



Full Governing Board – Minutes

Meeting Date: Thursday 9 July 2020

Meeting Venue: Via Zoom

Meeting Time: 5:15pm

Governors: Julian Mace, *(JM)*, Chair

Paul Amos, *(PA)*

Louise Baxter, *(LB)*

Marilyn Benzing, *(MB)*

Selene Edwards, *(SE)*

Glyn Freeman, *(GF)*

Sara McKenna, *(SM)*

Gabrielle Mace, *(GM)*

Joel Newman, *(JN)*

Trevor Scott, *(TS)*

Joyce Swann, *(JS)*

Martyn Ashley Taylor, *(MT)*

Ex officio: Stuart Reeves, *(SRv)*, Headteacher

Also in attendance: Catherine Geldard, *(HOP)*, Head of Primary

Jemma Graffham, *(DSF)*, Director of Sixth Form

Janice Logan, *(DFA)*, Director of Finance & Administration

Danny Simmonds, *(AHT-B&A)*, Assistant HT - Behaviour & Attendance

James Towner, *(AHT-A&C)*, Assistant HT - Assessment & Curriculum

Clerk to Governors: Steve Quayle, *(SQ)*

Apologies: Alison Allart, *(AA)*

Absent: Matt West, *(MW)*

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Item	Discussion	Action
1.	<p><u>Welcome and apologies for absence</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chair welcomed Governors to the meeting and accepted apologies from AA. Chair welcomed SRv back from his non-Covid sickness at the last meeting. 	
2.	<p><u>Declarations of Interests</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governors gave various declarations in respect of their children who attend the school. 	
3.	<p><u>Minutes of previous Governing Board Meetings</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governors agreed the Minutes as an accurate record of the 26 May EGM, and they were signed <i>virtually</i> by the Chair. Governors agreed the Minutes as an accurate record of the 4 June FGB, and they were signed <i>virtually</i> by the Chair. Governors agreed the Minutes as an accurate record of the 28 April Enterprise Committee, and they were signed <i>virtually</i> the Chair. Chair explained that the minutes from the 19 May Education Committee are delayed due to an ICT issue, but these will be presented and signed off at the next available FGB. SQ will ask for this to be noted on the school's website so it does not appear we have forgotten to upload them. <u>Governors discussed</u> who should sign off Committee meeting minutes. It was agreed the Committee can sign them off, but the FGB must ratify them before they can be published. <u>Governors suggested</u> we should publish dates of forthcoming meetings on the website so it is clear when minutes should be expected to be published – SQ to liaise with the SRV's Exec Asst about this. <u>Chair added</u> there will be several updates regarding Governance on the school's website by the end of the school year. 	<p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk Chair</p>
4.	<p><u>Items not already on the agenda</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> None forthcoming 	
5.	<p><u>Chair's Correspondence</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> None received 	
6.	<p><u>Governance Matters</u></p> <p><u>Health & Safety (H&S)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Chair advised</u> that GF has volunteered to become the H&S Lead Governor, but Governors need clarity on what that actually means and what Governors' responsibilities are in relation to H&S. A policy document has now been circulated to Governors. <u>Chair suggested</u> a meeting at the school between GF and DFA as an introductory meeting and take the matter forwards from there. Ideally there should be 2 or 3 meetings per year. <u>Chair asked</u> DFA to organise a date for this meeting. <p><u>Risk Register</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DFA explained Governors have looked at this before, but the previous version was considered not detailed enough by a recent audit. As a result, she has come up with a new version which has been recommended by The Key. <u>Chair added</u> that Governors are only reviewing the format tonight, not the content. <u>Chair asked</u> how DFA establishes the level of risk for each item. <u>Governors said</u> this is routinely calculated as probability versus risk which then produces a score. DFA added the crux is about what control measures are put in place to mitigate the risk. <u>Chair asked</u> if the newly proposed format is suitable for our insurers, auditors, etc. DFA said every organisation has a different model format but this one has been recommended by The Key. 	<p>DFA</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governors asked if the school has a data manager – the postholder is line managed by AHT-A&C. • Chair said he has no concerns about the format as it has come from The Key and asked Governors for their views. Governors agreed they were happy with the format. • Governors asked about their responsibilities for this. DFA said there should be a Governance page which is Governor’s responsibility. Chair assigned oversight of this to the Enterprise Committee. • GF said the Lead Governor role is not to have any input into the document unless there is something glaringly wrong. Chair agreed it is the SLT’s responsibility, except for the Governance risk page. • DFA said she needs to agree on a draft this year and so SLT will work on this and it will be presented to the Enterprise Committee. Chair said Governors will work up their section. • Chair said Governors will want to see a populated version at the next Enterprise Committee. SRv said this needs to be populated 3 times a year and be reviewed by the H&S Governor before going to the Committee for discussion. He will put this into the annual planner for next school year. • Governors pointed out the next Enterprise Committee is in December – SRv said it will be ready for discussion at the December meeting. • Governors asked if this is an additional role as part of the H&S Governor, or a separate role. Chair said it is not all H&S-centric but it is linked. GF said he has experience of risk registers, so it makes sense for him to oversee it. Governors said they would like it listed as a separate role even if it is overseen by the same person. Chair will speak with GF about this offline. 	<p>Chair</p> <p>SRv SRv</p> <p>Chair/GF</p>
9.	<p>Head Teacher’s Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AHT-A&C, on behalf of SRv, talked Governors through the Head Teacher’s report. <p>Covid-19</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The situation has changed weekly over the last 2 months, with the total number of attending students at around 400, which is one third of those on roll. They are not all in at the same time. • On site this has been very successful, with all factors put into place having worked well, which has contributed to staff and students feeling safe on site. • The home learning provision has been taking place concurrently. The school has noticed an uplift in concerns reported and although learning is an important factor, safeguarding comes first. • Going forwards in September there are lots of unknowns until the Government’s clarification is forthcoming. The SLT are meeting on 11 August to agree and then publish to staff and parents by 14 August to give enough time for parents to make plans. They want as many students back on site as possible if it’s safe to do so. • The timetable is close to being completed and AHT-A&C is prepared to have to be adaptive. • The summer term transition has been very difficult, and this is unsettling for students. As a school we have an advantage for those students who are coming up from Primary phase, but not all our intake has this level of contact as they are coming from other schools. Transition videos have been produced to support these students. • It is a similar situation for Year 11s going into the Sixth Form and so there will be an induction into the school for external students. The school will also be looking to make sure all students are supported on GCSE results day on 20 August. <p>School Development Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The last 3 months have disrupted the normal process but the SLT still have an agenda of areas to focus on which they will continue with and then adapt it next year. • AHT-A&C advised the virtual learning environment and technology are going to need to be adapted operationally. They will be utilising time in September to further train staff in case we need to go into lockdown again. • Chair said he would like to organise an Extra Governors Meeting for 20 August. This will be a brief meeting with an update on what is happening with the reopening, and updates on exam results. • Chair asked how many people have watched the Year 6 video – AHT-B&A advised he does not know but he knows it has been seen by all the primary schools. 	

- **Governors asked** if families are being engaged with as they normally would be. AHT-B&A said there has been constant contact with primary schools and parents. Tutors are contacting their students.
- **Governors said** it is good to hear staff will be doing extra IT training. SRv said he is not convinced all students were fully participating with their online lessons and there will be a significant minority who have not engaged at all.
- **Chair said** he had heard from parents of other schools praising their online teaching and asking why Gildredge House are not doing the same. SRv acknowledged.
- **Governors said** in the Eastbourne area there is a slight Covid increase compared to other areas, so another lockdown is not completely unlikely, and we need to be prepared for that. **Chair said** the Government want schools to be providing online tuition in preparedness for another lockdown.
- SRv said the school's ICT is not up to required standards, but this is due to previous financial concerns and his plan is to get back on track with ICT once the financial pressure has lifted after December. He will bring the ICT strategy back onto the agenda earlier than planned.
- SRv added the future of learning will have some level of online learning within the next 5-10 years.
- **Governors said** they understood the lack of live teaching was a safeguarding issue. AHT-A&C said it was both that and a lack of accessibility for some students. The school looked at external ICT provision and managed to acquire 6 laptops. Staff training was the other issue which was dealt with at the INSET day so staff can now communicate electronically.
- **Governors asked** if we are ready to proceed if we have another lockdown. AHT-A&C said the school could react very quickly next time.

Data

- AHT-A&C explained progress data has been very difficult to collect since March. He has shared updates with students advising them where they are to try to encourage those who need to do more.
- He agrees the school needs to assess the data as soon as students come back, but doing it online would make it inconsistent and unreliable.
- All the qualification data was sent through and this has shown an uplift. Previously SLT were anticipating a Progress 8 score just into positive, but the new scores have shown a 0.5 positive.
- AHT-A&C counselled that these are teacher predicted results and obviously staff are loathe to predict failure, even though students do sometimes fail. Also, teachers like to give students the benefit of the doubt. Ofqual have suggested all proposed grades could be reduced by up to 1 third. The school used FFT to validate some of the scores.
- For A-levels the picture is very similar although not as high as there are fewer students so there is a closer understanding of each student's individual anticipate grades.

Sixth Form

- This year the school has had to change its approach but the number that have applied is very positive and they all fit within the subjects the school are offering, unlike in the past. This year they have published the subjects sooner. Obviously, the pandemic may change perceptions and it is difficult to predict what will happen, so they won't know numbers until September.
- The SLT will take the opportunity on GCSE results day to establish the next steps for each student and encourage them to make the further commitment to our sixth form, and they will clarify with those who have committed to check they are still planning to come.
- AHT-A&C said the work of the Sixth Form team has meant the school is in a much stronger position than previously. **Governors commented** on the unusually high number of applicants from outside Eastbourne and asked if Gildredge House is their first choice. DSF said the new admissions process is much more robust. She said she was really pleased there were applicants from so many schools, which shows the promotional work is working.
- **Governors said** we should be mindful that some of these students might not come because of lack of ability to travel due to Covid. DSF said she has had 2 more applications this week where travel is a key aspect having applied elsewhere previously.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governors asked about the SLT's confidence of achieving 56 applicants, and then 70 the following year. DSF is confident of achieving this as the feedback suggests this trajectory will continue. • Governors asked about how the SLT feel about only 61 internal students applying for Sixth Form. DSF said a lot of the year group are going on to study level 2 courses with quite a lot of vocational students in the group. Also, the last few years have shown a positive year on year increase in GH student applicants. AHT-A&C added the school can offer only a restricted number of subjects. DSF said she is confident there are not many students leaving to do something they could do here. SRv also commented that only about 75% of students will get the grades that the school would require of them for Sixth Form entry. • Chair thanked DSF for her work. 	
11.	<p>Committee Updates</p> <p>Enterprise Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No update as no meeting since last FGB. <p>Education Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No update as no meeting since last FGB. However, Chair of Education Committee feels like Governors should be doing some extra visits in September around safeguarding. She asked if the school are planning on doing anything around parent surveys and the impact of school learning so we can learn lessons for another possible lockdown. SRv confirmed the school should gather this information. He also confirmed the new SENDCo will be attending the Education Committee. <p>Admissions Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair of Admissions Committee advised there have been a small number of appeals which have now all been completed. One appeal was upheld 	
12.	<p>Finance</p> <p>3-year budget</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair explained he understands the ESFA have provided special guidance this year and asked DFA to explain the situation to Governors. • DFA said the 3-year plan is very difficult to forecast in the circumstances. She has prepared a standstill budget. DFA talked Governors through the areas of finance that might change. • Chair said one of key points is that we will have paid back our debt to ESFA by end of this December. DFA added we will have paid back our PNA too so we will be back in control of our own destiny. Chair said this will allow us more flexibility for the next few years. • Governors commented that the staff costs seem to be creeping up from 81% to 83% of income and asked if this is sustainable alongside a spend per pupil figure which is dropping. DFA said she has included expected staff inflation but has not included the increase in per pupil funding. • SRv said it is merely a warning sign that if we carry on the KPIs are going in the wrong direction. • Governors said for them to be able to scrutinise the plan it is very difficult to do this without the correct information, so they are not sure what Governors can do with this set of data. DFA said she did not prepare this with the intention of it being scrutinised but to give an example. • Chair asked what accuracy of forecasting the ESFA expect. DFA said they do not expect accuracy this year under the circumstances. • Governors asked about ICT support costs and whether these need to be increased. DFA said the SLT are looking at a new ICT strategy and would prioritise what they think is key investment so money might need to be cut elsewhere. • Governors asked for clarity about the next steps as there seems to be a lot of work needed for the budget and asked if there is a planned timeline. Governors added they would like just one version incorporating DFA and SLT's viewpoints and asked if this will come to the next Enterprise Committee. DFA said yes as by then she will have a better idea of the situation. 	DFA

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SRv said it is quite difficult for Governors to assess the accuracy of the budget at the moment but there are trends to be aware of, such as the possibility for staffing costs increasing and the school needs to spend more money on ICT. • Governors said they understand it is difficult to obtain clarity at this time but they would like to see what the assumptions are so they can have a discussion around these assumptions. Governors added it would be helpful to understand the assumptions across all the budget lines with a narrative. • Chair asked if this had been benchmarked with other schools. DFA said none of them are doing this at the moment because of lockdown. • Chair asked about dates for submission to the ESFA and DFA said the 3-year plan is not going to the ESFA as they are not expecting it, just the forecast. 	
13.	<p>Monitoring</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair asked Governors for comments on Assessment & Data Monitoring visit – none forthcoming. 	
14.	<p>SEND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DSF said the SLT have made good progress on the action plan despite Covid, and this has already been shared with the incoming SENDCo, who is coming in next week. • Governors asked how they can be assured SEN students will be looked after with Covid restrictions in place, for example without Tree House as it will not comply with social distancing rules. DSF said this depends on how big student bubbles can be, so they will be better informed once they know the new rules. She said they may need to focus on small groups. • DSF added that traffic in Oasis may need to be looked at so bubbles can be kept separate. It will be about staff going out rather than students coming together for group work or tailored lessons. She added that through the pandemic the Secondary TAs have been phenomenal at supporting SEND students through the lockdown. • DSF said the school has a high number of SEND students and those students who have been home working throughout have benefitted from a great deal of effort from the SEND staff. • Governors asked if there is anything that needs to be done now that will be too late to do in August. DSF said this would be a case of going back through student's EHCPs and seeing what they need individually. Some students are receiving more support than their EHCP says they need but we are not going to know what level of support they truly need until they are back in September. • Governors asked if there is a need to increase SEND staff; DSF said not at this stage. The new SENDCo is going to redeploy staff and the interactions students have with staff but there is going to be a need for upskilling staff to meet the needs of the students and AHT-A&C has already mapped out training plans for this going forwards. • SRv said the new SENDCo's focus is about upskilling and culture shift. Then after a while he needs to tell us if the staffing structure is correct and if not what we need to do to correct it. • Governors asked if we now have fewer students wrongly categorised. DSF said there is a document which was pulled together regarding Child Protection, SEND and Behaviour and this looked at which area each student should be; however, there will have been changes through the lockdown, so the document needs to be reviewed as the continuum of needs are monitored once students are back. • DSF said there are going to have to be lots of conversations in September to see where students are now. There may be some who were not a cause for concern previously, but it will be made accurate again ASAP. AHT-B&A said some students have thrived through lockdown while others have had a negative experience. • Chair said Governors are aware of the need for work in this area and the SENDCo has the full support of the Board. DSF said she has been really pleased to cover this area temporarily. 	
	<p>Safeguarding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair said he has been working on an improved monitoring format for safeguarding going forwards. 	

