

# Minutes

## TRUSTEES MEETING

Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> November 2020 via Zoom

|   | Item  | Action points |
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| 1 | <p><b><u>Present and Chair's Welcome</u></b></p> <p>Present as Trustees: J Savage, J Cowell, P Sharp, J Hill , S Burns, G Merry, R Dakin and S Isherwood</p> <p>In attendance: J Barber, L Robertson, D Osborne. F Johnson (WR Partners)</p>  |               |
| 2 | <p><b><u>Minutes of 17<sup>th</sup> September 2020</u></b></p> <p>The minutes were reviewed and accepted as a true record.</p> <p>Action points: -</p> <p><b>JB</b> had sent the data return to <b>JC</b></p> <p><b>JC</b> had started to work on the document and requested to speak to <b>JB</b> later that day to assist in its completion. She would then circulate it before presenting it to the board of governors. It would then be an agenda item on the December governors meeting.</p> |               |

**JB** In regard to the Arts Council additional funding for joint hub projects.

He had initially thought that it could have been used to expand the Armchair Adventures project and had spoken to Edsential (Cheshire West music education hub - meh) who thought this was a good idea, however when he spoke to Sefton hub they had already planned to apply with Knowsley and St Helen's hub for an alternative project. These three hubs work together in partnership as Merseyside Education Hub Alliance. The Armchair Adventures project has applied for funding from Paul Hamlyn and Youth Music. Paul Hine subsequently felt that as the project was managed by a third party rather than being owned / led the music hubs directly there could be a negative response to the development bid. As such it was thought that another path should be explored.

A secondary project focusing on supporting young asylum seekers within Cheshire East and two further meh footprints was then explored. There were several young people living in Cheshire East in foster homes or in care. Although the Trust had supported children in a wide range of circumstances, nothing had been done with this group. He and LR had a meeting with Steve Nevitt the individual at Cheshire East Council in charge of the accommodation and welfare of these children. There are approximately 44

asylum seekers in the group however the majority are between the ages of 16 to 20 years of age, many of these were studying at South Cheshire College. Prior to lockdown they met fortnightly at the YMCA and enjoyed the music session at the end of the meeting. JB had contacted Cheshire West a number of times about a joint project but had not received any feedback.

He is still keen to look into providing a service in the new year depending upon the restrictions of the Coronavirus.

**GM** Suggested to **JB** that he looked at involving care leavers, who were 18 years and older who had left foster homes, as they would benefit, especially from the companionship any project would offer.

**JC** Pointed out that the funding from the Arts Council was restricted to 5 to 18-year olds.

**JB** Pointed out that the Trust had been working on a joint project with Brighter Sounds based at South Cheshire College, working with a group of twelve 16 to 19-year olds developing them into music leads. The care leavers could become involved in a similar project.

**JC** Pointed out that care leavers were under the care of the local authority until they were 25 years of age and suggested

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| <p>that JB spoke to the Art's Council to see if this could be the case with their funding.</p> <p><b>GM</b> asked <b>JB</b> to speak with her after the meeting to gather more information about this issue.</p> <p><b>JB</b> reminded the board that the free reserves generated by the business activities could be used to fund this if needed.</p> <p><b>LR</b> had already started working on the revised budget and this should be sent to Trustees prior to the Christmas break. She asked that if there were any questions or points that the trustees wished to raise about the budget, they contact her online or by telephone. If all trustees had approved the figures online, they would be agreed formally at the next Business and Resources meeting in January.</p> <p><b>JB Confirmed</b> that he had updated the Business Stabilisation Plan in regard to <b>GM's</b> position as a councillor.</p> <p><b>LR</b> had obtained up to date related parties information for all trustees and forwarded to <b>DO</b>, who had then updated the Charity Commission records.</p> <p><b>DO</b> said that he would be emailing all trustees to check that the contact details he held were up to date.</p> <p><b>JB</b> Informed the board that a press release had been sent to the local Chronicle group</p> | <p><b>JB</b> to contact <b>GM</b> re Care Leavers 16+ pathway</p> |
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|   | <p>of papers, he had received feedback from them on 10<sup>th</sup> November stating that the article would be included shortly.</p> <p><b>JS</b> Also advised the board that he too had written a piece highlighting the activity of the Trust during the pandemic, this had also been added to by his colleague at MMU and will be circulated throughout the North West.</p>   |  |
| 3 | <p><b><u>Statutory accounts year ended 31<sup>st</sup> August 2020</u></b></p> <p><b>FJ</b> attended the meeting as representative from WR Partners Accountants. She discussed the main points: -</p> <p>The figures were identical to the management accounts produced by LR. The figures and reports provided by LR were always accurate and could be relied upon.</p> <p>Both income and expenditure were below the previous year due mainly to events planned for the summer term being cancelled.</p> <p>There was a net surplus for the year of £32,673 mainly due to costs not being incurred in the summer.</p> <p>The creditors of £93,554 consisted mainly of deferred income which would be released during this financial year.</p> <p>The reserves include Art’s Council funds of £55,576. This represents unspent grant as</p> |  |

of 31<sup>st</sup> August 2020 due to effects of the Coronavirus on activities and will be spent during this financial year.

The reserves were at a comfortable level at £331,718 these were expected to fall slightly given the deficit budgeted for this year, which included alternative front-line projects (adapted to meet current restrictions).

**JC** Said she found it difficult to know what level of reserves were best to have. The Charity Commission encouraged spending on the charitable activities but there also needed to be adequate reserve.

**FJ** said that reserves stood at one third of the annual turnover which was reasonable. A high level of reserves is not a concern as long as there are reasons for the level, such as an upcoming project or the possibility of support from the Arts Council being uncertain.

**JS** Reminded the board that £100,000 had been set aside for relocation costs.

**LR** also explained that if funding stopped on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 there would be adequate reserves to continue services until 31<sup>st</sup> August 2021 (the end of the school year).

**JC** was concerned that funding would be cut given the high level of reserves and

asked if the Arts Council were aware of the reasons.

**JB** explained that he had spoken to the Arts Council on a number of occasions and had confirmation they were happy with the reserves in particularly the amount set aside to relocate. The intention of the move being to reduce back office costs such as rent releasing more funds for the charities objects.

**JC** queried that £160,535 was showing as restricted not £55,576. **LR** explained that the restricted reserves included £104,959 which related to fixed assets and as such were not free reserves to be spent.

**FJ** Brought **JC** attention to the reserves policy on page 4 of the accounts that points out that the Art's Council funding had only been secured until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021.

**JS** pointed out that the Arts Council could not claw back any of the 2020-21 grant as this would have been spent in full as of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021. He thanked **FJ** for presenting the accounts and answering any questions raised. He also thanked **LR** for her work on the accounts and for the monthly finance reports which he found very useful.

**JS** proposed that the accounts be approved, **GM** seconded, the rest of the board agreeing unanimously.

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|   | <p><b>LR</b> told <b>JS</b> she would forward the accounts to him by email to sign before returning to <b>FJ</b> . They would then be filed in December with the Arts Council.</p>  | <p><b>LR</b> to send accounts to <b>JS</b> and file with the Arts Council</p> |
| 4 | <p><b><u>Management Accounts and cash flow</u></b></p> <p><b>LR</b> Had issued the financial reports prior to the meeting, she pointed out that there was an additional report which showed the reserves position as at the end of the month, this would be a regular report. As of 31<sup>st</sup> October, it showed that frontline spend was in excess of funding restricted to frontline spend by £2,010.</p> <p>The cash position as of 31<sup>st</sup> October was higher than predicted for a number of reasons mainly the payment of invoices by schools being quicker than predicted.</p>  |   |
| 5 | <p><b><u>Annual payroll review</u></b></p> <p><b>DO</b> stated that the Business and Resources board had been given the additional duties of payroll committee and this should take place at the next meeting.</p> <p><b>JB</b> pointed out that salary increases had always been bench marked by the local guidelines as were Sandbach School's.</p> <p><b>LR</b> pointed out that the next meeting was on 10<sup>th</sup> December and that this may be cancelled making the next meeting 21<sup>st</sup> January, this would make it impossible for her to produced revised budgets.</p> <p><b>SB</b> Proposed there be a meeting the following week to do the review. It was agreed that the meeting take place on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> November at 8.45 am.</p> <p>Any other business could be discussed at</p> |   |

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|   | <p>that meeting and the December meeting be cancelled.</p> <p><b>DO</b> advised <b>LR</b> that the school used a template to show the effect on the budget of different percentage increases.</p> <p><b>LR</b> asked <b>DO</b> to send this to her as this was the format they were familiar with and to also send out the invite to the meeting.</p>   | <p><b>DO</b> to send out meeting invite and template</p>                  |
| 6 | <p><b>Policy approval</b></p> <p><b>LR</b> Had previously circulated four policies for approval requesting questions and comments be emailed to her.</p> <p>The policies were: -<br/> Staff pay policy<br/> Attendance and Sick pay policy<br/> Overtime policy<br/> Whistleblowing policy</p> <p>The staff pay policy and Whistleblowing policy were both approved by the board. However, <b>SB</b> requested that references to Cheshire East Borough Council and The Teachers Union be removed from the Attendance and Sick pay policy. She also asked that some small changes on the overtime policy. These will be updated and brought to the next trustees meeting.</p> | <p><b>LR</b> to update the two policies and bring to the next meeting</p> |
| 7 | <p><b>Sixth form course September update</b></p> <p><b>JB</b> told the board that the launch took place online last night with a chance for questions at the end.</p> <p>The link is now on Sandbach School website.</p> <p>In regard to the seven upper sixth students, three have currently been offered places at music conservatoire,</p>   |   |

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|    | <p>although it is still very early in the audition season. Additionally, one student has opted to take a year out and one to study Palaeontology.</p>  |  |
| 8  | <p><b>Coronavirus update</b><br/> <b>JB</b> informed the board that only two members of staff were working in the office at any one time, on a rota between himself Iain McKnight and Kelly Thomson. School engagement was almost up to last years levels, taking advantage of alternative ways of tuition.<br/> Ensembles have resumed to taking place online, but the hope is to return to face to face early next year.<br/> <b>SB</b> added that it was her belief that lockdown would still be around till February and she expected ensembles would be online till the end of half term. Also, she had information regarding tax relief for those working from home and she would forward this to him.</p> |  |
| 9  | <p><b>Statutory filing</b><br/> The revised Articles will be filed shortly following <b>JH</b> providing a resolution for <b>SB</b> to sign. Everything will then be up to date.</p>   |  |
| 10 | <p><b>Any other business</b><br/> There was no other business</p>  |  |
| 11 | <p><b>Future Meeting dates</b><br/> It was agreed that the next Business and Resources meeting take place on 25<sup>th</sup> November followed by 21<sup>st</sup> January 2021.<br/> There were on apologise given.</p>  |  |

The meeting came to an end at 9.50 am

The dates of the next meeting

Full trustees – 18<sup>th</sup> March 2021 8.45 am

Business & Resources – 25<sup>th</sup> November 8.45 am