



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

**Minutes of the Full Governing Board Meeting of the Academy Trust held at school on  
 Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> July 2022 at 19.00**

	Name	Category	End of Term
	Ruth Crowland	Member Appointed	06.03.25
	Vacancy	Member Appointed	
	Leigh Lloyd-Warren	Member Appointed	22.01.24
	Jane Mansfield – <b>Vice Chair</b>	Member Appointed	22.01.24
	Vacancy	Member Appointed	
*	Jim Winter	Member Appointed	06.07.24
	Ruth Bamlett	Member Appointed	14.03.23
	Catherine Gater – <b>Chair</b>	Member Appointed	13.07.24
*	Charlotte Sear	Member Appointed	22.01.24
	Richard Townsend	Member Appointed	03.03.24
	John Oglesby	Parent Appointed	07.09.25
	Vacancy	Parent Appointed	
	Gill Turner – <b>Vice Chair</b>	Parent Appointed	04.12.22
	Chris Emery	Parent Appointed	07.09.25
	Vacancy	Parent Appointed	
*	Matthew Free	Parent Appointed	07.09.25
	Chris Ingate – <b>Principal</b>	Principal	Ex-Officio
	Ross Noblett	Member Appointed	01.04.23
*	Claire Pressland	Member Appointed	02.11.24
	Kate Byers	Member Appointed	07.12.25
	Vacancy	Co-opted	
	Deryk Bull – <b>Finance Director</b>	Advisory	

\* Denotes absence

Also Present

Ivan Shepherd – Clerk

Charlie Gilbank – Deputy Principal

Sam Stopps – Deputy Principal

Item		Action
1.	<b>Welcome and receive apologies for absence</b> Apologies were received and accepted from JW, CS and CP.	
2.	<b>Declarations / pecuniary interests</b> There were no declarations of any new pecuniary interests. There were no declarations of any new gifts or hospitality.	

	<p>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> <p>There were no other declarations of interests that would affect decisions being made at this meeting.</p>	
3.	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <p>Governors <b>AGREED</b> to take lettings / gym as AOB.</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 11.05.22 are a fair reflection of that meeting.</p> <p>There were no action points from the previous meeting.</p>	
5.	<p><b>Principal's report and financial update</b></p> <p>The Principal's report was circulated prior to the meeting for trustees to read 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>• The Principal thanked all trustees for their support and hard work during and post pandemic.</li> <li>• Attendance is good.</li> <li>• Public exams have taken place for the first time in two years.</li> <li>• Staffing levels are good with very little turnover.</li> <li>• Pupil numbers are forecast to be at 1,400 for 2022/23, future forecast will remain at 1,400 in the near term.</li> </ul> <p>The risks to that number are a new secondary school in the area and another existing school which is moving to new premises.</p> <p>The gender balance is about even.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SLT have posted their school transformation projects on teams. Each one has a list of priorities and has been RAG rated.</li> </ul> <p>These school transformation projects form the basis of the long term vision for the school and will be built into the school improvement plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Principal told the meeting that positive outcome for all students will always be the priority.</li> <li>• Trustees wanted to thank the SLT and all staff for their continued hard work and dedication.</li> </ul>	
6.	<p><b>Finance Report and Budget Approval</b></p> <p>June Monitoring report</p> <p>The June monitoring report was circulated prior to the meeting for trustees to read 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>• The school is forecasted to end the financial year with a small surplus.</li> <li>• Some of this surplus has been allocated, and money received which has yet to be spent.</li> <li>• There are a number of ongoing projects which have 2021/22 GAG funding allocated to it.</li> <li>• Boiler work / replacement needs to be properly costed and put through the tender process.</li> <li>• Cleaning is going through the tender process and will be brought to the F&amp;E committee and FGB for a decision.</li> <li>• Insurance renewal will take place at the end of October 2022.</li> <li>• All statutory matters are up to date.</li> </ul>	

	<p>Budget 2022/23</p> <p>The 2022/23 budget documents were circulated prior to the meeting for trustees to read 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>• The budget figures have been reviewed and analysed in depth at the F&amp;E meeting held on the 22.06.22.</li> <li>• Since then the figures have been amended and further analysed by the steering committee and the chair of the Finance committee.</li> <li>• Trustees were told that the biggest concern is the huge increase in the cost of energy.</li> <li>• The Finance Director gave a detailed summary of quotes he had received from a number of energy suppliers for both a variable rate and a fixed two year rate.</li> <li>• There was a very useful discussion on the advantages or disadvantages of both the variable and a two year fixed term rate along with other available options.</li> <li>• There was also a very useful discussion about the rate of inflation used in the budget planning figures.</li> <li>• The Finance Director had used the government guidance figure of 2%.</li> <li>• Trustees recognise that for some, mainly non staff related costs, the inflation figure may well be higher. This was flagged as a risk, and mitigations have been noted.</li> </ul> <p>Lighting as a service scheme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Finance director told trustees that the lighting as a service scheme is approved by the ESFA.</li> <li>• Two tenders have been received and both had been verified with a pricing verification model.</li> <li>• Trustees were told that the scheme works through the contractor replacing all lighting in the school with LED. The contractor takes a fixed percentage of the savings.</li> <li>• Both tenders were circulated prior to the meeting.</li> <li>• The Finance Director <b>RECOMENDED</b> using Airis as the contractor.</li> <li>• A trustee noted that three tenders are usually required for a project.</li> <li>• The Finance Director told the meeting that there are only two suppliers able to offer this service and that the school had tenders from both of them.</li> </ul> <p>Trustees <b>APPROVED</b> the following unanimously</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. That the school will agree to use the Lighting as a Service Scheme.</li> <li>2. That the supplier / contractor for the Lighting as a Service Scheme will be Airis.</li> <li>3. That the school will sign up to a 2 year fixed price energy deal.</li> <li>4. The 2022/23 budget.</li> </ol> <p>Trustees noted the following:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. That there will be a concerted effort to reduce energy use.</li> <li>2. That the impact of higher than forecast inflation is a risk to the budget figures.</li> <li>3. The KPI's within the budget proposal.</li> </ol>	
7.	<p><b>Committee updates</b></p> <p>Curriculum - RC</p> <p>RC updated trustees on the last curriculum meeting.</p> <p>RC told the meeting that members of the curriculum committee have been very impressed with all who work within the DA / SEND department, noting that the leadership of the department has been excellent.</p>	

	<p>RC wanted to put on record the thanks of the curriculum committee. Finance Nothing to add</p> <p>Estates to include DPF As per the declaration at the start of this meeting RT took no part in this discussion nor did he vote. LLW told the meeting that the DPF sub-committee had received proposals from the three consultants the sub-committee have been in discussion with. These proposals were circulated to trustees prior to the meeting.</p> <p>After considering the proposals carefully, the DPF sub-committee are <b>RECOMENDING</b> that in order to remove excessive complexity from the process of developing the DPF any collaboration with Bishops Stortford Community Football club be <b>REMOVED</b> and not considered as an option for development. Trustees <b>AGREED</b> unanimously with this recommendation.</p> <p>Trustees <b>AGREED</b> unanimously that the DFP sub-committee manage the communication of this decision.</p> <p>Personnel - JM Trustees were updated on the last personnel meeting and told that the committee are planning for the next academic year. The personnel committee wanted to put on record their thanks to the HR manager who is working and continues to work incredibly hard.</p>	
8.	<p><b>Link governor update</b> Safeguarding (RB)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A SCR review has taken place.</li> <li>• The SCR will be managed using the HfL format.</li> <li>• CPOMs training continues.</li> </ul> <p>SEND &amp; DA (RC)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The past year has been very positive under new leadership.</li> <li>• The plans for next year are very exciting.</li> <li>• The full impact that covid / lockdown has had is not yet known and plans are in place to help mitigate against them.</li> </ul> <p>Health &amp; Safety (RT)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The results of a recent site tour have been posted on Teams and discussed at the last F&amp;E meeting.</li> <li>• Only minor matters were flagged and these have been dealt with by the site team.</li> </ul> <p>Science (CGt)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A science visit has taken place and the report has been placed on Teams.</li> <li>• Links with other local schools have been formed and are proving to be very useful.</li> </ul> <p>Careers (JO)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A careers visit has been completed and the report has been placed on Teams</li> <li>• Good feedback was received /from the Enterprise Co-ordinator.</li> </ul>	

9.	<p><b>Membership of the governing body</b></p> <p>There are two parent appointed vacancies. The school have requested nominations from the parent body to fill these vacancies, to date no nominations have been received. A year 7 parents evening will take place on 14.07.22 and nominations will be sought at this event.</p> <p>RC has resigned as a trustee. The entire board thanked RC for all of her hard work as a governor / trustee over many years.</p> <p><b>AP1 – Clerk to inform HfL that RC has resigned as a trustee.</b></p>	<b>Clerk</b>
10.	<p><b>GDPR</b></p> <p>CGk told the meeting that he is DPO training has taken place and has been very useful. The training has opened up networking opportunities and best practice benchmarking. The school are reviewing internal data protection practices.</p>	
11.	<p><b>Policies</b></p> <p>There were no policies to agree at this meeting.</p>	
12.	<p><b>Chair's Report</b></p> <p>The CoT told the meeting that there have been no correspondence or matters that have been dealt with since the last FGB meeting.</p> <p>Governance self-review exercise. Trustees were given a pro-forma containing 20 questions posed by the NGA. An electronic version of this pro-forma will be circulated. Trustees were asked to complete and RAG rate the Birchwood board of trustees against each question.</p> <p><b>AP2 – Trustees to return the governance self-review pro-forma to the chair of Trustees prior to the next FGB meeting</b></p>	
	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <p>Lettings / Gym - The question of whether or not the school should add the gym to the lettings offering had been discussed at the F&amp;E committee. At that meeting it was decided that a set of T&amp;Cs would be required before the gym could be added to lettings. Trustees recommended that these should be reviewed by a lawyer if this could be done at a reasonable cost. As the quotes received were very high, trustees have agreed to accept the T&amp;Cs as provided, particularly as the gym is currently safely used by members of the school community. Trustees <b>AGREED</b> that the gym can be added to the school's letting offering.</p>	
13.	<p><b>Dates of future FGB meetings. All start at 19.00</b></p> <p>TBC</p>	

Meeting closed at 20.56

Signed: .....

Date: .....

Catherine Gater – Chair of Trustees Birchwood High School

AP1 – Clerk to inform HfL that RC has resigned as a trustee.

AP2 – Trustees to return the governance self-review pro-forma to the chair of Trustees prior to the next FGB meeting.