



TADCASTER GRAMMAR SCHOOL LOCAL GOVERNING BOARD (LGB)

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 3rd July 2019 at 5.30pm

Present: Philip Turnpenny (Chair), Wendy Wilson (Head of School), David Gluck, Jon Bliss, Jeremy Airey, Jess Ryan, Heather Smith, Liz Wilson, Chris Burt

In attendance: Iain Tessier (Clerk, Governance Advisor)
Melissa Boyes (Chief Operating Officer, STAR MAT)

1.0 Welcome, Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest

ACTION

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting.

1.1 Apologies were received and accepted from Mike Dunphy. Georgina Wright was absent.

1.2 There were no declarations of interest.

1.3 The Chair reminded governors of their duty of confidentiality.

2.0 Minutes of the Last Meeting – 27th March 2019

2.1 Resolved:

The minutes of the meeting held on 27th March 2019 were accepted as a true record of the meeting and the Chair was duly authorised to sign the minutes.

3.0 Action Points and Matters Arising

3.1 Matters Arising

Back office structures (minute 3.1 refers)

The Chair requested an update. Mrs Boyes was now the COO. The CFO post no longer existed. Mrs Boyes was no longer the SBM for TGS but retained a finance reporting role. Mrs Northrop-Clay (LN-C) was the Operations Manager for TGS.

Status of Sherburn High School (minute 4.4.5 refers)

It was confirmed that Trustees had agreed that Sherburn High would join the Trust. The expected conversion date was 1st October 2019.

3.2 Action Points

<p>Seek legal advice re: school crest next steps</p>	<p>LN-C had been looking into this matter. Now it had been confirmed that the school had ownership of the crest, LN-C had written to the shop in Wetherby explaining the position and that they must discontinue selling crested clothing. There had been no response to the letter. It was proposed that a mystery shopper exercise be</p>
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	undertaken to ensure compliance. If the shop was found still to be selling such items then legal action could be taken following advice. Mrs Ryan agreed to act as mystery shopper and report back.	JR
Governor visit re: safeguarding report and audit	Mrs Ryan and Mrs Burt had conducted the visit. On the back of this visit, the plan was to invite governors to a training and feedback session. It was agreed that this session would take place as an introductory item at the beginning of the September LGB (5pm) and led by Cayte Mulhern.	ALL
Refresher safeguarding training	See above	JB
Complete safer recruitment training	Mr Bliss still needed to complete this action. Mr Bliss was directed to the online training course.	
6 th form visit	Mr Airey had conducted the visit and it had been referred to at the recent committee meeting.	
Propose dates for KS4 immersion morning	The immersion morning was referred to in the headteacher's report.	
Read IDSR report	Completed.	
Conversations with governors to ascertain their intentions re: fresh term of office	On agenda	
Approval of the equalities objectives and the accessibility plan	On agenda	
Upload MAT documents to MinutePad	Completed.	

4.0 STAR MAT Update

- 4.1 A new Lone Working policy had been approved by the Trust Board. A new Finance Manual was in operation; this now included a clear protocol on the use of credit cards.
- 4.2 All governors would have access to a new Google team drive for governance, accessible through governors' STAR email accounts.

5.0 Headteacher's Report

The Headteacher's report and the peer review report had been circulated prior to the meeting.

- 5.1 The SEF judgements remained unchanged.
- 5.2 With reference to the attendance data, the Head of School (HoS) noted that the current position was 'ok'. There was an improving trend both in terms of overall attendance and in terms of reducing persistent absenteeism. However, there were pockets of attendance for certain groups that remained a concern.
- 5.3 There was a brief update on Admissions. There were 29 students on the Y7 waiting list. Two candidates had got in on appeal. The situation was pretty healthy. There were fewer applicants from the York side but an increased level of interest on the Leeds side – this shift had happened over time. Had the school 'lost' Bishopthorpe? The HoS acknowledged that numbers had dropped but enthusiasm remained and the school continued to have a dialogue with York schools that had been feeder primaries to date.
- 5.4 A governor noted that whilst numbers were still relatively low by national levels, there had been a sharp rise in FTE. The HoS was asked to comment on the rise. The HoS acknowledged that during the spring term and into the first part of the summer the school had been required to deal with some challenging students, particularly in years 9 and 10. Two 15 day exclusions had been imposed and a number of parents had been invited in to discuss their child's conduct. Thankfully things had

settled down as the year end approached. The number of FTEs was lower in the previous year and presumably these were still challenging students in years 7 and 8. Was their behaviour worse or was it simply being dealt with? The HoS pointed out that some of the challenging students were recent managed moves. Some had very unsettled backgrounds, with issues connected to drugs and homelessness. It was worth nothing that as challenging students got older they tended to display ever more challenging behaviour, behaviour that would warrant steps such as FTEs. There had been no permanent exclusions in the year to date.

- 5.5 A recent complaint had been successfully dealt with at Stage 1.
- 5.6 Whilst the attendance of Pupil Premium students had improved slightly; it remained one of the said areas of concern. Attendance for disadvantaged students was so important. The PP manager was doing a great job engaging parents (parental engagement was 100% for the year) and the majority wanted to work with the school. Likewise SEND attendance was equally important and, whilst attendance had improved, some issues remained. The school was doing better than the national average but the HoS felt there were still improvements that could be made. The Chair noted that the school now had a higher percentage of SEND and EHCPs than the average – why was this? The HoS felt that the school's reputation preceded it – parents knew that the school did a good job supporting students with needs. A governor noted that more students nationally should have an EHCP but effectively there was a cap on local authorities approving applications. Some LAs were better than others at processing applications. The HoS agreed to some extent but it was a complex picture nationally. What was clear was that schools were doing a fantastic job in the face of low levels of funding and, in some cases, no funding at all.
- 5.7 The Y11 and Y13 progress data had been scrutinised at committee. There were no further comments or questions.
- 5.8 The HoS updated governors on new appointments. The HoS was asked to comment on the greater than normal number of leavers. The HoS acknowledged a relatively high turnover compared to previous years and that vacancies had been filled by staff on one-year contracts. Explaining the latter, the HoS pointed to the need for sufficient financial flexibility. The Chair asked if this approach was best for the long-term strategy. The HoS accepted that it was not ideal and that it would be better to recruit permanent teachers (often there was a larger, more quality field to pick from), however, the school had to keep options open for the incoming Headteacher bearing in mind that staffing would have to be looked at. The school was struggling to recruit a Maths teacher.
- 5.9 Governors briefly considered the SEND data that had been circulated. The Chair said that he was very impressed with the facilities in Field View – it was an absolutely fantastic resource, something to be very proud of. The Oglethorpe Trustees had been equally impressed and had made a donation for the gardens there.
- 5.10 Referring to the peer review report, governors found no surprises. Those Y9s and Y10s that were disaffected needed the school's support because there was often a lack of adequate support at home. Some of the comments in the report married with things observed by governors on the immersion morning. A governor pointed out though that whilst there had been some low level disengagement there had also been some good engagement from more challenging students.
- 5.10.1 The Chair expressed some concern about the comments linked to formal written feedback and the lack thereof. The HoS felt that the remarks had missed a bigger picture. Assessment and feedback was not always in books but it was always happening, just in other ways. Was the HoS confident that students were getting sufficient feedback? Yes students were getting feedback. Was it as effective and prevalent as it should be – this was something the HoS accepted could be worked on. The SLT had implemented some 'quick wins' and things had moved forward positively since September. Mr Betts had been tasked with addressing comments around the consistency of feedback to students and he had been 'hammering home' key messages in staff briefings etc. The Chair remarked that often you ended up 'preaching to the converted' – what about the 'harder to reach teacher'. The HoS accepted the point but reassured the Chair that they were making efforts to engage all staff.

- 5.11 It was noted that attendance at parents evening events had been very good and that the evenings had been overwhelmingly positive.
- 5.12 A visit report following the governors' KS4 immersion morning had been submitted to Mr Sykes. Away from the data etc, a governor pointed out that the students were very upset over the state of the toilets. So much so, certain students were actively avoiding the facilities. The HoS was well aware of the problems and the strength of feeling. LN-C was ensuring that the caretakers were properly resourcing the toilets. Governors said that capital monies for refurbishment were needed. The HoS was conscious that something had to be done as soon as funding allowed.
- 5.13 It was agreed that the KS3 immersion morning needed to be postponed to next academic year.

6.0 Health and Safety (originally item 9)

Governors had received a report proposing the residential trips for 2019/20 and 2020/21.

- 6.1 The HoS confirmed that all of the visits had taken place previously but one of the trips had a new leader. The Clerk was asked to clarify governors' involvement in this process. The Clerk noted that, whilst governors did not per se approve a school residential, they had to be satisfied that all health and safety and safeguarding protocols were in place and/or adhered to. In the event that concerns were not addressed they could direct the headteacher to cancel a trip. It was confirmed that all risk assessments and policies were in place and that Rob Solk had been dealing with the processes around trips for many years. The Hos had every confidence in the rigour he applied to the role. All trips were managed via EVOLVE. Governors were satisfied with the schedule as presented.
- 6.2 A governor did question the timing of the 6th form ski trip. As it was in the Easter holidays, was the school giving proper consideration to those students study requirements. The HoS felt that the timing of the trip was appropriate and that it had operated at that time of year for many years.
- 6.3 A governor was concerned about costs to the school. All staffing and other related costs were covered through the cost of the trip charged to students. The COO commented that there were risks (non payment by a participant) but this was not an area of the budget that governors needed to be concerned about. The loss of staff members following trips was regrettable, as was recently the case when a staff member on the skiing trip injured themselves very badly. This matter had been fully dealt with through insurance.
- 6.4 A governor was concerned about the nature of the trips rather than the timing etc. Many were very expensive and far beyond the reach of many families. If the school wanted to be truly inclusive did it not need to think about its offering? The HoS acknowledged the governors' points and steps had been taken to offer a range of other trips and activities that were more affordable and for which there were subsidies for disadvantaged students. The debate on what trips to offer would continue within SLT and Mr Wren was particularly conscious of the need to offer extra-curricular activities that everyone could access.

7.0 Policy Review (was item 8)

Equalities Objectives

Circulated within the MAT agreed policy prior to the meeting.

- 7.1 With regards the first objective, a governor lamented the fact that the school had gained Stonewall status but no longer had it. Why had the school not actively retained it (good to have to underscore the objective)? The HoS explained that there was a cost implication in terms of the designated staff member attending ongoing training. The staff member was maintaining the ethos of the status through work with an internal group. The governor was disappointed to hear about Stonewall imposing a financial cost on schools when they would know that school funding was very tight. Another governor was disappointed that the school couldn't find the money to support the ongoing accreditation. The COO pointed out that every single decision regarding the budget mattered and that non-essential expenditure had to be pared back completely.

7.2	<p>Resolved: The LGB approved the equalities objectives and the action plan as presented.</p>	
7.3	<p>The Clerk reminded governors of their need to monitor progress against the objectives and to ensure that the action plan was implemented. The SLT would be required to report on these matters at this point next year.</p>	ALL SLT
7.4	<p>Resolved: The LGB approved the accessibility plan as circulated.</p>	
7.5	<p>Resolved: Governors approved the Education Visits Policy, which was based on the NYCC model policy.</p>	
7.6	<p>Governors noted the recently approved STAR MAT behaviour protocol. The Clerk was invited to explain the rationale behind its introduction.</p>	
7.7	<p>The Clerk to ensure that the newly approved policies made their way on to the school's website</p>	Clerk
7.8	<p>With reference to the main equalities policy, several governors felt that the terms 'men and women' and 'boys and girls', used at several points in the policy, were too narrow and that the points should simply reference gender. The Clerk agreed to raise the matter with the Trust Board.</p>	Clerk
8.0	<p>Committee Reports</p>	
<p><u>Resources Committee</u></p>		
<p>The minutes of the recent meeting had been circulated. Decisions taken under delegated powers were noted.</p>		
8.1	<p>The Chair asked for a further update on the artificial pitch. The contractors had been on site on Monday and a plan had been drawn up to fix the pitch over the summer. Independent verification of the work would be sought to ensure specifications had been met. In the event that the pitch was not fixed, legal advice would be sought. The loss of income from lettings was a consequence of the problems and this was very regrettable. A further update to be provided next meeting.</p>	LN-C
8.2	<p>The Chair invited the COO to present a further budget update, based on the new assumptions that had been factored in since the Resources Committee meeting and that which had been taken into consideration by the Trust Board when approving the school's budget for the year. Prior to the meeting governors had received the revised Start Budget and the period 8 monitoring report.</p>	
8.3	<p>In terms of the current budget, an in-year deficit of £188k had initially been forecasted. The assumption now was that the school would end the 2018/19 budget period with a slight in-year deficit of circa £3k. (This was marginal on a £7.8m total budget). The 'quick wins' from the first part of the cost recovery plan had fed into this improvement. Cuts to learning resources had also been made; this was not ideal but the school had to balance its budget. Further tough decisions would be necessary given the three-year outlook.</p>	
8.4	<p>At the recent Resources meeting, governors had been presented with an in-year deficit of £229k for the year 2019/20. This deficit, along with deficits in many other school budgets, had left the Trust's position untenable in terms of approving budgets. With income flat, staffing cost pressures had put a massive strain on school budgets. In TGS's case, the school had a relatively expensive teaching staff with many staff on the upper pay spine. However, a recalculation of the supplemental pensions grant, based on advice from AVEC, had been the resulted in a shift in the budget position. The Trust had been able to approve a Start Budget for TGS based on the school operating a £38k in-year deficit for 2019/20. The Board would, however, expect further efforts to be made in-year to return a balanced budget. With further elements of the cost improvement plan rolled out, a neutral position was possible. Following a governor query, the COO confirmed that DfE were funding the pensions contribution increases for at least one year.</p>	

8.5 Governors' attention was drawn to the three-year projections. The £221k budget deficit envisaged by year three would not be allowed to stand. Thus, the LGB and the new Headteacher would need to act swiftly in terms of the next phases of the cost improvement plan. One had to remember that with staffing changes it took time for the savings to come through. It also needed to be pointed out that there was no contingency in the budget – it was very, very tight. Unforeseen expenditure could easily tilt it. No more funding could be put into learning resources or CPD. The COO described it as an austere budget.

8.6 The COO was aware that the condition of the school did need attention and these issues could be tackled by the SCA capital funding due to be received by the Trust. £1.2m had been allocated to the Trust for the purposes of improving school premises. The money would also allow the Trust to cover emergency situations, such as an asbestos leak. A brief discussion followed. Governors were concerned that many of the school buildings inherited by the Trust were in disrepair and that there could be quite a few emergencies meaning money had to be stretched thin. What then?

8.7 A governor asked what was driving the escalation of the deficit. Mostly it came down to staffing costs, hence the need to look at the current structures etc. A governor noted that there was a £70k reduction in catering income recorded for year three of the budget. Was that accurate? The COO acknowledged the governor's observation and would look into it.

MB

8.8 The COO noted that the development of the MAT central staffing team, which involved partly shared structure and costs with TGS would realise £45k in savings and this was in the budget. On this and other opportunities for group buy-in, the Chair felt that the COO should be able, as time went on, to tell LGBs the year-on-year savings they were benefitting from having joined the MAT. The COO confirmed that this would be the case and such reporting would take place in due course.

MB

8.9 There was a frank discussion about the budget and the wider ramifications of what might follow in terms of efforts to tackle the projected deficit. A governor wanted to record his concern over the fact that, whilst the Resources Committee had considered the Start Budget, it had not come to the full LGB for a recommendation prior to going to the Trust Board. The Chair pointed out that this was an unfortunate consequence of the LGB meeting being moved from before to after the Trust Board meeting (was on 2nd July). It was not envisaged that this would happen moving forward. The COO acknowledged the point but added that it was somewhat moot because the Trust had not and would not have considered the budget recommended by the LGB because of the severity of the deficit. The Clerk clarified that, whilst it was expected that LGBs would make a budget recommendation, ultimately the Trust board approved budgets and could move forward as they saw fit. Nevertheless, the governor expected all governors to see the full budget prior to Trust Board meetings in future.

8.10 Governors considered the proposed staffing structure that had been circulated. A governor asked if there were more admin staff than in previous years. This was not the case but the support staff team did need to be looked at under the cost improvement plan. A governor said that it was difficult to approve a structure when governors were unable to see the previous year's arrangements. The Clerk noted that approving the staffing structure was a requirement of the LGBs; indeed it had always been a governing body's duty. In previous years this had not happened, hence why there was no data to hand – effectively the board had a year one starting position. The COO believed that it might be possible to pull together records to show what had been in place at the start of the year. Governors welcomed the clear experience of the teaching team, given that 60% were on UPS, but this was of course expensive. The HoS acknowledged this fact but pointed out that this was one area where the percentage was falling compared to previous years. Next year the school would have 5 NQTs and certain faculty leaders were not being replaced like-for-like.

Resolved:

Governors approved the staffing structure for 2019/20. Governors were aware that this position would be reviewed in the autumn term as part of the ongoing cost improvement plan.

8.10 The minutes of the School Development Committee meeting had been circulated. The committee chair did not wish to raise anything from that meeting but was happy to take questions. None were lodged.

8.11 The Chair confirmed that the HoSs performance review group had completed Mrs Wilson's mid-year review.

9.0 Governance Matters

9.1 Heather Smith, Jeremy Airey and Chris Burt were all prepared to be considered for reappointment as Trust Appointed governors.

The Chair invited the governors to leave the meeting whilst their candidature was considered.

9.2 Governors were happy to endorse their reappointment. The Clerk to put their names forward accordingly to the Trust Board meeting on 16th July. The Clerk to notify the outcome to governors thereafter.

Messrs. Smith, Airey and Burt were Invited to return to the meeting

9.3 Mr Turnpenny was happy to be considered for re-election to the position of Chair. No other nominations were received.

Resolved:

Mr Philip Turnpenny was re-elected as Chair of the LGB for a period of 2 years.

9.4 Dr Airey was happy to be considered for re-election to the position of Vice Chair. No other nominations were received.

Resolved

Dr Jeremy Airey was re-elected as Vice Chair of the LGB for a period of 2 years.

9.5 The Clerk was invited to present the rationale for the revised meeting structure and the proposed meeting dates for the year ahead. The Trustees were encouraging LGBs, as committees of the Trust Board, to conduct formal meetings as one group. It was essential in the current climate for all governors to be familiar with all aspects of a school's operation. The Chair and new Headteacher were supporting the new way of working. The Clerk and the Chair fielded questions from governors.

Resolved:

Governors approved the new way of working and agreed the meeting dates for the year ahead. The Clerk to add the meeting dates to the document store on Decision Time.

9.6 **Resolved:**

Governors approved the following specific monitoring/link roles for 2019/20:

6th Form – L Wilson, J Airey

H&S – D Gluck, L Wilson

Careers – D Gluck

SEND / PP – G Wright, J Bliss

Safeguarding – C Burt, J Ryan

Equalities – H Smith, J Airey

9.7 **Resolved:**

A Pay Committee and Headteacher PM group was still necessary and membership was agreed as follows: P Turnpenny, C Burt, J Ryan. The Chair was granted discretion to make a last-minute appointment to the committee in the event of governor unavailability.

10.0 Chair's Correspondence

None.

11.0 Matters for Escalation to the MAT Board

11.1 As per minute 7.8.

Clerk

Clerk

12.0 Any Other Urgent Business

- 12.1 Mr Gluck reported that the Eco-group had met with certain governors. The group had an action plan and were clearly enthusiastic about the issue of sustainability and keen to look at ways to improve the school environment and reduce waste and the use of resources. Mr Gluck felt that it would be beneficial for the group to meet governors again, with the new Headteacher, in the autumn term to look more closely at what could be done. The Chair welcomed the idea. The Clerk said that he had spoken to LN-C about the potential for this group to contribute to a school environment and sustainability policy. Currently the school did not have one but Trustees were keen for schools to pursue one as this was an area of concern to young people.
- 12.2 The Trust would be writing to the local MP about the state of school funding, as per the suggestion by Mr Turnpenny.
- 12.3 The Chair wished to thank governors for their contribution during the year and wished to particularly recognise the hard work and commitment of the Head of School. Governors echoed these sentiments.

The meeting closed at 8.05pm

	Action Points from the Meeting	Agenda Item	Person(s) Responsible	Date for Delivery
1.	Mystery shopper exercise re: protecting use of school crest	3.2	JR	Report next meeting
2.	Refresher Safeguarding Training	3.2	ALL	Next meeting
3.	Complete Safer Recruitment training (item carried over)	3.2	JB	ASAP
4.	Monitoring progress against the equalities objectives and action plan	7.3	All	Summer 2020
5.	Policies to website	7.7	Clerk	By end of term
6.	Raise issue on Equalities policy with MAT Board	7.8	Clerk	MAT Board meeting
7.	Update on repairs to artificial pitch	8.1	LN-C	Next meeting
8.	Query re: catering income reduction in year three of the budget	8.7	MB	Report next meeting
9.	Report outlining year-on-year savings for MAT schools	8.8	MB	Due course
10.	Trust appointed governors: names to be put forward for reappointment and notification thereafter	9.2	Clerk	By end of term
11.	Meeting dates to TGSs document store on DT	9.5	Clerk	By end of term
12.	Governor group to have follow-up meeting with eco-group – possible policy development	12.1	Working group	Autumn term