



**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 Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> July 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
*	<b>Fred Gray – Vice Chair</b>	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
	Vacancy	Parent	
	Jane Wach	Parent	09.09.24
	Gill Turner – <b>Vice Chair</b>	Parent	04.12.22
*	Hilary Scotcher	Parent	30.06.22
*	Lisa Watkins	Parent	30.06.22
	Vacancy	Parent	
	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

John Oglesbury – Prospective Trustee

Chris Emery – Prospective Trustee

Matthew Free – Prospective Trustee

Ivan Shepherd – Clerk

<b>Item</b>		<b>Action</b>
1.	<b>Welcome and receive apologies for absence</b> Apologies were received from CS, LB, LW, HS & FG	
2.	<b>Declarations / pecuniary interests</b> There were no declarations of any new pecuniary interests, gifts or hospitality. There were no interests declared that related to matters being discussed at this meeting.	

3.	<p><b>Members ordinary resolution to re-appointment of Principal and staff governors as trustees</b></p> <p>Members <b>AGREED UNANIMOUSLY</b> that with effect from the adoption of the new articles of association Chris Ingate, Claire Pressland, Lee Bothwell and Ross Noblett should continue as Trustees, but their appointment be pursuant to Article 57 for CI and Article 50 for CP, LB and RN. It was confirmed that CP, LB and RN should continue their existing terms of office.</p>	
4.	<p><b>MLM and action points</b></p> <p>Trustees <b>AGREED</b> that the minutes of the last FGB meeting held on 05.05.21 were a fair reflection of that meeting.</p> <p>Action Points from 05.05.21</p> <p>AP1 – Clerk to add detached playing field to the agenda of the next FGB meeting <b>Completed</b></p> <p>AP2 - Governors to consider if they would rather be a trustee or member and inform the CoG and GT <b>Completed</b></p>	
5.	<p><b>Principal’s report</b></p> <p>The Principal’s report was circulated prior to the meeting for trustees to review and attend the meeting with questions and constructive challenge.</p> <p>The key points of discussion were as follows:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Year groups 9+10 have been sent home to self-isolate, these groups are being taught remotely. Attendance is good for other year groups.</li> <li>• Sports day was covid compliant it was a great success enjoyed by the pupils and staff.</li> <li>• The music evening was very uplifting and joyous.</li> <li>• The school continues to receive updates from the DfE regarding covid, self-isolation and vaccination of young people.</li> <li>• All pupils have been given lateral flow tests and asked to test during the summer holiday.</li> <li>• Yr. 11 and Yr.13 results will come through in August. Some appeals are expected and there is a robust process in place to deal with those. CGk told the meeting that the school are very confident in the moderation and assessment process which took place.</li> <li>• The safeguarding report was circulated with the Principal’s report, there were no questions.</li> <li>• The health and safety report was circulated with the Principal’s report, there were no questions.</li> <li>• A meeting of the parent council has taken place, the feedback from it was very positive. Parents felt that the line between teaching, safety and the removal of restrictions is a very fine one and that overall the school have responded well. Parents also felt that communication from the school has been very good.</li> <li>• The covid risk register will become and Outbreak Plan from September 2021.</li> <li>• Summer school for the incoming Yr.7 will take place in August.</li> <li>• SS explained the priorities for next year will be based around the principle of “Building Back Better”</li> <li>• SS told the meeting that he has identified organisations who will work alongside the school and pupils and help grow for a stronger future.</li> </ul>	

- Tactical and diverse use of these resources will form the building blocks for growth.
- CGk told the meeting that the process of CAG had been robust and that he had confidence in the moderation and assessment process undertaken by teachers, adding that all teachers have trust in each other's judgments.  
Appeals from parents are expected and there is a robust process in place to deal with those.
- CGk told the meeting that the process of CAG has caused some anxiety in teachers.  
A trustee asked what support is in place to help those teachers who were feeling anxious about the grading process.  
CGk told the meeting that line managers have met regularly with teachers listening to their concerns, supporting them and explaining that the appeals process will go to a central point and not be directed at individual teachers.
- There have been one subject access and one freedom of information request. These have been dealt with within the time limits.
- Policies are all up to date.
- Quality assurance and homework continues and will become a focus in the next academic year.
- There will be a big literacy push next year and catch up work will continue.
- Summer school will be part of a wider strategic transition from primary school into Yr.7.

#### Finance and approval of the budget

The finance report was circulated prior to the meeting for trustees to review and to attend the meeting with questions.

The key points of the discussion around the budget were as follows:-

- The school is expected to end the financial year with a small surplus
- The five year budget together with the underlying assumptions has been circulated to trustees. It was confirmed that the budget was reviewed by the Finance and Estates committee and the SLT. Changes made subsequent to the review by the Finance committee were flagged.
- The key assumptions underlying the budget were explained.
- A financial benchmarking exercise has been carried out, the results of which are on the governor portal.
- There was a discussion about the churn assumption, trustees **AGREED** that such an adjustment was appropriate and this should be applied in each year rather than there be a single year adjustment. There was discussion around the level and it was **AGREED** that the adjustment should be a made as a fixed percentage applied annually.
- It was confirmed that amounts shown as revenue contributions to capital would not be from restricted funds such as GAG.

It was confirmed that Trustees are not approving the capital spend, at this point an amount is shown for budgeting purposes.

- A trustee asked if the opening of the Avanti secondary school will have an impact on our pupil numbers and budget and had that been considered. . It was confirmed that Pupil Numbers in the sixth form have been revised down following review by the Finance Committee but that full capacity at year 7 had remained as an assumption.
- The Principal told the meeting the Avanti school is not due to open until September 2022 and that there are many unknowns; local forecasts currently

	<p>show significant local demand for places over the budgeted period; however the opening will be a variable for the next budget setting process</p> <p>The budget was <b>APPROVED</b>.</p> <p>Other matters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A new Finance Director has been appointed.</li> <li>• A minor change in the scheme of financial delegation has been published on the portal. Trustees <b>APPROVED</b> the change.</li> <li>• A letter regarding an update to the Academies Financial Handbook has been received. Trustees have been made aware of it. Consideration of the changes will be an agenda item in the next school year.</li> </ul>	
6.	<p><b>Self-review exercise</b></p> <p>The Principal asked trustees to review what they felt the next 12 months at Birchwood might look like, what the school does well and what the school could improve upon. The Principal told the meeting that this exercise had been completed by members of staff. The outcome will help shape the strategic future of the school. Trustees were randomly assigned to a breakout room of 4 where they could exchange ideas.</p> <p><b>AP1 – Trustees to capture the thoughts from the self-review exercise and send directly to the Principal.</b></p>	<b>Trustees</b>
7.	<p><b>Committee updates</b></p> <p>Curriculum – RC</p> <p>RC reported on the last curriculum meeting, the key points were:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are 224 pupils signed up for summer school</li> <li>• The improvement / catch up plan includes a very strong literacy piece.</li> <li>• A new library manager has been appointed.</li> </ul> <p>Trustees <b>APPROVED</b> the following policies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education of looked after children</li> <li>• Anti-bullying</li> </ul> <p>Finance and Estates – GT / LLW including Detached Playing Field update. GT reminded trustees that finance had been covered earlier in the meeting. There were no further questions.</p> <p>Subject to a minor typo correction, trustees <b>APPROVED</b> the following policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Charging and remissions policy</li> <li>• Lettings policy</li> <li>• Investment policy</li> <li>• LGPS discretions policy</li> <li>• Risk management policy</li> <li>• Staff benefits and expenses policy</li> </ul> <p>The Finance Director told the meeting that the services of a pension expert will be required to finalise the LGPS arrangements.</p> <p>LLW told the meeting that the health and safety report had been covered earlier in the meeting.</p> <p>CGk updated trustees on the detached playing field.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The master plan was shown and explained.</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultations with local residents had taken place and were positive.</li> <li>• Discussions about the impact of noise; transport and floodlights on the area were a part of that consultation.</li> <li>• A flooding assessment has been carried out.</li> <li>• The school have met with representatives of the local council.</li> <li>• A full public consultation began on 15.07.21 with two open meetings. These meetings will be attended by trustees from the Finance and Estates committee. The consultation will continue via the website.</li> </ul> <p>Personnel - JM</p> <p>JM reported on the last personnel meeting, the key points of discussion were:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitoring of the gender mix within the SLT</li> <li>• The possible introduction of a flexible working policy</li> <li>• A watching brief on any sexist or misogynistic behaviour</li> <li>• An extra day of for teachers as a reward for their hard work during the pandemic.</li> </ul>	
8.	<p><b>Articles of association</b></p> <p>GT told the meeting that the written resolutions have been passed, the new articles of association were therefore adopted on the 28<sup>th</sup> June 2021, and that the paperwork has been sent to Companies House by post due to an issue with their online filing service.</p> <p><b>Appointment of independent Members</b></p> <p>There will be an informal meeting of the seven potential new members, the members are expected to be appointed at the AGM which is due to be held in December 2021.</p>	
9.	<p><b>Link governor update</b></p> <p>Safeguarding, Health &amp; Safety and SEND / DA had been covered earlier in the meeting. Two updates were reported:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two trustees completed a school learning walk.</li> <li>• A trustee had completed a science visit</li> </ul>	
10.	<p><b>Membership of the governing body</b></p> <p>The chair told the meeting that HS is resigning as a trustee with immediate effect. The chair thanked HS for her contribution to the school over her term.</p> <p><b>AP2 – Clerk to inform HfL of the change on the board of trustees.</b></p> <p>The chair reminded trustees that an election for the positions of chair and vice chairs along with the agreeing link roles will be held at the FGB meeting due to be held in September 2021.</p>	<b>Clerk</b>
11.	<p><b>GDPR</b></p> <p>Completed earlier in the meeting.</p>	
12.	<p><b>Policy Management</b></p> <p>Completed earlier in the meeting.</p>	
13.	<p><b>Chair's Report</b></p> <p>One piece of correspondence has been received from a parent; this has been resolved</p> <p><b>AP3 – 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>
14.	<p><b>Dates of future full governors meetings all start at 19.00</b></p> <p>Meeting dates TBC</p>	

Meeting closed at 20.53

Signed: .....

Date: .....

Catherine Gater – Chair of Governors Birchwood High School

**Summary of action points**

AP1 – Trustees to capture the thoughts from the self-review exercise and send directly to the Principal.

AP2 – Clerk to inform HfL of the change on the board of trustees.

AP3 – All trustees to complete a short bio and return to the chair; these bios will be posted on the school website.