



**Part 1 Minutes of the Meeting of the
FULL GOVERNING BODY
of Helsby High School**

Date:	Monday 22 nd February 2021 at 5.00pm	
Venue:	Via Zoom Video Conferencing	
Present:	Ms G Fullbrook – Chair Dr A Morley – Vice Chair Mr M Hill Mrs F Miller Mr T O’Neill Mrs A Critchley Mrs J O’Hare Mr G Corker Mr A Wheeler Mr I Devereux-Roberts Ms R Clarke Mr C Jennings	Co-opted Governor Co-opted Governor Head Teacher LA Governor Co-opted Governor Parent Governor Parent Governor Parent Governor Co-opted Governor Co-opted Governor Staff Governor Co-opted Governor
Absent:		
In attendance:	Mrs S Warburton Mr M Vickers John Addison Mrs H Coy	Deputy Head Teacher School Business Manager Clerk Observing

The meeting met its quorum.

Decisions, actions and areas of challenge during discussions indicated in bold text

Agenda item 1	WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
Discussion:	The Chair welcomed all present particularly Mrs H Coy who was observing the meeting having expressed an interest in becoming a Co-opted Governor. At the request of the Chair all present introduced themselves and outlined any specific roles. There were no apologies for absence.
Agenda item 2	MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING
Discussion:	The Governing Body considered the minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body held on 25 th January 2021.
Resolved:	That the minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body held on 25th January, 2021, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.
Agenda item 3	ACTION LOG
Discussion:	The Action Log was reviewed and updated.

Agenda item 4	HEADTEACHERS REPORT
	<p>This Headteacher reported that since his last report to Governors School had continued to work in the ways described and discussed in detail at the last meeting of the FGB held on 25th January. At the time of writing, during the half-term break, School was awaiting promised announcements regarding how Schools might open during the next half-term. This announcement had subsequently been made and was detailed below.</p> <p>Currently Ways of Working Governors had received copies of staff and parental communications which explained much of the detail, however, the following brief over-view was given.</p> <p>Remote Learning: School continued to provide ‘live’ lessons in line with the school timetable, which continued to have been well-attended by students. As staff (and student) expertise and comfort with this way of working had grown, staff had developed new ways of engaging students and assessing learning progress. Should remote learning be continued for students beyond 8th March 2021 then School would need to consistently try to widen the variety of learning activity provided in order to keep students engaged and also address understandable growing national concern about the amount of ‘screen-time’ young people were currently having. Mrs Miller asked how pupils were grouped? The Headteacher advised that pupils follow the timetable in groups just as they would if they were in School</p> <p>Key Worker and Vulnerable Student Provision: Numbers on-site were consistently just above or around 30 at present. Despite the accessibility of provision, and encouragement of vulnerable student attendance, this was relatively low compared to some local schools. The reasons for this were not certain, although the remote learning provision and the associated monitoring and communication with home regarding student attendance and engagement might mean that parents were more confident leaving their children at home than would be the case if communication with School was less regular.</p> <p>Asymptomatic Testing Programme: Students on-site had continued to be tested on a weekly basis, with testing of staff now twice weekly in line with revised government guidance.</p> <p>Free School Meal Vouchers: The national voucher scheme was now in use and take-up by parents had been very high.</p> <p>Catch-Up Programme: The programme, described in detail at the previous Full Governing Body meeting, was now underway with current after-school provision provided on-line. Student attendance over the first few weeks had been very high and initial feedback suggested that the focused support provided was enabling students involved to make effective progress.</p> <p>Senior Leadership Work There was no doubt that teaching staff were busier than ever re-writing schemes of work which took current circumstances into account, producing new on-line resources and planning and delivering ‘live’ lessons (both of which were more intensive activities than their classroom-based equivalents). The last few weeks had represented a small change in pace for senior leaders from the relentless implementation of fast-changing national plans and initiatives which had characterised so much of the School’s work since March 2020. School had used the time to undertake some strategic work in the following areas - vital work which was normally difficult to find the time for in amongst hectic days in school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A review of the financial position given the effect of Covid over the last 12 months. Governors would be updated on the likely 2020-21 budget out-turn with a strategic plan for the School’s approach to both its financial management and its premises development moving forwards being presented at the FGB meeting on 15th March 2021.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To accompany the recent governance review and the future new Governing Body committee structure School had reviewed the status, purpose and future role of all of the School's current policies (statutory and non-statutory) and procedures. Resulting proposals for this important aspect of the School's work moving forwards would be made at a future Governing Body meeting. - Alongside the usual staffing planning for September which took place this term, School had also been considering leadership capacity moving forwards. Given the important and necessary links between this and the School's financial management, this would also be presented at the FGB on 15th March 2021. <p>A56 Cycle Path Consultation</p> <p>The Headteacher thanked Governors for their feedback on the draft School submission, particularly regarding the option of a variable speed limit outside the School. The feedback had been incorporated into the final submission, and an individual response had been requested.</p> <p>Following discussion of the report, the Headteacher referred to the statement made on 22nd February by the Prime Minister that pupils would be returning to School from 8th March 2021. The DfE had released guidance via a press release and the Headteacher drew Governor's attention to the following specific points:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All secondary school students would be required to take three COVID-19 tests as they returned to School from 8th March at existing School testing facilities. Schools would have the discretion on how to test students over that week to enable their return to the classroom. • After the initial programme of three tests in School, students would be provided with 2 rapid tests to use each week at home; and • Staff and students were advised to wear face coverings in all areas including classrooms where social distancing could not be maintained and as a temporary extra measure. <p>The Chair asked if there was a lead in time? The Headteacher responded that he envisaged a staggered return week commencing 8th March so that by 12th March all students should be in School, however, there could be extra guidance on this.</p> <p>Mr Corker asked if the guidance made any mention of wearing masks during outside breaks. The Headteacher thought that it would be all allowable for masks to be removed</p>
Resolved:	That the report be noted.

Agenda item 5	SAFEGUARDING UPDATE
Discussion:	<p>Mrs Warburton advised that in respect of Free School Meal vouchers, the redemption rate currently stood at 97%. The Pastoral Team enquired where any vouchers were not being redeemed. School had ordered vouchers up to 8th March but should return be staggered additional measures might need to be put in place.</p> <p>There were currently 41 vulnerable children or children of key workers in School. School had encouraged vulnerable children to attend as this impacted on attendance figures and currently 18 out of the 41 were vulnerable children. School continued to keep in contact with parents and all parents had received a phone call. Where there had been no response this was followed up with an e-mail. A number of home visits had been made to distribute learning packs but as a result 3 children had been identified to social care.</p> <p>CPD had continued in respect of safeguarding with 10 staff having completed the basic awareness course. The 3 Designated Safeguarding Leads were undertaking Level 3 refresher training and 3 PPL staff were completing the Level 3 training. 4 staff were undertaking the Our</p>

	<p>Way of Working training which was a Cheshire West and Chester Council initiative.</p> <p>In respect of attendance once students returned, School had a number of measures which could be put in place should students or parents have Covid anxiety around coming into School.</p> <p>Mr Devereux-Roberts commented that as soon as circumstances allowed he would wish to undertake a visit as Safeguarding Lead Governor.</p> <p>Dr Morley asked if those students who lived outside the immediate region showed any patterns of vulnerability? Mrs Warburton advised that School was not aware of any issues around the immediate catchment area.</p>
Resolved:	That the report be noted

Agenda item 6	FINANCE
Discussion	<p>The School Business Manager advised that with two months of the financial year remaining School was on course to carry forward a surplus in excess of £670,000, around 9% of the School budget. The anticipated spend for February and March was based on 2020 spending levels and because of the current situation could be impacted by students returning in March</p> <p>This was a result of a number of factors, however, £39,000 of the surplus belonged to FAVSP, including its transition project, and thus should be discounted from the surplus.</p> <p>Carry forward – The surplus at the end of 2019-20 was higher than expected. Once the funds which belonged to FAVSP (which was £17,561) were removed, the surplus at the end of March 2020 was £365,903. A small amount of this was needed to balance the 2020-21 budget set in Spring 2020. This left the majority of the surplus remaining in the bank account and contributed to the increased surplus at the end of March 2021.</p> <p>Income – More income was received than expected in 2020-21 in the following areas: Teachers’ Pension Grant - £20,908 more than budget. Teachers’ Pay Grant - £13,478 more than budget.</p> <p>The Catch-Up Grant for Year 7 was cancelled thus £8,460 of expected funds did not arrive. This was replaced by the COVID-19 Grant to support catch-up, totalling £23,651 (which had not been included in the budget).</p> <p>There had also been a reduction in budgeted income in sales at the tills and subsequent profits from catering and School did not see any planned income from the AGP due to ongoing delays. However, this had been offset by a reduction in expenditure in these areas.</p> <p>Expenditure –</p> <p>Staffing – School was on course to post a significant underspend, of approximately £199,000, of the wage bill, particularly teaching staff. This was a result of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A 3% pay award had been budgeted for but the award was only 2.75% • Not everyone moved up the pay range as anticipated. • Some teaching staff were replaced with less expensive colleagues or not replaced at all • Some recruitment, which had been budgeted for, did not happen, (e.g. an additional HLTA) or took place later than planned (site team). • School lockdown resulted in underspending on duties and site overtime. • Cancellation of exams resulted in significant underspend on invigilation.

A combination of school lockdown in the summer, low absence in the autumn term and remote learning from January 2021 meant the expenditure on supply was significantly lower than budget, with a predicted underspend once the end of the financial year ended in March.

CPD spend was also significantly under budget as a result of the impact of lockdown and remote learning. As a result of continuing low absence during the year, despite the pandemic, there had been no need to access the £20,000 set aside to support the supply budget (which School budgets for rather than spend on expensive employee sickness absence insurance).

Premises – An underspend was predicted on the energy budget as a result of the impact on the School's energy consumption during the lockdown of school. An overspend was predicted on cleaning materials and the cleaning of School caused by the impact of the pandemic.

£125,000 had been budgeted for capital works to take place in the summer of 2020. This did not happen as a result of the lockdown and thus these monies were used elsewhere within the year (IT, furniture, doors and maintenance) following governor approval in the autumn term. An overspend was anticipated on maintenance as a result of works planned to take place during February and March 2021 (student toilet refurbishments in B block and some gas related work in the science labs)

Transport – A small underspend was anticipated in this area.

IT & communications – School was on course to post a small overspend in this area as a result of expenditure on replacing the telephony system and investing in updated iMacs for Expressive Arts.

Other costs – School was on course to post underspend as a result of the following:

- Catering costs (*though this was offset by the loss on income in this area). This was a result of the lockdown School had experienced in summer and spring terms and the reduced catering offer during autumn term.
- Professional fees and hired services.
- Printing and copying costs as a result reduction in usage.
- Hospitality charges.
- Departmental spend.

Looking ahead to 2021 – Because of the sizeable surplus expected to carry forward School could look forward to investing funds in projects to aid school improvement during the coming year. As previously agreed with governors this would include investment in the Food Technology faculty held over from 2020.

There would be a further update at the Full Governing Body meeting on March 15th 2021 when Governors would also be asked to approve the 2021-22 draft budget. The SBM suggested that a small number of Governors might wish to meet with him prior to the FGB to discuss any specific priorities

Mr Wheeler asked if there had been any feedback from the local authority around the size of the carry forward? The SBM confirmed that he had had discussions with the local authority around this issue. There were historical precedents around carrying such large amounts into the following year and that he would be surprised if the local authority raised any issues. School had earmarked a large amount for capital projects which because of lockdown had not been completed, however, should School consistently carry forward large amounts then the situation could change.

	<p>Mr Wheeler referred to the Saalex loans and asked if it was financially prudent to pay off any outstanding amounts to reduce the carry forward figure? The SBM advised that only one more payment was due but that this could be discussed at the meeting with Governors around budget issues.</p> <p>Mr Wheeler asked whether any contracts had not been renewed over the last 12 months owing to Covid 19? The SBM advised that no contracts had been due for renewal and that only the waste collection contract was due for renewal in 2021. The normal contractual arrangements would be followed in respect of this contract.</p> <p>Mr O'Neill asked whether the SFVS had to be returned by March? The SBM advised that the deadline for submission had been put back to 28th May 2021.</p> <p>Mr Jennings suggested that Governors would be supportive of the School engaging agency support to ensure that measures were put in place to effect a smooth return of pupils on 8th March.</p> <p>The SBM advised that the Manual of Internal Financial Procedures was due for review and suggested that the proposal previously discussed around raising the level from £2,000 to £5,000 before 3 quotations were needed should be included in any review.</p>		
Resolved:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the financial update be noted. 2. That the Chair, Vice Chair and Mr Wheeler meet with the SBM to identify budget priorities for discussion at the next meeting. 3. That the SBM review the Manual of Internal Financial Procedures and share any proposed amendments with the Chair. 		
Action:	What:	Who:	When:
	That the review of the Manual of Internal Financial Procedures be an item for discussion at the next meeting	SBM	Next meeting
Agenda item 7	GOVERNANCE		
Discussion:	<p><u>Governor Vacancies</u> Governors were reminded that the Governing Body was currently carrying three vacancies for co-opted governors. The Chair would discuss with Mrs Coy about becoming a Co-opted Governor.</p> <p><u>Future Governance Focus</u> A proposal was put forward for discussion that the first half of the next three meetings would focus on one of the core function areas agreed in January 2020. The second half of each meeting will cover issues relevant to the School's needs. Accordingly, the following was suggested</p> <p>March Resources April Quality of Teaching May Personal Development</p> <p>It was envisaged that the proposal would give Governors the opportunity to establish a new structure with a view to a full introduction in September 2021.</p>		
Resolved:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the Chair to discuss becoming a Co-opted Governor with Mrs Helen Coy. 2. That the agenda structure proposed be approved. 		
Action:	What:	Who:	When:
	Chair discuss becoming a Co-opted Governor with Mrs Coy	Chair	ASAP

Agenda item 8	3G PITCH UPDATE
Discussion:	Mr Wheeler gave a brief update to Governors advising that the project was still on track financially but that owing to delays in receiving the discharge statement from the local authority the project now had an end date of September 2021
Resolved:	That the update position be noted.
Agenda item 9	DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS
	Monday 15th March 2021 at 5.00pm

There being no further business the meeting ended at 18.00