

**GEMS LEARNING TRUST**  
**MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  
**held on**

**Tuesday 8 March 2016**

**ATTENDEES**

<b>Dr Harry Ziman (Chair)</b>		Present
<b>Joe Garrod (vice-Chair)</b>	H&S	Present
<b>Andy Collings</b>	Finance, Audit and Risk lead	Present (arrived 1710)
<b>Jodie Croft</b>	CEO & Operations lead	Apologies
<b>Terri de Quincey</b>	Education, SEND, Safeguarding and Child Protection lead	Present
<b>Barbara Harrison</b>		Apologies
<b>Pippa Hogg-Andrews</b>	Principal Twickenham Primary Academy	Present
<b>Luisa Weinzierl</b>		Present
<b>Rony Valeny</b>		Present (arrived 1710)
<b>Also present</b>		
<b>Mary Aston</b>	Clerk	Present

**Part One (Non Confidential) Meeting opened at 1640**

**1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence**

- 1.1. The Chair welcomed Attendees to the meeting. There were apologies from Jodie Croft, Barbara Harrison and Alison Ashcroft (Gems Didcot Principal Designate) which were accepted.
- 1.2. The Chair explained that Luisa Weinzierl was no longer a **GEMS** employee but would remain on the Board and advised that as Matthew Connolly was not available to Clerk, Mary Aston would Clerk for this meeting. The Chair officially thanked Matthew Connolly for the work he had previously carried out for the Board.

## 2. Items for AOB and confidentiality

2.1. Harry Ziman received request from Barbara Harrison for clarification regarding the Action Points referred to in the SEF. To be discussed later.

2.2. No items were reported to be discussed in the Confidentiality section of the meeting.

## 3. Declarations of Pecuniary and Business Interest

3.1. All present confirmed that they had completed Declaration of Interest forms and that none were outstanding and there were no declarations relevant to this Agenda.

## 4. Minutes of previous meeting of Board of Directors on 24 November 2015

4.1. The minutes of the meeting held on 24 November 2015 were approved. A signed copy will be kept by the CEO.

4.2 Actions: These were discussed and outcomes can be found in the appendix.

4.2.1. Action 12 Andy Collings to provide a formal financial document for members and directors as previously discussed. Agreed to carry this forward.

080316 Action: Andy Collings to produce a formal document to explain financial role of directors

4.2.2. Actions 9 and 17 As Jodie Croft was absent for meeting agreed to carry forward to next meeting.

080316 Action: Jodie Croft CEO to circulate material around vision & Strategy for GEMS schools in the UK ahead of this being discussed at Board/AGM Easter 2016

4.2.3. Action: 7.3 Update report from CEO on energy costs at TPA., not available as Jodie Croft not present. Harry Ziman voiced his concerns about rising costs. Joe Garrod asked for information on who was being used for procurement and agreed to take this up with Jodie Croft and provide any necessary assistance and guidance. Pippa Hogg Andrews felt that a number of issues concerning services/suppliers could be resolved if consideration was given to employing a Premises Manager on site.

n

080316 Action: Jodie Croft/Joe Garrod to provide report on energy costs/suppliers and procurement process at next meeting

4.2.4. Action 5.8 Carried forward. Joe Garrod was advised by Pippa Hogg-Andrews that **an** Operational & Maintenance CD had been sent to him. Joe Garrod to check and complete the Operational & Maintenance Manual for next meeting.

080316 Joe Garrod to finalise Operational & Maintenance Manual by next meeting

4.2.5. Action 8.2 In absence of Matthew Connolly, Terri de Quincey reported that there were no issues regarding admission of nursery and primary children in September 2016 for Didcot. Jodie Croft will review admissions procedure in summer term.

080316 3. Action Jodie Croft to review admission procedures from nursery to reception for Academic Year 2017/18

4.3. There were no “Matters Arising” not covered on agenda

## 5. Principal Report Twickenham Primary Academy (TPA)

The following papers had been circulated to the Board in advance:

- Principals Report to Board Spring 2015
- TPA Self Evaluation
- TPA School Development Plan

5.1. Pippa Hogg-Andrews commented on the papers previously circulated:

5.1.1. Open Meetings had been held for parents looking for reception places in September 2016.

Engagement with current parents with strong with good communication links between school and parents. With present numbers parents being given individual attention.

5.1.2. Staffing is the prime issue. Luisa Weinzierl has been providing HR advice. Interviewing for 3 teachers and 2 teaching assistants is about to commence. Initial advertisements had produced a higher level of response than last year but not likely to be able to fill all vacancies from current applicants. Harry Ziman asked if readvertising would be taking place. Pippa Hogg Andrews confirmed this to be the case and explained that TPA was ahead of the recruitment process compared to other local schools.

5.1.3. Pippa Hogg Andrews informed the meeting that whilst extensive training, both in and out of the classroom, had been given to the 3 teaching assistants, two had not met the required performance levels required. One had been asked to leave TPA and the second teaching assistant had voluntarily resigned. The third teaching assistant had had her probationary period extended. Joe Garrod queried the reason for the problems with the teaching assistants. Pippa Hogg Andrews explained this was due to salary levels and the staff concerned having unrealistic expectations as to what the job role required. Terri de Quincey concurred that a great deal of time and training had been given to the teaching assistants before decisions were taken as to the best way forward

5.1.4. Detailed discussion regarding EYFS attainment and progress data. Pippa Hogg Andrews explained that progress is more difficult to qualify at this point in the term and when questioned about why there appeared to be less progress in maths and writing, explained that in maths, for example, harder, more complex topics are being covered at present.

5.1.5. Knowledge will be consolidated during the summer term when improvement to both attainment and progress will increase.

5.1.6. It was noted that there were now 3 children now qualified for pupil premium, all summer born. Harry Ziman asked for details of any impact of expenditure from the pupil premium funding as far as the children in question were concerned. Pippa Hogg Andrews advised that they were all on target for physical development, having been able to use the additional PE equipment purchased. One child was making more progress than the other two in literacy. Pippa Hogg Andrews explained the social problems which affected these particular children making it more difficult for them to reach all targets.

5.1.7. The first meeting of the Local Advisory Committee (LAC) was discussed. It was explained that the LAC comprised of Pippa Hogg Andrews, Jodie Croft, two parent members, one staff member and one community member. The community member, Clare Head, is a local Councillor and will speak for TPA at the forthcoming planning meeting. Members of the LAC will carry out visits to TPA to gather information for the next development point. More members will be added to the LAC as TPA grows and it is intended that there will be a more formalised role for the LAC next year. Harry Ziman pointed out that it was important to get the correct people on the LAC.

5.1.8. Andy Collings asked when Andy Weymouth would next be visiting. Pippa Hogg Andrews advised that she was not sure if he would be visiting next term due to changes in policy.

5.1.9. The problems reported regarding the lack of Broadband were discussed. Pippa Hogg Andrews explained that the contract with through LGFL and was not a contract which could be cancelled. Jodie Croft was dealing with LGFL and Virgin. Joe Garrod agreed to pursue with Jodie Croft.

180316 <b>No needed</b> Action: Joe Garrod/Jodie Croft to investigate expediting installation of Broadband
--

5.1.10. Pippa Hogg Andrews gave details of the various school events which had taken place since the last meeting.

5.1.11. The question of the SIP was discussed and Pippa Hogg Andrews advised that due to budgeting limitations the SPARKS element had been cancelled but that this area was supported by Terri de Quincey.

5.1.12. Pippa Hogg Andrews gave an overview of the School Development Plan. Harry Ziman asked if there was the need for a new plan next term. Agreed to prepare a new SIF draft

180316 <b>No need</b> Action Pippa Hogg Andrews to prepare SIF draft
--

5.1.13. Pippa Hogg Andrews advised that a Planning Officers Meeting was due to take place on 9 April 2016, to be followed by a full meeting. No date had as yet been confirmed for the full meeting. The planning application online showed that, since the Principal's Report had been circulated the number of positive comments had increased to 144. It was explained that the negative comments, which were largely orchestrated by The Friends of Twickenham Green, mainly focused on parking, road/pavement congestion, safety.

## 5.2. TPA Term Dates

5.2.1. Discussion of planned term dates for Academic Year 2016/17. Discussed whether correct number of sessions in place and whether INSET would need changing if there was any delay in the refurbishment works once planning approved. Agreed to review INSET days if necessary. Term dates approved.

180316 No needed Action Term dates Approved
---

## 5.3. Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy

5.3.1. Harry Ziman requested that "vulnerable groups" (page 3 of Policy) should be deleted from the Policy. Pippa Hogg Andrews to amend Policy. Andy Collings asked if it was possible to share a SENCO with another school. Both Pippa Hogg Andrews and Harry Ziman explained that it was customary to have one SENCO for each school. As the policy has been circulated prior to the meeting with no other comments being received the Policy was approved

180316 Action: Policy approved subject to deletion of agreed section by Pippa Hogg Andrews
--

## 5.4. Feedback from Director of Education

5.4.1. Terri de Quincey referred to question raised by Barbara Harrison regarding action points in the SEF relating to safeguarding and confirmed that there were no concerns on the part of the DfE. Terri de Quincey advised that a full report had been prepared following 2 audits being carried out and all items checked were 100% compliant and robust school procedures were in place. Further questions were put to Terri de Quincey relating to the audits and it was agreed that a copy of the report would be circulated to all members.

180316 Action: Terri de Quincey to circulate copy of audit report to all Board members
--

## 6. CEO Report to Board

6.1. In absence of Jodie Croft, Terri de Quincey reported on Didcot Nursery/Primary Academy and advised that the Principal had been recruited and staff recruitment was in

hand. To date 3 teachers have been recruited, one each for nursery, reception and the combined Year1/2 class..

6.2. Offers for nursery places have been made. There have been 40 first place requests for Reception. Consideration being given to having 2 classes instead of 1 as planned. Jodie Croft is attempting to obtain second choice information from the LA to assist with making this decision. As funding may be an issue, Harry Ziman suggested looking at the possibility of obtaining additional local funding.

180316 No needed Action Jodie Croft/Terri de Quincey to investigate possibility of additional funding

6.3. With regard to Kingston Primary School (Academy), it was confirmed that Lord Nash had accepted deferment and EFA are looking at available sites for temporary accommodation. Agreed Jodie Croft should continue investigating possible sites, including one on Portsmouth Road. Harry Ziman stressed the importance obtaining the correct site in order to ensure that both GLT and GTP's reputation remains unaffected.

6.4. In respect of Admissions Proposals for Didcot Nursery/Primary and Kingston Primary, Terri de Quincey confirmed that Jodie Croft had submitted to the Board admission policies in line with LA guidelines. Admission policies were approved in the knowledge that Jodie Croft may have to adjust dates once final dates are known for the area.

180316 No needed Action Admission policies approved. Jodie Croft to adjust dates as necessary

## 7. Finance Report

7.1. Andy Collings reported that the arrangement for financial operating support with Richmond upon Thames was not working and that Jodie Croft is now working with EduFin who will manage the accounts closely and produce management account. Andy Collings confirmed that there are no financial issues affecting TPA or Didcot. The deficit which Didcot had previous was a timing issue and this caused no ongoing consequences.

7.2. Andy Collings advised that management accounts would be available from EduFin for the next meeting. Harry Ziman requested a copy of the monthly management accounts due to be provided by EduFin. There was a discussion on how long it would take EduFin to bring the accounts up to date. RV requested that this needed to be expedited. Agreed Andy Collings would take this up with EduFin. Also agreed that Andy Collings would arrange for a copy of the monthly management accounts to be circulated to all Board meetings each month.

180316 No needed Action Andy Collings to work with EduFin to expedite bring the accounts up to date. Also to arrange for copy of monthly management accounts to be circulated to the Board each month

7.3. Harry Ziman discussed a review of budgets from April 2016 onwards. Pippa Hogg Andrews advised that Jodie Croft was working on this.

7.4. Discussed upcoming changes to National funding which could be detrimental to TPA. Question of Apprenticeship Levy also raised but Andy Collings advised not relevant to GLT. Agreed Andy Collings to take up question of any changes to National funding with Jodie Croft. As Jodie Croft has a 3 year budget in place. Harry Ziman advised that this would need to be revalidated in light of any funding changes.

180316 Action: Andy Collings/Jodie Croft to investigate any National funding implications. Board to revalidate 3 year budget as necessary

## **8. Approval of Admissions Policies for 2017**

8.1. As discussed previously Admissions Policies approved

## **9. HR Update**

9.1. Luisa Weinzierl advised that she had been working with Pippa Hogg Andrews regarding the Teaching Assistants issues, as well as assisting Jodie Croft with the SCR and DBS for Didcot.

Pippa Hogg Andrews expressed her thanks to Luisa Weinzierl for her professional advice and assistance with reference to dealing with the Teaching Assistants issues.

## **10. Board Development**

10.1. Harry Ziman reported that he was confident that the Board Membership was now more stable. This being especially important as the Board would, in due course, be responsible for 3 schools. Discussed the way in which the Board would develop and how to develop members. Also considered the possibility of increasing the initial stated number of schools from 3, especially in view of the Government drive that all schools should become Academies.

10.2. Joe Garrod explained that there would be at least an eighteen month lead time to start another school but felt that in order to maximise economies of scale it would be sensible to look at the possibility of having more than 3 schools. Harry Ziman advised that now would be a good time to consider adding to the number of GLT schools as the DFE were looking for sponsors and GLT has approved sponsor status. Discussed whether it would be better to look at existing schools rather than starting new schools but Harry Ziman warned that it would be important not to overstretch. Joe Garrod suggested speaking to Deer Park and offered to make introduction to Deer Park.

180316 Action: Joe Garrod to contact Deer Park and Rony Valeny to look at original strategy.

10.3. Harry Ziman suggested a half day workshop to discuss in more detail, possibly in the Summer term at Haymarket, with Clare Delaney as a speaker. Luisa Weinzierl proposed that if the workshop went ahead that it might be suitable for members to meet for dinner afterwards as an opportunity to discuss matters informally. Rony Valeny agreed with the suggestions but suggested this question should be referred back to Jodie Croft in the first instance.

180316 No needed Action: Harry Ziman to discuss with Jodie Croft

10.4. As part of Board Members personal development, Harry Ziman suggested that Prevent training would be appropriate. This is a short online course. Harry Ziman to circulate web link.

180316 No needed Action Harry Ziman to circulate web link to Board Members

## 11. Future Meetings

11.1. Harry Ziman suggested that once Didcot was operational (followed by Kingston) it might be impracticable for the Principal's report to be in the same format as that currently provided by Pippa Hogg Andrews and that a Summary report may be more appropriate. To be considered further but for the summer term no change to Principal's report.

180316 Action: Consider Principals' reporting system at next Meeting. For summer term no change to TPA Principal's report

11.2. Terri de Quincey suggested that some information from the Board Meeting in the future might be cascaded down to the LAC. It was agreed that minutes from the LAC meetings would always be sent to the Board.

180316 No needed Action: Jodie Croft to ensure that minutes from all LAC meetings are circulated to the Board

11.3. Harry Ziman requested that any items concerning staffing in the Principal's report should be submitted in a confidential report so they can be discussed separately as necessary.

180316 No needed Action: Pippa Hogg Andrews to report staffing issues in a separate confidential report

## 12. AOB

None

There being no other non-confidential items to discuss the meeting closed at 1850



**Signed:** .....

**Date:** .....

**Chair of Board of Directors**

**On behalf of the GEMS LEARNING TRUST**

## APPENDIX

### Action Points from GLT Board of Directors Meeting November taken at March Board

Minute			Who?	Notes
4.3	1	Andy Collings to produce a formal document to explain financial role of directors	AC	To be completed
4.5	2	Jodie Croft CEO to circulate material around vision & Strategy for GEMS schools in the UK ahead of this being discussed at a Board/AGM Easter 2016	JC	Deferred to next meeting due to JC's absence
5.8	3	Joe Garrod to complete the Operational & Maintenance Manual by mid December to go to CEO Jodie Croft.	JG	Carried forward to next meeting
6.3	4	Members noted the Admissions Policies for Didcot and Surbiton schools would be on the next meeting agenda for ratification by the Board	JC	
7.3	5	Update report from CEO on energy costs at TPA	JC	Deferred to next meeting due to JC's absence Deferred to March 2016 Board
8.2	6	Clerk to check current guidance on transfer from nursery to reception	MC	
10.2	7	Letter of resignation for Eriko Varkey as a director to be received by CEO	EV/JC	