

## Board of Trustees

Monday 8<sup>th</sup> February 2021

### Minutes

**Present:** Richard Craster  
Delia Goldring  
Peter Green (Chair)  
Lucy Harrison  
Linda Horbye  
Adrian Marrocco  
James Marshall  
Helen Pettifor  
John Rubinstein  
Jeremy Ruff  
Zubair Shaikh  
Ellie Smith  
Andrew Tebbutt

**In Attendance:** Ian Hooper  
Lubna Hussain  
Claire Mugridge  
Peter Thompson  
Beth Yap

1.	Governance
2.	Minutes of Previous Meeting
3.	Matters Arising from the Previous Minutes
4.	Report from the CEO
5.	Finance Policy
6.	Financial Management and Governance Self-Evaluation
7.	Maths School Update
8.	Risk Management Plan
9.	Any Other Business
10.	Collaboration Agreement

Minute	Decision /Action	D/A
3.2	All trustees to complete a register of interest form.	A
3.7	A high-level tutorial on academy finances to be prepared by Claire Mugridge and delivered to trustees.	A
5.	To approve the Finance Policy, subject to the change of the capitalisation amount, to be agreed by Adrian Marrocco and Ellie Smith.	D
5.	Finance Policy to be reviewed annually by the Audit & Compliance Committee. Finance Policy also to be reviewed as part of the Trust's internal audit to ensure that it is in line with the Academies Financial Handbook.	A
6.	All trustees to complete a register of interest and submit information to maintain the DfE Get Information About Schools register as a matter of urgency.	A
6.	To note the requirement to submit the FMGS by the end of March 2021 and the Trust's responsibilities within the Academies Financial Handbook. The Board specifically confirms that it is aware of the points stated in paragraph 3.	D
6.	To note the draft FMGS and delegate authority to the Chief Financial Officer/Clerk to finalise and submit the final FMGS.	D
7.	Confidential action.	A

## 1. Governance

### 1.1. Apologies

None.

### 1.2 Declaration of Interest

None declared.

## 2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting.

The minutes of the meeting of 11th January 2021 were reviewed and approved as a true and accurate record of the events that took place and would be uploaded to the Trust's website.

## 3. Matters Arising from the Previous Minutes

2. The Chair asked that anyone who had not completed a register of interest form should do so as soon as possible so this can be uploaded to the Trust's website.

Action

5. The Principal explained that he has liaised with BEAT and it has been agreed that no changes to current arrangements are needed at this stage.

6. The Principal confirmed that the College's partnerships with local schools, such as the Archer Academy, will be made more apparent on the website.

7. The Board was informed the staff pay awards have been finalised and agreed. Claire Mugridge confirmed that the awards were slightly higher than the College had budgeted for, but the increase was not material.

7. A high-level tutorial on academy finances would be prepared by Claire Mugridge and delivered to those trustees who feel they would benefit.

Action

## 4. Report from the CEO

The Report from the CEO had been circulated in advance of the meeting. However, John Rubinstein updated the Board on the situation with Covid-19, explaining that preparations are underway for all students to return to the College from 8<sup>th</sup> March 2021. John explained that the College is mindful that some students, along with their parents, may be reluctant to return.

John explained that the College is also aware that learning in lockdown, whilst good, is not the same as students being physically in the classroom. Therefore, staff are aware that there may be gaps in learning when the students return to College. The Board noted that the College has now received its allocation of 96 laptops and will be issuing these to students this week.

**Trustees questioned** whether there is anything the College could be doing to further improve online learning. Ian Hooper confirmed that a questionnaire has been sent to students and the feedback received has been valuable for the College. Overall, the students are very positive about the online learning experience and appreciate different ways of working, such as the use of breakout rooms. There were also some subject-specific comments, which have been shared with the Heads of Department. The College will also be conducting a similar survey for staff. Ian reminded the Board that, as it is not known how long this way of working will continue, the College is eager to continuously improve where it can.

**In response to a follow up question from trustees**, Ian explained that it is likely that the College will have a ‘blended learning’ approach in the future. He emphasised that the aim is to get all students back into the classroom, but online learning may be useful for those who are unable to physically get into College. It is also likely that the College will retain some online elements, such as online parent evenings, but this has not been decided yet.

Returning to his report, John informed the Board of the Ofqual consultation to determine how A Level grades will be agreed this year. John explained that this is a cause for concern for staff and students and more information will be revealed on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2021.

Finally, the Board was informed that plans for the transition to the new Principal/CEO, Sugra Alibhai, are going well. Sugra has already attended two SLT meetings and is arranging sessions with members of staff and Lucy Harrison at Archer Academy.

The Board was then invited to ask questions on the Principal’s report.

The Board congratulated the College on achieving 95.6% attendance this term and John commended the students for their hard work during this difficult time.

**Trustees questioned** why the number of applications to Imperial College London was 93, compared to UCL or Kings College London which received 261 and 247 applications respectively. John confirmed that Imperial College London requires higher grades and only offers STEM subjects, which may be why Woodhouse students opt in greater numbers for alternative universities.

Finally, the Board was pleased to note the number of Oxbridge offers this year (27).

## **5. Finance Policy**

Claire Mugridge presented Frontier Learning Trust’s finance policy, explaining that this has been created in accordance with the Academies Financial Handbook.

Claire highlighted the areas that are new for the College, as a result of academisation. Claire drew attention to the importance of related party transactions, which will include Imperial College London and the Archer Academy. The Board was also informed that, as an academy, there are restrictions around entering into leases and borrowing money.

The Board noted that the Trust is currently seeking a new internal auditor and tenders will be reviewed at the meeting of the Audit and Compliance Committee of 1<sup>st</sup> March 2021.

Claire explained that now would be a good time to review capitalisation levels, currently set at £1,000. **In response to a question from trustees**, Claire confirmed that this is a historical figure that has been retained over the years and now is too low. It was agreed that Claire would liaise with Adrian

Marrocco and Ellie Smith to agree the new capitalisation figure.

It was agreed to approve the finance policy, subject to the change of the capitalisation amount, which would be agreed by Adrian Marrocco and Ellie Smith, and a breakdown of items which were being capitalised.

Decision

It was agreed that the Finance Policy would be reviewed annually by the Audit & Compliance Committee. The Board also requested that the policy is reviewed as part of the Trust's internal audit to ensure that it is in line with the Academies Financial Handbook.

Action

**In response to a question from trustees**, the Clerk confirmed that a cycle of policies is maintained by herself and Claire Mugridge.

## **6. Financial Management and Governance Self-Evaluation**

The Board considered the draft Financial Management and Governance Self-Evaluation (FMGS), which must be submitted to the DfE within three months of a new academy opening. The Board noted that the majority of actions had been already completed.

The Clerk requested that trustees who had not completed a register of interest or forwarded her information to maintain the DfE Get Information About Schools register do so as a matter of urgency.

Action

The Board noted the requirement to submit the FMGS by the end of March 2021 and recognised its responsibilities within the Academies Financial Handbook and specifically confirms that it is aware of the points stated in paragraph 3.

Decision

The Board noted the draft FMGS and delegated to the Chief Financial Officer/Clerk to finalise and submit the FMGS.

Decision

## **7. Maths School Update**

Confidential minute and action.

Action

## **8. Risk Management Plan**

The Board considered the risk management plan, with John Rubinstein outlining the key risks for the Trust.

John informed the Board that all staff have recently undertaken Prevent training as part of their safeguarding duties. The College has also recruited a new Head of IT services, who is currently reviewing the network and IT infrastructure.

Ofsted are planning to review their inspection programme from March 2021 and the College should expect an inspection in the next year. This is something that will be discussed at the Woodhouse College Local Governing Body Board.

The Board noted that Covid-19 continues to be the main risk for the College

and, whilst a number of students and staff have tested positive for the virus, there have been no severe cases. John reminded the Board that the College now also has a testing programme on site.

John explained that morale is hard to gauge at the moment, as staff are not on site. However, more events are taking place online, such as quizzes and discos. The Board discussed how staff can be made aware of the new governance structure. It was agreed that staff should meet new trustees when a face-to-face session is able to take place.

Finally, the Board noted that the financial impact of the pandemic is significant, particularly around canteen and health & safety costs. This will be discussed at the next meeting when the management accounts are considered.

Action

**9. AOB**  
None.

**10. Dates of Next Meetings**  
22<sup>nd</sup> March 2021  
17<sup>th</sup> May 2021  
28<sup>th</sup> June 2021

The meeting concluded at 7:40pm