



GIRLS' LEARNING TRUST

MINUTES OF MEETING

Meeting Type	Trust Board
Date:	12 July 2021 at 7.00pm
Venue:	Meeting held via Zoom video conference call
Members:	Hamza Aumeer (HA), Alex Clark (AC), Robert Etchell (RE), Sandy Gillett (SG, Chair), *Marie Grant (MG), *Malcolm Munro (MM), Nigel Pepper (NP), Jennifer Smith (JS) and Philip Taylor (PT, Vice-Chair)
Others present:	Helen Latham (HL, Director of Finance and Operations) and Andrew Horrod (AH, Clerk)

* denotes member absent from meeting

Item	Item Description and Minute	Action
1	Apologies for absence and declarations of interest	
	Apologies for absence were received from MG and MM. There were no declarations of interest.	
2	Minutes of the previous meeting	
2.1	The minutes of the meeting held on 21 April 2021 were approved as a correct record for signing by the Chair.	
2.2	With reference to minute 4.8, NP asked about the two students in India and whether they had returned to the UK. JS said she would check and let trustees know via email.	JS
2.3	Referencing minute 12.1, AC said that the Charities Commission website was still showing him as a trustee of the Nonsuch Charitable Trust (NCT). AH said he would draw the matter to the attention of Tina O'Donnell, NCT Company Secretary.	AH
3	Matters arising from the minutes	
3.1	A matters arising sheet had been circulated and the Board noted that all but one of the listed items had been closed. On the first closed item, JS said she was still collating updates for the Governance Handbook and that a revised version of the Handbook will be ready for the next Board meeting.	
3.2	The open item concerned quality of teaching and the Board noted that	

	there will be a report back after the LGBs have met in September.	
4	CEO's report	
4.1	<p>JS had circulated a detailed report on issues affecting GLT schools during the Summer term, starting with a summary of how school life was returning to near normal. One key event was the recent Ofsted inspection of Nonsuch. JS said that Ofsted's formal report had not yet been received. Amy Cavilla's summary of how the section 8 inspection had converted to a section 5 inspection, plus the inspectors' initial impressions, formed Appendix 2 to her CEO's report. JS answered a few questions from trustees about the inspection. Apart from meeting with various members of staff, as detailed in Amy's summary, the inspectors had met with some students and run a questionnaire. The questionnaire could be either multiple choice or open text, Amy had chosen the latter. The inspectors had also looked at issues around race and equality. They had been very interested in the Race Equality Steering Group and impressed with the minutes of its meetings and other related documents. Ofsted's formal report would be submitted to Nonsuch LGB.</p>	
4.2	<p>JS highlighted key points from some other sections of her report and answered questions, as summarised below.</p> <p><u>Admissions and attendance</u></p>	
4.3	<p>A table showing student attendance by percentage, for the term up to 2 July, supplemented a more detailed snapshot of attendance on 2 July. It was noted that the X in the first table represented absence from school due to Covid self-isolation. So the figures in the Excluding X column were higher than those in the Including X column. JS added that between 5 and 10 students had been absent from each of the GLT's schools today because they were self-isolating.</p>	
4.4	<p>Arising from a point made by AC, there was brief discussion of attendance rates at CHSG and the impact of Covid. JS said the trigger for local authority action was a frequent attendance rate below 90%. In general CHSG did seem to be meeting its attendance targets.</p>	
4.5	<p>On Sixth Form admissions, JS said she had not received the NHSG figures for external student offers in time for her report and she would follow this up.</p>	JS
4.6	<p>On safeguarding and the case of the member of staff who had been dismissed, AC said he was aware of the circumstances, as safeguarding trustee. All appropriate procedures had been followed. Referring to the safeguarding table in the CEO's report, he suggested it would be useful to record there any sexual harassment/abuse referrals. This was something which would be highlighted in the DfE's next Keeping Children Safe in Education update. JS agreed to the suggestion, she would pick it up in her December Board report. She was aware of only one such incident in GLT schools during the last three years. This had been a so-called sexting incident, peer on peer.</p> <p><u>Academic Performance</u></p>	JS
4.7	<p>The report summarised the process that had been followed for production of Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGS). JS said that to date nothing had been queried by Ofqual. Detailed information regarding</p>	

	TAGS and the student appeal process was supplied under the following agenda item.	
	<u>Staffing and School Development Plans (SDPs)</u>	
4.8	The Board noted the remainder of the CEO's report concerning staffing issues and the recent safeguarding audits. There was brief discussion of Appendix 1, the schools' SDPs for 2021/22. RE asked whether the format and headings could be standardised. JS said she had already raised this with the Heads but had not pushed too hard in view of the heavy workload this year. There was scope for further discussion at Executive Team.	
5	Teacher Assessed Grades 2021	
5.1	JS had circulated a confidential report on Teacher Assessed Grades comprising: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GCSE and A Level grades for the three schools plus BTEC grades for Carshalton; • Tables comparing the TAGS against key performance indicators (this year's targets and results 2017-2019); • Information about the awarding of TAGS and the appeals process. All three schools had used the JCQ template for their Centre Policy for determining grades this Summer. A copy of the Nonsuch Policy was included along with the FAQ document on the appeals process for all students and parents. 	
5.2	JS answered some questions from trustees about the TAGS process within GLT schools and the nationwide picture. Some schools did not have the infrastructure for full assessment at the moment. She was confident in the GLT's processes and did not expect challenges, however appeals against grades were expected. SG thanked JS for the report.	
6	Feedback from Race Equality Steering Group (RESG)	
6.1	JS had circulated the following documents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minutes of the RESG meeting held on 24 June; • Terms of Reference for the RESG - as reviewed by the Group in June, for the Board's approval and adding to the Governance Handbook; • The Trust's Public Sector Equality Duty and Objectives document 2019-2021; • Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy statement - draft for the Board's approval; • Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2021-2026 - draft for approval. 	
6.2	JS said the discussion at the recent RESG meeting had been very interesting, as reflected in the minutes and appendix. She had nothing to add regarding the Terms of Reference, they were for the Board's approval. The Public Sector Equality Duty information on the Trust's websites needed improving and a new Equality Policy Statement had been prepared. The draft Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy had been seen by the RESG and was also for the Board's approval. Trustees' comments included:	

6.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reference item 9 in the RESG minutes, to strongly support a student representative on the Group, who should disseminate information to the wider school community - JS agreed, it would be sensible to have a student from each school. • Will the minutes be put on the GLT websites? – JS said she had thought about this issue and she would take it back to the Group for a view. • Some concern about having multiple policy documents and how they fit together – is it possible to have one? JS said that this was the intention but the Trust does have to publish a Public Sector Equality Duty statement. <p>Arising from the last point, SG suggested that JS work on a draft of a single policy document that covers equality issues and submit it to the policy sub-group including MM and PT. That document could then be brought to Trust Board for approval. This suggestion was agreed.</p>	JS
7	Update on Trust strategy planning	
7.1	<p>JS had circulated a write-up of topics that had been discussed by trustees at their strategic planning session in May. JS said the topics would be carried forward for discussion at the session on 2 October. That session would be similar to the May one but include governors and the senior leadership teams from all three schools. NP welcomed the write-up, suggesting it would be useful to have a more concise version on which session participants could comment.</p>	
7.2	<p>SG thanked JS for the write-up, the current position was noted.</p>	
8	Sexual Harrassment in schools – Ofsted report	
8.1	<p>Ofsted had recently been commissioned by the Government to undertake a review of sexual harassment in schools and colleges after anonymous testimonials of sexual abuse had been published on the Everyone’s Invited website. Ofsted inspectors had visited 32 state and private schools and colleges and spoken to more than 900 children and young people about the prevalence of sexual harassment.</p>	
8.2	<p>JS had circulated a briefing note summarising Ofsted’s findings and recommendations. The review had found that children and young people often do not see the point of challenging or reporting sexual harassment because it is seen as a normal experience. Ofsted had made the following recommendations for schools, colleges and partner agencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School and college leaders should develop a culture where all kinds of sexual harassment are recognised and addressed, including with sanctions when appropriate. • The RSHE curriculum should be carefully sequenced with time allocated for topics that children and young people find difficult, such as consent and sharing explicit images. • Schools and colleges should provide high-quality training for teachers delivering RSHE. • Improved engagement between multi-agency safeguarding partners and schools. 	
8.3	<p>The briefing note included a safeguarding update by Helen Holmes, Designated Safeguarding Lead at CHSG. This was a review of current practice at CHSG in the light of the Ofsted findings. SG welcomed this</p>	

	update and thanked JS for her briefing note.	
9	GLT Allegations of abuse against staff policy, for approval	
	A draft policy had been circulated. SG thought the title was rather awkward even though the policy was useful and in line with the DfE's Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance. PT said the draft had been considered by the policy sub-group and he had been expecting it to come to Trust HR Committee. AC suggested that the policy/title could better reflect that allegations can be made against any adults connected to the GLT, not just staff. These points were accepted, the draft policy would be held over for HR Committee to consider.	JS
10	Feedback from Admissions Committee	
	The minutes of the meeting held on 4 May had been circulated for information. NP said his only comment was to highlight the low number of Pupil Premium students accepting places.	
11	Feedback from Finance Committee	
11.1	On 29 June the Finance Committee had agreed the GLT budget for 2021/22 and a three year forecast (Medium Term Plan) subject to a few revisions. These revisions had been made by the Finance team and included in an updated budget report dated 6 July. That report and the minutes of the 29 June meeting had been circulated for this evening's Board meeting.	
11.2	NP said the discussion at Finance Committee had been very useful. The forecast numbers for retention of Sixth Form students had been revised downwards and contingency for unforeseen Covid-19 expenditure included. The budget position had been boosted by the excellent outcome of the Condition Improvement Fund bids. The Trust had been successful with all four of its CIF bids and congratulations were due to HL, Hamish Lungany and the rest of the Finance team.	
11.3	HL said she had nothing to add regarding the budget now before the Board for approval.	
11.4	Resolved: (i) To approve the circulated GLT budget 2021/22 and associated items including the Medium Term Plan; (ii) To thank NP and the Finance Team for their work on the budget.	
12	Feedback from HR Committee	
12.1	PT reported the main points of discussion at the Committee's 10 June meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An additional Assistant Head at WHSG had been appointed from a field of GLT candidates. • A review of the five pay policies currently operating in the GLT, with a proposal to streamline them to two policies: one for teachers, one for support staff. The Committee had agreed that this be progressed for teachers only at the moment. • Staff wellbeing, no additional requests for help had been made by staff. • Flexible Working Policy, the Committee had agreed to include the potential for home working in the Policy. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A note about Gender Pay Gap reporting; comparing this year to last the position has improved by 1%, which had been taken to mean that the pay gap between male and female GLT staff has narrowed by 1%. 	
13	Feedback from the LGBs	
13.1	<p><u>Carshalton</u></p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 28 April had been circulated for information. There was no verbal feedback from the July meeting due to MM's absence this evening.</p>	
13.2	<p><u>Nonsuch</u></p> <p>The minutes of the 22 April meeting had been circulated for information. There was no verbal feedback from the July meeting due to MG's absence this evening.</p>	
13.3	<p><u>Wallington</u></p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 27 April had been circulated. HA gave a verbal report back from the 8 July meeting. Governors had received updates on safeguarding, Pupil Premium, the TAGS process, premises and the Sixth Form. The LGB has two vacancies, to be filled in September.</p>	
13.4	<p>JS said she had recently met with all three LGB Chairs together.</p>	
14	Trust Governance update	
14.1	<p>SG said MM had advised her via email that CHSG has three new governors. MM was asking the Board to ratify the appointments, to take effect in September:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marie Patel – Appointed Governor • Jonathan Hart – Parent Governor, filling a vacancy created by the resignation of Matt Butler • Chris Tsoukala – Parent Governor, to replace a governor whose term of office has been terminated due to non-attendance at meetings. 	
14.2	<p>SG said she would forward MM's email to AH.</p>	
14.3	<p>JS had circulated the GLT Scheme of Delegation with proposed changes and discussion points shown in red type. JS asked trustees for comments, either now or following this meeting. The Scheme would then be firmed up for inclusion in the revised Governance Handbook. JS agreed with NP that there could be better co-ordination between Board and LGB meetings.</p>	
14.4	<p>JS had circulated a briefing note about the new annual school reviews, the around-the-table discussions at each GLT school involving the respective Heads and LGB Chairs, plus HL and herself. She was seeking one trustee to join in with each of the review meetings in September, details were shown in her note. NP confirmed that he would attend the Nonsuch review, 10am on 13 September. He asked that participating trustees be sent detailed, supporting information well in advance. PT said that he could not do the Carshalton review on 10</p>	

	September (11am) and AC agreed to step in as a replacement. AC said he could not attend the Wallington review as proposed for 16 September (11am) and RE agreed to step in for him.	
14.5	Following a request by JS, trustees agreed to put back the date of the next Board meeting to early October, when it was hoped that everyone could meet in person.	
14.6	SG said the Board needs to do a self-assessment exercise sometime soon; there was a set of questions prepared by the National Governance Association which might be useful. In addition the Board had a co-opted trustee vacancy to which she, JS and MG were giving consideration.	
14.7	Resolved: (i) To ratify the appointments of Marie Patel, Jonathan Hart and Chris Tsoukala as CHSG governors, in each case the four year term of office to commence on 3 September 2021; (ii) To change the date of the next Board meeting to Tuesday 5 October, 7pm at NHSG; (iii) That trustees who have any comments on the Scheme of Delegation, to please forward them to JS; (iv) To note the current position with the annual school reviews, Board self-assessment and co-opted trustee vacancy.	
15	Sutton pupil place planning	
15.1	JS had circulated a briefing note on the need for additional secondary school places over the next 5-6 years. A proposal for a new free school had been approved in March 2015, however since then the London Borough of Sutton had expanded 10 of the 14 secondary schools in the Borough and built a new school, Harris Academy Sutton, in 2019. Previously it had been expected that the demand for additional places would be sustained into the foreseeable future, but more recent developments indicated that this demand was likely to be temporary. As a result, secondary schools in Sutton had developed an approach to meeting the expected demand in the Borough over the next 5-6 years as an alternative strategy to building a new school.	
15.2	JS explained the current position with this alternative strategy. A number of local schools including CHSG were prepared to take additional Year 7 students in the years up to 2027/28, details were included in her report. Predictions suggested that Sutton does not need a new secondary school, however the plans for the free school included an adjacent special needs school, which is required. Schools and trusts in Sutton had been asked to sign memos of understanding and as CEO she had signed on behalf of the GLT, with SG's approval as Chair. The alternative proposal had been approved by Sutton Local Authority, recommended to the Regional Schools Commissioner, and a decision was expected by the end of this month.	
15.3	HL and JS answered some questions about the cost and feasibility of CHSG accepting additional students. Some analysis had been undertaken, detailed programme planning would be needed if the proposal went ahead. Based on the feasibility studies carried out so far, the requirement for capital works at CHSG would be around £2.2 million with the GLT contributing £400K. The Trust had been required to act quickly – hence use of Chair's action – but it had not signed anything that was irreversible.	

15.4	The current position was noted by the Board, JS would advise trustees as and when there were further developments.	
16	Risk Register	
	The latest version of the Risk Register had been circulated. There was brief discussion but no changes to the Register.	
17	Any other business and date of next meeting	
17.1	It was acknowledged that this evening's meeting had a full agenda with a lot of paperwork. RE gave brief feedback from the first Audit & Risk Committee meeting, which had been held last month. The attendance of a representative from the company undertaking internal scrutiny, Kreston Reeves, had been useful. A key issue was a review of the Risk Register, which HL would be setting in motion. SG agreed that in future the Board's agenda will include a slot for verbal feedback from the Committee Chair.	JS
17.2	SG thanked everyone for their contributions. She wished to record the gratitude of trustees to all staff for their work this academic year; JS said she would pass this on.	
17.3	The next Board meeting would be held on 5 October, as agreed under minute 14.	

The meeting ended at 8.55pm

Signed:

Dated:

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