

**BEAUMONT SCHOOL (Company Number 8104190)**  
**MINUTES OF MEETING OF GOVERNORS HELD ON**  
**Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2014 at 7.00pm**

**Governors Present:**

Alex Hall (“AHa”) (Chair), Alison Wallis (“AWa”), Liz Hitch (“EHi”), John McAlister (“JMI”), Steve Jump (“SJU”), Mike Cameron (“MCA”), Morag McCrorie (“MMc”), Martin Atkinson (“MAT”), Chris Aikman (“CAi”), Karen Trounson (“KTr”), Catherine Hopkin (“CMo”), Kevin Doyle (“KDo”), Lisanne Sherwood (“LSH”), Hannah Henry (“HHe”), Gary Kellett (“GKe”), Josephine Chu (“JCh”) and Carolyn Morris (“CMo”)

**In attendance:**

Simone Kilka-Green (“SKi”)  
 Cerys Falvey (“CFa”)

Clerk to the Governing Body  
 Chair of Sixth Form Council

**Actions Agreed at the meeting:**

	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
1	Resources Committee to review the terms of reference for the FAB group as the project moves to the next phases and make recommendations to the next FGB meeting.	Resources Committee	Next Meeting
2	Governors to review their biography on the school website and let SKi know if they would like to make any changes to it.	All	ASAP
3	EHi to request a copy of Sandringham School’s admissions group’s minutes of meetings.	EHi	ASAP
4	EHi to request that HCC model the impact on Beaumont of the changes to Sandringham School’s admissions rules.	EHi	ASAP
5	EHi and AHa to prepare a draft letter objecting to the changes to Sandringham School’s admissions rules and circulate it to the Admissions Group for comments.	EHi/AHa	ASAP

**1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence had been received from Rena Prindiville, Natalie Moody and Natasha Armstrong. Consent was given to their absence. It was noted that the meeting was quorate.

Governors welcomed the newly elected Chair of the Sixth Form Council, Cerys Falvey, to her first FGB meeting.

AHa informed Governors of the sad death of Harriet Rowlands, a former drama teacher at the school who retired in July last year and the wife of a former long-standing Governor. The school has contributed to an article about her for the Herts Advertiser and a sympathy card was passed around the meeting for Governors to sign.

- 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 11

*Actions*

No items were raised.

### 4. Approval of minutes of the meetings on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2013 (including Part 2 Minutes) and matters arising and meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> December

The minutes and Part 2 Minutes of the meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2013 were agreed as drafted. The minutes of the meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2013 were also agreed as drafted.

The action points from the meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2013 were considered as follows:

	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Update</b>
1	KTr and JCh to book onto exclusions training as soon as convenient.	KTr and JCh	ASAP	Completed.
2	RPr, MCa, AWa, AHa and KDo to meet to feedback on the 'dry-run' Ofsted Governor meeting and prepare for the real inspection.	RPr, MCa, AWa, AHa and KDo	ASAP	Completed, the Governors have met and allocated the areas of responsibility between them.
3	EHi to send the list of Governor Links to the Heads of Subjects.	EHi	ASAP	Completed.
4	The 'Key points from the Heads of Subjects' within the Examinations Results 2013 report to be discussed by the relevant Link Governors either with the Heads of Subjects or with MAT.	All	ASAP	Ongoing.
5	CTL Committee to discuss the English Baccalaureate and whether to make either History or Geography compulsory subjects at GCSE.	CTL	ASAP	Completed. See item 6 c) below.
6	AHa to send a note to all staff on behalf of the Governing Body congratulating the staff on the fantastic results.	AHa	ASAP	Completed.
7	LSh to chase up the Governors who have yet to attend safeguarding training and those Governors who need to renew their exclusions training.	LSh	ASAP	Completed. See item 10 below.

### 5. Sixth Form Update

Governors thanked CFa for attending the meeting. She informed Governors that, as well as having just been elected as Chair of the Sixth Form Council, she is also the Chair of the St Albans Youth Council ("SAYC"). The focus for SAYC is on mental health issues and it produced a report last year following 3 teenage suicides which was discussed at the House of Lords.

As a result of that, SAYC received a £15,000 grant to run a project. Work is ongoing on a further report which involves interviewing 3000 students. The aim is to improve the provision for and awareness of mental health issues.

Governors asked what involvement the school had in that report and it was noted that it was limited as CFa was not involved at the time. Moving forward the school will be more involved.

CFa informed Governors that it is not yet clear who will take up the position of Vice-Chair of the Sixth Form Council. The first meeting, when this will be discussed, is next week.

Governors asked about the impact on Sixth Form students of the work to extend the common room and library. CFa stated that, in her view, the work has been well managed by the school and the impact has not been too significant. Students in Years 12 and 13 have been separated into different rooms (rather than mixing) and further rooms have been provided for quiet study.

Governors thanked CFa for attending.

## **6. Committee reports and updates:**

### **A) Resources**

Governors had considered the minutes of the last Resources Committee meeting, which had been circulated before this meeting.

It was noted that the main business of the last meeting was the work to finalise the accounts for filing by the deadline of 31<sup>st</sup> December and also overseeing the work on the Sixth Form extension and library.

### **B) Community (note the approval of the Child Protection Policy)**

Governors had considered the minutes of the last Community Committee meeting, which had been circulated before this meeting.

KDo reported that the main items of business were the various annual checkpoints considered by the committee in areas such as Pupil Premium and Child Protection, including the review of the Child Protection Policy which it was noted was approved at the last meeting.

### **C) Curriculum Teaching and Learning**

Governors had considered the minutes of the last Curriculum, Teaching and Learning committee meeting, which had been circulated before this meeting.

AWa reported that, following a delegated action from the FGB, the committee looked in detail at the issue of the English Baccalaureate and the impact on the league table entries for the school if it does not require students to take either History or Geography at GCSE.

The conclusion of the Committee was that the school should consider putting in place a statement of values to avoid it feeling obliged to follow every Government initiative. The agreed course of action was to wait until after the expected Ofsted inspection and then address this. In the meantime, the school will encourage (but not require) all students to take either or both History or Geography and will give the students and parents appropriate advice about facilitating subjects.

Governors noted that requiring students to take EBacc subjects would improve the school's position on the league tables, but is not necessarily in the best interests of the students educationally. It was noted that some other schools have reduced student choice on their option subjects and have made these subjects compulsory.

It was agreed that a debate about a statement of principle for the school could feed into the Governors' Extended Meeting in February. It was also agreed that taking this position is a very confident and bold move for the school. There are also other areas to be considered such as the new measure of Progress 8 which does not include Btec Science which is the best option for several students. If Btec Science is not included, then it would mean that those students on the course would not be taking 8 subjects that count

towards this measure. There is no impact on the students of these measures; the impact is on the school and how it compares to other schools (both locally and nationally) who are taking different decisions for their students.

With a potential conflict between what is best for the students and what is best for the school, the school needs to be clear about what decisions it is making and why and then take steps to make public the reasons for the decisions and their impact.

Governors agreed that the aim of the school is to do its best for the students. It is a strength of the school that it offers students 4 options at GCSE and the school should not be defensive about that. It was noted that in the recently published updated Ofsted framework, there is a focus on extra-curricular activities and breadth of learning producing more rounded students. There is therefore a possible conflict between Ofsted's view of an excellent education and the Government's own assessment and publishing of results in league tables.

## **7. Chair's Update including:**

AHa reported that last term there were some excellent school events including the awards evenings, *A Christmas Carol*, and the Carol Service. He thanked staff for all their hard work.

AHa also thanked staff for all their work on the Sixth Form Evening last week. It was very well attended and there was much positive feedback. Governors who attended the Evening agreed that the performance of the staff and students was excellent.

AHa reported that this year 4 students have received Oxbridge offers out of 11 who applied. It was agreed that this is a fantastic achievement.

AHa informed Governors that there is a DfE consultation ongoing about whether there should be a skills requirement for school Governors. If Governors wish to participate in this they should go to the consultation on the DfE website.

AHa noted that (as mentioned earlier) Ofsted have produced updated framework and inspection documentation. The amendments are not significant and the school is very well positioned in relation to the areas that have changed.

### **a) Update on FAB and discussion of the ongoing authority to the FAB Group**

AHa confirmed that (as reported by email before Christmas) the school has completed the Development Agreement with Herts County Council ("HCC") on 23<sup>rd</sup> December. This means that HCC are now committed to construct the new playing fields and give the school the agreed sums for the Phase 2 and 3 works. There is also a dedicated FAB page on the school's website.

AHa also reported that HCC has now completed its purchase of the neighbouring land from London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. Diggers have gone onto the land to be used as the replacement playing fields to start clearance work.

Governors noted that the 'For Sale' sign has now been erected on the existing playing fields and HCC have engaged agents to market and sell the land. It is hoped that the terms for the sale will be agreed by May/June with the deadline for sealed bids being in February. AHa stated that he will produce an updated milestones document for the next FGB meeting but that the anticipated timescales are:

July 2014 – work to commence on the replacement playing fields

Sept 2015 – completion of the replacement playing fields and work to commence on the sports hall, new access and additional accommodation

Sept 2016 – completion of the sports hall, new access and additional accommodation

It was noted that the nature and extent of the works to be carried out at the school will depend upon the funds received from the sale of the land.

AHa reported that HCC are working on the appointment of a consultant to renew the current outline planning consent and the FAB group is pressing on with that and working on the appointment of a Project Manager for the Phase 2 and 3 work.

Governors asked about the inclusion of FAB related risks within the Risk Register approved in December. AHa reported that Lyndsey McCutcheon (who wrote the Risk Register and Risk Management Policy) has taken on the role of Facilities Manager working with Ed Jones. She will be closely involved with the FAB project and will therefore include FAB risks within the Register.

Governors discussed the need to review the terms of reference for the FAB group as the project moves to the next phases. It was agreed that this will be reviewed by the Resources Committee who will report back to the next FGB meeting with their recommendations.

*Resources  
Committee*

Governors agreed that the signing of the Development Agreement is a major milestone on the project and thanked all members of the FAB group for all their work on the project and in particular AHa and SKi for their work on the legal documentation. It was noted that working closely with the school's leadership team on this project has strengthened the relationship with Governors.

**b) Discussion of Governor information on the school's website**

AHa informed Governors of a recent request made by a parent for contact details for all Governors.

It was noted that the request was refused and personal details will never be released without Governors' explicit agreement. This led to a review of the information about individual Governors which is on the website, much of this is personal and could potentially lead to addresses being identified.

It was agreed that parents should be informed about who the Governors of the school are. AHa asked that Governors review their biography on the website and let SKi know if they would like to make any changes to it.

*All*

**c) Review of the publishing of Governing Body Minutes on the school's website**

AHa reported that a year ago it was agreed that the decision to make available Part 1 Governing Body minutes on the school website would be reviewed after a year. It was noted that the website includes a statement that the minutes of the committee meetings are available upon request from SKi as Clerk to the Governors.

SKi confirmed that no requests for minutes of committee meetings have been received by her.

It was agreed that the current position achieves the correct balance and shall be continued.

A Governor queried why minutes name Governors who are also members of the Leadership Team but not other Governors. SKi confirmed that this protocol was adopted upon advice from County that, when information is being provided to Governors upon which they rely in making decisions and considering papers, it is appropriate to name the source of that information within the minutes, even if the person is attending the meeting in their capacity as a staff Governor. An alternative would be for the staff member's position and not name to be stated, but that would also identify them in any event.

**d) Agenda for the Extended Governors meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> February**

AHa explained to Governors the planned agenda for the Extended Meeting on the 12<sup>th</sup> February. It was

noted that the 'track a student' offering from 10am is optional for Governors but would be a very good way of learning about the everyday life of the school from a student's perspective.

Governors noted that the intention is to send out the Self-Evaluation Documents ("SED") on 3<sup>rd</sup> February and Governors will be asked to send by email 3 questions each on the SED in advance of the Extended Meeting to AHa and SKi. Governors should review the relevant part of the SED depending upon which committee they sit on; if they are on more than one committee then Governors can choose which part of the SED to review.

From those questions, a list of questions will be produced for consideration by the LT in advance and then discussion at the meeting. It was noted that there is likely to be overlap between Governors' questions.

In relation to the strategy part of the Extended meeting, AHa reported that he has prepared a paper to be considered by the Committees at their next meetings with topics to be discussed. This paper is not intended to be prescriptive but is to suggest potential areas for discussion.

The intention is that the Extended meeting will end at 6.30pm and then Governors can stay for the Gym and Dance Display starting at 7pm if they wish.

Finally, AHa reported that the Pay Group has recently agreed an increase to the school's Individual School Range ("ISR"). The reasons for the decision are confidential but have been documented by the Pay Group. Governors who want more information should contact AHa.

## **8. Head's Update**

EHi noted that many areas she intended to raise had already been covered by AHa in item 7 above.

EHi reported the following:

- There have been many successful school events last term and she thanked Governors for their support.
- The school was fortunately able to release many staff to attend the funeral of Harriet Rowlands which was held today. It was noted that there will be an event sometime in the Spring to celebrate her life, at which students and staff will be able to participate.
- There is lots of building work ongoing at the school including the Sixth Form and Library extension, work to repair leaking flat roofs etc.
- The FAB project is gathering pace with the erection of the 'For Sale' sign on the field and diggers going onto the neighbouring land to start clearance work.
- Lyndsey McCutcheon has been engaged as the new Facilities Manager ready for when Ed Jones retires in the summer. Their work is overlapping now and Lyndsey is working on FAB and the appointment of the Project Manager for Phases 2 and 3. The Project Manager is necessary to oversee the FAB project as it is a huge project for the school and it should not distract the Leadership Team from their focus on the school.
- The school is continuing to support Townsend School. EHi thanked Governors for allowing Townsend Governors to attend committee meetings. The support process has been beneficial for both schools.
- As already noted, there have been changes to the Ofsted framework and inspection schedule. The changes to the framework are not significant. The changes to the inspection handbook now include a focus on extra-curricular and volunteer work and also a culture of high expectations which the school already has. Work is underway to collate and audit the details of the volunteer work; there is lots of it and it is just a case of recording all there is.
- There are also some changes by Ofsted in relation to data which do not really affect the school. The biggest change to the subsidiary guidance is that there is now a section on teaching where

there was nothing previously. The guidance is that inspectors should not make a judgement about the method of teaching and should instead consider whether the lesson is being taught well.

- In relation to staffing EHi always asks staff at this time of year whether they are thinking of looking for new posts. This is not viewed negatively and the information helps the school to plan for staffing for next year. There will shortly be some teaching posts advertised and Governors will be asked to be involved in any posts which include a management responsibility.

## **9. Update from the Admissions Group**

EHi reported that the Admissions Group have been involved in 2 matters as follows:

### **1) Changes to Rule 7**

EHi reported that this change was prompted by County contacting all schools for whom they deal with admissions to ask them to remove Rule 6 (Rule 7 at Beaumont due to the inclusion of the Children of Staff Rule) from their admissions rules.

The Rule relates to children outside a priority area for whom the school is their nearest school. Admissions at Beaumont have never reached this Rule, the school is oversubscribed and the PAN is filled by earlier rules.

HCC indicated that to retain the rule would cost more for HCC to administer the school's admissions so the Admissions Group agreed to consult on the removal of the rule. That consultation is ongoing for 8 weeks from early January and has been sent to parents and put on the school website. No significant comments are expected from that consultation

### **2) Responding to consultation from Sandringham School on changes to their admissions rules**

The school has been contacted by Sandringham School as part of its consultation on proposed changes to its admissions rules. The change was prompted by a shortage of secondary school places in Wheathampstead. HCC approached Sandringham to ask them to take an additional form of entry from September 2014 and increase its Pupil Admission Number ("PAN") permanently from 180 to 210.

The proposals are:

- a) to introduce a priority area within Sandringham School's admissions rules for children in Wheathampstead for up to 25 children selected on a random allocation basis within Wheathampstead; and
- b) to change the existing Rule 6 which is currently the child's nearest school to instead be based on distance to the school.

It was noted that Beaumont's existing admissions rules are based on the nearest school (as are most local schools). This means that although there are no 'catchment areas' as such for schools, the rule does create clear lines between schools, ensuring that children are allocated their nearest school.

The effect of a change to distance would mean that the 'catchment' for Sandringham would become more of a donut shape around Sandringham.

When questioned, the reason put forward by Sandringham's Headteacher for the Rule 6 change (which has nothing to do with the Wheathampstead issue) is that the change would reduce the impact of the increase in its PAN on Townsend School (as an undersubscribed school). Townsend is a faith school and has different admissions rules in any event. The effect however of the change is that it would have an impact on Beaumont School as the two schools' 'catchments' would overlap, which would mean that children in some areas could have the choice of either Beaumont School or Sandringham School and children in other areas could have neither.

EHi reported that the admissions group looked at the position if Beaumont School were also to change to a distance rule but agreed not to do so for various reasons, including the impact on our traditional 'catchment area' and the impact on the Samuel Ryder Academy.

The Admissions Group agreed that a response should be sent to the consultation by EHi and AHa jointly, setting out the concern that the overall effect of the increase in the PAN to 30, the capping of the numbers of children taken from Wheathampstead to 25 (including siblings who would be admitted under the siblings rule anyway) and the change to distance will mean that there will be an impact on Beaumont's admissions.

Governors noted that, notwithstanding the impact of the proposed changes and the questionable reasons given for them, the proposed changes are not in breach of the Admissions Code and therefore could be made legally. HCC is unlikely to object to changes which are compliant with the Admissions Code.

Governors agreed that EHi and AHa's response to the consultation should argue that all 30 of the increased PAN should come from Wheathampstead, as that is the ostensible reason for the increase to the PAN. It was also agreed that a request will be made for a copy of Sandringham School's admissions group's minutes of meetings so that the reasons for the proposals can be considered. These should be publicly available as Governors' minutes.

*EHi*

It was also agreed that a request will be made to HCC to model the impact on Beaumont School of the changes to the admissions rules so that an assessment can be made of the likely effect on the school and also whether there could be any 'black holes' created of areas where children could find themselves missing out on both schools.

*EHi*

Governors were also very concerned about the resulting confusion for parents caused by neighbouring schools having different admissions rules.

It was agreed that EHi and AHa will prepare a draft letter and circulate it to the Admissions Group for comments.

*EHi/AHa*

**10. Governor Development Co-ordinator Update – training session 3<sup>rd</sup> February 7pm**

LSH confirmed that all Governors have either attended or have booked Safeguarding and Exclusions training, AHa thanked Governors for that. It was noted that the session on Understanding Assessment Data is booked for Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> February at 7pm and will be held after the Community Committee meeting which has been moved to 6pm.

**11. To receive any other business as notified in item 3**

No further business was raised.

- 12. Date of next meeting:**  
**Training session – Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> February at 7pm**  
**Governors Extended Meeting – Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> February at 3pm**  
**FGB - Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> March 2014 7pm**

There being no further business AHa declared the meeting closed at 20.45pm.

Signed: .....  
Chair of Governors

Dated:.....