

Minutes of the Crofty Education Trust Board Meeting
18 May 2026, 1pm

Item	Subject	Action
1	Trustees present: V = virtual Matthew Brierley (MB) Karen Brokenshire (KB) Rob Gasson (RG) V – Attended Items 7 onwards Mike Hosking (MH) – Chair Nick Lake (NL) Ross Schreiber (RS) Peter Sheppard (PS) Rachael Woodhead (RW) – Attended Items 5 onwards <i>Also present:</i> Cathryn Andrews (CA) – Acting CEO Jess Hutchings (JH) – Lead Governance Professional Sean Pinhay (SP) – Chief Finance and Operations Officer (CFOO) Vanessa Schreiber (VS) – Executive Assistant Apologies: Amy Claridge (AC) - Trustee Simon Hague – CEO Rachel Martin (RM) - Trustee Tamsin Lamb (TL) – Director of Education	
2	Conflicts of Interest – No new declarations were made. No conflict of interests were noted for any items on the agenda.	
3	Minutes of previous meeting 31 March 2026 (Part A) were agreed as an accurate record of the proceedings and were approved.	
4	Action Tracker / Matters arising Action 280: Trustees have indicated their availability for Risk Register training. JH will book the session and record it for those who cannot attend. TL has produced a 'Guide to Data' for Local Governors. this has been shared with LGCs. TL will speak to Heads and ask them to deliver this training at an LGC meeting.	JH TL
STRATEGIC / OPERATIONS		
5	CEO Update. CA provided an update, focusing on strategic objectives, risk overview, and future developments. Details included: - The development of the children's strategy, which is being co-constructed with heads and will focus on addressing disadvantage. - The ongoing relationship with GLA, including the benefits of being part of the trust and the challenges of addressing disadvantage. - The upcoming thematic review on writing and history, with a focus on disadvantaged pupils' voices. - The progress of the people strategy and the positive feedback from risk visits to schools.	

Item	Subject	Action
	- The need to improve CPD opportunities for teaching assistants was noted, alongside the importance of recognising developmental opportunities within schools. - The importance of developing senior leadership - The ongoing work to support community engagement and civic duty, through the community strategy. - Trust focus on providing facilities for current community initiatives, rather than offering our own initiatives. Trustee noted the importance of understanding the context of the community, and current initiatives being offered. CA confirmed Crofty has agreed to let Tolvaddon meeting space on a half termly basis to the neighbourhood team steering group, which includes GPs CAHMS etc, as they cannot rent spaces elsewhere at a reasonable price. Crofty have been invited to join the steering group. CA confirmed: - Crofty are attending Southwest zero network. This is in its infancy, so we are contributing a lot and sharing the work we are doing in the trust across education and operations. - Chartwells in Wales are coming to view the Eco summit to see how Chartwells and Crofty work together - Full Risk Report will be shared with Board 3 times a year. Risk cycle is useful for executives. SLT will review risk data and identify areas of focus before Trust Committee and Board. - Risk register currently held online, but as this costs £6K per year, CA working with IT manager to develop inhouse register. - Funding increasing of £204K across Crofty linked to inclusion (mainstream inclusion fund) - drive to pool funding whilst ensuring schools have their own pot. <i>Q: Will the inclusion funding be included in the Self Evaluation Form (SEF) and Pupil Premium Plan?</i> Actions being taken will be reported in the SEF and PP Plan, but there is a statutory requirement to publish a report detailing how the money is being utilised against the 7 standards of inclusion. It will mean an additional report for leaders to complete. CA Reported: - Trust descriptors are being reviewed in conjunction with Ofsted ahead of Trust inspections that are due to begin in 2027 - Regional group suggested no compulsion for schools to join a trust, but they want all schools to be in trust moving forward. CA and GLA are presenting at the next regional meeting - Early Career Teachers (ECT) entitlements are changing next year - Drive to look at how trusts are developing their own development systems, to ensure clear pathways for all staff for development. - Civic duty – focus on trusts working with Local Authority and other Trusts - shared responsibility - Hope that Mission coastal as defined in the recent White paper would be linked to Southwest, however, information now published indicates that it will be focussing on Hastings and Scarborough. We will see what comes out of this. - Whitepaper summary still stands. Consultation for SEND element closes today.	
6	Staff Survey Results. The staff survey results were presented. CA noted: Letter addressed to all staff is being sent this week, confirming findings and next steps	

Item	Subject	Action
	• Heads have received their individual school results, and trust results. Survey comments are being shared with Heads via hub leads • Positive feedback around school leadership • CPPD good but some concerns depending on school • Recognition that as finance is tight it has an impact on staffing levels, and knock on effect to wellbeing, workload and managing complex behaviour needs within schools • Positive feedback about specialist trust roles and targeted support • Heads know there are challenges, but they know this is a national picture • Heads understand the KPIs that are reviewed during the budget meetings, and understand what we are doing and why, but how that is narrated might be different from school to school • Strong agreement that colleagues can be relied upon • Need to develop a shared understanding of what Crofty is trying to achieve. Shared Services Team are clear about the positive impact of schools being in a Trust, but schools are sometimes less clear. Heads have a role to play in improving understanding • Need to find ways to work together to reduce workload • GLA share resources in a specific way - think we can do sharing of resources more to support our staff (although need awareness of quality assurance) • Need to continue work we have started on wellbeing and where the responsibility for this lies. Trustees were disappointed with the number of survey responses and were disappointed to see a reduction in the Trust average scores. CA agreed that average scores are lower this year in every area and highlighted that response rates are better for our newer schools. CA confirmed SLT have considered whether the approach to the survey needs to change and noted the important role Heads have in promoting it. The letter to staff conforms we are disappointed with the response rates. Trustees highlighted that the executive summary mentions unsafe supervision ratios and asked for this be investigated. CA clarified this statement was AI generated and is not helpful and misleading. CA confirmed that although there is a comment about supervision levels, the general concern is linked to pupil behaviour and staffing levels. CA acknowledged that all schools have reduced average scores for the pupil behaviour question. Trustees highlighted that previous staff surveys haven't been processed in a timely manner and were pleased that the results have been made earlier this year, and that feedback will be given to staff now. CA confirmed the timeframe for the survey has changed, to ensure changes can be made ahead of the new academic year. <i>Q: Did you notice a difference between the results of small and big schools?</i> Not particularly but on the whole, the ex-Southerly Point schools are more positive. <i>Q: Are their pieces that you can take out from the schools that are more positive, that you can share with other schools? Is there a strategy to help address negative perceptions?</i> There is anecdotal information, but this is nuanced based on the context and challenges within each school. Data is important but it can mask a lot of things. We can share some good examples of where schools have had negative perception and are now more positive. There is a whole variety of reasons for this. When on a journey of improvement, it can be hard to be positive and enthusiastic, but everything we can do in terms of support from the Trust is being done. We need to make sure more staff feel it's a positive thing to belong to the trust.	

Item	Subject	Action
	SP suggested Trust should establish why the response for the new schools are more positive. Trustees highlighted that the survey results for Marazion were very low and suggested this is likely due to the significant budget pressures they are facing. Trustee acknowledged that the survey results are a hard read, and suggested a key thing to take forward is to ensure staff have the same level of understanding of what the trust are trying to achieve, as SLT and the Heads. Trustees suggested: • Officers review how many questions are included in next years survey • Using inset days as a way of telling staff what you are doing CA confirmed she visited all schools at the last inset day and delivered a session on wellbeing. Feedback indicates this was well received. Trustees noted some staff think they need to go out of school to attend training. CA confirmed schools have been talking about development opportunities within school – i.e going to view another class. Trustees highlighted the challenges of recruiting to senior leadership roles and. CA confirmed there are ongoing discussions with other trust leads about how we can approach CPPD for those who may be interested and is giving specific time and focus to what this looks like.	
	SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT	
7	Director of Educations update. CA confirmed: • Garras Ofsted report finalised and shared • Halwin Ofsted visit this week • Godolphin Ofsted inspection due • RISE intervention at Rosemellin – gaining some momentum. Paired with St Barnabus – CEO has paid us a virtual visit and awaiting next steps • SATS last week - no issues - moderation visits to check admin procedures received good feedback • Writing moderation planned – schools selected	
8	SIG Committee minutes. KB noted: • Trustees discussed the GLA report and trust response (spider vs starfish) • Pupil Premium was regarded differently between trusts - good to have reflection • School expecting Ofsted have a new Strategic Plan that replaces the School Development Plan, Self Evaluation Form, and School on a Page. The strategic plan will be rolled out to other schools from September • Trustees reviewed Trust data – discussion about teacher assessments – SATS – and expectations for those pupils on the cusp - targeting those at 95% • Attendance and behaviour – number of suspensions at Weeth a concern. Weeth take challenging pupils from elsewhere so need to bear this in mind • Reduction in attendance across the trust • Discussion about using an 'under the weather' form • Garras Ofsted report considered • Nominations for community awards approved • Link trustee draft role profile considered for those schools due an Ofsted, who don't already have a Trustees acting as interim chair • Governor recruitment update provided and agreed to share each half term • TL has provided a powerpoint for LGCs around focus on 3 year trend – heads will deliver this in an LGC meeting.	

Item	Subject	Action
	- CPOMS standardisation – don't think we have this right yet so TL will follow this up with CA - Trannack – there have been concerns there – Head has focus on KS1	
	FINANCE	
9	2026/27 Budget Progress Update. SP confirmed: 26/27 budget setting process ongoing – completion date May 2026 - First draft budget showed deficit of 1.1 million. Second draft indicated deficit of £308K. Third draft indicated deficit of £285K. Current budget presenting deficit of £59K. £59K 2026/27 in turn represents the historic Marazion opening deficit which the Trust repay the DfE over a 36 month period. - Marazion now generating a small surplus including the allowance for the £59k repayment. - Penpol are projected to have a £70-£80k loss in 2025/26, but are budgeted to generate a surplus in 2026/27. - However any future Penpol surplus will need to reinvest back into the school as the costs for estates work are estimated to be in the region of £2 million. - Penpol will also attract £80k SCA funding in future. - SLT reviewing options for further cost savings, scope for a potential £395k of further saving if all options are applied. - Existing staffing KPIs are still proving to be a good model so SLT didn't want to adjust this. - Pupil to teacher ratio was reviewed and due to decline in pupil numbers, this process identified 6 schools that would need to change their structures. - Those schools that have adhered to the Trust KPIs and not had to have a class restructure have therefore not had to adjust their staff allocation. - This year Shared Services Team cost £1.6 million to run, next year its is predicted to cost £1.3 million, due to the changes the Trust has made. <i>Q: Is the further saving of £395K a staff saving?</i> It's a combination. The majority of the savings will be made by bringing all schools in line with the Trust KPI, which has created savings of between £6K and £10k per school. There has been a saving of £34K on curriculum. We need to revisit the ratio of pupil to adults at Parc Eglos, as this school is causing financial concern. There is a desire to retain 14 classes due to their forthcoming Ofsted inspection, but the costs for this are substantial. We are considering more subtle models. <i>Q: Are the pupil numbers dropping at Parc Eglos?</i> Yes, Parc Eglos has a PAN of 60 but this year the intake was 35. Declining pupil numbers is typical across Cornwall. although some of our small rural schools are bucking the trend, such as Godolphin and Garras. <i>Q: Is it the KS1 pupil numbers that are lower at Parc Eglos?</i> Yes – the younger year groups. Trustees suggested it would be helpful for officers to investigate pupil numbers at non Trust neighbouring schools within Helston. <i>Q: Does this change mean redundancy?</i> No. We have a number of fixed term contracts that will offset the reductions. We are telling staff this half term about the planned changes to ensure they are given appropriate notice	

Item	Subject	Action
	<i>Q: If staff are being redeployed, will they know before May half term?</i> Yes, that is the plan. <i>Q: Has there been a review of spending centrally?</i> Yes. There are two ways to allocate funding a central service, one option is to charge a top slice. We don't take a top slice, but in theory the cost of operating central services is equivalent to 5.4% of the budget, which is below the usual 6% top slice figure charged by other trusts. <i>Q: How many years will it take for Marazion to pay off their deficit?</i> 3 years. <i>Q: Is this the same at Penpol?</i> No they didn't bring a deficit when they joined the Trust. However, future budget projections were indicating a significant overspend. We have now put measures in place to limit the overspend to circa £40K in 25/26 (current year) and the budget projections for 26/27 would indicate that Penpol will start to make a contribution to SST costs. <i>Q: How far are Headteachers aware of these figures across the trusts?</i> They aren't. Trustee highlighted the proposed class reduction at Parc Eglos and acknowledged that the school needs to be more successful, in order for it to its popularity to increase. Trustee noted that these improvements will take time, and if we cannot allow that time, it could be hard for the popularity to come back. CA confirmed that if Parc Eglos was a Local Authority school, they would have needed a class structure of 12. CA confirmed that as a Trust, we can support them, but a line must be drawn. CA acknowledged the forthcoming Ofsted visit is critical, but highlighted the need to find a balance with the budget. Trustee suggested a class restructure would be a big change for a school who is trying to pull things around. CA confirmed the Trust has other schools we are trying to turn things around (Rosemellin), and that each school could make a strong case overall. SP confirmed that the trust is bidding for phase 3 nursery funding for Parc Eglos, which could change how the nursery is currently set up. This is a potential opportunity for funding and in turn attract additional pupils. <i>Q: If you reduce class structures, can you increase them at a later date?</i> Yes <i>Q: Do we have a handle on the demographic in Helston? Have pupil numbers dropped in Helston at other schools?</i> We don't know the actual numbers, but the predicted pupil numbers in Helston are declining. Trustees agreed that whilst they were not comfortable with having to make cuts, these were necessary in order to protect the Trust reserves. SP confirmed he has met with all heads, and the majority of the meetings were positive. SP confirmed there will be a staffing restructure planned for Penpol which will bring them into line with other Trust schools.	
10	Procurement	
10.1	Supply Agency Tender. SP confirmed:	

Item	Subject	Action
	• Advice taken from PHP Law, who advised there were 2 potential routes to market: DfE framework and PHP law. • DfE framework is most expensive • SP recommendation is to use PHP Law as the route to tender, as this will also ensure compliance with Procurement Act • Supply agencies are also increasingly checking that Trust are following legal compliance models, in turn increasing the risk for the Trust in a compliant route to market is not secured. • SP will need to make a swift decision, once tender process is complete, so request is for delegation to CFOO to sign off the Supply Agency Tender • The trust is working on getting supply spending under control • When supply controls are in place, the trust could consider having an inhouse supply team. • Supply costs cover a variety of reasons some are due to sickness cover, which becomes insured after three days of continuous absence. • Need to confirm if there is an underlying level of absence before considering the employment of an inhouse team. Trustee suggested that if inhouse supply cover was made available, this could provide flexibility to support schools or teachers, when the demand for supply is low. <i>Q: CA, do you have views on this in terms of supply?</i> No comment at present; we need to gather more information over time. <i>Q: What do the absences represent and how much could be tightened up?</i> This varies from school to school and month to month, Maternity can also result in long term need for supply. Outcome: Trustees granted approval for CFOO to sign off the Supply Agency Tender.	
10.2	Catering Contract Extension. SP confirmed he is asking Trustees permission to extend Chartwells contract to 5 years, until December 2030. Key reasons for this extension include: • We are about to add Penpol and Marazion to this contract, so all schools will be under one provider • Examples of good partnership working with Chartwells continue including a recent example when the Local Authority gave the Trust only 10 days' notice to take a kitchen out service, Chartwells support throughout this process was excellent and allowed the Trust to continue to provide a seamless catering service throughout. • Chartwells staff do an excellent job and Chartwells have gone over and above with the value added. Some of the work that the Trust are doing with them is now shared outside of Cornwall. • The Trust have also had some concerns with the robustness of the allergen systems at Penpol following a couple of recent incidents. SP confirmed Trust recognises we have inherited a kitchen estate which has had little or no investment for years and has therefore developed a hub kitchen model which in turn means the number of kitchens that need investment now and in the future will reduce. This has also led to improved calibre of staff, but Trustees can be reassured that the quality of food has not dropped. The work to develop all hub kitchens is planned to be completed within the next 2 years.	

Item	Subject	Action
	Outcome: Trustees considered the proposal and approved that Chartwells contract be extended until December 2030, as outlined in the proposed paper.	
	HEALTH AND SAFETY	
11	Estates Strategy 26 CA confirmed the strategy presented is the original plan, and that changes and amendments will be made as it goes through the timeframe. Trustees commended officers on the content of the strategy. Outcome: Trustees Approved the policy	
	COMPLIANCE AND GOVERNANCE	
12	Policies	
12.1	Complaints Policy 2026-27 V1 was shared with Trustees for consideration. Outcome: Trustees Approved the policy	
12.2	Data Protection Policy 2026-27 V1 was shared with Trustees for consideration. CA confirmed that this policy goes through SchoolPro. Outcome: Trustees Approved the policy	
12.3	Freedom of Information Policy 2026-27 V1 was shared with Trustees for consideration. Outcome: Trustees Approved the policy	
12.4	Lettings Policy 2026-27 V2 was shared with Trustees for consideration. SP confirmed the policy update included details of where we might need to follow slightly different rules. Outcome: Trustees Approved the policy	
13	Delegated Decisions	
13.1	IT Testing Contract. CA confirmed: - FAR Committee had previously requested further quotes be obtained, and final approval of the contact should be delegated to the CEO, in line with the Financial Scheme of Delegation. - IT Manager has tried, but has been unable to get an equivalent quote - IT Manager keen to maintain monthly checks, so CA requesting approval from Board to award the IT vulnerability testing to the Focus Group, as per the paper presented to FAR on 26 March 2026 Trustees considered this request and agreed that, if there aren't any market providers, then the contact can be awarded to Focus Group, as per the paper presented to FAR on 26 March 2026. Outcome: IT Vulnerability Testing Contract to be awarded to Focus Group.	
13.2	Records Management Policy and Privacy Notices JH confirmed that the policy and privacy notices had have updated to account for recent changes to legislation, requiring data controllers to have a formal documented process to handle data protection complaints. Outcome: Trustees Approved the policy and privacy notices	
14	Board and Committee Meeting dates 2026/27 were shared and agreed my Trustees. Two errors were noted – JH to correct.	
	CONFIDENTIAL – Trustees Only	

Item	Subject	Action
15	Minutes of Previous meeting 31 March 206 (Part B) were agreed as an accurate reflection of the meeting.	
16	Confidential / papers for next meeting No items were noted as confidential.	