

Pele Trust Board of Directors



MINUTES

Annual General Meeting 6.30pm on Thursday 21st January 2021 via video conference

Members: Mr G Miller, Ms L Atkin, Mrs M Bates, Mr G Holmes, Revd J McGowan

Directors: Mr H Clear Hill (HCH), Mr S Harvey (SH), Mrs B Condra (BC), Mr C Gill (CG), Mrs L Joicey (LJ), Mrs M Stromsoy (MS), Mr R Golightly (RG), Mr R Kohli (RK)

In Attendance

Kieran McGrane (KMC) – CEO
Lynn Blain (LB) – Deputy CEO
Claire Hancock (CH) – Business Manager
Julie Collins (JC) – Management Accountant
Steve Leigh (SL) – Clerk to the Board

Item	Description of Discussion	Action
1.	<p>Welcome from the Chair The meeting opened at 6.30pm with the Chair welcoming all to the meeting.</p> <p>It was confirmed that the meeting was quorate and could move to business.</p>	
2.	<p>Apologies for Absence There were no apologies for absence with all members and Directors being present for the meeting.</p>	
3.	<p>Declarations of personal or pecuniary interest All Members and Directors were reminded that any personal or pecuniary interest relating to items on the agenda should be declared. Revd. J McGowan declared an interest in item 6 of the agenda – Director Appointments, and would not take part in the discussion of this item. Mr Holmes confirmed that there were some updates to be made to his Register of Business Interests and would liaise with the COO to update.</p>	COO
4.	<p>Any other Urgent Business items of business There were no items of urgent business to raise at item 8 of the agenda.</p>	
5.	<p>Minutes of the AGM held on 16th January 2020 5.1 Approval of Minutes Members RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 16th January 2020 be approved for signature by the Chair as an accurate record of the meeting with a signed copy being provided for the school file when the Chair was next in school.</p> <p>5.2 Matters arising from the minutes There were no matters arising from the minutes.</p>	CtoB / Chair

6.	<p>Director Appointments</p> <p>Members were informed that three of the Directors were nearing the end of their term of office. Each had confirmed that they were no longer in a position to stand for re-election due to work and personal commitments that would not allow time for continued support to the Trust as a Director.</p> <p>The Directors had undertaken a recruitment process to identify new Directors with four very strong candidates being interviewed for 3 positions. Mrs Bates had also involved in the interview process. Three Directors had been identified which were now presented for recommended Member approval and appointment. The individuals recommended for appointment were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms A Gibson – Headteacher of Hadrian Park Primary School, North Tyneside • Revd. J McGowan – St Basil’s & St James’ Fenham and current Member to the Trust • Mr J Tate – Managing Director, Tracerco Global <p>All appointments would be for a 4 year term of office commencing 22nd January 2021.</p> <p>Members RESOLVED to approve the appointment of Ms A Gibson, Revd. J McGowan and Mr J Tate as Directors to the Pele Trust Board with effect from 22nd January 2021. It was agreed that each be appointed for a 4 year term of office.</p> <p>Members expressed their thanks, gratitude and appreciation to BC, CG and SH for their work and contributions as Directors to the Trust in its journey to date and wished them the very best in their future endeavours.</p>	CtoB / COO
7.	<p>Presentation and Adoption of Annual Report and Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31st August 2019</p> <p>The CEO was invited to introduce this item, reflecting on the challenges that had been faced over the last 12 month period, particularly those presented with the Covid situation, the efforts made by schools in their ongoing support to pupils, students and families, and the progress maintained across the year. Lockdowns and restricted working had frustrated and impeded the progress of a number of initiatives that the Trust wanted to get off the ground. This would be addressed once schools returned to more normal operations.</p> <p>Collaborative working across all schools in the Trust was evident with strengthened relations being built across the staff bodies. Close collaborative working and shared practice, particularly over the Covid situation, had developed a highly effective support group which all valued. Feedback from schools to their School Improvement Partner on the working and support of the Trust had been extremely positive.</p> <p>Members commended the regular updates that they had received from the CEO and applauded the efforts that had been made in the ongoing development of the Trust over the year.</p> <p>Noting previous discussions around the potential growth of the Trust, Members questioned the interest of neighbouring schools to join the Trust arrangements. The CEO explained that working contact was still being maintained with Stamfordham Primary and Whalton CE Primary School, although this had been greatly minimised over the year as a result of Covid and the lockdown situations presented. The opportunity for schools to express an interest in becoming part of</p>	

	<p>the Pele Trust remained but it was felt that at this point in time, there was no strong appetite for either school to become part of the Trust. Noting the position of Ponteland Community Primary School, it was considered that their Reception numbers for September 2021 (when confirmed) would be a good indicator of their future development.</p> <p>Attention was drawn to the Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31st August 2020 which had been previously circulated. It was noted that these had recently been approved by the Board of Directors and were presented to Members for receipt and adoption.</p> <p>Members were walked through the content of the Annual Report with an explanation of the information and financial statements presented. It was noted that the audit reports undertaken as part of this process were clean and had produced unqualified reports, supporting the view that the accounts presented a true and fair view of the Trust's financial activities with no issues identified that would require formal reporting. This further endorsed and validated the hard work that had been invested by all schools in their journey to date.</p> <p>Noting the level of financial reserves currently maintained, Members questioned whether the retention of such a large balance had been a conscious decision in the development of the Trust. Directors confirmed that a subgroup of the Board were about to undertake a thorough review of the Trust's Reserves Policy which would consider the circumstances against which reserves may be allocated, the level of reserve funding that should be retained and how this aligned to the current policy. All Directors were in agreement that the Trust should not be running up a significant central reserve year on year without a clear plan as to what that funding was being retained for. There was a fine balance between retention of funding for clear reason versus making sure any available funding was benefitting the pupils and students currently in school.</p> <p>Members were informed that with a pupil population now exceeding 3,000 pupils, the Trust had qualified for the School Condition funding allocation from the ESFA. The amount of funding allocated would be identified later in the Spring term.</p> <p>Noting the budget positions for both Heddon St Andrew's and Richard Coates CE Primary Schools, Members were informed of the measures taken by each school to achieve balanced budgets, and the conditional financial support provided by the Trust to help Richard Coates CE Primary School achieve a balanced budget position over future years. All schools were subject to careful and thorough monthly budget monitoring in support of future planning.</p> <p>Members commended the quality of work in producing the Annual Report and Financial Statements presented, noting the positive feedback that the team had received from the auditor.</p> <p>Members RESOLVED to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive the Annual Report for 2019 / 2020 • Receive and adopt the audited annual accounts for the year ended 31st August 2020 • Receive the audit findings report to Trustees 	COO
8.	<p>Any other items of Urgent Business</p> <p>There were no other items of urgent business to raise for discussion.</p>	

	<p>The Members extended their thanks and appreciation to the senior leadership team and all staff across the Trust for the work, efforts and successes that had been secured over the year.</p> <p>The CEO once again extended his thanks to those Directors leaving the Trust for their support and contributions in the journey of the Trust to date.</p>	
<p>9.</p>	<p>Date and Time of Next Meeting It was agreed that a more informal meeting of the Members and Directors be held later in the year when it was hoped that schools would be back to normal operation. The proposed date of the next AGM meeting would be circulated as soon as the meeting calendar for 2021 / 2022 had been agreed.</p> <p>Members and Directors were thanked for their attendance and contributions to the meeting. There being no further business the meeting was closed at 7.15pm.</p>	

Chair.....

Signed.....

Date.....