

## Minutes from the Avonreach Academy Trust Trustees Meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2017 at 2.45pm at Pershore High School

### Attendees:

Clive Corbett (Executive Officer, Trustee)(CC/EO)	Sarah Bitcon (Trustee)(SB)
Phil Hanson (Trustee)(PH)	Rob Phillips (Trustee)(RP)
Julia Dean (Trustee)(JD)	Bob Stanton (Trustee)(BS)
Ian Cumming (Trustee)(IC)	Heather Thomson (Trustee)(HT)
Ann Derbyshire (Trustee)(AD)	Martin Allen (Trustee)(MA)
Heidi Fear (Trustee)(HF)	Judy Wood (Co-Opted Trustee)(JW)
Jeremy Clarke-Morris (Co-Opted Trustee)(JCM)	Suzanne Clarke (Member)(Observer)(SC)
Helen Lees (Clerk)(HL)	

*[Agenda Items 1 – 4 were Chaired by the Clerk]*

- Welcome, Introductions and Apologies:** Apologies were received and accepted from Andrew Longdon (Trustee)(AL). In addition, apologies were received and accepted from Russell Dalton (AAT CFO)(RD) who had been invited to attend the meeting to provide a verbal Finance update.
- Declarations of Interest:** No attendees had any interests to declare regarding the Agenda for the 15/09/17 Trustees meeting. All attendees were requested to complete the Declaration of Interest forms that had been issued to them and return them to the Clerk as soon as possible. It was noted that Members and Trustees Declarations of Interest will be published on the AAT website in accordance with statutory requirements.
- Election of Chair of Trustees:** The Clerk reminded all Trustees that an employee of the Trust is not eligible to hold the office of Chair of the Trustees (Article 82), and invited nominations from the floor. Ann Derbyshire proposed Andrew Longdon (in his absence). The Clerk advised that Andrew had advised via email prior to the meeting that he would be willing to stand as Chair. Julia Dean seconded the nomination of Andrew Longdon. A vote on the proposal was undertaken, the results of which were that Andrew Longdon was unanimously elected as Chair of Trustees.
- Election of Vice-Chair of Trustees:** The Clerk reminded all Trustees that an employee of the Trust is not eligible to hold the office of Vice-Chair of the Trustees (Article 82), and invited nominations from the floor. Bob Stanton nominated Rob Phillips, and this proposal was seconded by Ian Cumming. A vote on the proposal was undertaken, the results of which were that Rob Phillips was unanimously elected as Vice-Chair of Trustees.

*[Agenda Item 5 onwards was Chaired by the Vice-Chair – Rob Phillips]*

### Terms of Reference and Roles & Responsibilities

- Review and Approve Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Executive Leadership Team(ELT) and Raising Achievement Board (RAB):** The Executive Officer (EO) advised that the ELT propose that, until further schools join the MAT, the ELT and the Raising Achievement Board should be run as one group. A draft ToR for the ELT which reflects the above proposal was

*A Longdon  
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presented to all attendees for their review and consideration. It was agreed that the Quorum for the ELT/RAB should be 3. The ToR for the ELT and RAB were unanimously approved.

A Trustee queried the process that would be followed if a school got into difficulties. It was confirmed that should a school encounter difficulties that school's Local Governing Body should support the Head and drive the required improvements, however they would be held to account by the Raising Achievement Board who would be responsible for identifying the support/action that is required. The Raising Achievement Board will be responsible for reporting on progress to the Board of Trustees. **Action:** HL to send a link to the DfE Governance Handbook to all for their review (in particular regarding roles and responsibilities).

A Trustee stated that, in his personal view, the Heads should not be Trustees, but should be able to attend Trustees meetings without voting rights. The Board of Trustees agreed that the current arrangements should only be in place for a transitional period (ideally for @ 1 academic year), and that going forwards, once the Trust and its working arrangements are established, the Heads should "step away" from the Trustees Role. It was noted that this will require the Board of Trustees to identify 4 individuals to take on the AAT Trustee role. It was further noted that the 2 Co-Opted Trustees could step into the role of Trustee going forwards.

**6. Review and Approve AAT Committee Terms of Reference (ToR):** The Terms of Reference for the Ethos and Community Committee; the Pay and Performance Management Committee and the Finance and Audit Committee were reviewed and the following points were noted:

- The ToR for the Ethos and Community Committee were unanimously approved. It was agreed that the quorum for the Ethos and Community Committee should be 3. **Action:** HL to update the Ethos and Community ToR to capture the quorum details and to adopt the AAT Template Format for ToR.
- The ToR for the Pay & Performance Management (P&PM) Committee were unanimously approved subject to the 4<sup>th</sup> bullet point being amended to read "To establish and review Performance Management Policies for all staff across the trust in consultation with the Executive Leadership Team". **Action:** HL to amend the 4<sup>th</sup> bullet point in the P&PM ToR to read "To establish and review Performance Management Policies for all staff across the trust in consultation with the Executive Leadership Team".
- The ToR for the Finance and Audit Committee were unanimously approved subject to the quorum for the Committee being reduced to 3. **Action:** HL to update the ToR for the Finance and Audit Committee to capture a Quorum of 3.

**7. Allocate Roles and Responsibilities:**

**a) Allocate Membership of the Pay & Performance Management Committee:** The P&PM Committee membership was agreed as follows:

Heather Thomson      Phil Hanson      Ian Cumming      Sarah Bitcon

**a) Allocate Membership of the Finance and Audit Committee:** The Finance & Audit Committee membership was agreed as follows:

Heidi Fear      Bob Stanton      Rob Phillips      Phil Hanson  
Andrew Longdon      Jeremy Clarke-Morris

In addition it was agreed that Russell Dalton should attend as required in his CFO capacity.

- b) **Allocate Membership of the Ethos and Community Committee:** The Ethos and Community Committee membership was agreed as follows:

Julia Dean

Ann Derbyshire

Clive Corbett

Martin Allen

Sarah Bitcon

- c) **Appoint AAT Finance Trustee(s):** Heidi Fear was appointed as the AAT Finance Trustee, to be supported by Bob Stanton.
- d) **Appoint AAT Data Trustee(s):** Ian Cumming was appointed as the AAT Data Trustee (Pupil Performance Data).
- e) **Appoint AAT Safeguarding Trustee(s):** Martin Allen was appointed as the AAT Safeguarding Trustee.

*[Post Meeting Note: Following the meeting it was proposed, via email, that Judy Wood should join the Ethos and Community Committee in place of Ann Derbyshire, and that Ann Derbyshire should join the P&PM Committee. Formal approval of this proposed change to committee membership is required at the next Trustee Meeting. **Action:** HL to place formal approve of revised P&PM and Ethos and Community Membership onto the agenda for the next Trustee meeting]*

#### **Reporting**

8. **Receive Update from the Executive Officer (EO):** As all attendees had been present at the AAT Members Meeting, held immediately prior to the Trustees meeting, at which the EO had provided an update, it was agreed that this item did not need to be covered.
9. **Receive Update from the Chief Financial Officer (CFO):** As all attendees had been present at the AAT Members Meeting, held immediately prior to the Trustees meeting, at which the written report from the CFO had been received, it was agreed that this item did not need to be covered.
10. **Receive Update from the Executive Leadership Team (ELT):** As all attendees had been present at the AAT Members Meeting, held immediately prior to the Trustees meeting, at which a report from the ELT had been presented, it was agreed that this item did not need to be covered.
11. **Receive Updates from the 4 Local Governing Bodies (NJK/CO/IFS/PHS):** The Headline Reports from the July Meetings of the 4 Local Governing Bodies were received. It was noted that going forwards there would be benefit in developing a standard template for the reports from the LGBs. It was proposed that, at a minimum, each report should include an update regarding:
- Progress made with regards to the SDP
  - Standards
  - Finance
  - Safeguarding

An **action** was placed on the Chair to develop a standard LGB reporting format for usage going forwards. It was noted that Rivers have a standard format that could potentially be utilised.  
**Action:** JD/SB to forward on the Rivers template to AL for his consideration.

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The AAT Safeguarding Trustee proposed that he should meet with the Safeguarding Governor and Safeguarding Designated Leads at each school to review their systems and processes and, following these meetings, that he should develop an AAT Safeguarding Action Plan which would include details of Safeguarding information that each school should report to AAT Trustees each term. The above proposal was unanimously approved. **Action:** Safeguarding Trustee to meet with Safeguarding Governor and Safeguarding Designated Leads at each school to review their systems and processes. **Action:** Safeguarding Trustee to develop an AAT Safeguarding Action Plan, which should include details of Safeguarding information that each school should report to AAT Trustees each term.

A Trustee queried whether LGB members should be invited to sit on AAT Committees. It was noted that this could be useful going forwards, subject to LGB members having sufficient capacity to take on this additional workload.

The Trustees granted permission for the IFS and CO LGB's to commence a Parent Governor Election process in September 2017 in order to fill current Parent Governor Vacancies (AAT Article 55). **Action:** IFS and CO to commence Parent Governor Election process in September 2017. **Action:** HL to circulate the AAT Articles relating to Parent Governor Elections (Articles 53 – 56) to the Heads of each school.

A Trustee queried whether all LGBs are comfortable with the MAT governance arrangements. Trustees with links to LGBs advised that all LGBs have been provided with information regarding the developments during the MAT formation process, but that the new arrangements will take time to bed in as people adjust to the changes that will evolve over time. It was agreed that there would be benefit in inviting all LGB members to meet with Members and Trustees. **Action:** HL to place organisation of a "Meet and Greet" opportunity for Members, Trustees and LGB members onto the agenda for the next Trustee meeting.

## **Change of Age Range Proposal**

### **12. Change of Age Range Proposal**

- a) **Receive ELT presentation regarding Change of Age Range:** Heather Thomson presented the First Schools proposal to progress a Change of Age Range consultation regarding conversion to Primary Schools with effect from September 2019. It was noted that NJK are currently awaiting permission from the Diocese to be able to enter into consultation regarding amending their PAN and progressing a Change of Age Range Consultation, and that the First Schools proposal is dependent upon the Diocese granting NJK permission as all First Schools need to progress the change in tandem in order for it to be viable for PHS to take a Year 7 intake.

A Trustee queried what cost/benefit analysis on the Change of Age Range proposal has been undertaken? The Trustees who are also involved at an LGB level advised that all 4 schools have been working on the Change of Age Range proposal for a number of years, and that each school believes that the Change of Age Range proposal has educational benefits for the pupils. Parental feedback received over recent years also supports the proposal. It was noted that funding the initial new Y5/Y6 intake will be challenging, given the lag in funding, however the schools will be able to apply to drawdown on future pupil funding to "bridge" this gap.

PHS confirmed that all staff are already trained to teach Year 7 and that they already have the capacity to take a Y7 form of entry. The PHS Head advised that PHS has been asked by County to take an additional form of entry from September 2019 (to be funded by the LA) which would increase the PHS PAN from 252 to 282. The First Schools confirmed that all staff are already trained to teach Primary.

It was noted that there is a risk that even if all 3 schools convert together, all eligible parents may not elect to send their children to PHS and that the numbers applying to a new Y7 intake at PHS may not be viable. **Action:** RD to capture risk that even if all 3 schools convert together, all eligible parents may not elect to send their children to PHS and that the numbers applying to a new Y7 intake at PHS may not be viable, on the AAT Risk Register.

It was noted that any new Y7 intake at PHS would not be restricted to AAT First Schools pupils and that pupils from non-AAT schools could apply to join a new Y7 intake also. It was queried whether PHS would guarantee places to AAT pupils. PHS advised that the current PHS Admissions Policy already gives priority to pupils from feeder schools, however development of an AAT Admissions Policy will be required. **Action:** HL to place Development of an AAT Admissions Policy onto the agenda for the next Trustees meeting.

It was noted that the LA have recently published a letter regarding the 2019 Admissions Process, in which it states that the consultation window will be 16/10/17 to 11/12/17, and that the LA assumes that all schools that need to consult will do so within this window. It was further noted that schools must notify the LA of their intent to consult by 25/09/17. **Action:** HL to circulate the LA 2019 Admissions Letter to all.

It was agreed that the ELT should arrange a meeting with the County Representative regarding Admissions (Tracy Wilson) to discuss the proposed AAT Admissions plans and seek clarification regarding the actions required to be progressed and the related timescales. **Action:** ELT to arrange a meeting with Tracy Wilson (Admissions) to discuss the proposed AAT Admissions plans and seek clarification regarding the actions required to be progressed and the related timescales.

- b) **Vote upon Change of Age Range Proposal:** It was unanimously agreed that, subject to Diocesan approval being granted to NJK to enter into a consultation regarding Change of Age Range, that all First Schools should progress a consultation between 16/10/17 to 11/12/17 and should notify the LA accordingly by 25/09/17. **Action:** ELT to progress a Change of Age Range consultation between 16/10/17 to 11/12/17 and notify the LA accordingly by 25/09/17 (subject to NJK being granted approval to proceed).

*[Post Meeting Note: Diocesan approval for NJK to enter into consultation regarding changing their PAN and progressing a Change of Age Range Consultation was granted on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2017]*

## AAT Policies

### 13. AAT Policies

- a) **Review and Approve AAT Complaints Policy:** Thanks were expressed to Andrew Longdon for drafting the proposed AAT Complaints Policy. The proposed AAT Complaints Policy was unanimously approved subject to the document being augmented to capture the right of appeal to the Secretary of State (SoS). **Action:** AL to update the AAT Complaints Policy to capture the right of appeal to the SoS and then pass to RD for uploading onto the AAT website.
- b) **Review and Approve AAT Finance Policy and related documentation (Whistleblowing Policy; Charging and Remissions Policy; Financial Regulations Policy; Risk Management Policy):** It was noted that there are a lot of discrepancies between the proposed AAT Finance Regulations Policy and the equivalent Policy current utilised by the First Schools. It was also noted that a number of items that the MAT Working Group had agreed should be included within the Finance Policy (eg Centralised Costs Process and Formula etc) have not been captured within the document.

*Approved  
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The following actions were agreed:

- HL to circulate the MAT Working Group Actions Table to all for their review and progression of open actions.
- HF to meet with RD, prior to the scheduled Finance and Audit Committee meeting, in order to progress the required changes to the suite of Finance Policies

It was noted that schools need Finance Policies to operate to during this term whilst the new AAT Finance Policies are being developed. For operational reasons it was therefore agreed that the finance related policies as currently drafted should be approved for usage by each school pending their further development by the AAT Finance Trustee, the CFO and the Finance and Audit Committee. It was agreed that the AAT Finance Trustee should report back to Trustees at their next scheduled meeting. **Action:** HF to report back to the Trustees regarding the development of the suite of Finance Policies at the next Trustee meeting and/or (as applicable) present revised Finance Policies for review and approval at the next Trustee meeting.

- c) **Approve Adoption of WCC's Safeguarding Guidance and Policy (April 2017 version) as the AAT Safeguarding Policy:** The draft AAT Safeguarding Policy was approved subject to the policy document (which is based upon the Worcester County Council Model Policy) being updated to the AAT Policy Document format and all references to WCC being replaced to AAT as required. It was noted that each school needs to update the Model Safeguarding Children Policy included within the AAT Safeguarding Policy to reflect their school's arrangements and contacts. **Action:** RD to update the draft AAT Safeguarding Policy to the AAT Policy Document Template Format and to amend all references to WCC with AAT as required. **Action:** Heads to update the Model Safeguarding Children Policy included within the AAT Safeguarding Policy to reflect their school's arrangements and contacts. **Action:** RD/Heads to upload the final version of the AAT Safeguarding Policy to the AAT and School websites.

- d) **Receive Recommendation from the ELT regarding the developing of an AAT Pay and Performance Management Policy:** The ELT proposed that:

- for 2016/17, the performance of all AAT staff should be assessed in accordance with the Performance Management Policy that was in place at each employing school at the start of 2016/17
- for 2017/18, the performance of all AAT staff should be assessed in accordance with the Performance Management Policy that was in place at each employing school on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2017.
- during 2017/18 the ELT, working with the P&PM Committee as required, should develop a new AAT Pay Policy and a new AAT Performance Management Policy (consulting with stakeholders as required).
- the new AAT Pay Policy and the new AAT Performance Management Policy should be implemented at the start of the 2018/19 academic year

The above proposal was unanimously approved. **Action:** ELT to progress the development of a new AAT Pay Policy and a new AAT Performance Management Policy (consulting with stakeholders and P&PM as required) for implementation at the start of the 2018/19 academic year.

- e) **Review List of Statutory Policies and agree way forward for development of AAT Statutory policies (where applicable):** The List of Statutory Policies required (by the DfE and/or the Academies Financial Handbook) was reviewed. The EO took an **action** to review the list, produce a workplan for development of AAT versions of the required policies and to commence drafting the required policies. **Action:** SB to send the EO a link to "The Key's Model Policies" website area for review.

## Safeguarding

### 14. Safeguarding Matters:

- a) **Receive Update regarding Enhanced DBS Checks requiring completion:** All attendees were advised that they should receive an email from Alison Nice (PHS DBS Co-ordinator) in the near future for their progression. All attendees were advised that once they have completed the online form, they will need to bring their evidence (Passport/Driving Licence etc) to PHS for review by Alison.
- b) **Receive Update regarding Safeguarding Training requiring completion:** All attendees were advised that they need to confirm the details of the Safeguarding Training that they have undertaken, and, where any gaps are identified that they will need to undertake/refresh their Safeguarding Training. **Action:** Sandy (PHS) to contact the Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) at each school to confirm and record what Safeguarding Training has already been undertaken by Members/Trustees. **Action:** Sandy (PHS) to arrange for Safeguarding Training to be provided as required to fill any gaps identified.

It was noted that Members and Trustees will also need to complete "Disqualification by Association" forms. **Action:** SB to forward on details regarding "Disqualification by Association" forms to PH/Sandy for their progression.

- c) **Receive Update regarding updating of Edubase:** Attendees were reminded that there is a statutory requirement for their personal details (Name; Address; Date of Birth; Nationality etc) to be uploaded to the DfE's Edubase database. Attendees were requested to complete the Edubase details form provided to them by the Clerk as soon as possible. **Action:** All Members/Trustees to complete the Edubase Details form asap and return to the Clerk
- d) **Receive Update regarding publication of Members/Trustees details on AAT Website:** Attendees were reminded that there is a statutory requirement for defined information (eg name; term of office; roles held) to be published on the AAT website. The Clerk confirmed that there was no requirement to publish Members and Trustees contact details on the website, with the exception of the Chair. The Clerk confirmed that Members and Trustees are to be given avonreach.org email addresses for their usage going forwards. **Action:** RD to progress avonreach.org email addresses for Members and Trustees asap.
- e) **Receive Update regarding the Development of the AAT Single Central Record (SCR):** PH confirmed that PHS staff will develop the AAT Single Central Record (SCR), onto which the details of all Members, Trustees and AAT employees (EO, CFO, Clerk) will need to be entered. PH also confirmed that any LGB members and School Staff who undertake work at the Trust level will also need to be entered onto the AAT SCR going forwards. **Action:** PH to progress development and maintenance of the AAT SCR asap.

Alison  
21/10/17

A Trustee noted that new General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) are due to come into force in May 2018, and proposed that AAT should review its systems and processes now in order to ensure that they are compliant with these new requirements. The Clerk advised that Babcock are running a course regarding GDPR in the near future. It was unanimously agreed that AAT should review its systems and processes in order to ensure that they are compliant with the new GDPR requirements. **Action:** RD to review AAT systems and processes to ensure compliance with GDPR and report back to the Trustees prior to the GDPR Implementation Date.

### Meeting Schedule

15. **Agree AAT Trustees Meeting Schedule for 2017/18:** The proposed 2017/18 Trustees meeting schedule was reviewed.

The Clerk advised that the next Trustees meeting is scheduled for 4<sup>th</sup> December, however the Trustees are required to approve the Trust's Financial Management and Governance Self Assurance (FMGS) prior to its submission (deadline for which is 30/11/17), therefore it was agreed that the next Trustees meeting should be brought forward to Thursday 23/11/17 @ 5pm at PHS.

( Link to FMGS: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/academy-financial-management-and-governance-self-assessment-guidance>)

It was agreed that the Ethos and Community Committee (which is to be Clerked by the NJK LGB Clerk) should meet on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2017 at NJK (Time TBC).

It was agreed that the Finance and Audit Committee (which is to be Clerked by the PHS LGB Clerk) should meet on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2017 at PHS at 4.30pm.

It was agreed that the P&PM Committee (which is to be Clerked by the CO LGB Clerk) should meet on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2018 at CO at 4pm.

It was agreed that the ELT (which is to be Clerked by the AAT Clerk) should meet on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2017 at IFS at 8am.

**Action:** HL to update the AAT 2017/18 Meeting Schedule to reflect the above dates and re-circulate to all (including all Clerks).

It was agreed that each Committee should agree their own meeting dates/times going forwards, in order to accommodate attendees diary commitments, providing that the meeting dates agreed allow sufficient time for reporting through to the Trustee Meetings.

16. **AOB :** No attendees had any items of Any Other Business, and the Chair therefore drew the meeting to a close at 5.15pm.