Meeting	Seaford Learning Trustees
Date	Wednesday 31st January 2024
Time	5pm – 7pm
Venue	Board Room, Seaford Head School, Arundel Road site
Trustees	Jacky Cross Jon Dilley Bob Ellis James Hollingsworth Chris Mercer Margaret Rooms Sarah Speedie
In attendance	Jane Branson Amy Clarke (Co-Head, Chyngton) Gaynor Newnham (Clerk) Robin Tollyfield (Co-Head, Chyngton) Sally Laidlaw
Apologies	
Absent	

Minutes

1.	**Welcome & Apologies for Absence** JD opened the meeting, as Chair. There were no apologies though JH would be leaving at 6.00.
2.	**Disclosure of Personal and Pecuniary Interests in Proceedings** JB declared an interest in an agenda item, during which she would leave the meeting.
3.	**Minutes of the Previous Meeting, 6th December 2023** **Approved** **Review of actions/ matters arising:** SL explained that £34k is interest on funds. Membership will be discussed at the AGM. All other actions are complete.
4.	**CEO Update – Written** BE reported that there was a positive start to the year, and the Senior Executive Team meetings work well and are driving Trust development. The other Seaford School perceive the Trust well. Primary Cluster Meeting minutes were tabled at the meeting, and it was explained that the group's strategic impetus has improved. The Youth Counselling Project, Careers, PSHE, Reading, Family support deployment, HNB project and peer review were discussed at the last meeting; it is hoped formal relationships will evolve from the partnerships. Seaford wide priorities have been looked at by the audit and risk committee. Performance Indicators may need to be changed re 2 schools' and Trust viability. Though many trusts use secondary funding to support primaries at present, the need to ensure ongoing viability

	and flexibility in enlarging the Trust was agreed. It was noted that maintained schools would be required to restructure, as they cannot be supported by a secondary school. SHS SH6 applications are positive at 200+. SHS has joined a cluster with Claverham, Gildredge and Willingdon schools. The reasons for joining were queried, and BE explained that these schools are keen to be part of peer review. Claverham has previously been judged outstanding, and Gildredge and Willingdon are well established. Gildredge is in favour of EBAC. BE explained, when asked if Cavendish was interested in collaboration, that it is involved in its own trust. It was confirmed, in response to a question, that a cross-phase art teacher will work across both schools, as they will be employed by the Trust. Funding Trust-wide appointments was discussed, as it was commented that the Chyngton budget would be positively impacted by employing cross-phase staff. SL explained that the aim will be to have a Trust budget from which to fund these posts. This flexibility is important and could be attractive to other primaries and ensuring everyone has a certain level of provision was discussed by the Audit and Risk Committee. It was noted that more complicated accounting processes are not currently needed, and Trustees are confident in the abilities of the CFO auditors. It was reported that the cluster schools have participated in a range of positive LA supported initiatives. The report format was discussed, and it was agreed that some areas are not required. The context section can be removed from future reports.
5.	**Finance and Premises** **Finance** The Finance Report had been circulated with the agenda, and SL reported that: • Building and supply costs have not been finalised. • Chyngton utility bills need bringing up to date. • SHS budget was reviewed in November. • CS budget was reviewed this term and SL has a good working relationship with the school. • January's pay run is complete, and all salaries now correct. Trustees asked about staff pay reviews, and it was reported that they are complete for support staff. The 2023 increase has been signed off. Those on the lowest pay are penalised more due to the tax credit system reducing their income. Teachers work to academic years and non-teachers are on an April cycle, which was confirmed, in response to a question, to be in line with other trusts. Salary costs accurate at the end of Month 5. The CFO confirmed, in response to a question, that they have no concerns. It was also confirmed, following an additional question, that pupil numbers impact the budget. The budget for 2024-25 is almost due and will be planned with caution. **Premises** The CFO reported that CIF (Capital Improvement Fund) bids have been submitted for work to the roof at Chyngton. The Trust will contribute 30%, subject to approval in early May. Various options were considered, but decisions were time critical. JD was involved in the process. The amount of the Trust contribution was queried and reported as £215k. There is competition for bids, and a

	higher contribution is more likely to lead to the bid being granted. If unsuccessful, the Trust will need to complete the repairs needed. There is an appeal process. The condition of the other Seaford primaries was briefly discussed, and it was stated that maintained schools submit capital bids to the local authority, to be funded from reserves. Any school joining Seaford Learning Trust would be subject to due diligence processes, which would include looking at the site. A bid has also been submitted for Fire Safety at SHS. **It was agreed to discuss plans for after the Trust reserves have been spent at the Finance Committee (Audit and Risk) - add to agenda**. ***Action:*** • ***Add plans for after the Trust reserves have been spent to the Finance Committee agenda.*** ICT servers were discussed, as they are at end of life for the 3 sites and a solution is needed. Though there is a move to cloud-based provision servers are needed as some functionality would be lost without and the school would be reliant on Wi-Fi and cloud. The comparative cost was queried and reported to be a 5-year investment would be £1k/ month for servers, and £2k/month for cloud. If the servers last longer the cost would decrease. IT costings are always in principle, but the best price will be secured by 'Computer to Cloud.' A 5-year plan for IT infrastructure is needed, with budgeting. It was confirmed, in response to a question, that there is a hardware budget, though this project would be funded from devolved formula capital. **It was agreed to discuss IT at the next Audit and Risk Committee meeting.** **Action:** **Add IT to the next Audit and Risk Committee meeting agenda.** **The Trustees approved the costs in principle for work to the roof at Chyngton and Fire Safety at Seaford Head, and for the IT server replacement.** *JH left at 17.58*
6.	**Audit and Risk Committee Feedback** The A&R Minutes were circulated within the CEO report. It was explained that internal audit recommendations have been categorised into actions to be either working towards or not workable. It was reported that the auditors can complete deep dives and data governance, high needs funding or PPG could be considered for future analysis. Trustees agreed that this should be completed if it would be helpful. SL will discuss this further with the auditors. It was asked if the internal audit replaced informal benchmarking, and it was explained that audits must be completed by a qualified person and is an obligation under the academy handbook. Please refer to the confidential minutes.
7.	**Impact of the Trust on Chyngton – presentation** AC and RT presented to Trustees. The additional points were made:

	• There have been 27 in-year-admissions. • SHS teachers have been leading maths interventions for borderline children and teaching to gaps for Y6 children. Resources, planning, and teaching have been addressed and there has been early impact as shown in the November tests. • Work on modern foreign languages is ongoing. Trustees asked about support with teaching English, and it was explained that this has been discussed and arranged. A 3-day/week reading intervention is in use. • Attendance strategies have been jointly developed but are different for primary and secondary. An attendance officer is in place, doing good work on persistent absence. The Intensive Family Support Practitioner will work on attendance and there will be an EWO employed. Attendance is stronger than last year. It was confirmed, in response to a question, that the Amazon award remains in use, aimed at motivating parents, as a family solution is needed. Trustees asked how many children are 'severely absent,' and whether they are linked to the early help team. It was reported that there are five children in this category, and there have been significant improvements. It was explained, in response to a question, that severely absent children coming into school for 1-2 hours at a time might be in class with their peers and some attend specialist nurture provision. • The Trust subscription to TES jobs has aided with recruitment. It was confirmed, in response to a question, that SHS does not use NViro for cleaning. It was explained that there is ongoing work on having sustainable structure in view of being below PAN; the staffing structure, and support for challenging children will be considered. Trustees asked if there is an Alliance Partner, and it was explained that all the Seaford schools have the same adviser. Support from the LA has reduced over time. The staff feedback to partnership working was queried, and it was reported that some subject leaders agree the work with SHS has been invaluable. There may have been teething troubles around adapting to the primary way.
8.	**5 Year vision** A document had been circulated in advance, but this would be deferred to the next meeting.
9.	**Standards across the Trust** The school dashboards had been circulated with the agenda.
10.	**Agenda Items for next meeting:** AGM – to be advertised. School finance Dashboards Marketing the trust – 5 year vision It was explained that finance Training will be combined with the LGB session and completed online. MR to circulate date. ***Action:*** • ***Circulate date for online finance training session.*** There being no further business, the meeting closed at 19.10.

11.	**Any other business** None **Next meeting:** **AGM Wednesday 20 March 4-5pm** **Trustees Wednesday 20 March 5-7pm**

Summary of actions

No	Action	By	Notes
1.	Add plans for after the Trust reserves have been spent to the Finance Committee agenda.	SS	
2.	Add IT to the next Audit and Risk Committee meeting agenda.	SS	
3.	Circulate date for online finance training session.	MR	