

WATERGATE SPECIAL SCHOOL

GOVERNING BODY

MINUTES

Of a meeting of the Governing Body held on

THURSDAY, 20 SEPTEMBER 2018 AT 6:00 p.m.

Present:

Jeanette Bell		Ruth Elliott	Chair
Cllr Carl Handley		Danniel Horton	
Aine Ni Ruairc	Headteacher	Florence Orowolo	
Cllr Jacqui Paschoud		Joanna Taylor	
Laurence Thackwray		Henrii Webb	
Will Wood		Gary Whipp	

Also in Attendance:

Alex Brooks-Johnson	Adviser to the Brent Knoll and Watergate Trust
Catherine Munday	Clerk to Governors

Alex Brooks-Johnson was introduced to governors by the Chair. Alex Brooks-Johnson started his presentation to governors with a brief outline of The Trust, its structure and its place in the special needs educational and support community. The Trust now has partnerships with Ravensbourne, Greenwich University and Phoenix Housing as well as with Watergate and Brent Knoll schools. Wider Horizons was a former partner but has now gone into administration. The overriding objective of the Trust is to support the families of pupils with special educational needs.

In May 2017 a review and visioning process was set in motion, with the aim of setting the strategy for the future of the Trust. As part of the process, consultations took place with staff and parents as well as between trustees, and some short term aims were identified:

- Out of school provision;
- support for parents;
- Enhanced inter-school collaboration.

Outcomes have included:

- Setting up a staff working party which has agreed to run a campaign this autumn to educate the wider community about autism;
- the provision of a holiday club over the summer;
- a review of parent support schemes within Lewisham which has identified that resources are too stretched, across a large number of different groups which is a poor use of the resources available;

(Gary Whipp and Laurence Thackwray joined the meeting at this point)

Long term aims are more ambitious and include the provision of housing, social enterprise schemes and Post 16 education. In relation to housing, the work of the CLASH group, which is looking to provide four self-contained flats for adults on the higher end of the autistic spectrum, might provide a template for future action in this area and an exploratory meeting has been held with the Head of Housing in Lewisham.

Alex has also made contact with the Ignition Brewery social enterprise scheme in Sydenham. This is run on a voluntary basis and employs adults with learning difficulties. It is being run as a commercial enterprise with a tap room having recently opened.

(Florence Arowolo joined the meeting at this point)

There followed a discussion about the obstacles to the provision of housing and the need to include families whose child/children are being educated out of borough. There was a brief discussion as to the importance of bringing Greenvale into the Trust, but at present this does not seem to be likely.

The summer activity group funded by Phoenix, was a success, and further funders are now being sought. There is not enough time to organise an October half term club so the focus is currently on February 2019.

The Trust now needs to grow and to develop new partnerships but at present the focus has to remain on holiday schemes and parent support until new fundraising opportunities can be identified.

The Chair thanked Alex Brooks-Johnson for coming and updating governors as to the work of the Trust.

Alex Brooks-Johnson withdrew from the meeting.

1. PROCEDURAL ITEMS

1.1 Welcome / Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Judy Evans (holiday) and Jesus Jimenez-Gazquez (prior appointment), with consent.

1.2 Order of Business

The agenda was confirmed.

1.3 Election of Chair

(The Clerk took the Chair for this item)

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

RESOLVED unanimously that Ruth Elliott be elected to serve as Chair for a term of one year, expiring at the first meeting of the governing body in the 2019/2020 academic year.

Ruth Elliott rejoined the meeting and was congratulated on her appointment. Ruth Elliott resumed the Chair.

1.4 Election of Vice Chair

A discussion on the possible benefits of appointing two vice chairs was deferred, pending a governing body review (see Item 3.3 below)

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

RESOLVED unanimously that Carl Handley be elected to serve as Chair for a term of one year, expiring at the first meeting of the governing body in the 2019/2020 academic year.

1.5 Approval of Minutes

The following document had been circulated to governors:

- Draft minutes: 5 July 2018

It was

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

1.6 Matters Arising

Item 5: School Improvement and Development Planning

The Chair reported that best practice requires governing bodies to carry out an external review of their practice every 3-5 years. Following up on this, the Chair has been in touch with Catherine Farrant, who is a National Leader of Governance, and who has agreed to carry out an external review, free of charge.

Will this include a review of future planning?

(Chair) This will specifically include a review and advice on strategic thinking.

Governors were requested to confirm this appointment.

SO RESOLVED.

Actions:

The Chair will liaise with the Headteacher and with the Clerk concerning the provision of paperwork for the adviser.

There were no further matters arising.

1.7 Chair's Action

The Chair reported that she has taken Chair's action to approve the Financial Management policy, the Debt Policy and the Lettings Policy which had been circulated at the July meeting of the governing body.

2. GOVERNING BODY PROCEDURES: ANNUAL REVIEW

2.1 Declarations of Interest

Governors were requested to complete the annual Declarations of Interest forms and return these to the Clerk at the meeting. Current declarations were annexed to the agenda.

2.2 Governor DBS Checks

Governors were reminded that they must have an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check and certificates need to be renewed every three years. The Headteacher confirmed that current checks are up to date.

2.3 Review of Governing Body Procedures

The following documents had been circulated:

- Financial Management Policy and Code of Practice
- Current Terms of Reference for the following committees:
 - Education and Pupil Welfare Committee
 - Personnel and Welfare Committee

- Pay Committee

It was

RESOLVED to approve the Terms of Reference and the Financial Management Policy and Code of Practice.

3. GOVERNING BODY UPDATE

3.1 Membership

The following document had been circulated:

- Current List of Governors

The following membership details were noted:

Expiry of Term of Office	Jeannette Bell – Parent Governor (wef 17/12/2018)
	Joanna Taylor – Parent Governor (wef 17/12/2018)
	Gary Whipp – Co-opted Governor (wef 24/03/2019)
	Judy Evans – Co-opted Governor (wef 24/03/2019)

Appointments There have been no appointments.

Vacancies There are currently no vacancies

Parent Governor elections will take place after half term. Jeannette Bell confirmed her intention to stand again.

3.2 To Review Delegation of Functions and Committee Structures

The following document had been circulated:

- Current table of committee membership and links

This item to be deferred pending the GB strategic review.

3.3 Governing Body Review

See under Item 1.6 above.

4. COMMITTEE, WORKING PARTY AND GOVERNOR REPORTS

4.1 Any Committee / Working Party Reports

School Expansion Working Party

Carl Handley reported that the working party had met recently when the focus had been upon the proposed access road and health and safety implications for pupils arriving and departing by both bus and car. It was agreed that the proposed location and route for the access road is not acceptable. There would be an opportunity for modifications to the plan if the Local Authority were to release some additional neighbouring land which is within its ownership. The Chair had subsequently written to the Local Authority on this point, and she understands that the proposal is under consideration.

The Headteacher reported that there has been an on-site meeting with the Project Manager and the Quantity Surveyors and there was a particular focus on the access road. It was

acknowledged that further detail is required as to the dimensions of the roadway and its precise route.

Action:

The Chair to circulate her letter to all governors.

Brent Knoll and Watergate Trust

The Chair had attended the governing body meeting at Brent Knoll when the issues raised at the July GB meeting had been discussed in terms of financial commitment. The discussion had reflected much of what had been said at Watergate and the outcome was the same. It was agreed that there should be a joint meeting of the two governing bodies to discuss the future of the Trust.

Action:

The Chair will liaise with the Brent Knoll Chair of Governors to arrange a mutually convenient date, time and place at which to hold a joint meeting.

4.2 Governors' Reports

The following document had been circulated:

- Report on September Chair's Briefing

There were no questions.

5. HEADTEACHER'S UPDATE

The Headteacher's report was tabled and included information under the following headings: Leadership and Management, After School and Holiday Centre, pupil places, staffing, professional development, premises, front door relocation and forecourt parking and calendar.

Pupil Places

Can the Headteacher give a more detailed breakdown for the new admissions?

The majority of the new pupils have been admitted into Reception and Year 1 with two/three pupils being admitted into year 2.

Front Door Relocation and Forecourt Parking

The tendering process has been completed, but the costs will far exceed the allocated budget and planning restrictions will only allow for three disabled parking bays in the forecourt area.

Therefore, the Headteacher suggested that the project be suspended, with school staff being deployed to control the forecourt area at dropping off and collection time.

Was there not a health and safety issue around pupils running out of the school through the current doors and into the road?

(Headteacher) This issue may well have been overstated. Historically there was one incident, but there has been no recurrence since the fitting of the electronic door.

What is the justification for employing staff to monitor the forecourt area and yet not employing a social worker?

(Headteacher) There is a perceived health and safety issue in the morning and afternoons because of the increased number of parents now collecting their children. Classroom staff are

employed to supervise transport elsewhere on site is established. It is expected that meal supervisors will be able to fill this role.

Can the funding released by not carrying out the works be allocated elsewhere?

(Headteacher) Possibly for redecoration and signage around the school. Suggestions can be taken to the relevant committee.

It was

RESOLVED to defer a decision on the front door and forecourt works until there is more clarity around the timetable for the school expansion. In the meantime, marshalls are to be employed to supervise the area.

Action:

The Headteacher to advertise as soon as possible for the marshalls.

6. SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

The first draft of the Improvement and Development Plan was tabled. The Headteacher requested that the relevant areas of the Plan be reviewed in each committee where governors can suggest amendments to the priorities. The priorities in the Teaching and Learning section reflect Ofsted's Next Steps as well as the recommendations in the Challenge Partners' review. Governors will also need to input into the SEF.

The Chair wanted the Plan to include a page specifically for governors into which any recommendations arising from the proposed review can be fed and this was agreed.

7. PERFORMANCE RELATED APPRAISAL

7.1 Pay Policy

This item was deferred to December as details of the new pay rates are awaited.

7.2 Governor Appraisers

The Headteacher's appraisal has been scheduled for 11 October 2018. It was

RESOLVED to confirm the appointment of Sue Roberts as the external adviser, and Carl Handley and Henrii Webb as the appraisers, with Jacqui Paschoud as the Review Governor.

7.3 Pay Committee and Pay Appeals Committee

The current membership of the Pay Committee was confirmed to be the Headteacher's appraisers and the Chair of Governors. All non-staff governors are members of the Pay Appeals Committee.

8. INFORMATION AND TRAINING*

8.1 Governors' Information Pack

Governors confirmed receipt of the GIP, electronically.

8.2 Lewisham Governors' Association

The LGA's 2018 Biennial General Meeting will take place on Monday 12 November from 7.00 pm to 9.00 pm at the Civic Suite (refreshments available from 6.30 pm). All governors are welcome to attend.

8.3 Governors' Training

Governors were referred to the training programme in the GIP and were reminded that training must be booked online. Florence Orowolo will attend induction training this term and the option of Modern Governor training was considered.

Action:

The Chair will research the Modern Governor training further.

9. CLOSING ITEMS

9.1 Any Urgent Business

(The Headteacher withdrew from the meeting during discussion of this item)

The Chair reported that the recent illnesses of both the Deputy Headteacher and the Assistant Headteacher have highlighted the need for greater senior leadership depth. The two acting Assistant Headteachers have performed well in their acting up roles, but they do require mentoring which has added to the burden on the Headteacher. Both the Deputy and Assistant Headteachers are on a phased return to work, but in both cases this can only happen over an extended period of time. In the meantime, it has been necessary to bring in more leadership team support. Currently, Carolyn Vagg – formerly co-head at Willowdene School in Greenwich – has been working for two days a week to support the Headteacher, but this is a temporary consultancy appointment which expires at half term, and this is not financially sustainable in the long term.

The Chair has met with the committee chairs to discuss the problem and the following suggestions came out of that meeting:

- A new Deputy Headteacher needs to be appointed, subject to the cost and time implications. School funding over the year may now be as much as £300,000 more than previously anticipated due to banding appeals.
- Jesus Jiminez-Gazquez and Natalie Carroll should be fast-tracked for further management training and development and to be appointed as Assistant Headteachers.
- These changes will require the appointment of another class teacher.
- Carolyn Vagg to be requested to remain until Christmas to continue mentoring Jesus and Natalie.

(Will Wood withdrew from the meeting at this point)

It was

RESOLVED:

- (i) to confirm these suggestions in the Finance Committee, subject to clarification of the full costs and updated financial position against the budget.
- (ii) the selection panel for the recruitment of a Deputy Headteacher to be Henrii Webb, Danniell Horton, Carl Handley, Jeannette Bell and Ruth Elliott

(The Headteacher rejoined the meeting)

9.2 Schedule of Meeting Dates

The next meeting of the governing body will take place on Tuesday, 4 December 2018 at 6:00 p.m.

The next meeting of the Personal and Welfare Committee is to be rescheduled. The Clerk, Henrii Webb and the Headteacher will liaise to agree a date. The time is to be 6:00 p.m.

Otherwise, the dates were confirmed.

10. CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

There were no confidential items identified in the minutes.

SIGNED



DATED

28/3/19

FINAL