

Minutes

TRUSTEES MEETING

Thursday 24th June 2021 via Zoom

	Item	Action points
1	<p><u>Present and Chair's Welcome</u></p> <p>Present as Trustees: J Savage, J Cowell, P Sharp, S Burns, G Merry, R Dakin.</p> <p>In attendance: J Barber, L Robertson, D Osborne.</p> <p>Apologies: S Isherwood, J Hill</p>	
2	<p><u>Minutes of 18th March 2021</u></p> <p>The minutes were reviewed and accepted as a true record.</p> <p>Action points: -</p> <p>LR explained that all policies were on hold, until Sandbach School receives approval for their updated policies which were on the agenda for the next Governors meeting, as the Trust has to keep its policies in line with the school.</p> <p>JB the minutes from the Steering Group meetings had been circulated to the board.</p>	

	<p>JB had updated the stabilisation plan to include a statement regarding contingency plans.</p> <p>JB the success of the specialist sixth form course and its students, had been posted onto Sandbach Schools website and an article was included in Barlines which is circulated throughout Cheshire East. JS suggested that the article be sent to a local paper such as the Sandbach Chronicle JB agreed to do this.</p> <p>JB had received the details of the Holiday Activity Programme grants available from Cheshire East from SI. This programme was to benefit the children on free school meals over the summer. The bid we submitted was for a project that would start on 26th July and would last for four weeks. It would be for four hours a day and four days per week the children would receive breakfast, lunch, tuition on how to prepare a simple meal and two hours music education per day. The council had contacted JB the previous Friday to ask for further information, which was a good sign, but he had yet to hear if the bid had been successful.</p>	<p>JB to send article to the Chronicle</p>
3	<p><u>Management accounts and cash flow</u></p> <p>LR had circulated the reports prior to the meeting. She went on to summarise the main points.</p> <p>RESERVES POSITION</p> <p>The predicted position as of 31st August 2021 currently shows an underspend of restricted grant of £25,679 compared to a</p>	

budgeted overspend of £8,603 a difference of £34,282.
A detailed breakdown of how this was made up had been circulated the previous month and it could be seen that this was mainly due to COVID restrictions resulting in the cancellation of events such as the Halle (£16,445) and the Bennett workshop (£4,500).

BUDGET YEAR ENDED 31ST AUGUST 2022.

At the April trustees meeting the board approved the budget for the year ended 31st August 2022 this showed a deficit of £3,678. It was agreed that this would be reviewed and updated for the June meeting to account for any changes that might arise in the following months. The updated budget shows a reduced loss of £1,166; this takes into account the following: -

- Revised tuition income and tutor costs.
- An increase in the Arts Council grant of £1,955
- The inclusion of an Arts Awards pilot scheme to be introduced into 5 schools amounting to £1,980.
- It has also been decided to support a music tech course at a cost of £900 for our students, this is an area that is raised each year by the Arts Council.

MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS

The budget that was approved in January showed a deficit of £47,992.

This was due to Covid-19 which caused the closure of schools and the cancelling of several of the Trust's events during the 2020 summer term. The statutory accounts showed a profit of £32,673 and an underspend of £55,576 of the Arts Council's restricted grant as of 31st August 2020. The budget was set to utilise the unspent restricted grant which resulted as would be expected in a deficit budget.

The projected deficit for the year ended 31st August 2021 is £28,707, this is £19,285 below the original budget.

Again, the majority of this variance was due the cancellation of events due to COVID restrictions.

Since the financial reports were issued to the Trustees the Asylum seekers project has also been cancelled for this term.

LR asked permission from the Trustees that the Saxday, Gawsorth Hall event and the Asylum Seekers project be carried forward to the following year.

GM Asked if the Trust had the capacity to run these events alongside what had been planned already.

JB Replied that there had been a meeting in regard to the Asylum Seekers project

the previous week, the project would last for 10 weeks and would require very little manpower from the Trust other than the two tutors which would be taking part. The Gawsorth Hall event is hoped to take place in September as this is linked to the availability of the year 13 students who would be leaving to go to universities towards the end of September.

JC asked if this affects the budgeted deficit for the year ended 31st August 2022.

LR explained that this would increase the deficit in the region of £8,500, however given the much more favourable position predicted as of 31st August 2021 and the level of reserves the Trust has this should not cause any concern.

JC asked if the Arts Council may reduce or claw back any grant funding given the level of reserves.

JS advised her that the Arts Council would only claw back any grant that had been unspent as of 31st March.

JB reminded the board that £100,000 had been set aside for future relocation costs of which the Arts Council were aware. The trust also aims to have adequate reserves to meet any commitments to schools to the end of the academic year should the funding cease.

Business Stabilisation Plan

JB explained that the business stabilisation plan had replaced the business plan.

It can be seen that the Trust's engagement with schools has continued to improve with overall engagement over the four cores currently standing at 96.2% compared with 63.2% as at September 2020. We are also engaging with 100% of the 124 primary schools compared with 56.5%. Since this report was updated, we have now engaged with an additional specialist school bringing this to 8 out of the 9.

The Model Music Curriculum was introduced one week prior to the Business Stabilisation Plan being filed with the Arts Council on 1st April. It is a non-statutory document set to support schools. In response to this the Trust has updated its curriculum, ran a session on this topic at the annual LMT Music Education conference in May and will provide INSET for LMT Tutors in September.

He reminded the board that the Trust had made available to all primary schools a yearlong licence for Universal Access to Out of the Ark, 44 schools did not take advantage of this offer which amounted to £4,224. JB and Iain McKnight had attended a meeting the previous week with Out of the Ark to discuss using this underspend on their new product 'Spark Yard'. This is a new website that can be accessed for an annual fee, although this was impressive there was a significant overlap with our own LMT curriculum, so we decided not to go ahead with this purchase. The Trust's curriculum is available to all Cheshire East schools via our website. It is his intention

to update the curriculum and for it to be housed outside the core LMT website. This would be launched in January 2022 and although still free to Cheshire East school would be available to other music hubs, and entities for a fee thus increasing the income stream for the Trust. The grant from the Arts Council cannot be used on updating and improving the website, however he has contacted Carys to ask if this could be treated as frontline spend given that it is entirely to do with updating and availability of the curriculum (SMEP).

JC asked **JB** about the risks in the plan, did he feel that any of the risks are high and likely to happen especially those relating to the engagement of schools.

JB Responded that there was currently little risk in relation to school's levels of engagement, percentages of schools had increased mainly due to the service the Trust had provided in the last fifteen months. The school contracts had been sent out in April and the majority had now been returned confirming engagement for the following year. The contracts are in the process of being amended to rolling contracts in line with other music hubs. Only two schools were still receiving tuition online and it was felt this was due to convenience rather the risk of COVID and they have confirmed they will return to face-to-face tuition in September.

JC asked that if for any reason such as year groups having to isolate would it be possible to change to online lessons.

JB ensured her that this could be done, and that the majority of the tutors were

	<p>now capable and happy to provide this service.</p> <p>DO stated that this was a new norm, Sandbach school for example had webcams set up in all classrooms.</p>	
5	<p><u>Fundraising</u></p> <p>JS reminded the board that on numerous occasions in the past the Arts Council had suggested that the Trust increase the range of income streams it has in addition the grant. Although JB and his team have applied for funding from various sources and have been successful. His company UCan Play has submitted a bid to Innovate Uk to fund an A level music online study programme, the details of which had been circulated to Trustees. He proposed that JB be engaged for half a day a week for a nine-month period, using his expertise as an A level music teacher to assist in producing a high quality product, whilst also drawing on his wide range of contacts and experience of music hubs. The Trust would be paid £20,000 for his time. He advised the board that the bid had to be submitted by the end of August with the results being announced in November.</p> <p>At this point he passed the meeting over to JC to chair the meeting due his conflict of interests.</p>	

	<p>JC Asked the board if there were any questions.</p> <p>RD asked why the sum the Trust would receive had fallen from £25,000 to £20,000.</p> <p>JS Explained that this was due to a reduction of the hours that JB would be spending on the project.</p> <p>RD went on to ask if there was a possibility that a grant may be received to fund part of the bid, rather than the full cost.</p> <p>JS replied that the response would be a full funding or a rejection and not a partial funding. The bid meets the criteria although it may not be seen as a priority compared to other bids.</p> <p>GM asked if JB had the capacity to take on this additional work.</p> <p>JB confirmed that he had looked at the Sandbach School's requirements for his time for 21-22 which had reduced, and he could have the capacity for half a day each week.</p> <p>GM asked if the Trust could be promoted alongside this project.</p> <p>JB explained that although it would be a Ucan Play product once was up and running the Trust's tutors should be able to provide online mentoring to the students.</p>	
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JC asked **SB** if she had any thoughts.

SB stated that **JB** should be trusted to make the correct decision. The Trust had been running for a number of years and was stable, she felt it was important for people be allowed to take on new challenges and opportunities in order that they don't become stale.

JC then asked **PS** for his comments.

PS explained that he had spoke to **JS** who had answered any questions he had raised. He would happily approve the proposal for **JB** to work on this project for a nine-month period for a fee of £20,000.

JC agreed that it would be a good opportunity for **JB**'s development. Then went on to ask what benefit it would be for Cheshire East.

JS explained that this product would be available for anyone including those in Cheshire East. In the future it could become a commercial partnership that would benefit the Trust financially, given approval was received from the Arts Council and following protocol in relation to any conflict of interest.

RD asked if the product went ahead would it be seen as competition to other A level music providers that we are currently in partnership with?

	<p>SB explained that there were already many such products available, but this would be of higher quality.</p> <p>To summarise the benefits of approving this proposal would be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To make available A level music tuition to all students regardless of economic status, social class or geography • To ensure the high quality of the product. • To provide £20,000 additional income for the Trust • To provide JB with a new challenge (CPD) • In the longer term a possibility of an increase in work for the Trust’s tutors supporting this project. <p>The proposal was agreed unanimously.</p>	
6	<p><u>New building</u></p> <p>JB explained that at the previous Business and Resources meeting a discussion was had (see minutes) regarding a new ground floor building on Sandbach School’s land which would be funded and leased (from Sandbach School) by Foden’s Band. The Trust was considering using the £100,000 reserves set aside to relocate to construct a first floor to this building which the Trust would occupy. It has since been decided</p>	

	<p>that this will not go ahead mainly due to the challenges caused by the storage of the LMT instrument stock.</p> <p>JS said that a search would continue for new premises but at this point there was no pressure to move.</p>	
7	<p>Cheshire East Holiday Activity programme grant</p> <p>This was discussed in minutes and matters arising.</p>	
8	<p>Statutory filing</p> <p>DO advised the board that all filing was up to date</p>	
9	<p>Any other business</p> <p>JB Advised the Trustees that Jackie Davies had now stood down as chair of the Steering Group in line with the terms of reference and had been replaced by Lauren Scott. There had been three new members to the group and other members were being refreshed, these include a pupil (who will be leaving to go to university) and a secondary curriculum leader of music.</p>	

The meeting came to an end at 10.00 am.

The dates of the next meeting

Full trustees – 23rd September 2021 8.45 am.

Business & Resources – 16th July 2021 8.45 am.