



Alderman Jacobs Primary School (Academy Trust)

****AGM Meeting****

Wednesday 7th December 2022

MINUTES

Key:

Trustee Questions

School Improvements

Governors Present: Cathy Carlisle (Headteacher), Laura Holland (LHO), Elaine Craine (EC), Andrew Pattison (AP), Tom Claxton (TC), Lindsey Boucher (LB), Eamonn Dorling (ED)

In Attendance: Jocelyn Sumner (Finance and Operations Manager), Amy Ure (Governance professional), Mark Jackson (Azets)

Meeting commenced at 5.22pm

1	Welcome and Apologies In the absence of Kevin Blencowe (Chair) LHO welcomed everyone to the annual AGM. Apologies received from Joel Combes (JC), Eleanor Gunn (EG), Sadie Wiles (SW).	All to note
2	Declaration of Pecuniary Interests - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cathy Carlisle (CC) - Secondment to SOKE education Trust as CEO. Husband provides Landscaping services. Daughter has a temporary contract for Midday Supervisor Laura Holland (LHO) - I am a Trustee of another Trust (OWN Trust) in Peterborough. I am also an associate Trustee for SOKE Trust but have no voting rights. Elaine Crane (EC) - Oldest son works for MacIntyre Hudson, who audit our school accounts. Lindsey Boucher (LB) Headteacher at Coates School 	All to note
3	Minutes of the Previous Meeting (8th December 2021) Previous minutes shared prior to the meeting. No concerns or issues raised with the minutes.	All to note
4	Agreed Actions Updated All actions have been completed	All to note
5	Trust Report to members Audited accounts - Mark Jackson (Azets) The following documents were shared with trustees prior to the meeting.	All to note

- Management information for the year ending 31/08/2022
- AJS Annual Reports and Accounts for the year ending 31/08/2022
- AJS Audit findings report for the year ending 31/08/2022

Mark gave a brief summary of the documents, with opportunities for Trustee questions.

Management Information - We have a positive financial result for the year. Finishing the year with 468,000 which is more than the reserves policy. Trustees have scope to use some surplus but to be mindful that there is a lot of uncertainty re school finances/pensions over the next 12 months and beyond. Azets are urging caution and to ensure you are on top of any announcements and the impact they have on the budget. He also noted that the surplus policy was set in 2014, with fluctuations trustees should consider reviewing the policy.

Key financial ratios - Generally up slightly from last year and slightly higher than benchmark against local academy schools, mainly noting:

- Non-teaching staff are higher than benchmark - there were changes in the year.
- Number of reserve days is below the benchmark, but a couple of schools keep a very high number.

Overall no causes of concern.

Official accounts - Trustees were reminded that these are public records, they go on Companies House and are submitted to the EFSA.

Trustees were invited to raise any issues or concerns.

Auditors report - The auditors agree the accounts reflect schools' finances. So, two clean reports.

Trustees were asked to note statement on page 23 **(1.2) going concern**.

This is the company's ability to operate, not the school. So, if we were to join a MAT the company would close. **Members were surprised to see the increase in staff numbers and asked if this would continue next year.** These are mainly fixed term contracts. The numbers are not full time equivalent so could just be an extra hour over lunch time.

Audit findings report - Appendix 1 is any observations that are made during the audit. These were only minor, low issues identified.

Trustees noted that the management response needs amending - should be 3 members who are not trustees.

ACTION: MJ to amend

It was noted that the headteacher expense was authorised in-year by the Deputy. This was done before it was raised as part of the audit last year.

Appendix 4 - No errors were identified so credit to JC and the team.

Emerging EFSA topics listed for information only.

- Cyber risk - important monitor layers of protection in place.
- External governance review - this has been done.

MJ



<p>MJ Left</p>	<p>Appendix 6 - Reminders of 'must dos' set out in the ATH. Members were encouraged to look through them.</p> <p>Overall there are no particular areas of concern from AZET point of view. Members agree it looks good and further conversations around surplus and unknown risks need to take place. They wanted to give their thanks to JS/CC and Azets.</p> <p>MJ is happy to support, if needed, on joining a MATS. He audits another school within the MAT so if this became an issue another colleague could support.</p> <p>MJ left at 5.52pm</p>	
<p>6</p>	<p>Programme of Internal Scrutiny</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members to appoint Auditors <p>Members were advised that officially every year they are delegated to decide who to appoint as auditors. We are currently in a 3-year contract with Azets. So, members have a year to consider if they would wish to change auditors. If members are not happy with them currently we could give notice on the contract but there will be penalties.</p> <p>Members agree that when you work closely with the profession and they have knowledge of the school we should continue with Azets.</p>	<p>All to note</p>
<p>7</p> <p>JS arrived</p>	<p>Trustee update to members</p> <p>The trustee update to members was shared prior to the meeting. Members were invited to raise any questions regarding the report.</p> <p>CC highlighted that although the budget is balanced it is a very pared back budget, taking out larger 'nice to have' projects. We know additional extra pots of money will be coming in one around 90,000 and another grant of around £16,000 to support sustainability and energy. Members asked if we would get 90,000 next year as well. We should get the first installment in April and the remainder in the next 2 academic term, in the GAG. We have not been advised of any additional funds beyond the next financial year.</p> <p>Members were reassured that we believe the budget incorporates all risks. Members asked if the budget includes the same teaching structure we currently have. Yes, it includes the same teaching staff structure. Members asked if the £16,000 grant is ring fenced. The grant is simply available to support schools very broadly with energy and related sustainability costs - doesn't need to be put against a specific budget line, as far as we are aware so far.</p> <p>JS arrived at 6pm.</p> <p>Members were informed that we are currently working in partnership with a MAT, for this year only. CC has been seconded out to be CEO for SOKE.</p>	<p>All to note</p>

	<p>This is an opportunity to explore the benefits of joining a MAT or SOKE without merging finance. Some of the reasons given:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decline in AJS trust board structure • Sharing resources, teaching • Open opportunities • Raise standards/improve performance • DFE encourage all schools to be in or working towards MAT <p>Members asked for the trustee's/head teacher initial thoughts. LHO and JC have joined SOKE as associate members and will be attending the first meeting next week. Some pros/cons discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It feels the right time to make a change. • It would widen pupil/staff opportunities/development • Concerns that the trust needs a bit of work • All schools have the same pupil aspirations and vision • Schools have a common approach and willingness • Significant changes have been made in a term, if continued at a similar pace could be a strong trust. • Cost effective <p>Members asked if the focus is still on the children. Yes, each school maintains its own identity and autonomy. There is a shared approach to curriculum/assessments and more centralised services. Members asked how the staff feel about it, would they need to work from other schools within the MAT. There doesn't seem to be any concerns. CC is based mainly at AJS. Our vision is that schools will retain identity and autonomy so when you apply for a job in a school, that is where you work.</p> <p>Members' thoughts are that it sounds positive and exciting. Members were advised that more focused discussion will take place around Easter and members will be updated and involved in what happens next.</p>	
8	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>Following a question raised by a member prior to the meeting with concerns regarding the longevity and sustainability costs of the swimming pool. A swimming pool and energy costs document was shared with the members prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Members noted swimming pools in the local area are at risk of closure and details of energy costs of a local pool have been requested under the FOI act. There was a suggestion that the school might consider if funding is available to purchase energy storage solutions and exploit the energy being created by our solar panels. If energy could be stored this would help to fund the energy use of the swimming pool and help sustainability. This will be considered as part of the Trusts long term plan.</p> <p>All agreed swimming is important for all children and is still part of the national curriculum. Members wondered if we can afford to keep it running, when there is a real threat to swimming pools being available in the local area. All agree, that at the moment it looks like the swimming pool is affordable.</p>	All to note



	Coates are not satisfied with the services received at the manor swimming pool and are currently considering alternative venues. AJS swimming pool could be a potential option which would also bring in an additional income to school.	
9	Summary of Meeting	All to note

The meeting closed at 6.20pm

Signed as a true record: Date:
 Laura Holland (Chair)

Date of next AGM meeting: TBC