Board of Trustees
Meeting minutes: 13th July 2026
4.00pm

Held in person at Landscove School House, with some online participation via Microsoft 'Teams

Invited: Cheryl Mathieson (Chair), Kate Evans (KE), Dominic Course (DC), Ben Thorne (BT), Christine Cottle (CC), Alwyn Harries (AH), Rachael Sharpe (CEO), Jill Larcombe (JL), Max Thomas (MT)

Officers in Attendance: Matt Matthew (MM), Charlotte Roe (GP)

Minutes: Nicol Bush - Clerk to the Trust

No	Item	ACTION
1.	**Welcome and apologies** The Chair opened the meeting with a welcome to all attendees. Apologies were received and **accepted** from TP, GS, PW **Reflection** – Vision and Values The Ethos Trustee provided a reflection, recognising the collective efforts of Trustees, leaders and staff throughout the academic year. He reflected on the Trust's vision of "Flourishing schools for all at the heart of our communities" and reaffirmed its commitment to supporting the wellbeing, development and success of all pupils and staff. Trustees noted the progress made during the year and the importance of continuing to make decisions that reflect the Trust's values and support the long-term sustainability of its schools and communities.	
2.	**Declarations of interest** • Dominic Course is Chair of Governors at South Dartmoor Community College and a Director of DACORS Ltd. • Graeme Scott is an employee and Executive Chairperson for educational software company, The Mario Framework. • Kate Evans is Director for Education of The Good Shepherd MAT and Governor at Boscastle County Primary School. • Paul Waterworth is Director of Gerrard Stuart Financial Services Ltd • Jill Larcombe is a Clerk to the DAG, Clerk to two federations, and a governor at Castle Primary School. • Tom Parkin - Headteacher of South Molton Primary School, part of The Harbour School Partnership Trust There were no new declarations of interest brought to the meeting.	
3.	**Any other business** There was no other business brought to the meeting.	
4.	**Approval of meeting minutes from 18th May 2026** **For formal approval:** • Part I minutes of the meeting held on 18th May 2026 were **approved** as a true record and signed accordingly. • **Part II** minutes of the meeting (circulated separately in advance of the meeting) held on 18th May 2026 were **approved** as a true record and signed accordingly.	
5.	**Matters arising from 18th May 2025 not on the agenda** There were no matters arising not already included on the agenda.	

6.	**Trust Risk Register** **6.1 Meeting to consider the risk categories highlighted for Board review with scrutiny of any amber or red risks to ensure they are discussed within the meeting.** **6.2 Meeting to consider any Risk Register issues from Committee meetings** It was noted that there were currently 24 risks, comprising 18 amber, 5 green, and 1 red risk. *Trustees queried whether amendments agreed at the recent committee meetings, including changes discussed by the Remuneration Committee relating to People and Personal Development, had yet been reflected in the register.* It was confirmed that the register incorporated updates arising from all committee meetings, although there may still be some changes to be processed. The meeting agreed that many of the risks would be considered through the agenda items. **6.3 Meeting to consider the Risk Register Trends for 2025-2026** The Chair noted that the report currently covered up to Summer 1, with the latest updates still to be added. Trustees agreed that the report was helpful and provided a clear summary of movements in risk ratings over time. Trustees raised that the document showed where risks had moved between categories, such as from green to amber and vice versa, and demonstrated that risks were being regularly reviewed and updated. The Board welcomed the new report and agreed that it would be useful to continue receiving it as part of the risk monitoring process.	
8.	**Chief Executive Officer's Report** (Circulated to Trustees by the CEO via email- before the meeting) **Part II was taken**	
9.	**Deficit Recovery Plan-** (Circulated to Trustees by the CEO via email- before the meeting) **Part II was taken**	
10.	**Trust Growth** **10.1 Woodbury Management Partnership** **Part II was taken** **10.2 School Updates** **Part II was taken**	
11.	**Admissions Committee** The Chair provided an update on the work of the Admissions Committee, noting that it had met weekly throughout the year and had experienced increased activity compared with the previous year. The Chair advised that 226 admission applications across 21 schools had been considered, compared with 164 applications in the previous year. Whilst not every application had been agreed or come to fruition it was recognised that the increase reflected both local school challenges and the positive reputation of Trust schools. It was agreed that a report, similar to the one produced the previous year, providing some analysis of the numbers of pupils leaving the Trust during the year would be useful to enable comparison. The DCEO agreed to arrange for this to be available for the first meeting in the next academic year. **Action: DCEO to provide report**	
12.	**Audit Committee** **Meeting held on 2nd July 2026** Trustees received the Audit Committee minutes and internal audit reports. The Chair of the Audit committee noted that the committee had completed its annual meeting with the internal auditors, who confirmed they had been given full access to the information required to undertake their reviews. The Chair of the committee highlighted the positive impact of the Trust's IT provider, BayTech, during its first year of service, alongside ongoing work to review IT equipment and connectivity across schools. Cyber security remained a key risk, and findings from a recent audit highlighted the continued importance of staff training and secure practices. Trustees considered the proposed internal audit plan for the forthcoming year. It was noted that the plan included a renewed focus on financial systems and controls, particularly in light of the forthcoming changes to the Trust's leadership team. Trustees **approved** the internal audit plan for the year ahead.	
13.	**Finance & General Purposes Committee**	

	Meeting held on 10th July 2026 The Chair of the F&GP Committee reported that discussions had focused on budgets, year-end forecasts, capital expenditure and estate priorities. He noted that the key matters arising had already been covered through the CEO and finance reports. The Chair also highlighted discussions regarding the estate's capital programme, including changes to funding arrangements, forthcoming condition surveys and the prioritisation of building projects. He noted that capital projects were progressing well. Trustees discussed the level of reserves to be held by the Trust and **agreed** to revisit the matter once the final year-end figures were available, including consideration of the presentation of reserves and designated funds within the annual accounts.	
14.	**Remuneration and People Committee** **Meeting held on 10th July 2026** The Chair of the Remuneration and People Committee reported that the Workforce Action Plan was progressing well, with the exception of the appraisal framework review, which had proved to be a larger and more complex piece of work than originally anticipated. She noted that further development work would take place during 2026 to 2027, with the aim of implementing a revised approach from 2027 to 2028. An initial pilot would be undertaken within the education team. It was noted that recruitment activity remained strong, with 58 vacancies advertised and 260 applications received during the year. The Committee also noted initial indications showed that staff attrition had reduced to 14.46 per cent, compared with 20.35 per cent in the previous year but a final analysis, together with a more detailed workforce analysis would be presented in the autumn term. The Chair of the Committee shared that the committee had also considered preparations for the annual pay review due to take place in September.	
15.	**Standards & Curriculum Committee** **15.1 Meeting held on 7th July 2026** The Chair of the S&C committee noted that Sharon Lord (R.E Lead) had attended her final meeting and received thanks for her contribution, particularly in relation to Christian distinctiveness and ethos. She advised trustees that Alwyn Harries would take on responsibility for this area at Board level. The Chair of the committee shared that focus had been on behaviour, noting continued improvement across the Trust. The committee also reviewed pupil outcomes and were pleased to note stronger than expected outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. She noted that several schools had exited Tier 3 support and that the Committee had been introduced to the Trust's Challenge Partners, who provided an overview of their roles within the developing school improvement structure. Finally, the Chair of the S&C committee reported that improvements had been made to the quality of information provided to the Committee, enabling greater scrutiny and discussion of performance data. **15.2 Local Advisory Committees** The Chair reported that the main issues arising had already been covered elsewhere on the agenda. Discussion had included teacher recruitment and retention, staff absence and sickness levels.	
15.	**External Inspection Reports** 15.1 OfSTED: There were no inspections since the last meeting 15.2 SIAMS: There were no inspections since the last meeting	
16.	**Governance** **16.1 Update of changes or appointments of Members, Trustees and Governors** The Chair informed Trustees that Christina Mabin, who had been acting as Eden's Member representative, would step down from the role in October. Archdeacon Andrew Beane would succeed her as the representative and would attend the forthcoming Members' meeting. Trustees were also advised that two new Members were in the process of being appointed. Chris Norman, a former Trustee with significant estates experience, had agreed to be appointed as a non Foundation Member. Richard Jacobs, an experienced business leader and founding trustee of the Ted Wragg Trust, had been nominated as a Foundation Member. Both had been invited to attend the	

	forthcoming Members' meeting as observers while their appointments were being finalised. The Chair advised that Ben Thorne would step down from the Board at the end of December, following completion of the annual audit process. Trustees expressed their appreciation for Ben's valuable contribution and expertise. The Chair further advised of the need to recruit a replacement Trustee, with a particular focus on finance expertise and encouraged Trustees to identify potential candidates through their networks. **16.2 LAC Committee structure update** The Chair advised that progress was being made in recruiting a Chair for the Totnes Local Advisory Committee. A prospective candidate, who was a parent at a local school and a family law barrister, was due to meet with the Chair and Governance Professional to discuss the role. The Governance Professional noted that the Local Advisory Committee structure continued to operate effectively, although further recruitment of governors, particularly Foundation Governors, remained a priority. **16.3 Update on Governance Action Plan** The Chair advised that the Governance Action Plan was being revised to provide greater strategic focus. The Chair said that progress against a number of actions had already been achieved and a revised draft would be reviewed and circulated for further consideration. **16.4 Meeting dates for 2026/27 (Circulated by the GP to Trustees in advance of the meeting)** **16.5 Governance Annual Cycle of Business (circulated by the GP to Trustees in advance of the meeting)** Trustees received an update on meeting arrangements for 2026 to 2027. It was noted that meeting dates and the annual cycle of business were still being finalised, with proposals to reduce the number of Board and committee meetings to better align with reporting cycles and reduce workload while maintaining effective governance. The final documents would be circulated as soon as they were available. **16.6 Membership of Board Committees for 2026/27** Trustees reviewed committee memberships and agreed that existing arrangements would remain unchanged. **16.7 Governance Away Day** Trustees discussed a governance development session to support a review of Board roles, responsibilities and the Scheme of Delegation. It was **agreed** that the session should be held early in the academic year, with suitable dates to be explored. **16.8 Chair and Vice Chair of Board of Trustees for 2026/27** The Chair reminded Trustees to submit nomination forms for the positions of Chair and Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees. **16.9 Related Parties Forms - (Declarations of Interest)** Trustees were reminded to complete and return Related Party Declaration forms to the Governance Professional by the end of August 2026.	
17.	**Safeguarding** **17.1 GS to update meeting on safeguarding across the Trust** **17.2 CEO to update on any specific matters to note** GS provided an update on compliance and safeguarding matters. Trustees were advised that Trust wide performance data was being collated for presentation in September. Ongoing compliance requirements, safeguarding audits and safeguarding forum activity were also reported. The CEO noted that preparations were underway to implement new statutory requirements and deliver associated staff training. **17.3 Feedback from LAC meetings** There were no issues to raise.	
18.	**Health and Safety** Trustees received a brief health and safety update and were advised that there were no significant matters requiring Board attention.	

19.	**Sustainability** The CEO provided an update on sustainability across the Trust. Trustees were advised that all schools had implemented Climate Action Plans during the year and that a range of sustainability projects were underway. Good practice was highlighted at Landscove and Broadhempston, where sustainability had been embedded within the curriculum. Trustees noted that schools would review progress against their Climate Action Plans and develop updated plans for the forthcoming year. Trustees were also informed of progress with sustainability related capital projects, including LED lighting upgrades across five schools, the installation of energy efficient heating systems at two schools and participation in an electric vehicle charging scheme at one school.	
20.	**Digital Strategy** The DCEO provided an update on the Trust's digital strategy and IT provision following the first full year of service from BayTech. He shared that the service had strengthened relationships with schools, increased onsite support and delivered improvements across the Trust's IT infrastructure. The DCEO advised that 125 staff devices had been deployed, 13 schools had transitioned to cloud management, Wi-Fi upgrades had been completed or were underway across schools, and more than 3,600 support tickets had been resolved during the year. Plans were also in place to repurpose devices for pupil use. The DCEO reported that the Trust's Digital Strategy Group had not progressed as intended due to capacity constraints. As a result, digital development work would move to the RISE Digital network from September, enabling staff to collaborate with practitioners and specialists across a wider partnership to support future developments, including artificial intelligence and digital innovation.	
21.	**Policies for approval** The following policies have been reviewed and updated and are presented for approval: **21.1 Recommended by the Audit Committee** • **Mobile Phone and Screen with film-** *This policy was not yet available* **21.2 Recommended by the Finance & General Purposes Committee** • **Gifts and Hospitality-** Trustees **approved** the Policy following minor amendments to the wording. **21.3 Recommended by the Remuneration Committee** • **Exit Interview Policy 2026-** This policy was **approved** by the Trustees • **Recruitment Policy 2026-** This policy was **approved** by the Trustees **21.4 Standards & Curriculum Committee** • **Behaviour in Schools-** This policy was **approved** by the Trustees **21.5 Full Board Policies** • None	
22.	**Review of Risk Register RAG ratings** Trustees reviewed the Risk Register and considered whether any risk ratings required amendment following reports received from committees and discussions held during the meeting. It was noted that updates arising from committee reviews had been incorporated and that risk review dates would be updated accordingly. Trustees **agreed** that the current risk ratings remained appropriate. It was noted that recruitment and retention continued to represent the highest rated risk area.	
23.	**Evaluation of governance impact of meeting** Trustees reflected on the meeting and agreed that discussions and decisions had remained aligned with the Trust's vision and values, with the best interests of pupils at the forefront of decision making. The Chair noted that it was the DCEO's last Board meeting before his departure from the Trust on 11 September. On behalf of the Board, the Chair acknowledged the significant contribution the DCEO had made throughout his time with the Trust and expressed appreciation for his leadership, commitment, and support in the development of the Trust. The Chair recognised that the impact of his work would be felt for many years to come and, alongside the Board, wished him every success in his future role.	

The meeting ended at 6.16pm

Signed by the Chair.....on.....