



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

<b>Date:</b>	Monday 27 <sup>th</sup> March 2023 at 5.00pm	
<b>Venue:</b>	School	
<b>Present:</b>	M Hill MH T O’Neill TO’N A Critchley AC R Allerston RA K Lowe KL M Garvey MG	Head Teacher Co-opted Governor Co-opted Governor Parent Governor Parent Governor Local Authority Governor
<b>Absent:</b>		
<b>In attendance:</b>	S Warburton M Vickers John Addison	Deputy Head Teacher School Business Manager Clerk

**The meeting met its quorum.**

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

<b>Agenda item 1</b>	<b>APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR</b>
<b>Resolved:</b>	<b>That in the absence of the Chair and Vice Chair, Andrea Critchley be appointed Chair for this meeting of the FGB</b>
<b>Agenda item 2</b>	<b>WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b>
<b>Discussion:</b>	The Chair welcomed all present. Apologies for absence were received and accepted from H Coy, I Devereux-Roberts, R Clarke, A Wheeler, G Fulbrook and A Pierre-Louis.
<b>Agenda item 3</b>	<b>MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING</b>
<b>Discussion:</b>	The Governing Body considered the minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body held on 13 <sup>h</sup> December 2022.
<b>Resolved:</b>	<b>That the minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body held on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2022 be approved as a correct record.</b>
<b>Agenda item 4</b>	<b>ACTION LOG</b>
<b>Discussion:</b>	The Action Log was reviewed and updated.
<b>Agenda item 5</b>	<b>GOVERNANCE ISSUES</b>
<b>Discussion:</b>	<u>Committee Reports</u> The Governing Body received the following committee reports:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality of Education Committee held on 23rd January 2023;</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resources Committee held on 13th March 2023; and</li> <li>PDBA Committee held on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2023</li> </ul>		
<b>Resolved:</b>	<b>That the reports be noted</b>		
<b>Discussion:</b>	<u>Instrument of Governance</u> MH reminded Governors of the discussion held at the Strategic Planning Day in respect of the Instrument of Governance and the possibility of changing the number of co-opted and parent governors as it was believed to be easier to attract parents to become governors rather than identifying suitable people to become co-opted governors. Discussions with the local authority had revealed that it would be unlikely to approve an increase in the number of parent governors at the expense of co-opted governors as it could impact on the power dynamic of the Governing Body. It was, however, suggested that two of the current parent governors, Kirsty Lowe and Rob Allerston could convert to co-opted governors and elections then held for parent governors.		
<b>Resolved:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>That no amendment be made to the Instrument of Governance</b></li> <li><b>That Kirsty Lowe and Rob Allerston be appointed as Co-opted Governors for a 4-year term of office to 26<sup>th</sup> March 2027.</b></li> <li><b>That arrangements be put in place to elect 2 Parent Governors</b></li> </ol>		
<b>Action:</b>	<b>What:</b>	<b>Who:</b>	<b>When:</b>
	<b>That arrangements be put in place to elect two Parent Governors.</b>	<b>MH</b>	<b>ASAP</b>
<b>Discussion:</b>	<u>Strategic Planning Day</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review of parent feedback – Governors had nothing more to add to that discussed at the Strategic Planning Day.</li> <li>Ofsted preparation – suggested that a small group of Governors comprising the Chair of Governors, Committee Chairs and the PP Governor be formed to produce a list of possible questions and answers in respect of an Ofsted Inspection</li> <li>Timing of future Strategic Planning Days – should continue on an annual basis with a flexible agenda.</li> </ul>		
<b>Resolved:</b>	<b>That the above actions arising from the Strategic Planning Day be approved.</b>		

<b>Agenda item 6</b>	<b>RESOURCES</b>		
<b>Discussion:</b>	<u>2023/24 Budget</u> MV submitted the draft 2023/24 Budget for Governors approval.  Governors were advised that at the meeting of the Resources Committee held on 13 <sup>th</sup> March 2023, the Committee had received the draft 2023/24 Budget and 3 Year Forecast which showed as follows		
		<b>Forecast 2023/24</b>	<b>Forecast 2024/25</b>
	<b>Balance B/Fwd</b>	343,149	0
	<b>Projected Income</b>	9,235,907	9,094,629
	<b>Projected Expenditure</b>	9,235,907	9,481,879
	<b>In Yr surplus / deficit</b>	0	-387,250
	<b>Projected C/fwd</b>	0	-387,250
	MV advised that <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>various budgets had been reduced by 5% to ensure that school delivered a balanced budget.</li> <li>The figures contained an estimated 3% pay increase for teaching and non-teaching staff</li> </ul>		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Alternative Provision Budget had been cut by 44%.</li> </ul> <p><b>AC asked for an explanation of the rationale behind the large cut in the AP Budget. MV advised that school had a lot of students being educated off site which was very expensive and that every effort needed to be made to bring them back into school. The Pastoral Support Team were working on this, however, if it was considered that the best option was for a student to remain in AP this would continue. MG commented that the Resources Committee discussed this proposal in detail, and recognised the major challenge faced by the SLT to get those students back in school but not to the detriment of the education of others in school. MH commented that the Resources Committee identified the major areas of risk in cutting the AP budget around parental perception, staff wellbeing and the possible increase in the number of permanent exclusions.</b></p> <p><b>MV commented that £100,000 remained in the AP Budget although the major cost was around transport costs as the AP provision was some distance from school.</b></p> <p><b>AC asked what the impact on school would be if the Government awarded a higher than a 3% pay award and it was unfunded. MV advised that if any pay award was above 3% school would be in a serious financial position, however, if the Government funded any increase above 3%, school would receive a pay grant.</b></p> <p><b>MV also advised that Years 2 &amp; 3 looked difficult but that the figures were based on existing staff and pupil numbers, both of which could change.</b></p>
<b>Resolved:</b>	<b>That the draft 2023/24 Budget be approved.</b>
<b>Discussion:</b>	<u>SFVS</u> The SBM advised that TO'N had submitted to SFVS to Cheshire West and Chester Council within the authorised timescale.
<b>Resolved:</b>	<b>That the report be noted and TO'N be thanked for his work on this.</b>
<b>Agenda item 7</b>	<b>HEADTEACHERS REPORT</b>
<b>Discussion:</b>	<p>In presenting his report, MH suggested that this had certainly been a 'term of two halves'. The first half-term was long (6½ weeks) and tiring for both students and staff.. In contrast, the second half-term was short (5 weeks) and had seen considerable disruption due to industrial action by members of the National Education Union (NEU) and also disruptive weather in March. These disruptions had generated challenge in terms of maintaining continuity of learning and also consistency of routines and expectations (for example with regard to attendance and behaviour).</p> <p><b>NEU Industrial Action</b></p> <p>Over 40 members of teaching staff in the school were members of the NEU, and the majority had been absent on the 4 occasions when action had been taken this term. As this represented over half of the teaching workforce, school had had to close to Years 7-10 on those days. Parents appeared to have been very understanding, with very little displeasure expressed to the school (as was also the case when the school was forced to close due to heavy snowfall on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> March).</p> <p><b>Ofsted Preparation</b></p> <p>The school was well into the 'window' for its next Ofsted inspection, which could now come at any time. All preparations required were in place and, in many ways, the sooner the inspection happens, the better. At present the thought of imminent inspection was on the minds of all colleagues and as a result was inevitably a cause of significant stress on the organisation. <b>AC commented that in the light of recent adverse publicity she had a concern that it would increase the level of stress in school and impact on staff wellbeing. MH commented that school was well prepared for an Ofsted Inspection but acknowledged that</b></p>

**the recent publicity did highlight the pressures on school staff created by the current inspection process..**

#### **School Development Plans/Performance Management Mid-Year Reviews**

Half-way through the academic year was a time for reflecting upon progress to date, with School, Department and Pastoral Development Plans all being carefully monitored this term. Mid-year performance management reviews also provided an opportunity for teaching colleagues to reflect upon the progress of their classes and their contributions to the work of the school, enabling them to re-focus their work ahead of the second half of the year.

#### **Stakeholder Voice**

Governors would be aware that accessing stakeholder voice was a key focus area within this year's School and Governor Development Plans. As considered at the governors' Strategic Planning Day on 11<sup>th</sup> March, the Staff Well-Being survey had been completed and was now being responded to and parental feedback was gathered at on-site parent events this term. Student Councils had now been appointed and would meet for the first time before Easter, providing effective mechanisms for accessing the views of students in what was a really important development for the school.

#### **Year 11 & 13 Examination Preparation**

Having completed their PPE2 examinations earlier this term, Year 11 and 13 students were now well into their final preparations for their summer examinations. Year 13 students continued to be on track to meet their targets as a whole cohort; Year 11 PPE2 data was similar to that in the Autumn Term, with an improvement in Science from PPE1 to PPE2 counter-balanced by slightly lower predicted grades in Maths. Predicting student performance was so much more difficult than it was pre-pandemic as the disruption of the last few years made setting grade boundaries and knowing what students needed to do to achieve grades so much more uncertain than it once was. The data could still be used to identify intervention opportunities though, with after-school School-Led Tutoring and other subject-based intervention provision being complemented by pastoral interventions to support individual students in many different ways.

#### **Enrichment Highlights**

The school's enrichment provision continued to grow and this month's disruption had not stopped students from participating in many exciting areas of school life. The annual school production, considerable success by school sports teams, particularly in football and basketball, and trips to Paris and the headquarters of CERN in Switzerland had all been highlights that governors would hopefully have been able to follow on the website and social media sites.

#### **September 2023 Admissions**

225 places had been offered to Year 6 students for September (220 of whom put Helsby down as their 'first-choice' school). School was over-subscribed and had 13 students on the waiting list, several of whom were late applicants from catchment primary schools. School appeared to have recruited more strongly than ever from partner primary schools (210 of the 225 offered places were from within catchment) but appear to have had far less applications from Halton than previously. **TO'N commented that it was pleasing to see the school fully subscribed. MG expressed concern that that some catchment area children had not been awarded a place. MH advised that there were 5/6 children in this category who were late applicants and missed the initial round of allocations, however, school always had a number of first preference students who subsequently turned down their place and accordingly the local children had been offered places from September 2023. In respect of the reduced numbers from Halton, MH advised that a popular secondary school had extended its proximity distance and possibly had admitted some students who would otherwise have sought a place at HHS.**

	<p><b>The School's Financial Position</b></p> <p>Members of Resources Committee had already been made aware that Helsby High School was not immune to the pressures on school funding being felt across the education system currently. Pandemic savings had eased financial pressure in recent years, however this year's unfunded pay award had considerably reduced the reserve at the end of the 2022-23 financial year. The need to budget for further unfunded pay awards in future years meant that difficult decisions had had to be made around 2023-24 budget expenditure and there could be little doubt that unless there were significant national changes to school funding in the near future school would enter a very challenging period financially. This would be the case for all schools though and careful management to date meant that school had been able to set a balanced 2023-24 budget without having to resort to any staff restructuring or redundancy processes.</p> <p><b>The Longer-Term</b></p> <p>Politically, this appeared to be period of 'limbo' for education in this country. Aside from the government's recent publication of its (very) long-term SEND and AP (Alternative Provision) Plan, there were few current national developments or initiatives of note. The White Paper and proposed Schools Bill were a distant memory and all momentum in terms of schools joining Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs) seemed to have stalled, with no further promised detail emerging on the criteria for forming or joining Trusts (hence the first meeting of the Governing Body's MAT Working Group now being scheduled for early in the Summer Term).</p> <p>Whatever the future held, one thing that was certain was the need for the school to have a strong Governing Body moving forwards. Hence MH expressed his gratitude for the work and support of governors, both of which were very much in evidence at the Strategic Planning Day earlier this month. Through involvement in committees, link roles, curriculum reviews, school councils, interviews, staff well-being groups and so much more, governors were playing a full and crucial role in the work and development of the school.</p>
<b>Resolved:</b>	<b>That the Headteachers Report be noted.</b>

<b>Agenda Item 8</b>	<b>UPDATE ON LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT SECTION OF THE SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN</b>
<b>Discussion:</b>	Governors received the Leadership and Management section of the School Development Plan (SDP). The section contained the objectives, detailed the actions aimed at achieving those objectives, who was responsible, and progress made which was RAG rated. The Governing Body Development Plan along with plans for Mental Health and Wellbeing and 6 <sup>th</sup> Form were also circulated.
<b>Resolved:</b>	<b>That the update be noted.</b>

<b>Agenda item 9</b>	<b>SAFEGUARDING</b>
<b>Discussion:</b>	<p>SW advised that there were no specific safeguarding issues to bring to the attention of governors.</p> <p>KL had undertaken a Link Governor Safeguarding visit and a copy of her report had been circulated to Governors</p>
<b>Resolved:</b>	<b>That the report be noted</b>

<b>Agenda item 10</b>	<b>PROVISION OF SCHOOL UNIFORM FROM SEPTEMBER 2023</b>
<b>Discussion:</b>	Governors were reminded that at the FGB on 12 <sup>th</sup> December 2022, a discussion was held around the provision of school uniform from September 2023 including the possibility of outsourcing the service to a third-party provider. Following the discussions, the Governing

	<p>Body resolved as follows:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. That Governors acknowledge that the proposal to outsource the provision of school uniforms to a third-party provider was worthy of further discussion.</b></li> <li><b>2. That the SBM consult with other schools in respect of their returns policy and how this operated.</b></li> <li><b>3. That further information be provided to the Governing Body on the impact on the cost of items of uniform of including the costs currently born by the school in respect of bank charges and staff time but not containing any profit element.</b></li> </ol> <p>Accordingly, MV advised that he had spoken to two other schools who used the provider in question and had received very positive feedback from both schools and from parents. The process involved on-line ordering and collection from a shop in Chester which could be an issue. Alternatively, parents could order on-line and collect from school but there would only be a single delivery per week which depending on when the order was placed could result in delays receiving any items of uniform.</p> <p>In respect of bank charges and staff time, MV had calculated that bank charges were around £850 whilst staff time equated to approximately £3,000 which when based on sales of £42,500 meant that school would need to add 7.5% to the cost of uniforms to recover costs. Uniforms had already been purchased for 2023 so any move to a third-party supplier would be from September 2024 with a guarantee that in the first year, they would match the price charged by school.</p> <p><b>TO’N suggested that there was no guarantee of the price in the second year. MV advised that this was so but reiterated that the company was very competitive in its pricing. RA asked about contract length. MV advised that as the supplier would take any existing school stock, they would seek a 5-year exclusive contract.</b></p>
<b>Resolved:</b>	<b>That the provision of school uniform from September 2023 remain in-house but that prices be adjusted to reflect the costs to the school of providing the service.</b>
<b>Agenda item 11</b>	<b>POLICIES</b>
<b>Discussion:</b>	<p>Governors were asked to approve the Behaviour Principals and Written Statement and to ratify the following policies following review at the committees indicated.</p> <p><b>Resources Committee</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Whistleblowing Policy</li> <li>- Lettings Policy</li> <li>-Health and Safety Policy</li> </ul> <p><b>Quality of Education Committee</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Careers Policy</li> </ul> <p><b>PDBA Committee</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Designated Teacher for Looked-After and Previously Looked-After Children Policy</li> <li>- Low Level Concerns Policy</li> <li>- SVSH Policy</li> </ul>
<b>Resolved</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. That the Behaviour Principals and Written Statement be approved.</b></li> <li><b>2. That the following Policies be ratified.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Whistleblowing Policy</b></li> <li>• <b>Lettings Policy</b></li> <li>• <b>Health and Safety Policy</b></li> <li>• <b>Careers Policy</b></li> </ul> </li> </ol>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Designated Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children Policy</li> <li>• Low Level Concerns Policy</li> <li>• SVSH Policy</li> </ul>
<b>Agenda item 12</b>	<b>ITEM OF ANY OTHER BUSINESS</b>
<b>Discussion:</b>	<p><u>Care Community Partnership Group</u>  MG advised that he had been made aware of a source of funding operated by the local Care Community Partnership Steering Group through its Mental Health Sub-Committee where application could be made to purchase equipment to help those with specific mental health issues.</p> <p>Accordingly, MG had contacted Gemma Walker the School SENDCO to see if there was anything which the school could use to benefit the mental health and wellbeing of its students and to submit a bid for funding.</p> <p>The following items were identified, and MG sought the support of Governors to submit a bid</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three iPads with appropriate applications to allow students to access on-line support with mindfulness, wellbeing and mental health techniques whilst in school within the Learning Centre at a cost of £1,800</li> <li>• Ten wearable watch style heart rate monitors to enable students to be more self-aware and in control of their emotions where students might be experiencing a panic attack at a cost of £300.</li> </ul>
<b>Resolved:</b>	<b>That the funding application as detailed be supported</b>
<b>Agenda item 12</b>	<b>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</b>
<b>Decision:</b>	<p>Monday 17<sup>th</sup> July 2023 at 5.00pm</p>

**There being no business the meeting ended at 6.30pm**