

THE SPRING PARTNERSHIP TRUST
Final adopted minutes of a meeting of the Trustees held remotely via Webex
at 5:30 pm on Wednesday 10th December 2020

Present:

Mr R Barlow
Ms C Barenbrug
Mrs O Brookman
Mr A Blount
Mrs J Brinkley, CEO
Mr J Cliff, Chair
Mr D Okafor
Miss R Punter
Mr R Taylor, Vice Chair

Clerk: Miss K Crossley

In attendance:

Mrs C Sheehan, CFO
Mrs V Bolton, COO
Mrs G Sesli, EHT

1. Apologies for absence

- 1.1 Apologies for absence had been received from Ms Hawker, who was unable to attend due to a change to the start time of the meeting and had sent questions on the papers. The meeting was quorate.
- 1.2 Trustees welcomed Mrs Brookman, who had been appointed by Members on 8th December 2020 and would sit on the HR Committee. Introductions were made.

2. Declaration of pecuniary interests

- 2.1 Mrs Brookman declared her interest in Boomfields Ltd.

3. Board Business

3.1 To note changes to the Board and remaining terms of office

- 3.1.1 See minute 1.2

3.2 Trust and Local Advisory Council membership

- 3.2.1 Trustees were referred to the updated Trust and Local Advisory Council membership (appendix 1). The CEO was supporting the Local Advisory Council to recruit new members at LPS.

3.3 Confirm all DBS checks up to date

- 3.3.1 It was confirmed that DBS checks for all Trustees were up to date, with the exception of those for Mrs Brookman and Mr Cliff, which were in progress. R Barlow's portable DBS was diarised for annual checks.

3.4 Advise clerk of any changes of contact details

- 3.4.1 Directors were reminded to inform the clerk of any changes to their contact details.

THE SPRING PARTNERSHIP TRUST
Final adopted minutes of a meeting of the Trustees held remotely via Webex
at 5:30 pm on Wednesday 10th December 2020

3.5 Confirm director details up to date on website and Get Information About Schools (GIAS)

3.5.1 It was confirmed that information about Trustees and Members on the Trust website and Get Information About Schools (GIAS) was up to date.

4. Minutes of previous meeting

4.1 Trustees agreed amendments to the minutes of the meeting of 16th September 2020 (appendix 2). The minutes and confidential minutes were approved and would be electronically signed by the Chair. **JC/KC to action.**

4.2 Trustees were referred to the matters arising report (appendix 3), detailing the status of outstanding actions:

4.2, 4.25 The central team was drafting a heat map of financial, HR and educational KPIs which would be brought to the next meeting for reporting by exception. Trustees asked whether the KPIs which had been recommended in the SRMA report would be included in the heat map. It was confirmed that only one KPI in the SRMA report was outstanding, which related to teacher contact time; an alternative which was relevant the primary sector, such as staff/pupil ratio, would be considered. **JB to action.**

5. Executive team reporting

5.1 CEO report

5.1.1 This minute was deemed to be confidential, see confidential minute 9.

5.2 CFO report

5.2.1 Monthly management accounts to September 2020

5.2.1.1 There were no questions from the Board on:

- the CFO report
- consolidated management accounts September 2020
- consolidated cash flow forecast 2020/21
- consolidated financial reporting (appendices 8-12).

5.2.2 Approval of annual accounts to 31st August 2019 and review of audit findings report

5.2.2.1 Directors were referred to the Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31st August 2020 and the Audit Findings Report (appendices 13 and 14).

5.2.1.2 The CFO reported that the audit had been successful, despite having been undertaken remotely. The accounts and audit findings report had been reviewed by FARCO and it had been agreed that unadjusted audit differences totalling £29k would be adjusted, as a result of which the in-year financial position was a surplus of £171k.

5.2.2.2 Further to discussion with the auditor at the recent FARCO meeting, the Chair reminded Trustees of their responsibility to be satisfied of the Trust's status as a going concern from 12 months of the date of signing of the accounts. FARCO was satisfied that this was

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at 5:30 pm on Wednesday 10th December 2020

applicable for 2020/21, but noted the impact of changes to bulge funding on forecasts from 2021/22 onwards. Trustees would continue to monitor the Trust's finances robustly and prepare for challenges in future years.

- 5.2.2.3 Trustees confirmed that they were satisfied that the Trust would continue to operate as a going concern.

5.2.3 Recommendation of appointment/reappointment of auditor

- 5.2.3.1 A discussion had been held at the recent FARCO meeting on the frequency of rotation of audit partners and the Committee had accepted assurances from the auditors that additional controls would be put in place after six or seven years of working with the same audit partner. It was noted that a tender had been held for external audit services earlier in the year and that the executive team was happy with the service from UHY Hacker Young. The Board recommended that Members approve the re-appointment of UHY Hacker Young as the Trust's auditor at the AGM in January 2021. **JC to action.**

- 5.2.4 In response to a question from the Committee, it was confirmed that support staff restructuring had been completed and the new structure would be in place from January 2021.

5.3. COO report

5.3.1 Consider and approve any spend requests over £20,000: CIF applications

- 5.3.1.1 Trustees were referred to the COO report (appendix 15) and were advised that a potential opportunity had arisen for the Trust to benefit from a limited-time price reduction of £1,300 on its current internet contract with LGfL, which was due for renewal in August 2021. Initial work had begun on the renewal, including identification of potential alternative providers. The approval of the Board was sought to delegate authority to consider the request to the Chair of Trustees and the Chair of FARCO, enabling the Trust to benefit from the price reduction, should the recommendation of the executive team be to reappoint LGfL. The request was approved.
- 5.3.1.2 The approval of Trustees was sought for the appointment of contractors for successful CIF bids, as recommended by FARCO (appendix 16). It was noted that the value of the Trust's contributions to bids had increased by c£6,300k since the matter had been considered at the last FARCO meeting as a result of the conclusion of the tender review process. The Trustees requested that a clear approach to the suggested CIF contributions be set out at this point next year. As with this year, this would include consideration of the cost of any essential works that would be required to be funded by the Trust should the CIF applications be unsuccessful. **VB to action.**
- 5.3.1.3 This minute was deemed to be confidential, see confidential minute 9.2.
- 5.3.1.4 The COO explained the reasons for the delay in circulating the requirement for confirmation that Trustees had read part 2 of Keeping Children Safe in Education, and asked that this be completed by 4th January 2021. **All to action.**
- 5.3.1.5 It was agreed the update on the Digital Strategy which had been provided to FARCO in November 2020 would be shared with Trustees. **KC to action.**

THE SPRING PARTNERSHIP TRUST
Final adopted minutes of a meeting of the Trustees held remotely via Webex
at 5:30 pm on Wednesday 10th December 2020

5.3.2 Asbestos report

- 5.3.2.1 There were no questions from the Board on the section in the COO report on the asbestos report.

6. Trust Committee Business

6.1 Overview of HR issues

- 6.1.1 The Chair of the HR Committee outlined discussions at the meeting in October 2020. A discussion followed on whether the non-confidential minutes of HR Committee meetings should be included in the papers for Trust Board meetings going forward, and this was agreed, other than in cases in which Trustees may be called upon to sit on HR panels.
- 6.12 Trustees ratified the approval by the Chairs of FARCO, ACC and the HR Committee of the teachers' pay award in line with the recommendations of the STPCD.

6.2 Minutes of FARCO meeting, 13th October 2020

- 6.2.1 The minutes of the FARCO meeting of 13th October 2020 (appendix 17), which had previously been circulated by email, were received for information.

6.3 Minutes of ACC meeting, 23rd September 2020

- 6.3.1 The minutes of the ACC meeting of 23rd September 2020 (appendix 18) which had previously been circulated by email, were received for information.

7. Policies

7.1 Admissions Policy 2022/23

- 7.1.1 The Admissions Policy 2022/23 (appendix 19) had been revised in line with guidance and was approved by the Board.

7.2 Behaviour Policy

- 7.2.1 It was agreed that the following points in the Behaviour Policy (appendix 20) would be reviewed and the revised policy taken for approval at the ACC meeting on 20th January 2021:
- Inclusion of review frequency of the policy
 - physical intervention, including whether this should be covered in a separate policy
 - reference to permanent exclusion
 - the role of the Executive Headteacher with reference to exclusions. **GS to action.**

7.3 Health and Safety

- 7.3.1 Minor amendments, including additional wording on ventilation in schools, had been made to the Health and Safety Policy (appendix 21), which was approved by Trustees.

THE SPRING PARTNERSHIP TRUST
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8. AOB and date of next meeting

- 8.1 Trustees thanked Mr Barlow for agreeing to take on the role of Safeguarding Trustee. It was agreed that Mr Barlow would undertake Level 3 safeguarding training. **JB to action.**
- 8.2 Trustees asked about the Trust's plans for Friday 18th December 2020 and it was confirmed that this would be a staff INSET day.
- 8.3 In response to a question about plans to maintain tracking and tracing from 17th December 2020, including reporting confirmed cases and informing bubbles, it was reported that a rota had been drawn up for this to be managed by the executive team.
- 8.4 The next meeting would be held on Wednesday 10th February 2021 at 6pm via Webex.

Signed:Date:.....
John Cliff, Chair of Trustees