Meeting	**Seaford Learning Trustees**
Date	**Wednesday 22nd February 2023**
Time	**5pm – 7pm**
Venue	**H5 Seaford Head School, Arundel Road site**
Trustees	**Jane Branson** **Jacky Cross** **Jon Dilley** **Bob Ellis** **James Hollingsworth** **Paul Holmes-Ling** **Chris Mercer** **Margaret Rooms**
In attendance	**Gaynor Newnham (Clerk)** **Sally Laidlaw (Chief Finance Oficer)**
Apologies	**Susie Sylvester (SS)**
Absent	

Minutes

Item	Item Outline
1.	**Welcome & Apologies for Absence** JD opened the meeting Apologies were received and accepted from SS
2.	**Disclosure of Personal and Pecuniary Interests in Proceedings** JH declared that he is a governor at Cradle Hill Primary School. JB is Chair at Willingdon.
3.	**Minutes of the Previous Meeting, 7th December 2022** **The minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting** One question was raised about the level of detail about the audit in the minutes and it was explained that this is contained in the audit report. **The summary of actions was reviewed, and all were noted to be complete or on the current agenda.** The structure of the Seaford Learning Trustee meetings was discussed, and JD asked for school updates to follow minutes etc. as a standing agenda item. It was explained, in response to a question that, as LGB minutes and dashboards will be circulated for each meeting, governors should ask questions related to the minutes and any updates since the reports were written should be shared in this part of the meeting. **School updates were provided, as follows:** **Chyngton** The co-chairs explained that things are going smoothly and there is a sense of confidence in the

successful co-headship and increased leadership capacity. The co-heads are clear about how their roles are delineated. Things are calm, following the OFSTED inspection and transition to The Trust, though some clarification of requirements and procedures for managing policies is needed. The staff governor was very positive, at the last LGB meeting, about the relationships being forged between CS and SHS. It was confirmed, in response to a question, that staff are seeing the benefits of joining the MAT. The co-heads have continued to express concerns about their oversight of the budget. They are meeting regularly with the CEO and SBM to address this.

BE explained that SHS agreed to adopt all ESCC (East Sussex County Council) policies when it became an academy and he suggested that, rather than creating trust wide policies. Both academies should continue to use the LA policies, replacing references to ESCC with SLT, and clarifying whether responsibility lies with governors or The Trust. JD supported this view.

JD clarified that the school should be responsible for their own policies, not the clerk, and that Sally Laidlaw, as Business Manager, should be responsible for the SLT policies. The Trust Scheme of Delegation should specify which are Trust and which are school policies.

Action:

- ***Emma Scudder to be responsible for CS Policies***
- ***Kathryn Greenwood to be responsible for SHS Policies***
- ***Trust schools to use ESCC Policies and replace references to ESCC with SLT***
- ***Trust Scheme of Delegation to clarify responsibility for policies***

The **Disciplinary Policy** was briefly discussed, as clear lines of accountability are needed. It was confirmed that schools should manage staff discipline internally.

The **Trust Complaints Policy** was discussed, and JD explained the rationale for adding a trustee review before a panel is convened.

The following points were made:

- under the draft policy, complaints went to the CEO too quickly or prevents him from intervening. There should be an initial informal stage before escalation to the HT and, if needed, to the Chair
- making complaints should not be longer and more complicated than necessary.
- The panel could include a trustee who is not connected to the school, rather than having an additional trustee-level layer. The reason for the additional layer was queried and explained as an opportunity to review and change the decision
- it was agreed that it would be inappropriate to involve governors too early
- Most parents want to be listened to and feel they have a fair hearing, and trustee involvement could add that
- the beginning of the policy lacks clarity about informal complaints; CS added extra wording to the school policy about the informal stage, to have an opportunity for de-escalation, after the last ESCC update to the policy
- policies should not be name-specific – need to be clear when referring to a HT of a school and when it is escalated to CEO level

JD requested sight of the CS wording - GN will share the last CS Complaints Policy with him, as an action.

Action:

- ***Send CS Complaints Policy to JD***

Health and Safety Policies were discussed, and SL explained that it is not possible to have a trust-wide policy, due to the differences between the 2 schools. The draft CS H&S Policy correctly refers to LGB and ESCC, as they are the responsible person; references to phase leaders can be adjusted by the school.

BE explained that Emma Scudder at CS has been asked to update the ESCC policies to SLT. Kathryn Greenwood is the designated person at SHS, and SL with work with Kathryn Greenwood on the trust-wide policies. The SLT Board can flag policies that need to be trust wide.

It was noted that this needs to be correct for potential new members of The Trust and should be reflected in the Scheme of Delegation.

It was agreed to insert an introductory paragraph into all policies to explain that CS is now part of the trust – BE will draft this to include mission statement and rationale

Actions:

- ***insert an introductory paragraph into all policies to explain that CS is now part of the trust – BE to draft***

BE explained that there are regular meetings with RT and AC about finance, and the situation is evolving.

SL also explained that they are not familiar with the accounting package in use at SLT and are not able to work with the budget as they did previously. SL will now do the modelling based on their requests.

BE added that working on the budget is not a strategic use of the co-heads' time. The CFO will model different scenarios

Actions: It was explained that trustees will receive month-end reports as school specific EXCEL documents, as circulated to the Chair of Trustees. These reports will also be shared with the co-heads and the Chair of the relevant LGB.

Seaford Head School

MR explained that the school is undergoing some changes, with 3 outgoing and 3 new members of the leadership team and 3 new governors, which it will take time to assimilate and work with. BE's time available for the new leaders is something to be considered, though he explained that the school is fortunate to have commenced some handover and the remaining appointments will be made in a timely manner, to allow a good handover. It was confirmed, in response to a question, that all posts have been advertised and there has already been lots of interest generated.

A question was raised about staff presentations to the LGB's, and it was explained that the attempts to encourage a big picture approach that have worked well and led to a good level of questioning and positive feedback from the presenters and members of the LGB.

CEO Update

BE reported that:

- There are weekly meetings with the CS co-heads and he also meets them individually
- SL attends every third meeting, and her input has been positive
- SHS teachers have delivered lessons in maths, French and PE. The interventions in Maths are significant as KS2 predictions are lower than last year.
- There has been positive and exciting work on curriculum development in RE (Religious Education) and MFL (Modern Foreign Languages)
- A peer review of English feedback is planned
- There is a working party looking at enrichment entitlement for young people in Seaford
- The Intensive Family Support Worker is having good impact and is jointly funded by the Seaford Head (50%) and the 4 other Seaford schools.
- There has been joint Mental Health First Aid training
- CS pupils attended the SHS production of Bugsy Malone

BE fed back on the recent consultation on admissions, which caused some local controversy. BE met the LA to explain the aims of the trust, but the issue may have created some tension with the other heads. BE explained that there has always been a vision for all Seaford Primaries to be welcomed into the Trust, though some may be resistant. However, Alfriston and Denton may also like to be included.

It was explained that pupil recruitment into CS was disappointing, which is a challenge. It will be a priority for the SLT to support the school with recruitment. It was suggested that starting a nursery should be considered, though a local nursery closed due to lack of children. Assurance was given that lots of energy is spent on recruitment, and a relationship with Denton is being cultivated, as it is hoped that the over-subscribed school may be able to direct families to CS. However, the press coverage around the admissions was positive and Y5 is now over-subscribed. This suggests that the development of the Trust is having a positive impact on recruitment into KS2.

It was also explained that, according to forecasts, there will only be 160 new children per year in the local area, which is likely to impact on all the primaries. Trustees asked if the LA would become involved, and it was explained that the LA has allowed schools to grow beyond needs in the area.

Trustees asked how many children come to SHS from further afield, and it was explained that Alfriston has a very small y 6 and the intake depends on which side of the village children live. Many Denton pupils come to SHS and the school is able to recruit from further afield.

JB explained that there used to be an East Dean cohort, though extra capacity in Eastbourne since Gildredge House opened and Cavendish became all-though provider has meant that less children now travel to school in Seaford. Some East Dean students attend SH6.

It was also noted that:

- The LA is starting to promote academisation again
- There will still be collaboration with the local primaries if they join a different Trust
- The LA is promoting strong community trusts, which will be the best thing for Seaford in the long term.
- There may be scope for the CS co-heads to support other schools

A Trustee asked if a Seaford school could disappear if pupil numbers do not increase, and it was explained that PAN may need to be reduced.

JB asked BE to attempt to recruit an additional governor for CS.

	Action: • ***Attempt to recruit a governor for CS***
4.	**Finance and Premises** SL reported that the auditors strongly advise annual review of the Governors' Checklist and Charity Commission checklist, which had been circulated with the agenda. JD and SL work through the documents, which are a good means of challenging the SBM. This will normally come to the September meeting. In response to a question, it was confirmed that there is no requirement to provide evidence, and they prompt questions. It was explained that the Schools' Resource Management document is also managed in the same way. Trustees asked about the readiness to respond to Charity Commission complete spot checks, and SL confirmed that she is confident that any requested evidence can be provided. It was confirmed, in response to a question, that a negative answer to a question is not a weakness, but a prompt to act. It was explained, in response to a question, that CS will no longer complete the Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS), as it relates to maintained schools. SL explained that, moving forward, there will not be termly finance presentations to the LGB's, and she will attend the meeting before the budget is approved at both schools. In the meantime, the monthly reports will be circulated to the Chairs, with supporting evidence and information, and governors will be able to submit questions. SL explained that she welcomes questions, as they challenge her and ensure the boards understand what is being presented to them. She will be happy to train and support governors as needed. **The SLT approved circulating the finance reports to the LGB's.** **A caveat to the Financial Scheme of Delegation had been requested at the last meeting but, as there was now clarity for Trustees, it was agreed that the additional wording was no longer needed and the original Scheme of Delegation could be reissued for email approval.** ***Action:*** • ***Re-circulate the Financial Scheme of Delegation for approval by email.*** **CS Accounts** It was reported that: • The maintained school carry forward has been received. • There was an error in the reporting of PPG • The income from the LA is now shown in the budget and is not shown as carry forward. • The 2023-24 GAG has been received and will be input to show the outturn. • Income marginally increased, and there is additional supplementary grant for this year • Management reports for SHS and CS show potential concerns, and positives. • It is not yet known how utility costs will change, and there will be a new charging stream from April • Trustees will be provided with financial tracking at each meeting

	A trustee asked what caused the shift from £12k surplus to £50k deficit, and SL explained that there was one error related to accounting for PPG, and the unfunded increases in staffing costs. **Health and Safety/ Premises** SL is working on plans for the premises, though there is not currently anything eligible for an SSIF bid. Planning permission for the fence was refused. This was discussed at the meeting and it was agreed that guidance will be sought, as there had been 2 external concerns about the wall , which the school has done its best to resolve, and a higher authority has said no. It was noted that the planning officers, and their report, were positive, but the committee refused the application. Trustees noted the safeguarding concern and resolved to attempt to proceed further. PHL offered to attend future meetings as he has relevant experience. **The Trust confirmed that it would support SL in making a complaint, due to comments made at the meeting.** *JH left at 18.35*
5.	**Governance Framework:** • **Local Governing Board Terms of Reference and Scheme of Delegation** This was deferred • **Agree annual schemes of work** **Approved** • **Ensure governance arrangements are published on the school websites** This was deferred
6.	**MAT Policies and Procedures** • **Discuss and agree which policies should be approved by the trust, and which should be approved at school level plus which should be overarching trust policies, to be personalised to each school** This was covered under agenda item 3 • **Trust Complaints Policy** This was covered under agenda item 3 • **Trust H&S Policy** This was covered under agenda item 3
7.	**CEO Update** This was covered under agenda item 3
8.	**Feedback from LGB meetings – to include LGB Minutes (in draft) and HT report / dashboard** This was covered under agenda item 3. A dashboard was available for SHS and will be amended to

	make it more useful for CS.
9.	**Trust Vision, Strategy and Priorities** **Risk Register** Trustees asked if the LGB's should have their own 1-page risk register, which was confirmed. It was explained that SHS has not had one, and CS has one which the Co-Chairs would like to retain. This was discussed and it was agreed that GN will share the CS register, for information. There can be Trust and School Risk Registers, if required. BE has circulated a proposed Risk Register for the SLT Board. The non- financial Scheme of Delegation had been circulated and will be revisited at the next meeting –GN to share as soon as possible. The Annual Schedule of Works was noted ***Action:*** • ***Circulate CS Risk Register – to align with the SHS version*** • ***Re-circulate the non- financial Scheme of Delegation shared for an earlier meeting.*** A question was asked about whether there will be a Trust website and BE explained that he created a 1-page document for the governance section of the website, which he will share for the next meeting. There will be student competitions in both schools to create a logo / strapline for the Trust. Trustees asked if there will be a session on trust values for the children. JD explained that he would like a consistent approach to branding, logos, standard footers, correspondence, etc. Trustees also suggested the following: • Making it clear that SHS and CS are linked and promoting the advantages of being part of the trust, such as transitioning to SHS. This could include photographs of primary and secondary students enjoying joint events. • Having a trust site and school specific sites, with consistent aesthetics, or a Trust 'landing page' with links to the school sites • Approaching local companies for help with the design aspects • Promoting the core values of the Trust It was confirmed that there will be trust email addresses for staff, governors, and trustees.
10.	**Agenda Items for next meeting:** Reorder items on the agenda based on today's meeting - GN • Schemes of Delegation • Risk register
11.	**Any other business** • **Trustee visits to Chyngton School – confirm date/ time** It was reported that SS visited CS and was very positive; it was agreed to request a written report on the visit. It was agreed, following a discussion, that SS is the correct person to be

	visiting CS, as she has primary expertise and experience. It was agreed that the next SLT meeting will take place at CS, and those wishing to tour the school should arrive for a tour at 4.30 pm. **Trustees discussed and approved using Governor Hub for sharing meeting papers.** JD asked GN to share the Academies Benchmark Report, as an action. ***Action:*** • ***Share meeting papers on Governor Hub*** • ***Share the Academies Benchmark Report, as an action.*** **Next meeting Wednesday 19 April 5-7pm at Chyngton School.**

Meeting dates for 2022-23

	FGB SHS	LGB SHS	FGB CS	LGB CS	Trustees	Members
Term 1	Tuesday 27 September 8-10am		Thursday 29 September 2-4pm		Wednesday 5 October 5-7pm	TBC
Term 2		Tuesday 29 November 8-10am		Thursday 1 December 9-11am	Wednesday 7 December 5-7pm	TBC
Term 3		Tuesday 7 February 8-10am		Thursday 9 February 9-11am		TBC
Term 4		Tuesday 28 March 8-10am		Thursday 30 March 9-11am	Wednesday 22 February 5-7pm	TBC
Term 5		Tuesday 23 May 8-10am		Thursday 25 May 4-6pm	Wednesday 19 April 5-7pm	TBC
Term 6		Tuesday 11 July 8-10am		Thursday 13 July 9am-3pm	Wednesday 7 June 5-7pm	TBC

Attachments

Item	Action	By	Note
1.	Emma Scudder to be responsible for CS Policies	ES	
2.	Kathryn Greenwood to be responsible for SHS Policies	KG	
3.	Trust schools to use ESCC Policies and replace references to ESCC with SLT	ES/KG	
4.	Trust Scheme of Delegation to clarify responsibility for policies	SL?	
5.	Send CS Complaints Policy to JD	GN	
6.	insert an introductory paragraph into all policies to explain that CS is now part of the trust – BE to draft	BE	

7.	Attempt to recruit a governor for CS	BE	
8.	Re-circulate the Financial Scheme of Delegation for approval by email.	GN	
9.	Circulate CS Risk Register	GN	
10	Re-circulate the non- financial Scheme of Delegation shared for an earlier meeting.	GN	
11	Share meeting papers on Governor Hub	GN	
12	Share the Academies Benchmark Report, as an action.	GN	✓