



**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE HIGHAMS PARK ACADEMY TRUSTEES
RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 16 NOVEMBER 2023 AT 10.30 A.M.
AT THE SCHOOL AND VIRTUALLY**

Present: Dave Brown (Chair as TP joined remotely)-DB
Tracy Penfold-TP
Alan Benton-AB
Richard Palmer-RP
Erik Mesel-EM
Nigel Armsby-Principal-NA

Also in Attendance: Tim Morris, Company Secretary-TM
Hugh Swainson, Buzzacotts-HS
Jacob Adeshina, School Business Manager-JA

Clerk: Ms Caroline Russell

Summary of agreements and actions:

Minute reference	Formal agreements and/or actions identified	Named person(s) for action(s) identified	Completion date
5.4.	Letter of Representation: Detailed survey needed re fixed assets, write off of redundant goods and link to JS spreadsheets.	JA	As soon as possible
5.4	Pecuniary Interests: Companies House vs HP Portal. Discrepancies to be addressed.	TM	31-12-2024
9	Date and Time of Next Meeting: Thursday 25 January 2024-10.15 a.m..	All to note. School to action.	25-01-2024

1. WELCOME

1.1 Welcome

All were welcomed to the meeting and introduced themselves.
DB indicated that the meeting would focus on the management accounts with a presentation by HS.

1.2. Quorum

The meeting was quorate with 6 trustees present.

1.3. Apologies for Absence

There were none.

2. ELECTION OF CHAIR

Tracy Penfold was elected unanimously. (Proposed by Tim Morris and seconded by Alan Benton).

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3.1 Declarations of Interest in the Current Agenda Items

Chair's Initials:



There were none.

3.2. Standing Declarations of Interest

These were noted, there being no declarations in relation to this meeting.

4. **MINUTES**

4.1. Minutes of the Last Meeting Held on 19th October 2023

These were received and accepted with no matters arising not considered elsewhere on the agenda. The minutes were considered signed, e-copies to be retained by the School and Governor Services.

5. **DRAFT ANNUAL ACCOUNTS-HS PRESENTED**

5.1. Post Audit Management Report: This was noted as prior e-circulated with clarification re 2023/4 to focus on the closing position and reserves.

Page 3 Executive Summary: This indicated that the audit had gone well and to timetable supported by information from the finance team.

Page 4 Unqualified Audit: This was noted with the accounts considered to present a 'true and fair' view. The conclusion that there were no issues re regularity was noted.

Page 5 Outstanding Items: These were noted re post balance sheet events.

Page 6 key Audit Findings: These were noted re financial climate, reserves policy and going concern assessment (it was considered that the Trust is a 'going concern' for a further year).

Capital Review of Rebuild: It was noted that this would involve disposal of the existing building which is to be demolished and that planning permission is still awaited. **Q.** Will there be a write off of the value of the old buildings? **A.** Yes, and later accounting for the value of the new build.

Page 10 Capital Expenditure: Additions to fixed assets during the year totalled £182K, of which £77K were funded from capital grants.

Income Recognition: This was noted with the accounts reflecting unspent capital balances.

Regularity and Related Party Issues: There were none.

Local Government Pension Scheme Valuation: This was included.

Education and Funding Agency Academies Financial Handbook Requirements: The accounts comply with these including re estates management, concessionary loans and support staff numbers and costs.

5.2. Proposed Amendments to Accounts: These were noted as considered to have no material effect on the accounts.

Page 18 Accounting and Internal Control Systems: This noted the expansion of auditing standards including re general IT controls with 1 recommendation about cyber essentials.

Audit Observations: These are summarised and prioritised A-C.

5.3. Summary of Net Movement of Funds

This noted £197,000 Operational surplus for the year. After £105,000 assigned to a fixed asset purchase £92,000 remained as an in-year surplus to reserves. There is £1.7million in available reserves constituted by brought forward reserves of £1.608m plus the £92k from the 22/23 results.

5.4. Letter of Representation

Chair's Initials:



This was noted for approval by the Board with no fraud or irregularity identified.
Recommendations were noted in relation to:

- The maintenance and content of a fixed asset register.
- Tracking of capital expenditure including assets additions and disposals. It was noted that this was not agreed last year.
- The need to value all new build additions.

ACTION: Detailed survey needed to value fixed assets and to write off redundant goods and link to JA's spreadsheets.

Q. Are the minibuses fully depreciated? **A.** Yes.

Trustees noted the issues identified but not considered as material risks. However, it is recognised that trustees do have responsibility for safeguarding assets which should be registered and tagged.

Pecuniary Interests: These have been cross referenced to Companies House with some discrepancies identified. TM agreed to undertake a review and to ensure alignment

5.5. Appendix 3-Key Financial Ratios

There is a small in year surplus. Regarding payroll key performance indicators at 80% + these are slightly higher than average. There is a little slack in the timetable, 44% of staff are at the top of their pay scale.

Q. So, ideally, salary costs should not exceed 80%? **A.** Yes, on this benchmark because it is difficult to achieve a surplus and break even without deferring other items such as maintenance.

Q. So this needs to be tracked and reduced if possible? **A.** Yes. **Q.** Contract out catering and cleaning? **A.** You could consider that but recent analysis shows it would push costs up.

There is an in-year revenue reserve of £92,000 and currently £1.7 million in accumulated reserves.

The Local Government Pension Scheme is determined by reference to actuarial assumptions. The Teachers' Pension Scheme is revalued periodically (last time in 2020) with employer contribution rates to increase by 5% from 2024. The notes to the accounts reflect the actuarial valuations.

HS was thanked for this presentation and answers to queries. The work of the School's finance section was also acknowledged with thanks noting that receipts and payments were recorded accurately which significantly aided the quality and timeliness of the audit. Overall, a good result.

5.6. Letter of Representation and Overall Accounts

These were noted. A draft has been agreed for presentation to trustees.

Page 29 Draft Accounts: These were noted per funds' perspective.

Going Concern Document: This is to be signed for signature by trustees. The resignation of AS was noted and to be adjusted in the final version of the Accounts document.

Unspent Balances re National Tutoring Programme: These were noted. NA stated that school run programmes are more effective re outcomes. Unspent balances are recovered.

5.7. Draft Trustee Report

This was noted as covered above.

5.8. Report to Pay Sub Committee

Chair's Initials:



This committee sat on 16/11/2023 and approved the recommendations of the Principal regarding incremental pay progression for main professional scale and upper pay scale teachers. No staff who were eligible and applied were denied pay progression. 47 staff are at the top of their scale. It was noted that the average age of staff at HPAT is older than in many other schools. This is a benefit to the School re-experience, a current difficult recruitment market with fewer teachers being trained and the OFSTED context of the School. Some staff have reduced their hours. As staff leave or retire, younger but less experienced staff can be recruited which will reduce costs noting that the School's behaviour system is now better established. Staff turnover is low but recruitment is pending with an Easter start likely for the one and only vacancy.

6. ESTATE MANAGEMENT-RP PRESENTED

- 6.1. It was noted that the School Rebuilding Programme is still with the planning department and that a new case officer has been assigned and is reviewing the whole project from scratch. This may delay contract approval and plans to start. However, there is permission for a decision to be made on grounds of urgency by delegated authority. Preparatory work and meetings continue to progress this.
- 6.2. Discussion noted that a lease is held for the Youth Centre by the HPAT charitable trust. A licence is needed to alter the use with a deed of variation required so the LA is asking for a formal specification. This has been refurbished by the school as a hall space. It was further noted that it is likely the former site services officer house will be used as a site office for the duration of the works and then refurbished at the end of the contract at the expense of the contractors

7. POLICIES AND STATUTORY DOCUMENTS

- 7.1. **Premises Hire Policy:** This was **AGREED** (costs and rates updated). Income from 'sports hall lets' is likely to be below the VAT threshold.
- 7.2. **Grievance Policy:** This was **AGREED**.
- 7.3. **IT. Major Incident Response Plan:** This was **AGREED**.
- 7.4. **Debt Management Policy:** This was **AGREED** as consistent with the Education and Funding Agency's Academies Financial Handbook. Permissible write off levels were noted.
- 7.5. **Cyber Security:** This was **AGREED** as satisfying RPA requirements.

8. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS NOTIFIED BEFORE THE MEETING

There was none and no confidential business.

9. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

This is scheduled for 25 January 2024-10.15 a.m.

The meeting closed at 11.30 a.m.

Chair's Initials:



Highams Park
Academy Trust

Chair: (print)

..... (sign)

Date:

Chair's Initials: