Meeting	Seaford Learning Trustees
Date	Wednesday 18 March 2026
Time	5pm – 7.00pm
Venue	Seaford Head School (Arundel Road Site)
Trustees	Jon Dilley Bob Ellis Margaret Rooms
In attendance	Sally Laidlaw (Chief Finance Officer) Gaynor Newnham (Clerk)
Apologies	James Hollingsworth Sarah Speedie Jacky Cross Jane Branson (Guest)
Absent	Chris Mercer

MINUTES

<table>
<tr><th>Item</th><th>Item Outline</th><th>Action</th></tr>
<tr><td>1.</td><td>Welcome & Apologies for Absence
The Chair opened the meeting and thanked those present for attending.
Trustees received and accepted apologies from:
• James Hollingsworth
• Sarah Speedie
• Jacky Cross
• Jane Branson (Guest)

Chris Mercer was absent without apologies.

The quorum for meetings was checked and confirmed to be three Trustees, or 1/3. The meeting was, therefore, confirmed to be quorate.</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>2.</td><td>Disclosure of Personal and Pecuniary Interests in Proceedings
None</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>3.</td><td>Minutes of the Previous Meeting: January 2026
Trustees approved the minutes as an accurate record of the meeting.
Trustees reviewed the summary of actions:
<table>
<tr><td>No</td><td>Action</td><td>By</td></tr>
<tr><td>3.1</td><td>Invite members to attend training about the role.</td><td>BE</td></tr>
<tr><td>5.1</td><td>Ask ES to reorder the school dashboards so the newest tab is on the left</td><td>ES</td></tr>
<tr><td>9.1</td><td>Remove Janet Bowen as HR link in the relevant policies</td><td>ES</td></tr>
</table>
3.1 Member training has not yet taken place. SL will take responsibility for this.
5.1 Complete
9.1 Complete

Matters arising
Members discussed:</td><td></td></tr>
</table>

	• the importance of having the right people in the right roles, as someone who is very keen and engaged may be better suited to a more active role. • whether more Trustees are needed, and the pros and cons of inviting people with no connection to the school to be involved. Both discussions were deferred to the next meeting. Trustee terms of office were confirmed to be 4-years. **Action:** **Arrange to meet members to for training** **Add 'Trustee recruitment' to the next agenda**	**3.1** **3.2**
4	**CEO verbal report** • **School Dashboards** **Chyngton** The CEO highlighted that: • attendance has improved over the last three years, but is still not as it should be, particularly in Y6 and Y1. • The number of safeguarding concerns has slightly increased • Complaints are down in both schools • Suspensions have increased from 3 to 9 over 3 years, which is common across primaries. Q: What is 6.5% absence as school days? A: 5% is half a day/fortnight SHS attendance is not improving due to having children on roll, at the request of the LA, who do not attend school. Q: How would the attendance data appear without the outliers? A: It would be much higher. Q: Would removing the outliers from the data impact on strategy? A: Yes, it is better to focus on improving attendance of the typical child, rewards, etc. Q: Is there any conflict of the DSL being responsible for attendance? A: The DSL can oversee the strategy, while all staff are urged to take responsibility for attendance. Q: What leads to primary pupils being suspended? A: Violence. Some children are not ready for school, and suspensions are used as a last resort. The school is extremely inclusive. <u>Seaford Head</u> The CEO highlighted that: • Whole school attendance has increased from 2023, but this is due to Y12 and 13. • Safeguarding has not changed significantly over three years. • The number of complaints has reduced. • Suspensions are lowest in East Sussex • Teaching numbers have crept up – due to the growth in SH6. Q: Is 88% attendance in Y11 due to individuals?	

	A: The team work hard but there are children who find school challenging and opt out. This is a change to previous trends, where attendance has increased in Y11. Q: Is this an ongoing legacy of covid? A: The current Y11 did not take SATS Q: Are disinterested students at Y11 not likely to progress to 12/13? A: This is true. Chyngton's current Y6 attendance does not bode well for transition to SHS. • **Marketing the Trust** CS had a positive Ofsted inspection, and the report will be excellent marketing for the Trust. CS had no areas needing attention in the draft report, and inclusion and personal development were judged to be strong. Trustees commended the tremendous result. Trustees were informed that the new Ofsted framework places pressure on headteachers. The CEO showed Trustees some ASCL conference data which showed that 'exceptional' judgements are currently higher in secondary than primary. Attendance and behaviour require a secure fit on the data, which can be problematic and is causing concern to schools. Q: Are parents sent a copy of the Ofsted report? A: Letters will be sent to the parents and the Trustees. The CEO also reported that: • a former CS who is a current SHS pupil has been offered a place at Oxford. A press release is already being considered. • The local cluster has looked at pooling resources for SEND. **Trustees agreed that the Trust could be involved as long it is not funding resources for the non-Trust schools.** • The recent whole school performance celebrated talent and values • CS will be part of the SHS battle of the bands.	
5	**Finance and operations** <u>Finance</u> The CFO reported that the deficit at SHS has reduced, but the CS budget continues to fluctuate due to the use of supply teachers to cover staff absence. Q: Is the school following absence management procedures? A: The CFO is leading on absence management and processes are being followed. Q: Is staff absence insurance being considered? A: The CFO will explore possible options, as a local school has engaged with a private insurance company. Q: Will the CS deficit negatively impact on the SHS budget? A: No. The CS is still new for the CFO, who will have a better view next year. There may be some inaccuracies in the budget reporting due to assumptions being made at present.	

The CFO confirmed that the Finance Self-assessment tool was completed by SL and SS and submitted by the deadline.

Premises

The CFO reported that the safeguarding work at Steyne Road is almost complete. Fire improvement work at Steyne Road is in the early stages and will be completed by September, with being done over the school breaks.

Swimming Pool

The issue had been discussed by the Audit and Risk Committee, and the CFO is due to meet Wave and ESCC.

Trustees discussed the pros and cons of remaining in the contract and made the following points:

- Trying to apply for eco grants is impaired by having the pool.
- The Trust has no information upon which to invoice the schools using the pool, meaning that it is subsidising all schools who use the pool
- Wave has not invested in the pool
- Pool use by the public is minimal
- It is marketed as a Wave pool, but they do not fund it. They are not fulfilling their community responsibility.

Trustees agreed the Trust should withdraw from the swimming pool contract.

Nursery

The CFO updated the Trustees on staffing and explained that there is a trained nursery worker in the inclusion team who will step in in T5, if needed, so the nursery can open. There is a member of staff with experience but no current qualification who could also work in there.

Q: When will the Nursery open?

A: After Easter. Recruitment decisions will be made in T5.

Specialist Facility

The CFO reported that there is slow progress with the CS facility.

Q: What is the expected timeline?

A: The LA is offering tender for contractors on 01 April.

Q: Is the LA paying for the work?

A: Yes.

Q: When would the LA like the facility to be available?

A: September. We have been accommodating; the consultants have delayed the plans.

The CEO alerted Trustees to the current 'Excellence of All' document, from the LA, which implies SHS is opening a specialist facility and that CS' facility is open and suggested that Trustees should write a letter to ask how that has happened.

Q: How is the SHS facility progressing?

A: Surveys have taken place.

Q: Is this for a portacabin on the field?

A: Yes – a nice extension to the current building, and an additional one.

Q: Who owns the cabins?

A: The LA – they will be made permanent

Q: Are we losing SH6 space?

A: Yes – the hut will be for SH6.

Q: Will the new building be a similar size to what will be lost?

A: Yes, there will be space for 2 classrooms.

Q: Will there be a need to review access?

A: No

Catering

The CFO reported that Chartwells had been supplying school meals for the last seven years and ESCC had invited other providers to tender. The quality of the meals has declined, and the cost of the meals was £13k for CS and £28k for SHS, with a £29k rebate. Impact Foods were asked by SL to tender but ESCC has renewed with Chartwells for any buying in school. The SHS contract has expired and the Trust can accept or reject the proposal and select a new provider by 01 September.

Q: Does Impact Foods also serve BOSCO?

A: Yes

Q: Why was there no rebate for CS?

A: It is only for secondary schools.

Q: Would there be a rebate from Impact Foods?

A: Yes, and the food is cheaper.

Q: Why would you like to change provider?

A: The promises Chartwells made 7 years ago have not been honoured, and they have no credibility. Chartwells staff had asked the CFO to talk to them about TUPE, which led her to believe there must have been a breach of confidentiality by Chartwells, which she will complain about.

Q: Would the contract change but not staff?

A: Correct. The current catering staff would be subject to TUPE.

Q: Would changing cost the Trust more money?

A: Impact has completed a profit and loss statement and factored in the management fee – there would be a £500 profit in Y1 with no payment from SLT. The Trust would receive a percentage of profit as it increases.

Q: Would this be due to improved food quality increasing sales?

	A: Yes. Impact will invest £59k in capital works for the second phase. SH6 proposal is for the catering facility to be open while the staff are in, with a bespoke menu. Regular pop-ups will engage pupils and ascertain interest. They will improve food to improve service. Q: How long would the contract be? A: 7 years Q: How long has Impact worked with Bosco? A: Many years – very few schools leave them. The SHS food lead and lead governor visited their provision in another school and were impressed. There are also initiatives for ECO, food waste, etc. Q: Where is Impact based? A: The schools' point of contact will be covering Worthing to Bexhill. Q: Is the food made offsite. A: No – cooked at SHS and CS – this may change when CS moves to 1FE. The CFO has been reserved about making a change, due to possible workload, but is reassured that there will be little for her to do. There will be money available for chef managers who the CFO will be able to hold them to account better than she can for Chartwells. Q: Would there be a benefit for the Trust if they use our site to cook for other schools? A: Yes. The key point will be improved food quality – we have a moral duty to provide good food to our students. The CFO explained that Impact would like to come and do a presentation to the Trustees if they agree to proceed. Q: Is the potential change of food contract common knowledge? A: The Food Lead and Finance Team are aware. The lead governor will be informed if/ when there is a contract in place. The CFO reported that the other local primary schools have paid someone to tender on their behalf, which could be explored if Trustees wished. **Trustees agreed to pursue the contract with Impact Foods and that the CFO may confirm with ESCC that the Trust does not wish to continue with Chartwells.** **Trustees approved the Premises Policy**	
6	**Feedback from the Audit and Risk Committee** The CEO reported that the restructure of the Student Services team has been paused following a resignation and feedback through the consultation process.	
7	**Safeguarding** There were no urgent updates. Q: Are there meningitis updates to parents? A: They have been circulated on Edulink.	

	Q: Does the school have records of vaccinations? A: No – we provide the facilities only	
8	**Agenda items for next meeting:** SLT AP and Trust priorities Trustee Review Links with other schools Written report Catering presentation – SL to arrange for 4.30pm **Action: Arrange catering presentation.**	**8.1**
9	**Any other business**	
10	**Next meeting:** Wednesday 6 May 2026 Closed at 18.57	

Actions

No	Action	By whom	By when
3.1	**Arrange to meet members to for training**	SL	Next meeting
3.2	**Add 'Trustee recruitment' to the next agenda**	GN	Next meeting
8.1	**Arrange catering presentation**	SL	Next meeting

Seaford Learning Trust – meeting schedule for 2025 2026				
Term	**SHS LGB**	**Chyngton LGB**	**Trustees**	**Other**
1	Tuesday 23 September 8-10am	Thursday 25 September 8-10am	Wednesday 08 October 5-7pm	
2	Tuesday 11 November 8-10am	Thursday 13 November 8-10am	Wednesday 3 December 5-6.30pm	AGM: Wednesday 3 December 6.30-7pm
3	Tuesday 13 January 8-10am	Thursday 22 January 8-10am	Wednesday 28 January 5-7pm	
4	Tuesday 3 March 8-10am	Thursday 5 March 8-10am	Wednesday 18 March 5-7pm	
5	**Tuesday 28 April 8-10am**	**Thursday 21 May 8-10am**	**Wednesday 6 May 5-7pm**	
6	**Tuesday 23 June 8-10am**	**Thursday 09 July 8-10am**	**Wednesday 10 June 5-6.30pm**	**Awayday: 15 July 2026**