

Minutes of an extraordinary meeting of the Governing Body of Blatchington Mill School and Sixth Form College held on 19 July 2016

Those Present: Peter Sowrey (PS) (Chair), Kevin Fry (KF), Fiona Bauermeister (FB), John Barker (JB), Richard Goodsell (RG), Ashley Harrold (AH) and Richard Mills (RM).

In attendance: David Harvey (DH – clerk) and Sarah Hextall (SH – school business manager).

Quorum: 7 out of 12 governors present with 3 vacancies – meeting was quorate throughout.

0. Welcome.

1. Apologies for Absence.

- 1.1. Sally Hunt (SH), Gareth Chan (GC), Addy Balogun (AB), Peter Gerry (PG), and Andrew Wallace (AW) had sent their apologies for absence which were accepted.

2. Urgent Business - None

3. Declarations of interest – KF notified the FGB of his role as staff Unison (union) representative.

4. Minutes

- 4.1. Approval of the minutes of the meetings of 16 June and 14 July 2016 was deferred by the FGB to its next meeting on 22 September 2016.

5. Matters Arising – Not applicable.

6. Staffing consultation and final proposals response

- 6.1. AH circulated a document to governors dated 19 July 2016 – *End of Consultation Period Document on Proposed Restructure of Blatchington Mill School Business Section* – stating that a number of actions had been taken since the FGB meeting of 14 July. Letters had been sent to staff raising specific concerns had been sent out; also a letter to all staff in the business section; all had been given 36 hours to respond.
- 6.2. AH circulated an additional document to governors, prepared by SH, which set out the final proposed staff structure and showing the various sections of the school. AH stated that there were two outstanding elements in the process:-

Competitive interview
- 6.3. AH stated that this would be put in place for an ICT(B) post, for which two members of staff would be interviewed on 20 July. The unsuccessful candidate

would be put forward for another role, so no redundancy was envisaged.

Pay Protection

- 6.4. AH recalled that in the original consultation, the school had not offered this facility but now was willing to do so after consulting the local authority (LA) on this point. The union Unison had asked for a three year period to apply, with the school offering two (100% for the first year, 75% the second), as recently agreed as the LA's policy. Unison had not agreed with the LA's interpretation of the school's obligations in this regard; so this issue was unresolved.

Discussion

- 6.5. In his role as staff Unison representative, KF endorsed AH's summary of the latest situation with regard to the consultation, noting that there were to be no redundancies and the pay protection point was in dispute. KF reported having spoken to Unison who were adamant that a three year period applied; but noted this situation applied only to one member of staff. KF paid tribute to the hard work done by AH and SH over the weekend to achieve the current agreement.
- 6.6. Governors asked for reassurances that there would be no redundancies as a result of the competitive interview process. AH confirmed this would be the case, as there was an additional role to fill.
- 6.7. Governors asked for more detail on the pay protection point. AH stated that the difference in question was a drop from £21K to £13K; which should be seen against the perspective of the school managing a balance between maintaining staff morale and acting as guardian to its finances.
- 6.8. Governors asked for information about the Unison point, in terms of actual costs that would apply. AH stated that the savings that would accrue from the restructure exercise had not yet been incorporated into the new budget.
- 6.9. Governors asked about the state of negotiations with Unison. AH confirmed that the school was still discussing this point with the union and had made an offer. The key point to remember was that the staff position was secure.
- 6.10. Governors asked whether there were any additional risks to implementation of the proposal that they should be aware of. AH stated that there might have been one of a collective dispute, but this was now unlikely.
- 6.11. The Chair notified the FGB that he had contacted Susan Bowes (Unison) after the 14 July meeting, pointing to the progress in reaching an agreement, highlighting the positive changes and clarifying aspects of the restructure. Ms Bowes had acknowledged this message, pointing to the far reaching consequences.
- 6.12. The Chair asked KF if Unison members at the school had considered themselves as being treated fairly by the process. KF felt that was the case; he had emailed every member asking if they had any unresolved issues and only one reply (on pay protection) had been received. The only other outstanding issue was the Facilities/Performing Arts role change that has been deferred

pending job evaluation by BHCC.

- 6.13. The Chair noted that this restructure consultation with staff had been carried out and relevant documentation made available to all. The FGB took due account of this statement.

Timeframe

- 6.14. AH stated that the next steps would be for the competitive interview process to be carried out on 20 July, for some aspects of the restructure to take effect in October; others in September. There would be planning work carried out over the summer to arrange some of the physical realignment of offices. AH stated that the vacant roles envisaged would be advertised (facilities, senior leadership team assistant and receptionists) for recruitment in September. Notice of these advertisements would go out internally to staff in the next two days.
- 6.15. The Chair suggested the FGB meeting scheduled for 21 July be now cancelled, given the progress made to reach agreement on the restructure proposal. The FGB instead could be emailed a report on the competitive interview process and update on the pay protection issue. The FGB agreed this suggestion by the Chair.
- 6.16. The Chair expressed warm thanks on behalf of the FGB to AH and SH for all their work accomplished on this issue.

Conclusion

- 6.17. The Chair asked the FGB to approve the staff restructure proposal formally (the document referred to in paragraph 6.1 above), which was given by majority vote, as there was one abstention.

7. Chair's Actions

Pantomime

- 7.1. The Chair informed the FGB that Robert Blass, show producer of Showtime Productions and Music Theatre 2000 had contacted governors, asking for reconsideration of the school's decision to increase its Windmill Theatre hire charges for a planned pantomime this Christmas.
- 7.2. SH informed the FGB that the school had received a similar request from this organisation to reduce its charges last year, which it had accepted but would not be able to do so similarly in 2016.
- 7.3. The Chair asked if this was a matter that needed consideration by the FGB. SH believed this was a matter for the Finance Committee. The Chair endorsed this view, considering that the issue could be dealt with by email and was being addressed by the Finance Committee Chair (PG) in any case.

Action – Members of the FGB and the Finance Committee to be notified of the cancellation of the meeting scheduled for 21 July 2016 – Clerk.

These minutes are an accurate reflection of the meeting.

Signed ...

Position ...

Date ...