



The Robert Carre Trust

The Minutes of the Board Meeting held in the Conference Room at Carre's Grammar School on **Monday 14 SEPTEMBER 2017 at 19.10.**

Present: Stephen Hopkins (Chair), Robin Baker, Nick Law (Executive Headteacher), Rachael Hockmeyer, Karen Bradford, Leanne Barr and Garry Titmus
Also present: Geoff Hewett (Chair CGS LGB), Debbie Hopkins (Chair KSHS LGB), Jo Smith (HoS KSHS), Jem Green (DFA&R), Debbie Scott (Clerk)

1. SH explained the new format for meetings and minutes. While some Trustees had reservations, all were willing to participate.

2. **WELCOME** – SH welcomed all to the meeting. Apologies had been received from Malcolm Robertson.

3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** - None

4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING, HELD ON 10 JULY 2017

Resolution: *It was agreed unanimously that the minutes were a true record and they were signed.*

Action Tracker – The revised action tracker was shared and updated to reflect progress.

Re New Site – action passed to the new Executive Working Group

Re Admissions – new Admissions Policies would be considered over the next cycle of meetings; encourage more Primaries to engage with the 11+ process.

Re Carre's Gift – heading to be changed to Alternative Finance, and task to be continued by each LGB

Re Trustee Vacancy – defer until next meeting

Re Staff Survey – NL and JS had incorporated feedback to the responses during presentations at Staff Training on 4 September and in the new SDPs and Departmental Development Plans.

5. GOVERNANCE

a) Governance plan for 2017-18

Role of LGBs – SH's paper had been circulated. He explained the importance of the Board and the LGBs working together and the strategic leadership accountability, the Board's main role being to hold the Executive Headteacher to account and, through that person, to hold the Heads of School to account. The role of each LGB was to obtain the necessary assurances through its school's Head and convey those assurances to the Board. In order to do this it would be necessary to establish the mechanisms for reporting, with items on Board and LGB agendas listing the assurances expected and reported. It was noted that new procedures would be put in place to enable certain Educational Visit forms and Policies to be signed off by individuals, e.g., Chairs, rather than Committees, except for the statutory policies which would still need final Board approval. SH and DS would be amending the Policy Review Schedule accordingly. It was hoped that this would reduce the burden on the LGBs and Committees. Policy reviews would still be available through GVO so that they could be accessed by all levels of governance. Financial accountability would rest with Board, not LGBs, but

LGBs would continue to have access to financial information. LGB Chairs felt that it was useful for them to continue to attend Board meetings, to enable effective feedback to LGB meetings. It was noted that Trustees had access to the LGB meeting packs and minutes through GVO.

Governance Plan for Terms 1&2 – SH tabled two documents that explained the new processes, with details for terms 3-6 to be developed. The Assurance reporting template would be completed by the Clerk at each LGB meeting and circulated as part of the Minutes. The Chair would attend the first meeting of each LGB to explain the process and would also be meeting with each SLT.

Resolution: *It was agreed unanimously that the new processes should be incorporated in the RCT Governance Document. DS to update with amends and add to Discussion on GVO*

Resolution: *It was agreed unanimously that the following Trustee roles be assigned:*

SEND and Disadvantaged Students – LB

Safeguarding - RH/GT

Health and Safety – RB

Finance - MR

b) **Admin matters**

Members and Board composition – it was noted that the current NGA/DfE advice was for distinct separation between Members and the Board to avoid being vulnerable to accusations of cronyism and to this end SH had stepped down from his role as a Member at the last Members' meeting, leaving three Members, the minimum required, PJ, AH and RB. The Members had agreed to defer filling the two vacancies (Keith Dolby and SH) until the current state of flux was resolved.

Action: *JG to approach Yvonne Green to consider becoming a Member*

Committee membership -

Resolution: *It was agreed unanimously that the Committee membership would be as follows:*

Education and Personnel: RH (Chair), LB, GT, SH and one from each LGB (NG/tbc)

Finance and Resources: KB (Chair), MR, RB, NL and one from each LGB (SO/tbc)

Meeting dates – it was noted that the dates would stand as agreed.

Resolution: *It was agreed unanimously that future Board meetings would start at 18.00*

Skills Audit - It was noted that the revised NGA Skills Audit forms were now on GVO and all were asked to complete as soon as possible and return to the Clerk.

Declarations of Interest – It was noted that JG was still waiting for several to be returned and that it was essential that these be on file before the Auditors' visit at the beginning of October.

Whistle Blowing – It was noted that the review had been brought forward to the current term to incorporate new guidance.

Governance CPD – Trustees noted the access to NGA's Learning Link which replaced GEL www.nga.org.uk and follow the 'Training' tab

Code of Conduct – NGA revised version

Resolution: *Trustees agreed to adopt the revised NGA Code of Conduct*

Action: *DS to update 2017-18 Governance Document on GVO, calendar of meetings and lists of roles*

Action: *SH to attend both LGB meetings, 25 and 26 September.*

Action: *All to complete forms – Skills Audit, Business Interests (for all governance levels)*

Action: *Whistle-Blowing Policy to be reviewed – GH/NL/Board*

Action: DS to circulate sheet for confirming reading of (and signing up to) Safeguarding Documents, Whistle-Blowing, Code of Conduct – All to complete

Action: CPD – all to register/login to Learning Link

6. STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Papers (Option paper, Staffing options and Budget Recovery Plan) had been circulated.

Strategic Options

(discussion redacted)

Resolution: Trustees agreed to continue to pursue options C, D, E and F linked to the long term Vision of CGS and KSHS being a single school on a new site and that the other presented options should not be pursued.

Action: Exec HT to report to next Board meeting in December work that had been done to further explore the preferred options.

Staffing Review Paper

Trustees noted that savings had already been achieved by the two schools working together and would continue, with considerable savings expected once the new site was operational. Further details of that day's NFF announcement were awaited and would, it was hoped, release some financial pressure.

Resolution: Trustees agreed that the work on staff restructuring be continued

Action: Exec HT to bring to the December Board meeting a proposed structure for consultation and implementation plan plus a cost savings calculation.

Financial Recovery Plan

Resolution: It was agreed that detail be left to the Chair of F&R and JG to pursue

Action: as above

7. STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

The provisional data had been circulated and, in summary, NL highlighted the student destinations ranging from Oxbridge to Higher Apprenticeships which were impressive across RCT. KSHS A levels and CGS ASs were outstanding. GCSE results under the new grading were still dubious, with 18% correct seeming to equate to a Grade 4 pass in Maths. KSHS GCSEs had pleasingly exceeded expectations.

Assurance: The Board awaited assurances from E&P and LGBs

Action: LGBs and E&P to consider the full attainment and progress data

Action: SH and Chairs of LGBs to write to all staff, thanking them for their efforts and achievements

8. POLICY MATTERS

- a) **Pay Policy** – NL explained the amendments recommended and the background to the RCT Pay Policy which had resulted from aligning the two separate schools' policies on RCT formation in 2015. It was noted that other academies had taken the opportunity to devise their own pay-scales and agree pay increases (if any) and this had caused undue unrest amongst their staff and issues with recruitment.

Resolution: Trustees agreed to implement the pay scales as agreed nationally

Resolution: Trustees adopted the Pay Policy, subject to the minor amendments discussed and removal of the LGB representatives from the Pay Committee

Action: DS to make minor amendments (deleting reference to HT, adding Board instead of Governing Body in one paragraph and removal of LGB representatives) and publish the policy

- b) **Schools Admissions Policies** – currently drafted and then approved by LGBs after following formal consultation process

Resolution: It was agreed that these should continue to be the responsibility of the Local Governing Bodies, but that work be carried out on ways to increase admissions.

Action: Executive Headteacher to bring to the next Board Meeting a proposed strategy for raising student numbers.

- c) **Financial Regulations and Policy Manual** - It was noted that the amendments recommended had been put forward by the Auditors and would ensure that the Policy matched the practice.

Resolution: Trustees adopted the Finance Policy.

Action: DS to make the amends and publish the policy

JG, DH, GH and JS left the meeting at 21.10

Part 2 - TRUSTEES ONLY

1. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR

It was noted that RB had served as Vice-Chair (and Acting Chair following AH's relocation) since the formation of the MAT. As the latest NGA/DfE advice was for separation between levels of governance, further advice needed to be sought

Resolution: RB to continue as Vice-Chair in the interim

Action: DS to ask JG to clarify with Browne Jacobson regarding dual roles.

2. RCT STAFFING STRUCTURE

Action: NL to share detailed document with Trustees, via the Clerk

3. ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE ANNUAL APPRAISAL OF THE EXECUTIVE HEADTEACHER

It was noted that the EHPM Panel would comprise KB, GH and Sue Baxter. NL, as Executive Headteacher, and DH would conduct the Head of School's Appraisal.

4. ATTENDANCE OF NON-TRUSTEES AT BOARD MEETINGS

Resolution: It was agreed that agendas would continue to be in two parts. LGB Chairs would be invited for the first part only; SLT, other staff and specialist advisers would be invited to Board meetings by invitation of the Executive Headteacher, where appropriate.

5. MATTERS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

Items in accordance with the Annual Governance Plan

Annual Accounts and Report 2016-17

Trustee Vacancy

Appointment of Vice Chair

The meeting closed at 21.35.