

Hope Sentamu Learning Trust Board of Trustees Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 11th December 2024 at 6.00pm At Vale of York Academy

Present: Jane Lewis (Chair of Trustees) Andrew Simpkin Karen Osborne
Joe McKeogh (via Google Meet) Patrick Looker

In Attendance: Helen Winn (CEO, HSLT)
Wendy Munro (COO, HSLT)
Tracy Shaw (Financial Controller, HSLT, via Google Meet) *[from 6.15pm until 6.58pm]*
Helen Nozedar (Management Accountant, HSLT, via Google Meet) *[from 6.15pm until 6.58pm]*
Georgina Holman (Governance Advisor, Clerk)

		Action
1.	<u>Welcome & Opening Prayer, Apologies for Absence, Any Other Business and Declarations of Interest</u> The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, which opened with a prayer. There were no apologies and all Trustees were present. In relation to discussions regarding City of York Council (CYC), Patrick Looker declared an interest as CYC employee. In relation to discussions regarding the Trust, Andrew Simpkin declared an interest as his wife was an employee of the Trust.	
2.	<u>Minutes of the previous meeting, action plan and matters arising</u> - previously distributed. The main minutes of the previous meeting held on 25th September 2024 were agreed to be a true and accurate record and were duly approved. - Clerk to share the correct link to the online Business Interests declaration form and all Trustees to complete. Completed. - COO to deliver training for Trustees on the Trust's Risk Management software system during the autumn term. Carried forward to next year as separate training w/c 6th January 2025. - Link meeting attendance data for 2023-24 to be shared with Trustees. Completed. It was confirmed that attendance data had been shared with the respective Trustee Chair for each network meeting and it was acknowledged that there was work required to increase attendance at the meetings. - COO to update on the work of the AP Working Group at the next Board meeting in December. Completed and on this agenda, item 9. - Trust working group to develop induction plan for new governors. The COO updated Trustees on the significant challenges with governor recruitment. There was a plan to review the whole process, including safeguarding requirements, to try to streamline this and establish a clear understanding of requirements, such as for events on school premises. The Chair noted that the review of induction processes also incorporated Trustee induction. - To revise the descriptor 1.1 in the Trust Strategic Plan to read 'embed' instead of 'develop' and to amend the dates in the plan. Completed. - CEO to develop alternative tool to measure progress of strategic KPIs and share with Trustees at the next Board meeting. The CEO explained that the criteria had been included alongside	COO

	<i>the risk for each school within the CEO report. However, the CEO proposed that the KPIs were aligned with the new Ofsted report card, once this was confirmed. This could be trialled prior to putting into place for September 2025.</i> 8. Clerk to add Ofsted Changes Summary Report to all LGC agendas. Completed. 9. COO to add arrows to the Risk Register to reflect changes in risk. Completed. The COO advised that previous risk data had been included instead of arrows. 10. Trustees to arrange to attend an LGC meeting for the Safeguarding training item during the autumn term. Trustees Patrick Looker and Karen Osborne confirmed having completed this. The COO advised that the Director of Safeguarding would be recording a training video to be uploaded to the National College platform. COO to share video with Trustees Andrew Simpkin, Joe McKeogh and Jane Lewis. 11. COO to share an example of Smoothwall incidents being addressed through CPOMS with Trustees. Carried forward to be undertaken during risk management training. 12. Trustees to be updated on the safeguarding recommended actions at the next Board meeting. Completed, on this agenda, item 5. 13. COO and Trust Compliance Officer to review and revise the DPD Terms of Reference in line with the Scheme of Delegation, ahead of reviewing the other three committee ToR. Completed. COO to share with clerk. 14. Chairs' meeting to be rescheduled in coordination with Chair and Vice Chair availability and central team to prepare feedback from the governor conference. Completed. 15. COO to review admissions policies to ensure irrelevant historic and out of date references were removed. Completed. 16. Clerk to advice Vale of York and Forest of Galtres LGCs of the changes to composition and to ascertain whether staff governor terms of office can be reduced. Completed.	COO, AS, JM & JL COO COO
6.	<u>Annual Management Accounts and Report (taken out of order)</u> – previously distributed *HSLT Annual Report and Financial Statements The COO commended the two members of the Trust Finance team for their work during a particularly challenging time. Thanks were echoed by the CEO and Trustees. The COO advised that the Annual Report had been scrutinised by the Resources Committee at their recent meeting and queries raised had since been addressed by the finance team. A Trustee explained that the Final Report document presented the accounts in a very different format to the monthly budget management reports that were brought to the Resources Committee. The committee had requested further clarity on how the management and final accounts were reconciled and Financial Controller, Tracey Shaw, had clarified the impact of depreciation charges. A Trustee asked whether the proposed amendments to wording had been adopted in the final report. Tracey confirmed that all amendments had been incorporated within the final accounts and audit documents on the agenda. The Trustee thanked Tracey for all the work on the reports and summarised that there had been a slight underspend at the year end, despite the original forecast deficit of £1.2M. As a result, the Trust's financial security was good. The Chair questioned why performance information for Aspire Academy was not included in the report alongside the other secondary and post 16 performance data. The CEO explained that data for alternative provisions was not articulated comparably and used different measures, however, the provision was referred to in the narrative. Tracey pointed out that this was at the Trust's discretion as to what was reported on. Trustees agreed that it was good practice to reflect performance across all schools. It was agreed that the report format would be reviewed for the following year to include alternative provision public examinations data. Action – Trustees' Annual Report for 2024-25 to include alternative provision examination data alongside other schools' performance data.	COO/ Finance team

	A Trustee asked whether the requested written confirmation in relation to the insurance flood claim had been obtained. Tracey advised that colleagues had been chasing this with the insurance provider and, whilst verbal assurances had been provided, there was no written confirmation as yet. The COO explained that there was not a significant risk with the claim but, without written assurance, auditors had to acknowledge the risk because the accounts included the expected reimbursement. Tracey added that it was a large claim which exceeded the materiality level. The COO further explained that the auditors would need to make a minor amendment to the assurance wording if written confirmation could not be obtained from the insurers. The COO noted that the Trust's Operations Manager, Karen Forrester, had a very clear audit trail for the entire claim and the delay in full payment resulted from the insurer's need to review this carefully. It was confirmed that this did not prevent Trustees approving the Annual Report which was due to be signed off electronically the following day. A Trustee queried a proposed amendment in relation to the Trust achieving a "sizeable reduction in gas electricity" which had not been reflected in the data. Tracey agreed to revise this. The Chair highlighted that Member information also required updating. The COO agreed to update this. Action – COO and Tracey Shaw to make final amendments to the Annual Report in relation to the Members' details and the gas and electricity consumption statement. A Trustee questioned whether the savings made during the 2023-24 year were a result of the funding for the Teachers pay award. The COO explained that this funding came into effect for the current year and invited the finance team staff to summarise where income had increased during the previous year. Tracey explained that expenditure forecast for many vacant roles had not been released back until the end of the year and this, in addition to the income received for the alternative provisions, accounted for most of the additional income in the 2023-24 year. The CFO had produced a report for Trustees to summarise the savings. The COO advised that the finance team would be reporting on vacancies and cover arrangements in more detail in the monthly management accounts in order to adjust and release expenditure against vacant positions more regularly. A Trustee noted that the earlier this was identified, the more resources the Trust would have to invest. A Trustee observed that there had been additional staffing resource within the central team and this had been used to backfill gaps elsewhere. Another Trustee highlighted the substantial movement in income between the first two periods of the 2024-25 year. A Trustee pointed out that the Resources Committee had not had sight of the period 13 management accounts to support the final annual accounts report and suggested that it would be helpful to have an outturn report to reflect the Trust's position alongside the annual management accounts and report. Tracey advised that there had only been a £4K movement between periods 12 and 13 due to a small amount of additional income and expenditure. The most substantial movement had occurred prior to period 12 and this had been summarised in the CFO report. The Trustee pointed out that this had been circulated via email and not presented to the Resources Committee so there had not been an opportunity to formally review and report on this. The COO assured Trustees that regular reporting on management accounts would be more robust during the 2024-25 year. There were no further questions on the Annual Report and Financial Statements and Trustees thanked the finance team for all their work. On the basis of the minor amendments requested, Trustees approved the Annual Report and Financial Statements.	COO & TS
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6.1	<u>Audit Report (taken out of order)</u> – previously distributed *HSLT Audit Findings Report It was noted that the Audit Report had been scrutinised at the Audit and Risk Committee. There were no questions on the document.	
7.	<u>Budget Management Update (taken out of order)</u> – documents previously distributed *Executive Summary Period 2 *Consolidated Management Accounts Period 2 *ASP & COM Debtors Summary The COO advised that the documents had all been shared at the recent Resources Committee meeting. Reporting processes had been revised by the finance team to provide a clearer summary and greater transparency of information shared with Trustees. The COO invited Trustees to share any further suggestions for improved reporting formats. Management Accountant, Helen Nozedar, advised that there were always limitations in forecasting for the Teacher Pay Award and 3% had initially been budgeted, which was then increased to 5%. The government had now stated that this would be fully funded, which put the Trust in a favourable position. Further information had also been forthcoming from one local authority with respect to alternative provision funding. There had been substantial movement in the period 2 accounts as a result of EHCP funding and further statements remained outstanding from another local authority. Helen explained that individual student analysis was now in place with respect to SEND funding. With reference to support staff, there had been some savings as a result of the challenges in recruitment and the finance team would provide analysis of the savings against the cover expenditure. Variance for the month was only £500. The COO shared an example of where supply costs were particularly high at one school and the subsequent discussions that had identified the cause. Helen explained that finance officers were questioning schools more rigorously on the use of agency cover. Tracey added that another factor impacting the accounts was the support staff pay award, which was lower than had been forecast and consequently resulted in substantial savings. <i>A Trustee noted that the Trust's budget was now in a very different position and asked how this would impact future projections and the overall recovery strategy.</i> Tracey explained that the fluctuation in pupil numbers was a key challenge in projecting income. The CEO added that pupil projections could only be based on available information. <i>The Trustee pointed out that some of the previous savings had now been released back into the budget.</i> The COO advised that the finance team would be reviewing areas of forecast and expenditure and would be able to provide an adjusted three year forecast at the next Board meeting. Trustees agreed that the level of financial reporting to Trustees was exactly as required, providing a clear narrative and greater understanding of the information. A Trustee praised the clarity of the summary information and highlighted the previous challenges for Trustees in assessing the financial risks. The Trust was now in a better position for future decision making. <i>A Trustee queried the impact of the recent announcement regarding the 2025-26 Teacher Pay Award.</i> The CEO explained that the government were proposing to give more notice of the pay award to schools, but there had been little detail confirmed at this stage. DfE information had indicated that some additional expenditure would need to be covered through efficiencies and there was the further complexity in funding being lagged, all of which had to be taken into account. Helen advised that 3% was currently budgeted for teacher pay awards, which was in line with the	

	recent government announcement. Trustee discussed the potential implications of National Insurance increases on schools. Trustees thanked the finance team for their update. <i>Helen Nozedar and Tracey Shaw left the meeting at 6.58pm.</i>	
8.	<u>Church Schools Oversight Report (taken out of order)</u> – previously distributed The Chair proposed Trustees moved next to Church School items, given the documents required approval ahead of presenting to Members at the AGM in January. *HSLT Annual General Oversight Report The Chair advised that this had been discussed with the COO and CEO. Appointment dates relating to Trustees had been confirmed and minor typographical errors had been noted for amendment. A Trustee queried the format of the report. The CEO explained that it was a Diocesan document providing a summary of the organisation to present to the Diocese and Members alongside the individual Church 'School on A Page' reports (SOAPs). Trustees approved the Church Schools Oversight Report.	
8.1	<u>Church School SOAPs (taken out of order)</u> – documents previously distributed *MCE SOAP *STJ SOAP *ASA SOAP *NSJ SOAP *FOG SOAP The CEO explained that these were all live documents and would be formally submitted just prior to the AGM. Further updates would be required for one school following an Ofsted inspection that week, providing the outcome was published by the time of the AGM. Trustees approved the Church School SOAPs in their current form.	
3.	<u>CEO Report</u> – documents previously distributed *CEO Report September 2024 The CEO outlined key points from the report, notably the risk in relation to behaviour at one secondary, where different strategies were being considered. The use of internal provision for vulnerable and SEND pupils had been the focus of a recent review, from which the outcome would be shared at the next DPD Committee meeting in January. The Principal from Compass Academy, Stacey Ward was working with senior leaders to ensure that appropriate support was in place to mitigate the risk. Executive Principal Chris Mulqueen was also working intensively with the school on inclusion, monitoring suspension rates and the processes in place at the school. The CEO updated Trustees in relation to a recent Ofsted inspection at a Trust primary school. <i>This discussion has been recorded separately in the confidential minutes.</i> The CEO advised that improvements continued across the Trust's schools, most rapidly at Vale of York Academy, and the Scarborough schools were also growing in strength. The CEO directed Trustees to the risk document to highlight the challenge meetings that took place with principals to moderate each schools' self-assessed RAG ratings to ensure consistency. The criteria for a green rating had been included in the document. The CEO advised that the reporting would be developed to align with the forthcoming Ofsted report cards. A Trustee asked the CEO to update the Board on the leadership changes at ASA. The CEO informed Trustees of the changes in working hours for the Principal at ASA and how this was supported by Trust Associate Principal Louise Beasley taking on the role of Principal one day a week. The would be monitored but was currently working well.	

	The CEO went on to update on future leadership and line management changes at Forest of Galtres and Skelton primary schools. A Trustee asked whether the Trust was recruiting for the vacancy at Skelton. The CEO advised that the leadership position would be advertised with a view to filling the post from September 2025 and Associate Principal Sara El Oakley would remain in place for stability in the interim. The CEO outlined the challenges in recruiting expertise and skills for a small school and the effective use of internal Associate Principals to lead and coach emerging leaders as a response. Referring back to the report, a Trustee queried the high level of amber and red RAG ratings. The CEO confirmed that all were in process but it was still early on in the academic year. Any areas of significant concern would be highlighted to Trustees. *HSLT Strategic Plan 2024-27 With reference to the Strategic Plan, the Chair advised that this was for information and there were no material changes since the last meeting.	
6.	<u>Annual Management Accounts and Report (item revisited)</u> The COO notified the Board that written confirmation regarding the insurance payment had just been received from the Trust's insurers.	
3.1	<u>STJ SIAMS Inspection Report</u> – previously distributed The CEO summarised the inspection experience at the school and highlighted the work of the Principal at St James', Julia Strickland, who was supporting both primary and secondary Church schools with preparations for SIAMS inspections. The CEO praised the excellent leadership at St James' C of E Academy and the very positive inspection outcome.	
3.2	<u>Challenge Meeting Updates</u> – previously distributed *School Risk Status Map *HSLT Schools Risk Register – overall Risk Status The CEO advised that these documents had been shared with Trustees for information. The CEO added that the challenge and stretch meetings with school leaders were very positive in terms of the discussions that took place.	
4.	<u>Risk Register</u> – previously distributed *November 2024 Risk Register The COO advised that this document reflected the Trust level risks rather than school level. A Trustee questioned why the Financial Projection Reserve Policy was RAG rated red. It was explained that this was the risk of the Trust not meeting the policy. With reference to behaviour and SEND issues previously discussed at one school, a Trustee asked whether there was more that the Trust could be doing. The CEO advised that it was essential to ensure any investment was made wisely and further work was required to identify whether more could be offered or whether existing resources could be better deployed.	
5.	<u>Safeguarding</u> – previously distributed *Safeguarding Report The COO praised the Director of Safeguarding's work across the Trust's schools, particularly the support for leaders, and the training and discussions with school staff, which had resulted in more effective identification of low level concerns.	

	The Chair highlighted the Safer Recruitment training that had been delivered by Kyle Immanuel, and the culture of vigilance that was now evident across the Trust. It was noted that school staff frequently recognised the support provided by the Director of Safeguarding as hugely beneficial. The COO informed Trustees that Kyle had introduced supervision for Safeguarding Leads and Deputy Safeguarding Leads and offered training in order that those post holders could offer supervision to colleagues.	
9.	<u>Alternative Provision</u> – documents previously distributed *AP Strategic Plan Update *HSLT AP Strategic Plan *2024-25 Alternative Provisions Pricing Strategy The Chair explained that a pricing strategy for alternative provisions had been developed and required Board approval. However, it was recommended that the strategy incorporate some operational flexibility should further adjustments be required. The CEO proposed that the strategy be brought back to the Resources Committee for approval of any future revisions. The COO recalled the challenges experienced with respect to financial accountability and advised that the strategic plan was the result of significant work that term to develop the strategic direction for the Trust's Alternative Provisions (APs). Pricing was likely to fluctuate in line with local authority funding however it was critical that the CEO and the COO had clear oversight and could make decisions when required. The AP Working Party had met and achieved the intended aims and the COO proposed that this was now monitored through the full Trust Board. The COO went on to advise that, following discussions with Hull City Council, there was funding available for additional places at one AP. This required an application for significant change with the DfE. The COO had made this application and assured Trustees that there was the operational capacity to manage this significant change in pupil numbers. Referring to the Pricing Strategy, a Trustee queried the methodology and whether the aim was simply to cover all costs. The CEO confirmed that the proposed pricing strategy would cover costs and was competitive in comparison to other providers. The CEO suggested that a rationale be added to the document to make clear the intent. Action – CEO/COO to add rationale to the pricing strategy document to make the intent clear. A Trustee questioned whether the pricing was based upon which organisation was commissioning the place rather than the complexity of needs. The CEO advised that both were factored in and the strategy was complex to ensure funding was received for identified needs. The Chair noted the clarity provided in the table and praised the COO for her work on this. Trustees approved the pricing strategy on the basis that the rationale was added and with the understanding of operational flexibility for the CEO & COO. A Trustee queried whether a future strategy was required to incorporate outreach work for example. The CEO advised that the strategy would be updated and revised as information became available but it was otherwise difficult to forecast changes to funding. The Chair proposed reviewing the strategy at the March Trust Board meeting when more clarity regarding SEND funding would be available. The COO agreed that the strategic direction from the government could see APs transitioning to a different model in the future.	CEO/ COO
10.	<u>Committee minutes/updates</u> – documents previously distributed *Audit & Risk minutes 13-11-2024	

	It was noted that matters had been covered under previous discussions. The COO thanked members of the central team and Trustee Joe McKeogh for their participation in the recent external audit selection process, which would report an outcome to Trustees in January. *DPD Minutes 24-10-2024 There were no matters to highlight. The next meeting was scheduled for early in the spring term. *Resources Minutes 30-09-2024 Trustees noted the minutes and that key points had been covered under earlier discussions. *Standards Minutes 04-11-2024 Trustees noted the minutes.	
11.	<u>Policy Review</u> There were no policies to review. There was a discussion in relation to the uniform strategy and this was recorded separately in the confidential minutes.	
12.	<u>Updates from LGCs</u> - documents previously distributed *Governor appointments and vacancies - Trustees approved the appointments. *LGC Chair nominations and Vice Chair appointments - Trustees approved the appointments Trustees discussed governor vacancies, recruitment, and the level of engagement. The clerk was tasked in making contact with a governor at Manor CE Academy regarding removal. Action – Clerk to liaise with Trustee Karen Osborne and the LGC Chair regarding a Foundation governor at Manor CE Academy. The Chair highlighted feedback from LGC Chairs with respect to the LGC agenda item ‘Items to escalate to Trust Board’. The clerk was tasked with amending this to ‘Items to share with the Trust Board’. Action – Clerk to amend wording of LGC agenda item to be ‘Items to share with Trust Board’.	Clerk Clerk
13.	<u>Summary of items to report to LGCs</u> Items to share with Trust Board as an agenda item to replace ‘escalate’. The central team will be reviewing volunteer engagement, recruitment and onboarding processes.	
14.	<u>Any Other Business</u> – documents previously distributed 14.1 *Governors Disciplinary Panel Report to the Trust Board The Chair summarised discussions that had taken place prior to the meeting regarding the issues with convening disciplinary panels and the potential to use members of staff on disciplinary panels. The COO highlighted the challenge due to the volume of panels required at one school and explained that the proposal was a proactive suggestion to address this. The paper proposed drawing upon specific members of staff from the central team but it was clear within the statutory guidance and the scheme of delegation that this responsibility lay with Trustees and governors. There were other potential options including the use of hybrid panels where one governor, not chairing the panel, could join remotely. Trustees discussed the challenges and inconsistencies identified with current arrangements and the need for improved processes, which the COO was currently working on. The clerk advised that entirely virtual panels were only permitted at the request of parents or as a last resort and not a	

	default option. It was suggested that external expertise could be sought to undertake review panels and the CEO noted that this could be a paid role. The COO advised that the Trust was in contact with the DfE to discuss this further. The Chair proposed that further options in relation to external support be explored following a response from the DfE. In the meantime, the COO and clerk were tasked with addressing the current volume of panels with a targeted approach to schedule these in as a priority. Action – Clerk to work with COO and ASA staff to schedule required suspensions panel meetings.	Clerk
14.2	*George Pindar School Visit report Vice Chair Karen Osborne gave a brief summary of the visit, highlighting the atmosphere in the school and the enthusiasm of the staff. The visit had included a lesson observation and the Vice Chair praised the level of concentration shown by students, the excellent work produced, and the management of the lesson, reflecting all the CEO's ambitions for teaching.	
14.3	<u>Appointment of Company Secretary.</u> The COO outlined the recruitment process for the CFO role and the anticipated timeframes. In the interim, a named Company Secretary was required for Companies House and the COO had agreed to take on this responsibility. Trustees passed on their thanks to Simon Bryan Smith for all his work and years of service. Trustees approved the appointment of the COO as Company Secretary in the interim.	
14.4	<u>Scheme of Delegation</u> The COO explained that this would usually be reviewed and updated to share with Trustees at the end of the autumn term. Additional time was requested for the Chair and COO to complete a more detailed review. Trustees discussed whether forthcoming changes for the Trust would require the adoption of new Articles of Association and agreed that this should be avoided where possible. Trustees agreed that the Scheme of Delegation would remain unchanged at that time.	
15.	<u>Confidential items</u> – documents previously distributed Items 15 and 15.1 were recorded as separate confidential minutes.	
15.2	*Confidential Minutes from the Trust Board meeting on the 24th September 2024 The minutes were approved as a true and accurate reflection of the meeting.	
16.	<u>Dates and times of next meetings</u> Wednesday 22nd January 2025 online (Following AGM online) KO sends apologies. Wednesday 26th March 2025, 6pm Wednesday 21st May 2025, 6pm Wednesday 16th July 2025, 6pm	

The meeting closed at 9.02pm

These minutes were approved by the Hope Sentamu Learning Trust Board of Trustees at their meeting on 22nd January 2025

Action Points from the Hope Sentamu Learning Trust Board meeting held on 11th December 2024

	<i>ACTION</i>	<i>ITEM</i>	<i>WHO</i>	<i>WHEN</i>
1.	COO to deliver training for Trustees on the Trust's Risk Management software system during the autumn term. Training to include sharing examples of Smoothwall incidents being addressed through CPOMS.	2	Wendy Munro and all Trustees	22/01/25
2.	COO to share Safeguarding training video with Trustees Andrew Simpkin, Joe McKeogh and Jane Lewis.	2	Wendy Munro	22/01/25
3.	COO to share revised committee terms of reference with clerk ahead of approval by Trustees at next Board meeting.	2	Wendy Munro	22/01/25
4.	Trustees' Annual Report for 2024-25 to include alternative provision examination data alongside other schools' performance data.	6	Helen Winn	Dec 2025
5.	COO and Tracey Shaw to make final amendments to the Annual Report in relation to the Members' details and the gas and electricity consumption statement.	6	Wendy Munro and Tracey Shaw	22/01/25
6.	CEO/COO to add the rationale to the pricing strategy document to make clear the intent.	9	Helen Winn & Wendy Munro	22/01/25
7.	Clerk to liaise with Trustee Karen Osborne and the LGC Chair regarding removal of a Foundation governor at Manor CE Academy.	12	Clerk	22/01/25
8.	Clerk to amend wording of LGC agenda item to be 'Items to share with Trust Board'	12	Clerk	22/01/25
9.	Clerk to work with COO and ASA staff to schedule required suspensions panel meetings.	14.1	Clerk	22/01/25
10.	Updated Uniform Policy to be brought to the next Board meeting.*	11	Wendy Munro	22/01/25
11.	Chair to share response from the Bishop of Whitby with Trustees.*	15.1	Chair	22/01/25
12.	Clerk to request model articles of association from the Diocese.*	15.1	Clerk	22/01/25

Items for future meetings:

Gender Pay Gap Strategy & non-teaching staff career development case studies.

Report on External Auditor selection process

**actions from confidential minutes*