

## MINUTES of the BOARD MEETING

11 February 2025, 1p.m.

### Part A Public

Item	Subject	Action
	<p><b>Trustees present:</b></p> <p>Matt Brierley (MB)</p> <p>Karen Brokenshire (KB)</p> <p>Amy Claridge (AC)</p> <p>Rob Gasson (RG) <i>items 1-7.1 only</i></p> <p>Karen Harris (KH)</p> <p>Mike Hosking (MH) – Chair</p> <p>Nick Lake (NL)</p> <p>Deborah Richards (DR)</p> <p>Peter Sheppard (PS)</p> <p><i>Also present:</i></p> <p>Jem Alder (JA) – Trust Governance Lead</p> <p>Cathryn Andrews (CA) – Director of Development</p> <p>Simon Hague (SE) – CEO</p> <p>Jess Hutchings (JH) – Governance Co-ordinator</p> <p>Tamsin Lamb (TL) – Director of Education</p> <p>Sean Pinhay (SP) – Chief Finance and Operations Officer [CFOO]</p> <p>Vanessa Schreiber (VS) – Executive PA</p>	
1	<b>Apologies</b> Ross Schreiber (RS)	
2	<b>Conflicts of Interest:</b> KB reported her daughter is now a governor at Lanner. No other additional interests were declared.	
3	<b>Minutes of the meetings</b> of 10 December 2024 were accepted as an accurate record.	
4	<b>Action Tracker / Matters arising</b>	
4.1	6.1.2 Home education request from Cornwall Council. TL reported she had not received any response from the council since informing them of our decision.	
5	<b>STRATEGIC / OPERATIONS</b>	
5.1	<b>CEO's update</b>	
5.1.1	<p>National.</p> <p>SH summarised key points from the recent Children's Wellbeing Bill – highlighting that most would make no difference to Crofty:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement National Curriculum – already do this</li> <li>• Do not have any unqualified teachers</li> <li>• Already follow national Teacher Pay &amp; Conditions</li> <li>• Secretary of State could give direction to academies if acted unreasonably on relevant duties – would depend upon interpretation but bigger question is how much centralisation over education would we want the government of the day to have?</li> <li>• All primaries to provide access to a Breakfast Club – currently only Porthleven don't but have a centre next door which does</li> </ul>	

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5.1.2	<p>SW Regional Director meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Repeated existing government priorities</li> <li>New RISE teams- unclear if these will have the impact they want</li> <li>Director gave a more nuanced view on government approach – “be great at what you do, be resilient and agile, not too much focus on growth – but more on stability”.</li> <li>Number of schools applying to convert has dropped significantly this academic year</li> <li>Be clear how you contribute to your area – and your partnerships – focus on ‘place’</li> </ul> <p>Four Cornish MATs with secondary schools are merging into two.</p>	
5.1.3	<p>Benchmarking.</p> <p>Latest Kreston annual report has been published:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Costs outstripped income for 2<sup>nd</sup> year in a row</li> <li>16% and 8% increase in per pupil costs</li> <li>31% of academies have &lt;5% of income as reserves – majority of these are primary MATs</li> <li>Fewer expecting to grow</li> </ul>	
5.1.4	<p>Penpol.</p> <p>Governors have been satisfied with their extended consultation and have voted to apply to join Crofty. Expect this will go to April advisory board but regional office have given us 17 March as their deadline for paperwork.</p> <p>SH alerted Trustees that another single-item board meeting may be needed during the preceding week.</p> <p>Trust has commissioned a separate survey of their estate to support our Due Diligence.</p>	
<b>5.2</b>	<b>Marazion</b>	
5.2.1	<p>Update.</p> <p>Trustees received the report which had been presented to FAR Committee. Officers provided a verbal update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Estates all signed off</li> <li>Verbal agreement regarding playing field</li> <li>Confident 1<sup>st</sup> April deadline for conversion will be met</li> <li>Anticipate having an update on their projected deficit when final decision taken on 7 March</li> </ul>	
5.2.2	<p>Change of Articles option.</p> <p>Trustees received a briefing note on whether there was any benefit to update to the latest Model Articles alongside Marazion joining the trust. This also covered whether adopting Church articles held any specific benefit.</p> <p>Meeting discussed and noted the trust already adhered to recent changes to the Articles – and decided there was no benefit to changing at this time.</p>	
<b>5.3</b>	<b>Safeguarding – Lead Trustee update</b>	
5.3.1	<p>DR urged trustees to read her written report but highlighted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Very reassured by what she has read and heard when attending meetings and training sessions</li> <li>Lots of improvements to practice and process have been made – including use of CPOMS</li> </ul>	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All websites now make it clear about how to report a concern</li> </ul> <p>DR finished by noting the workload for all our DSLs when there is so little external support from outside of the Trust.</p> <p>Trustees discussed whether they had a strategic role to escalate these concerns direct to the council – noting that the risks all apply to the trust and our staff.</p> <p>It was agreed the Chair would write to the Chair of the Independent Safeguarding Board on behalf of the Trust.</p> <p>Suggestion was also made whether a joint message should come from CACE (Cornwall Association of Chief Executives).</p> <p>MH thanked DR for being so proactive in her role as Lead Trustee.</p>	MH
<b>5.4</b>	<p><b>Policy management schedule</b></p> <p>SH thanked JH for her work on producing the schedule presented to the meeting – the first time the Trust has had such a comprehensive list and guidance on how to manage all policies.</p> <p>Trustees confirmed their agreement to implement all the proposals – noting that they could be monitored and reviewed and amended over time as necessary.</p>	
<b>5.5</b>	<b>Policy approvals</b>	
5.5.1	<p>Gifts and Hospitality.</p> <p>Previously part of the Finance Scheme of Delegation and has been reviewed by FAR Committee who reviewed some of the values and requested minor amendments.</p> <p>SP reported that the proposal regarding long service awards would have cost c.£750 in the previous financial year.</p> <p>Approved.</p> <p>JA reported that reference to this policy will be added to governance codes of conduct.</p>	JA
5.5.2	<p>Investment.</p> <p>Again previously part of Finance Scheme of Delegation but now separated to reflect the amount of money involved. Policy reflects practice over the last 18 months which has been reported regularly to FAR Committee - and is based on a very low risk approach.</p> <p>Agreed.</p>	
5.5.3	<p>Whistleblowing.</p> <p>One query over the level of involvement of the CEO and Headteachers in the process was discussed – but Trustees agreed to approve the policy as presented.</p> <p><i>Q: Is Whistleblowing covered in staff training?</i></p> <p>Yes.</p>	
5.5.4	<p>Maternity and Miscarriage.</p> <p>Previous 'Family Friendly' policy has been separated into this policy and a Leave of Absence policy. TL confirmed this new policy includes all recent legislation.</p> <p>Approved.</p> <p><i>Q: The policy is quite 'wordy' – should staff have something simpler to use?</i></p> <p>Yes agree – fact sheets for staff are being developed.</p>	

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5.6	<p><b>Parc Eglos Swimming Pool</b></p> <p>Trustees had received a detailed report summarising the current position and that the Trust is willing to be supportive of any community efforts to raise funds for a learner pool on or adjacent to the school site.</p> <p>Trustees did discuss the suggestion that enough officer time had been spent already on this issue – but the consensus view was to proceed with the proposals as there was little further time commitment required.</p> <p>Trustees noted that demolishing the current pool and replacing with a much needed improved outdoor play area for the school was beneficial, and accepted there was a cost involved.</p>	
6	<b>SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT</b>	
6.1	<b>Director of Education's update</b>	
6.1.1	<p>Ofsted reports.</p> <p>Portreath and Treloweth both very positive – for former if a graded inspection would have been close to Outstanding. Head's choice to not request a follow-up inspection.</p> <p>Treloweth was more of a challenge. Recognised the work done to address dips in performance last year. We are keeping them at Stage 1 as still work to do.</p> <p><i>Q: Why 2 inspectors at Portreath but only 1 at the others?</i></p> <p>Schools get two 'inspector days' each – so depends if a one or two day inspection.</p> <p><i>Q: The Treloweth report made no mention of the Trust's support – in contrast to the others?</i></p> <p>Probably just a word count limitation as was mentioned in their verbal feedback.</p>	
6.1.2	Confidential item	
6.2	<p><b>Small School Hub / Class structures 2025.26</b></p> <p>Trustees received proposals to restructure classes at Halwin and Trannack. These are budget-driven decisions as the Trust cannot justify this level of overspend in such small schools.</p> <p><i>Q: Are there any longer term forecasts on pupil numbers?</i></p> <p>Nothing reliable as very variable across the county due to new housing, and a general demographic shift from rural areas to towns.</p> <p>Trustees confirmed they were happy that these changes are officer decisions.</p>	
6.3	<p><b>SIG Committee</b> 20 January.</p> <p>KB fed back on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SEND Improvement Plan from James Taylor – very supportive approach</li> <li>• Two Trustees attended the first Trust SENDCo conference</li> <li>• Rise in EHCPs nationally – Trust will consider the suggestion of a Poverty / Disadvantaged strategy</li> <li>• Chairs training planned – good initial response</li> <li>• LGC Chairs – two vacancies still to address</li> <li>• Trustee visits to schools being planned</li> <li>• TPATs decision for a 2 week half term this autumn was discussed together with question of whether Crofty needs to consider a similar approach in the future.</li> <li>• Local Governance update</li> </ul>	

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<b>7</b>	<b>FINANCE</b>	
<b>7.1</b>	<b>Budget Monitoring</b> SP reported that the overall position has improved due to increased level of funding received. Majority will be retained to address the budget deficit but some is being released for capital works and for school improvement. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Majority of schools have moved 'into the green'.</li> <li>• Positive monitoring meetings with Headteachers</li> <li>• Still working on improving use of supply and budget projections. Where we have tightened controls elsewhere this has made a positive difference.</li> </ul> <i>Q: Where will any expenditure relating to Parc Eglos swimming pool be funded from?</i> This will appear under capital expenditure. <i>Q: Is the delay in filling our Governance Professional vacancy related to lack of finance?</i> No - SP explained reason for the delay is need to address a contractual issue first.	
<b>7.2</b>	<b>Capital programme / budget update</b> Trustees noted this information report.	
<b>7.3</b>	<b>FAR Committee</b> 29 January. In addition to items covered earlier in the agenda NL summarised the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reviewed Estates / Health and Safety KPIs and noted volume of reported incidents of violence against staff. Requested a data breakdown for next time.</li> <li>• H&amp;S update – introduced to ClearView analysis and how it helps the Trust make additional savings</li> <li>• Noted risk reporting yet to be coming to FAR – but some risk indicators appearing in other reporting</li> </ul>	
<b>8</b>	<b>GOVERNANCE</b>	
<b>8.1</b>	<b>Governance Scheme of Delegation</b> Trustees received the updated scheme with latest terms of reference for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School Improvement and Governance Committee (SIG)</li> <li>• Finance, Audit and Risk Committee (FAR)</li> <li>• Local Governance Committees</li> </ul> Amendments to the FAR terms of reference were noted and the whole scheme approved.	
	Meeting finished at 3.15	

Dates of next meetings	
<b>3 Mar</b>	<b>BOARD – Marazion decision</b>
4 Mar	LGC Chairs
7 Mar	Members AGM
10 Mar	SIG
18 Mar	FAR
<b>1 Apr</b>	<b>BOARD</b>

