

The Knights Templar School

Minutes of the Governors' Meeting held on Tuesday 10th December 2013

Please note : these minutes will be corrected, if necessary, and approved at the next meeting. Meanwhile, they will be treated as accurate, also please read them carefully and let the Clerk know if you notice any significant errors.

If you want to raise items at the next meeting, they can be included on the agenda if GKY gets them by the next Finance and General Purposes Meeting on Wednesday 29th January 2013. In the case of an urgent item which arises after that date, please let him know anyway, to help in planning the timing of the meeting.

Part 1

1. **Members Present** : Graham Kingsley (GKY), Andrew Pickering (APG), David Cook (DCK), John Swift (JST), Richard Picking (RPG), Maria Lukianowicz (MLZ), Wendy Hepburn (WHN), Jo Johnson (JJN), Sarah Barker (SBR), Alison Atkinson (AAN), Sue Welch (SWH), Jane Millett (JMT), Julie Mutter (JMR), Brian Williams (BWS), Chris Gough (CGH), Ian Burrows (IBS), Jane Cole [Clerk] (JCE)
2. **Apologies** : Mike Boxall, Dari Samsami, Janet Wallace, Alan Church, Mark Overton
3. **Supporters' Reports** :
 - 3.1. Parents' Association (Mark Overton) : RPG confirmed that the AGM took place a few weeks ago and confirmed £6k has been used for canopies. The next target is £3K for a grand piano. Paul Herring has put in a second request for a couple of upright pianos; target £8K.
 - 3.2. Friends of KTS (Becky Northern) : Becky was not present at the meeting.
4. **Declaration of pecuniary or other interests** form was passed round.
5. **Governors' contacts with the school** form was passed round.
6. **Urgent 'other business' items arising since 25th November**
 - 6.1. Head's retirement at end of school year 2013-14 : APG felt it important governors/staff were informed at the right time. APG discussed with GKY three weeks ago and decided at that time the Governors meeting would be the appropriate time for governors to be informed.
 - 6.2. IBS : DfE recommends certain section of Raise-on-line for governors. Ofsted will refer to this. IBS could arrange a governors' training session on this which will give a greater insight into school results. **Action : IBS/Jo Sullivan**
7. **Minutes of meeting held on 16th October** were agreed as a true record.
8. **Matters arising from the previous minutes not otherwise on the Agenda**
 - 8.1. School meals (from 13.2.3) - progress? SWH discussed this in P&P with the school council and decided they wanted to tackle this issue. SWH has been in touch with AAN and both will have lunch with school council members. They will looking at pricing and look at food that is produced. They will also possibly do a survey.
 - 8.2. Update to 6th form documents on website (from 13.4.1 : sixth form information was not up to date). APG confirmed this has now been rectified.

9. Financial Update and Annual Report and Accounts

- 9.1. JST - F&GP recommend that we adopt the accounts that were distributed to all governors last week. They show a clean bill of financial health and the audit partner who presented these to F&GP praised our financial management practices - which was very pleasing to hear.
- 9.2. It is important for JST to reconcile the year end cash balance shown in the accounts to what he has previously reported to governors as being our uncommitted year end balance – he produced and circulated a short reconciliation
- 9.3. He also circulated the Management Letter last week which details the points that arose from the audit to which we are required to respond. These were considered to be minor points and caused the auditor no great concerns. The points raised were as follows:
- 9.4. We chose not to provide a full breakdown of staff governor remuneration that would attribute salary bands to named members of staff in the report. We gave the number of governors who fell into various remuneration bands, rather than naming them
- 9.5. We had received an overpayment of £4k from HCC in respect of a former pupil with special needs and are thus required to pay the money back
- 9.6. We need to ensure that our physical inventory of ICT equipment reflects the additions and disposals of ICT equipment detailed in the fixed asset register. We will need to spend some time with our ICT colleagues to do this.
- 9.7. Lloyds Bank advised that our Business Charge Card limits are great than the ones we originally applied for - £14k was advised however we had always been working to a £7k limit.
- 9.8. It was noted that the fee for a one-off letting last year to NHDC for the Baldock Festival was invoiced after and not before the event. We will make sure all lettings are invoiced in advance in future
- 9.9. JJN: is there a benchmark to carry forward? JST said it used to be a limit of 12%. This has changed in the last year encouraging academies to carry forward what they want as long as credible reason for doing so.
- 9.10. MLZ: plans to spend the Pupil Premium soon? JST: discussions at SLT are ongoing. Some is going to staffing budget. IBS met with Margot Whitworth who has taken responsibility for Pupil Premium. A report will go onto website and we want this done before end of term.
- 9.11 JMR: how much detail do we need to provide? IBS: there are no exact guidelines.
- 9.12 DCK asked about the unfunded pension deficit of £700K. APG said this figure was the one that concerned F&GP the most. There is a pool arrangement with other Herts academies so consequences of this school compared to other schools will be shared. The only problem would be is if staff all retired at the same time: unlikely. This applies only to non-teachers, we do have detailed actuarial figures. The Teachers Pension Scheme has no financial implications for the school.
- 9.13 DCK confirmed our pleasure at positive Auditors' comments, which governors endorsed.
- 9.14 ***The annual report and accounts were duly agreed by the Governing Body and were signed at the end of the meeting***
The monthly monitoring report for November is still being compiled and will be sent out to all governors next week. October's monitoring report was discussed at F&GP – details are in the minutes – not much to report given it reflects only the first two months of the year. Pleasingly, the staff budget is running £17k under budget, so a good start to the year.
- 9.15 Sports Centre - JST has a meeting on Monday at which the November figures will be presented and these will be forwarded to all governors. The centre remains profitable on a year-to-date basis and JST is hoping to see an improvement due to a successful "Annuals Day" held last week.

10. Governing Body Items :

- 10.1. Governor co-options : Alan Church and Richard Picking (Community Governors) reach end of their current terms at the end of 2013. Both had submitted themselves for re-election; there were no other candidates. It was agreed to have a vote even so. Forms were passed round with RPG's and ACH's names for Governors to vote "yes" or "no" for each.. RPG left the room whilst voting took place. The clerk counted the votes and RPG and ACH were voted back in.

- 10.2. Vacancy from resignation of Judith Balsom: At the last meeting Duncan Wardrop was suggested as a possible candidate. GKY had had a response today. Duncan would be willing to serve. GKY will ask him to write a short personal statement and we will then consider whether or not to appoint him. It was suggested on this occasion to do this via email rather than waiting for the next governors' meeting – **this was agreed by all**
- 10.3. Governors' overall length of service: JJN: it is important to refresh governors if they have served several terms in office. APG said the majority of schools have difficulty recruiting both community and parent governors. WHN: we should make a conscious decision whether we need to put a cap on people's terms. SWH: it would not be in the best interests of the school to turn people away if they have served for a number of years and are good governors, since we do not have a ready supply of candidates, in spite of our efforts. After a discussion it was agreed to continue as at present, with no rule as regards the number of terms to be served.
- 10.4. Parent Governor elections (Jo Johnson and David Cook reach end of current term at end of 2013) : David Cook stood for re-election together with one other candidates (one form was incorrectly completed and arrived too late for us to seek a corrected version). Pauline Poole and David Cook were declared elected. GKY has written to Pauline Poole to welcome her and she will start her term at the beginning of 2014. She has been invited to sit in on committee meetings so she may contact the Chairs of those respective Committees.
- 10.5. DCK: why there was an 80 word statement for parent governors, and 150 word statement for Community Governors? It was agreed to have 150 word statement for both Community and Parent Governors with immediate effect.
- 10.6. GKY thanked JJN for all her work with the Governing Body over the years.
- 10.7. Governor Development Coordinator (CGH) : Nothing to report.
- 10.8. Teacher Governors (JWA, DSI) : No representatives today.
- 10.9. Support Staff Governor (BWS) : Nothing to report.
- 10.10. Governor/school relations (APG, GKY) : APG said this evening has been a cordial meeting but APG, together with SLT and F&GP members felt that some committee and board meetings have been less cordial We are all governors and share responsibility for the school. There is more pressure on governors than in the past. The last Ofsted report said governor monitoring needed to be sharper. It is right and proper staff are held to account but important that meetings do not become "them and us". We have a mutual interest and some items on occasion have become adversarial.
- 10.11. GKY wanted to add that the in governors meetings everybody is free to express their own views but that outside the meeting place governors would be expected to be loyal even if they were not on the side of making that decision. This is especially hard for parent governors – your entitlement to press hard for your child may not always be the best decision for the school. It's an area of sensitivity that governors need to be aware of.
- 10.12. DCK said he was not aware of a time when a Governor has made an inappropriate public statement.. GKY said it could be social contacts with other people, comments made at a parents meetings etc. DCK - being a Governor means people will approach you and it is part of your role to speak to parents. Personally he is always conscious that if a member of staff has a comment about his child he is there as a parent not a Governor. He feels that if parents do speak to him about their concerns he feels APG or SLT would want to hear about it. DCK is worried with APG's comments concerning 'tone of our discussions'. He feels that there would normally be constructive courteous challenges if necessary, not destructive nor discourteous and feels it is easier to have those discussions about where we might do better in a smaller setting rather than larger ones which tend to have more formality about them. GKY agreed with everything DCK said. He said it is the responsibility of the governors to challenge and the way that it is done is the issue, not whether it is done.
- 10.13. WHN would want the Chairman to talk to her should it be felt she had stepped out of line.
- 10.14. IBS said one item discussed at SLT and F&GP was certain members of SLT felt they were not trusted to do the job they are doing and the feeling that SLT have not been working on issues that had been discussed.
- 10.15. SBR feels maybe SLT are not communicating effectively enough to Governors on what the school is doing in between meetings and sometimes not recognised that these things are going on.

- 10.16. JN also has not picked up any issues within any meeting. She feels she has the opportunity to challenge, and that answers have been given.
- 10.17. MLZ: one problem is there is such a lot to cover within a meeting it is hard to digest all the material given and would be helpful to have all information beforehand to be more prepared and see what has been happening. Inevitably people will pick on aspects they notice but MLZ can see from SLT point of view. She feels the reason for this is that SLT are giving out information and Governors generally want to know what's going on and genuinely interested. Maybe manner comes across as too excited but intention is good, maybe should be slightly gentler on both sides.
- 10.18. SWH said P&P committee were given lots of information.
- 10.19. IBS said Ofsted will quiz Governors so they want more detail.
- 10.20. WHN said she is largely ignorant on education so rely on SLT to tell her what I should be interested in. We need guidance on what we need to be asking and paying special attention to..
- 10.21. DCK said this should be discussed in individual committees. This was agreed. **Action : All Chairs of Committees**

11. Reports

- 11.1. Headteacher (APG) : Report had been circulated. Speaker at Commemoration Evening will be Peter Wholley. Watch BBC's "Strictly Come Dancing" on 21st December: BBC visited the KT Sports Centre and sixth formers – it features briefly!! We are applying to CMF for Science block. The maximum sum of money has been reduced. A bid of £2.7m is most likely to be successful.
- 11.2. DCK: are we now accepting higher admission numbers? APG this is not increasing PAN, just improving the science facility.
- 11.3. Baldock Forum Meeting (APG/GKY) : Local schools concerned about housing expansion. Fair to say no strategic planning from County Council; already seeing significant increase in pupil numbers. 30 children extra this year at Hartsfield.
- 11.4. DCK said he can challenge politicians about policy, funding etc. If of benefit in discussions he is happy to do that.
- 11.5. Premises, Health & Safety Committee (ACH) : JST - electrical power upgrade. Work meant to take place last Sunday didn't happen. Further meetings this week, we believe this will be sometime in January. Caretaker's house - meeting at County Hall last Friday. Meeting went well, still have intention to let us sell land and keep 100% proceeds and may be able to transfer the freehold of our site to us, to ease any future such plans. Science block - covered in APG's report.
- 11.6. Pupils & Personnel Committee with 6th form liaison (SWH/RPG) : Nothing to say, all in the Minutes. Finalised Pay Policy has been circulated to all governors.
- 11.7. Teaching and Learning Committee : apologies for late delivery of minutes
- 11.8. Finance and General Purposes Committee : Everything in the minutes.

12. Next Meetings

- 12.1. SLT Planning meetings : Not agreed agendas yet, would welcome opportunity to meet with governors – dates to be circulated when agreed. GKY requested as much notice as possible of these meetings.
- 12.2. Full Governors' meeting Thursday 13th February 2014

13. AOB as agreed at start of meeting (already discussed)

14. An item of business was discussed under Part 2.

APG'S SUCCESSOR: APPOINTMENT

- GKY : Existing headteachers have to give notice by the end of April, deputies by the end of May. Timing is therefore important.
- It's possible that it may be necessary to have more than one round of appointments.
- SWH noticed course coming up on appointing school leaders but fully booked; currently on waiting list.
- GKY confirmed we will seek advice. There are several organizations offering this - Herts for Learning, ASCL, Hays....
- Before end of this term GKY will consult with F&GP members to suggest how we should set about making the appointment. Everybody will want to be involved in some way or another. Aim for a small group managing the progress and making sure maximum number of people are involved in the decision.
- DCK is content with phrase 'ownership of everyone'
- GKY asked that Lorenzo Farina to check the website to confirm as much as possible is up to date. Every candidate will look at website – it will form their impression of the school.
- Committee chairs are not up to date on website **Action : JCE to contact Lorenzo**