

Minutes from a meeting of the Governing Body of Blatchington Mill School & Sixth Form College on Thursday 14 July 2016 at 17.00 hours.

Those present: Peter Sowrey (PS) (Chair), Kevin Fry (KF), Gareth Chan (GC) – arrived 5.15pm during Item 6, Addy Balogun (AB), John Barker (JB), Peter Gerry (PG) – arrived 5.40pm during Item 6, Richard Goodsell (RG), Ashley Harrold (AH - Headteacher), Richard Mills (RM) Andrew Wallace (AW) and Sally Hunt (SaH) arrived late

In attendance: Ruth King (RK) Deputy Head; Sarah Hextall (SH) Business Manager; Kate Hodson temporary clerk

Quorum: 8 out of 12 governors started the meeting; 11 governors attended; the meeting was quorate throughout.

1. Attendance – to receive and, if thought fit, to accept apologies for absence.

Apology from Fiona Bauermeister received after the meeting.

Request to ensure that Deputy Head RK and Business Manager SH are copied into all papers

Attendance sheet given to PS by clerk

Action: Clerk to copy in as above

2. Any urgent business which the Chair is of the opinion should be considered at this meeting. Included in items on the agenda.

3. To note any declarations of interest which any Governors may have in any items of business

Item 7 RG noted interest in Block C build.

Item 6 KF is staff governor and a Trade Union representative.

4. To approve the minutes of the meetings held on 26 May and 16 June 2016

Duly signed by PS after physical amendment to include RK's apology for absence. Signed minutes given to SH by clerk

5. Any matters arising not dealt with elsewhere on the agenda.

Action points gone through from minutes: all actions completed, some of which to be reflected in this meeting.

6. To discuss the staffing structure presented at the 16 June meeting.

AH passed round 2 papers: 1: a complete table showing current roles and new roles of each staff member; 2: Diagrams showing the grades of roles within the 5 Business areas of Finance, Systems/IT, Facilities, Data, other administration.

A letter from the local branch of Unison trade union had also been circulated to all governors.

KF acknowledged that his role as Unison Rep throws up a conflict with his role as staff governor. KF did not attend the previous GB meeting, as governors were being asked to vote on the proposed restructure. AH and all governors agreed it was important to allow KF to contribute, and then step out of the meeting when the letter from Unison branch was being discussed.

AH agreed this was a change on a large scale for the school – progress has been made since the consultation period started and AH wanted to show governors that the school is on track to resolve all outstanding issues raised by staff affected.

AH mentioned in Paper 2, there is an issue around pay protection – which means savings may not be seen immediately, following the restructure. There is also a Facilities B role which could possibly be slotted into by another member of staff and meant that redundancies were not being considered.

Governors asked the following questions:

Is AH satisfied that all the necessary admin roles are covered in the new structure? AH confirmed he was. SH mentioned 2 members of student services are being lost, but those members of staff were leaving anyway.

How has the Open Door policy worked? AH has kept a log of when slots have been offered to staff, to speak to him. AH feels there has been a genuine listening process within the consultation.

What % of staff are taking reduced salary? In Data section, one role has been discontinued but the role was vacant. However, no-one has been forced to decrease time and hours and some staff have asked for more hours, which has been able to be accommodated, within the school Budget.

Have roles been downgraded? The grading for HR admin has been reviewed and resulted in some roles going from B to A. However the student services officer and RIC roles are B, as these are student facing. One role has changed grade downwards with different responsibilities – this is within data.

If redundancies have not been ruled out, how does that affect costs? The school has prevented redundancies in Admin by moving staff to other roles. There is a risk in IT but not in Facilities, as there is another role which can be offered.

The redundancies pressure has lifted, but some staff are still expressing grave concerns. However AH believes all individuals' issues have been settled.

KF was invited to comment on the staff voice as Unison Rep. The staff accept the restructure is necessary. However, KF reported some staff hadn't received new job descriptions and felt they were being rushed to make a quick decision, without all the information they needed. (**Note** - KF left the room 5.43pm)

PS had a letter dated 8th July, from Unison branch Sue Bowes, to AH, raising points staff are not happy about, around a lack of information including job descriptions. The letter asks for the consultation period to be extended, with Unison considering lodging a collective dispute, whilst keeping the status quo.

Governors raised the following questions and comment:

There is some governor concern over protected pay and how this affects the new spend.

Reply to the letter

How long does AH think he has to reply to the letter, so that the process can move forward?

Outstanding concerns from staff

KF's view from staff is not a long way from AH view that all is settled. Staff can understandably feel unsettled just because of change. This could account for inconsistencies in responses from staff about whether they feel things are settled and agreed. Could KF attend further individual meetings with any member of staff with an outstanding concern, (if they want him to be present)?

Lack of information/slow information

Job descriptions (JDs) were shared at the first meeting in a brief format, as the school uses generic job descriptions for administrative roles. Attaching this information to the generic JDs would have been clearer but that did not happen. However, AH confirmed JDs have been given to all who asked as soon as possible. Some of the issues are around a perceived lack of information, which has been/can be remedied easily. SH suggested meeting the Admin team as a whole? If the team is feeling unsettled, that could help. Governors want AH to offer every opportunity to staff to resolve problems.

Extending the process

An extension to the consultation impacts on the whole time frame for restructure – if it goes over summer holidays, the school cannot recruit to any vacancies until the process is finished. This would have a huge impact as some roles need school knowledge, so the school would have to ask other staff to cover those in the interim. AH thinks would be very difficult to extend.

Governors want to consider that. AH wants to resolve issues without further dispute and certainly any that can be resolved by talking over the next 3 days.

Unison dispute?

Action: PS to contact Unison rep tonight by email and say the school is trying to resolve the issues

Action: PS to clarify legal agreement mentioned in the Unison letter and clarify

what is meant by “the status quo”

Action: AH wants to contact HR/LA today.

KF re-joined the meeting

PS fed back to KF and summarised for all governors. The positive aspect of consultation means opportunities have opened up for some staff. GB wants to agree a way forward. Starting the next day Friday 15 July AH will offer further meetings asap to identify specific issues, in order to address them, to be attended by KF/Unison rep if member of staff wants that.

AH/KF need to find out who is unhappy and deal with their individual concerns. KF believes it is only a handful of people. AH/KF can then provide a further list, to say all is resolved, by next FGB. If not, then the request for an extension will be considered at that stage.

Next FGB to discuss consultation – Tuesday 19 July 2016 at 5.30pm

7. To receive a report on the Finance Committee meeting of 20 June – school budget 2016/2017

The following points were highlighted to governors:

- Not much movement since last meeting.
- Now have an agreement to set up a SEN funding meeting. AH feels got a long way forward in terms of SEN funding, which does address some of the issues with the Budget.
- Deficit is staying consistent
- PS gave out letters to each governor from Showtime Productions, requesting a reduction in hire fees on Windmill Theatre and commented hire charges are delegated to Finance committee
- C South build is on track, with a planned handover at the end of October half term. Lightning strikes to scaffolding were reported, being covered by insurance.
- The school is upgrading its fire safety systems and has attracted matched funding from the LA.

Action: PS to circulate letter from AH/PS

8. To receive the Head Teacher’s report

Chair asked AH to draw out salient points:-

Attendance figures help show how the school can use data to tackle attendance. The school knows certain groups who don't attend map to groups who don't achieve as well. For example, students in receipt of Pupil Premium don't attend well. Teachers get this information, which enables conversations to happen between teachers and students

Governors asked for clarification of letters on P4. N – No longer on Plan. S – Statement. E – EHC plan. K – any form of SEN without EHCP

Governors asked how requests to keep children off school e.g. for holidays were dealt with. AH confirmed requests were usually declined, in line with LA policy. The school is aware some absences may be reported as illness not absence requests. However, the school sees non-attendance more as an issue with children not engaging and not wanting to be at school, which is something the school can tackle.

Governors asked for explanation of results tables, which now included further breakdown as requested by governors. AH mentioned the results can now form an accurate list for league tables.

Governors asked about numbers for sixth form for September 2016. Numbers are higher than last year, but won't be confirmed until mid-September 2016.

9. To receive an update on Post 16, Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND), Teaching School and Children In Care (CIC) inspections

Post 16 inspection. AH has the report following the inspection, involving over 16's

Teaching School – rigorous assessment by assessors, but decision will not be made until 2016 results are available.

Children in Care (CIC) inspection went well. AH circulated a CIC review report – which was glowing and highlights what the school does well. There are currently 13 children in care in school.

The review commented that governors need to scrutinise CIC as a group, in same way as they might look closely at say, Pupil Premium (PP) children.

Action: Clerk to distribute SEND inspection report to all governors

Action: AH to share report with governors.

10. To receive an update of the uniform change process

The school uniform has now been changed and Friends of Blatch have been very positive. AH is happy the new uniform meets important criteria of washing well, being gender neutral, containing shorts, skirt, a universal top, and being produced at the same cost to parents for any item in any size.

2016 Year 7 will start to wear the uniform as a transition year, then all children from 2017. Children in Year 9 wrote AH a letter about the uniform and AH met with them.

11. To receive an update on safeguarding

The latest version has already been circulated to staff.

The school is about to introduce Child Protection Online Management System (CPOMS) in school, an electronic system of recording safeguarding issues, and other behaviour issues, which can quickly be shared with safeguarding lead or behaviour lead. RK reassured governors that only the safeguarding lead can log onto the system and see all the

issues logged. Other staff may have logins, for specific issues.

The cost is £1500 a year – the school is signing up for a year and a half. This is because SIMS is also developing something the school may want to use at some point in the future.

Governors asked how secure the system is, e.g. in case of Disaster Recovery (DR) and whether hard copies are also being kept?

DR is covered but RK confirmed there are no hard copies being kept. RK had talked to the police and the local safeguarding board, both of whom recommended not having hard copies.

p7. Date agreed should read July 2016, not March 2016

P12. Staff training. Amended to 'Designated safeguarding lead and Deputy'. RK confirmed with both the lead and deputy now being trained and updated every other year, they are less likely to miss anything new coming through.

Governors asked if two people responsible for safeguarding is enough for a large school. RK confirmed there is some overlap with other members of staff roles and CPOMS recording also adds to that.

RK acknowledged that having the Safeguarding lead and the Behaviour lead as different members of staff, there are communication challenges.

Action: RK to update Keeping Children Safe in Education 2015 version document, to add in links to more recent version.

Action: Prevent training has been recommended to all staff and RK will recirculate the link, so that at least one governor can also undertake the training.

12. To endorse school policy on safeguarding

GB agreed to endorse the school Safeguarding policy, with changes to include reference to deputy safeguarding lead and the use of CPOMS.

13. To receive reports on training undertaken by Governors.

PG asked all governors to come to him with training requests, so that he can follow up.

14. To receive a report on any actions taken by Chair.

None. Chair thanked Ashley on behalf of the Governing Body for his hard work in his first year of Headship at Blatchington Mill. The Chair also thanked all governors for their hard work this year.

These minutes are an accurate reflection of the meeting.

Signed ...

Position ...

Date ...