

COTHAM SCHOOL

Meeting of the Academy Governing Body

Wednesday 6 July 2016

MINUTES OF MEETING

Governors Present:		
Dora Alderson, CG	Andrew Ellis, SG	Claire Grocott, PG
John Bass, PG	Jo Feather CG	Jeremy Krause, LA
Jim Bowyer, PG (Chair)	Sandra Fryer, CG	David Yorath CG
Jo Butler, Headteacher	Delroy Hibbert, CG	
In Attendance (non-voting) Christine Ansell, Dep. Head KS3 Svetlana Bajic-Raymond, Dep. Head KS4 Mel Sperring, Business Manager	Apologies David Brockington, Coop David Winter, PG Ed Carpenter, SG Paula Bradshaw, PG Absent: Helen Gordon, 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	Welcome, Apologies for Absence, declarations of interest and notification of AOB Apologies accepted. JBo thanked Governors for their contributions on GovernorHub
2	MAT Update JBo gave an update. Have met with Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC), Rebecca Clark. Who has said she will not approve anything she does not feel will definitely work The RSC advised not to rush and to get the documentation right for Cotham. Memorandum of Understanding Prima have not, so far, talked to other schools, but have said that they will do so if the Governing Body are not in a position to sign the Memorandum of Understanding. A timeline was produced quite recently, by Prima, who took it to the RSC. Discussion about the process for agreeing a way forward especially around the use of the standard articles vs the cooperative articles. The memorandum is an agreement to continue working with Prima. This is likely to form part of the consultation. Prima do not want to use the Coop articles. There were different views within the Governing Body about the level of support within the DfE for the use of the Cooperative Articles The RSC is interested in what the vision, school improvement strategy and growth strategies would be for the MAT. There is very little difference between the cooperative articles and the standard articles.

The Cooperative Forum meeting was very positive. However, there was no desire to tie Forum meetings into the Governors' meeting cycle. The focus was on recruiting alumni and a fundraising strategy rather than Governance. This mechanism for stakeholder engagement could continue.

There is a danger of getting stuck on the argument around the articles without doing further work.

Q – How do Governors get involved in the visioning exercise?

Need to consider that other schools are in the city who might be interested in working with us as part of a MAT. It would be positive to involve those schools in the discussions.

The view was expressed that it is more important that the principles by which the school stands are maintained, than the formal cooperative model is maintained. We would need to guarantee effective methods of communicating with and involving stakeholders.

There are concerns that losing the coop would mean losing something important in the history of the school. Important to have some formal expression of the principles.

Legal Members are the proprietors of the Academy. It is important to consider who the Members and trustees are and how they are appointed.

Consultation will be important in this. There was concern that the Prima documentation will focus on certain stakeholders and around the timing and length of the consultation. Need to be sure that all the voices are heard.

JBo understands that Cotham will be part of deciding who is key and the ongoing process will be collaborative.

Concern that the Memorandum of Understanding does not contain enough reference to good business planning including uses of our assets and resources. Discussion around this. Prima were clear that they expect that expertise to come from Cotham.

Prima will cease to be an organisation as we move forward.

Query about Prima, 'persuading members' and Cotham, 'welcoming' (No.8). This may have come from their previous experience of working with other schools.

Point 9 is quite vague – query about the representation on working groups. Representation will be equal with relatively small working groups working on the detail and reporting back for wider discussion.

The timeline is a draft. This is likely to be driven by the RSC office. Now have a named contact at the RSC office and an offer of support from a member of the Headteachers Board, who make decisions with the RSC on MAT formation etc. Projects will be knocked back if the RSC does not feel they are the right thing for Bristol.

Prima is not another Oasis or other large academy chain. They have a link to the University and a background in training and development which could be very useful in terms of recruiting and retaining staff.

There is a need to be pragmatic. There was a view that the odds are stacked against the coop, 'brand' and it might be a disincentive. When developing a vision, would hope that the recent coop heritage could be acknowledged and the principles continued.

Concern that we are left behind and swallowed up by someone else.

The Memorandum is not legally binding.

Approved unanimously by show of hands for J Bowyer to sign the Memorandum of Understanding

3	<p>Post-16</p> <p>Admissions Statement</p> <p>There is a lack of consistency in the use of, 'students', 'pupils' and 'children'. This needs to be amended.</p> <p>It needs to be checked for typo errors and grammar.</p> <p>The section on qualifications needs to be clarified, SBR to check this with MC and pass to LS</p> <p>Approved subject to the changes above.</p>
4	<p>Headteacher's Report</p> <p>This was not circulated before the meeting.</p> <p>LS circulated the report during the meeting.</p> <p>JBu gave an update on the Stoke Lodge enquiry. SF thanked JBu for her work on this.</p> <p>JBu has asked for some advice about whether the field can be fenced. This will be controversial but the current situation is unsustainable. Discussion around this. JBu offered a compromise position to create a space for use by the school and residents but this was turned down. Should wait until the closing statement. The university wants to extend their use of the Coombe Dingle site and we do not have tenure.</p> <p>To change the use of the land, we would need the Secretary of State's permission which means we need to continue to maintain it.</p> <p>Nathan Allen is securing costs for the fencing. Are taking advice on whether attacking the fence would be a criminal act.</p> <p>Should be lobbying the Mayor now. The Forum are willing to do this. Could have a formal meeting with the City Council.</p> <p>The pavilion has been vandalised again.</p>
5	<p>2016 - 2017 Budget Approval</p> <p>This is recommended for approval by the Finance, Premises and General Purposes Committee on 20 June 2016. Governors thanked MS for her work to produce a balanced budget.</p> <p>Approved the 2016-2017 Budget.</p>
	<p>JBo thanked CA for all her work at the school over the years on behalf of the Governing Body. CA was presented with a gift.</p> <p>JBo also thanked John Heayberd for all his work for the school, particularly in safeguarding. A gift will be sent to him.</p> <p>Governors were invited to the end of term BBQ on 21 July at 12.30pm</p>
6	<p>Committee and other Reports</p> <p>Minutes were circulated before the meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Learning & Well-being – CG</i> <p>Q – How can people appeal the SEN process – specifically around parents getting support? The parents need to contact JBu.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Personnel and Training – DA</i> <p>Approved one additional Inset day for 2016-2017</p> <p>Approved the revised Teachers' Appraisal Policy</p> <p>Approved the Pay Policy</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Finance Premises & General Purposes – SF</i> There was a discussion about school numbers and the building project, which has been delayed. There has been a discussion with the LA about the possibility of a larger project to accommodate more students, with some funding from the LA. • <i>Coop Working Group</i> • <i>Appointments & Standards - JK</i> JK raised an issue about items being tabled at meetings – has apologised to JBu that an item was discussed at the last meeting that she, and some others, had not seen. Thanked everyone for their contributions to discussions on GovernorHub. Also thanked JBu for the additional information she has posted. Ofsted judgements about leadership include the Governors as well as the staff. Could consider more clarity on agendas. • <i>Post 16</i>
7	<p>Report on Audit Committee</p> <p>DY distributed a report before the meeting and talked through the key points.</p> <p>This may be superseded by becoming a MAT – the MAT will have an audit committee, so it is unlikely we need one in the interim.</p> <p>Suggestion that the Autumn FPGP meeting discusses an audit function and risks.</p> <p>Good audit looks at processes and procedures as well as financial issues.</p>
8	<p>Vacancies and elections</p> <p>JK suggested we keep a list of former Governors who could be called on to assist with appeals panels. There could be issues with confidentiality. To be considered by Appointments and Standards Committee.</p> <p>JBo to contact HG about when she plans to stand down.</p> <p>DA thanked HG for her work on the appeals panel.</p> <p>Discussion around the fact that there was no member of staff who put themselves forward to be a Governor. It might be useful for Governors to consider ways to connect more with staff. JBo to send a message to staff to encourage them to consider becoming a Governor.</p> <p>Governors could also come in at the beginning of term (1 / 2 September) or produce some information about being a Governor.</p> <p>Query about whether the staff Governor needs to be a teacher – LS to check</p>
9	<p>Dates for next year</p> <p>A schedule was circulated before the meeting. Comments to be sent to LS</p> <p>Discussion about the timing of the meeting. Proposed trying a start at 6.30pm for the first two FGB meetings of next year.</p>
10	<p>Minutes of last meeting – Agreed as correct.</p>
11	<p>Matters Arising and Action List - See updated actions report</p>
12	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>School Image and Promotion – JBa raised this. Many of the local schools are frequently mentioned in local publications and Cotham needs to be better at promoting the school.</p> <p>JBu – this will be a focus for the school next year. There will be a member of staff responsible for contacting the press each week with a selection of stories.</p>

	<p>There was a discussion around ways to do this and the types of articles that could be created. Need to be careful about controlling the message to some of the press.</p> <p>MAT issues – Have been discussing the skills base for the visioning group. JBu will send the first date out to all Governors. There will be different strands to this.</p> <p>Will need to consider the consultation strategy and how that is signed off. There was a discussion around this and what the consultation is about.</p> <p>Further discussion around scoping the work involved.</p>

Meeting closed at 9.20pm

Next Meeting – Wednesday 14 September

Signed

Date