

Weald Of Kent Grammar School
Non-Confidential Minutes of the Full Trustee Board
20th May 2025 at 6pm
Sevenoaks and virtual



Trustees Present	Andrew Barnett – AB –(from 18:18) Richard Booth – HT Robin Jones (Chair) -RJ Ben Katz – BK Alessia Ropkins – AR Toby Fountain (Vice-chair) – TF Saima Islam – SI	William Varley – WV Amelia-Jane Clark – AJC Adrian Docherty – AD John Savage – JS Gautam Sehgal – GS Victoria Tomalin – VT
Apologies	Jane Craigie-Payne – JCP Liz Kinnersley - LK	Rosanna Holt - RH
Absent	Kim Jiskoot – KJ	
In attendance	Karen Marr – Clerk Veronique Ricks Ken MacSporran Mason Willis	TEP Clerk Deputy Head Deputy Head CFO

Item	Main discussions and agreed actions	Action by	
PROCEDURAL			
1	Welcome, Apologies and Quorum The chair welcomed everyone. The meeting was quorate (13/17).		
2	Declarations of interest There were no new declarations of interest, trustees were reminded to update their interests on GovernorHub.		
3	Minutes of the last meeting – FTB 1st April 2025 The non-confidential minutes from the 1 st April 2025 were approved. Trustee Question: Page 4 of the minutes – are the appeals for those just missing the pass mark on the paper or by a panel? A: By a panel.		
Actions Log 09.07.24			
Name	Item	Action	Outcome
-€ MW	6/1	Chair to contact previous chair re Weald Development Trust	Closed
15.10.24			
Name	Item	Action	Outcome
MW	4/1	Arrange RR software demo for RR working group	Discuss this meeting
New trustees	5/1	Consider which committee to join according to skill set.	Closed
Trustees	5/2	Check trustee profile on the school website and forward information to Tracy Paddington if these were missing or incorrect.	Ongoing
SLT	7/3	Suggest wording for the Equality Objective Statement	Ongoing – SLT planning day 10/6.
01.04.25			
Name	Item	Action	Outcome
Clerk	4/1	Email revised Articles of Association to members for their approval.	Complete
MW	6/1	MW to recirculate previous internal audit areas covered.	This meeting
MW	6/2	MW to raise the question of refurbished technology with the IT manager.	Complete – see note below.
Clerk	6/3	Clerk to add reserves under 5% to next Fin Com agenda	Complete

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HT	6/5	HT to arrange data training for trustees	5.30pm 8/7/25
HT	6/6	HT to discuss internal audit focus with HR Director.	Complete
RJ/AB/AJC	7/1	MAT working party to meet before the end of April.	Close

MW raised the question of refurbished equipment for IT; it was not considered a viable option as a replacement for the current aging equipment but would be considered for future projects.

For Discussion and Agreement

4	Structure	
	Progress had been made with the Trustee Induction program; it was suggested that the induction be road-tested with the new trustees. ACTION: A-JC to liaise with the HT on next steps.	A-JC
5	Policies	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pupil Premium Policy <p>The updates to the policy had been highlighted. The link trustee was Alyssia Ropkins. It was agreed that the policy should be amended to refer to the Department for Education (DfE) instead of the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) (The functions of the ESFA had been brought into the DfE to ensure that financial improvement was central to school improvement.) Trustees requested that “constant” reporting be reworded to “regular” reporting. The policy was approved subject to these amendments. ACTION: Clerk to update TP on these changes.</p>	Clerk
6	Committee Update	
	<p><u>Finance Committee</u>: The internal audit topics had been agreed for the first two audits (1 = Management accounting reporting; 2 = Staff Absence and attendance.) The third focus was yet to be agreed. The first audit had suggested some updates to the finance policy, that management accounts should be shared with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and that the year-end timetable should be agreed.</p> <p>Trustees were advised that the management accounts were available on GovernorHub, there had been no material changes to the forecast position. Reserves were currently at 6% of turnover but were expected to drop below this. The committee discussed other income sources, cost management and the financial implications of joining a MAT. The fundraising drive had been tested and was ready to be sent in the first week of term 6, followed up by the appointment of the Marketing and Development Manager.</p> <p><u>Leadership and Management Committee (LMC)</u>: Due to meet on 24th June - tbc, agenda to include an update on the revised Articles of Association.</p> <p><u>Quality of Education (QofE)</u>: Due to meet on 9th June.</p> <p><u>Quality of Care (QofC)</u>: Due to meet on 16th June.</p> <p>The Risk Register had been discussed by all committees, next step was to identify the top risks per each committee and the mitigating factors, ACTION: clerk to add “finalise top risks plus mitigants and contingencies” to each committee agenda. ACTION AB to circulate RR template <i>18:32 WV joined the meeting</i></p>	Clerk AB
7	MAT Update	
	A meeting was planned for 2 nd June to discuss the reasons why Weald should join a MAT, what options there were and potential questions that needed to be asked. Areas for consideration were governance, education, finance, values and transition planning. Each member of the working party to lead on each item. Trustee Question: Was the thinking from scratch or were there documents in existence? A: A set of questions from The Key was being used plus some	

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	<p>other documents, these needed to be nuanced. Alignment of values was incredibly important.</p> <p>Trustee Question: Was the intention to join a preexisting MAT? A: Yes, a huge amount of work was involved to create a MAT however this would be discussed by the group. The HT to be part of the working party. Trustee Question: There has been discussion around the benefits of a MAT, when do we ask if it is the right thing to do? A: Previous Ofsted grading had forced the trustees to have conversations and there is a need to continue to review the options. The question will be asked again as part of the process.</p>	
8	HT Update	
	<p>The HT update was shared with the meeting papers on GovernorHub.</p> <p>The final numbers for year 7 for September had been received, the school was not full for the third year in a row. It was considered that the reputational damage from the previous Ofsted report plus the issue with the number of girls passing the 11+ were the reasons.</p> <p>The final number is 279, there will be 4 forms at SEV – all full and 6 forms at TON which will have capacity for in-year admissions. IT was anticipated that year 7 at TON would be full by the end of the 25/26 academic year. The most recent Ofsted report was published after the cut-off date for secondary school applications. Trustees noted that the school catchment area continued to widen.</p> <p>Trustee Question: Do in-year admissions sit a test at Weald? A: Yes, the students were tested at points throughout the year, and the threshold was chosen by the school based on the cohort profile. 15 students were taking a test in July. Trustee Question: What was the capacity at TON? A: 7 forms, the PAN was currently 300 but could be 330. Trustee Question: Was the budget based on 300? A: Yes. Trustees were reminded that 6th form numbers would be finalised following GCSE results.</p> <p>A meeting was held with Nick Abrahams (KCC) and was felt to be optimistic. NA was not aware of the 11+ issues and advised the school that their own test could be set. Information on projected student numbers was requested but had not yet been received and no date as yet set for a further meeting. Trustees discussed the mechanism for and risks of setting an entrance test. Trustee Question: Could the required data be requested under a Freedom of Information request? A: Possibly. Trustee Question: At what point on admissions was critical mass an issue? A: Staff costs had to be adjusted accordingly however 4 form entry was difficult, most secondary schools were a minimum 7 FE for a reason. 5 FE at TON could work but further 6th form places would need to be filled.</p> <p>Trustee Question: Would the structure of the school be an issue for a MAT? A: Having two sites could be seen as an issue. Trustee Question: Would setting our own entrance exam be more viable within a MAT? A: Yes, probably one common to all the schools within the MAT, some pupils already sit more than one test. The Kent test is held in September each year and the secondary school application deadline was the end of October.</p> <p>Trustees discussed the lack of information on pupil place planning from KCC and agreed that an FOI request could be sent if there was still no response at the end of term. It was noted that the population of Tonbridge was forecast to rise slightly over the next 20 years. The HT advised that trustees may be needed to help support the requested change to the 11+ pass mark.</p> <p>ACTIONS: It was agreed that the Finance Committee would consider the cost of setting an entrance test at their next meeting, LMC to follow up on the admissions strategy.</p> <p>Open evenings and mornings would be held in July, the focus was to encourage local girls to apply to reduce the catchment area, if possible, local competition would be different with the better Ofsted report and grade.</p> <p>The deficit reduction plan (DRP) had a target to reduce staffing by 6 FTE; the current position was a reduction of 5.2 FTE. The contact ratio was at 76%. Current staffing protects the class sizes and the breadth of the curriculum but would not clear the deficit.</p> <p>The teachers pay award by the School Teachers' Review Body (STRB) was expected to be at least 4% with any additional funding of this not guaranteed. The NEU balloted for strike action based on the funding of increases. Trustee Question: What was the cost of the increase to SLT? A: A net cost of £14k including back filling a post. Trustee Question: How did the school deal with strike action? A: There was significant union membership which could mean the school would have to close.</p> <p>The changes to student support in SEV were discussed with the Chair and the Chair of LMC, two positions were combined following some long-term absence and a resignation.</p> <p>Uniform Supplier: Trustee Question: Who were Monkhouse? A: Current supplier, the company</p>	FinCom / LMC

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	<p>that bought out Simmons who were the school's local supplier, their service was not good for parents. A key question for the tenderers was how they would deal with the stock held by Monkhouse. The school were satisfied with the outcome from the tender process with a better deal for parents in both costs and service. The tender was awarded to Gogna and the contract was expected to be signed. The school will be dealing directly with the Managing Director of Gogna and all uniform except the blazer would be produced in the UK. Trustee Question: Why did Monkhouse not bid? A: They did not see the option on the tendering website. It was still unsure how much stock was held by Monkhouse and it was understood that increased stock was being held without an explanation being given.</p> <p>Gogna state that they can be in place for September and will have enough stock for the incoming year 7. Trustee Question: Was Gogna an online ordering operation? A: Yes, but would come to Weald 3 times a year for a weekend for measurements etc.</p> <p>Arbor Management Information System (MIS): It was recommended that each committee check how their areas operate within Arbor.</p> <p>ACTION: Add Arbor conversation to committee agendas.</p> <p>The next Trustee Monitoring Day was on 20th June; Tracy Paddington would send an invitation to trustees. The school was closing at lunchtime on that day. This was an opportunity to see the school in action and trustees could visit either campus.</p>	Clerk
9	Training	
	Board Effectiveness to be discussed at the next meeting.	Clerk
OTHER		
10	AOB	
	None	
11	Confidentiality	
	None – minutes not available publicly until after the signing of the Uniform Contract.	
12	Date of next meeting	
	8 th July 2025, 6pm at Tonbridge	
	The meeting closed at 19:37	

Actions Log
15.10.24

Name	Item	Action	Outcome
Trustees	5/2	Check profile on the school website and forward information to Tracy Paddington if these were missing or incorrect.	
SLT	7/3	Suggest wording for the Equality Objective Statement	SLT day 10/6

01.04.25

Name	Item	Action	Outcome
HT	6/5	HT to arrange data training for trustees	5.30pm 8/7/25

20.05.25

Name	Item	Action	Outcome
A-JC	4/1	Liaise with HT re next steps for Trustee Induction	Meeting 26/6
Clerk	5/1	Update TP on the changes agreed to the PP policy	complete
Clerk	6/1	Add finalise top risk plus mitigants and contingencies to each committee agenda.	
FinCom	8/1	Consider the cost of setting an entrance test	
LMC	8/2	Follow up on the admissions strategy.	
Clerk	8/3	Add Arbor conversation to committee agendas.	
Clerk	9/1	Add Board Effectiveness to next FTB agenda	