



TOVE LEARNING TRUST

Minutes

GOOGLE HANGOUTS MEET VIDEO CONFERENCE

Meeting	Trustees
Date	23 rd March 2020
Attendance & Apologies	
Trustees	
Christopher Watt (Chair) CW	P
Jamie Clarke (JRC)	P
Tim Foster (TF)	P
Trust representatives	
Sue Wagstaff (CFO) (SW)	P
Trustees	
Jo Chitty (JC)	Ap
Thomas Schilling (TS)	P
Duncan Nicholson (DN)	Ap
Trust representatives	
Tracy Routledge (Estates) (TR)	A

(key: P=Present, Ap=apologies received, A=absent)

In attendance: Katie Fell (Clerk) (KLF)

No.	Item	Action
1.	Apologies and introductions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apologies recorded for Jo Chitty (JC) and Duncan Nicholson (DN). Trustees met via Hangouts Meet video conference due to Covid-19 social distancing measures. 	
2.	Declaration of Interests <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No interests declared. 	
3.	Minutes and Matters Arising from 10th February 2020 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trustees reviewed minutes from the previous meeting 10/02/20 and agreed they were a true reflection of the meeting. Matters arising: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> GAD fire risk assessment; remedial works are in hand. Monthly Estates Report still to be submitted to Trustees. SW follow up with TR. New look finance reports have been added to the Trustees Classroom today. A further notes page will be added to provide additional commentary. Trustees had not yet had time to review the accounts. SCA funding is due in April. Still awaiting confirmation. The minutes will be signed electronically by the Chair due to meeting being online. 	SW
4.	Safeguarding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No issues to report. 	
5.	CEO Report (JRC) – verbal update <ul style="list-style-type: none"> JRC shared pupil progress data with Trustees. No primary data to report this month. This is for information of progress to date, but with lack of exam data for summer 2020 it will be incomplete for this academic year. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The remainder of the CEO report focused on growth of the MAT with the transfer of Lakes Academies Trust to TLT and the current response to COVID-19, as minuted below. 	
6.	<p>LAT Schools joining TLT decision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SW presented a summary of the due diligence for Trustees' review. Full risk register and business continuity plans for the schools have not been received, but financial due diligence has been completed by Jamie Nairn as Interim CEO, and operational and estates due diligence has been completed by the TLT central team. Original overspend predicted at £180K, now expected to be around £95K following a detailed budget review by Jamie Nairn. This could well reduce further. LAT will work closely with TLT for budget setting for 2020-21 and the headteachers welcome the input and support offered by SW. A joint LGB is recommended initially due to the size of the schools, to embed more robust governance, and develop closer working relationships with the local community. JRC confirmed Chair of Trustees, Lucy Abbot, has agreed to stay on to Chair a new joint LGB for Water Hall and Knowles Primary. Trustees raised concerns about the late posting of annual accounts. JRC confirmed the ESFA will not be imposing a fine. JRC explained there was fault on both sides and an extension was expected, but not granted. ACTION: Chair of Trustees asked CFO to raise this concern with auditors Crowe LLP and seek assurances for next accounts filing. Premises issues were discussed; Ridge has completed condition surveys for both sites and the DfE is trying to support with funding required for essential remedial works. Outcome yet to be received. CFO confirmed that the feeling in both schools is that they have been very underwhelmed with the support from LAT and would look forward to the opportunity of joining TLT. Trustees confirmed they felt reassured that further due diligence had been completed to a satisfactory level and had provided answers to previous queries. DECISION: On reflecting on all due diligence presented and with no significant risks highlighted, Trustees agreed to proceed as and when the current situation with COVID-19 enables the transfer to go ahead. 	SW
7.	<p>COVID-19 (JRC)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> JRC presented a summary of recent events within MAT schools leading up to the full school closures imposed by the government on 23rd March 2020. Exams have been cancelled for SATS, GCSEs and A levels and Ofqual is currently working towards an assessment scheme to award grades and outcomes this summer. It was noted that there was a lot of bad feeling across the MAT, and staff and students felt let down by the cancellation of exams. JRC reported to trustees that headteachers and senior leaders across the MAT are working professionally and exceptionally well to respond to ever changing circumstances and to ensure educational provision is maintained for children of key workers and vulnerable students. MAT schools are reporting daily how many key worker students are attending each site. Higher figures reported at primary level due to age of children needing childcare. Fewer numbers are being reported daily as the week progresses. Vulnerable children are also being taken care of either in school or in regular contact with staff and counsellors. Implications of exams were discussed. Help manage expectations for Year 13 students hoping to go to university – they should not be disadvantaged. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staffing issues may worsen over the coming weeks. We are monitoring numbers closely and keeping in touch with other local schools. Their staffing levels may also ultimately impact on us too. Ensure resilience in site teams, and investigate with heads this week. Strategic planning and ongoing teaching and learning provision was discussed. Schools are providing online learning resources via Google Classroom, but a risk identified is the lack of laptops allocated to staff at Lord Grey to enable remote working. Staff salaries will be maintained if they are employed on a contract. Casual and zero hours staff are still being discussed with HR advisers EPM, and further guidance is expected from the government. Potential risk regarding the Ethos team workers and the sponsored programme with International Motors was highlighted to trustees. Contingency plans are continually being reviewed by headteachers. JRC commended the leadership team on the remarkable job they are doing, and the support of staff. Teams are monitoring any significant issues, and developing solutions as required. Trustees asked how would the Easter holiday period be addressed. Schools are preparing rotas to cover the holiday period as long as there is a demand for key workers and vulnerable students. Trustees checked the CEO was getting support he required too. The DfE are in regular contact, providing support, listening to feedback and responding accordingly. Chair of Trustees asked the central team not to put themselves at risk and to be mindful of their own and other's needs. Trustees asked for CEO to pass on their thanks for all the tremendous work our leaders and staff are doing in each of our schools. 	
8.	LGB/AIB and Governance issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thanks were extended to Sarah Conway, Chair of Lord Grey AIB, who finished as Chair of the Lord Grey AIB on 27th March 2020. All face to face LGB/AIB meetings across the MAT have been postponed indefinitely during the school closures, but will continue virtually. Chairs and Clerks have expressed the desire to be supportive to school leaders during these challenges, and understand the need to put meetings on hold but they would welcome summary updates when possible. 	
9.	CFO updates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No further updates to discuss. 	
10.	AOB <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trustees agreed to meet more frequently due to the fast moving situation. Plan is to meet at the end of April. It was agreed CEO and Chair would maintain regular contact and convene an earlier meeting if required, especially in light of LGBs not meeting as frequently. TS asked if support functions were able to work remotely and safely from home. Yes, we have cloud based systems and working well from home. 	

Meeting ended 7:15pm

Next meetings:
Tuesday 28th April 2020

ACTIONS from this meeting		
ACTION	BY WHOM	BY DATE
CFO to raise concern re late filing of accounts for LAT with Crowe LLP and seek assurances for next time.	SW	31/04/2020

Signed by:  Chair of Trustees

Date: 28/04/2020