



An Daras Trust
Igniting Curiosity Growing Capabilities

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25/02/2026

Minutes

Finance, Resources & Staffing Committee - Spring 2026
Wednesday 25th February 2026 at 9.45am at ADMAT Central Office

1. Welcome and Apologies/Trust Identity Reminder (Chair)

Present: Peter Hague (Committee Chair), Jon Sharpe (Committee Vice Chair), Margaret Savage, Steve Tavener, Claire Paul and Jo Callow

Apologies: None

In Attendance: Emma Gilbert (CFO) and Gemma Peacock (Governance Officer)

2. Declarations of Interest/Pecuniary Interests relevant to this Agenda (GP)

None declared relevant to this agenda.

3. Minutes of previous FRS Meeting (12th November 2025) and matters arising (Chair/ GP)

- A monthly snapshot with any recent income or unexpected expenditure to be provided along with bullet points on why this is. This is to be provided and placed in the "Finance Management Reports" sub folder within the Full Board folder on SharePoint, and Directors notified. *Done. Committee to confirm the requirement has been met. The Committee confirmed that they are happy with the reports although these may be reviewed by the new CFO when they start in March.*
- Accelerated reader quotes- Decision was to go back and negotiate, see if we can pay annually and not upfront, and for the increase on the budget, identify where this money will be taken from? Bring to Audit committee for decision. *Audit Committee, 3rd December 2025 item 11- the investigations into this matter were highlighted, figures lower than expected and is within JC's expenditure allowance so no decision needed by this committee. Matter closed.*
- School resource management- remove from cyclical plan for FRS autumn term (TM). *Done and will be shown on amended cyclical plan in the summer term ready for the new academic year.*
- **Look at staffing and how they can work as part of feasibility of reducing to one floor at central office for next FRS (JS/EG).** *Discuss under item 10 of the agenda.*
- MIS System- more investigation required and bring to Audit committee – what is currently in the budget, which option fits within that budget or not, which is the best option and what are set up fees if changing companies (JC/EG). *Full Board Meeting, 10th December 2025 item 7- after further investigation, the decision was made to take up the contract with BROMCOM.*
- Catering options – carried forward to next FRS (JC). *Discuss under item 11*

From confidential minutes

- **Add "Discuss PAN for next admissions policy" to cyclical plan for FRS Summer term.** *Done. Will be discussed at summer FRS 2.*

- **Matter Carried Forward from LSS Committee- staffing matter.** Discuss under item 13 of the agenda.

The Committee agreed the minutes, and the chair signed a copy including the confidential minutes.

4. Confidential Agenda Items (Chair)

Item 13 is covered in the confidential minutes.

5. MAT Improvement Plan (JC).

The Directors reviewed the Trust Improvement Plan priorities that are relevant to the FRS Committee. It was noted that the attendance figures are missing under priority 4b. **JC will add in the figures although she confirmed that attendance is currently in-line with the national statistics.**

Two new Headteachers started in September and they have settled in well to their roles. Both are completing external training which includes the National Professional Qualification (NPQ), one for SENCO and one for Headship. They are being mentored in their new roles by Louise Hussey.

The financial viability of the Trust continues to be worked on. Prior to the release of the Government White Paper a meeting had taken place with Cornwall Council about creating a SEN base within one of the Trust schools however, this would no longer align with the principles of the White Paper.

Work has begun to draft the class structures for next academic year. The number of anticipated new foundation children are being used to help with the planning. The plan is very much a draft until definite new pupil numbers are known along with how much funding will be received and any teacher and support staff pay rises.

Windmill pre-school has closed and has moved into Windmill Hill Academy. There have been lots of new children starting in the pre-school, so the move seems positive. Quotes are being sought from Estate Agents to value the old pre-school property although approval will be required from the RDs Office before it can be sold.

Sustainability is mentioned in the new Ofsted framework. The Trust have recently met with 7 different school uniform companies and parents and children have also been asked for their views. The amount of uniform including a school logo will be kept to a minimum whilst still retaining the identity of the school. All the schools have second-hand uniform for parents to access.

The Directors discussed the options for migrating the data from Sims to Bromcom. The preferred option is to send the data to Bromcom for them to migrate, but Sims are wary about this method because they “own” the data. Bromcom will however, provide a free of charge indemnity policy and Wolferstans have deemed the data transfer to be low risk. **The Directors agreed the option for Bromcom to migrate the data and to accept the indemnity policy.**

6. Review Current Finance (EG/JC)

EG confirmed that the Trust’s financial position is more positive compared to the end of December. Deferred income from the nurseries has created a surplus. Kyran is currently looking at the forecast and working on the data from period 5. The Directors asked if a forecast line could be added to the report? **EG confirmed that this would be possible.**

The Directors looked at the school-by-school expenditure. They queried the amount spent on agency staff. EG confirmed that a large amount of the agency expenditure will be covered by supply

insurance which is doing its job to protect this year's financial position. **In the cash flow why is the first period shown in red?** Conditional formatting has been added to the report and cell colours will change when they fall below a certain amount to enable issues to be highlighted early on.

Why is there an aged creditor for St Stephens relating to Zen Educate Ltd? EG confirmed that it was likely that the invoice had been received late. There is no dispute and the creditor should disappear from the report.

It was confirmed that there are no virements.

It was agreed that JS would review the Academy Trust Handbook to see if a Finance Director's Report is required and this will be discussed at the next FRS meeting.

7. Finance Future (EG/JC)

The Directors agreed that they are happy with the current KPIs. They felt that the dashboard, school-by-school expenditure and notes are all helpful reports for the Committee.

8. Finance Compliance and Benchmarking (JC/EG/Chair)

EG will complete the staff and resource benchmarking before she finishes and will have a report ready for the next Full Board meeting. She has recently completed a benchmarking report for Windmill Hill Academy which also provides recommendations. The Directors felt that it would be good if the new CFO could produce reports for all the Trust schools and this would also provide data to support the CEO's planning. **The Directors asked for a summary of the key points when the reports have been completed.**

9. Staff Structure/ Roles and Budget (JC/EG/Chair)

Planning has started on staffing structures for next academic year based on the current indication of pupil numbers. There is still uncertainty around funding and any increases in staff wages through national pay rises. JC noted that decisions will though need to be made as it has an impact on the curriculum where there are mixed age classes. It is already known that Windmill Hill Academy will move to having 6 classes and Coats Green will have two classes with consideration needing to be given to another teacher moving to the school.

The decrease in pupil numbers will mean that funding is likely to drop by about £300k. **Where are we with teachers?** It has been recommended that the Trust avoid redundancies wherever possible and deal with the funding drop through "natural wastage". **Are we expecting a government funding review?** Nothing is anticipated. **Where are we with the SCITT programme?** There are currently 4 candidates however, 5 are required to run the programme.

10. Premises & Infrastructure (JC)

The energy contract end dates are not in-line for all Trust schools. The Trust have been approached about changing tariffs. **The Committee raised questions as previously tariffs had been fixed for some of the schools. JC will find out some further information regarding the fixed contracts and the issue was referred to the next Audit Committee.**

Heating is the biggest issue for the school estate due to the ageing systems however, the Trust continues to follow the necessary health and safety requirements.

The Committee discussed the feasibility of retaining the ground floor of the Central Building with the possibility that it could be hired out to another Trust who already hire the meeting room a couple of days a week. It was proposed that An Daras would continue to have access to the meeting room for a couple of days each week. Retaining the ground floor would provide flexibility should additional space be required in the future. A decision regarding the lease is required imminently as notice would need to be given in April. **JC will contact the other Trust to see if they would be interested in hiring the space and a discussion would take place at the next Full Board meeting about changing the days of Committee and Board meetings if required.**

11. Catering Options (JC)

The catering contract with Aspens expires on 31st July. Alternative providers have been sought; however, two potential companies have since gone into administration making it difficult to obtain quotes. Consideration is being given to bringing the catering in-house, but this creates difficulties around compliance with a Compliance Manager needing to be appointed across all schools. Discussions have been taking place with a company, who through the payment of an annual fee, could help bring the catering in-house, make the compliance checks, train kitchen staff and help with the designing of menus. It was proposed that this could be trialled with two of the schools who already provide in-house catering.

JC will contact Aspens to enquire how long they would extend the contract for as previously the Trust have been required to sign a three-year contract.

The Directors asked for a plan to be created for the move to in-house catering which details the pros, cons, costs, when the move would happen and who would be involved. This would be discussed at the next Full Board meeting.

12. Timing of CEO's Performance Management Review and use of External Advisor (Chair)

It was proposed that JC's Performance Management review will take place in September although it was acknowledged that not all the performance data may be available from the previous academic year. This will enable JC's targets to be set ahead of the performance management reviews taking place for other staff and targets can be cascaded as necessary. An external advisor will continue to be used as part of the process. **This was agreed by all Directors.**

13. Settlements (JC)

Two confidential staffing matters were discussed and recorded in the confidential minutes.

14. Estates Vision and Strategy (JC)

The Committee noted that the strategy is an aspirational document requested by the government. The Trust don't use an online system to generate the report as such a system is extremely expensive however, there is a system in place so that nothing is missed. An audit is due in May which will look at estates and there will potentially be a recommendation regarding the use of technology.

15. Trust Asset Management Plan (JC)

The plan is linked to estates but is much wider as it involves people for example. This plan will also be shared with the auditors in May, and any recommendations will be considered.

16. Policy Review (GP)

Policies for review this term are:

- Business Purchase Card (MB)- approved with no changes.
- Investment (EG/JC) - approved with no changes.
- Staff Code of Conduct (SC)- approved with minor amendments.
- Flexible Working Policy (SC)- approved with no changes.
- Staff Leave and Absence Suite (SC)- approved with the minor changes that are required by law for implementation from 6th April 2026. The policy will be shared with the Trust's legal team on 19th March 2026.
- Menopause Policy (SC)- new policy approved.

The Financial Scheme of Delegation was reviewed and agreed that there would be no changes. **JC would remove reference to the EU.**

17. AOB (Chair/ GP)

JS thanked EG for her work as the CFO having worked for An Daras since 2018 and wished her well for the future.

18. Date of Next Meeting (GP)

Next meeting will be FRS 1 on Wednesday 20th May 2026 and FRS 2 on 17th June 2026, both at Central Office.

Meeting closed at 11.16

GL Peacock
Governance Officer

Distribution List:

P. Hague – Director (Chair)
J. Sharpe – Director (Vice Chair)
M. Savage - Director
S. Tavener – Director
J. Callow – CEO/Director
C. Paul – Director
E. Gilbert – CFO