



## Board Meeting MINUTES

**15:00 on Monday 22 May 2023**

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TRUSTEES/DIRECTORS	
NAME	PRESENT
Tom Attwood (Chair)	■
Stephen Gough	■
Frank Green	■
Sara Attwood	■
Chris Weavers (VC)	
Helen Priday	■
Rochelle Saunders	■
Also in Attendance:	
Jonty Clark	Interim T4 CEO
Gosia Klosek	Head of College, ArtsX
Lisa Tharpe	Operational Safeguarding Lead
Asad Muzammal	Governance Professional

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**1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence:**

- a. Apologies for absence were received from Chris Weavers.

**2. Declarations of pecuniary interest in any of the agenda items:**

- a. There were no declarations of pecuniary interest in any of the agenda items.

**3. Governance Matters:**

- a. None

**4. Minutes of the Previous Meeting and Matters Arising:**

**Agreed:** The Minutes of the meeting held on 27 March 2023 were confirmed as true and accurate records.

*The order of the Agenda then changed and Items 7, 10 and 8 were brought forward.*

**5. Safeguarding Update:**

- a. LT advised that IMHS recently completed the annual Section 175 LA Safeguarding Audit. The audit form has been updated to include a greater focus on the role of Governors and Trustees. Trustees noted that the ArtsX Sec 175 audit is due for submission to Islington in September.

The Staff Code of Conduct was updated at the beginning of the year to consider the updated KCSiE Guidance. To meet the audit requirements, LBTH has asked its school to further update their Staff Code of Conduct to stipulate that staff should not have sex with a young person under the age of 18 and more clarification around what is considered as a low-level concern and the terminology used.

The school website has also been updated to meet the audit requirements. LT said that this has been time consuming because the school's website domain is updated and maintained by an external provider.

LT advised that the audit had also raised a point on safer recruitment processes being used for the recruitment of Trustees and Governors. SA advised that she had discussed this with KM.

**Action 230522/01:** A safer recruitment process to be in place for all Trustee and Governor recruitment. (KM, SA, LT)

- b. In discussing outstanding DBS re-checks for Trustees and Governors, LT said that it is unclear on who has formal responsibility for monitoring DBS checks and Safeguarding training for T4 Trustees and Members. Trustees acknowledged that all Trustees, Members and Governors are required to have an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. This requirement is set out in the School Governance Regulations and in [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(KCSiE\) 2023](#). Trustees agreed that this should not need to be a matter discussed in Board meetings and that Trustees and Governors should endeavour to respond to such requests as soon as they are received. It was acknowledged that the roles of Trustees, Members and Governors will be suspended until their documents for a re-check have been submitted and a check is underway.

**Action 230522/02:** TA to be copied into all DBS reminder emails sent to Trustees, Members and Governors. (LT, JC)

- c. LT advised that the IMHS DSL has resigned. The school had supported her in achieving the L5 Health & Social Care Award and soon after gaining the award she left to take up employment elsewhere. The school has been successful in recruiting an even more experienced social worker to the vacancy, who has worked with many schools in the local area and further afield.

**Action 230522/03:** The Trust's staff contracts to be reviewed and in future to include a commitment to a repayment agreement, if staff leave before a certain period after having completed training paid for by the school or Trust. (JC)

- d. LT advised that staff at IMHS supported four students who left at Easter in finding appropriate accommodation.

The school has admitted six students who have a banding of B+, with funding attached of between £87.5-96.5K per student. LT said that student reviews take place every three months, to ensure that each student has the right support in place and that it is effective, and that the student is not impacting other students' needs or learning. LT provided details of a case study of a student who was receiving one-to-one support. The school adjusted the student's timetable to be more bespoke to the student's needs and increased his activity levels, to provide experience of being out in the community and associating with peer groups.

- e. LT advised that the school has made four MASH referrals to support parents, after it had become known that these students should be classified as young carers, due to their parents requiring support with additional needs. Trustees discussed how the emphasis in providing support is often just on the actual student, but in order to help the student, help is also required to help the parents. LT said that the school helps to encourage closer working between Adults Social Care and Childrens Social Care teams.

LT advised that initiatives to support parents include Coffee Morning sessions and regular workshops, such as mental health, sleep hygiene, online safety and non-violent resistance training. It is expected that this training may also reduce the presented behaviours in school. All members of the Welfare team are also to be trained, so that they can provide additional support to families.

- f. In response to questions on allegations made against a member of agency staff at IMHS, LT said that the issue was to do with the agency not having completed their due diligence on a staff member who worked at the school for two weeks. The school was alerted to the matter by the LA. The staff member was attending training for one of those weeks and had no access to students and when the school was informed, the staff member was no longer at the school. The school provided all information to the LADO. Trustees suggested that the school does not use the agency further until they can demonstrate that they have put in place a robust tightening up of their procedures. Trustees noted that the allegations about the staff member had not been substantiated.

LT advised of a second incident involving a member of agency staff, who arrived at a debrief session smelling of cannabis. The staff member said that he was with friends who were using cannabis and had not used it himself. The contract was terminated immediately.

GK advised that a LADO referral was made for an agency member of staff at ArtsX. The issue was related to professional standards and the contract was immediately terminated. Trustees noted that no young people were at direct risk in the matter.

- g. Trustees noted the 85.6% attendance at IMHS and noted that this is significantly above the National average for Special Schools and close to the mainstream school National average. LT said that every half-term, the school celebrates students who have good attendance or have made improvements in attendance. The school also works with parents to help understand if additional support is required for students who are regularly absent or arrive late.

Trustees received the ArtsX Attendance report. In discussing the 65.1% attendance at ArtsX, Trustees agreed that direct comparisons of the two establishments' attendance levels cannot be made, as the majority of ArtsX students are independent travellers and the students at IMHS are provided with home-to-school transport. GK said that the welfare team continue to work with students and their families to help improve attendance and this

is also one of the college's priority focuses. Trustees reviewed the extensive list of career events and educational visits at ArtsX and agreed that the list had been well thought out to encourage student attendance.

- h. Trustees received the staff absence report for both establishments.

**Action 230522/04:** Student and staff reports presented to the Board to be anonymised /pseudonymised. (T4 Executive, CLT, SLT)

#### **6. Standards Committee Report:**

- a. FG said that the Committee had reviewed the IMHS Behaviour Policy and Curriculum Policy. The Committee agreed that the Curriculum Policy addresses the Trust's vision through a coherent set of curriculum approaches and strategies.
- b. The Committee reviewed progress towards the ArtsX priorities and the key points following the Ofsted inspection. An updated is included in the papers today. Trustees acknowledged that an Ofsted visit at ArtsX is anticipated within the next year.
- c. Trustees noted that LT had supported the preparation of the ArtsX Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy. GK said that the policy addresses points raised by Ofsted Inspectors during their visit and is a more coherent and supportive document.

#### **7. Interim CEO's Report:**

- a. Trustees acknowledged that the Standards Committee had reviewed the Data Report in detail at their meeting last week.
- b. JC advised that he spends a day at each establishment for most weeks and is getting to know the staff and students. The Beckmead Executive has provided support and input on finance issues and historical HR issues at both establishments.  
The Beckmead CFO is supporting KM in producing consolidated accounts and preparing towards the 2023-24 budget. The Beckmead IT due diligence and support has provided some value, in being able to advise on some cost-effective purchasing agreements at the T4 establishments.
- c. Trustees had a general discussion around the previous CEOs of the Trust not having been able to clarify the T4 vision. The ArtsX offer is different to what it was four years ago and for student recruitment to be aimable for the September intake, both financially and as a vision, Trustees agreed that it must be clear on whether ArtsX is recruiting AP or SEN students and how this sits with the potential merger plans with the Beckmead Trust. Trustees discussed how IMHS has had successive Outstanding Ofsted gradings and has built its culture over the last 15 years. In response to questions on the elements of practice at IMHS that the Beckmead Trust hope to incorporate into their provisions, JC said that it is understood that there is some anxiety about partnering with an organisation where there is a need for clarity on the physicality of the practice. JC said that there were three weapons-based interventions at the Beckmead 14-19 provision last year, and there is an opportunity to reflect and have a professional dialogue on this with the IMHS leadership team. For example, during a recent visit, a member of staff at IMHS was seen jumping in between two students to deescalate a situation. This would have been recorded as a physical intervention at a Beckmead school, but not at IMHS. JC said that partnering with a school that is different and finding a way forward to work together with all the staff, is seen as an exciting opportunity for learning and becoming a better organisation overall.

In response to questions, GK said that the differences between ArtsX and IMHS include the gender mixed roll and the mix of AP and SEN students at ArtsX, all which requires a different approach to pedagogy.

*Stephen Gough left at this point.*

- d. Trustees received the ArtsX year planner. GK advised that ArtsX regular holds celebration events of students' work and performances and other events, such as Wellbeing Day.
- e. In discussing the ArtsX launch event, Trustees agreed that the event should be delayed until the college is more settled. This will also allow time for more positive stories about the students to develop and for more student material to be available that can be presented at the launch event.

In response to questions, JC confirmed that the Beckmead Trust has staff with experience of marketing and launch events. Trustees agreed that good planning for a launch event that includes inviting sponsors and LAs can take up to a year.

**Action 230522/05:** A launch event working group to be set up, focussing on a provisional launch date of October 2024. The working group to include ArtsX staff, ArtsX Governors and Beckmead staff. (GK, JW, HP).

- f. In discussing finances, Trustees noted that forecast outturn for IMHS is a surplus of approximately £200K, while ArtsX continues to have a forecast deficit of a similar amount. Trustees agreed that they are more optimistic on the future finances of ArtsX with the support in place from the Beckmead Trust.

JC advised that KM and the Beckmead CFO are preparing the 2023-24 budget and speaking to the Heads of Schools on their forecasts for the roll in September and their expectations around the budget.

Trustees noted that TA is currently acting as AO. KM will be appointed to the AO role pro tem for the balance of the year at the next FARC meeting.

**Action 230522/06:** All Trustees to be invited to the next Finance, Audit & Risk Committee meeting. The Beckmead CFO to also be invited. (Clerk, JC)

#### **8. Chair's Action:**

- a. Trustees noted that a Chair's Action was required to expediate a Compromise Agreement for a staff member at ArtsX.

**Approved:** The Board ratified the Compromise Agreement arrangement.

*Jonty Clark left at this point.*

#### **9. Policies & Documents:**

- a. Trustees acknowledged that the policies presented today had been reviewed by the Standards Committee.
- b. Trustees noted that LT had supported the preparation of the ArtsX Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy. GK said that the policy addresses points raised by Ofsted Inspectors during their recent visit and it is now a more coherent and supportive document.

**Agreed:** The Board approved the following policies and documents: ■ IMHS Behaviour Policy  
■ IMHS Curriculum Policy ■ ArtsX Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy

#### **10. Potential Merger Update:**

- a. In discussing the potential merger, JC advised that the DfE Regional Director's Officer has asked for 3 and 5-year cashflow projections for the Beckmead Trust and how this would be impacted by a merger with the T4 Trust. The next meeting with the Regional Director's Officer has been scheduled for June. Both Trusts are continuing to work in anticipation of the merger being approved. There is a strong business model and the cashflow projections are good.
- b. TA said that he has met with the Beckmead Executive and has full confidence in them. Trustees discussed the value of a high calibre central staff would bring in allowing Headteachers to focus on teaching and learning.
- c. In response to questions, GK said that from her visit to the Beckmead schools, it was recognised that there is a shared ethos and values. There was a positive atmosphere in the Beckmead schools, where there is autonomy with effective accountability. There is a CPD model for the Beckmead Headteachers and SLTs across the trust. It was also acknowledged that a larger Trust would provide staff with more career opportunities. The ArtsX SLT have the impression that the college would be highly valued by the Beckmead Trust as an asset and the merger feels the right thing to do, both strategically and ethically.

In response to questions, JC said that he is working with GK on the vision for ArtsX, against the expectations of commissioning authorities on the balance and type of students being admitted to the college. The college is working towards a realistic expectation of over 85 on roll for next year.

- d. In response to questions on the challenges that have been identified over the next three months as T4 Interim CEO, JC said that there is still some work to do with the IMHS staff to understand that the values of both Trusts are very much aligned, even though there is a difference in practice. One-to-one meetings have been held with key members of the IMHS staff to talk about shared values and aspirations for the students. JC said that he has been impressed with the level of expertise, reflection and teamwork that goes into the daily debriefing sessions at IMHS.

There are HR issues at ArtsX, which has caused anxiety amongst the staff. There is work required on communicating the clarity of the college's vision to the staff and it is expected that it will take some time before there is a culture shift on professional standards and expectations. GK added that the support from the Beckmead Trust staff has been valuable in allowing the CLT to focus more on teaching and learning, than on HR matters. It is HR matters that gave rise to the Ofsted action on the leadership team needing to take rapid action to make improvements to the curriculum and other matters. The leadership team has been distracted with HR matters and safeguarding improvements and has not had the capacity to focus on their core role. JC said that there is a strong leadership team at ArtsX and some very good staff. Trustees acknowledged that should the merger go ahead, then following the TUPE process there is no guarantee that there will not be a staff restructure.

In response to questions on whether some of the staffing issues are related to specialist teachers of music and dance, who are now being asked to work with different types of students and may not have the skills or experience to do so, GK said that in some cases the issue has been related to historical poor recruitment practice at the college. JC said that to secure a viable balance of students in receipt of an EHCP and students who come in through

the AP route, the college will need those specialist teachers to deliver the curriculum to students with complex needs. Some of the staff have opted out of acquiring the skills to work with complex students. GK added that ArtsX is an AP provision, not a SEN provision, but all students would find it difficult to be placed in a mainstream environment. Many of the AP students arrive with undiagnosed needs, which is another reason it is important that the college offers a SEN orientated curriculum offer. GK said that in a meeting with the DfE, when asked about the SEN balance in the college, she had said that the college provides inclusive education and will not refuse a place to a student because they have SEN. These students may not be suited to a mainstream environment, but equally they may not be suited to a Special School environment. ArtsX provides a kind of bridging provision between the two for these students. JC advised that Beckmead has three provisions where there is a mix of AP students and students with EHCPs. The DfE appears to have some difficulty in understanding how this model works and on how APs must have flexibility to use this model to ensure financial viability.

- e. Trustees noted that GK had met with three commissioning authorities last week. Trustees noted that the only commissioning arrangement in place is with Camden for 25 AP places. JC said that the arrangement will be reviewed as part of the Beckmead due diligence.
- f. Trustees agreed that a merger with the Beckmead Trust benefits the T4 Trust and serves to further its objects for the benefit of the students of the trust. In discussing the technicalities of the merger process, Trustees noted the availability of the NGA report: [MAT Mergers – A guide for academy trust leaders and trustees \(nga.org.uk\)](https://www.nga.org.uk/publications/mat-mergers-a-guide-for-academy-trust-leaders-and-trustees) and the DfE Guidance: [Information note for academy trusts about academy transfer - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/information-note-for-academy-trusts-about-academy-transfer).

**Agreed:** Trustees agreed that in principle they support a voluntary collaborative merger with the Beckmead Trust and that due diligence should commence. A case for merger should be submitted to the Regional Director's office.

#### **11. Any other Business:**

- d. Forward Agenda
  - ArtsX Launch Event
  - 2023-24 Budget

#### **12. Next Meeting Date:**

■ 17 July 2023

#### **13. Any Confidential Items:**

None.

#### **14. Items for non-Staff only:**

None.

The meeting closed at 16:45

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Chair

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Date

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### **Decisions**

**Agreed:** The Minutes of the meeting held on 27 March 2023 were confirmed as true and accurate records.

**Approved:** The Board ratified the Compromise Agreement arrangement.

**Agreed:** The Board approved the following policies and documents: ■ IMHS Behaviour Policy ■ IMHS Curriculum Policy ■ ArtsX Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy

**Agreed:** Trustees agreed that in principle they support a voluntary collaborative merger with the Beckmead Trust and that due diligence should commence. A case for merger should be submitted to the Regional Director's office.

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### **Actions from this meeting:**

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