

**Minutes of Meeting of Full Governing Body Meeting held virtually via Zoom on
Wednesday 8 July 2020 at 6pm**

Present: Jane Dixon (JLD); Derek Cross (DC); Keith Wilson (KW); Liz Currie (ESC); Tony Atherton (TA); Sue Doubell (SD); Jonathan Hodgson (JH); Cath Proud (CEP)

Non-voting: Natalie James (NJJ) Jody Dunn (JDN)(Clerk).

1. Apologies: David Hall (DH); Gareth Harris (GH) Peter Roberts (PDR)

2. Declaration of Interest – None

JLD opened the meeting and welcomed NJJ to her first FGB meeting and formally introduced her to the Governing Body. JLD advised governors that PDR was still recuperating and that CEP was acting up in his absence.

3. Minutes of previous meetings and matters arising

There are three sets of minutes to be approved; minutes from the last FGB meeting in December 2019 and two sets from the meetings held in June with regards to the partial reopening of the school.

- Minutes from 4 December

Page 2 – Link governors – we said we would revisit this when we had a permanent headteacher in post, however due to the current circumstances JLD suggested this be reviewed again at the October meeting.

Governors approved the minutes as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

- Minutes from meeting on 4 June - Proposals For Partial Re-opening of School to Allow for Face to Face Contact Time for Years 10 and 12

A couple of minor typos were identified. Governors approved the minutes as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

- Minutes from meeting on 18 June- Consideration of Final Plans and Procedures for Partial Re-opening of School on 22nd June.

Governors approved the minutes as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

4. Update from Chairs of C&S and F&R Committees

F&R

JH and NJJ gave an overview of what was discussed at the F&R meeting the previous week, highlighting several items, the main things being the Revenue Budget 20/21 and the BFR3Y - Budget 20/21 and 2 year forecasts, as these had been brought to the meeting for approval. JH made governors aware that a robust conversation surrounding these had taken place at the committee meeting and that NJJ had been very prudent in creating the budget. NJJ confirmed she had used forecasting software to create the forecast, which is a much smarter way of working and takes into consideration things like inflation etc. It doesn't account for any increased income, therefore we are likely to be in a better position than this currently shows. The biggest change is in relation to catering and the change over to Mellors from September.

JH added how NJJ had made excellent progress since taking up position in terms of updating processes and procedures and moving from manual systems.

Governors agreed and approved the budget and the forecast.

JH and NJJ informed governors of other items covered in the meeting including:

The CIF funding bids – these have been granted which is fantastic.

Catering – A discussion was had around the catering contract, which is due to begin in September. School is looking to move forward with the 5 year contract, is just waiting for clarification around the VAT element, which NJJ explained to governors. It was agreed that NJJ would take the outcome of the VAT query to the next F&R meeting to update governors.

Q - Do the VAT changes that were announced today affect or impact the school?

A – They are likely to reduce what school is able to claim back, but this may be recoupable as part of the COVID costs. However at this stage it still isn't known if school will be eligible to claim anything back.

COVID costs – these will continue to be recorded and will be submitted as and when it is known whether they are recoverable.

Debt write-offs – JH explained the situation and made governors aware that a robust conversation was had around this at the recent F&R meeting. The debt has built up over a number of years and is mainly related to historic music lessons. Missed payments had not been followed up and invoices had not been cancelled. NJJ has now implemented new systems and processes to ensure that this does not happen again.

Governors agreed and approved that the £16,000 debt can be written off and confirmed they were satisfied that NJJ would ensure that a similar situation could not arise again.

Q – We will not be doing business with debtors on the aged debt list again will we?

A - NJJ said that where the debt was in relation to lettings full checks would be carried out and school would make sure they were unable to book again, and said that the debt was largely down to a lack of joined up thinking, which the new processes will resolve.

Q – Governors asked whether auditors have picked up on this?

A – NJJ said they should have as should internal scrutiny but she was satisfied systems were now in place to ensure this would not happen again.

JH finished by thanking both CEP and NJJ for all their hard work.

CEP added her thanks to NJJ, informing governors that she has made a huge impact already and will be a great asset to the school.

C&S

KW firstly thanked CEP for everything she is doing, it is very much appreciated and she will be missed by the school.

As the C&S meeting was paper based and the questions and answers had been circulated, to all governors there was no need to go into any detail. The Chair of C& S said he had confidence in the things that have been planned, where students are up to and in the systems that are in place. Governors agreed everyone is doing a great job.

KW asked governors to have a look at the virtual opening evening video if they had not yet done so as it is fantastic.

5. Governing Body Update Report

CEP pointed out that the report was very comprehensive and paints a detailed picture of what is happening in school. The report is a combination of things that the governors are usually updated on via the HT report to governors and things relating to the current situation. She worked through the report highlighting parts of each section.

- Pupil numbers and attendance

CEP talked governors through the table and graphs provided in the report. She explained that attendance in the first few days of the school being closed was low (up to 3 children per day attended), but reduced to zero once the full lockdown instructions were issued by the Government. Following May half-term, attendance increased to approximately 6 – 8 students per day. Following the wider reopening of schools and workplaces on 15 June, attendance has increased to an average of 10 -12 students per day. Attendance is by prior agreement and includes key worker and vulnerable children as well as those who were being monitored for safeguarding and welfare issues prior to lockdown.

As you can be seen from the data, there has been a very positive uptake on year 10 and 12 students returning to school for face-to-face sessions. They are really engaging and the feedback is very positive. It was evident they were nervous at the start but they are now starting to relax. The reasons for those choosing not to come in are largely due to home situations or transport issues.

- Staffing Overview

The first part of this section shows the outcomes of the staff survey with regards to staff returning to work in September. The majority of staff want to be back in school. The second part is the usual staffing report provided by HR. School is fully staffed for September and has done really well with recruitment despite the difficulties of doing it online.

There is an ongoing grievance and since this report was published a counter grievance has been raised. This is being dealt with appropriately following school procedures.

- Risk management

CEP explained that she wouldn't go into detail on this section as governors has already looked at the risk assessment in great detail. The risk assessment is currently fit for purpose but will need to be amended ahead of September. SLT are having regular meetings regarding the plans and procedures to be put in place for September.

- Safeguarding and child protection

We have continued with our usual processes with regards to safeguarding throughout the school closure. All students have been contacted weekly by their form tutors. All form tutors have done this via email, some have held zoom meetings or team chats with their form groups. Students who we regarded as vulnerable received an open offer to attend school, which was repeated regularly by Student Support Managers and AHTs as contact was sustained during school closure. Few opted to do so, despite this open offer. Arrangements have been made for students to come into school even if they were not classified as vulnerable but it was in our judgement that enabling this to happen would be of benefit to their well-being.

Funding has becoming available to support students over summer and we have decided to use this to allow our students to continue with their counselling sessions over summer, which we feel will be very beneficial.

SD said that she is very confident and happy with the schools approach and that the procedures are very thorough.

At this point JLD made governors aware that a parent complaint had recently been submitted to her and that it is being dealt with by JLD and a panel of governors.

- Curriculum and learning

CEP told governors that much of this information had been issued to governors as part of the C&S meeting.

The different ways of remote teaching continue to develop. SLT have been discussing the plans for September and the fact that we will have to prepare for different eventualities such as localised lockdowns, certain year groups not being in the building etc. Both staff and students have proved that they are adaptable.

We have always been conscious of teacher wellbeing and workload. It seems staff have really pulled together and are sharing ideas and resources etc.

ESC agreed that it has been very tough and it is a whole new way of working. There has been lots of sharing ideas and some people have taken to live lessons more than others. We seem to be ahead of the game in comparison to other schools.

CEP noted that the IT Team have been extremely supportive to everyone setting up sessions on all the possible ways to deliver live lessons. People seem to have embraced it and hopefully this will continue.

JLD said that she knows how hard everyone is working, and thanked them and said it was great to see how all staff and students have adapted.

- Finance

NJJ explained that the finance team have continued to work effectively throughout lockdown and have been coming into the office on a rota basis as well as working from home. The team have had to adjust to quite a lot of change, with a new manager and new processes of working more electronically. They have also had an increased workload, with trip refunds, free school meal vouchers etc.

The team are still reviewing the expenditure incurred since mid-March when lockdown was becoming a distinct possibility. At present, the breakdown provided is the finance team view of possible costs and categories. Finance are working with faculty leaders to identify relevant spend and categorise these. This is not a final total and some costs may prove not to be covid-19 related, and further costs could yet be incurred.

The next stage will be to look at what, if any, funding is available to HGS to cover these costs. It is worth noting that some costs may be replacement rather than additional costs, i.e. revision guides, exercise books in lieu of reprographic costs.

- Additional information

CEP explained that in order to facilitate planning for a smooth start in September, the two new Deputy Heads have been coming into school for two days a week between now and the end of term in order to involve themselves in the preparation for the next academic year and bring additional capacity in the final fortnight. It will also support a smooth handover from Cath as well as support Peter in his planned return to work in August/September. Both are keen to be supportive of the school.

We will share the arrangements for September with both staff and parents before the end of term, and SLT will be meeting before the end of summer to review in line with any government changes.

6. Policy for approval - Anti-fraud.

JLD noted that everyone should have had the opportunity to look at this ahead of the meeting and asked if anyone had any questions?

JH thanked NJJ for making sure policy was clear and noted he is more than happy with it. Governors approved the policy.

CEP informed governors that there will be an addendum to the behaviour policy coming for September as some temporary sanctions will be added in relation to breaking COVID related rules, one-way systems etc.

7. AOB

- Senior Appointments

JLD informed governors of the need to ratify the recent senior appointments of the Headteacher and the two Deputy Heads. A discussion was had and governors voted to approve.

- Governor Recruitment

JLD then moved on to governor recruitment and that we were looking at co-opting former parent governor, Shaista Ahmed. A discussion was had around this, with regard to Shaista's skill set. Governors agreed she brought constructive challenge to the board and she was a valued member. All governors voted in favour of co-opting Shaista, therefore this was approved. JLD confirmed she would get in touch with her to confirm.

A further discussion was had around the composition of the governing body and the number of staff and parent governors we have. JLD confirmed that the Trustees would look at this at the October Trustee Meeting.

- Meeting Dates

JLD confirmed the JDN had been looking at the meeting dates for next year and had sent a copy to JLD for review. JLD confirmed she was open to suggestions with regards to days and could be flexible. She advised governors to send preferences/comments to JDN, who would circulate the proposed dates.

A discussion was then had around governors Zoom meetings and the possibility of keeping these up in the next school year. Governors discussed the positives and negatives of remote meetings and agreed that remote meetings had worked very well but that it would be good to have some face-to-face meetings when that was considered safe. JLD asked governors to send any further comments/feedback to JDN and we would review in October.

- Thank you's

JLD thanked JDN for all her hard work in all her roles for school, particularly over the last few months. It is greatly appreciated.

JLD then thanked CEP for everything she has done throughout her time at HGS, for her dedication and enthusiasm. On behalf of everyone on the governing body, she wished CEP lots of success and said she would be very much missed.

- AOB's from JH

JH noted that the ESFA monitoring regime is being re-established from September and asked whether Ofsted visits maybe reinstated. A conversation was had around this, and CEP confirmed Ofsted is still a focus but not a priority right now.

JLD said governors would be kept up to date with any matters arising over the summer and thanked them for their support.

The meeting closed at 7.55pm.