



# Epping Forest Schools Partnership Trust

Held on Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2019 at 6.45pm  
at St John's Primary School, Buckhurst Hill

## MINUTES of the TRUSTEES MEETING

	<b>Trustees</b>
*	Lee Batson (Chair)
*	Lesley Duffin
*	Brenda Jarvis
*	Sue Sunderland (Vice Chair)
*	Dee Wood
*	James Wood
*	Peter Tidmarsh (CEO)
	<b>Observers/Advisers</b>
*	Jackie Scott (FaCSS)
*	Elisabeth Nunn (Clerk)

\* indicates attendance

(The meeting started at 6.51pm.)

		<b><u>ACTION</u></b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Apologies (and reasons for absence); declarations of interest in agenda; plus declaration of Business Interests/Gifts and Hospitality</b> There were no apologies for absence or declarations. Trustees welcomed Jackie Scott, the Manager of FaCSS, to the meeting.	
<b>2</b>	<b>To receive a presentation by FaCSS Manager, Jackie Scott, on the impact of the hub's work</b> Mrs Scott gave both a PowerPoint and a verbal presentation to Trustees on the work of the Trust's Families and Children's Support Services (FaCSS) formerly known in the Epping Forest Consortium as the Local Delivery Group (LDG). The following, in particular, was noted: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Essex Effective Support Windscreen details the level of need and support for families and children. Mrs Scott reported that an increased level of more targeted, intensive and specialist support was required locally.</li> <li>202 pupils/families received support from FaCSS during the spring term 2019; this included accessing family support, the Nurture Programme, Compass Club, Music and Play Therapy as well as child counselling. Mrs Scott reported on the Nurture Programme explaining that it is a 10-week programme for parents and grandparents. She added that 18 families signed up for the most recent programme, with 12 completing it. Mrs Scott is trained to deliver the programme which is cost-effective as it is run from Alderton Junior School.</li> <li>Trustees noted the hub's wide range of partnership working practices; they were pleased to note that it works closely with Essex Young Carers.</li> <li>Mrs Scott reported that in 2018 there was a 22% increase in the number of food parcels provided to local Epping Forest people on the previous</li> </ul>	



		<b><u>ACTION</u></b>
	<p>year; she added that many of these are families with children attending schools within the MAT.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trustees noted how FaCSS records the impact of their services and, at the September Headteacher meeting, Mrs Scott will present a collation of data. (Miss Wood arrived at this point, 7.07pm.)</li> <li>In 2017, when the LDG was in operation, an annual survey was carried out on the services and support being offered. Mrs Scott reported that any issues were responded to and Trustees noted these responses/actions. It is hoped that another survey will be carried out in October 2019.</li> <li>Trustees asked: Q: You offer SEN pupil support. How is this different to what is offered by schools and SENCos? A: (Mrs Scott) In collaboration with the District Council, we were able to win a bid to provide SEN pupil support for eight children in years 3 and 4 in the form of our Compass Club. These children, for example, may potentially be those who do not meet the criteria for SEN. The support is delivered by young coaches who go into the schools; it is not run by SENCos and it is different to their work.</li> <li>It was noted that FaCSS is run by just 3 members of part-time staff: Mrs Scott, a Family Support Worker and a member of admin staff.</li> <li>The hub's total budget is £189,000 which is the 1.5% taken from the MAT's schools. This equates to £40 per pupil. However, until now, the hub has had to rely on its carry forward to meet the Trust's increasing need; there will be no carry forward at the end of 2019/2020. Going forward, Mrs Scott reported that additional funding will be needed from external sources in order to retain the same level of provision.</li> </ul> <p>Trustees asked: Q: Are there opportunities to bid for funding in lieu of the current mental health/well-being drive? A: (Mrs Scott) There are fewer bids available to us now.</p> <p>Trustees thanked Mrs Scott for her presentation and expressed their thanks to her and her team for all their hard work for the children and families within the Trust.</p>	
	(Mrs Scott left at this point, 7.24pm.)	
<p><b>3</b></p>	<p><b>AOB requests for an end-of-meeting consideration</b> <u>AGM</u>: it was noted, at this point in the meeting, that the AGM had been held on April 24<sup>th</sup> at Theydon Bois School and that a Governors' briefing had followed. The CEO had received positive feedback on the event.</p>	
<p><b>4</b></p>	<p><b>To approve the Minutes of 28<sup>th</sup> March 2019</b> Trustees approved the Minutes of the meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> March 2019 and these were signed by the Chair.</p> <p><b>Matters Arising</b> (those which do not appear elsewhere on the agenda) a) <u>Agenda item 13j</u>: The Clerk reported that it is a legal requirement for the Trust to produce an annual governance statement on all its schools and that</p>	



		<b><u>ACTION</u></b>
	<p>this forms part of the Annual Report and Financial Statements.</p> <p>It was agreed that the Clerk will discuss with the CEO the content of this Annual Governance Statement. Also, it was suggested that each school should be asked to use a standardised format to provide relevant information about their school which will be collated to form the Trust's Annual Governance Statement.</p>	<p>CEO/Clerk to look at Trust's AGS</p>
<b>5</b>	<p><b>Trust Membership</b>  <u>An update from the Chair of Trustees regarding Buckhurst Hill Primary and the due diligence process:</u> Rev Batson reported that the Trust is nearing the end of its due diligence process in relation to Buckhurst Hill Primary; there are only some financial and premises matters to review. It was noted that the school is expected to convert on 1<sup>st</sup> November as the Headteacher Board is to meet on 18<sup>th</sup> July to discuss the school's academy order request.</p> <p>Trustees asked:            Q: Do we have to accept the school if there is a financial deficit?            A: (Rev Batson) We will only sign off on this school if there are no problems with finance or premises. If there are, we would delay the process.</p> <p>Trustees were reminded that if the Trust is not satisfied with any part of the due diligence process, Trustees would need to discuss this further. Mr Tidmarsh agreed to share any concerns with the Board.</p>	<p>CEO to update Trustees on BHCP</p>
<b>6</b>	<p><b>To receive a briefing from the CEO</b> To include:</p> <p>a) <u>To note data relating to staff in terms of attendance, CPD, pathways and emotional wellbeing:</u> It was agreed that this item will be carried forward to the next meeting.</p> <p>b) <u>An update on the Trust's summer term press release:</u> Mr Tidmarsh reported that he will be producing a summer-term/seasonal update for parents. He will also investigate further the production of a press release.</p> <p>c) <u>Attendance data:</u> The CEO reported that the Trust is trialling a cloud-based system which collates all schools' attendance data. This data will then be fed to the Essex Attendance Officers for review and to action any issues with the individual schools.</p> <p>d) <u>Surveyor post:</u> A discussion was held about the recommendation made by both Committees to appoint Daniel Connal as the Trust surveyor. However, Mr Tidmarsh reported that he had been contacted again by Faithful and Gould Surveyors, who have already carried out surveys on all schools in this area for the DfE; they have offered to review their original quote. After discussion, it was agreed that Mr Tidmarsh would discuss the tender further with</p>	<p>October agenda item</p> <p>October agenda item</p>



		<b><u>ACTION</u></b>
	<p>Faithful Gould and ask if they would give the DfE surveys to the Trust as well as reduce their quote to under £38,000. If this is not forthcoming, the CEO has delegated authority to appoint Daniel Connal as the Trust surveyor. Mr Tidmarsh will report back.</p> <p>e) <u>School Improvement Hubs and Membership 2019/2020</u>: Trustees noted the changes to the school improvement hubs and membership for 2019/2020:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Safeguarding Hub will merge with the Vulnerable Children Hub. Trustees noted that the Trust will be able to collate safeguarding information via Safeguard Software which has been approved by the Headteacher Group.</li> <li>• The Teaching and Learning Hub is now the Curriculum Hub (in response to the changes in the Ofsted framework from September).</li> <li>• A new Governors Hub has been created.</li> <li>• The hubs originally comprised mainly Headteachers; Trustees were pleased to note that members now include teachers and Deputy Headteachers.</li> </ul> <p>f) <u>Central Team</u>: Trustees noted the changes to the Central Team for 2019/2020:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changes to the way the finance team operates had been previously discussed and minuted at the recent HR Committee meeting.</li> <li>• The Clerk to Trustees/Company Secretary role is now 20 hours a week.</li> <li>• The Trust has appointed LBA as the school meals support on a one-year contract. This contract will cover compliance, health and safety and the line-management of the school catering staff.</li> <li>• As discussed at committee level, the CEO would like to appoint a Chief Operating Officer; this COO would act as a deputy to the CEO and would be paid from the savings made when the Trust changes its broadband contract.</li> </ul> <p>Trustees thanked Mr Tidmarsh for his update.</p>	October agenda item
<b>7</b>	<p><b>To note receipt of the Minutes from the Finance and Audit Committee and HR Committee</b> Trustees noted receipt of the Minutes from both the Finance and Audit Committee and the HR Committee.</p> <p><u>Matters arising</u></p> <p>a) It was noted that the discussion on the NJC Support Staff Pay Award 2020/2021 will be held in the autumn term. b) Trustees were delighted to appoint Mrs Duffin as Safeguarding Lead.</p>	October agenda item
<b>8</b>	<p><b>Risk Register</b> <u>To review the MAT's Risk Register/ To discuss how best to monitor risks effectively</u>: The Trust's Risk Register had been previously circulated and was noted. A discussion was held about how best to monitor risks effectively; Mr Tidmarsh reported that this practice has not been embedded and that this also appears to be an issue for other MATs. In a bid to rectify this, the CEO reported that he intends to alter some of the Risk Register questions to make them more specific to the Trust. The current register is quite long; 8 – 12 points are more manageable. It was noted that Mr Tidmarsh will work with Mrs Margetts on this.</p>	



		<b><u>ACTION</u></b>
	<p>A general discussion was held about some of the schools' red flags. It was agreed that the CEO will ask schools to let the Trust know what their mitigation is for their amber/red risks. It was also agreed that the two committees should focus on monitoring specific, related areas from the Risk Register.</p> <p>Trustees asked:            Q: How closely do the categories within the Risk Register align with our hubs?            A: (CEO) They don't really; that's why we feel the headings/questions do not suit our Trust at the moment.</p> <p>Mr Tidmarsh agreed to produce a revised Risk Register template for the autumn term meeting which will enable Trustees to hold Mr Tidmarsh and the central team to account more effectively.</p>	<p>CEO to ask schools for their mitigation plans</p> <p>CEO to produce revised Risk Register: October agenda item</p>
<b>9</b>	<p><b>Trust Strategy</b></p> <p>a) <u>An update on contingency planning within the Trust following the CEO's discussions with the Headteacher Group</u>: Rev Batson reported that Mr Furness and Mrs Noden are the most senior Local Leaders of Education within the Trust and would form internal contingency planning in the event of the CEO's absence. It was also noted that Mr Tidmarsh networks with other CEOs who would support the Trust if there was a gap in leadership on a short-term basis. Trustees were pleased to note there is a good contingency both within and outside of the Trust. Mr Tidmarsh also reported that the potential Chief Operating Officer role would act as a Deputy to the CEO post.</p> <p>b) <u>To discuss the strategic deployment of Trust staff in the absence of the Trust Finance Manager: Mr Tidmarsh to report on short-term emergency arrangements to cover key tasks</u>: Mr Tidmarsh reported that in the event of Mrs Freeman's absence, the Trust could use Essex County Council or the auditors for short-term support. Trustees noted that there is no internal contingency available and that this is a risk which needs to be managed.</p>	
<b>10</b>	<p><b>Headteacher recruitment and appointments</b></p> <p>a) Trustees appointed Christina Kearney as the Headteacher of Oak View School from September 1<sup>st</sup> 2019.            b) Trustees appointed Becky Sigston as the Headteacher of Ivy Chimneys Primary from September 1<sup>st</sup> 2019.            c) Trustees appointed Tara Bristow as the Acting Headteacher of Alderton Infant School from September 1<sup>st</sup> 2019.            d) Trustees appointed Amy Dowling as the Acting Headteacher of Chigwell Row Infant School from September 1<sup>st</sup> 2019.</p>	
<b>11</b>	<p><b>MAT Governance</b></p> <p>a) Governors noted the vacancy for a Trustee following Mrs Rossetti's resignation on May 16<sup>th</sup> 2019. They thanked Mrs Rossetti, via these Minutes, for her support of and work for the Trust. It was noted that the Chair had also written to Mrs Rossetti to thank her formally.</p>	



	<b>ACTION</b>
<p>b) <u>To discuss the analysis of the recent Trustee skills audit</u>: The Clerk had previously circulated an analysis of the Trustees’ skills audit. It was noted that financial oversight (and procurement) is a weakness within the Trust Board and that any future recruitment should focus on appointing a qualified management accountant, if possible.</p> <p>c) <u>To discuss increasing the number of Trustees to 10</u>: The current Board membership is 8 Trustees, although the Trust’s Articles of Association allow for a total of 10 to be appointed by the Members. After discussion, it was agreed to expand the Trustee number to 10; one will have to be a Foundation Trustee appointed by CDET. The Chair and CEO will liaise with Rev Elbourne about this appointment.</p> <p>A discussion was held about how to recruit new Trustees. Mr Tidmarsh reported that following Mrs Rossetti’s resignation, he advertised in the weekly update and has received one application of interest; the Chair and CEO are to meet with the candidate and will report back.</p> <p>It was also noted that the Clerk has produced a recruitment/application booklet outlining the Trustee role and this will be sent to interested parties. Trustees suggested that Mr Tidmarsh approaches Academy Ambassadors. Trustees recognised that it was important to try and appoint a Trustee with management accountancy experience, and that one space on the Board should be left open for someone with these qualifications. The CEO agreed to approach Haslers in the first instance to see if they knew of anyone who might be willing to serve as a Trustee.</p> <p>A further discussion was held about the Board’s committee structure; it was suggested that an additional committee could be created to focus on curriculum and data. Currently, this is covered by the Trust’s Curriculum Hub, but it was agreed that a working group of Trustees, Headteachers and Governors will meet in the autumn term to discuss what the Trust’s needs are in relation to curriculum and data and what aspects would be covered by a new, formal committee.</p> <p>d) Trustees approved the updated LGBs’ composition and membership, noting the continuing Trust Governor vacancies at Theydon Bois. They also approved the new Trust Governor appointments across the schools.</p> <p>A discussion was held about LGB membership in terms of appointing parents as either Foundation or Trust Governors; Trustees felt that this could create an unhealthy balance within the LGBs. It was agreed that the Clerk will amend the LGB Terms of Reference for September 2019 to state that the Trust expects the LGBs <b>not</b> to appoint parents in Governor roles other than as Parent Governors.</p> <p>e) Trustees received and noted the Clerk’s report from the LGBs’ meetings. The concerns regarding finance were noted. Trustees asked:            Q: Is the Trust Finance Manager role too much for one person?            A: (CEO) Possibly. However, when we go back to individual bank accounts, this should eradicate some of the problems and workload. We have asked schools to rag-rate themselves in terms of financial confidence. I will share this rag-rating with Trustees and will ask schools to carry out the same exercise again in 6 months’ time to see if confidence has improved. The new financial planner will make deadlines much clearer for schools.            After discussing the points made by the LGBs this term, the following was agreed:</p>	<p>CEO/Chair to liaise with CDET about Foundation Trustee</p> <p>October agenda item</p> <p>Working group to meet in autumn term re: work of curriculum/data committee</p> <p>CEO to share rag-rating with Trustees</p>



		<b><u>ACTION</u></b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Finance concerns</u>: Each LGB will be asked to nominate a Governor to join their school's meetings with the Trust Finance Manager and report back on the school's finances to the LGBs termly.</li> <li>• <u>Risk Register</u>: The Trust is looking at new ways of assessing and monitoring risk more effectively.</li> <li>• <u>Strategic Plan</u>: At the Chairs' meeting in September, the CEO will provide additional information about what sits behind the Trust's Strategic Plan. Mr Tidmarsh reported that he will share his collation of LGB comments on the Strategic Plan with Trustees.</li> </ul> <p>It was agreed that the CEO will work through the document with the Clerk to answer any queries. The Clerk will feed responses back to the LGBs.</p> <p>f) Trustees were pleased to have received the Minutes from the recent Headteacher Group meetings. They asked that any confidential personnel items are placed on pink and not circulated freely.</p>	<p>CEO to circulate LGB comments on strategic plan</p> <p>CEO/Clerk to work through LGB comments and respond</p>
<b>12</b>	<p><b>Policies</b> Trustees approved the following policies: Accounting Policies (annual review) Financial Regulations Policy Freedom of Information Policy (subject to a final review by the CEO, the Clerk and Mr Wood) Exclusions Policy Governor/Trustee Code of Conduct Policy (subject to one minor amendment/deletion by the Clerk) Charging and Remissions Policy Equality Duty Policy Investment Policy Managing Serial and Unreasonable Complaints Policy (incorporated into Complaints Policy) Redundancy and Restructuring Procedure (including the EAI procedure)</p> <p>The Clerk will inform the Headteachers that the policies have been approved and that these up-to-date versions should be placed on their websites if they are not signposting to the Trust website. She will also send the policies to the school business managers via Mrs Kent at Hereward Primary.</p> <p>b) The Business Continuity Plan was not approved as it needs further work. It will be reviewed and added to the autumn term policy list.</p>	<p>Clerk to inform HTs/Clerks/SBMs of approved policies</p> <p>Clerk to action</p>
<b>13</b>	<p><b>Trustee Visits</b> a) <u>To discuss the Trustee visits to schools</u>: Rev Batson reported that Trustees have visited all schools within the MAT this year, apart from Whitebridge</p>	



		<b><u>ACTION</u></b>
	<p>which it will arrange to visit in the new academic year. Trustees have spoken with each school's finance manager and also checked to ensure that the Trust's strategy for disadvantaged pupils is on every school's agenda. Mr Tidmarsh reported that he has received positive feedback from the Headteachers about the visits. Trustees reported that they were astonished at the diversity across the MAT on many different levels and that each school has its own strengths and challenges.</p> <p>b) <u>To produce a schedule of visits for 2019/2020</u>: Rev Batson will produce and circulate a schedule for 2019/2020.</p>	<p>Chair to circulate visit schedule</p>
<b>14</b>	<p><b>Clerk's Items</b></p> <p>a) <u>An update on Trustee training</u>: The Clerk had previously circulated details of training opportunities for the Board; it was agreed that the CEO and the Clerk will meet to discuss the GovernEd option for the autumn term.</p> <p>Mr Tidmarsh also reported that he had received £1100 in funding from the DfE for Trustee training and it was agreed that this would be set aside and used for additional, focused training when identified.</p> <p>b) <u>An update on the provision of ID badges for Trustees</u>: The Clerk agreed to liaise with Mrs Margetts.</p> <p>c) <u>To discuss the requirement for DBS checks for Members</u>: It was noted that there is only a requirement to seek DBS checks for Members if they are in 'regulated activity' with pupils. However, Trustees agreed that they would continue to ask Members to complete these checks. It was noted that there had been some difficulty in obtaining Mr Kennedy's information as original copies of the required documents need to be seen by either Mrs Margetts or someone employed by the Trust. Mr Tidmarsh suggested that the Clerk asks Sarah Hurwood from Epping Upland to sign off these documents as she is a Trustee at Mr Kennedy's Trust.</p>	<p>CEO/Clerk to discuss training</p> <p>Clerk to liaise with Mrs Margetts re: Trustee ID badges</p> <p>Clerk to contact Mrs Hurwood</p>
<b>15</b>	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <p>There was none, although the Chair took this opportunity to thank the CEO and the Central Team for all they have done for the Trust over the past year.</p>	
<b>16</b>	<p><b>Dates of meetings</b></p> <p>a) Trustees noted the dates of the meetings for 2019/2020 (see page 9).</p> <p>b) Trustees noted and approved the revised Governance Planner for 2019/2020.</p>	



			<u>ACTION</u>
<b><u>Autumn Term (1)</u></b>			
HR Committee	Tuesday 1 <sup>st</sup> October 2019	2.00pm	
Finance and Audit Committee	Tuesday 8 <sup>th</sup> October 2019	7.00pm	
Trust Board Meeting	Thursday 17 <sup>th</sup> October 2019	6.45pm	
<b><u>Autumn Term (2)</u></b>			
HR Committee	Thursday 21 <sup>st</sup> November 2019	2.00pm	
Finance and Audit Committee	Wednesday 27 <sup>th</sup> November 2019	7.00pm	
Trust Board Meeting	Wednesday 11 <sup>th</sup> December 2019	6.45pm	
<b><u>Spring Term (1)</u></b>			
HR Committee	Thursday 23 <sup>rd</sup> January 2020	2.00pm	
<b><u>Spring Term (2)</u></b>			
HR Committee	Wednesday 11 <sup>th</sup> March 2020	2.00pm	
Finance and Audit Committee	Thursday 19 <sup>th</sup> March 2020	7.00pm	
Trust Board Meeting	Tuesday 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2020	6.45pm	
<b><u>Summer Term (1)</u></b>			
AGM	Wednesday 22 <sup>nd</sup> April 2020	6.00pm	
<b><u>Summer Term (2)</u></b>			
HR Committee	Tuesday 23 <sup>rd</sup> June 2020	2.00pm	
Finance and Audit Committee	Tuesday 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2020	7.00pm	
Trust Board Meeting	Thursday 9 <sup>th</sup> July 2020	6.45pm	
The meeting ended at 9.03pm.			