



Yvonne Hilditch Chancery MAT [85] 14 October 2020

Directors Meeting Minutes 14/05/2020

▶ Virtual ▶ Thursday, May 14, 2020 ▶ 17:30 ▶ Chair: Ros Caulfield ▶ Clerk: Sue Lambeth

FINAL: The minutes are confirmed and locked.

The meeting will be held virtually on Zoom.

Governors Attending: > Nikki Ratcliffe, Steven Coles, Justine Twiss, Jenny Whiston, Ros Caulfield, Sarah-Louise Gohr, Elizabeth Martindale, Alison Hattersley

Governors Apologies: >

Non Governors Attending: > Sue Lambeth, Yvonne Hilditch

Non Governors Apologies: >

Agenda Item 1 ▶ Welcome, Apologies and AOB

The meeting was quorate and started at 17.31.

MINUTE

RC welcomed all to the meeting. Following Cheshire East guidance the meeting would focus on urgent business only linked to Covid-19.

All were in attendance.

No items of other business were requested.

Agenda Item 2 ▶ Declarations of Interest

MINUTE

No declarations of pecuniary interest or conflict of interest between an individual and the Board of Directors as a whole in connection with the business to be discussed during the meeting were declared.

Agenda Item 3 ▶ Ratification of Virtual Meeting Protocol

MINUTE

The meeting **ratified** the Virtual Meeting Protocol.

DECISION

The meeting ratified the Virtual Meeting Protocol.

Agenda Item 4 ▶ Membership

Membership of the Board of and Members' Board

There had been no changes to the membership of Chancery Multi Academy Trust since the previous meeting of the Directors on 11th February 2020.

MINUTE

There were no terms of office due to expire before the next meeting.

Appointments to LGBs

The Directors **confirmed** the re-appointment of Sarah Steele as a Co-opted Governor at Pikemere School.

DECISION

The Directors confirmed the re-appointment of Sarah Steele as a Co-opted Governor at Pikemere School.

Agenda Item 5 ▶ Chairs Action

MINUTE

The Power to Act on behalf of the Board of of Chancery Trust had been delegated to the Chair at the autumn term Directors' meeting.

The Chair advised she had taken no actions on behalf of Chancery Multi Academy Trust since the last meeting.

Agenda Item 6 ▶ Part One minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the Directors' meeting held on 11th February 2020 were reviewed, agreed to be a true and accurate account and would be signed off by the Chair.

MINUTE

There were no matters arising.

The following point was highlighted:

· Confirmation of LG's appointment as a director had been sent to Companies House and information had been updated on the DfE website.

Agenda Item 7 ▶ Minutes of Finance / Audit / LGB meetings

MINUTE

- Finance 27th April
- Audit 3rd February and 27th April (not approved)
- Pikemere LGB 4th March and 6th May (not approved)
- Excalibur 9th March (not approved)
- The Berkeley Spring Term

All minutes were received and **accepted**.

Agenda Item 8 ▶ Finance

MINUTE

The Finance Committee meeting reviewed the accounts in April and agreed that YH would continue to upload management accounts to Trust Governor for Directors every month. For the approval of the budget in the July meeting a finance report would be presented to Directors. Schools had agreed that budgets would be available to YH in sufficient time for the July Directors' meeting.

Agenda Item 9 ▶ Business Critical Decisions/CEO Report

MINUTE

Directors thanked the CEO for her extremely comprehensive document and LG then reported as follows:

- The latest lengthy government guidance had been received at 7.30 p.m. on Monday 11th May.
- Arrangements for children of Key Workers and home learning were in place.
- The next step was to consider the government guidance for the safe re-opening of schools for Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 pupils.

- Discussions regarding safety were taking place with other Chief Executive Officers (CEO) and Headteachers (HTs). There appeared to be an expectation to re-open, in which case the Multi Academy Trust (MAT) and the schools had to be satisfied of the safety of staff and pupils. It would be impossible to eliminate the risk, merely minimise it.
- There was a lack of clarity in the guidance around the number of pupils expected to be admitted and the degree of social distancing to be followed. Classrooms at Pikemere and Excalibur only lent themselves to accommodating 10 pupils whilst complying with two metres social distancing. Further clarification from the government and the DfE was to be sought.
- POST MEETING NOTE – further clarification was received on the evening of Thursday 14th May.
- LG demonstrated the set up in a Pikemere classroom.
- Guidance for Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) was no soft toys and no equipment i.e. the basis of the curriculum.
- Communication would go to parents to advise that further guidance was awaited and further information would follow. The aim would be to make it clear that there was an intention to open and not to encourage parents to keep children at home.
- The context of the The Berkeley (TB) was advised to be different.
- Following two metre social distancing rules, Pikemere and Excalibur could potentially operate with pupils returning on two set days per week. TB felt the school could accommodate all pupils on 4.5 days. It was agreed that further discussion was required, to ensure all schools were following the same principles. Directors unanimously **agreed** that social distancing should take priority, particularly taking into account the increased hygiene and cleaning, particularly relating to toilets and handwashing arrangements.
- Two days for each bubble of pupils per week would allow spare classrooms for the expansion of numbers.
- Planning must be in place for pupils to be brought back carefully and safely, and in such a way as to protect the staff.
- Careful communication with parents was agreed to be essential, in order to avoid being seen to encourage parents to keep children at home and to avoid mixed messages. LG advised that parents would only be given facts and any communication would point out that schools, when they re-open, would not be as pupils formerly knew them; pupils would not be taught in whole class groups but rather in 'bubbles' i.e. subdivisions of a former class, as medically advised.
- Information reported to Cheshire East (CE) in the weekly contact call, was being fed back to the DfE via the Director of Education. The key issues currently were space and the staff.
- There was no spare staffing capacity, other than staff working from home to provide home learning for pupils. The expectations of teachers were the same whether working from home or in a classroom, and it was felt to be unfair to ask a teacher of one year group to work with another year group in school for two days and still provide high quality home learning provision for their original year group. LG had not yet included herself in the plan but would be available to cover in the eventuality of further staff absences.

The Directors thanked LG wholeheartedly for her tremendous work in the very difficult and trying times.

Teaching union views were that re-opening must be a school decision based on the safety of children and staff.

Directors were of the opinion that a level of expected of pupil numbers would be required to inform decisions and that it was important not to scare parents and to show the schools could make it as safe as possible.

Directors **agreed** a further meeting would be required to continue to support LG and the work of the headteachers and staff across the trust. The Directors offered to share the load with LG where appropriate e.g. sharing documents and providing feedback, and LG agreed to forward guidance as it was received.

Circumstances were agreed to be exceptional and Directors **confirmed their total confidence in LG**. An informed decision would be made by Directors once in possession of full information.

Directors felt that LG's wellbeing was also paramount.

LG reported that the three school leaders had been in constant contact and were collaborating at leadership level.

Regularity checklist

The Regularity Checklist had been completed by LG with YH. JW confirmed she had read the regularity checklist and felt it was of a very good standard.

- DECISION** Directors unanimously agreed that social distancing should take priority. Directors agreed a further meeting would be required to continue to support LG and the work of the headteachers and staff across the trust.
- Q: Are parents of Pikemere and Excalibur being requested to indicate whether their children would return on 1st June were the school to open, as are those of pupils at The Berkeley?**
A: A communication with parents was still under consideration.
- Q: What is required from Directors?**
A: Directors will have to make the decision as to whether schools can open in a safe manner. There is nothing yet in place which can be shared. Risk Assessments must be acceptable and Directors must be satisfied that each school has hygiene systems and staggered times in accordance with its context. Directors will be required to be critical. An aligned set of principles and the interpretation thereof, must be set, behind which Directors could stand.
- CHALLENGE**
- Q: How would the pupil bubbles be staffed?**
A: The adults attached to each bubble and the make-up of the bubble would remain consistent. The same approach must be taken by all three schools.

Agenda Item 10 ► Policies

MINUTE There were no policies for approval at this meeting.

Agenda Item 11 ► Next meeting

LG would contact Directors to arrange a further meeting.

MINUTE The date of the next scheduled meeting of the Directors was confirmed to be 14th July 2020 at 5.30 p.m.

Directors expressed thanks to all three Headteachers for their enormous amount of work in these unprecedented times. LG agreed she would pass on thanks.

LG had personally sent a card to Caroline and Juliet and their teams by way of a thank you .

Agenda Item 12 ► Any Other Business

MINUTE There was no further business to discuss.

Agenda Item 13 ► Impact Statement

MINUTE What is the impact of this meeting on the pupils across Chancery Trust?

1. As the meeting was conducted via Zoom, it enabled all Directors to participate. It ensured that the Directors were able to be fully informed based on the current information available and to challenge and support the CEO in her role in such unprecedented times.

2. The Risk Register and Regularity Checklist ensures that Chancery MAT is continuing to meet its legal and financial requirements and responsibilities.

3. The comprehensive written report from the CEO gave Directors a clear insight into Chancery MAT's short term and medium term progress against the Key Priorities.

4. Lengthy discussions pertaining to the current situation and the Government's intention for schools to begin to reopen from 1st June gave Directors a clear understanding of the unprecedented levels of challenge and preparation that would be required in order to safely meet this requirement.

5. The CEO's verbal feedback on the levels of communication between the Head Teachers and Senior Leaders of the three schools, plus the wider network of Head Teachers and CEOs, enabled Directors to explore the potential impact of the Government directive for Chancery MAT. This has subsequently allowed Directors to raise concerns or be reassured of steps being taken to evaluate and address risk to both children and staff at each of the schools across the MAT in the current COVID 19 situation.

6. All of the above have contributed to continuing to put the safety and well-being of all children and staff of Chancery MAT at the heart of the decision making processes.

The Part One meeting closed at 18.35.

Governor Agreed Actions set during this meeting: 0

Directors Meeting 1 Summer 2020v2 Pt1 *dated:* 14/05/2020
Minutes approved by Yvonne Hilditch