Meeting	Seaford Learning Trustees
Date	Wednesday 7th June 2023
Time	5pm – 7pm
Venue	Seaford Head School
Trustees	Jane Branson Jacky Cross Jon Dilley Bob Ellis Paul Holmes-Ling Chris Mercer Margaret Rooms Susie Sylvester
In attendance	Gaynor Newnham (Clerk) Sally Laidlaw (Chief Finance Officer) Diane Moss (NGA reviewer)
Apologies	James Hollingsworth
Absent	

Minutes

Item	Item Outline
1.	**Welcome & Apologies for Absence** Jon Dilley (JD) opened the meeting and introduced Diane Moss, who was completing an external review of governance and would be observing the meeting. Apologies had been received, and accepted, from James Hollingsworth.
2.	**Disclosure of Personal and Pecuniary Interests in Proceedings** JD reported that he is no longer a governor at St John's School.
3.	**Minutes of the Previous Meeting, 19th April 2023** • **Approve Minutes** MR queried the accuracy of the statement that Seaford Head School (SHS) and Chyngton School (CS) were previously LA schools before joining Seaford Learning Trust. This was briefly discussed and, as this had been the case before SHS became a stand-alone academy, the statement was agreed to be fit for purpose. **The minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.** • **Review Actions** The summary of actions was reviewed, and all actions were noted to be complete or in hand, except: ○ Trustee visit protocols will be reviewed at a future meeting ○ There are still issues with some of the policies; the Chair requested that these are directed to the person responsible ***Action:*** • ***Review Trustee Visit Protocols***

	• **Matters Arising** There were no matters to discuss.
4.	**School Updates** Minutes of the previous LGB meetings, school dashboards, and the SHS Headteacher report had been circulated with the agenda. • **Seaford Head** The Chair of Governors explained that the finance link governor has queried the school's level of financial oversight. The Chair of Trustees explained that the Trustees approve the budget and the Local Governing Boards (LGB's) monitor delivery, progress, unexpected costs, etc. and ensure that each school lives within its means. It was explained, in response to a question, that before becoming a multi-academy trust, SHS followed the circle model of governance, and JD had been the finance link governor, who reported back to the board. In addition, alternate meetings had been devoted to finance and had been attended by the Business Manager. It was confirmed, in response to a question, that the Chairs and nominated finance governors currently receive monthly reports on the budget and cashflow. It was noted that the financial scheme of delegation has been approved and should outline the procedures. **It was agreed, following further questions, that the monthly finance reports will be added to Governor Hub, for trustees to access.** **It was also agreed that the Trustees will attend finance training.** • **Chyngton** Trustees noted that attendance continues to be a concern and considered whether the trust needs to be more engaged with this issue. BE explained that the intensive family support practitioner has had a positive impact, but there will be further consideration of staffing across the trust, which will be added to the improvement plan. A cohesive, cross-trust approach should lead to improvements. The following points were made: ○ Good habits and relationships with families will be encouraged ○ Incentivised approaches may be considered ○ Trends across year groups were discussed at SHS ○ Attendance is a national issue The impact of absence on outcomes was queried, and it was agreed that there may be a correlation, but mobility also has an impact. CS has taken on vulnerable children later in their school careers. Trustees asked about pupil admissions for September, and it was reported that 39 pupils will join the reception class. The current roll is 379, against a PAN (Pupil Admission Number) of 420. It was confirmed, in response to further questions, that marketing will continue.
5.	**CEO Update** The CEO reported that:

- The Trust has received funding to support transition across all Seaford schools. Though the funding is for 2-years, a permanent appointment has been made. This was to widen the field of applicants. The role begins in September, though initial work has been completed.
- The new SHS school entrance is now complete, and all student support services are now in one area. It was explained, in response to a question, that there will be further minor internal moves.
- The LA asked SHS to exceed PAN, and a temporary classroom will be installed over the summer (for which £82k funding was received). The school will benefit financially from having more children on roll. This will also be positive for the community. It was confirmed, in response to a question, that the increase in PAN is for 1-year. More than 300 children stated that SHS was their 1st choice.
- Positive relationships are being maintained with the other local primary schools. The May HT meeting discussed the transition project and agreed to continue to contribute to the family support worker for a third year.
- The Trust has funded 'Action Your Potential' for the local primaries, though the impact has been mixed. Vulnerable families have not been reached. BE confirmed, in response to a question, that he is happy that other families have been supported by the initiative. **Trustees agreed that the trust needs to engage with the whole community, as this is a central feature of its vision, but some families are always hard to reach.**
- The Youth Counselling Project is working with all the Seaford schools.
- 2 Y13 students led a campaign to secure teacher assessed grades for young people with cancer, which was taken up by the local MP
- SH6 students led an assembly on online safety at CS
- Transition to SHS has been discussed with all local schools, including Denton; it was confirmed, in response to a question, that all students joining in September will be welcome to attend the transition week.
- The ESCC Director of Children's Services supports the Trust's vision to support the local community.
- Succession planning for leadership at CS has been successful and BE suggested that a different model may need to be considered in the future, with one of the leaders potentially being deployed across the trust. The CS Chair challenged the appropriateness of announcing this potential change at this meeting. It was agreed, following further discussion, that it will be good to increase leadership capacity across the trust. Questions were raised about the practical and cost implications for CS and the staff concerned. It was clarified, for Trustees, that there are currently co-heads at CS, with one HT 0.6 FTE (Full-time equivalent) and the other, 0.4 FTE HT and 0.6FTE DHT. **It was agreed that there will be further discussion of this operational decision outside of this meeting.**

Trustees requested a regular CEO report to trustees, and it was agreed that this will be provided 3 times per year, to alternate with the SHS HT Report.

There was a brief discussion about the Trust's governance structure, and it was agreed that it would be good to aspire to having more separation between Governors and Trustees, but the Trust is in its early stages. Capacity is being built, over time, which should lead to improvements.

Action:

- ***CEO to provide a written report to Trustees 3 times per year***

6.	**Finance** The CFO reported that: • Budgets could be submitted up to 31st August but, due to the holidays, they will be submitted as soon as possible. • Training will be provided to ensure Trustees understand the reports, in future. <u>SHS</u> • The school received additional funding due to Y7 capacity funding. • The SLT has been reduced by one member of staff. Trustees asked if this is a long-term plan, and it was explained that this will depend on the growth of the trust. A top-heavy SLT should be avoided. • There are 11 teachers leaving, and 14 joining. The number of new staff was queried, and it was explained that outgoing members of the SLT have subject specialisms that will need to be covered, and a teaching post was covered by supply for the whole of this year. The 6th form has expanded, meaning that more teachers are required. • High needs funding is not yet shown in the budget, as it covers 2 years and not all staff have been appointed • A £3k surplus is predicted, and the carry forward looks positive. Trustees asked if this surplus is small, and it was explained that the school is fortunate not to be having to use reserves, as many other schools are struggling. There has not been a negative budget at SHS for 5 years. Trustees asked why other schools are struggling, and it was explained that staffing costs are high for all schools. It was asked if Trustees should be concerned that staff costs as a percentage of the budget are high for 2026-27 and 2027-28. The CFO explained that wages will increase, but the income remains the same in the budget. The budget presented shows the worst-case scenario. A Trustee asked if there is a top-slice, and it was explained that this is part of the main budget for this year. The future top-slice will be based on expenditure. The CS top-slice is 3%. It was asked if being oversubscribed has supported the budget, but it was then explained that the 6th form is below capacity. 120 are needed for the provision to be sustainable. **Trustees approved the SHS budget** <u>Chyngton</u> The budget shows the worst-case scenario, and reserves will be used to ensure the budget balances. It has been challenging to set the budget as there is not yet a 12- month cycle, and there are four staff vacancies and 2 maternity leaves to be accounted for. The maternity costs will be met by the school and there will be a more accurate view once the exact dates are known. It was confirmed, in response to a question, that the budget is realistic. It was confirmed, following further questions, that the budget includes 1.6 FTE HT, a teaching commitment for the Assistant HT, and a 2% pay award for teachers. It is not known yet whether this will be funded. The CFO explained that, despite low pupil numbers, the school should be fully staffed to accommodate potential in year admissions. The budget should allow a Headteacher, a Deputy Head or Assistant Head and SENCO, and a teacher for every class, assuming 2-form entry. If necessary, a reduced PAN could be requested in future, though it is hoped that pupil recruitment will improve as families learn pupils would move automatically to SHS. There are initial signs of this in upper KS2. Trustees asked if pay increases are expected to be funded centrally, and it was explained that the situation

	is not yet known. It was explained that the budget will be reforecast in September, when more costs have been confirmed. Monthly reports will be circulated to Trustees. **Trustees approved the CS budget.** Trustees noted the Management Report, though it was explained that there are problems with the software. It is hoped to be able to see changes through the year more accurately next year.
7.	**Premises/ Health and Safety (H&S)** The CFO reported that: • There have been H&S walks at each site. • There is a plan for improvements and a better tracking system for CS. • There is a H&S committee at SHS, which includes a governor, and CS may like to mirror this process • There was a successful CIF bid for fire doors and work will be completed over the summer • The Safeguarding bid for the lower school has been sent to the Secretary of State to appeal the planning refusal from the local council **The Trustees approved using devolved formula capital of approximately £58,000 for glazing in the millennium wing. Trustees also approved using a contractor who will already be on site over the summer, and it was confirmed that this complies with tendering regulations.** **Trustees gave in-principal approval for works to the Crittall windows at CS, also using DFC and the same contractor. Final approval for that project will be given by the CEO, according to the Scheme of Delegation.** Trustees asked if CS should have a H&S Audit via Zurich Insurance, as this was actioned for SHS. It was explained that this will not be needed, and there will be an ESCC H&S audit of all sites in the autumn.
8.	**Governance Framework:** • **Review of the Trustee Risk Register** The updated risk register showed that progress is being made in most areas, and Trust systems are evolving. Staffing costs were noted to be high. Trustees discussed the potential risks of other Seaford Schools joining an external trust, and it was agreed that the main risk would be to the Trust vision for a town-wide Trust. The existing work with the local primaries may be in the Trust's favour. Other risks include funding, and reputation. A Trustee asked if GDPR should be added to the Risk Register, and it was agreed that it could be added to the LGB registers, if the LGB's wished.
9.	**MAT Policies and Procedures** • Trust Complaints Policy It was confirmed that the Complaints Policy has been approved, though the Chair had wished to see if wording included in the CS policy should also be added to the SHS version. GN will resend the CS Complaints Policy to JD ***Action:*** • ***Resend the CS Complaints Policy to JD***

10.	**Trust Vision, Strategy and Priorities** BE stated that this had been covered in his CEO update
11.	**Agenda Items for next meeting:**
12.	Any other business A Trustee asked if Trust Vision, Strategy and Priorities could be placed higher on the agenda, in future, and questioned how Trustees are supporting the vision for the trust. Other Trustees suggested that a Trust Development Plan is needed. The CEO agreed that the next meeting should include school and trust development plans. Although the draft meeting schedule for 2023-24 had been agreed at the May meeting, concerns were raised about the long gap between the T6 and T1 meetings. An 'awayday' was suggested, though the Chair questioned whether this would add value to the cycle of meetings. There was a brief debate about whether the role of the Trustees should be related to strategy, vision and accountability, or delivery. Trustees also discussed: • The different roles of Trustees and Governors • Repetition of LGB work at Trustee meetings • The limitations of most Trustees also being Governors • The need for the Trustees to become better acquainted and able to work together • The need to reduce the amount of time spent discussion individual schools at Trustee meeting, should more schools join. The CFO pointed out that there have been 5 Trustee meetings so far, one of which was focused on introductions, and one to sign off accounts. The auditors have given their reassurance that this will be a process and time is needed. There are specific things that have needed to be covered at meetings, which have left less time for broader discussions. The Trustees need time to learn what is required of them. For example, an Audit and Risk Committee has not yet been established but will be required. The CEO commented that the launch day in October was excellent. More thinking time would be good and would be informed by the school improvement plans. Trustees should have input into the plans for the trust, while maintaining balance, as all Trustees are unpaid volunteers. It would be possible to evaluate the current model for meetings when one full cycle had been completed. A Trustee requested a meeting before October to discuss the vision and the plan for the next year.
13.	Date of next meeting: Wednesday 11 October 2023 5-7pm

The meeting closed at 19.23

Actions:

No	Action	By
	CEO to provide a written report to Trustees 3 times per year	BE

3	Review Trustee Visit Protocols	BE
4	Resend the CS Complaints Policy to JD	GN

Meeting Dates for 2023-24

Term	LGB SHS	LGB CS	Trustees	Members
1	**Tuesday 26 September 8-10am**	**Thursday 28 September 9-11am**	**Wednesday 11 October 5-7pm**	
2	**Tuesday 21November 8-10am**	**Thursday 23 November 9-11am**	**Wednesday 6 December 5-6.30pm**	**Wednesday 6 December 6.30-7pm**
3	**Tuesday 16 January 8-10am**	**Thursday 18 January 9-11am**	**Wednesday 31 January 5-7pm**	
4	**Tuesday 5 March 8-10am**	**Thursday 7 March 9-11am**	**Wednesday 20 March 5-7pm**	
5	**Tuesday 30 April 8-10am**	**Thursday 2 May 9-11am**	**Wednesday 15 May 5-7pm**	
6	**Tuesday 25th June 2024**	**Thursday 11th July 2024**	**Wednesday 12th June 2024**	**Wednesday 12th June 2024**