

**Minutes of a Meeting of the STEP Board of Trustees
Held on Monday, 12 October 2022 at 5.15pm (Virtual)**

Name	Position	Attendance
Trustees		
Ben Bartlett (BB)	Non-Executive Trustee	Present (for item 7)
Kate Chhatwal OBE (KC)	Non-Executive Trustee	Present
Angela Farrell (AF)	Non-Executive Trustee	Present
Ross Gardner (RG)	Non-Executive Trustee (Vice Chair)	Present
Paul Glover (PG)	Executive Trustee (Chief Executive Officer)	Present
Peter Lilford (PL)	Non-Executive Trustee	Present
Rory Nath (RN)	Non-Executive Trustee	Present
Ursula Norbert (UN)	Non-Executive Trustee	Absent (apologies accepted)
Navdeep Sanghara (NS)	Non-Executive Trustee	Absent (apologies accepted)
Shelley Stuart (SS)	Non-Executive Trustee	Absent (apologies accepted)
Rama Venchard (RV)	Non-Executive Trustee (Chair of Trustees)	Present
Executive Team		
John Halliwell (JH)	Executive Director of Primary	Absent (apologies accepted)
James Hooper (JHo)	Director of Operations	Absent (apologies accepted)
Claire Majumdar (CM)	Director of Quality Assurance, Data and Governance	Present (for items 1-9)
Ben March (BM)	Chief Finance and Operations Officer	Present (for items 1-12)
Tim Mills (TM)	Executive Director of Primary	Present (from item 1-9)
Other Attendees		
Philippa Jackson (PJ)	Senior Governance Clerk (Minutes)	Present

1	<p><u>Welcome, Apologies and Housekeeping</u></p> <p>The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies had been received from UN (governing body meeting), NS (speaking engagement), SS (sickness), JHo (family matter) and JH (Ofsted inspection). BB would need to leave the meeting early to join another Trust Board meeting.</p> <p>Trustees were reminded that the December Board meeting and Board Development Day would be held in person at Tudor Academy. The Clerk would be in touch nearer the time to make arrangements with Trustees.</p> <p>The Chair advised that the Executive Team would leave the meeting prior to the discussion on Succession Planning.</p>
2	<p><u>Quorum</u></p> <p>The Clerk declared the meeting quorate.</p>

3	<p><u>Election of Chair and Vice-Chair 2022/23</u></p> <p>The Clerk invited nominations for the role of Chair and Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees for 2022/23. RV was nominated and elected as the Chair of the Board of Trustees for 2022/23. RG was nominated and elected as the Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees for 2022/23.</p>
4	<p><u>Review of Pecuniary Interests, Attendance, Skills Audit and Diversity Information</u></p> <p>The Board of Trustees Terms of Reference were noted.</p> <p>The Code of Conduct was noted and Trustees confirmed their compliance.</p> <p>Trustees confirmed they had updated their Trust Governor profiles, including personal and pecuniary interests and ticked the boxes to confirm they comply with the key governance and statutory documents.</p> <p>There were no potential conflicts of interest declared in relation to the agenda items for this meeting. The Clerk confirmed that the Register of Interests had been updated and would be published on the STEP website.</p> <p>The annual attendance record for 2021/2022 was noted.</p> <p>The Trustee skills audit analysis for 2022/23 was noted. The Chair commented that the skills audit was a useful tool for mapping out the skills and expertise of the Board of Trustees and to identify any gaps. Trustees felt that the Board currently had the right mix of skills and expertise.</p> <p>Trustees confirmed that they did not consider any Member or Trustee to have undue influence or that there were any Non-Trustees that are acting as shadow or de facto trustees.</p>
5	<p><u>Minutes</u></p> <p>The minutes of the Board of Trustees meeting held on 18 July 2022 were approved. The Chair confirmed he would sign a copy of the minutes for the Trust files.</p>
6	<p><u>Matters Arising from the Minutes</u></p> <p>Trustees noted the actions from the previous meetings as set out in the agenda. The due diligence for Wood Green Academy was underway and a paper setting out the next steps would be presented to the Board in December.</p>
STEP First – We are all one team	
7	<p><u>Chief Executive's Report</u></p> <p><i>BB joined the meeting.</i></p> <p>The CEO provided a verbal update on the developments within the Trust since the last meeting.</p> <p>The school term had started well. Attendance across the Trust was 94.5% (compared to 92.8% at this point last year). Trust wide Persistence Absence was 8%, slightly below the national average.</p>

The performance appraisals for 2021/22 had been completed for all members of the Executive Team and objectives set for 2022/23. PG thanked Trustees for supporting this process.

He explained that leadership behaviours had been fully implemented for this year's performance cycle and there was a direct link to the pay awards, particularly with the senior leadership team. 360 appraisals were up and running for all members of the senior leadership team and this process would close in the Autumn term.

The Executive Team had been small but a stable structure in the last few years. PG had given a lot of thought as part of his MBA as to how STEP could improve performance. The Extended Executive Team had provided some reassurance to the team and had helped to improve the 'One Team' approach to unity. The Executive Team had previously operated in a reassuringly controlled manner but the complex portfolios meant that the team had sometimes worked in silo. The 'One Team' must be driven by Executive Team behaviours and by developing the wider Executive Team's collective responsibilities. The Trust would also need to look at how behaviours drive the culture going forward and how this could be evaluated.

The teachers' pay recommendations were still to go through Parliament. A 5% pay rise was expected and pay would need to be back dated. Some cost savings would be required once a decision had been made.

A significant shortfall in the budget was expected as utility costs continued to soar. Some costs could potentially be negotiated with suppliers and the Director of Operations had been asked to investigate options to address this.

The MAT summary evaluation reviews, conducted by Ofsted, were expected to increase. As part of the process, a team of inspectors would visit the Trust following several academy inspections. No judgement would be made but a narrative would be produced alongside a summary report. The aim was for STEP to be fully prepared for a review by the end of the Autumn term.

Q: What happens at the end of a MAT Summary Evaluation? Where do the findings go?

A: To the Trust CEO and Secretary of State. The findings are also used by the Regional Directors to assess the capacity and effectiveness of a MAT. It was more of a quality standard highlighting strengths, weaknesses and areas that could be enhanced.

Q: Do we know any MAT's that have been through this?

A: It would be useful to get in touch with them to help prepare. It would also be useful to discuss how the information could be used within the community and with potential discussions with new schools.

Q: It is important to keep this in perspective as Ofsted have said that they only had the capacity to carry out 12 MAT inspections a year.

A: Everything that we are doing to prepare is heading in the right direction. It was important to be ready and prepared as it was highly likely that STEP could be evaluated.

Action: Circulate Ofsted reports from recent evaluations and the MAT Summary Evaluation briefing paper prepared by the Director of Quality Assurance, Data and Governance. (Clerk)

BB left the meeting.

PG provided a progress update on the Anti-Racism Roadmap. The action plan continued to be reviewed. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) training would be delivered for trustees and the Executive Team. A BAME network would also be set up across the Trust. The Roadmap would be updated and shared in due course.

A small team from the STEP Ahead Teaching School Hub had been working closely with La Salle Education, to support the move towards a consistent curriculum offer across the Trust. The commitments to this would continue to be monitored.

Work had started with PLMR, the PR consultancy firm appointed on a trial-basis to work on STEP's external communications. They had offered significant support and a communications strategy would be presented in due course.

Trustees approved the STEP Compass Priorities Document for 2022/23.

8 Safeguarding

Termly Safeguarding Report

CM provided a verbal safeguarding update. She thanked KC for her support in the recent Ofsted inspections. STEP staff had received bespoke and uniform safeguarding training and could talk about the key updates to KCSIE 2022. CPOMS had been updated with different categories but the same categories would remain in the reports to trustees. Safeguarding scenarios had been shared across the Trust and allowed for context. Safeguarding audits were in progress across the Trust to ensure a clear understanding with all academies.

Annual Trustee Safeguarding Report

RN reminded trustees of their responsibility to ensure that support and oversight of safeguarding standards was maintained within the academies and that staff had the resources to carry out their safeguarding duties. It was also important for trustees to understand contextual detail and target particular areas of concern with effective strategies. Trustees should also consider how safeguarding support could be stepped up as the Trust grew in size and expanded geographically.

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022

Trustees noted 'KCSIE 2022' and confirmed they had read the document and understood the key changes.

STEP Ahead – We invest in our future

9 Educational Standards and Performance

CM reported that the changes to STEP Academies' 2022 EYFS, KS1 and KS2 data were minimal. A further update would be provided to the Education Committee once the data had been validated.

The minutes of the Education Committee held on 11 July 2022 were noted.

There was a short break in the meeting. Members of the Executive Team left the meeting, except PG and BM.

10	<p><u>Parent Teacher Associations</u></p> <p>Trustees noted the briefing paper on the Parent Teacher Associations (PTA’s) across the Trust. Trustees agreed that no further action was required at this stage. It was suggested that if an Academy Committee would like a PTA type function, this could be accommodated through a sub-committee function. This would be raised at the next Chairs’ and Trustees’ Forum.</p> <p><i>Action: Clerk to add ‘PTA and Sub Committee function’ to the next Chairs and Trustees’ Forum agenda. (Clerk)</i></p>
STEP Up – We all succeed together	
11	<p><u>Financial Management and Monitoring</u></p> <p><u>Academy Trust Handbook</u> The key changes to the Academy Trust Handbook from September 2022 were noted and Trustees formally adopted the Handbook.</p> <p><u>Audit Service Plan Report</u> The Audit Service Plan Report for Year ended 31 August 2022 was approved.</p> <p><u>LGPS Update</u> Trustees noted a briefing paper on the LGPS consolidation. It was agreed that the potential to consolidate LGPS across STEP would be a key strategy to offset future financial risk. Trustees commented that this was an approach being taken in other known Trusts.</p> <p>Q: Was there a financial risk of consolidation? A: No. Any LGPS deficit would be underwritten by the government.</p> <p>Q: Will there be any changes to the benefits that staff get? A: No. The benefits would remain the same.</p> <p><u>Finance and Operations Committee</u> The minutes of Finance and Operations Committee held on 5 July 2022 were noted.</p> <p><i>BM left the meeting.</i></p>
12	<p><u>Admissions</u></p> <p>Trustees approved the admissions arrangements for 2024/25 for all STEP Academies. They also approved the consultation for the admissions arrangements for Peacehaven Heights and Telscombe Cliffs Academies for 2024/25 onwards.</p>
13	<p><u>Academy Engagement</u></p> <p>The schedule for Trustee academy visits for 2022/23 would be circulated in due course.</p>

14 STEP Governance

Governance Action Plan

An update on the Governance Action Plan was provided. The action plan had been shared with STEP Members and would be considered at their annual meeting on 24 November. The action plan would then be shared with Trustees at the Board Development Day on 19 January '23.

STEP Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees' Programme of Works 2022/23 was noted.

Trustees Succession Plans

This discussion would be deferred to the Board Development Day.

Committees

The Committee Membership for 2022/23 was approved. RG was appointed Chair of the STEP Finance and Operations Committee for 2022/23. BB was appointed Chair of the STEP Education Committee for 2022/23. RG was appointed Chair of the Pay Committee for 2022/23.

It was noted that the Pay Committee Meeting would be held on 17 October 2022 to review the pay recommendations for 2021/22.

STEP Academy Committees

The minutes of the Summer Term Academy Committee meetings available on The Trust Governor were noted.

The STEP Governor appointments were approved as set out in the report. The 2022/23 Chair of Governors for the STEP Academy Committees was noted and the appointments would be ratified at the December meeting following nominations.

The STEP Academy Committees' Programme of Works 2022/23 was noted.

STEP Members

The annual STEP Members meeting would be held on 24 November 2022 at Tudor Academy.

Training

The Trustee Safeguarding and Safer Recruitment training report was noted.

Feedback was provided on the Governance training session (safeguarding) held on 14 September 2022. Trustees had found the delivery and content of the training to be very engaging and in line with the latest guidance. It had been useful to receive STEP specific content directly from the Academy Committees. They thanked CM for arranging this.

The bi annual Trustees' and Chairs' Forum had been moved to Thursday, 1 December at 6.00pm (Virtual).

The next Governance training session would be held on 25 January 2023 at 6.00pm (Virtual).

15	<p><u>Complaints</u></p> <p>Trustees noted the complaints dealt with across the Trust during the Autumn term. The CEO was satisfied that all complaints were being dealt with effectively. The complaints process was currently under review and the STEP Complaints Policy would be presented to the Board of Trustees in due course.</p>
16	<p><u>Signing of Legal Documentation</u></p> <p>Trustees noted that the following documentation signed by the Company Secretary/ CEO/ Chair of Trustees since the previous meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • License for La Fontaine Academy
17	<p><u>Correspondence to the Chair/ Chairs Actions</u></p> <p>There had been no correspondence received by the Chair since the last meeting.</p> <p>The following actions taken by the Chair since the last meeting were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approval of 2021/22 Apprenticeship Return • Approval of CEO mileage claim
18	<p><u>Papers circulated for Noting</u></p> <p>The following papers had been circulated for noting between Board meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESFA Academies Planner 2022/23 • 2021/22 Apprenticeship Return • 2022/23 Board and Committee meeting dates
19	<p><u>Any Other Business</u></p> <p>There were no other matters of business to report.</p>
20	<p><u>Meeting Impact</u></p> <p>Trustees thanked the Executive Team for their updates. There had been good discussions held on the financial viability of the Trust and the outcomes for the children.</p>
21	<p><u>Date of Next Meeting</u></p> <p>The next Board of Trustees meeting would be held on 14 December 2022 at 5.00pm at Tudor Academy. The Board Development Session would be held on 19 January 2023 at 2.00pm at Tudor Academy.</p>
22	<p><u>Confidential Matters</u></p> <p>Discussions on strategic and financial matters, succession plans and Ofsted inspections were recorded in the confidential minutes.</p>

Action List	
Action	Owner
Circulate Ofsted reports from recent evaluations and the MAT Summary Evaluation briefing paper prepared by the Director of Quality Assurance, Data and Governance.	Clerk
Clerk to add 'PTA and Sub Committee function' to the next Chairs and Trustees' Forum agenda. (Clerk)	Clerk

Signed as a true and accurate record of the meeting	
Chair's signature	
Chair's name	
Date	