



**BIRCHWOOD HIGH SCHOOL**  
 Parsonage Lane Bishop's Stortford CM23 5BD  
 Company No: 07791971

**Minutes of the Full Governing Body meeting of the Academy Trust Governing Body held remotely via Teams on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> January 2021 at 19.00**

	Name	Category	End of Term
	Annie Swanepoel – <b>Vice Chair</b>	Community	08.12.24
*	Alison Wilson	Community	14.03.23
	Leigh Lloyd-Warren	Community	22.01.24
	Jane Mansfield	Community	22.01.24
	Fred Gray	Community	08.12.24
*	Jim Winter	Community	06.07.24
	Ruth Bamlett	Community	14.03.23
	Catherine Gater – <b>Chair of Governors</b>	Community	13.07.24
	Charlotte Sear	Community	22.01.24
	Richard Townsend	Community	03.03.24
	Vacancy	Parent	
	Jane Wach	Parent	09.09.24
	Gill Turner	Parent	04.12.22
	Hilary Scotcher	Parent	30.06.22
	Lisa Watkins	Parent	30.06.22
	Ruth Crowland	Parent	06.03.21
	Chris Ingate – <b>Principal</b>	Staff	Ex-Officio
	Ross Noblett	Staff	01.04.23
	Claire Pressland	Staff	02.11.24
	Lee Bothwell	Staff	30.06.22
	Vacancy	Co-opted	
	Nicola Coop – <b>Finance Director</b>	Advisory	

\* Denotes absence

Also Present

Charlie Gilbank – Deputy Principal

Sam Stopps – Deputy Principal

Ivan Shepherd – Clerk

Item		Action
1.	<b>Welcome and receive apologies for absence</b> Apologies were received and accepted from Alison Wilson and Jim Winter.	
2.	<b>Declarations / pecuniary interests</b> There were no new declarations of any new pecuniary interests, gifts or hospitality. There were no interests declared that related to matters being discussed at this meeting.	
3.	<b>Notification of any urgent business not covered in this agenda</b> No AOB was put forward.	

4.	<p><b>MLM and action points</b> The minutes of the last FGB meeting held on 09.12.20 were <b>AGREED</b> and signed off as a correct record of that meeting.</p> <p>Action Points from 30.09.20 AP1 – Governors were asked to complete the pecuniary / business interest forms for the academic year 2020/21 and return to Nicola Coop by 02.10.20. <b>Completed</b></p> <p>Action points from 09.12.20 AP1 – Any governor who wishes to fill the vacant vice chair of governor role to contact CGa, CI or AS. <b>Completed</b></p> <p>AP2 – Clerk to inform HfL of the changes to governor and the chair of governor appointments. <b>Completed</b></p> <p>AP3 –All governors to send their personal references to the Personnel Manager. <b>Carry over</b></p>	
	<p><b>Vice chair</b> A vacancy for vice chair of governors exists. Fred Gray nominated himself for the position, no other nominations were received. Fred Gray was <b>UNANIMOUSLY ELECTED</b> as vice chair of governors until September 2021.</p>	
5.	<p><b>Principal's report</b> The Principal's report was circulated prior to the meeting for governors to read and attend the meeting with questions and constructive challenges. CI summarised the report, the key areas covered were as follows:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As a general overview the Principal told the meeting that the period since Christmas has been one of great change and adaptation, by the school, teachers, pupils and parents. In general the feedback to the school from pupils and parents along with the reaction to the change in teaching by teachers has been positive.</li> <li>• SS told the meeting that attendance is very good although a few students are not engaging with lessons. These students and their parents have been contacted and offered additional support or the opportunity to attend school. A governor asked what is being done with absence data. SS explained that the data is collected and passed on to heads of faculties, who are then very quick to respond. The pastoral team are working very hard offering support to those who have not attended.</li> <li>• The Principal told the meeting that the feedback from both students and parents is that remote learning is working well. Timetables are being followed and the day starts with form registration. The mixture of live and recorded lessons keeps learning fresh and interesting. Because teachers have gained a greater knowledge of Teams they are able to make the lessons more engaging, there has been a huge amount of knowledge sharing between teachers. A governor commented that in her experience students have more time to absorb the learning.</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Principal told governors that teachers are only allowed to attend school if they are on the rota to do so, thus following government advice on reducing unnecessary travel and meetings. The Principal added that it is very important to be aware of staff welfare and that a number of initiatives are taking place with this in mind, these include regular 1-2-1 meetings with head of year / faculty, informal faculty meetings and ad-hoc support. There is very little staff movement in terms of joining other schools, however some vacancies do exist. Consideration has been given to increasing the SLT, however this is very difficult to do at the moment.</li> <li>• There has been lots of Covid testing but only 1 positive result. Staff have Covid testing kits at home, they test the night before they are due to attend school.</li> <li>• Governors wanted to put on record their thanks to all staff at the school, who have worked tirelessly and with extraordinary professionalism to ensure that high class education is delivered to all. The Principal said that he would pass that message onto staff.</li> <li>• The Principal told governors that how grading for GCSE and A level exams will be determined remains undecided, however a public consultation on the matter is open and gives a broad if not complete understanding to schools, parents and pupils. The impact this has on student next steps and the uncertainty caused has led to some anxiety.</li> <li>• Safeguarding remains a priority for the school, this is being done remotely; a policy is in place with clear guidelines and processes. Safeguarding matters are being dealt with very robustly; the school know who is vulnerable and keep in regular contact with them and their home.</li> </ul> <p>A governor asked if students with EHCP are receiving the additional support per week that they would receive if they were at school. SS told the meeting that giving the same level of support / provision remotely is difficult; however the LSAs who deliver it are working very hard to ensure the support is the same as if they were at school. Consideration has been given to bringing pupils who have EHCP's into school to ensure that full support is provided.</p> <p>A governor noted that the school needs to evidence that pupils with EHCP's are receiving full support. SS told governors that records are being kept and evidence can be given.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The CoG noted that the Strategic Priority Document is on the governor portal and asked that all governors read this before the next FGB meeting which is due to be held on 03.03.21.</li> </ul> <p><b>AP1 – All governors to read the Strategic Priority Document ,which is on the governor portal, before the next FGB meeting which is due to be held on 03.03.21.</b></p>	<p><b>All Gobs</b></p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Principal told the meeting that whilst Quality Assurance is formally on hold at the moment, the school can demonstrate that work on QA is being done. Teachers are completing self-assessments, peer assessments are being carried out and feedback is being sought so that improvements to work being set can be made.</li> <li>The latest financial summary was circulated prior to the meeting for governors to review. NC explained that there is a small in year deficit because of the impact lockdown has had on catering and lettings. Some savings will be made however these are yet to become clear.</li> </ul> <p>Catering and Lettings staff have been furloughed. Audits continue to happen, however these are now completed remotely. Supermarket vouchers are being issued to those families who are in receipt of free school meals.</p>	
6.	<p><b>Committee reports</b></p> <p><b>Curriculum</b> There has not been a meeting since the last FGB, therefore there was nothing to report.</p> <p><b>Finance and estates</b> The Finance committee decided not to pursue the Salix loan for LED lights. The site team continue to work very hard on all areas of the school estate.</p> <p><b>Personnel</b> There has not been a meeting since the last FGB, therefore there was nothing to report</p>	
7.	<p><b>Articles of association</b> GT updated governors on the progress since the last meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Governors were reminded that under the current articles all governors on the board are both trustees and members and that as from 01.03.21 any employee at the school must not be a member.</li> <li>Changing the articles so that employees are not members is the first priority.</li> <li>Any other changes to the articles can be debated / decided post March 2021.</li> <li>GT told the meeting that legal advice on how to proceed will need to be taken</li> <li>It was <b>AGREED</b> that a working group consisting of GT, CI, CGt, NC, LLW and JM should be formed to progress the changes.</li> <li>There was a discussion around whether an extraordinary general meeting is needed before 01.03.21 to agree the change to make employees trustees only or whether it would be permissible to make that change at the next FGB meeting due to be held on 03.03.21.</li> </ul>	
8.	<p><b>Link governor update</b></p> <p>Safeguarding Safeguarding had been covered earlier in the meeting. FGG added that he and SS have a Teams meeting planned in the next week to review safeguarding matters in detail.</p> <p>SEND &amp; DA SEND and DA had been covered earlier in the meeting. RC had met with SS and the school SENCO last week for a review.</p>	

	<p>Health &amp; Safety Health and safety had been covered earlier in the meeting. There was nothing further to report.</p> <p>The Principal told the meeting that other subject link governors can meet with subject leads virtually and encouraged them to make contact and arrange a meeting.</p> <p><b>AP2 – The Principal to circulate the subject link governor list. This will include any vacancies which governors are encouraged to fill</b></p>	Principal / all Gobs
9.	<p><b>Membership of the governing body</b> Vice chair of governors This was covered earlier in the meeting</p> <p>Committee chair vacancies FG was appointed chair of the Audit committee until September 2021. LLW was appointed chair of the Estates committee.</p> <p>Vacancies on the board A parent governor vacancy exists, it was <b>AGREED</b> that nominations will be sought from the parent body in March 2021.</p> <p>Term end dates RCs term ends on the 06.03.21. It was <b>AGREED</b> to seek nominations from the parent body in March 2021.</p> <p>The Governor Hub The CoG reminded the meeting that all governor training is listed on the Governor Hub and asked that all governors register using the e-mail link that has been sent to their Birchwood e-mail account.</p> <p><b>AP3 – All governors to register on the Governor Hub</b></p>	All Gobs
10.	<p><b>GDPR</b> CGk updated governors, they key points covered were:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There have been no major incidents.</li> <li>• Consent for tests data has been completed and data from the tests is stored securely.</li> <li>• There is a new online safety policy which covers behavioural issues</li> <li>• There have been no data breaches.</li> </ul>	
11.	<p><b>Policy Management</b> CGk told the meeting that all policies are up to date.</p>	
12.	<p><b>Chair's Report</b> There are three matters to be reported.</p> <p>New secondary school in Bishops Stortford The CoG told the meeting that she had received a consultation document relating to the new school being built in Bishops Stortford.</p> <p><b>AP4 – Clerk to circulate the new school consultation document to all governors.</b></p> <p>Governor file storage platform The question was posed whether or not the governor portal, used currently, was the best platform to store and retrieve governor files. The CoG suggested that Teams may be a better platform.</p>	Clerk

	<p>Mark Stocker  Governors had been told of Mark's death before the meeting.  The CoG thanked governors for their kind words and memories.  The Principal will attend Mark's funeral on behalf of the school.  It was <b>AGREED</b> that Mark's huge contribution to the school should be recognised on a permanent basis in some way.</p>	
13.	<p><b>Dates of future full governors meetings all start at 19.00</b>  03.03.21  05.05.21  07.07.21</p>	

Meeting closed at 19.36

Signed: .....

Date: .....

Catherine Gater – Chair of Governors Birchwood High School

**Summary of action points**

AP1 – All governors to read the Strategic Priority Document ,which is on the governor portal, before the next FGB meeting which is due to be held on 03.03.21.

AP2 – The Principal to circulate the subject link governor list. This will include any vacancies which governors are encouraged to fill

AP3 – All governors to register on the Governor Hub

AP4 – Clerk to circulate the new school consultation document to all governors.