

The Knights Templar School

Minutes of the Governors' Meeting held on Tuesday 27th November 2012

Please note : these minutes will be corrected, if necessary, and approved at the next meeting. Meanwhile, they will be treated as accurate, so 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 GK gets them by the next Finance and General Purposes Meeting on Monday 28th 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.

1. **Members Present** : Brian Williams (BWS), Chris Gough (CGH), Judith Balsom (JBM), Alison Atkinson (AAN), Jane Millett (JMT), Julie Mutter (JMu), Sue Welch (SWH), Chair - Richard Picking (RPG), Andrew Pickering (APG), David Cook (DCK), John Swift (JST), Sarah Barker (SBR), Ian Burrows (IBS), Wendy Hepburn (WHN), Dari Samsami (DSI), Mike Boxall (MBL), Maria Lukianowicz (MLZ), Alan Church (ACH)
 - 1.1 Apologies for Absence : Graham Kingsley, Jo Johnson, Janet Wallace, Ann Brown, Paul Barnett
2. **Welcome to New Governor**, Brian Williams, Support Staff
3. **Declaration of pecuniary or other interests** form was passed round.
4. **List of governors' visits to/contacts with the school** form was passed round.
5. **Notification of urgent items for AOB** – DCK was complimentary about the attitude and ability of the students from the sixth form who were counting votes – thank you to the school.
6. **Parents Association Report** (Mark Overton) – Mark was not present at the meeting.
7. **Minutes of the Meeting on 17th October 2012** were agreed as a true record.
8. **Matters arising not otherwise on the Agenda** – there were none.

9. Annual Audit – Adoption of Annual Report

Auditors gave a presentation at the F&GP meeting. This report had culminated in a tremendous amount of work from JST and Ann Robert. At tonight's Governors meeting the Accounts need to be formally adopted. Governors were sent a draft report on 15th November with a request for feedback. RPG asked if there was any feedback from Governors; there was none. It was therefore minuted that the Annual Accounts have been adopted by Governors. RPG will sign in Graham Kingsley's absence, and as Vice-Chair. **Action : RPG (done)**

10. Financial Update

- 10.1 **Budget Progress** - An up to date progress report is unavailable at present due to the work that has been involved in producing the Annual Accounts, a report will be sent in December **Action : JST**
- 10.2 **Sports Centre** – Figures to the end of October are very pleasing. These have been sent via e-mail. The Sports Centre year end is March, therefore the first seven months of this year's trading are net income of £5,000 ahead of budget (at £23,000 gross). This is on a profit share arrangement where the school receives 25%, and Stevenage Leisure receive 75% to reinvest.

11. Governing Body Items

11.1 Governor Development Coordinator (CGH)

AAN is attending an induction course, BWS has been passed the relevant information. Understanding Assessment Data could be useful for Link Governors, this will be held on 18th April 2013, as would Effective Governor Visits on 19th March 2013 and Anti-Bullying on 5th May. These will be sent round to everybody via Jane. SWH went on Hertfordshire Governors Conference, this was excellent. SWH will write and e-mail to everybody. **Action : Jane (done)**

11.2 Teacher Governors (DSI) – Nothing to report.

11.3 Support Staff Governor (BWS) – nothing to report.

12. School Redevelopment Update (APG)

Work on the new building started during half-term holiday. It is difficult to assess how much progress has been made but pupils, particularly in Year 11, are very excited that the new block is being built. Growth in pupil numbers is also an issue. A meeting with Lyster Grillett & Harding took place where the Governing Body asked them to design a plan for rebuild of the Science department. APG and JST met with Adrian Warne and asked him to design a plan to replace the entire block. It was felt that if more of the school's accommodation could be improved at the DfE's expense this should be looked into.

DSI asked if we are asking for more finance from the DfE, will this have an impact on the original build that we are applying for? APG said plans are very clear, we will apply for phase 2 and 3 but will be happy with just phase 2. APG had met with County and it was very clear that funding would not materialise, therefore the only way to fund any new building projects is through the Capital Academies Maintenance Fund. JST said criteria is deliverability, and the school has gone through LG&H because of their experience with schools and applying for funding. APG feels we have a very good chance and at the very least planning permission will be in place for Phases 2 and 3. DCK confirms this analysis; he has personal experience of this in the civil service and the more audacious the project the more likely the school are to get it. DCK has been amazed by how much activity there has been around the issue of 'oven ready' sites.

13. Reports

13.1 Head's Report (APG)

School's Admissions – this needs to be discussed at next Governors meeting. The school population is going to grow. We need to address whether we are prepared to increase admission numbers. APG would like this subject to be a substantial item on the next Agenda and would like governors to start thinking and talking about it. Any changes required will need to be agreed by the summer of 2014. IBS asked if County gave any background on these calculations, he has been on governing body for 13 years, has heard this before but this has not ever materialised. IBS asked how confident County are with these figures? Have they just taken feeder primary schools? APG said school population of Herts has shown one of sharpest increases in the country, County are providing extra primary classes in the next couple of years. Hartsfield have an extra reception class this year and primary education is County's priority. APG said figures have been based on historical applications to school, our admission arrangements and based on GP data. At a meeting last week Justin Donovan showed a map of the County and the anticipated amount of growth and Baldock was one of those areas. What is clear is that our school will not be able to meet the needs of children that live in the catchment area. RPG asked if the Studio Schools have been factored in the figures. APG said they had not as the studio schools are accepting pupils at 14. DCK mentioned that County's elections are in May 2013 and in his experience most value can be before extracted elections, not after them.

13.2 **Teaching & Learning** – everything is in the minutes. MLZ – talked about considering the comments by Ofsted in relation to how governors could become more strongly involved; improving link governor system.

13.3 **Premises, Health & Safety** – everything in the minutes.

13.4 **P&P** – everything in the minutes. School Council organising Christmas fete on 14th December at lunchtime and after school; they are putting in a huge amount of work. P&P have also been looking at Ofsted on governance and looking at monitoring performance management – SBR will be helping. Re-election of governors was discussed; ACH mentioned this was talked about a year ago. SWH said discussions were more about searching the community for governors, and how this would happen. RPG said we are adopting the same criteria for elections but at a slightly earlier stage.

13.5 **F&GP** – All in the minutes. RPG said Annual Accounts were discussed and also discussed some points raised on governor involvement from Ofsted.

14. **Dates, Times and Topics of SLT Planned Meetings** : APG said no dates as yet; looking at Ofsted, once action plan is in place will invite governors to come along.

15. **Date of next meeting** : Tuesday 12th February next meeting.

16. **Any Other Business** - None.

PART 2

Ofsted Discussion

APG gave a brief introduction then divided Governors into 3 groups. He asked Governors to look at the issue of governor monitoring and more widely at the report and the action plan that SLT have drawn up.

He asked the questions :

1. Do we have in it what needs to be?
2. Is it in a usable format?

APG's Introduction

The Ofsted report is fair. The grading Ofsted gave us we would have given ourselves. We have to produce an evaluation form and we graded ourselves exactly the same grade as Ofsted. All of those action points are things we need to do to be a better school. Ofsted said we do not have enough teaching which is outstanding, we don't. Ofsted did 48 lesson observations, we do more, proportions were spot on. In 2009 and 2006 our teaching was good then. Most of the teaching is good or better but not all. Our goal has to be that **all** teaching is good or better.

Pupil progress was good but could be stronger. They are right – especially in sixth form. Results have been static; they fell in 2012. We have been overtaken by schools we were ahead of. We need to aspire that our students add value and do better.

Monitoring needs to be 'sharper'. This is a well chosen word. It is saying we need to be more robust as governors and SLT, ensuring that young people get the best deal. Governors need to be involved and have evidence that this is going ahead. Sir Michael Wilshaw published his annual report today and said they need to look more critically at governors. If you read reports from outstanding schools, in addition to emphasis on achievement and attainment, governance needs to be sharp.

It is disappointing that we are no longer outstanding but we must use the Ofsted report as a mechanism to improve what we are doing for young people. There is much in report that we should be pleased about. More parents have congratulated me than the one parent who expressed disappointment. Young people always do us proud. Encourage people to read the report – judgement at front but text is very positive.

FEEDBACK

Group 1

WHN – discussion on first topic. Why do we need sharp governance? Recognise no buffer of local authority so need to make sure things OK. Needed to agree on a common definition. Issues of accountability and the role of the governor and the link governor scheme is just one mechanism of sharp governance and not only requirement to show effectiveness. What could/should link governor scheme be – quality and results discussed. Idea of having consistency of data across all faculties and committees and departments; know what they are looking at and can question/analyse. Work to be done. Talked about risks of link governor scheme, too close relationship and link governor trespassing into activities. Boundaries.

Group 1

ACH – Looked at nitty gritty. Link Governor role needs to be defined. Needs protocol issued to governors and staff – what they are about and perceive? Governors want to be seen as people who can help, support, discuss issues. Link Governor could meet Departments to discuss results meetings once a year, problems with timing etc goes into a lot of depth not needed? Ensure regular links between faculties –

doesn't happen. Formalise process so they can report back to Board of Governors. Need to be alerted to changes in the school to go back and form a useful link. Formalise link governor attendance. Head of SLT could tip off governor when need for congratulations so can endorse positivity. Encourage meetings to happen and consider some sort of social gathering at the beginning of school year. Publicise who we are and what we do. Add to board downstairs and link to subjects. Lot more information needed to enable them to establish links – feedback chain on learning walks, monitoring. Governors to visit classrooms – but very sensitive topic. Overcoming fears that staff might have. Should be regular item on Agenda. One difficulty finding time for meeting to occur. Limited time in the school day or free from teaching.

RPG - SBR has document to keep them abreast of learning walks – record in P&P Minutes.

Group 3

MLZ – how we could relate all this to SIP. Role of link governor should take account. Chris Gough went to a governor training meeting last week on how to be an effective link governor but we considered providing proforma for link governor. Standard procedure in reporting terms main topic to look at and if that went well then more contact could be established. One meeting a year in Autumn term then contact by email. Suggestion going to come to options meeting in Autumn term when link governor would be informed about what is happening. Important that meetings with department should be constructive. Should report back to head and governors in general and actions. Relate to a standard proforma. Improvement of staff training, but need to know that the SLT have identified who they are and steps being taken to improve teaching ability. Looking at progress in monitoring. Some committees have less to do than others. Best practice observation by teachers is happening. Something that Governors need to know. Suggestion that parent governors could check on homework/feedback let them know that governing body is aware of problems that parents might have.

Discussion

RPG – formalise and weave back into SIP.

IBS - Premises may not need 6 meetings a year, but maybe T&L needs more. Governors monitoring revisit the uses of the meetings and how often they meet.

DCK – need to be careful how we allocate our time. Experience spend lot of time on mechanics and initiative about having discussions has been a step forward but need to get into more meaningful discussions.

RPG – SIP could be discussed at SLT meetings.

MLZ – very useful to have timetable of SLT meetings which is appropriate for governors to go to.

DCK – have to build confidence in a system.

MLZ – does depend on personality on HOD and sometimes does not work as well as it should – one thing admit when it does not work and swap around.

ACH – time to judge when not working/working when trust is established.

WHN – low on list of personality clashes.

IBS – if HOD said so what's a link governor do different than SLT link will do – how would you answer?

SWH - because link governor may not be a member of staff and might have a different view on something.

IBS need to make it clear to subject leaders that governor links are different.

DSI – came up few times in discussion look at it with a different head on. Looking at positive things. Not just about results and teaching but school play and other things that aren't measured – school play/trips.

IBS – when struggling financially in previous years not given enough money then complained to link governor.

WHN –proforma needed.

IBS - There is no governor handbook. Maybe it should be written.

Spoke about job description and protocols.

APG made decision at SLT not to second guess what governors should do, one of four points was of governors. Changing to academy, shrinking of the LEA.

Meeting ended.