

Board of Trustees

Monday 11th December 2023

Minutes

Present:

Sugra Alibhai
Richard Craster
Peter Green (Chair)
Lucy Harrison
Linda Horbye
Jose Morago
Adrian Marrocco
Lola McDowell
Lucy Needleman
Ellie Peters
Helen Pettifor
Zubair Shaikh
Andrew Tebbutt

1.	Governance
2.	Minutes of Previous Meeting
3.	Matters Arising
4.	Strategic/Training Item: Outcomes & Destinations
5.	CEO Report
6.	Safeguarding Report & Policy
7.	Financial Statements 2022-23
8.	ICLMS Update
9.	Reports from Committees
10.	Any Other Business

In Attendance:

Alex Christodoulou
Del Cooke
Beth Holmes
Ian Hooper
Lubna Hussain
David Lee
Marco Macchitella
Claire Mugridge

Minute	Decision /Action	D/A
1.3	To formally delegate the responsibility for cyber security to the Audit & Compliance Committee.	D
1.3	To approve the 2023-24 Scheme of Delegation.	D
3.4	Andrew Tebbutt to share details of Black Graduates' Careers Events with Sugra Alibhai.	A
4.	Ian Hooper to confirm the number of schools that use Alps.	A
5.	To note that Safeguarding Policy was approved by written resolution on 17 th November 2023.	D
6.	<i>Confidential Action</i>	A
6.	Lubna Hussain to send attendance data to the Clerk for circulation.	A
7.	To approve the 2022-23 Financial Statements.	D

7.	To approve the submission of a bid to the Condition Improvement Fund for the replacement and upgrading of fire doors at a cost of £700k, with the Trust contributing 10% of this.	D
7.	To approve the submission of a bid to the Condition Improvement Fund for the replacement of radiators, pipes and ventilation in the main building and north wing at a cost of £2.5m, with the Trust making no contribution towards this.	D

Trustees welcomed Jose Morago who had recently joined the Board and introductions were made.

1. Governance

1.1. Apologies

None.

1.2 Declaration of Interest

None.

1.3 Scheme of Delegation

The Clerk presented the Scheme of Delegation, highlighting the main changes, which were largely as a result of the opening of ICLMS. It was noted that the Terms of Reference of the ICLMS Local Governing Body had been reviewed and updated.

The Clerk explained that, during the recent internal audit, it was suggested that the Board of Trustees receives an update on cyber security at each meeting, but it was noted that this is currently a standing item for the Audit & Compliance Committee. Therefore, the Board agreed to formally delegate the responsibility for cyber security to the Audit & Compliance Committee.

Decision

It was noted that each Local Governing Body will comprise one upper and one lower sixth Parent Governor, with elections taking place at the start of each academic year.

Finally, the Clerk explained that, going forward, the Scheme of Delegation would be reviewed in the summer term and approved at the Board's July meeting, ready for implementation from September.

The Board approved the 2023-24 Scheme of Delegation.

Decision

1.4 Governorhub

Trustees were presented with an overview of Governorhub and the Key for Governors.

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting.

The minutes of the meeting of 3rd July 2023 were reviewed and approved as a true and accurate record of the discussions that took place, with one minor amendment. It was agreed that item 6 was confidential and would be removed from the minutes before being uploaded to the Trust's website. The Board also reviewed and approved the other confidential minutes from this meeting.

3. Matters Arising from the Previous Minutes

- 3.8 Trustees and Governors would receive a presentation from Andrew Tebbutt on Outreach at the Annual Strategy & Training Event in January 2024.
4. Andrew Tebbutt to share details of Black Graduates' Careers Events with Sugra Alibhai.
5. It was noted that the Finance & Operations Committee had not yet discussed letting the new ICLMS permanent building, as there are restrictions around the hours that the new building can be used. The Trust is awaiting further clarification on this from Barnet's planning department.
- 8.3 Climate change has been added to the Trust's risk register and was discussed in detail by the Audit & Compliance Committee.

Action

In response to a question from Trustees, Sugra Alibhai confirmed that a survey of the site's condition has now taken place and a working party would be convened to consider the next steps, with a view to creating a long-term premises development strategy.

The Board questioned whether any further consideration had been given to how the Trust would measure some of its 5-year objectives, such as *producing students who are ready to be healthy, successful adults*. Sugra explained that this is something that was discussed in detail at the recent Local Governing Body meeting and it was agreed that qualitative objectives would be measured through student data and feedback.

4. **Strategic & Training Item: Outcomes & Destinations**

Alex Christodoulou presented Woodhouse's 2023 outcome data, reminding Trustees that this had been considered in detail by the Local Governing Body.

The Board noted that, in advance of the results, schools had been informed that Ofqual's intention was that grades should return to a similar distribution to 2019. Therefore, the College was anticipating its results to be lower than those of 2022, which they were, but was pleased to note that they were significantly higher than those of 2019.

The Board noted the key headlines:

- 76.5% A*-B grades, compared to 66% in 2019 and this year's national average of 53.5%.
- 47% A*-A grades, compared to 33% in 2019 and this year's national average of 27.2%.
- 14.5% A* grades, compared to 9% in 2019 and this year's national average of 8.9%.

It was noted that non-disadvantaged students were more likely to achieve the highest two grades than students who previously were in receipt of pupil premium. It was noted too that the gap in A* grades may be because of the different impact of the experience of lockdown amongst some student groups.

Trustees considered value-added ratings, noting the Alps scores of each subject, which, unlike last year, are all now above a grade 7 and puts the College in the top 25% of the schools that use Alps. **In response to a question from Trustees**, it was agreed that Ian Hooper would confirm the number of schools that use Alps. It was noted that many schools use the DfE value-added measure, but this is not yet available due to the need for the dataset to rebuild after the disruption of Covid. The Board also noted that according to the Six Dimensions measure (which is used exclusively by sixth form

Action

colleges), Woodhouse scored 0.16, which means that 1 in every 6 grades is above the expected grade.

Trustees questioned whether there were any concerns regarding the value-added by subject. Alex confirmed that whilst the College was pleased with the progress of maths and geography (the latter being a concern historically) there is still further work to do around computer science and music this year. **In response to a follow-up question**, Sugra explained that this is largely as a result of staffing issues, which were discussed in detail at the Finance & Operations Committee. It was noted that there are challenges nationally around the recruitment of computer science teachers.

The Board questioned the strategy for increasing the number of A* grades and was informed that a whole-staff training session recently focused on the barriers to achieving A*s, particularly around cultural capital. Consequently, each department has had to include an approach for increasing A*s in their development plans. In addition to this, the College is focusing on the development of exam techniques and ensuring that staff are challenging students sufficiently at the top end.

Trustees also received an update on destinations, noting the key headlines:

- 3.5% (or 20 students) have taken a place at Oxford or Cambridge
- 61% at Russell Group universities
- 64.9% at high tariff universities (Sutton Trust 30)
- 3.1% (or 18 students) are reading medicine, veterinary medicine or dentistry.

It was noted that 137 students did not have a place at university but 113 of these were offered a place during the UCAS clearing process, which included 27 at Russell Group universities and 38 at high tariff universities (Sutton Trust 30). It was noted that these figures were in line with last year but further work is needed around reducing the number of students without a place prior to clearing. **In response to a question from Trustees**, Sugra explained that the main reason for this high number is due to students applying to several universities that all require similar grades, against the advice of staff. Therefore, more work is taking place with tutors this year around conversations with students and their parents, with the aim for them to nominate 'insurance' options on their UCAS applications..

In response to a final question from Trustees, Alex confirmed that the College is doing more to promote alternative pathways (eg apprenticeships), and runs workshops to support applications and holds mock interviews.

5. **Safeguarding Report and Policy**

Lubna Hussain presented the 2022-23 safeguarding report, explaining that the Trust continues to see a large number of students dealing with bereavements, current and historic suicide attempts and eating disorders. The Board was also informed of the key changes to Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023.

Lubna explained that the Trust is currently reviewing its Fitness to Study Policy, and aims to strengthen it and have it in place by January 2024. In addition to this action, a full review of My Concern has been conducted to ensure that it remains fit for purpose, and will continue to be used across the Trust.

It was noted that the Trust continues to strengthen its links with external services. Parents and students are regularly introduced to support services and informed of how to access them. The Trust is also improving the effectiveness of its mental health first aiders. The Trust continues to offer a counselling service that is available 5 days a week.

Lola McDowell fed back as Safeguarding Trustee, explaining that she has met with the Safeguarding Teams across both institutions, and confirmed that the policies that are currently in place are robust, and are followed through in practice. The Board noted the large amount of work that is required around staff getting to know a large number of students during the autumn term, and the strong relationships that are built very quickly. It was noted that the next step would be for Lola to undertake a regular safeguarding audit with the team during her visits.

Noting the mental toll that this work could take on staff, **Trustees questioned** what support was available to the Safeguarding Team itself. It was confirmed that safeguarding, HR and Student Services staff have access to monthly supervisions with trained counsellors and the take up for this provision is strong. In addition to this, all Trust staff have access to the Employee Assistance Programme.

It was noted that the Safeguarding Policy was approved by written resolution by the Board of Trustees on 17th November 2023.

Decision

6. CEO Report

The Board received the CEO report, noting that Frontier Learning Trust now contains two open institutions. Trustees were pleased to note that ICLMS has 43 students and has been successful in its request for planning permission for the permanent building, after a marathon effort to achieve approval.

Confidential minute.

In response to a final question from Trustees, Lubna explained that the number of persistent absences has increased, and staff are reviewing this data to identify trends. It was agreed that Lubna would send attendance data to the Clerk for circulation.

Action

7. Financial Statements 2022-23 and CIF

The Board received the 2022-23 financial statements, noting that these had been considered in detail and recommended to the Board for approval by the Audit & Compliance Committee. However, it was noted that there had been an adjustment of £25k, due to the timing of income transferred from the trading subsidiary. The Board was informed that this was identified by the Trust itself, and an automated process has been put in place to avoid this happening again in the future.

The Chair of the Audit & Compliance Committee thanked the Finance Team for its hard work in preparing the accounts, particularly considering staff absence and resignations.

The Board approved the Financial Statements, noting that this was a clean audit.

Decision

Claire Mugridge informed the Board that the Trust had appointed new surveyors to submit bids to the Condition Improvement Fund (CIF) on a no-win-no-fee basis and to

manage the projects if successful. A conditional survey of the site has now been conducted and fire doors have been identified as an area for development. However, it was noted that the Trust is currently compliant with all fire regulations. The Board also noted that the installation of Paxton doors would support the security of the site and ensure that parts of the building could be compartmentalised, and only accessed by using ID at pre-agreed days and times. The upgrading of fire doors has been quoted at £700k and the Trust would contribute 10% of this figure, which improves the chance of the bid being successful. The Board agreed to proceed on this basis. **In response to a question from Trustees**, Claire explained that, should the bid be unsuccessful, the Finance & Operations Committee would discuss the next steps.

Decision

Claire went on to explain that the second CIF bid is much larger and has been costed at £2.5m. This work would replace all radiators, pipes and ventilation in the main building and north wing. Due to the high costs, it was agreed that this proposal would be submitted without a contribution from the Trust, as this would wipe out the capital funds for the year. The CIF bid was approved on this basis.

Decision

8. ICLMS Update

David Lee informed the Board that it has been a good first term at ICLMS and the school is now launching its admissions process for 2024. The school aims to increase the number of girls on roll and has taken legal advice on what it can do around this. David explained that, so far, 502 applications have been received, of which 38% are girls.

The Board was pleased to note that planning permission has been granted for the permanent building. Construction is expected to complete in May 2025, with a view to occupying the building in August 2025. This means that additional temporary accommodation would be needed next year, which is currently in hand.

All Trustees were invited to the Student Research Project presentation afternoon on Wednesday 27th March 2024 at Imperial College London (South Kensington).

9. Reports from Committees and Local Governing Bodies

9.1 Search & Governance Committee

The Board noted the minutes of the Search & Governance Committee of 18th September 2023 and was informed that the Annual Strategy & Training Event would include a session on the Trust's governance structure. It was also noted that an External Review of Governance would take place in the spring term, with a key area of focus being around how safeguarding is managed at both Trustee and Governor level.

Finally, it was noted that the Audit & Compliance Committee needs further strengthening in terms of numbers and it has been agreed that Lucy Harrison would transfer from the Finance & Operations Committee.

9.2 Remuneration Committee

It was noted that the Remuneration Committee met on 30th October 2023 and agreed the remuneration of the Senior Post Holders.

9.3 ICLMS Local Governing Body

The Board considered the minutes of the ICLMS Local Governing Body of 6th November 2023, noting that the Parent and Staff Governors have now been elected.

9.4 Finance & Operations Committee

The Board received the minutes of the Finance & Operations Committee of 13th November 2023, noting that the Vice Chair position is currently vacant and an election would take place at the next meeting.

9.5 Woodhouse Local Governing Body

The Board noted the minutes of the Woodhouse Local Governing Body of 20th November 2023 and was informed that feedback from link governors is now a standing item on each agenda. The Governing Body received feedback from Pemi Arowajolu on the good work taking place around careers at the College and, separately, approved the Self-Assessment Report, which judged Woodhouse to be outstanding in all areas.

9.6 Audit & Compliance Committee

The Board considered the minutes of the Audit & Compliance Committee of 27th November 2023.

10. Any Other Business

The Clerk reminded the Board that the Annual General Meeting would take place on 24th January 2024 and all Trustees were invited to attend.

Finally, the Chair thanked all Trustees for their ongoing support and commitment to the Trust.

The meeting concluded at 8:07pm