

BEAUMONT SCHOOL (Company Number 8104190)
MINUTES OF MEETING OF GOVERNORS HELD ON
Thursday 15th January 2015 at 7.00pm

Governors Present:

Alex Hall (“AHa”) (Chair), Alison Wallis (“AWa”), Liz Hitch (“EHi”), Martin Atkinson (“MAAt”), Morag McCrorie (“MMc”), Steve Jump (“SJu”), Chris Aikman (“CAi”), Natalie Moody (“NMo”), Mike Cameron (“MCA”), Karen Trounson (“KTr”), Lianne Sherwood (“LSh”), Gary Kellett (“GKe”), John McAlister (“JMI”), Carolyn Morris (“CMo”), Catherine Hopkin (“CHo”), Natasha Armstrong (“NAr”), Ian Johnston (“IJo”) and David Lee (“DLe”).

In attendance:

Simone Kilka-Green (“SKi”)
 Lewis Curtis-Thomas (“LCa”) (items 1 – 11)

Clerk to the Governing Body
 Chair of the Sixth Form Council

Actions Agreed at the meeting:

	Action	Responsibility	Timescale
1	MCA to send out links to some useful background reading for Governors on becoming an Academy Sponsor.	MCA	ASAP
2	MMc to give a 15 minute training session on the new SEN Code of Practice at the start of the next FGB meeting.	MMc	Next meeting
3	AHa to check with HCC that the costs of any remedial works to the playing fields after their handover to the school would be paid out of FAB project funds.	AHa	ASAP
4	Questions on the SED for the Extended Meeting to be emailed to SKi by Friday 13 th February.	All	By Friday 13 th February
5	DLe to book new Governor training and safeguarding training.	DLe	ASAP

1. Apologies for Absence and welcome to new parent Governors

Apologies for absence had been received from Hannah Henry and Rena Prindiville. Consent was given to their absence. It was noted that the meeting was quorate.

AHa welcomed IJo and DLe, the new parent Governors to the meeting and also LCa, the newly appointed Chair of the Sixth Form Council. All present introduced themselves.

2. Declaration of any conflict of interest foreseen in relation to agenda items and undertaking to declare any that arises in the course of the meeting-

Governors were reminded that anyone with a conflict of interest must declare it, withdraw from the meeting and take no part in any discussion or decision on the matter. None was declared.

3. To receive notification of any other business for item 14

Actions

EHi raised a confidential item.

4. Approval of minutes of the meetings on 4th November and 16th December 2014 and matters arising

The minutes of both meetings were agreed as drafted.

There were no actions arising from the meeting on 16th December, the action points from the meeting on 4th

November were considered as follows:

	Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Update
1	EHi to arrange for Claire Robins of Sir John Lawes to attend an FGB meeting and speak about their experience of sponsoring Samuel Ryder.	EHi	For a future FGB meeting	EHi confirmed that this is being arranged as part of the Extended meeting on 26 th February.
2	MCa to send out links to some useful background reading for Governors on becoming an Academy Sponsor.	MCa	ASAP	This action will be carried forward.
3	Governors to circulate any further comments on the paper on Governor roles and responsibilities by email.	All	ASAP	Completed.
4	Paper on Governor roles and responsibilities and agreement on allocation of roles to be discussed further at the next meeting.	FGB	Next meeting	On agenda.
5	LSh to email those Governors whose exclusions training is due to expire.	LSh	ASAP	Completed, in-house training on exclusions is fixed for 25 th February at 7pm.
6	MMc to give a short training session on the new SEN Code of Practice.	MMc	Date to be fixed	It was agreed that this will be given at the start of the next FGB meeting.
7	LSh to liaise with the new parent Governors when they are appointed on a date and subject for the in-house training session.	LSh	When the new parent Governors are elected.	Completed. The in-house session is fixed for 25 th February at 7pm.

MCa

MMc

5. Committee reports and updates:

a) Resources

Governors had considered the minutes of the last meeting which had been circulated in advance of the meeting. AHa suggested that as the Chair of the Committee, RPr, was absent from the meeting Governors should email any questions to RPr.

b) Community

Governors had considered the minutes of the last meeting which had been circulated in advance of the meeting. AHa suggested that as the Chair of the Committee, HHe, was absent from the meeting Governors should email any questions to HHe.

c) Curriculum Teaching and Learning

Governors had considered the minutes of the last meeting which had been circulated in advance of the meeting. LSh gave an overview of the matters discussed at the meeting and it was noted that the Committee had looked at the expected outcomes for this year and also Department Reviews for Maths and Science, with which the committee was very happy.

The committee will be looking at the strategy for receiving the annual Department reviews, which are now embedded in the school's management processes, but Governors are considering whether their approach to them could be more strategic.

6. Chair's Update including:

AHa thanked all Governors who attended the Sixth Form Open Evening earlier in the week. He reported that there were lots of external attendees compared to last year and the staggered times for the talks together with more areas of the school being opened up for visitors worked very well.

Governors who attended agreed that the event was well organised and the students were very enthusiastic about the school.

- Update on FAB

Governors were already aware that contracts for the sale of the playing fields had been exchanged before Christmas with Charles Church. AHa reported that a meeting had been held with HCC Officers and various of their appointed consultants at the end of last week, to discuss several questions from the school – most notably around timing and budget.

In relation to timing, AHa confirmed that it was established at the meeting that, assuming various hurdles are overcome, it is possible to meet a deadline for handover of the playing fields of mid-July. The key for the school is that this timetable would then enable the school to progress the ground works part of its works during the summer break.

Governors noted that the planning consents which are in place contain complex conditions which require some amendment in order to make them work. HCC are working with consultants on amending those conditions, although this is progressing quite slowly.

In relation to the budget for the school's works, it is anticipated that there will be an underspend on the original budget for the playing fields which HCC are contractually obliged to add to the school's budget for its works. Information is awaited from HCC on the anticipated final costs for the playing fields work and AHa reported that the FAB Group continues to push HCC on that.

Governors recalled that, as discussed at the FGB meeting on 16th December 2014, Governors endorsed the fact that the scheme that will be discussed with St Albans Planning Department is potentially more expensive than the available budget. AHa confirmed that the plans for the scheme will be circulated after the meeting with the Planning Department when their view of the scheme will be clearer. The reports from HCC, following their discussions with St Albans Planning Department, is that they appear to be taking a practical view of the scheme and are supportive of it, and so it is hoped that the planning process will be smooth.

AHa reported that the HCC Head of Estates confirmed at the meeting that HCC is secure with the contractual position with Charles Church and has assured the school that invoices for fees incurred by the school will be paid by HCC when presented, regardless of when the contract with Charles Church actually completes. HCC has also approved the school liaising directly with Charles Church (via Lambert Smith Hampton) on areas of synergy and costs savings for both the school and Charles Church.

It was noted that the new playing fields are estimated to take 20 weeks to complete – this timescale is dependent on the weather conditions, but if the work progresses in March, the July deadline should be achievable.

Governors are aware of the fact that the Academy cannot surrender its lease of the playing fields until it has available equivalent or better playing fields. HCC has to claim a consent under S77 from the DfE for the transfer and AHa explained that there is a risk that, if the handover is in July, and there are severe drought conditions

over the summer break combined with a hosepipe restriction being imposed, then the new playing fields could be damaged and require remedial work before they can be used in September.

AHa advised that HCC's consultants (Peter Jones Associates) have considered this and have confirmed that they consider that it would only take a couple of months for the new playing fields to recover from drought conditions, in which case the benefit of being about to carry out heavy ground works over the summer outweighs this risk. Moreover, the MUGA pitches should already be available for use throughout this period.

Governors asked who is advising on the question of when the playing fields are available for use. AHa confirmed that Peter Jones is HCC's contractor. Governors also asked who would pay the costs of any remedial works. It was explained that this would come out of the school's part of the FAB project funds, but AHa agreed to double check the position with HCC. AHa

Governors agreed that, if possible, a July handover would be preferable so that the school's works can start during the summer break.

AHa invited Governors to attend FAB meetings and/or request copies of the notes of the meetings if they would like further information on the progress of the project.

- Signature of amended Register of Pecuniary (Business) Interests

AHa reported that the amended document which had been circulated before the meeting arose out of a query raised by the Academy's Auditors on the procedures in place to identify connected parties. All Governors were asked to complete the amended form provided at the meeting and return it to SKi at the end of the meeting.

- Volunteers for the cleaning contract panel on 13th February

It was noted that MCA had volunteered to be part of this panel.

- Volunteers for the STASSH complaints panels

Governors had already responded to SKi's email requesting volunteers to sit on complaints panels for other STASSH schools if required. AHa explained that this request arose out of extensive correspondence with the EFA regarding their interpretation of the legislation relating to how complaints about academies are heard.

It was noted that the EFA's interpretation of the legislation requires academies to have at least one person on a complaints panel who is 'independent of the management and running of the school' and the EFA considers that Governors are not independent, and therefore a panel must include at least one independent non-Governor.

EHi has informed STASSH of the EFA's position and it was agreed that a 'pool' of Governors will be set up, across St Albans and Harpenden, in case they are required to be an independent member of a panel. Several Governors have emailed SKi to confirm their willingness to assist other STASSH schools, and AHa asked that any other Governors willing to assist should email SKi. EHi and SKi will maintain a list of Governors and offer assistance as required.

There then followed a discussion which is recorded in Part 2 confidential minutes.

- Plans for the Extended Meeting on 26th February

AHa confirmed that plans for the Extended Meeting are well in hand. As discussed at the last FGB meeting Clare Robbins will attend to speak about sponsoring another school. There will be a discussion about committee structures and also a question time on the Self-Evaluation Document ("SED"). This will be discussed in detail at the next round of committee meetings and questions are to be emailed to SKi by Friday 13th February.

There will also be discussions about the school's ethos and the work of the Ethos and Philosophy Working Party and also the work of the Budgeting and Fundraising Working Party.

The final session of the day will be on the Plan for School Improvement ("PSI").

Those Governors taking part in the 'track a student' initiative for the first part of the meeting have confirmed that to LSh. It was noted that this will start at morning break.

7. Head's update (verbal) including update on admissions for September 2015

EHi handed out a sheet setting out the school's planning and review cycle for the SED and PSI and took Governors through it.

In relation to the SED, as already noted it will be discussed in detail at the next round of committee meetings and questions are to be emailed to SKi by Friday 13th February. *All*

Governors noted the 'Beaumont School – Information for applicants' on the sheet circulated. This provides the context of the school and is also sent out to job applicants.

In relation to admissions for September 2015, EHi reported that the school will go over PAN by 6 students, therefore taking the student numbers to 31 per form. EHi has informed local heads about this. It will only be for one year and EHi confirmed that Beaumont is not the only school to go over PAN this year.

Governors had considered the Hertfordshire Improvement Partner's report (following the meeting in the Autumn Term which was attended by JMI), which had been distributed by email prior to the meeting. It was noted that the review focused on standards and achievement of pupils at the school and was judged to be outstanding. Governors congratulated the school on that.

EHi reported that 2 bids for funding have been submitted to the Government Condition Improvement Fund ("CIF"). One bid was for work to improve the drains and the other was for new science labs. It was noted that there were many applicants and the school is not optimistic that either bid will be successful.

EHi thanked Julie Wells and Lyndsey McCutcheon for all their hard work in submitting the bids. It was noted that several of the consultants on the FAB project helped put together these bids without charge.

Finally EHi reported that Townsend School had its Ofsted inspection in the last week of the Autumn Term. The results are not yet available and she suggested that Governors have a look at the Ofsted website next week.

8. Update on Governor roles and responsibilities and the allocation of roles

This item on the agenda follows on from the detailed papers discussed at the last meeting. It was agreed that this will be considered further at the Extended Meeting.

AHa reported that the current thinking on this is to allocate the roles to Governors on the basis that this will not involve additional meetings with staff (as the additional burden on them was a significant concern discussed at the last meeting). The possibility of moving to two committees from September is a matter to be discussed in detail and in particular the impact of that on the remaining committees.

9. Update from the Ethos and Philosophy Working Party

JMI reported that this working party was set up to try and capture the essence of all the wonderful comments that are made about the school by various people and try to distil what it is that makes the school outstanding.

It was noted that a lot of data has been collated from students, former students, parents of prospective students, staff, former staff and parents. JMI reported that the feedback on all levels has been fantastic and that will be shared with Governors at the Extended Meeting.

Governors asked whether any views from people who are external to the school had been sought. It was noted that views had been sought from some of the parents who visited the school on Secondary Transfer Evening but it was agreed that, other than that, it is difficult to know who else to approach.

Work is now ongoing to try and distil the data down into a document that can be used for a number of purposes

including:

- a) to preserve the corporate memory of the school;
- b) to reinforce the school’s communications; and
- c) to help the school in making strategic decisions.

It was noted that, if the document can be used for these purposes, then it will have been a very useful exercise. JMI thanked everyone that had assisted with this so far and Governors looked forward to the further discussion at the Extended Meeting.

10. Update from the Budgeting and Fundraising Working Party

As MCa, the chair of this working party was not at its last meeting, EHi reported that the focus of the last meeting of this Working Party was on fundraising for the school. Many potential fundraising ideas were discussed; the issue identified is in applying the school’s limited resources to the right initiatives.

Governors asked for a flavour of those ideas and EHi explained that areas being explored are developing the school’s alumni network, asking parents for a voluntary contribution (it was noted that, although this would need to be carefully thought through and presented to parents, this is successfully used in other local schools and raises significant sums of money for those schools), starting a fundraising campaign (for example the school will be 80 years old in 2018) and there is also the possibility of approaching local businesses (of which there are many in the area) for support.

EHi reported that an area that the school needs to develop is the letting of the facilities. As part of the FAB project, the school has decided to commission a report from a specialist in the sports market, who will look at the facilities that are available locally and seek to establish whether there are any gaps in the market that the school could look to fill.

11. Governor Development Co-ordinator Update

LSh reported that all Governors are either already trained or booked onto exclusions training – the in-house training session on exclusions is fixed for 25th February at 7pm.

IJo is booked to attend new Governor training and safeguarding training, DLe agreed to book those as soon as he is able. *DLe*

12. To receive any other business as notified in item 3

LCa left the meeting – Governors thanked him for attending.

EHi raised several items which are recorded in Part 2 Confidential Minutes.

- 13. Date of next meetings:**
In house Governor training session – Exclusions – Wednesday 25th February – 7 - 9pm.
Extended Meeting – Thursday 26th February 10am – 6.30pm
FGB – Wednesday 18th March 7pm

There being no further business AHa declared the meeting closed at 8.20pm.

Signed:
Chair of Governors

Dated:.....