CROFTY EDUCATION TRUST

MINUTES of the BOARD MEETING

31 March 2026, 1pm

Part A Public

Item	Subject	Action
1	***Trustees present**: V = virtual* Matthew Brierley (MB) Karen Brokenshire (KB) Amy Claridge (AC) Rob Gasson (RG) Mike Hosking (MH) – Chair Nick Lake (NL) Rachel Martin (RM) Ross Schreiber (RS) Peter Sheppard (PS) Rachael Woodhead (RW) *Also present:* Cathryn Andrews (CA) – Acting CEO Jess Hutchings (JH) – Lead Governance Professional Tamsin Lamb (TL) – Director of Education Sean Pinhay (SP) – Chief Finance and Operations Officer (CFOO) Vanessa Schreiber (VS) – Executive Assistant James Taylor (JT) – Trust Inclusion Lead (Items 1 and 11) **Apologies:** Simon Hague – CEO	
	MH welcome to RM and RW to their first Board official Board meeting, as new Trustees. MH confirmed RG will stand down at the end of the academic year, when he retires. MH confirmed the new CEO at Wave will be applying to join Crofty as a new Trustee.	
	MH confirmed a change to the running order of the Agenda, to enable JT to provide an update.	
11	**Sandpipers Update.** JT thanked Trustees for supporting the exploration of the Sandpipers project. JT confirmed that, due to the planned changes to inclusion and SEND provision in the coming years, work on the Sandpiper Project would be suspended, to ensure any future provision aligns with future DfE Models and funding streams. JT and colleagues will reflect on DfE's current expectation that children should access provision within their local school and community, as the initial plan for Sandpiper was to have one central location for all pupils. *Q: How will you meet the need that you had identified?* We are incredibly fortunate to have input from our Trust Speech and Language Therapist and are continuing to support the children within their school. We will continue to reflect and build our provision to meet the needs of the children. Currently we have children with social, emotional and mental health needs, along with neurodivergent needs, so we are	

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	looking at this and how we respond to this. It is the specific model for our response that we are pausing on.	
2	**Conflict of Interest.** No additional declarations noted.	
3	**Minutes of previous meeting held on 10 February 2026 (Part A)** were confirmed as an accurate record of the proceedings.	
4	**Action Tracker.** **Action 177:** Skills register. Existing skills audit needs to be reviewed before the skills register can be updated. The skills audit will be reviewed after the Governance Framework audit. **Action 267:** Governance Review Paper. MH confirmed that the planned review of governance has been superseded by the Governance Framework audit that County are undertaking in May 2026. MH confirmed Trustees will need to consider having a separate Audit and Risk committee next year and confirmed the remit of the remuneration committee would also need to be reviewed. MH noted concern about Trustee workload and suggested Trustees consider the ideal number of Trustees on the Board.	
5	**STRATEGIC / OPERATIONS**	
5.1	**CEO Report.** CA reported: • School Improvement is ongoing. • Significant need to focus on disadvantaged pupils this year, to close disadvantage gap, so this was reviewed during the Trust Thematic review of Maths and Art, and the GLA visit for reading. Staff considered how can tackle the disadvantage gap on a strategic level as well as individual level. • Community strategy acknowledges that tackling disadvantaged barriers is a public duty. • People strategy is ongoing - talent management framework is the main shift for this year. • Changes made to CPPD format – positive feedback about new modular courses. • Specific attempt to include SST in training, such as leadership CPPD modules. • Focus of Trust inset day was on wellbeing and the idea of mattering. CA went on tour to further embed the ‘connect, care, grow’ focus of strategy. • Civic duty – Trust Strategic Planning Manager and Trust Executive Assistant are working together and reviewing current key partnerships and being realistic about the challenges that our communities are facing. • Community strategy – developing ways of working with our partners. Looked at where we can offer our school spaces for free, as youth spaces. Rather than trying to do things within our communities, focus on making space available for local youth community groups. • Penpol - cradle to career project – joint venture between Crofty and TPAT. • Continuing to develop local links - Camborne Mayor assisted with the Trust parliament vote • Work on net zero and sustainability is ongoing and embedded. We have been nominated for the MAT award of the year for sustainability. We are engaging with the new southwest sustainability network. • SE, SP and CA have reviewed the new DfE estates strategy. It has a strategic approach to sustainability, and repurposing and using space. This was of interest, as we are already using our spaces creatively. • Teacher labour market report – potentially some slight changes in how people feel about working in the Education Sector.	

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	• Staff survey – now completed. Results will be shared with Trustees in due course. Trustees acknowledged the important work that Camborne's Mayor is undertaking to improve relationships between the community and local secondary schools and noted the positive impact this will have on the schools that our primary schools feed.	
5.2	Risk Reporting. CA shared the overall risk report which included a Risk Overview, Executive Summary, Key Performance Indicator (KPI) Status and an explanation of the tolerances that drive the KPIs. CA confirmed: • Various Shared Services staff involved in the collation of the risk data. • Risk explanations and tolerances have been considered in detail but may need to be tweaked in the future. • Finance Audit and Risk Committee, and School Improvement and Governance Committee will receive more detailed report, which will include data trends over time. • Staff workload and wellbeing will come up in staff survey results • Hardware is IT • Suggest that Board focus on red risks in future • School Improvement has 2 KPIs: Leadership and governance needs attention, either due to Ofsted, or our internal evaluation along with safeguarding metrics. • Staff sickness absence is a red risk as currently at 6.10% (not including maternity). Public sector sickness absences is running at 2.9% and wider population is 1.8%. Edupay cannot separate teachers and support staff currently • Our overall absence is 10%, but this includes maternity. • The risk overview has been shared with this hub leads. This document is useful as it indicates the potential impact on our ability to operate as an organisation. • In future the report will include trend data against ourselves and against national *Q: Does the public sector absence of 2.9 include maternity?* No, it's sickness only. *Q: What are the 3 schools at risk identified under School Improvement, Leadership and Governance?* There are 3 schools that need attention (as defined by Ofsted). This is either where Ofsted have identified Leadership and Governance as needing attention, or where schools were previously graded as Requires Improvement. Rosemellin has had the Ofsted judgement, Parc Eglos and Halwin were RI in their last inspection. *Q: How will you update this Risk Report Overview?* We will use various systems such as Arbor and Edupay to collate the data every half term. A lot of this data is readily available to us. *Q: Are pupil suspensions of 1.18 % based on all children within the Trust?* Yes *Q: Staff sickness – would be helpful to look at long term sickness, short term sickness and reason for sickness.* Agreed. We would need to review overall sickness and sickness by school.	

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<tr><th>Item</th><th>Subject</th><th>Action</th></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Chair noted that although FAR and SIG will review risk data in detail, it will be important for Board to own the overall risk and look in detail at key areas of concern. Trustee commended the risk report and noted the importance of reviewing where areas move from red to green. Thanks were extended to CA and colleagues for their work on Risk Reporting to date.

Trustees agreed it would be helpful to arrange a training session on the risk register and report to increase Trustees understanding.</td><td>JH</td></tr>
<tr><td>6</td><td>Top 10 Estate Checks for Boards. SP confirmed:
Responses to the Top 10 estates checks were collated by Estates Manager and reviewed by SP, CA and JH.
Purpose of this report is to give assurance to Trustees.
Estates Manager and CA are developing the Estates Strategy, that will be presented to Board in the Summer 2026 Term.
Q: Is there anything a concern you wish to make Trustees aware of?
No

Q: Where does estates information get viewed?
Finance Audit and Risk review KPI but these estates check should be for Board to consider. It is important to look at estates and school improvement together, as these are closely linked.</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>7</td><td>Director of Educations update. TL confirmed:
Recent Garras Ofsted inspection was very successful - expected across all areas
Elements of Inclusion and Professional Development were within strong standard - useful discussion gave insight into what we need to be strong in an area.
Gloucester Learning Alliance visited Trust last week and identified following areas of development:
Need to further refine our Pipil Premium strategies to ensure focus on what we want to spend time and money on.
Pupil Premium Strategy is already linked to School Development Plans for schools that are due Ofsted but need to ensure other schools move to holistic approach.
Need to look at leading clarity of best practice. We can see an improvement on reading, but there isn’t a consistent approach to best practice. There is work to do on agreeing a set of principles.
GLA were complimentary of the schools they visited.
Interviews for Deputy Head at Treloweth took place and Richard Scott was appointed. Recruitment of Assistant Head now a priority. External Advert to be placed.
Solution to school improvement gap that CA will leave when she becomes CEO was shared with SIG. Changes to Trust Inclusion Lead role underway. Title change to School Improvement Officer (Inclusion). Post holder is a qualified Ofsted inspector and brings a range of experience and knowledge to the trust.
Adverts for secondments for curriculum leads currently live (English, Maths and wider curriculum).</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>8</td><td>Rosemellin Update. TL confirmed:</td><td></td></tr>
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	• RISE (Regional Improvement for Standards and Excellence) involvement at Rosemellin following recent Ofsted Inspection. • RISE has a school improvement focus and is aimed at schools that RDD have deemed as requiring support. Schools with previous Ofsted grade of Requires Improvement and is graded as Needs Attention for Leadership and Governance in new framework are given RISE support. • Rosemellin has been allocated with a RISE partner who has conducted a diagnostic meeting. We are awaiting this report but are aware this will include a recommendation to match Rosemellin with another Trust, who will provide school improvement support. RISE support generates a funding allocation of £80k per year, which is closely tied to the support plan. • TL has joined the senior leadership team at Rosmellin for interim. SLT meetings didn't have a formal agenda, or a focus on teaching and learning, so more intervention required than initially thought. Trustee shared that their experience with RISE interventions was that the Trust had a say on how the RISE funding was spent and noted that as the Trust Board are the responsible body, they could decline elements of the RISE support if required. *Q: Is the Trust we are recommended to match with negotiable.* We had choice of Trusts and were able to express our preference. There is no guarantee that we will be matched with the school we have requested. The Trust we have requested serves a deprived area and do seem to be doing well, so it would be a good Trust to link with. *Q: Do you think the RISE support and intervention from TL will have an impact on all members of SLT at Rosemellin?* At the moment, we are all moving forward together.	
9	Ofsted Report – Porthleven. TL Reported: • Strong standard for behaviour and attendance • Needs Attention for attainment – there will be reinspection in 2 years – likely in the autumn term. Trustees noted the importance of reviewing 3-year trend data for outcomes.	
10	SIG Committee minutes. KB noted: • Internal audit of Governance Frameworks in May 2026. • Suggestion to have Link Trustee for those schools expecting Ofsted. • SIG noted importance of LGCs reviewing 3-year trend data and asked TL to produce guidance for LGCs • LGC feedback – 11 schools responded – 25 comments, 18 were positive. This is a big turnaround. • Maths and Art Thematic Review was positive • Staff CPPD training modules are well attended – new modular approach is positive • Reportable incidents – schools with high numbers were identified and this has been followed up by school improvement team. • Safeguarding report - need for standardisation of reporting was identified. SIG discussed how standardisation could be encouraged across the trust. • RISE meeting was discussed in confidential minutes - identified need for governors to be trained on appropriate challenge. • School Improvement strategy proposal was discussed.	TL

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	• Need for trustees to reflect on the role and responsibilities was discussed. MH will reinstate the Trustee appraisals this year, as these weren't completed last year. Trustee suggested that as Trustees review trend data, the standardisation of safeguarding reporting must be made explicit across the trust, rather than be encouraged, and noted there should be one set of principles that all staff refer to. TL confirmed that the number of behaviour incidents across the trust were discussed at the recent DSL meeting, as these were higher in some schools. Discussion identified that in some schools everyone involved in an incident enters separate CPOMs report, whereas at other schools one staff member enters the incident. All schools will now nominate someone to enter an incident on CPOMs. Another variant was communication with parents – some schools had large numbers, and some had lower. In future, where an incident is about communication with parents this will be recorded as the main reason on CPOMs. If staff phone a parent and are concerned with their response, then that would generate a new report. *Q: Is there a bigger push towards having a Trust curriculum?* For foundation subjects no, but for reading, writing and maths there is a push to have a Trust approach. The sharing of best practice is working. *Q: There are so many variables to CPOMs recording, do you think you will get a standardisation across schools or do you think it's better to have reflections for the school?* No, you won't ever get complete standardisation. We can get closer than we are currently but we don't want it to be a KPI as this could discourage reporting. We need to ensure recording is accurate. *Q: How are we taking forward the idea of Link Trustees?* JH is taking this forward after a discussion with CA and TL. A proposal will be presented to SIG, and then Board.	
	FINANCE	
12	Financial Scheme of Delegation. SP confirmed: • Previous FSoD was updated in 2022 and was designed for a smaller trust • New FSoD has been written in line with latest regulations and guidance. This was reviewed by FAR, who suggested amendments as noted in the FAR minutes. Various staff have scrutinised the updated FSoD and now requires Board approval. • FSoD includes the rules the Trust are required to follow, grid at the end is how these rules are applied. • As the new FSoD is applied, we will learn and adjust this as required. Any changes will be reported to Board. • The levels of authority and delegation outlined in the FSoD are sensible and ensure Trust finances are secure, whilst enabling the Trust to run. • Size of the Trust means that certain purchases must now be approved by Board, such as energy, grounds maintenance etc. • SIG purchase will be reviewed by FAR and approved by Board • Tender template is an example only • Section 20 includes details of when urgent action can be taken **Outcome: Trustees approved the Financial Scheme of Delegation**	
13	Budget Monitoring – Management Accounts. SP confirmed: • Accounts reviewed by Finance Audit and Risk in detail • Trust is £19K adrift on from £25 million budget	

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	• Last year we had an issue with high levels of supply costs. This has improved this year due to tighter control measures and liaison with Heads. We are analysing how supply is spent and also looking at sickness absence. • Schools are making good effort to spend their curriculum budget this year. • Approximately £5K additional SEND funding per school is due. • Employer pension contribution for support staff has reduced by 3%. This hasn't been built into draft budget and will add £150KL to the pot. • Class restructuring – spoke to hub heads who this will impact – Heads happy it won't affect the staffing KPIs overall but recognition that it is likely that collapsing of classes will happen again next year in some schools as pupil number decline isn't slowing • We have fixed term contracts across the Trust so won't be making redundancies *Q: If number of classes are reduced, and PAN remains, is there a danger that class sizes will exceed 30?* We know the pupil numbers for September and the PAN for a number of schools has been addressed. *Q: What will happen if there is pupil migration?* After the class reductions, classes are still below 30. There are pinch points for some schools such as Porthleven, but due to pupil numbers there isn't a feasible way to reduce their class numbers. Trustees noted that the trust had maintained a strong reserves position through efficient operations; however, trust expansion has necessitated investment that has reduced reserve levels. SP noted additional financial pressure of recent non-funded pay increases for support staff – representing 25% of the Trusts overall expenditure - and cost approximately £2million more per year, to employ the same number of staff. *Q: Following the support staff offer that was released last week, will that have an impact?* We have budgeted 6.5% for teachers over 3 years and 3% for support staff, so no significant impact. Where we go with support staff long term will be interesting. *Q: Are the class reductions for the 5 schools manageable for the schools in terms of education?* We have looked at these schools – where it makes sense to move classes together, we have made changes. Where it doesn't make sense, we haven't. For example, Porthleven. We haven't made class reductions at Parc Eglos, as their Ofsted Grade is Requires Improvement, so we need to support them, but we may need to reduce by 2 classes there next year. *Q: £19k is the variance of the deficit. The actual deficit is £365K. Is it normal to be in deficit? Is that better or worse than in previous years? Where will this be next year?* The most important figure to note is the £365k in year overspend. Currently we can overspend as we have reserves. 2 years ago, our overspend was £600K, then £450K, and now £365K, so we are moving in right direction, but our reserves are now reaching our 5% tolerance, so we need to break even next year. Community pooling started 3 years ago and we have a number of schools who are now benefitting from this, but we need to reduce our overspend. Our initial draft budget for 26/27 indicated a £1.1mill shortfall. Our staffing KPI has already been streamlined and is lean, so we don't want to adjust these. Due to	

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	reduction in pupils the issue is the pupil to teacher ratio, so 5 of schools will be asked to reduce number of classes.	
14	Procurement Tenders	
14.1	Grounds Maintenance Update. SP confirmed: • Glendale has not progressed with their representation • Freedom of Information was requested but denied due to commercially sensitive nature of details requested • The new suppliers are very good – we have received compliments from 3 schools. There was an issue reported from 1 school – first grass cut was heavy so wasn't collected. *Q: Can Glendale put in a request to the information commissioner?* Yes, they could. We have taken advice on GDPR and procurement. *Q: Is the information commissioner likely to come back and say that the FOI is too commercially sensitive?* Yes	
14.2	Cleaning Contract Extension. SP confirmed: • Request to extend KGB cleaning contract presented to FAR for review and now being recommended to Board for approval. • 3 + 2 year contract. We are asking to extend to 5 years • Prices as expected • 2 or 3 schools joined in last 3 years, most in last 12 months, so their staff would need to go through TUPE if we don't extend, which we don't think is fair • KGB haven't given us cause for concern • Issue with KGB currently is staff vacancies but doing think we will get a better service elsewhere. **Outcome: Trustees agreed to approve the Cleaning Contract, as per details in the report.**	
15	FAR Committee minutes. NL confirmed: • Budget monitoring – budget on track • Estates and ICT KPI were reviewed – discussed importance of reporting and ensuring heads know this. • Financial Scheme of Delegation and Framework was reviewed in detail and recommended for Board approval • Charging and Remission Policy Approved • Lettings Policy Approved • Online Safety Policy approved with some caveats • Investment group update- over years we have accrued £262K through investment • Cleaning contract extension was reviewed and recommended to Board for approval. • IT Testing contract was reviewed but not awarded. Trustees requested similar comparison from other companies, as 2 of the quotes provided a different service. FAR recommended further quotes were obtained, and agreed that final approval be delegated to the CEO, in line with the Financial Scheme of Delegation Framework. • Internal audit report for procurement was positive and provided assurance. • Academy Trust self-assessment return was reviewed. • Budget setting process was discussed • Grounds Contract update was provided.	

Item	Subject	Action
	COMPLIANCE AND GOVERNANCE	
16	**Policies**	
16.1	Risk Management Policy. Trustees acknowledged receipt. **Outcome: Policy Approved**	
16.2	Flexible Working Policy. Trustees acknowledged receipt. **Outcome: Policy Approved**	
16.3	Maternity Policy. Trustees acknowledged receipt. **Outcome: Policy Approved**	
17	**Delegated Decisions**	
17.1	SP confirmed the purchase of an Elliot Hut for Godolphin School was agreed by CA and MH, as per section 20 of the Financial Scheme of Delegation. SP noted: • Elliot Hut became available in Hull – rare to find one in good condition and at this price • Following previous investment at Godolphin, this will replace the final Elliot Hut, and will have a significant positive impact on pupils and their teaching and learning • Rapid action required to secure purchase. As overall costs exceed £100k limit, proposal was submitted to FAR, with request for purchase. This was approved by CA and MH. • Planning Permission will need to be sought, but as replacing like for like, this should not be an issue. • If necessary, children will be rehoused in September whilst installation is completed, but we have experience of rehousing two classes. • We have identified funding to cover cost, but we are hoping to secure CIL funding • When we first looked at building repairs at Godolphin, the initial cost was 1million, these 3 Elliot's will cost approx. £300k, so significantly lower than this. *Q: Is the Elliot Hut in Hull?* Yes. The overall quote includes cost for it to be moved and installed. *Q: Usual Life expectancy of an Elliot Hut is 25 years, and this one is 10 years old, will it be cost effective?* Yes. We will do work to it to extend its life.	
17.2	IT Testing Contract. FAR agreed that additional quotes should be obtained, and final approval of the contact should be delegated to the CEO, in line with the Financial Scheme of Delegation.	
17.3	Charging & Remissions Policy – Approved by FAR.	
17.4	Lettings Policy – Approved by FAR.	
17.5	Online Safety Policy – Approved by FAR	
	CONFIDENTIAL – *Trustees Only*	
18	Minutes held in Part B Confidential	
19	Minutes held in Part B Confidential	
20	**Confidential / papers for next meeting** **Items 18 and 19**	
	Meeting finished at: 15:30	