



## **EDUCATION SOUTH WEST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

Minutes of the **Annual General Meeting** of **Education South West** held at South Devon UTC at **6.00pm** on **Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> February 2024**.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Present/Absent</b>
Nic Grodhunce	Member	Absent
Sharon Marshall SM	Member	<b>Present</b>
John Pike JP	Member	<b>Present</b>
Margaret Turgoose MT	Member	<b>Present</b>
Leon Winston LW	Member	<b>Present</b>
<b>Invitees</b>		
Graham Austin GA	Trustee, Chair	<b>Present</b>
Gail Brown GB	Trustee	<b>Present via Teams</b>
Annelie Fearon AF	Trustee	<b>Present</b>
Jennifer Gibbs	Trustee	Absent
Adrian Hines AH	Trustee, Vice-Chair	<b>Present</b>
David Potter	Trustee	Absent
Jackie Ridding	Governor Services Clerk	<b>Present via Teams</b>
Matthew Shanks MS	Executive Principal and Trust Leader	<b>Present</b>
Jenny Sutton	Trustee	Absent
Barrie Taylor BT	Trustee	<b>Present</b>
<b>Executive Board</b>		
Rob Coles RC	Secondary School Improvement Lead, Executive Headteacher of Coombeshead Academy and South Devon UTC	<b>Present</b>
Tracy Hannon TH	Director of Education	<b>Present</b>
Jayne Keller	Director of School Improvement	Absent
Suzannah Wharf SLW	Director of School Improvement and Executive Head of Teign School	<b>Present</b>
Stuart White SW	Finance Director and COO	<b>Present</b>

<b>1</b>	<b><u>WELCOME</u></b>	
	LW welcomed all to the meeting and agreed to be chair.	
<b>2</b>	<b><u>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</u></b>	
2.1	Apologies were received from Nic Grodhunce, Jennifer Gibbs, David Potter, Jenny Sutton and Jayne Keller.	
2.2	The absences were consented to.	
<b>3</b>	<b><u>DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY AND BUSINESS INTERESTS</u></b>	
3.1	No declarations of pecuniary or other interests regarding items on the agenda were made.	
3.2	No declarations of gifts or hospitality had been received or given since the last meeting.	
<b>4</b>	<b><u>MINUTES</u></b>	



4.1	The minutes of the meeting held on <b>Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2023</b> were <b>approved</b> and would be signed by the chair.	
4.2	There were no matters arising.	
<b>5</b>	<b><u>CEO REPORT</u></b>	
	<p>MS thanked members and trustees for their support and explained succession planning was in progress across the trust.</p> <p>MS reported TH would be retiring on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2024 and they would be advertising nationally for a Deputy CEO.</p> <p>MS explained they had established Education South West teacher training under the SWiFT title. He said a review to determine what format it would be in the future, as well as delivery of NPQs and ECT was taking place. MS said he continued to meet on a weekly basis with the school improvement team and shared services to ensure continuity.</p> <p>MS reported the budgets were very tight. He said schools were still suffering because of the pandemic.</p> <p>MS said there had been building work at Teign to provide more maths classrooms and they were hoping they would be ready at the end of May 2024.</p> <p>MS confirmed no reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC) had been identified in any of the schools.</p> <p>MS said recruitment of staff had been a concern in some areas.</p> <p>MS reported the focus for the year was outcomes and attendance. He said the primary data had been suppressed as a trust, due to Kingswear only having 4 students but noted the data was above national average and the secondary data was -0.17 on Progress 8. MS said the outcomes for basics needed to be higher at secondary schools and for writing at primary schools.</p> <p>MS explained because of this, the Regional Director had identified an increase in outcomes as being a priority for the trust in the current academic year and the next.</p> <p><b>Members asked if all trusts had been prevented from growing.</b> MS said some were still growing but he said it was important for ESW to continue working with integrity and ensure the children were always put first. He said the trust were continuing to support some schools not in the trust through management partnerships, even if some of those schools never joined ESW, they would continue to support them whilst he was CEO because it was the right thing to do for education. MS said trusts should not only be about their ability to grow bigger but about their ability to support schools and work with schools who had things to offer, to ensure that all children benefitted.</p> <p>MS reported there had been Ofsted successes in the trust and confirmed that lots of work had gone into the inspections.</p>	
<b>6</b>	<b><u>CHAIR OF TRUSTEES REPORT</u></b>	



	<p>GA thanked BT for taking on chair of the Performance and Standards Committee. He reported the chairs of the local boards met each half term for a chairs' forum.</p> <p>GA explained lots of work had gone into the risk register which was more user friendly. He said the trust policies were being reviewed and approved.</p> <p>GA said there were new governing boards with Wynstream, Kingsbridge Primary and Kingsteignton joining the trust.</p> <p>GA reported he had met with MS and the Regional Director to discuss the work they were doing across the trust and had invited them to visit the trust. MS said as a trust, they wanted the outcomes to improve and following the pandemic, they took a child-centred approach. He said the focus needed to be making the children's outcomes and lives better.</p> <p>GA said the financial control was in good shape and thanked SW for his work. He said they had a very successful meeting with the auditors, Francis Clark. GA noted they had invested in the school improvement team to increase the standards across the trust.</p>	
7	<b><u>ANNUAL REPORTS AND ACCOUNTS 2022-2023</u></b>	
	<p><b>Members asked if the trust was working on energy saving initiatives.</b> MS said they had considered it but most projects would need a large investment which would potentially take money away from the children and the schools. He said they were doing all they could for the children's education.</p> <p><b>Members asked why the pension contributions had not increased.</b> SW said he would review the figures but there had not been a big change in contributions and some support staff may have withdrawn from the pension scheme due to the cost of living.</p> <p><b>Members asked what the expenditure was on staffing.</b> SW said for all staff it was between 70-73%.</p> <p><b>Members noted a deficit budget had been set which had improved, but said there were also healthy reserves. They asked if a deficit budget had intentionally been set over the last few years and would the trust do that again.</b> SW explained they did not plan to set deficit budgets but at times had no choice due to factors such as the energy costs. He said some schools joined the trust with no budget and plans were in place to build them up. SW said the overall reserves could be used to support a school but there needed to be a plan in place.</p>	
8	<b><u>APPROVAL OF EXTERNAL AUDITORS FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2023-2024</u></b>	
	<p>GA reported he had a meeting with SW and Francis Clark to discuss the audit. He said for independence, Francis Clark had agreed to change the audit manager and audit partner. GA proposed to reappoint Francis Clark.</p> <p><b>Members agreed to reappoint Francis Clark as the external auditors.</b></p>	
9	<b><u>APPOINTMENTS OF TRUSTEES AND/OR MEMBERS</u></b>	
	Members noted the appointment of the following Members:	



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Margaret Turgoose appointed on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2023</li> </ul> <p>Members noted the appointment of the following Trustees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gail Brown appointed on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2023</li> <li>• Jennifer Gibbs appointed on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2023</li> </ul> <p>MS suggested it would be useful to appoint another trustee.</p> <p><b>Members asked if there were any skills the board of trustees were lacking.</b> MS said they had trustees with expertise in education, strategy and finance so they had all skills covered but more trustees would help share the workload. GB noted her board of trustees had increased to 14 with a balance of people still in full-time work and retired.</p>	
10	<b><u>ANY MOTIONS TO BE DEBATED BY THE MEMBERS</u></b>	
	<p><b>Members asked if some of the problems with persistent absence were due to parents' attitudes having changed and education not being seen as important.</b> MS agreed this was an issue and attendance was a focus in all local governing body meetings. He said they were raising awareness for attendance in schools and they were working with external leaders and other trust leaders. RC explained the primary school attendance was broadly in line with national figures but the secondary attendance was approximately 0.5% below national figures. He said the school improvement team were working on the outcomes and attendance.</p> <p>RC explained the work they were doing to improve attendance. He said in the first term, they had rewritten the attendance policy and provided standardised letters for the schools to use. RC said in the second term they carried out detailed research with the communities and he said he would produce a presentation for the second half term. He explained in the third term he would utilise the attendance leads in the trust to create an attendance hub. RC said the trust was focusing on building relationships with the community whilst not tolerating poor attendance. He noted the strategies would take time to influence the attendance figures.</p> <p><b>Members asked trustees how they monitored and evaluated progress and were they confident they had the right people in the right place.</b> GB said the Performance and Standards Committee received a very high level of information, the trustees asked challenging questions and the questions were always fully answered. She said there were no assumptions and the executive team had a very good knowledge of the schools.</p> <p><b>Members asked if the local governing boards had enough governors.</b> GA explained some were better than others and recruitment was often a discussion during the chairs' forum. MS said it was important they recruited the right people as there were misconceptions about what a governor's role was.</p>	
11	<b><u>ANY BUSINESS THE TRUSTEES HAVE ASKED THE MEMBERS TO CONSIDER</u></b>	
	The trustees did not have any items for the members to consider.	
12	<b><u>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</u></b>	
	MS thanked the members for their challenge.	



	LW said it was good to hear what was happening and noted it was important they were critical with what they looked at.  SM said it was pleasing to hear the trust were doing the right thing for the children.	
13	<b><u>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</u></b>	
	The date of the next AGM would be confirmed.	

The meeting closed at 6.51pm.

Signed

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Dated

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