

<b>BOARD:</b>	<b>DMAT AGM Meeting</b>		
<b>TRUST:</b>	DARTMOOR MULTI ACADEMY TRUST		
<b>DATE:</b>	Thursday 15 <sup>th</sup> December 2022		
<b>TIME:</b>	2.00pm – 3.30pm		
<b>VENUE:</b>	Holsworthy Skills Centre & Remote via Teams		
<b>PRESENT:</b>	J Lawler (Chair)	C Greaves (CG)	
	J Dumeresque (JD)	M Williams (MW)	
<b>ATTENDING:</b>	D Morrow (CEO) M Greener (CoS) M Wintrip (GP) G Briscoe (GB) P Sanders (PS)	T Skeaping (CoT) P Elliott (PE) E Neath (EN) R Ledger (RL) C Gould (CG)	S Kiff (CFOO) P Last (PL) S Biddles (SB) T O’Kennedy (TOK) T Usher (TU)

Actions, **red** Questions raised, **blue** Points agreed, **green**

Meeting started at 2.00pm

<b>Item</b>	Chair was nominated and agreed. J Lawler to Chair the meeting.
1.	<b>Welcome</b> Chair welcomed all those present.
2.	<b>Administration matters</b> 2.1 <b>Apologies for absence</b> I Luke (Member) was noted as absent, no apologies received. <b>Action: GP to contact I Luke to establish reason for absence.</b> 2.2 <b>Confirmation of Quorum (3 members required)</b> The meeting was confirmed as quorate. 2.3 <b>Declarations of interest</b> No pecuniary or personal interests were advised for any agenda item for this meeting.
3.	<b>Members to ratify/approve the minutes from the meeting of the –</b> 3.1 Trust Members to ratify/approve the minutes from the AGM meeting that took place on 16.12.22.  Chair asked Members if there were any corrections required.  TS noted the following: Item 5 - needs APPROVED to be added. Item 7 – the word Bishop needs to be removed.  <b>Trust Members AGREED that the AGM minutes, subject to the changes outlined above, were a true and accurate record of the meeting. Chair to sign on Governor Hub.</b>  Actions from previous meeting were confirmed as complete.
4.	<b>The receipt and adoption of the report of the Directors and the audited accounts of the Company for the year ended 31 August 2021.</b> <i>Papers shared prior to the meeting.</i>  Chair asked if CEO wanted to lead members through the item.  CEO explained this item is for members to ratify the Trust Board's approval of the annual accounts.  JD referenced a question she had sent earlier by email and said she had found the answer by further investigating the accounts.

**JD asked why there were twice as many journals in this set of accounts?**

CEO explained how this was down to coding and classification factors, not a result of any errors or mis-postings.

CFOO added how accruals and prepayments are being processed monthly now, which increases the quantities of journals.

CEO said he understood why the question had been asked, and assured JD it is improved efficiency in coding and posting, which has led to an inevitable increase in the numbers of journals. He furthered that no issues had been found via audit testing and DMAT is well positioned on the assessment curve. Internal management testing on journals continues and presents no anomalies.

**JD referred to reserves level and the “lost” £1M the previous year.**

CEO interjected to say reserves had been invested.

**JD agreed that to be the case but noted there is further investment to do next year, and reserves are just above minimum level. She said this causes her some concern, given what needs to be spent on Tavistock and school improvement in general. JD added that a cash flow forecast would have help.**

CEO said the cash flow forecast does show the position. He said there were two key elements to this:

- Firstly, reserves had been designated to purposefully to be below the presumed 4% eligibility threshold for increased government funding. DMAT had missed out on COVID-19 recovery funding because reserve levels had previously been on the wrong side of that threshold. Part of this is accruing the reserves expected to be spent this year.
- Second is a wider discussion around DMAT's Reserves Policy. Being publicly funded can influence decisions to be overly prudent. DMAT Audit and Resources Committees, and Trust Board, have maintained close regular oversight and have been very challenging in this area. CEO has made a commitment to the Board to look at in-year spend this year, to find some efficiency savings and to ensure healthy reserve levels are maintained. The policy does, however, need to be reviewed to ensure it is effective and in line with costs e.g. utilities.

**Chair said there seemed to be some confusion about what the reserves were. He referred to the Analysis of Performance Schedule, which cites Revenue Reserves as £2.693M at the end of the financial year. Chair asked for confirmation of this being correct, which CEO provided. Chair went on to say that figure has now been reduced by just under £1M within the year.**

CEO clarified the precise amount as being £932K.

**Chair asked how this compares to reserves in the previous financial year, as it had reduced then also.**

CEO said DMAT had brought forward a reserve of, effectively £3.6M, which included restricted, unrestricted, and some of the GAG reserve.

**Chair asked what the equivalent figure the previous year would have been? As £3.6M was the amount it had reduced to.**



CFOO said the figure was £3.7M the year before, when there had been an approximate £62K deficit.

**Chair sought clarity, that in the previous year DMAT “stayed still?” (CEO and CFOO responded affirmative.) Chair asked what is being forecasted for reserves for the current financial year.**

CEO said it depends and some mitigating factors will be discussed at the Trust Board meeting later today. The expectation, he said, is that reserves will be approximately £2M by the end of the year. CEO explained some challenges. This time last year, he said, the utilities bill for Okehampton was £3,000, the equivalent bill this year is £34,700. This illustrates the cost pressures on the budget which are well beyond what could have foreseen when it was set. DMAT is also awaiting the outcome of the government funding issues, which should mitigate some aspects. The reality, CEO said, it is not currently possible to forecast with precision. However, it is being supported, challenged, and triangulated by the Trust Board.

**Chair summarised saying reserves are expected to be around £2M with lots of “if and buts.”**

CEO concurred and said it is very difficult to give a firm response at this point. Until there is an announcement about funding and there has been opportunity to enact processes around that, much remains unclear.

**MW referred to page 15, where it details “Principle risks and uncertainties.” He focused on safeguarding and child protection and the Trust Board priority of maintaining high standards. He asked, given the recent OFSTED the recent OFSTED report on one of our secondary schools, how that is achieved and how the Trust Board are assured that process is in place, and working in all schools.**

CEO outlined how there is a Director of Safeguarding who operates against a schedule, reporting to both Local Stakeholder Boards (LSBs) and Inclusion & Social Justice Committees. In addition to this, there is external verification, through NSPCC (safeguarding audits) and Devon County Council (DCC) contextualised audits. Therefore, he said, there is regular internal and external verification processes in place.

**MW asked how often this happens and whether the NSPCC external validation is new?**

CEO said he believes it is healthy to have external verification and he had commissioned the NSPCC work when he joined DMAT, and they are re-commissioned annually. However, CEO noted the regularity for Okehampton, and Tavistock Community Colleges had been accelerated, given the size of the schools and the need for work in this area. The DCC visits have arisen to further validate, as they have statutory responsibility for safeguarding in the local area.

MW thanked CEO.

**Chair asked if the NSPCC work had flagged concerns at Tavistock before the Ofsted inspection?**

CEO said it flagged up some specific areas, however, the context for Tavistock Ofsted was post lockdown and there were some specific issues around protective characteristics and a continuation of some behaviours from outside school, which were carried back in. Processes and systems were deemed strong, but culture had been tested because of the wider circumstances. The most recent visit from DCC noted Tavistock as having exemplary practice in some areas.

**Chair enquired about a visit earlier this month.**

CEO said this was a visit from an external Trust Partner. The initial draft reports say classrooms are disruption free and the overall culture of diligence and safeguarding is positive. CEO noted the next steps as aiming for classrooms to also be distraction free and there is full focus and no “mental truancy.” The view of one visiting partner, who had undertaken Ofsted inspections, was that the school would not currently be deemed inadequate.

	<p><b>Chair referred to the KIDD document and asked for an update on the rebuild of Tavistock, which had been cited as a risk?</b> CEO confirmed this as being a key risk and DMAT are still awaiting the outcome and announcement about the re-building program. He said he feels positive about it and significant amount of “campaigning” has been undertaken for DMAT’s bid.</p> <p><b>Chair asked when a decision would be made?</b> CEO said it is imminent.</p> <p><b>Chair said DMAT had been engaging with some primary schools in the Tavistock area, he asked if that work was on hold now?</b> CEO said there are two small primary schools that are due to join DMAT later in 2023. Milton Abbot and Mary Tavy and Brentor. He said there have been further discussions with three or four more primaries in this locality. However, given the Tavistock judgement and the resulting prohibition on growth, those relationships are not currently being furthered.</p> <p><b>Chair asked those present if there were any more questions about the accounts.</b> None raised.</p> <p>Chair wanted to formally note to thanks to the Finance Team, who contributed to and produced the accounts. The auditors, he noted, had well endorsed the accounting, and struggled to find fault. Chair said it is reassuring to see the strength of the processes.</p> <p><b>The Members accepted the accounts and AGREED with the Trust Board’s proposal to approve. Trust Board decision ratified.</b></p>
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<p>5.</p>	<p><b>Auditors Appointment</b></p> <p>The Chair advised that the Trust Board wished to propose the reappointment of Bishop Fleming for next year’s accounts. He clarified with CEO that no concerns had been expressed about their practice.</p> <p><b>The Members AGREED to the Trust Board’s proposal to approve Bishop Fleming, as the auditors for DMAT next year.</b></p>
<p>6.</p>	<p><b>Chair of Trust Update</b> <i>Paper shared prior to the meeting.</i></p> <p>Chair asked Chair of DMAT Trust Board (TS) to share any highlights from her report.</p> <p><b>TS said she hoped the report was useful and informative and asked Members if they had any questions or comments.</b></p> <p><b>MW asked what is The Promise School?</b> TS described it as a specialist provision for pupils with Social, Emotional &amp; Mental Health (SEMH) needs. She explained how DMAT had “won” the provision, which made it one of the first mainstream MATs to bring a special school on board. TS said the school is a new build with lots of investment. Until now pupils have been occupying interim accommodation, which has been a cause of some issues. March 8<sup>th</sup> is the date DMAT will get the keys for the new building with a view to move pupils in after easter. There are, TS said, currently 40 pupils on roll but there is longer-term capacity for 100. TS said DMAT are privileged to bring this school into its family.</p> <p>Chair said this community have been seeking such a provision for a long time. Until now children with special needs have had to travel some distance. Chair felt it was a great decision and a “feather in the cap” for DMAT. <b>He asked if the Member’s meeting in the Autumn term might be held at The Promise School.</b></p>

**Chair asked TS about the Okehampton College complaints mentioned in her report.**

TS concurred there had been some complaints. She stressed this to be in line with broader trends across region and nationally, where parents / carers are going directly to Ofsted with complaints. She cited how there had been one complaint from St. James, relating to it being one of the interim sites for The Promise School. TS said she anticipates issues resolving and a drop off in complaints.

**JD recalled the time of being awarded The Promise School (TPS) and how there had been many requirements and restrictions associated with it. She asked if the Tavistock Ofsted outcome creates a risk of potentially losing it.**

TS acknowledged one of the criteria was around Ofsted outcome thresholds which has been contravened with Tavistock being graded "inadequate with serious weaknesses." She said however, it is not straight forward, and she would ask CEO to update on this.

CEO said there were a couple of things to say on this subject, namely:

- DMAT was awarded TPS before any schools having any validated data and / or Ofsted outcomes, due to the pandemic. It had therefore been difficult to evaluate DMAT at that time. Subsequently there were many inspections in a very short period. Every Ofsted, apart from Tavistock College, was "good." The balance "score card" for DMAT was agreed by the Regional Director to be overall positive. In addition to this DMAT have demonstrated notable improvement in "requires improvement" schools. Therefore, the overall performance of DMAT is positive and Tavistock's outcome will not block growth.
- When awarded TPS, DMAT were at that point untested and have improved in all metrics. CEO acknowledged there is a risk and said there always is with such provision. He noted that some of the most vulnerable pupils in the county pupils have been brought into TPS. Some of whom have been out of educations for upwards of 4 years, with high levels of Children Social Care involvement and SEND. Having these pupils in temporary accommodation, alongside mainstream, can be perceived by communities as problematic and risky.

TS clarified, the school which had come out of "RRI" rating was Bradford Primary. The principal of the school had received a letter from the Regional Schools Director praising and congratulating them on the outcome. TS also noted Holsworthy Community College had been rated "good."

**Chair asked if Trustees had been surprised by the outcome at Tavistock or if it had been logged on the Risk Register as a concern?**

TS said yes, they had been surprised. Tavistock had not been singled out on the Business-Critical Risk Register. Ofsted was listed as a risk and the Board have since separated risk assessment of Ofsted outcomes of secondaries and primaries. TS said it was known Tavistock may require improvement but the judgement of "inadequate" was not anticipated.

**Chair asked what the lessons for trustees are?**

TS said Trustees have reflected extensively and a key point is to strengthen skills and experience on the Board, so they can provide strong challenge and support to the Executive Team. Particularly in QEC Secondary Committee and SEND. A SEND Trustee has been recruited and reporting to QEC Secondary Committee has improved significantly, which makes it much easier to hold to account. TS noted there had also been more focus at Local Stakeholder Board level. A new Chair has been appointed at Tavistock, who is a SEND specialist. They have risen to the challenge and each governor has responsibility for a strand of the Rapid Improvement Plan.



**Chair said the most recent version of the Risk Register shows improvement and mitigated risk for TCC. He queried this and whether this should be flagged up.**

TS said the Board are discussing later. After mitigation the rating is "amber." She said this demonstrates that DMAT are confident Tavistock will move out of inadequate quickly. The score reflects the Board's confidence in the additional systems and processes in place.

**CG asked about staffing and morale. She said the national picture for teaching is that staff turnover is generally high. She said, given the Tavistock report and issues mentioned about behaviour, what are current staff turnover levels, at DMAT secondaries?**

CEO said one previous failure was DMAT, prior to his appointment, was it did not operate as a single trust. Tavistock was particularly segregated, and it took time to understand why. In terms of staff morale and turnover, DMAT has healthy churn but below national levels. He said some staff who left Tavistock were perhaps best placed to do so, as their approach did not fit with the need to rapidly improve. Subsequent appointments have strengthened Tavistock, which now needs to be agile and shift culturally.

**CG acknowledged it is difficult, amidst change, to balance risks and impact on staff. She asked about levels of exclusions. CG acknowledged this is a factor when addressing behaviour but equally in rural areas there are limited alternatives for those pupils excluded.**

CEO said that although at a higher level than he would like, DMAT are not in the top 5 for exclusions in the county. CEO said he aspires for DMAT to be "non-excluding" but cannot compromise on the current approach because of lack of provision of alternative education and opportunities. CEO said this is something he is discussing with the Regional Director. He said he is also reviewing and challenging suspensions and exclusions. It is not done likely but must be a tool for principals where needed, particularly to reinstate expectations post-pandemic.

TOK added the Trust has moved from annualised appraisal to a regular monthly check in program. Therefore, there are more frequent checks on how people are feeling and more regular conversations to develop more open and honest line management relationships.

Chair said this also means performance issues are dealt with promptly.

TS said Tavistock staff were devastated by the Ofsted outcome but have turned it into a positive, as led by the principal. Trustees have visited every aspect of the school and it is very calm and has a good feeling about it.

JD said the issues are not isolated and behaviour, post-pandemic and lockdown has been a challenge for all schools.

Chair said the issues have been taken seriously and there seems to be plan and actions in place. He extended thanks to Trustees.

7. **CEO Update**

*Paper shared prior to the meeting.*

CEO wanted to note the level of TS's involvement. Attending every Ofsted and every governance meeting. He said her level of support has been remarkable.

**Chair asked Members to formally thank TS for the time and effort and commitment she dedicates to her role as Chair of Trust Board.**

**Chair asked if there were risks associated with the schools which have not yet been inspected by Ofsted.**

CEO said none will be graded "outstanding" and schools that have this as a legacy rating rarely retain it. Regarding Okehampton College, he said, he is confident with the work done to improve standards, expectations and behaviour but feels there is more to do more around "hearts and minds." CEO said the main risk will be around parental perception. CEO said there is a risk is

Okehampton could be graded “requires improvement.” He said, however, that he did not feel that would be the standardised judgment. CEO considers there to be a range of areas of “good” and is confident it will be securely “good” in a short amount of time. He reminded those present that when he undertook an audit of all schools in the first months of his tenure, only one would not have been deemed inadequate. A significant amount of progress has been made since then. The Board have taken responsibility to be work in partnership, be honest about status and support and challenge the Executive. Improvement, he said, is at all levels and he stated he is not concerned about the primaries due for Ofsted, from a risk perspective.

**MW noted Okehampton Primary School (OPS) seems to struggle in terms of achievements and asked what work is being done there?**

CEO said the OPS received a “good” rating in its recent inspection. CEO said there is a significant cohort of pupils who are disadvantaged because of socio-economic factors. Addressing this will require deploying the overall strategy for disadvantage, focusing on the right children and families with wrap around provision. The greatest challenge for OPS is the number of families under Early Help and Children’s Social Care. CEO said DMAT are refocusing leadership in order to accelerate progress.

**Chair asked about practice SATs and the autumn results for maths and reading, which was outlined in CEO Report.**

CEO said results for maths are better than those for reading. He said there is a mismatch, in that SATS achievements are not corroborated NCRT reading tests. He said it has revealed a discrepancy between their SATS achievement level and whether they are sufficiently fluent in their reading. CEO said DMAT are rethinking their literacy strategy and taking an “all through” approach working back from Year 13. External milestones will be regarded as important but will not be driving the way the curriculum is delivered. Measuring through SATs and other exams is important for external validation but if children cannot access the next level of the curriculum, one is placing more value on assessment, rather than ability. CEO said DMAT is looking at a long-term cross Trust quality of education piece.

Chair acknowledged CEO's statement and view.

TS assured Members the QEC Primary Committee has a breadth of expertise and skills and is focusing on rapid improvement plans. She added how LSB representatives also triangulate this oversight.

**Chair asked if there were any further questions.**

Chair thanked CEO for his report.

**8. Ratify and note Member / Trustee appointments as appropriate and Member resignations since the last AGM.**

**8.1 Resignation of KS as trustee (from October 2022)**

**The Members NOTED the resignation of K Scrivener.**

**JD asked why KS had withdrawn?**

TS explained KS withdrew due to other commitments.

**8.2 Note Trustee appointments of PE, TOK, TU, EN (March 2022)**

**The Members NOTED the appointment of P Elliot; Tracy O’Kennedy; T Usher and E Neath.**

9.	<p><b>Any other business</b></p> <p>9.1 <b>Proposal of focus areas for Member meetings</b> (Namely: Finance, Compliance &amp; Strategy / Planning)</p> <p>Chair referred to the diocese training session materials he had previously circulated to Members. He suggested Members had thematic meetings, as well as standing items.</p> <p>He explained how this meeting is Finance focused, then suggested Compliance in the spring.</p> <p>Chair also suggested that the next meeting be held in one of the DMAT schools.</p> <p>CEO suggested Tavistock College so Members might witness improvements.</p> <p>GP asked how themes will map into meeting agendas.</p> <p>Chair said that will need to be considered and gave some examples like; Compliance relating to strategy requirements and how we audit against that.</p> <p>GP agreed to arrange some planning time.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Action: GP to arrange time with next Chair to plan how suggested themes (Compliance) be mapped into the next Members meeting agenda.</b></p> <p>TS wanted to extend formal thanks, at this the DMAT AGM, to the Executive Team who, she said, have dealt with an extraordinary number of challenges over past year.</p> <p>Chair endorsed the thanks from Members also.</p> <p>Chair proposed JD chair the April Members meeting, which she agreed to.</p> <p>Chair thanked all present for their time and closed the meeting.</p> <p><i>The meeting ended at 3.00pm</i></p>
10	<p><b>Date of next meetings</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 18<sup>th</sup> April 2023 @ 2pm</li> <li>• 11<sup>th</sup> July 2023 @ pm</li> </ul>

**Action Log from AGM 15.12.22**

Item No	Action	Who
2.1	GP to contact I Luke to establish reason for absence.	GP
9.1	GP to arrange time with next Chair to plan how suggested themes (Compliance) be mapped into the next Members meeting agenda.	GP