


Finance & General Purposes Committee

Minutes

Thursday 12th December 2024 at 2.30pm

Held online via Microsoft Teams

Attended: Ben Thorne (Chair)
Nicola Dunford (CEO)
Cheryl Mathieson (CN)
Paul Waterworth (PW)

In attendance: Matt Matthew (DCEO)
Louisa Taylor (Finance Manager)
Charlotte Roe (Governance Professional) 

Minutes: Nicol Bush (Clerk to the Trust)

No	Item	ACTION
1.	Welcome and Apologies The Chair opened the meeting with a welcome to Trustees. Apologies were accepted from Christopher Norman.	
2.	Declarations of Business Interests The CEO is a Trustee for the Bearnas Education Foundation. Chris Norman is Director of CANE Properties Ltd. There were no new Business interests brought forward.	
3.	Any Other Business There was no other business brought forward.	
4.	Minutes of the previous meeting The minutes of the meeting held on 27 th September 2024 were approved as a true record and were signed by the Chair electronically.	
5.	Matters Arising (not on the agenda) There were no matters arising brought to the meeting.	
6.	<p>Finance</p> <p>6.1 Finance update to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial Performance to 30th November 2024 – Month 3 <p>The Finance Manager presented the finance update report (which had been circulated prior to the meeting) and gave a deeper analysis of the content. <i>The Trustees asked were there any projections of when the reduction of pupil numbers would end?</i> The DCEO answered that the Trust was approaching the bottom of the curve but would have more information in April 2025, once the Trust received the admission numbers for September 2025.</p> <p>6.2 Budget 2024/25 Version 2 and notes-</p> <p>The Finance Manager presented the budget review report to the meeting. <i>The Trustees asked did the report include the £61k capital money?</i> The FM responded that at the point of updating the numbers, the FM was not aware of the capital money, so it had not been included.</p> <p>The Trustees agreed to approve the proposed version of the master budget to reflect a £187k deficit rather than the previous £164k deficit. The Chair raised that the revised budget was more factually correct than the previous.</p> <p>The DCEO said there were challenges ahead in the 2025/2026 forecast, with a drop in income and a rise in staffing costs, as well as a drop in pupil numbers however considering the reserves, the Trust remained in a financially healthy position for the current year.</p> <p>6.3 Part II was taken.</p> <p>6.4 Restricted Funds – There were no issues to report.</p> <p>The Chair updated the Trustees on the audit clearance meeting and said all was positive, particularly with the increase of schools within the Trust. The Chair gave thanks to those that were involved.</p> <p>The DCEO responded to a question that had been raised by a LAC hub at the S&C committee meeting around the allocation of the Sports Grant. The DCEO explained that the Sports Grant was ring fenced by individual schools, which paid for the P.E specialist for a ½ or a full day and that the remainder was allocated into a separate line within the school’s budget to spend.</p>	

GP

	The GP said it was an important message to get out to the LACs, in order for Governors to support the Trustees with a consistent message.	
7.	<p>Estates 7.1 DCEO to update the meeting 7.2 Agree contribution levels CIF 25/26</p> <p>The meeting discussed the Estates report and the DCEO noted the main point on the report was sustainability, which the Trust was moving forward positively. The DCEO added that Landscope school was audited the previous day which had gone well. The DCEO said there had been a lot of issues in various schools, such as; fencing, heating etc but had all now been resolved.</p> <p>The DCEO presented the CIF bid contributions document (which was circulated prior to the meeting via email) and the Trustees discussed at length. <i>The Trustees asked could the Trust create a benefit per pupil calculation?</i> The DCEO answered the CIF bids were ranked around the area of most need and the current CIF bids were a series of priorities for the Trust. <i>The Trustees asked if the CIF bids were not accepted, would the Trust have to undertake the work themselves?</i> The DCEO responded that the current CIF bids work would roll across into the following year and the Trust would have to continue with maintenance repairs. The meeting accepted the CIF bid contributions document.</p>	
8.	<p>Human Resources The Trustees raised that HR had been discussed at the previous Remuneration meeting and agreed that the My new Term system had been a good investment by the Trust.</p>	
9.	<p>Health & Safety Item discussed under 7.</p>	
10.	<p>Data Protection The report was circulated prior to the meeting, there were no issues brought forward.</p>	
11.	<p>Safeguarding The CEO updated the meeting on safeguarding and noted that the DCEO had been helpful in dealing with parent complaints. The CEO explained there were a couple of issues regarding staffing however did not disclose precise information.</p>	
12.	<p>Risk Register Trustees to review report on the following risk register categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial • Estate • Operational <p>The DCEO presented the Every report and updated the meeting on the risk management areas. The DCEO said there were no updates needed for the risk register following this meeting but would note they had been reviewed by the Trustees.</p>	DCEO
13.	<p>Strategy Plan Trustees to update on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial strategy and control – Ben Thorne (Deferred to the next F&GP meeting) • Growth and Capacity-(Deferred to the Full Board committee) <p>Financial Strategy and Control and Estate Management 13.1 Review of 2023/2024 13.2 Update on 2024/2025 (Deferred from previous meeting on 27.09.24)</p> <p>The Trustees agreed to defer item 13. to the next F&GP meeting, following a discussion between the Chair and the DCEO.</p>	CHAIR/ DCEO
14.	<p>ESFA Bulletins There were no issues brought forward to the meeting.</p>	
15.	<p>Policies 15.1 Charging and Remissions Policy 2024- the policy was approved by the meeting.</p> <p>15.2 Accounting Policy 2024- The policy was reviewed during the Bishop Fleming audit and there were no significant changes. The GP to update the wording changes in the policy. The policy was approved by the Trustees.</p>	GP
16.	<p>Evaluation of governance impact The Trustees discussed the impact of the meeting on the Trust and agreed that it had been a constructive and concise meeting and having everyone on the same page made it easier to implement what was needed.</p>	

The meeting ended at 4pm.

Signed by the Chair.....on 31st January 2025