



Minutes of the Heart of Mercia Multi-Academy Trust incorporating  
Hereford Sixth Form College, King Edward VI College, Stourbridge  
and Worcester Sixth Form College.

held on 22<sup>nd</sup> June, 2023 at Worcester Sixth Form College

Present: Ken Hopkins, (by Teams), Marion Hawkins, Peter Cooper (Executive Principal),  
Daniel Pearce-Higgins, Katie Jackson, Shirley Tully

In attendance: Jonathan Godfrey (Clerk to the Trust),  
Sallyanne Griffiths (Finance Director)  
Andrea Marshall (HoM Quality Improvement Officer)  
Ceri Morgan (Director of strategy)  
Linda Watkins (Clerk to Board designate)  
Andrew Dickinson (Headteacher Chantry High School)  
Adam Tedesco (Governor Chantry High School)

Ken Hopkins welcomed Andrew and Adam from Chantry High School as observers.

**ACTION**

1 **Apologies for absence:**

Craig Holden, Sheila Boniface

2. **Election of Director:**

It was noted that the Members at their meeting of 17<sup>th</sup> April, 2023 had appointed Jonathan Godfrey a 'section 50' director by an ordinary Resolution of the Members, with a term of office commencing on his ceasing to be the Clerk. This was warmly supported by the Board.

3. **Declaration of interests and gifts**

None were declared.

4. **Minutes of the meeting of 8<sup>th</sup> December, 2022**

The minutes of the meeting were approved.

5. **Matters arising and outcomes of action points**

Directors had followed a programme of visiting LGBs on an irregular basis. The discussion on the establishment of link Directors had been postponed until the June meeting.

It was conformed that a bid to the Trust Capacity Fund for £250K had been submitted.

6. **Executive Principal's report**

The Report was noted. The following issues were discussed:

The assimilation of Chantry High School and John Kyrle High School is progressing well. Restructuring of the senior team at JKHS has been completed successfully and staff have engaged positively in collaborative activities.

The financial challenges at all three colleges arising from a 3% deficit in funding of pay rises will require significant efficiency gains. In addition, fund-raising from ex-students, benefactors, legacies and grant awarding bodies should be considered. This would require some investment in staffing. Adam Tedesco commented that his MAT had successfully raised £100K from fundraising. HSFC celebrates its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in the academic year 2023/24 and WSFC its 40<sup>th</sup> in the same year. Fund-raising will be integrated into any planned activities.

It was noted that the building projects at HSFC and WSFC were on schedule for completion for the start of next term.

The MAT continues to collaborate with other successful Trusts and Rachel Slater, CEO of the Stourvale MAT has agreed to become a Director of HoM.

7. **Update on secondary school key performance indicators**

Ceri Morgan gave a presentation on the key performance indicators used at Key Stage 4 which include Attainment 8 (raw GCSE data) and Progress 8 (value-added data) in the 8 best grades achieved by students, and progress post GCSE. The value-added is based on progress from KS3 to KS4. It was noted that all data, owing to the impact of Covid teacher assessed grades would not enable valid comparisons to be made for the last two years. Attendance is an important indicator. It has fallen nationally, after Covid, from 95% to a low of 87% but has recovered to 91%. Home-schooling has increased as an option. Absence is categorised according to number of successive days missed. 10 days is considered long-term absence.

In addition to data Ofsted grades, E Bacc numbers and curriculum offer, progress of pupils with additional needs or in receipt of pupil premium was important. Many schools also use the commercially available Fischer Family trust software to analyse value-added.

DFE publishes school performance data on its website. In addition to data, Ofsted uses 'soft intelligence' on a school's culture and ethos, staffing changes, financial position, and stake-holder surveys.

8. **Minutes of the Committee Meetings of 27<sup>th</sup> March, 2023**

**The Audit Committee** minutes were summarised by Marion Hawkins.

Following discussion, the minutes of the meeting, the Updated Risk Register and Information Policy and Business Continuity Plan were approved. New risks had been added to the register on the impact of Covid, Artificial Intelligence and meeting the sustainability agenda.

**The Finance and Resources Committee** minutes were summarised by Shirley Tully.

It was noted that although the three-year forecast showed deficits in each year, mitigating actions would be in place to address the shortfalls. The funding beyond next year could change and it was agreed that irreversible cuts should be avoided in the face of this uncertainty. Following discussion, the Management accounts for April, the budget for 2023/24 and the financial forecast were approved.

Policies on Equality and Diversity, Health and Safety, Recruitment, Redundancy and Support and Capability were approved. It was noted that the Redundancy and Capability procedures, at the discretion of the Board, allowed a staff member to be accompanied by a legal representative at an appeal hearing.

**The Curriculum and Quality Committee** minutes were summarised by Daniel Pearce-Higgins. It was noted that after Covid, attendance and retention data had improved, responses to student questionnaires were largely positive and projected student numbers showed growth in all three colleges. The minutes were approved.

9. **Minutes of the CEO and Chairs meeting of 13<sup>th</sup> June, 2023**

In summarising the minutes Peter Cooper commented on the very positive feedback from colleges and schools on the collaborative activities which had taken place, developments to MAT governance which reflected the assimilation of secondary schools and the continued commitment to a level of delegation which seeks to ensure as much autonomy for schools and colleges as possible.

10. **Report on LGB minutes**

Jonathan Godfrey gave a verbal update on issues under discussion. All colleges are implementing actions to meet the financial challenges common to all. The arrangements for formalising communication between LGBs and the Board are under review.

11. **Assimilation of John Kyrle and Chantry High Schools to the MAT**

It was noted that Due Diligence had not revealed any concerns and that governors at both schools were in favour of joining the MAT. Following discussion, it was agreed unanimously that, in principle, the Heart of Mercia Trust should incorporate the Chantry High School and John Kyrle High School from 1<sup>st</sup> September, 2023.

12. **External Report on Governance**

Peter Cooper explained the context of the report:

It had been commissioned as part of collaborative work by SFCA and Stone King on governance in SFCs. The main author came from an FE background and was now an academic working on governance. The report looked at current arrangements but also commented on readiness for further expansion. Its key recommendations relate to formalising the relationship between the board and LGBs and achieving a greater level of consistency in reporting and documentation. This requires a greater level of support from

a Governance Professional. The report's recommendations will be implemented and an action plan presented to the Board in September.

13. **Appointment of Linda Watkins as Governance Professional**

In response to the need for more support for the Board as the Trust expands, Jonathan Godfrey was relinquishing the post of Clerk. Ken Hopkins summarised the expertise and experience of Linda Watkins who has worked as a Clerk to a MAT and also Clerk to Hereford and Ludlow College and Hereford College of Arts Board. Following discussion, Linda Watkins was appointed as the Governance Professional from July on a 0.6 contract.

14. **Calendar of meetings**

An updated, draft calendar has been circulated.

15. **Any other business**

16. **Date of Next Meeting: 6.00pm 12<sup>th</sup> October, 2023 at KE VI College, Stourbridge**