

**Minutes of the Full Governing Body Meeting
held in the School
Tuesday 5 December 2023 at 6.00pm**

Present:	Dr B Naylor (Chair)	BN
	Dr M Pobjoy	MP
	Mrs L Crossley	LC
	Mr C Harte	CH
	Mr N Jones	NJ
	Mr G Ellis	GE
	Mrs L Worville	LW
	Mr J Bilson	JB
	Mr T Hollis	TH

Apologies:	Mrs L Aird
	Mr N Arnold
	Dr N Dixon
	Prof C Leitmeir

In Attendance:	Mrs L Martindale (Deputy Head)	LM
	Mrs A Banks	AB
	Mr W Lenhan (SBM-Auditors report only)	WL
	Mr D Slater (Ellacotts-Auditors report only)	DS
	Mrs C Whitney (Clerk)	CW

Actions

- 3. DS to include the attendance of governors appointed in September 2022.
- 3. DS to establish whether depreciation relates to both sites as St John's is leased from Magdalen College, Oxford and Waynflete is leased from the LA for 125 years.
- 3. DS to confirm what the trend is regarding how salaries are increasing but the pension figure is reducing. WL to circulate his response to governors.
- 3. WL to investigate whether the VAT was overclaimed for July/August 2023.
- 7b. CW to circulate the minutes from the Chairs meeting on 29th November, once approved.

1. Welcome & Apologies for Absence

BN welcomed all to the meeting. Apologies were accepted as above. The meeting was quorate.

2. Declarations of interest in respect of any items on the agenda & notice of any amendments to the Register of Interest

None.

3. Presentation by Ellacotts LLP, Auditors

Ratification of Trustees' Report and Financial Statements for the period ended 31 August 2023.

Mr Slater, a partner of Ellacotts Corporate Services, was welcomed to the meeting. All governors had been provided with the draft Annual Report and the Audit Results Report to the Board of Trustees prior to the meeting.

Mr Slater ran through the report on a page-by-page basis and stated that there were no significant changes which impacted the accounts. **He asked that governors advise if there are any amendments to the Trustees' information by the end of Friday 9th December 2023.** The accounts will then be finalised and made available to be signed, in line with the Academy Trust Handbook. Mr Slater confirmed the report was a clean, unqualified report with no issues arising.

The following were noted:

Governor attendance

LW highlighted that the attendance table in the report does not include attendance of governors appointed in September 2022 – NJ, LW and LC. This is to be checked and amended by the auditors.

Statement of financial activities focusing on net movements in year

Depreciation

This is now included in the accounts as the school has a right from Magdalen College, Oxford, to use the land and buildings over a number of years. The value of this therefore depreciates over time, as the length of the remaining lease decreases. A backdated figure of 200K has been included this year as it has not been applied previously. **MP asked whether the depreciation relates to both sites as St John's is leased from Magdalen College, Oxford and Waynflete is leased from the LA for 125 years.** Mr Slater advised he will check this and confirm.

CH joined the meeting at 6:20pm

LGPS

The defined benefit pension scheme liability has reduced from £1.23m to £533K, following an updated actuarial report. Mr Slater advised this has improved the school's overall position, but also confirmed the school has had a good year financially.

Notes to the Financial Statements

Capital grants

The remainder of the 106 monies have been received as well as the funding of the new boilers from the CIF bid

Funding for the Trust's educational operations

A key variance from 2021/2022 is a supplementary grant of approx. 160K, which was received under 'others' in 2022/2023 to cover teacher and support staff pay increases.

Staff

Staffing costs have remained consistent. **LW asked what the trend is regarding how salaries are increasing but the pension figure is reducing.** Mr Slater advised he would check and provide a response to WL, who will circulate this to governors.

Deferred revenue

Governors asked what this is. This relates to income received in year but deferred to a different period, such as trips and the energy efficiency funds.

Analysis of net assets between funds

Assets are all liquid rather than fixed. There has not been any unspent carry forward, other than energy efficiency.

Pension and similar obligations

Mr Slater confirmed that the pension figures were obtained from the recent actuarial report. These have been benchmarked against other schools and he is confident these are correct.

Related Party Transactions or Declarations of Interest to report

None.

Audit Results Report to the Board of Trustees Year Ended 31 August 2023

Mr Slater briefed on the Audit Results Report which was circulated prior to the meeting and provides a snapshot of the audit. He confirmed that Ellacotts were issuing a clean unqualified audit opinion.

Key Areas of Risk

Mr Slater briefed on the key areas of risk noted from page 5 onwards and confirmed there were no concerns of any incorrect instances relating to checks on the following:

- Systems and Processes
- Schemes of Delegation
- Management override of systems

Other observations/recommendations included:

Income/Expenditure

Revenue has been coded to the correct areas in accordance with CFR and transactions have been recorded in the correct period.

LGPS

The actuary valuation has been benchmarked against other schools and is in line with these.

SCR

This should be reviewed and any gaps filled. Visitors ID is also to be reviewed although Mr Slater advised that the risk has been downgraded to low.

All employee contracts are to be signed – it was noted that one older contract had not been signed.

It was confirmed that the financial statements have been prepared on the 'going concern basis', as Ellacotts are in agreement that the school can reasonably be expected to continue in operation for a period of at least 12 months from the date of these being signed,

Adjustments to trial balance

There is £19,764 accrued income.

An £824,451 depreciation charge is to be added.

VAT

There is a slight unconfirmed difference to the VAT balance, but this was not seen to be an issue by Ellacotts.

GE asked how the depreciation figure affected the accounts. Mr Slater advised that this is a non-cash transaction which doesn't impact the management of the trust funds. From a management accounts perspective, there is now a fixed asset register and WL will be able to include 1/12th of the annual depreciation figure, each month.

LW asked whether the VAT has been overclaimed or not claimed. Mr Slater advised that for July/Aug 23, the VAT may have been overclaimed, but this could be a genuine difference. **BN asked whether this will be looked in to.** WL confirmed this would be.

Mr Slater requested that any queries are sent to WL who will forward them to the auditors. Once finalised, the accounts would be emailed to governors on Monday 11th December for approval using Docusign.

Approval of Annual Accounts 2022-2023

It was proposed that the accounts be approved by the Full Governing Body (FGB) subject to any minor amendments. All governors voted in agreement with the proposal, motion carried.

BN thanked Ellacotts for their presentations and WL for his hard work in preparing the accounts.

Mr Slater and WL left the meeting at 6:30pm

4. Minutes of the meeting held September 2023 & Review of Action Points

Review of Action Points

The minutes having been circulated were agreed as a true copy and signed for filing.

2.0 Governors to complete and sign the annual Declaration of Interest form and return it to CW. Ongoing. Governors have refreshed this on GovernorHub for 2023 but CW to check if there needs to be a signed copy as well.

7.2 CW to check the constitution regarding the right to remove governors who are not attending meetings and have not been contactable for some time. It is not possible to remove governors without agreement,

7.3 Committees to refine the governor's checklist to a more workable document, apportioning checks down to each committee from the senior staff report and other reports. CW to add to committee agendas for this to be actioned.

5.c CW to refer to The Key to source a suitable reference template for new governors. Complete. CW will add this to the GovernorHub noticeboard with the minutes from this evening.

6.b A new foundation governor is to be sourced. On-going. MP to action once a suitable candidate has been sourced.

6.1 CW to investigate the functionality of GovernorHub, to utilise it more effectively and possibly attend some training. Complete.

8.d CW to add KCSIE 2023 to confirmations in GovernorHub. Complete.

8.d.a GE and LW to look at how the 'Schedule of Musts' will be divided up and passed to other committees, by the next FGB meeting on 5th December. On-going. GE to bring to the next Finance & Resources committee meeting and CW to add this to the agenda.

10.0.a LM to email the 2023 Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedures to CW, to email to governors for ratification, Complete.

11.0.a New skills audit will be compiled once new governors are in place. On-going.

11.0.d CW to check governor details are correct on the website/gov.uk. Complete

13.1 CW to establish the nomination process for LA to be appointed for a further term as her current one expires in November. Complete and LA appointed for a further term of 4 years.

5. Minutes of the planning meeting held 31st October 2023 & Review of Action Points

The minutes having been circulated were agreed as a true copy and signed for filing.

4.0 TH to ensure each sheet on SIP states which Committee it reports to.

Complete.

4.0 TH to ensure Heads of faculty to include a report to governors on hard thinking and learning.

Complete.

4.0 ALL to review ideas to assist governors to evaluate and ratify hard thinking including: · a sheet of paper with prompts to test against when visiting a faculty · evaluating the pupil's perspective · asking what hard thinking means to pupils · finding out students experiences for governors to evaluate · a focus group asking pupils what they do in lessons that helps them to learn. On-going. AB to attend the next E & W Curriculum and Standards meeting on 23rd January 2024 to help governors identify what they need to look for, including teachers and students actions.

5.0 CW to amend and process the Governor visits policy as agreed. Complete.

5.0 CW to process the Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy. TH to check whether it is correct that KCSIE 2023 includes mention of KCSIE 2021 a few times. Complete.

6. Master's Report

A report dated November 2023 had been circulated and taken as read.

SIP

TH outlined that the latest version of the SIP has been uploaded into the meeting papers on Governorhub. Each tab has been updated and priorities have been evaluated and colour coded over the last 4 weeks, depending on what the SLT think has been achieved during the first 10 weeks of the academic year. TH stated that it is still too early to be seeing the true impact and the SLT have been cautious and demanding of themselves when reviewing and rating performance.

Update to the Register of Business Risks

TH agreed that it is the responsibility of senior staff to own this, which includes making any changes and reporting. GE has offered to help TH to track impact and make the live document work.

Staffing

There has been a small turnover of staff. Recruitment of support staff (LSA's, admin assistants etc.) is attracting a stronger field of applicants than it has previously. The facilities manager starting in January 2024 will take some workload from WL, focusing on H & S and strategic planning. TH gave thanks to governors for previously approving the Support staff and Teachers pay awards, allowing them to be applied in a timely manner.

Workload/Well-being

School is very busy and staff are covering absences. However, there is evidence of colleagues supporting each other and a sense of connection.

Premises

The new boilers at St Johns were installed in the summer and are working well. However, pipes and radiators were not replaced, and this has caused a difficulty with compatibility where 'new meets old'. In future, it will be important to consider a fuller specification of what is required when making CIF bids. TH advised that energy efficiency money is diverting to K Block.

Complaints

There are fewer complaints being made. Staff are listening and engaging with complainants, to resolve them before they escalate. **JB asked if the complaints policy could be reviewed to see if any changes should be made for it to work better.** LM advised that the SLT are working on the behaviour policy to allow staff to provide a proactive strategic response and correct use of suspensions.

Safeguarding

There is a small but significant cohort of students (none of which joined at the start of Year 7), with high profile needs. This is causing a serious workload as there are some particularly high-level cases. Because Magdalen has spaces and many of the students have had issues in other settings or are being home schooled, they often arrive within several days of a place being requested. This does not allow any time to assess their needs properly or make plans to settle them in. **GE asked if such students arrive with a funding package.** This is not generally the case until they have been included on the October school census. **NJ asked whether any of these have EHCP's.** LM advised that this is the case, but as funding is received twice per year, school doesn't always receive all of it. TH advised that it takes time to assess how students needs are being met before requesting funding. **GE asked how this situation can be improved.** TH referred to the recent governor visit from LA and CH. The school has more students with identified needs and wider needs than it has had historically. Often it is too much to ask a student who has been home schooled for 18 months to attend four long lessons a day. School is working differently but still setting a standard by offering a phased return and blended learning on a part home, part in school basis.

All schools are experiencing similar post pandemic problems including truancy within school and vaping. There has been a spike in suspensions over the last few weeks, however improvements are now just starting to be seen.

Local Plan

There is a proposed development to the southwest of Brackley, towards Evenley. TH has had a meeting with the planners as they propose to build an "all-through" school, for children aged 4 to 18. Usually there is an expectation that the other secondary school, i.e: Magdalen, will run it. If 106 money is available, it was agreed this would be an opportunity for growth and Magdalen should be pro-active and have plans ready to present to developers. **BN asked whether there is any information in the public domain.** TH suggested that he contacts Cllr. Baker who has been very helpful in the past.

7. Committees

a) Committee Membership & Committee Chairs

The current committee structure has been effective from 1st January 2023. **Colm asked CW to check that he is a member of the Personnel committee on GovernorHub.** It was noted that membership of the Health & Safety committee is low as this meets during the day. TH advised he would mention the need for applicants with availability during the day, when advertising for new Governors.

b) Committee Reports – *minutes to be taken as read.*

- **Curriculum and Standards (26 September)
Terms of reference (TOR)**

The TOR were approved as presented

- **Personnel (3 October)**
- **Pastoral (21 November)**
- **Pay Committee (31 October)** – all pay scale increases were awarded

- **Health & Safety (31 October)**
Terms of Reference (TOR)
The TOR were ratified as presented.
Health & Safety Policy
The H & S policy had been uploaded to GovernorHub and was ratified as presented.
Register of Health & Safety Risks
The Register is progressing

NJ asked for clarification as to whether a further RAAC survey was required. WL advised that a previous survey had established RAAC was not present in the school and no current further action is required.

- **Audit & Risk (7 November)**
Terms of Reference (TOR)
The TOR were ratified as presented, with no changes

- **Finance, Resources (7 November)**
Terms of Reference (TOR)
The TOR were ratified as presented, with no changes
Appointment of Auditors
Following re-tendering, Landau Baker are to be appointed from Sept 2024.

- **Chairs Committee (29 November)**
Minutes to be circulated, when finalised, by CW
Terms or reference (TOR)
The TOR were ratified as presented, with one change of wording from 'academic' to 'academic and business'.

8. Compliance

a) Scheme of Delegation

It was agreed that this should be approved in principle, with changes to be made by committees as each one establishes its responsibilities. BN agreed that the scheme of delegation is now more in line with recommendations, and it was ratified by governors, acknowledging that there may be amendments in the future.

b) Management Accounts

Accounts for PD1 were made available on GovernorHub prior to the meeting. **GE noted some under budgeting for agency staff and asked who they are.** TH advised that agency staff cover unwell teachers and posts not filled, which can be unpredictable. There are also other variations due to the nature of PD1. BN suggested that the Finance committee continue to focus closely on this. JB agreed and stated that the overall predicted carry forward is positive. MP suggested that agency staff costs are split in future, between teacher absence cover and vacant post cover, with more realistic figures being predicted for next years budget.

c) Risk Register

See above.

9. Governance

a) Safeguarding Update

CH asked how often governors should complete safeguarding training. LM advised that all governors should read and understand KCSIE each year. Safer recruitment training needs to only be completed once.

b) Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) Declaration

All governors to check they have completed the declaration on GovernorHub to confirm they have read the KCSIE 2023 statutory guidance.

c) Governor visits

10. Headteacher's Performance Management (HTPM)

Mr Harte reported that this had been successfully completed in October. Current objectives were reviewed and new objectives set.

11. Health & Safety

No health and safety issues were reported.

12. Any Other Business

NJ asked whether a different contractor could be used to assist with CIF bids. TH advised that the three-year agreement with RAMM is due to end in 2024. TH advised that all the information for the current CIF bids is with RAMM and the bids are due to be submitted imminently.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8pm.

13. Date of next meeting – Tuesday 21 March 2024 6.30pm

Signed  (Chair)

Dated.....22/03/24.....