

COTHAM SCHOOL

Meeting of the Academy Governing Body

Wednesday 22 October 2014

MINUTES OF MEETING

Governors Present: Dora Alderson, CG Jim Bowyer, PG (Chair) David Brockington, PG Ed Carpenter, SG Andrew Ellis, SG Sandra Fryer, CG Claire Grocott, PG Marlene Kelly AM Jeremy Krause, CG Malcolm Willis, Headteacher David Winter, PG David Yorath CG		
In Attendance (non-voting) Heather Marouf, Acting Clerk Christine Ansell, Dep. Head KS3 Svetlana Bajic-Raymond, Dep. Head KS4 Geraldine Hill-Male, Dir. Performing Arts Mel Sperring, Business Manager	Apologies Jo Feather CG Caroline Francis, SG Helen Gordon PG Absent: Marian Curran, Dir. Post 16 Lesley Spring, PG Sujitha Subramanian, PG	Governors in Post: 16/19 Quorum = 6 (1/3 rounded up) AM = Associate Member CG = Community Governor PG = Parent Governor SG = Staff Governor SMT = Senior Management Team

Item	Minutes of Meeting
1.	<p>Welcome, Apologies for Absence, declarations of interest and notification of AOB</p> <p>Thank you to Heather for covering for Leanne. JB will contact Leanne to see when returning back to work. She is picking up e-mails.</p> <p>Apologies received from Helen Gordon, Jo Feather (New Community Governor) and Caroline Francis.</p> <p>First Item: JB read out letter of resignation received from Bill Greenslade who has been a Governor at Cotham School for 12 year. JB has sent an e-mail of response from the Governors but said Governors should feel free to e-mail Bill if they wish.</p> <p>No Declaration of Business Interest.</p> <p>AOB – DY wanted time at the end to discuss a conference that he went to recently.</p>
2.	<p>Forum Update by GHM</p> <p>GHM presented the Cotham Co-operative Academy Report. Each constituency group has identified a representative to meet with the HT candidates i.e. Dave Martin, Emma Wheeler and Hugh Thomas and asked that Governors keep Forum informed of progress. Suggested dates for Headteacher interviews are 4 and 5 December 2014.</p> <p>The Forum is requesting a work plan for discussions that will take place in Governing Body sub-committees so that Forum members know when appropriate to attend subcommittee meetings. The</p>

Governors discussed this point and said that committees' work is more reactive and that it would be difficult to produce a comprehensive list at the beginning of the year. It isn't for Committee Chairs to direct what goes on. This is driven by SLT and committee members for Agenda items. Governors appreciate it is important to have dialogue with the Forum but producing a forward chart would not be helpful. There is a planning cycle in place – those key dates could be given to the Forum Members. The strategic direction is captured in the Academy Development Plan. This document could be used as a way of getting information to the Forum. GHM advised that perhaps the Forum members could start as observers at committee meetings and Governors could invite Forum members to their meetings. Jeremy Krause thanked Dave Brockington for producing a summary of Co-op Academies. We could use this wording to answer the question of the relationship to the Governing body. JK advised their ideas are flowing, we need to harness them.

Actions: Chairs of Committees plus JB put a timeline down of business over the year. Use Academy Development Plan. Meetings open to observers. We need to check their role – when confidential items are being discussed they need to withdraw from the meeting. A note of this discussion to be given to the Forum members before their meeting on 1 December.

Dave Brockington updated on the neighbourhood partnership. The formal request we made to be part of the Local Neighbourhood partnership had been discussed informally. The Local Neighbourhood were worried that we were not representative of other schools. Dave Brockington asked Counsellors for the nature of the objections – other schools can join the neighbourhood partnership if they wish.

Actions: GHM to invite counsellors and Stephen Williams, MP to the AGM on 10 December 2014.

Future First are to develop Alumni in State schools to the same level as in the private sector. The Database is now open, social media is used to contact ex-students. Francis Blagburn is working independently on that with Delroy and Nick Ross. Dave Martin looked at the history of the school to 1991. We are now looking from 1991. This is moving fast. Francis has a blank canvass and has a lot of good ideas.

3. **Budget Forecast – MSP**

MSP took Governors through the budget forecast for the next year and next 5 years. Nigel Hardy, the previous Audit Partner from Baker Tilly has previously recommended only a 3 year forecast as there is too much uncertainty to put anything further on papers, however a 5 year forecast is presented purely for indicative purposes. We have known since conversion to Academy status that we were going to hit a crunch point in 2015. These figures are not to cause alarm but to draw attention to a downward trend in income and the potential to not be able to balance our budget without the use of some of the £1.7 million cash reserve held currently. The reserve funds are planned to be used to re-investment in ICT as the equipment provided through the BSF programme becomes due for replacement, the current identified cost of replacement is just under £1 million. Discussions have started at FP&GP to confirm what reinvestment will be required.

The assumptions were read out. Based on the current forecast reserve funds could be exhausted in 5 years' time and there is a risk that the school would be unable to produce a balanced budget forecast. We need to start discussion now to ensure this can be avoided.

Governors asked if all schools were facing this scenario, it was agreed that they are. We cannot guess an election outcome. Perhaps we will need to fund raise for an all-weather pitch.

There was a discussion on where the £1.7 million cash reserve was being held and whether it was the best investment. MSP advised that an Audit finding recommendation will be that we need to invest the money to achieve the best possible return. SF advised that there may be other funds or fund raising we could do. We could trawl Trusts – perhaps this is something the Forum could help with.

DB advised that The Co-Op College get comprehensive ethical investment advice. They are earning 10% on ethical investments. DB can put us in touch with people who know about this. MSP advised that we need to look at the investment policy again. We will invest in low risk. Information from DB would be gratefully received.

4.	<p>Headteacher's Report</p> <p>MW went through his report.</p> <p>Main points of interest: We had an induction day before the start of term for all new staff. For the third year running we have been awarded DFE Lead Computing Schools. It was too early to put attainment/progress in the report. These are going in to the next L&WB committee and will be reported in the next HT's report.</p> <p>DA was interested in Upgrade on page 9 of the HT's report and how that had been received by students. MW had done a drop in to upgrade and talked to students. He reported that a very positive atmosphere had been created there in terms of structure, organisation and support for students. From MW's observations it was being well used by students. It is staffed all the time. Two learning mentors have been pulled in and they have been given a specific role with a wider range of students.</p> <p>CA added that Lucy Mitchell has taken on the role of "essay doctor". Students can book time with the "essay doctor" – working within Upgrade. CA advised that some of the A level students are finding courses challenging but benefitting from Upgrade.</p> <p>MW advised that he will organise another series of governor visits. Will offer different time, places and cohorts. Will do Learning Walks. We now have a pro forma which DA has passed to Heather. We can use this as a basis to work from.</p> <p>DB added on Upgrade that UCAS have launched a website called Progress which is to support IG and progression to apprenticeship route which people may find interesting.</p> <p>DB – Declarations of Interest – Governors to please fill in and give to Mel.</p>
5.	<p>Committee and other Reports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Learning & Well-being – CG</i> <p>JK successfully elected as Vice Chair.</p> <p>Safeguarding report by JH. Few changes that have come in to Safeguarding Policy. Governors advised to look at last section of Safeguarding Policy. There are bullet points that Governors need to be aware of. First Response number that is available without going through JH. John is hoping to get another 2 to 3 hours training for staff on First Response.</p> <p>Post 16 Update: AS have been below national average. Current Yr. 13 should do well through to A Level.</p> <p>Lower achieving pupils have achieved good progress. Gap reducing. What we need is a link governor to Post-16 – Anybody interest to let Claire or Jim know.</p> <p>KS4 – Parameters keep changing. Need to keep an eye on pupil premium students and closing the gap.</p> <p>Question raised by AE on First Response in that we have a named person in school to deal with safeguarding and by bypassing that person there is a danger that something could get missed if we don't go through him. MW's statement remained that any safeguarding issues are reported to John Heyberd.</p> <p>SF raised a query on safeguarding and Governors' responsibility. It would be helpful if Governors could be briefed in depth as to how things are in Bristol. Perhaps John Heyberd and Angharad Davies could do a strategic item at L&WB or at FGB.</p> <p>DB asked if "Safeguarding" safeguards against radicalisation? DB suggested that we ask John for an electronic copy of the documents he took to L&WB – everyone should read and any questions collated and put to JH.</p> <p>MW suggested that it may be interesting for L&WB to hear from Ben Saunders Re: PHSE, Religion, Ethics and Philosophy. He is reviewing schemes of work to ensure that British Values are appropriately taught through curriculum areas. This is now a new expectation of Ofsted.</p>

Action: MW to let Claire know when this is worked up so that he can bring it to L&WB – perhaps in January.

MK commented on students being radicalised. Students are very aware of it. MW recently did a FTE on a student for producing an ISIS leaflet. MK advised that we need to deal appropriately, calmly and sensitively with such things. JK advised that Governors should watch a 5 minute slot on Radicalisation in Bristol from Inside Out West on iPlayer.

AE advised that we need to be clear on British values and not be afraid to challenge it and to model what we perceive as being the right behaviour within this community. We should model good behaviour and are clear on what we say and do and that we are inclusive. We won't tolerate that language/behaviour under any circumstances and that we embrace everybody.

DB advised that the Trust of ASDAN, with money from the Paul Hamlin Foundation have produced a 30 hour short-course curriculum material on Islamic citizenship education. It was trialled in Birmingham in Islamic classes and extended school. DB can send a link to anyone that is interested and certainly to Ben Saunders.

- *Personnel and Training – DA*

Typo on Minutes – Meeting was held on 22 September not 2 September.

Governors training was held on 6 October. Five Governors attended. Training was well prepared by AGJ to prepare Governors for any appeals that we may have to handle with new Pay Policy. DA would still gratefully receive expressions of interest as more Governors may be needed for appeals. Appeals will be coming along in the next 6 weeks or so if we have them.

This term we will be getting updates from AGJ and MW on how the new PM process is going in relation to staff pay.

- *FP&GP – SF*

Had report on budget makings.

Currently working on putting capital bid together to go to Government for funding. Date brought forward to be done before election. Extension work to school working with White Design. Going to local consultation with residents tomorrow. Fits well – doing an enormous amount of work on costing and what DFE might fund. If they don't get funding will look at Plan B.

Planning application going for 4 classrooms. Could be lettable in its own right.

Looking at external areas. Extra social space – this will cost extra money.

Developing idea for all-weather pitch – not going in as a bid

Not much work done on Stoke Lodge – first step is the decision on Village Green going to enquiry. We need to decide how to participate in that.

- *Audit Committee – DW*

No Minutes. Bob Skinner internal auditor suffered a heart attack and there is a questions mark over whether he will be able to continue as internal auditor for Cotham. We will e-mail him soon to find out the situation.

Audit Committee not scheduled to meet until early December.

DW has a list of topics to be discussed at first meeting and thanked Governors for their contributions. DW will report back to Governors at FGB.

Jo Feather sent her apologies for this evening and is soon coming in to school to meet with MW and tour the school.

SF advised that we need to look at governance structure of school – a strategic item. We can relook at DY's docs.

JB – reporting back on HT's recruitment process. The advert for the vacancy went out this week. Gone on TES, Eteach and on to Schools Co-operative Society website. Live until 17 November.

	<p>Navigate are the consultants. Timeline quite right and looking to have interviews on 4 and 5 December. The working party have a meeting on 23 October to look at the recruitment process on the 2 days and to agree a timeline. JB wrote to staff to inform them of where we are with the recruitment process. Will want staff input into the process. This is yet to be finalised.</p>
6.	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>DY spoke at a conference recently. He will share paperwork Opportunities and Challenges for Governing Bodies. LA schools have a constituted governing body to a skill set of governors. No prescription for academies to do this and they are now behind the game of modern governance. DFE – best leadership in schools for the benefit of children.</p> <p>Other Headlines: Relevant to FP&GP – financial reporting, charities reporting. Academies big business sitting in current estate £2 billion cash, academies sector hold 1/7th of all government cash. They need to be assured that the EFA is checking what they do and are getting it right. Interested in Pupil Premium, procurement and connected parties high on list, fraud and risk. Government believes there is more fraud than being reported. Considerable concern looking at governance on academies and financial issue. They believe they have audit committees, reliance on governors accepting risk. MW advised that this was very interesting. He always appreciated having auditors in school and that degree of scrutiny and thanked DY that we have this in place.</p> <p>JB wanted to note thanks to people on the FGB who bring other things to the Governing Body who are not in education.</p>
7.	<p>Action List</p> <p>Contact Paul Jacobs – Jeremy has been appointed.</p> <p>Community Governor and Parent Governor elections – Community Governor election has happened</p> <p>Contact Lynda – she was contacted and will remain on Co-Op</p> <p>E-mail GHM – still to be done</p> <p>Governors' Away Day – tried to do this – we couldn't find a mutually acceptable date. Will have another go at that. It might be worthwhile waiting to see if we have appointed a new Head and invite him/her.</p> <p>Governor visits in to school – MW will be in touch</p> <p>Update Committee Membership – Structure – to be done</p> <p>Distribute lists and membership – Leanne did this. Governors to check and make sure correct</p> <p>Committees – still to do. Perhaps send to JB</p> <p>FGB meeting in Term 2 – to do with away day</p> <p>Send correction to Minutes – not done due to Leanne's absence</p> <p>Away Day – on Hold</p> <p>Working group for HT – Done</p> <p>Attend Forum – SB couldn't do that day. JB will pick up under consultation tomorrow.</p> <p>DT – Academy Show on 26 November</p> <p>Minutes of last meeting taken as correct. JB to sign.</p> <p>List of next Committee meeting dates on the Agenda – next FGB on 10 December 2014</p> <p>If HT interviews run on 4 and 5 December 2014 appointment panel need to recommend to FGB. Discussion between 6 or 10 December. 10 December was decided. Governors to pencil date in diaries and will depend on Working party meeting on 23 October 2014.</p> <p>Hold back on training day until new HT appointed but Learning Walks to go ahead with dates being offered next term.</p>

Meeting closed at 21:21

Next Meeting 10 December 2014 – AGM 6.30 p.m., FGB 7.00 p.m.