

**COTHAM SCHOOL**  
**Meeting of the Academy Governing Body**  
**Thursday 19 November 2020, 6pm**  
**Virtually via Google Meet**  
**MINUTES OF MEETING**

<b>Governors Present:</b>		
Dora Alderson, CG	Ed Carpenter, SG	Lucy Hunt, PG
Jack Barber, SG	Jane Chamberlin, PG	Morag Pirie, SG
John Bass, PG	Jo Feather PG	Richard Puttick, PG
Jim Bowyer, LA (Chair)	Sandra Fryer, CG	Rebecca Reid, PG
Jo Butler, Headteacher		
<b>In Attendance</b> (non-voting) Allison Crossland, Business Manager Leanne Sowersby, Clerk	<b>Apologies</b> David Yorath CG  <b>Absent:</b> Andrew Chadwick, PG	Governors in Post: 15/19 Quorum = 5 (1/3 rounded up) AM = Associate Member CG = Community Governor PG = Parent Governor SG = Staff Governor SMT = Senior Management Team

Item	Minutes of Meeting
	<b>Welcome, Apologies for Absence, declarations of interest and notification of AOB</b> SF welcomed everyone. Apologies accepted. No declarations of interest.
1	<p><b>Governance Update</b></p> <p>A report was shared along with a letter that has been received from the ESFA. The letter raised a number of issues around Governance and Members of the Academy.</p> <p><b>Terms of office for Governors</b> – JF led on this item.</p> <p>SF’s current term should run from 20/07/17 to 19/07/21, to regularise her terms of office.</p> <p>Discussion around why the dates appear to be different on GovernorHub. LS will ensure that these are correct.</p> <p>The Governors noted the position as regards the terms of office for four of the Governors as set out in the Governance Report to the Governors and also noted that advice had been taken from VWV. The Governors noted that the Articles were silent on the question of whether a change of category of Governor triggered a new term of office but that the Articles did provide for a four-year term of office for Governors.</p> <p><b>Governors resolved that:</b></p> <p><b>Notwithstanding the change of category from Co-opted to Community Governor and in line with the Article's requirement that Governors serve for four-year terms, SF be deemed to be serving her third term of office which commenced on 20/07/17 and would come to an end on 19/7/21.</b> Proposed JBo, seconded RP, unanimously approved</p>

**Notwithstanding the change of category to Co-opted to LA Governor and in line with the Article's requirement that Governors serve for four-year terms, JBo be deemed to be serving his third term of office which commenced on 4/5/17 to 3/5/21 with a change of category to LA Governor on 1/8/18. It was noted that this would be advised to the LA. Proposed JF, seconded LH DA, unanimously approved.**

**Noting the FGB's purported 'extension' of DA's second term of office was inconsistent with the Articles of Association, Dora's third term of office be deemed to have commenced from the date of that purported extension and accordingly runs from 18/12/17 to 17/12/21. Proposed RP, seconded JC, unanimously approved.**

**Noting the FGB's purported 'extension' of DY's second term of office was inconsistent with the Articles of Association, David's third term of office be deemed to have commenced from the date of that purported extension and accordingly runs from 01/01/18 to 31/12/21. Proposed JF, seconded DA, unanimously approved.**

***Members of the Academy Trust*** – The issues were discussed. There is a need to separate the Members and the Governors. Need to recruit at least three, but preferably five, Of the members only one may also serve as a Governor – likely to be DY as he is already a Member as a founding Member.

There is a plan in motion to appoint new Members at the FGB in December, and to follow this with an AGM.

**Q – What do Members do?** Members are the top level of the company. Our Articles are slightly different to the model Articles, which require slightly more of Members.

**Q – How formal does the process for appointing Members need to be?** There will need to be a process involving a CV / covering letter. It appears to be standard practice for people to be recruited through networks of contacts. There is an urgent need to recruit at this point and a wider recruitment process can be looked at in the future. There is also an organisation, Academy Ambassadors, that can help find Members to join the school. The school has registered with the organisation.

**Recommendation is to approve the process for appointment of Members as set out in paragraph 24 of the report** – proposed DA, seconded LH - **approved unanimously**

***Articles of Association*** – The current Articles were adopted in 2012, following academisation in 2011. SF talked through some of the difficulties experienced with the current adopted articles and the school being able to remain compliant with them.

There are three options that the school can consider. To amend the current Articles formally with the ESFA, adopt the new model Co-operative Articles, which contain similar requirements around the Forum etc, or adopt the model standard Articles (which have no forum or constituency requirements).

There is a clear message from the legal team, that whatever option is chosen for the Articles, must be one that allows the school to comply with the Articles. If we are not able to comply with the Articles, there is a risk of regulatory intervention in the leadership of the school, which could lead to being forced into special measures.

Proposal is for a working group to discuss this and feedback to FGB on 10 December.

The co-operative Articles have not been completely sustainable since their adoption in 2012. If the choice made resulted in a consultation process, we would need a really clear picture of the benefits of the decision.

Discussion to agree that legal advice will be sought from VVW for the workshop

**Agreed to arrange a workshop to discuss how best to move forward**

**LS to create a doodle poll for possible meeting dates**

***Appointment of Community and Co-opted Governors*** – The report proposes a process of an application and interview for appointment of both Community and Co-opted Governors. Community

	<p>Governors must live or work within three miles of the school. Co-opted Governors can be from anywhere and would be recruited for particular skills.</p> <p>Some potential candidates were discussed that had made their interest known to the school.</p> <p><b>Q – Why would a CV not be circulated to all Governors?</b> There is currently no agreed process. If Governors feel CVs should be circulated to all, then this can be done.</p> <p>The report provided in the meeting has been agreed with our VVW legal advisor.</p> <p>Discussion around the appointment process for Community Governors and ensuring this fits with the Articles.</p> <p>Governors are happy to confirm the proposals.</p> <p>SF will revisit the proposals for Governance Review and will update at FGB in December.</p>
2	<p><b>Covid-19 – Further and Full Closure of school - Decision Log</b></p> <p>JBu talked through the document. The decision-making log is to seek permission from Governors to allow decisions to be made in school by the Senior Leadership Team on a day to day basis.</p> <p>There are significant issues with staff being out of school due to the need to isolate. There is a need for SLT to be present in the school to support staff.</p> <p>AC talked through the updates to the Risk Assessment.</p> <p>LH has done an H&amp;S walk around and fed back that the cleaning process and separate zones for the students are working very well.</p> <p><b>Q – How do the measures align with other schools?</b> Can only speak for ourselves, have been well advised by our H&amp;S consultant. JBu understands that everyone is operating in a similar way, with differences according to their sites etc.</p> <p>Have had a telephone assessment with HSE who have signed off our processes.</p> <p>Are seeing a number of cases where children have been tested when a parent has symptoms, but the child has not, but the child has tested positive.</p> <p>JBu reassured Governors that the tracing of close contacts is very thorough and if there is any likelihood of a member of staff having been in contact then they are asked to go home.</p> <p>JBu talked through some scenarios in which the school would be unable to open. For example, if there are no catering staff and meals could not be provided, if there were not enough teaching staff, no qualified first aiders, or no site staff. JBu has captured as many as possible without being overly prescriptive.</p> <p>The document describes a variety of scenarios, where something other than full opening might be required.</p> <p><b>Q – Do we know what percentage of staff we have present at the moment?</b> We think currently around 85% of staff are present. Science and Maths are particularly hard hit currently.</p> <p><b>Q – Are we still able to get supply?</b> It is becoming more difficult to get supply, it can vary on any given day. Other schools are having similar issues. Some supply staff want to limit the number of schools that they want to work in. The Government is happy for supply staff to work wherever there is a need, but they can choose.</p> <p>Staff are being as flexible as they can be, but there are times when there is simply no-one available to cover.</p> <p><b>Q – Is there a feeling that this is quite likely to happen at some point?</b> Yes, this is possible, it does not seem to be getting better and Heads across the city are expressing the same concerns.</p> <p><i>JBas left the meeting</i></p> <p><b>Q – Is there an indication of the financial implications of this?</b> This will be discussed at FPGP on Monday 30 November, as there are significant implications. There will be a re-forecast in February.</p>

	<p>There is currently no indication that the Government plans to provide any financial support with additional costs. We will be using some of our surplus to meet some of these costs.</p> <p><b>Q – Was the option of circuit-breaker closures discussed?</b> It was raised, but there was no support expressed for it. There is a nervousness about making such decisions unilaterally while the Government is so adamant about keeping schools open.</p> <p><b>Q – Would it be sensible to preview this possibility with parents/carers?</b> SF would be happy to work with JBu/AC on a simple statement on the outcomes of this meeting.</p> <p><b>Q – Will the increasing number of supply teachers have an impact on the learning of students?</b> Year 11 and 13 are using video lessons, with teachers teaching remotely where they can. Are very concerned about the loss of education, due to self-isolation and last year’s lockdown. There is not a level playing field for Years 11 and 13 for exams this academic year.</p> <p>Discussion around communications with parents on this issue.</p> <p>Request that, if information goes to parents, that something also goes to staff.</p> <p>JBu noted that Post-16 arrangements will be dependent on what is agreed with RGS and the document has been agreed with them.</p> <p>There is further discussion required around whether a one- or two-week rota would be best, should we need to move to a rota.</p> <p><b>Governors approved the Decision-log for full or partial closure of the school and delegated the sign-off of this to the Chair &amp; Vice Chairs of Governors.</b></p> <p><b>Governors approved the delegation of operational management decisions re managing Covid-19 to JBu and the Senior Leadership Team.</b></p> <p><b>Governors agreed that in the event of the necessary whole school closure, this will be done in consultation with the Chair or Vice Chairs of Governors.</b></p>
3	<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p> <p><b><i>Health &amp; Wellbeing fundraiser</i></b> – SF raised the possibility of launching a health and wellbeing fundraiser for future consideration.</p>

**Meeting closed at 20:10**

**Next Meeting – Thursday 10 December 2020**