



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

**Minutes of the Full Governing Body (Members and Trustees) meeting of the Academy Trust  
 Members and Trustees held remotely via Teams on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> September 2021 at 19.00**

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>End of Term</b>
	Ruth Crowland	Community	06.03.25
*	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</b>	Community	13.07.24
	Charlotte Sear	Community	22.01.24
	Richard Townsend	Community	03.03.24
	John Oglesby	Parent	07.09.25
*	Jane Wach	Parent	09.09.24
	Gill Turner – <b>Vice Chair</b>	Parent	04.12.22
	Chris Emery	Parent	07.09.25
	Lisa Watkins	Parent	30.06.22
	Matthew Free	Parent	07.09.25
	Chris Ingate – <b>Principal</b>	Staff	Ex-Officio
	Ross Noblett	Staff	01.04.23
	Claire Pressland	Staff	02.11.24
	Vacancy	Staff	
	Vacancy	Co-opted	
	Deryk Bull – <b>Finance Director</b>	Advisory	

\* Denotes absence

Also Present  
 Charlie Gilbank – Deputy Principal  
 Sam Stopps – Deputy Principal  
 Jolene Jacobson – Vice Principal  
 Rob Herbert – Vice Principal  
 Ivan Shepherd – Clerk

<b>Item</b>		<b>Action</b>
1.	<b>Welcome and receive apologies for absence</b> No apologies were received from trustees. FG, AW and JWc did not attend the meeting. CE, MF and JO as newly elected parent trustees were welcomed to the full governing body.	

2.	<p><b>Declarations / pecuniary interests</b>  There were no declarations of any new pecuniary interests, gifts or hospitality.  RT told the meeting that as the local ward councillor and member of the planning committee, he will not be able to join in discussions relating to the detached playing field or vote on its use.</p>	
3.	<p><b>Notification of any urgent business that is not covered in this agenda</b>  There was no AOB.</p>	
4.	<p><b>Election of Officials</b>  The clerk took the chair for this agenda item.  Trustees <b>AGREED</b> that they will be electing a chair and vice chairs for a term of 1 year.   Catherine Gater was nominated for the position of chair, and was elected unanimously   There are two vice chair positions.  Gill Turner was nominated for one of the vice chair positions and was elected unanimously.  There were no nominations for the second vice chair position.   <b>AP1 – Trustees who would like to know more about the position of vice chair were asked to contact either the CoG or the Principal</b></p>	<b>Trustees</b>
5.	<p><b>Appointment of clerk</b>  Trustees <b>AGREED</b> that they want Ivan Shepherd to clerk their FGB and committee meetings for the academic year 2021/22.</p>	
6.	<p><b>Articles of association</b>  Trustees <b>AGREED</b> to retain the current articles of association for the academic year 2021/22</p>	
7.	<p><b>Trustee / members code of conduct</b>  The code of conduct was circulated prior to the meeting for trustees to read and agree to.  All Trustees said that they <b>AGREE</b> to the code of conduct.  Trustees will be asked to sign a printed copy of the code of conduct which will be placed in the trustees file at the school.  CoG to reminded trustees of the importance of compliance with the code of conduct and maintaining the strictest levels of confidence.</p>	
8.	<p><b>Pecuniary / business interests forms</b>  Business interests form for 2021/2022 academic year were circulated prior to the meeting, trustees were asked to complete and return to the Finance Director and HR Manager before this meeting took place.   <b>AP2 – Trustees who have not already done so, to complete and return the business interests form to the Finance Director and the HR Manager.</b></p>	<b>Trustees</b>
9.	<p><b>Committee Terms of Reference</b>  The committee chairs were confirmed as follows:-  Steering – Catherine Gater  Finance – Gill Turner  Estates – Leigh Lloyd Warren  Curriculum – Ruth Crowland  Personnel – Jane Mansfield  Audit and Risk – TBC   Subject to minor tweaks the ToR for all committees for the academic year 2021/2022 were <b>AGREED</b> by trustees.</p>	

	<b>AP3 - Trustees who would like to know more about being the chair of the audit committee were asked to contact either the CoG or the Principal</b>	<b>Trustees</b>
10.	<p><b>Trustee / member membership</b>  There are no imminent term end dates.  CE, MF and JO attended their first FGB meeting as parent trustees.  The proposal is that Trustees and members become separated within the articles at the AGM due to be held on the 8<sup>th</sup> December.  If the proposal is agreed 7 members will be appointed.</p> <p>A document showing the membership of the governing board and committees has been produced and will be circulated to trustees.  <b>AP4 – Clerk to circulate the governing board and committee membership.</b></p>	<b>Clerk</b>
11.	<p><b>Minutes of the last meeting</b>  Trustees <b>AGREED</b> that the minutes of the last FGB meeting held on 13.07.21 are a fair reflection of that meeting.</p> <p><b>Matters arising</b>  AP1 – Trustees to capture the thoughts from the self-review exercise and send directly to the Principal.  <b>Completed</b></p> <p>AP2 – Clerk to inform HfL of the change on the board of trustees.  <b>Completed</b></p> <p>AP3 – All trustees to complete a short bio and return to the chair; these bios will be posted on the school website.  <b>AP5 All trustees to complete a short bio and return to the chair; these bios will be posted on the school website</b></p>	<b>Trustees</b>
12.	<p><b>Principal’s report</b> – including Finance Director summary report  The Principal’s report was circulated prior to the meeting for trustees to read and attend the meeting with questions and constructive challenge.  The key points of discussion were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The new term has started well; attendance is good as is behaviour. Year 7 have settled in well this has been attributed in part to summer school.</li> <li>• Numbers on roll are up to PAN  The Principal told trustees that there is a slight numbers in-balance between boys and girls.  A discussion about gender in-balance followed this point.  The Principal told the meeting that pupil numbers and the split between boys and girls are reported during the annual census.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There have been a small number of positive Covid tests.</li> <li>• The school was low on LFT supplies at the start of the term.</li> <li>• The school have decided to ask pupils and staff to do lateral flow Covid tests at home.  This doesn’t follow the government recommendation.  The Principal explained that the decision was taken in order to prevent anyone who has Covid without knowing it coming into the school and mixing with others.  Home testing was considered to be the safest option.  Trustees asked if running Covid testing at home against government advice was</li> </ul>	

	<p>the right decision.  CGk told the meeting that preventing the spread of Covid unknowingly was, in the opinion of the SLT, the key factor. Therefore home testing was considered the safest option.  CGk reminded trustees that testing is not mandatory; it's done on a voluntary basis.  The Principal told trustees that Birchwood is not the only school in the area to have introduced home testing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co2 monitors have been ordered but are not yet scheduled for delivery.</li> <li>• CGk told the meeting that GCSE and A level results were good and slightly above last year.  CGk added that the exam boards didn't moderate any papers at all. There are a small number of appeals going through; the school has a rigorous process in place.  Teachers did a very good job in assessing GCSE and A level grades; the process ran smoothly</li> <li>• University and apprenticeship places have been tracked.</li> <li>• The Principal told the meeting that teacher sickness is low at the moment; however there is a real risk that Covid will cause high levels of sickness in turn leading to high levels of cover requirement.  This will come at a cost and has been flagged as a risk within Finance and a plan is in place to help mitigate.</li> <li>• The Principal told the meeting that he had attended a meeting of the school heads consortium and more meetings are planned.</li> <li>• All staff and trustees have been asked to complete part one of Keeping Children Safe in Education; this will be accompanied with a short "test" which will need to be passed.</li> <li>• The Principal told the trustees that during the pandemic the vast majority of the focus of both the SLT and the trustees has been on operational issues.  The focus now has to switch to strategic work and a school improvement culture. The SEF/SIP was circulated prior to the meeting; trustees were asked to read that and emerging priorities for 2021/22. The comments and challenge from trustees will help formulate the SEF/SIP and the direction of the school.  A trustee asked if students had been consulted / asked to contribute to the formulation of the SEF/SIP.  The Principal told the meeting that it and the priorities had been discussed at student council but that they hadn't been formulated there.</li> </ul> <p><b>AP6 – A link asking for feedback on the SEF/SIP will be added to the KCSIE questionnaire and circulated to trustees. Trustees have been asked to complete and return the questionnaire.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DB told the meeting that the year-end figures should be available by mid-September.</li> <li>• Trustees discussed the in-year surplus figure and asked if the surplus should be retained or spent.  The chair of the finance committee recommended retaining the surplus given</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Trustees</b></p>
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	<p>that the figure is relatively low when set against the annual running cost of the school. Finances are benchmarked against similar sized schools.</p> <p>Detached Playing Field. CGk updated trustees on the progress of the detached playing field. The key points of the discussion were as follows:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An archaeological survey on the site will be carried out.</li> <li>• A flood assessment will take place.</li> <li>• The school has bid for funding from the town council for the cycling track.</li> <li>• The oak trees which were removed did not have TPO's and were removed in consultation with the town council.</li> <li>• All public consultations have taken place</li> <li>• All responses, including questionnaires, letters and e-mails will be collated.</li> <li>• Some of the responses are concerned that Bishops Stortford Football Club will be involved; the view being that it will cause noise, traffic and light pollution.</li> <li>• Once all the information / response data is available it will be put in front of the governing board who will be asked to make a decision on which option to take forward.</li> <li>• All of the options will be looked at and the arguments in favour or against will be considered.</li> <li>• No decisions have been made or agreements entered into.</li> <li>• The CoG and The Principal are have reviewed the project and are happy that it has been conducted according to the seven principles and standards set out by the Nolan committee for people in public life.</li> </ul> <p>The CoG and The Principal agree that the project and been carried out in the best interests of the school and was transparent at all times.</p> <p>RT left the meeting at 20.30</p>	
13.	<p><b>Committee Reports:</b></p> <p><b>Curriculum</b> RC told the meeting that looking forward across the academic year; the curriculum committee will focus on literacy across all year groups, student wellbeing and quality first teaching. RC added that data collected over the entire pandemic period shows that all pupils have had difficulties and it's not just those who are SEN / DA. Strategically speaking Catch Up has to reach all of these pupils</p> <p><b>Personnel</b> JM told the meeting that the personnel committee will focus on flexible working, staff wellbeing and gender equality across all aspects / stakeholders within the school.</p> <p><b>Finance &amp; Estates</b> Chargecard policy – light amend. Trustees <b>AGREED.</b></p> <p>Reserves – two savings accounts have matured. GT explained that she would like trustees to AGREE to open an instant access savings account which is protected by the FSA. Trustees <b>AGREED.</b></p> <p>School lettings – The company who managed lettings have gone into liquidation and owe</p>	

	<p>money to the school. The Finance Director and the Finance committee propose writing down the debt. Trustees <b>AGREED</b></p> <p>Lettings income is down. The potential cost of paying for supply teachers has been highlighted as a risk There are no large service contracts due. Estates LLW told the meeting that work on the detached playing field continues. The project to build a toilet and washing block is in progress. An IT upgrade is planned.</p>	
14.	<p><b>Link trustee reports</b> The new term has just started therefore there were no updates from link trustees</p>	
15.	<p><b>Policies</b> CGk told the meeting that all policies had been circulated to the SLT and will be dealt with at committee meetings.</p>	
16	<p><b>GDPR</b> One subject access report has been received and has been fulfilled on time.</p>	
17.	<p><b>Chair's action and business</b> The chair told the meeting that no urgent action has been taken since the last FGB meeting.</p> <p>The chair told the meeting that correspondence had been received regarding the detached playing field project. This correspondence has been acknowledged and passed to the appropriate body.</p> <p>There was nothing to add to trustee projects</p> <p>School uniform review The currently uses Fosters as the school uniform supplier. The school have been contacted by another supplier and prices received. Discussions between the school, Fosters and the new supplier are progressing. Trustees have been invited to work directly with the FD on the supply of uniform <b>AP7 – FD / trustees to update the next FGB regarding school uniform suppliers</b></p> <p>The chair reminded trustees that statutory guidance on school uniform is expected</p>	<b>FD/trustees</b>
18.	<p><b>Dates of future full governors meetings all start at 19.00</b> 08.12.21 – FGB and AGM 26.01.22 09.03.22 11.05.22 13.07.22</p>	

Meeting closed at 20.58

Signed: .....

Date: .....

Catherine Gater – Chair of Governors Birchwood High School

**Summary of action points**

AP1 – Trustees who would like to know more about the position of vice chair were asked to contact either the CoG or the Principal

AP2 – Trustees who have not already done so, to complete and return the business interests form to the Finance Director and the HR Manager.

AP3 - Trustees who would like to know more about being the chair of the audit committee were asked to contact either the CoG or the Principal

AP4 – Clerk to circulate the governing board and committee membership.

AP5 All trustees to complete a short bio and return to the chair; these bios will be posted on the school website

AP6 – A link asking for feedback on the SEF/SIP will be added to the KCSIE questionnaire and circulated to trustees. Trustees have been asked to complete and return the questionnaire.

AP7 – FD / trustees to update the next FGB regarding school uniform suppliers