs were also noted and approved. These included:

- Admissions
- SEND
- Safeguarding & Child Protection
- Curriculum
- Behaviour

The responsibilities of LGB's in respect of policies was also explained and exception reports will be circulated by SE.

How these will be reported to Directors in the future was also explained.

The responsibilities in respect of financial probity contained in the Scheme of Delegation were outlined to Directors.

The Scheme of Delegation was unanimously approved by Directors

Proposed: AT Seconded: NM

7.0 MAT Update Report

Presented by: CEO

The report had been circulated and SE summarised the content.

School Standard reviews have taken place on the 3 primaries and reports will be generated.

The work undertaken to this point on the Trust was split into two areas.

1. Business facing information gathering and system development
2. Education facing quality assurance, leadership development and system introduction

These were summarised in the report.

How distractions are being removed for the Heads of School in the Trust in order for them to focus on the quality of education being delivered was explained.

Training has already been undertaken for the Heads and SE noted the focus on areas such as the development and implementation of School Improvement Plans.

A brief narrative on each of the Trust schools was included in the update document.

Field Lane primary school has previously received two Section 5 requires improvement judgements from Ofsted, the most recent in 2019. This makes it the most vulnerable school in the Trust. The most recent Section 8 monitoring inspection was positive and stated that the school is taking effective action to remove itself from the previous judgement.

Siddal Primary School has received one requires improvement judgement from Ofsted in 2018. The school is yet to have an Ofsted monitoring visit.

Luddenfoot Academy which received an Outstanding Ofsted judgement in 2015, has just had a Section 8 Ofsted inspection.

The current Ofsted Inspection focus was outlined to Directors and to achieve Outstanding is now much more difficult.

Question below submitted by DB prior to the meeting with the response from SE.

Q - Do we have a provisional/indicative Ofsted judgement for Luddendenfoot?

A - The provisional judgement on Luddendenfoot's Section 8 judgement (and using the wording from the Ofsted handbook) is that if a Section 5 inspection was conducted last week, then it is likely that the school would no longer be outstanding. The findings of the Ofsted process were in line with the areas of improvement identified by the Trust due diligence / quality assurance process last month. In short these were:

- The synthetic phonics and assessment of the lowest 20% of learners
- The coherence (history) and the implementation (Geography) of the curriculum
- The composition of the LGB (This area has already been addressed by joining Polaris)
- Internet safeguarding, specifically the school's filtering system (This area has already been addressed by joining Polaris as their systems migrate to ours in the coming week)

There were a great number of positives highlighted by the inspector, but as he stated the outstanding judgement is an exacting judgement and something that is the exception to the rule.

We have a strong improvement plan in place and all the staff at the school could not have performed better over the two days. The reaction of the community to the inspection saw 50+ very positive Parentview reports, this was something that the inspector highlighted as the most positive parent view exercise he had ever seen. No poor teaching was seen throughout the two days and the pupils were described as articulate and delightful. In the coming weeks the report from the Trust and the Ofsted report will be uploaded onto the Governance Portal for your review.

The nature of the discussions held with the inspector were summarised.

SE detailed the inspection process at Luddendenfoot and the depth of questioning of staff which took place. Safeguarding was not an issue raised by the inspector however issues with online safety had been raised. The strengths of the school as noted by the inspector were detailed to Directors.

Within 2 years, a full Section 5 inspection will take place.

The differences between a Section 5 and Section 8 inspection were explained by SE.

In the due diligence which took place prior to the formation of the Polaris MAT, a very similar list had been created as seen in the Ofsted feedback.

The instability of the structures seen in the previous Trust at the school were noted.

Q – Are you confident we have the resources and skills to move all the schools up?

A – Yes. The work of Matt Crowther and Rebecca Denham in this respect was summarised by SE and a more formal structure has been created.

Buildings & Assets - A condition survey will take place on all the Trust building assets.

Q – What is the timescale for Eddisons?

A – Starting next month. At Rastrick, we had the report within 3 weeks.

Q – What about the internal assets?

A – There will be a full audit undertaken at the schools.

Q – This will help to identify what is needed resource-wise to improve the teaching experience?

A – Absolutely.

SE explained how existing assets have been redeployed where necessary.

SL advised that this is a key area which is being assessed to ensure the schools have what they need.

Question below submitted by DB prior to the meeting with the response from SE.

Q - My only "challenge" would be around the HR/Estates Manager and more specifically the estates side. I fully understand your reasoning but managing the site managers, three of whom are new to the organisation, and with our limited knowledge of the actual sites, remotely must involve a lot of additional resource. Can you provide comfort to the Directors at the meeting that, with everything else going on, this will not create any issues going forward?

A - The four site managers have several things in common; they are very experienced, they know their sites very well and they all run systems of compliance that give me comfort that the schools we lead are safe places. All of this means that there is a solidity in the practices of the managers moving forward. The challenge is to bring this practice and these mechanisms of compliance together. To this end, we have the following planned in the short term:

- The completion of the condition surveys across all schools the Trust has procured (this process has started)
- The introduction and training key staff on the Trust software package, that brings all matters relating to site compliance onto one platform
- The running of a fortnightly meeting with the Site Managers (led by me) in order to check important processes they have coming up and those that are being planned
- To further develop the JD/PS for the role of Estates and Projects Manager and subsequently plan the recruitment process into the new year

Finance - The audit which is taking place currently was noted.
The budgets will be delivered to the Trust schools in January.
Staff previously employed at Brighter Futures have been brought into the Trust in-house payroll system.
SL explained the benefits of this approach particularly in respect of HR.

Trust Staffing - Issues which had been encountered which were staff related during the transfer of the Brighter Future Trust to Polaris were summarised by SE.

Q – How long will you leave this vacancy in respect of HR and Estates?

A – New key roles in the Trust are being investigated by SE and SL and a structure will be proposed to the Trust in March.

SL explained that the full closure of the previous Trust needs to take place first.

SE noted that the schools do have processes in place but these will be amended as required.

Trust wide processes will be introduced over a period of time.

Next Steps – The details were in the report circulated and included:

The development of CPD plans will be undertaken across the Trust.

Integrated systems on the different sites will take place.

The financial returns and audit on RHS will be completed.

The Governor Portal is being developed continually in order to support the Trust Board and LGBs.

The Chairs of the LGB's have been met and training has taken place.

8.0 Appointment of LGB Chairs and LGB Terms of Reference

Presented by:	CEO
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The following were proposed as Chairs of the Local Governing Boards:

Luddendenfoot Academy

Marie Briggs

Siddal Primary School

Sally Moore

Field Lane Primary School

Paul Booth (new appointment)

Rastrick High School

Duncan Brundell

Q – Are these the incumbents?

A – Yes.

The appointment of above were unanimously approved.

Proposed: JS Seconded: NM

The Vice Chair will be appointed by the LGBs themselves.

The LGB Terms of Reference had been circulated prior to the meeting and was unanimously approved.

9.0 Named Trust Leads

Presented by:	Chair
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SE explained the role of the Trust leads in the different areas and how the reporting of these areas will take place.

Pupil Premium – DB
Safeguarding – SP
SEND – JN

JN outlined her work and interest in SEND.

10.0 Any Other Business

Presented by: Chair

New Director badges will be processed at the next meeting for all.

DBS checks – These are being redone for all Directors of Polaris MAT.

Feedback was requested on the portal when Directors start to use this. SE requested that all complete the Pecuniary Interest Form to be found on the portal.

11.0 Date of Meetings for the Academic Year

Presented by: Clerk

06 January 2022 including members.

07 April 2022

26 May 2022

30 June 2022

Meeting ended at 6.15pm

Approved as a True record of the Meeting

Signed: _____

Chair

Agenda item	Action	Person Responsible	Deadline
10	All Directors to complete the Pecuniary Interest Form on the Governance Portal	All	ASAP