

**MAGDALEN COLLEGE SCHOOL – BRACKLEY**

**Minutes of the Full Governing Body Planning Meeting  
held in the school on  
Tuesday 14 January 2025 at 6.00pm**

<b>Present:</b>	Mr J Alexander	JA	Parent Governor (first meeting)
	Mr N Arnold	NA	Community Governor
	Mr J Bilson	JB	Member Appointed Governor
	Miss K Brunton	KB	Parent Governor (first meeting)
	Mr R du Plessis	RP	Parent Governor (first meeting)
	Mr G Ellis	GE	Community Governor
	Mr T Hollis	TH	Headteacher Governor
	Mr N Jones ( <b>Vice Chair</b> )	NJ	Parent Governor
	Prof C Leitmeir	CL	Foundation Governor
	Dr B Naylor ( <b>Chair</b> )	BN	Community Governor
	Dr M Pobjoy	MP	Foundation Governor
	Mrs Charlotte Wood	CW	Parent Governor (first meeting)
<b>Apologies:</b>	Mrs L Crossley	LC	Parent Governor
	Mr J Gold	JG	Parent Governor
	Mr C Harte	CH	Foundation Governor
<b>In Attendance:</b>	Mrs A Banks	AB	Deputy Headteacher
	Mrs L Martindale	LM	Deputy Headteacher
	Mr E Passmore	EM	Landau Baker / BKL (left after item 3)
	Mrs C Powell	CP	Clerk to the Governors

The meeting was quorate.

***Governor questions and challenge are highlighted.***

**Actions**

<b>2.</b>	New Governors to complete their entry in the Register of Interests for 2024 – 2025 on Governor Hub (GHub).	<b>JA &amp; JG</b>
<b>3.</b>	Correct the spelling of the school's name and insert page numbers to the Audit Findings Memorandum	<b>EP / BKL</b>
<b>3.</b>	Share the internal scrutiny reports completed by Moores with EP.	<b>TH</b>
<b>3.</b>	Amend errors on pages 14 and 48 of the Annual Report and Financial Statement	<b>EP / BKL</b>
<b>10.1</b>	Discuss the inclusion of Appropriate Curriculum Provision in the role of the SEND Governor with CH.	<b>LM</b>
<b>10.1</b>	Add 'Governor responsibility for Appropriate Curriculum Provision' to the agenda for the next E&W Pastoral Committee meeting.	<b>Clerk</b>
<b>10.1</b>	Consider an external review of behaviour as part of the ongoing review programme.	<b>Audit, Risk &amp; Assurance Committee</b>
<b>10.3</b>	Share the list of meeting dates with the new Governors.	<b>Clerk</b>
<b>10.3</b>	Advise the Clerk which Committee meetings you would like to attend.	<b>New Governors</b>

<b>10.4</b>	Investigate other sources of Governor training including Oxfordshire Governor Services and NGA Learning Link.	<b>Clerk</b>
<b>10.4</b>	Coordinate new Governor induction visits with TH and BN.	<b>Clerk</b>

### Decisions

<b>3.</b>	The annual accounts for the period ended 31 August 2024 were approved by the Full Governing Body (FGB) subject to minor amendments agreed.
<b>7.</b>	Governors approved the updated Attendance Policy for adoption.
<b>8.</b>	Governors approved the Code of Conduct for All Adults for adoption.
<b>9.1</b>	The Terms of Reference for the Education and Welfare Committee were agreed for adoption.
<b>9.2</b>	The Terms of Reference for the Finance and Resources Committee were agreed for adoption.

#### 1. **Welcome & apologies for absence**

BN welcomed everyone to the meeting, and congratulated the new Parent Governors on their election. Introductions were made around the table.

Apologies had been received and were accepted from Mrs L Crossley (LC), Parent Governor, Mr J Gold (JG), new Parent Governor and Mr C Harte (CH), Foundation Governor.

The meeting was quorate.

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

There were no declarations made in respect of any items on the agenda and no amendments to the Register were noted.

New Parent Governors were reminded to complete their entry in the Register of Interests on Governor Hub (GHub) at their earliest convenience.

#### 3. **Presentation by Landau Baker Ltd, Auditors**

The Audit Findings Memorandum (v2) and Draft Accounts (v2) prepared by Landau Baker / BKL auditors had been shared on GHub.

Mr E Passmore (EP) was welcomed to the meeting. He gave a commentary on the audit findings and accounts based on a spreadsheet of meeting notes which was emailed to Governors during the meeting.

The following points were noted in relation to the Audit Findings Memorandum and questions were invited.

- The spelling of the school's name on the title page requires correction to read Magdalen rather than Magdelen.
- Page numbers should be inserted.
- In the risk assessment section (page 6) it was clarified that management override of controls is an inherent risk and therefore not of significant concern.
- The income deferred in the prior year was identified, and it was confirmed that the end position remains unchanged.  
**Governors queried whether this amount can be spent in the current year?** EP confirmed that it cannot as it relates to year ending 2023.
- An error in the posting of Fixed Assets was noted.  
**Governors questioned the implications of this error?** EP confirmed that there are no practical implications beyond the lowering of the value of the balance.

EP summarised that a very good job has been done in difficult circumstances. ***Governors asked for clarification that in spite of the challenges faced with staffing within the Finance Team, mistakes have been corrected and there are no concerns from the audit?*** EP confirmed this to be the case.

#### **Recommendations**

- While the unexpected changes and challenges in relation to the Finance Team were handled as well as they could have been, lessons should be learnt and applied to contingency planning.

***Governors noted that the advisory point on implementation of a Business Continuity Plan is considered a medium risk. For the benefit of EP and of the new Governors, it was reported that the Governing Body have already reflected on this and agreed to work on the development of a new Business Continuity Plan.*** TH added that an early draft version of this is in progress.

***Governors asked whether the Business Continuity Plan contains key personnel and risks associated with the loss of those employees?*** TH explained that the Plan is constructed by areas of work.

- Hard work remains to be done by the Finance Team, and they will require ongoing support.

For the benefit of new Governors, BN explained that the sudden and tragic death of the School Business Manager in September had left the school with no finance staffing due to one other vacancy and one long-term absence. However, BN was pleased to report that a new Business Manager has now been appointed to start at the beginning of February. The Finance Manager is on a phased return to work and there is a new Finance Assistant in post. BN reiterated how well the school team has managed in these circumstances and recognised the great efforts made in order to get to this point.

- Management accounts must now be prioritised and reported monthly to the Governing Body.

***Governors asked how common the orange 'medium' priorities are?*** EP confirmed that these are very common.

- There are three low priority recommendations for action.

***New Governors asked for more information about how internal scrutiny is carried out?*** EP explained that this should be an independent process of assurance in identified areas. TH reported that there is a programme of internal scrutiny in place, which has covered areas such as anti-fraud measures and whistleblowing. GE confirmed that the plan remains active and three reports have been completed by Moores. It was agreed that the reports completed in the last year will be provided to EP.

#### **Annual Accounts for Year Ended 31 August 2024**

The accounts were presented to the Governors by EP, who made the following key points.

- The issue raised previously in relation to Fixed Asset posting was explained as a transfer missed from last year's accounts and included in this year.

***Governors asked whether this error needs to be corrected in last year's accounts?*** EP suggested that this is not necessary.

- The accounts indicate a worse position than is the reality.
- While the financial position has declined, there is no cause for alarm.
- The impact of increases to staff pay and pension costs not fully funded by the DfE has been felt by all secondary schools.

***Governors questioned why reserves appear to be down?*** EP explained that this is the knock-on from the building works completed in 2023.

**Governors asked for confirmation that while reserves are down, the budget is in a surplus position?** EP provided this confirmation.

**Governors asked whether the school remains in a good financial position?** EP confirmed that the position remains good overall.

**Governors are aware that a deficit budget has been set for this year and asked about the plan going forward?** BN explained that the plan is to achieve a balanced budget in the following year.

**Governors asked about DfE funding for teacher salaries and pensions this year?** EP reported the DfE are indicating that these will be fully funded at a national level.

**Governors asked what the next moves by the DfE are likely to be?** EP suggested that current guidance for schools on investment in IT infrastructure is likely to become mandatory.

**Governors asked if anything else is expected from the DfE?** EP reiterated that their other focus is expected to be on school estates and premises, as well as SEN funding to address current inequalities between mainstream and special schools. **Governors noted that the latter would be a positive change and much needed.**

**Governors noted errors in the accounts on pages 14 and 48 which were noted for amendment by EP.**

Governors voiced their gratitude to TH and the staff team for getting through a very difficult time. The support of the EPA Trust was acknowledged.

#### **Approval of Annual Accounts for the period ended 31 August 2024**

The accounts were approved by the Full Governing Body (FGB) subject to minor amendments as agreed.

EP left the meeting at the conclusion of this agenda item.

#### **4. Minutes of the meeting held 22 October 2024 & review of action points**

The minutes had been shared in advance on GHub and were checked page by page for accuracy. There were no amendments made, the minutes were approved as a true record of proceedings and signed by the Chair.

##### **Review of Action Points**

<b>5.1</b>	Add the loss of business-critical roles and functions to the Risk Register. <b>ONGOING</b> TH that this is being dealt with as part of the review of the Risk Register and the development of a new Business Continuity Plan. <b>Governors asked whether whole-school critical roles are being included and not just the business roles?</b> TH confirmed that they are.
<b>5.1</b>	Review the Risk Register at the next meeting of the Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee. <b>COMPLETE</b>
<b>6.1</b>	Communicate with the successful and unsuccessful candidates for the Parent Governor positions. <b>COMPLETE</b>
<b>6.1</b>	Invite successful candidates to the next FGB meeting. <b>COMPLETE</b>
<b>6.1</b>	Signpost successful candidates to induction training and resources. <b>COMPLETE</b>
<b>6.1</b>	Email the Clerk with ideas or suggestions to support plans for the induction of new Governors. <b>COMPLETE</b> It was noted that induction tours for new Governors will be arranged in the next few weeks. Training would be discussed at item 10.4 on the agenda.
<b>6.4</b>	Liaise with the appropriate member of SLT to arrange Governor visits on the agreed dates. <b>COMPLETE</b> Governor visits took place on 15 November and 17 December 2024. It was noted that CH has arranged with LM to visit next week, with a focus on SEND.
<b>6.4</b>	Bring appropriate training opportunities from the Northants programme for discussion by Governors at the next round of Committee meetings.

	<b>COMPLETE</b> This is being included on the agendas for Committee meetings.
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## 5. Master's report

The Master's report had been shared in advance on GHub. The key points were summarised by TH and questions were invited.

### School Improvement Plan (SIP)

For the benefit of new Governors, TH explained that the 'live' SIP document is available on GHub in a separate folder under the 'Documents' tab. He noted that it is RAG-rated, reviewed weekly by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and the different priority areas are subject to scrutiny by Governors in the appropriate Committee meetings.

***New Governors queried whether the SIP is linked to the Risk Register?*** It was discussed and agreed that the two documents are inter-connected, work together and inform each other.

TH added that the new version of the Risk Register is also available on GHub in a separate folder.

### Governor Visits

TH thanked Governors for the visits completed recently.

### Staffing

The challenges of recruiting to the Sociology and Psychology teaching position were noted. TN reported that everything possible is being done to find a suitable candidate and six interviews have been carried out. However, the post remains vacant.

The successful appointments of a School Business Manager (SBM) and two new Maths teachers were noted.

### Premises

TH reported that some work in this area has stalled without a Business Manager in post. He highlighted the need for a full condition survey in order to identify the priorities for action.

***NJ asked about the improvements to toilets in the Dashwood building, which had not been done at the time of the Governor Health & Safety visit at the end of last term. He thought that money had been previously agreed for this work.*** TH reported that this project has never been progressed due to the costs being higher than anticipated. The allocated funding was diverted to the security fencing and improvements to the Thomas Godwin Centre completed in 2024. TH added that the chosen route of individual toilet cubicles has not resolved the problems it was hoped it would and the issue of toilets will need to be included in a condition survey.

***RP highlighted that toilets also need to meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA).*** TH confirmed that this will be considered as part of the condition survey.

***NJ asked if the school could go back to the designers of the toilets on their failure to meet DDA requirements?*** It was agreed that this will need to be picked up with the new SBM.

***NJ asked whether the toilet in Dashwood has now been re-opened?*** TH confirmed that it has.

***NA asked for further clarification on the situation around CIF bids.*** TH explained that the deadline for applications had now passed and it has been agreed to delay further bids.

***NJ asked whether the subject of vape detectors, which had been discussed with TH by email, could be re-visited? He noted that vaping in the school toilets is a recurrent theme in Governor panel meetings.***

TH confirmed that the need to find the right solution at an affordable price is on the agenda. LM added that this is an area of concern in every school, not just Magdalen College School (MCS).

### **Complaints**

TH reiterated that the procedure is working effectively.

### **Staff workload and wellbeing**

***New Governors asked whether succession plans and development plans are in place for all staff?*** TH reported that all staff have induction plans and appraisals. He added that succession planning is done more informally, and a lot of time is spent on this. AB added that SLT meet fortnightly to look at staffing needs.

TH noted that a lot of early career colleagues in the staff team are doing very well and taking on more responsibility.

***New Governors asked who looks after the welfare of the SLT and the Headteacher?*** AB explained that the senior staff tend to look out for each other and are a very supportive team. LM concurred.

### **School events**

***Governors congratulated the school on the success of the Nine Lessons and Carols on 18 December, and on other recent events.***

### **Admissions and future developments**

TH summarised the planning around the PAN (Published Admissions Number), which has been reported in detail at committee level.

***Governors asked whether reducing the PAN will have an impact on the school's eligibility for Section 106 funding?*** TH explained that the Local Authority (LA) have been informed of the school's plans. He added that with unused space already, there is little likelihood of the school needing to expand again. However, if for any reason in the future it did wish to expand, there would be ways to do that.

***Governors asked if larger class sizes will have a negative impact on student outcomes?*** TH explained that the proposed change will be minimal, with classes likely to increase from 24 to 28. He added that the plans also have a bearing on teacher recruitment. AB added that 28 in a class is still significantly lower than in most schools and noted that from Key Stage 4 upwards, there will continue to be more, smaller class sizes as a result of GCSE and A-Level options.

***New Governors highlighted that public perception is that larger classes result in worse outcomes.*** This was acknowledged and TH agreed that it will be necessary to think carefully about the communication around this.

***Governors asked what the impact will be on the school's finances?*** TH reminded Governors that core funding is based on actual student numbers, which will not be affected by this. This proposal aims to plan more effectively for actual student numbers. LM added that the LA is working with MCS to respond to the needs of the community.

### **Football Education Partnership**

TH highlighted that this new partnership is in its first phase and will help with sixth form recruitment.

***Governors asked how the partnership with Brackley Town Football Club (BTFC) will work academically?*** TH explained the history of the BTFC post-16 scheme, which offered a NCFE qualification alongside a football development pathway. He noted that the decision was taken to broaden the options for students and to give them access to a tutor, pastoral support, careers advice and the other benefits of being part of a larger sixth form cohort. The partnership with MCS will offer the students 3 academic pathways, including the options to re-sit Maths and English GCSE, to follow the NCFE qualification route and/or to take A-Levels.

**Governors asked about expected cohort numbers?** TH explained that there would be a maximum of 20 in the first cohort.

**Governors noted the benefits of this partnership scheme. They asked about teacher recruitment to support the scheme?** TH explained that it will require an additional 40-50% of a PE teacher, which can be accommodated within the existing staff structure. He confirmed that this is the only resourcing need.

**Governors asked if there is a contract agreement?** TH confirmed that a Service Level Agreement is in place.

**6. Risk Register**

There was nothing to add to the Master's Report (item 2).

**7. Attendance Policy (updated) for approval**

The updated Attendance Policy had been shared on GHub. The proposed changes highlighted in yellow on page 9 of the document were agreed as being in line with DfE guidance.

**New Governors noted the inclusion of a member of staff's name on page 13.** It was agreed that this should be replaced with the job title, which is Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral).

**Governors approved the updated Attendance Policy for adoption.**

**8. Code of Conduct for All Adults for approval**

The Code of Conduct for All Adults had been shared on GHub and was noted as an EPM model policy with no changes.

**Governors approved the Code of Conduct for All Adults for adoption.**

**Governors noted that the Code of Conduct includes volunteers and contractors, and asked how it can be applied in those cases? The responsibility on Governors for monitoring this was highlighted. The length of the Code was noted and an abridged version for contractors was suggested.** TH explained that it is a statutory document that must be in place. LM reported that this Code of Conduct is in regular use and part of the induction process for all staff, who are required to sign up to it.

LM reported that for safeguarding reasons, there is a summary document which all visitors to the school site receive as part of the signing-in process.

**Governors questioned whether copies are given to external contractors?** TH reported that they are not; this is the responsibility of their employers, with whom the school has a contractual arrangement. LM confirmed that the school has either assurances or mitigations in place with regard to the Code of Conduct for All Adults.

**CL highlighted that the Code only applies to regulated activity with students.**

**9. Committee reports**

**9.1 Education and Welfare Pastoral Committee – 19 Nov 2024**

The minutes of the meeting had been shared on GHub and were summarised by BN who had chaired in the absence of JB and CH. He noted that;

- The Committee Terms of Reference were reviewed and recommended for adoption by the FGB.
- The SEND Policy and Information Report, Substance Use and Misuse Policy, Equality Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy and Home School Agreement were reviewed and approved.

**Governors asked whether there has been any improvement with regard to the Red Card issues reported to this Committee meeting?** TH reported that there has been a reduction in both the number of Red Cards and the frequency of their use.

**The Terms of Reference for the Education and Welfare Committee had been shared on GHub and were agreed for adoption.**

### 9.2 Finance and Resources Committee – 21 Nov 2024

The minutes of the meeting had been shared on GHub and were summarised by GE. He highlighted that;

- There was considerable flux at the time of the meeting due to the vacancies in the Finance team.
  - The Committee Terms of Reference were reviewed and are recommended for approval by the FGB.
  - The Financial Handbook was reviewed and approved.
  - The Data Protection Policy was reviewed and approved subject to minor amendments, which have since been made.
  - The Crisis Management and Business Continuity Plan was approved in the short-term, and a plan for a fuller, long-term review was agreed.
  - The Finance and Resources Committee is in need of new members and the new Governors were invited to attend forthcoming meetings to observe and consider joining.
- The Terms of Reference for the Finance and Resources Committee had been shared on GHub and were agreed for adoption.**

### 9.3 Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee – 26 Nov 2024

The minutes of the meeting had been shared on GHub and were summarised by GE, who was Committee Chair at the time. He highlighted that;

- LC has now taken on the role of Chair of this Committee.
- The external audit programme agreed and monitored by this Committee was explained for the benefit of the new Governors.

### 9.4 Chairs' Committee – 26 Nov 2024

The minutes of the meeting had been shared on GHub and were summarised by BN. He highlighted that;

- Most of areas covered in the meeting had already been or would be discussed.
  - The meeting discussed the response to the letter received from Ofsted. BN thanked those Governors who provided input. He reported that the letter raised three questions, all of which have been addressed using evidence sources including the minutes of the last Education & Welfare Pastoral Committee meeting, the Leaders' very comprehensive and clear report to that meeting, the report on the Governors' Monitoring Visit in November which focussed on behaviour, and the recent report from a whistleblowing investigation (see 10.1). BN noted that the only outstanding query was the adoption of the Code of Conduct for All Adults, which is now complete.
- Governors asked whether anything else has been raised?*** BN confirmed that it has not at this stage.

***Governors asked what triggered the letter?*** BN explained that this is not known, but it was neither a complaint or a whistleblowing case, neither of which have come through the usual school procedures. He noted that anyone can go to Ofsted. TH added that the letter asked specifically about how Governors work and assure themselves that processes and procedures are in place and working effectively. BN noted that there was no sense of specific concerns raised.

### 9.5 Health and Safety Committee – 3 Dec 2024

The minutes of the meeting had been shared on GHub and were summarised by GE. He highlighted that;

- Very good information was provided by the Facilities Manager in the absence of the SBM.
- Governors requested an update on Lockdown Procedure, which was noted by the meeting as overdue.*** TH confirmed that this remains under review by SLT and is on the way.

## 10. Governance

### 10.1 Whistleblowing – External Investigator's Report



BN reported that an external investigation was carried out, which identified no action required. The report made two recommendations; an external review of behaviour and the appointment of a named Governor with responsibility for Appropriate Curriculum Provision. BN noted that both recommendations seem sensible to action.

It was discussed and agreed that this area of Governor responsibility should sit alongside SEND and Inclusion. LM agreed to discuss this with CH at their meeting next week and noted that CH is currently the named Governor with responsibility for SEND. This will then be added to the agenda for the next C&W Pastoral Committee meeting.

It was agreed that a review of behaviour should be considered by the Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee as part of the ongoing programme of internal reviews.

**Governors asked what the whistleblowing issue was?** BN explained that while the detail must remain confidential, the theme of the issue was the negative impact of the new Behaviour Policy.

### **10.2 Update on Governor recruitment**

It was noted that there are vacancies for one Foundation, one Community and one Local Authority Governor. The Clerk reported that work to recruit to these vacancies is being done through the Assistant Headteacher, who has a network of contacts with local businesses and organisations. Approaches are planned to both BTFC and Mercedes, as well as to those organisations participating in the Careers Fair on 30 January 2025.

### **10.3 New Governor roles and responsibilities**

The new Governors were invited to attend any of the forthcoming Committee meetings to observe and help them decide which might be most suited to their skills and interests. The Clerk will share the schedule of meeting dates. She asked the new Governors to advise her of which they would like to attend, so meeting papers and Teams invitations can be shared.

### **10.4 Governor training plan**

A proposed format for a Governor training plan and record prepared by GE had been shared on GHub. It was noted that training should be an agenda item on every Committee meeting agenda.

TH added that Governor training will be part of the planned Governance Review.

Governors asked the Clerk to investigate additional sources of training, including access to courses offered by Oxfordshire Governor Services and subscription to the National Governance Association (NGA) Learning Link programme.

It was discussed and agreed that new Governors will be invited to come in for an induction visit with TH and BN before half-term. The Clerk was asked to coordinate the dates and times for these visits.

### **10.5 Governor visits**

The ongoing programme of visits planned by Committee was noted. BN encouraged all Governors to take the opportunity to take part in monitoring and other visits.

## **11. Headteacher's Performance Management (HTPM)**

NA reported that the HTPM panel met in November with the support of an external adviser to complete the Headteacher's performance management. Current objectives were reviewed and new objectives were set. A review will be carried out at the mid-year point.

## **12. Safeguarding update**

There were no urgent concerns to report.

## **13. Any Other Business**

***RP asked if some guidance on using GHub could be provided?*** It was agreed that this could be included as part of the new Governor induction visits.

**14. Date of next meeting**

Tuesday 18 March 2025 – FGB business meeting

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.10pm.

**Signed..... (Chair)**

**Dated.....**