

Great Oak Multi Academy Trust
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Minutes of the meeting held on 8 August 2023

Directors	Office	Term
Gary Benn		31/08/2025
Lilly Barker		16/11/2026
Paul Gray		10/02/2026
Alison Meadows		11/05/2025
Sarah Mitchell	Executive Headteacher [EHT]	Ex-Officio
* John Saxon		TBA
* Andrew Taylor	Chair	31/08/2025
<i>In attendance:</i>		
Tom Bennett	Clerk	
* indicates absence		

The EHT opened the meeting with a prayer

47/23 Welcome and apologies for absence

It was noted the extraordinary board meeting had been called to discuss the forthcoming resignations of two directors and the plans to increase the number of the Trust's members.

Apologies were received and accepted from Andrew Taylor and John Saxon.

48/23 Chair

In the absence of the Chair and Vice-Chair, it was **agreed** to appoint Lilly Barker as the Chair for the meeting.

49/23 Notification of AoB

None.

50/23 Notification of business interests

No director declared a potential conflict of interest on any matters to be discussed at the meeting or that they had received or given any gifts or hospitality that could be perceived to compromise their impartiality when dealing with matters for the MAT.

MAIN BUSINESS

51/23 Governance

a) Update on the approval of the amended Articles of Association

The EHT advised that following recommendations from the Department for Education [DfE] and the auditors, in line with latest ATH, that Multi Academy Trusts should have at least five members and the majority of members should not be Directors, the Trust's lawyers had been instructed to amend the Articles of Association. The amended Articles were based on the DfE's model memorandum and articles for academy trusts with a Church of England majority under the Academies Act 2010.

Under these the majority of members needed to be members with links to the Church.

The amended Articles of Association had been sent to both the Chelmsford Diocese and the DfE for approval.

Action

The meeting considered the current three members of the Trust and that two, Andrew Taylor and the Rev Alex Jeewan would no longer be members under the current articles in the near future. This was due to Andrew Taylor standing down as the Chair of Directors and Alex moving to another parish outside the deanery in October.

It was noted under the current Articles of Association, the Chelmsford Diocese were responsible for nominating one individual member holding a senior appointment within the deanery of Saffron Walden.

It was noted that the Rev Jeremy Trew was the Rector and Area Dean for Saffron Walden and surrounding villages.

It was **agreed** to contact the Rev Jeremy Trew to enquire on the progress of replacing the Alex Jeewan.

It was **agreed** to follow up the review of the articles by the DfE.

It was noted Andrew Taylor had been on contact with Rob Merchant, the Dean of Mission, Ministry and Education and Carrie Prior, the Director of Education at the Chelmsford Diocese, on the Trust's plans to increase the number of its members and filling the upcoming vacancies.

b) **Recruitment of new directors**

The EHT provided an update on the recruitment of new directors to fill the upcoming vacancies on the Board and reported that since the last meeting, a governor on the GCPA LGB had expressed an interest in becoming a director.

A pen-portrait had been forward to the other members including Chelmsford Diocesan Board of Education as CDET are a member for approval, as required under the current articles of association. CDET had requested further information on how the proposed director will ensure the continued distinctive identity of Church of England schools.

If approved the new director would start their term in September.

The EHT reported she had spoken to two parents who had previously expressed an interest in becoming a governor at GCPA about the role of director.

The EHT reported that she had approached a representative from the Faculty of Education at Cambridge University to see if they had interest in becoming a director.

It was **agreed** there should be at least one director representing each of the current two academies within the Trust.

John Saxon, a governor at DPA was standing down as a governor and director in October due to being re-located to a different parish.

It was agreed that EHT would update Debden LGB about the need for representation given the stepping down of Rev. John Saxon.

It was **agreed** to advertise for a new director on Debden Parish Pump magazine.

It was felt the Board needed to strengthen its financial management and safeguarding skills when seeking new directors.

c) **Directors' roles and responsibilities for 2023-24**

The meeting considered the appointment of a new Chair following the retirement of Andrew Taylor at the next Board meeting in September and the appointment of a Vice-Chair.

Lilly Barker expressed an interest in being elected as Chair. It was **agreed** to appoint Lilly as Chair for 2023-24.

Paul Gray expressed an interest in being elected as Vice-Chair provided there was no conflict with his role as the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee.

PG

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LB

It was noted the Audit Committee’s Terms of Reference stated the committee should include “Three Directors– to be appointed from those Directors other than the Chairman of the Board or Chief Executive Officer”.

It was **agreed** to appoint Paul as the Vice-Chair of the Board for 2023-24.

It was **agreed** to appoint the new director, currently being considered by the CDET, as a member of the Audit and Risk Committee, should their appointment be confirmed.

It was **agreed** Gary Benn would remain responsible for Health and Safety at the Trust.

PG

EHT

GB

52/23 Finance

a) 2023-24 Budget

The meeting received the second draft of the 2023-24 Budget following the Board’s decision at its last meeting to increase the assumed increase in the 2024-25 and 2025-26 projected GAG income from 1% p.a. to be in line with CPI at 2.5% for each year.

The meeting also noted a small error [£2,000] had been identified in the 2023-24 DPA Budget that had reduced the budgeted surplus from £15k to £13K.

It was **agreed** to approve the amended 2023-24 DPA Budget and 2024-25 and 2025-26 Projections for both Academies.

EHT

b) ESFA Budget Forecast Return [BFR] 2023-24

The meeting received the draft 2023-24 ESFA’s BFR and noted the return recorded the consolidated data from and reconciled to the updated 2023-24 Budgets for each Academy and the Trust.

It was **agreed** to approve the 2023-24 BFR for submission to the ESFA.

EHT

53/23 Any other business

54/23 Date/time of future meetings

- Wednesday 06/09/2023
- Thursday 14/12/2023
- Thursday 25/04/2024
- Thursday 18/07/2024

Approved by the Board on 14 December 2023