

Anglian Learning Annual General Meeting Minutes



20 January 2025

Members Present

Albena Madej (AM), Christopher Walkinshaw (CW), Gareth Davies (GD) and Martyn Postle (MP)

Trustees Present

Helen Pain (HP Chair of Trustees), Jon Culpin (JC CEO), Matthew Blake (MB), Andy Brock (AB Trustee) and Aron Whiles (APW)

Others Present

Charity Main (CM COO), Claire Lawton (CL) and Kerrie Jones (KJ Head of Governance, Compliance and Risk)

	ITEM
1.	Welcome, apologies and election of Chair for this meeting
	There were no apologies. GD was elected to Chair the meeting.
2.	Declarations of Interest with regard to agenda items
	There were no declarations of interest.
3.	Special Resolution to appoint Dr Claire Lawton as a Member
	CL left the room for this item. She had previously been a Member when she was Chair of Trustees (an ex-officio role under the Articles of Association in force at the time). All agreed this would be a positive appointment and was approved unanimously.
3.	Review of AGM Minutes 25 Jan 2024
	Members confirmed they had received and noted the minutes of the AGM held on 25 January 2024. The minutes were agreed as a true record and duly signed by GD. Matters arising: Deneia Primary Academy opening has been delayed to September 2028 due to insufficient pupils. It was noted that lack of a primary school on the site could deter people from buying a house. It is a difficult project and delays have led to rising costs. It is hoped that building can begin in spring 2026. Members queried the impact on the existing primary school serving the area. It was confirmed the school has received growth money, but the situation will become increasingly challenging, and the LA plan is unknown. The Trust has learned from its opening of Marleigh Primary and understands pupil numbers don't always grow as anticipated and that new schools can attract a large number of SEND pupils. Anglian Learning is committed to the project which it has invested a large amount of time in.
4.	Receive Annual Accounts & Auditors Report for the period ending 31 August 24
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The annual accounts and auditors report had been circulated. Members confirmed they had received and read these documents. The accounts were scrutinised by the Audit and Risk Assurance committee on 3 Dec 2024, approved by the Anglian Learning Trust Board on 16 Dec 2024 and submitted

	<p>to the ESFA. The external auditor is Price Bailey who are in contract with no concerns.</p> <p>Key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reserves reduced over the year as part of a planned deficit budget setting. It has been a challenging financial year but not significantly worse than expected and we remain within our Reserves Policy of 4% of General Annual Grant (GAG) and 30 months of funding. • Cash balances remained healthy • The accounts reflect that Wimbish Primary converted and joined Anglian Learning on 1 Sep 2023 • The audit management report was positive with only minor action points <p>Members were interested to hear which issues Trustees felt were of most concern. Areas include the ongoing funding position and the challenge of ensuring school improvement can be followed through, particularly around SEND and disadvantaged pupils. The team has done a significant job to reduce costs and recognises important long-term business decisions need to be made.</p> <p>This year's budget includes savings by schools of £1.4m. A small deficit has been budgeted but offset by additional Government funding. However, it is too early to make predictions and there are pressures on schools including SEND needs and staff pay increases. Government increase in core funding is very small; this is a national issue.</p> <p>The budget setting process for 2025-26 is starting and schools continue to be asked to find savings. We are investing in a module for forecasting within the Integrated Curriculum Financial Planning (ICFP) system which will support this. Central capacity to support schools will need to be funded by raising schools' contribution. It was acknowledged that there will inevitably be consequences of budget cuts.</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Report from Chair of Trust Board</p> <p>The Chair of Trustees had circulated her report in advance of the meeting and mentioned some of the highlights including the prominent work on culture and vision, the strong reputation that Anglian Learning has which involves us in influencing national policy and the significant progress made in development of our people.</p> <p>She acknowledged the tremendous amount of work that has taken place over the year thanking the executive team for their leadership, CM and her team for the cost savings work and the whole central team. She welcomed new Trustees and explained that a recruitment programme to strengthen the Board is underway. She will be stepping down as Chair at the end of the academic year.</p> <p>Members were interested to hear about the Trusts which will be joining Anglian Learning. The CEO explained they will bring 2 secondary schools and 4 primary schools.</p> <p>The increase in mental health and behaviour issues was discussed and it was acknowledged that a rise in these started before the pandemic and was exacerbated by it. Funding has not kept pace with need so has reached a critical point. Mainstream budgets cannot support demand and historic low funding in Cambridgeshire is a contributory factor, as well as the rural nature of our schools. We continue to try to avoid permanent exclusion of pupils although we face increasing pressures.</p> <p>Members asked about the effectiveness of governance generally cross the Trust. The Chair of Trustees explained that a review of governance had been undertaken and identified positive aspects. Our focus now is on Local Governing Bodies where there are challenges such as with governor recruitment. We will be investigating alternative models for the local tier of Governance that could add more value, while retaining the</p>

	<p>best features of the current model. There is currently one school with no LGB and two shared LBs set up where an Executive Headteacher is in place.</p> <p>The Trustees in attendance reported positively on their experience as Trustees so far, praising Anglian Learning as an organisation and commenting on the high standards of the Board and its sub committees.</p>
7.	AOB
	<p>Members reflected on recent newspaper stories which suggest increased Government control of academies. The CEO confirmed that while the new Children’s Wellbeing and Schools Bill is trying to level the playing field with maintained schools, the newspaper reports are somewhat exaggerated.</p> <p>Members wished to congratulate Sawston Village College having been cited as the best national state school in the Sunday Times league table. GD will draft a letter to the Principal and Chair of Governors.</p> <p>Members congratulated Trust leaders on Anglian Learning outcomes and achievements. The CEO thanked the Board and all the staff.</p>
8.	Set Date time and venue of next meeting
	<p>The date of the next AGM was set for 26 January 2026 at 6pm.</p> <p>A General Meeting was confirmed for Thursday 19 June at 5pm.</p> <p>Venues to be confirmed.</p> <p>The meeting ended at 7.15pm</p>