

# WATERGATE SCHOOL

## GOVERNING BODY

### MINUTES

Of a meeting of the Governing Body held on  
Thursday, 6 October 2016 at 6:00 p.m.

#### Present

Ms Jeannette Bell		Ms R Elliott	Chair
Mrs J Evans		Cllr C Handley	
Mr D Horton		Cllr J Paschoud	
Ms A Ni Ruairc	Headteacher	Ms J Taylor	
Mrs H Webb		Mr G Whipp	

#### Also in Attendance:

Mr W Wood	Observer / potential co-opted governor
Mrs C Munday	Clerk to Governors

#### 1. PROCEDURAL ITEMS

##### 1.1 Welcome / Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Ms Minto and from Miss Paterson. Discussion regarding these apologies is recorded in the confidential minutes.

##### 1.2 Order of Business

The agenda was confirmed.

##### 1.3 Election of Chair and Vice Chair

(The Clerk took the Chair for this item)

###### *Election of Chair*

One nomination was received for Ms Elliott, which was seconded. Cllr Handley did not wish to stand for re-election, and there were no further nominations. Ms Elliott withdrew from the meeting and a vote was taken by secret ballot. It was

**RESOLVED** that Ms Elliott be elected to serve as Chair for a term of one year, expiring at the first meeting of the governing body in the 2017/18 academic year.

(Ms Elliott rejoined the meeting and was congratulated upon her appointment.)

###### *Election of Vice Chair*

One nomination was received for Cllr Handley which was seconded. There were no further nominations. Cllr Handley withdrew from the meeting and a vote was taken by secret ballot. It was

**RESOLVED** that Cllr Handley be elected to serve as Vice Chair for a term of one year, expiring at the first meeting of the governing body in the 2017/18 academic year.

##### 1.5 Declarations of Interest

The following document had been circulated:

- Register of Business Interest form

Governors' current declarations had been annexed to the agenda. Governors were requested to renew their declarations and to return these to the Clerk.

#### 1.6 **Governors' Code of Conduct**

The following document had been circulated:

- NGA Revised Model Code of Conduct

The Clerk explained that the Code had been amended to include reference to publication of some governors' details on the website and on the DfE Edubase site and requested that governors sign the master copy being circulated at the meeting. It was

**RESOLVED** to approve the Code of Conduct.

The Chair took the opportunity to remind governors of their duty of responsibility in relation to discussions at the governing body and between governors.

#### 1.7 **Approval of Minutes**

The following document had been circulated:

- Draft minutes: 5 July 2016
- Confidential minutes (tabled)

It was

**RESOLVED** to approve the Minutes as being a true and accurate record.

There followed a discussion as to the circulation of the confidential minutes. The Clerk's current practice is to table the confidential minutes rather than have such minutes being stored on governors' personal computers. The Clerk understood that this is now regarded as good practice. Governors expressed some concerns that this conflicts with the statutory requirement for all papers to be sent to governors at least seven days ahead of the meeting date. As neither staff, pupil or parent names are ever recorded in the confidential minutes the possibility of a data protection breach occurring is minimal. IN the course of the discussion governors expressed a preference for papers to continue to be posted out at least seven days ahead of the meeting. Mr Horton indicated that he had access to printing facilities which might be used to produce the papers at no cost. It was

#### **RESOLVED:**

- The Headteacher will contact Governor Services at Lewisham to request local guidance as to the circulation of confidential minutes.
- That the Clerk and the Chair will liaise with Mr Horton to discuss the printing of meeting papers.

*Action: Chair, Headteacher,  
Clerk*

#### 1.8 **Matters Arising**

##### ***p. 4 Item 6.3 Education and Pupil Services Committee***

*When will the SOLAR presentation to all governors take place?*

(Headteacher) This will take place this term, but could not be included in a governing body meeting as it is likely to last up to one hour. It was

**RESOLVED** that the meeting will take place at 2:30 on 10 November 2016, immediately prior to a meeting of the Personnel and Welfare Committee.

There were no more Matters Arising.

## 2. GOVERNING BODY REVIEW

### 2.1 Membership Update

The following document had been circulated for information:

- Current List of Governors

There are currently vacancies for a co-opted governor, a Foundation Governor and a Parent Governor.

With regard to the Foundation Governor vacancy this is in the gift of the Brent Knoll and Watergate Co-operative Trust. The Chair advised that she will be joining the Trust and should then be eligible for appointment as a Foundation Governor. This would result in a second Co-opted Governor vacancy.

The Headteacher advised that the school will be carrying out Parent Governor elections later in the term. It was

**RESOLVED** that Jeannette Bell and Joanna Taylor, current Parent Governors, will liaise to write a piece about their own experiences on the governing body in order to encourage more interest.

### 2.2 Committee Membership and Governor Links

The following document had been circulated:

- Current table of committee membership and links

It was noted that, having been appointed as Chair of Governors, Ms Elliott will need to relinquish her role as Chair of the Resources and Estates Committee as soon as a new Chair is identified.

Mr Horton expressed a desire to view the work of all committees before making a decision as to which committee might best match his experience and abilities.

It was noted that there is a vacancy on the Joint Strategic Committee.

A proposed schedule for Governors' visits had been emailed from the school, with a request that governors advise her of possible dates when they can come into school for a visit. It was noted that Mr Horton and Mr Wood will need to be linked to specific classes.

It was

**RESOLVED** to appoint Gary Whipp as Health & Safety Link Governor.

### 2.3 Review of Governing Body Procedures

The following documents had been circulated:

- Procedures for Remote Participation
- Committee Terms of Reference for the following committees:
  - Resources and Estates Committee
  - Education and Pupil Welfare Committee
  - Personnel and Welfare Committee
  - Pay Committee

It was

**RESOLVED** to approve the Procedures for Remote Participation and the Committee Terms of Reference.

#### **2.4 Annual Review of the Governing Body**

The Chair led a discussion on how best to move forward with an evaluation of the governing body. It was necessary to focus on how well the governing body provides leadership, support and challenge to the Headteacher. The Chair suggested that a working party be set up and requested volunteers. The Headteacher suggested that the SIA, Mr Scott, might facilitate a session on the role of governors which could be based on a recent Lewisham training session - Are you an Effective Governing Body? It was

**RESOLVED** that a working party be set up. The initial members would be Jeannette Bell, Ruth Elliott, Jacqui Paschoud, Joanna Taylor, Dannel Horton, Will Wood and Henrii Webb. The Chair will liaise with the members to agree a date for the meeting.

*Action: Chair*

### **3. COMMITTEE, WORKING PARTY AND GOVERNOR REPORTS**

#### **3.1 Committee / Working Party Reports**

The Headteacher expressed some concern that the Joint Strategic Committee has not met during 2015/16, and the Chair agreed to make enquiries as to the status of this committee.

*Action: Chair*

There were no standing committee reports.

#### **3.2 Governors' Reports**

There were no governors' reports.

#### **3.3 Brent Knoll and Watergate Co-Operative Trust**

The Trust will be holding its AGM next week when the proposal for the appointment of Ruth Elliott as a Foundation Governor will come under consideration.

The Headteacher reported that the newly-appointed Headteacher at Brent Knoll has withdrawn. The current Headteacher will be stepping down at the end of this term and the proposal is for an interim headteacher to be appointed up to the end of the current academic year.

### **4. HEADTEACHER'S UPDATE**

The following document had been tabled:

- Headteacher's Report.

The Headteacher's update included information under the following headings: Pupil Admissions, Pupil Attendance, Financial Management, School Improvement Adviser Visit and Staffing.

In her verbal summary the Headteacher highlighted the following:

There are now 112 pupils on roll which includes the part time placements, which equates to 110.3 full time places. Some of the new pupils have not yet come into the school.

There are still two persistent absentees and the local authority is taking further action. The Headteacher has concerned about safeguarding implications but all possible action on the part of the school has now been taken.

There is a proposed re-structuring of the High Needs banding system, which is likely to impact upon funding. Governors continued to express their concerns that a significant budget cut will have a negative impact upon the education of pupils. It was

**RESOLVED** that this matter will be discussed in detail at the next meeting of the Resources Committee.

The SIA's visit is complete but the report has not yet been issued. This will be taken at the next meeting of the Education and Pupil Welfare Committee.

#### *Governors' questions*

*Do the figures for the school roll still include those pupils who have relocated to Birmingham?*  
These pupils are no longer on the school roll and their places have been allocated elsewhere.

*Are there any outstanding appeals to the SEND Tribunal?*

The Headteacher did not have such information. Referrals continue to be received but these have to be rejected.

*If parents do not want a place at the school for their child, why are these places not re-allocated?*  
Lewisham have reserved these places for these pupils as it is believed that they are most suited to the child's needs, even if this is against the wishes of the parent. These pupils remain on roll until the position is legally resolved.

*There was one parent in dispute concerning the lack of suitable equipment. What is the update?*  
That pupil has now returned part-time to the school.

*Will the school be issuing a challenge to the funding re-structure?*

No, but the local authority continues to have an obligation to fund high level care and if it fails to do so pupils will have to be educated out of borough.

(Ms Webb withdrew from the meeting at this point)

*It is likely that Lewisham will cease to provide the SIA service in the future. What will replace this scrutiny?*

The Lewisham Special School Headteachers are planning to work together to share good practice and foster improvements throughout the sector, but ideally there should be challenge externally to the borough, but this might have to be purchased in.

There were no further questions.

## **5. CURRENT ISSUES AND UPDATES**

### **5.1 Policy Review**

The following documents had been circulated:

- Model Pay Policy
- LA Model Staff Disciplinary Policy for School Based Employees

#### ***Pay Policy***

The Clerk advised that the Lewisham model Pay Policy has been revised and governors were recommended to confirm adoption of the policy. It was

**RESOLVED** that the policy be referred to the Personnel and Welfare Committee for discussion with a recommendation to come back to the next meeting of the governing body.

### ***Lewisham Staff Disciplinary Policy***

Governors were advised that this model policy has been negotiated with the main teacher unions.

It was

**RESOLVED** to adopt the Lewisham Staff Disciplinary Policy

### **5.2 Safeguarding**

The following document was tabled:

- Final Draft Safeguarding Policy

The Headteacher advised that the revised policy incorporates recommendations from the School Improvement Adviser and takes into account the most recent guidance from the DfE and it now needed to be uploaded onto the website. It was

**RESOLVED** to approve the Safeguarding Policy with any minor changes to be agreed by Chair's Action which should then be reported back to the governing body.

The Headteacher understood that all DBS certificates had now been received, other than for Mr Horton due to his recent appointment, and this is being followed up.

### **5.3 Appraisal**

It was

**RESOLVED** that the Headteacher Appraisers will be Jacqui Paschoud, Henrii Webb and Carl Handley with the Chair as the Review Governor. Mr Scott will be invited to act as adviser. The Chair will organise the appraisal.

## **6. INFORMATION AND TRAINING\***

Governors were reminded to read the current Governor Services Information Pack for articles on governance issues of local and national importance and for details of the current term's training programme. Governors were referred in particular to the following items:

### **6.1 Edubase**

From September 2016 governors' details must be uploaded onto EduBase – the DfE's database of all schools in the country. Personal data will be encrypted and access will be restricted.

### **6.2 Governors' Award Ceremony**

There will be an award ceremony for long-serving governors on 14 November 2016 as part of the Lewisham Governors' Association AGM.

### **6.3 Lewisham Governors' Association**

The AGM will be held on Monday 14 November 2016. Mrs Evans reminded governors that she sits on the LGA Management Committee as the representative for Special Schools.

## **7. CLOSING ITEMS**

### **7.1 Any Urgent Business**

#### ***Co-Opted Governor Appointment***

Mr Wood confirmed his desire to pursue appointment to the governing body as a co-opted governor, and he withdrew from the meeting whilst governors considered his application.

Mrs Evans reported that Mr Wood's application had come via SGOSS (School Governors' One Stop Shop) and that he is resident in Lewisham borough. Mr Wood works for the Ministry of Defence and has extensive knowledge of management. He has taken a tour of the school and has been very impressed. References have been taken up and these are very strong. Mrs Evans recommended Mr Wood's appointment. On a show of hands it was

**RESOLVED** that Mr Wood be appointed as a Co-opted Governor for a term of 4 years, expiring on 5 October 2020.

Mr Wood was invited back to the meeting and was congratulated on his appointment.

## **7.2 Dates and Times of Future Meetings**

A proposed schedule of meeting dates is appended to this agenda. It was noted that all committees will now meet at 3:30 pm., other than the Education and Pupil Services Committee which will continue to meet at 1:30 for the convenience of parent governors.

The next meeting of the governing body will take place on Thursday, 8 December 2016 at 5:30 p.m.

## **8. CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS\***

Discussion of one matter under minute 1.1 dealing with governors' apologies was agreed to be treated as confidential and excluded from the minutes to be made available for public inspection.

**SIGNED** R Elliott

**DATED** 6/12/2016