

BEAUMONT SCHOOL (Company Number 8104190)
MINUTES OF MEETING OF GOVERNORS HELD ON
Tuesday 23rd January 2018 at 6.30pm

Governors Present:

Alex Hall (“AHa”) (Chair), Martin Atkinson (“MAA”), Yvonne Powdrell (“YPo”), Jonathan Mountstevens (“JMo”), Alison Wallis (“AWa”), Mike Cameron (“MCA”), Gary Kellett (“GKe”), Lianne Sherwood (“LSH”), Ian Johnston (“IJo”), Anna Battaglia-Geymonat (“ABa”), David Lee (“DLe”), John McAlister (“JMI”), Brenda Austin (“BAu”) (items 5 – 21) and Andy Gray (“AGr”).

In attendance:

Simone Kilka-Green (“SKi”)

Clerk to the Governing Body

Actions Agreed at the meeting:

	Action	Responsibility	Timescale
1	AHa to consider further inviting students to attend the Extended Meeting.	AHa	For the Extended Meeting on 8 th March 2018
2	Governors to email to SKi any particular requests for the daytime session of the Extended Meeting by Friday 2 nd February 2018.	All	By Friday 2 nd February 2018
3	SKi to email the updated Inspection Data Summary Report to all governors.	SKi	ASAP
4	SKi to check with the School Business Manager whether the Schedule of Financial Delegation permitted the proposed extension to the cleaning contract without any alternative quotes being obtained.	SKi	ASAP
5	The structure of the GB to be discussed in detail at the Extended Meeting on 8 th March and the Chair of Governors Elect (from September 2018) to be identified and agreed at the next meeting.	FGB	Extended Meeting on 8 th March 2018 and the FGB meeting on 22 nd March 2018
6	SKi to liaise with the school to progress the election of the new parent governor.	SKi	ASAP
7	LSH to confirm the date for the next in-house training session on understanding assessment data.	LSH	ASAP

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Torie Stewart (“VSt”) and Cate Davies (“CDa”). Consent was given to their absence. All other governors were present at the meeting.

2. Declaration of any conflict of interest foreseen in relation to agenda items and undertaking to declare any that arises in the course of the meeting

Governors were reminded that anyone with a conflict of interest must declare it, withdraw from the meeting and take no part in any discussion or decision on the matter. None was declared.

3. To receive notification of any other business for item 20

Actions

None were raised.

4. Approval of minutes of the meetings on 14th November 2017 (including Part 2 confidential minutes) and 12th December 2017 and matters arising

The minutes of the meeting on 14th November 2017 were agreed as drafted. The action points from the meeting were considered as follows:

	Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Update
1	Chair of Governors Elect (from September 2018) to be identified and agreed at the next meeting.	FGB	Next meeting	On agenda
2	The implementation of a process for reviewing the contribution of individual governors to be on the agenda for the Extended Meeting on 8 th March 2018.	FGB	Extended Meeting on 8 th March 2018	On agenda for Extended Meeting
3	Resources Committee to consider in more detail the General Data Protection Regulations (“GDPR”) and the school’s plans to ensure compliance by 25 th May 2018.	Resources Committee	Next meeting of the Resources Committee	Completed
4	SKi to circulate some information from the Information Commissioner’s Office on the GDPR to all governors.	SKi	ASAP	Completed
5	LSH to liaise with MAt on the dates for the next in-house training session and book a session on understanding assessment data.	LSH	ASAP	Completed and on agenda

The Part 2 confidential minutes of the meeting on 14th November 2017 were agreed as drafted, and it was noted that the action from that meeting had been completed.

The minutes of the meeting on 12th December 2017 were agreed as drafted. The action points from the meeting were considered as follows:

	Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Update
1	JWe to circulate the final version of the accounts by email.	JWe	ASAP	Completed
2	The two recommendations in the Management Letter regarding the structure of governance to be considered at the next FGB meeting.	FGB	Next FGB meeting	On agenda

5. Student and House Leadership Update

MAt explained that there were no students to attend the meeting as Year 13 students were taking their mock exams.

BAu arrived at the meeting.

YPo reported that, as the school had recently moved to Department reviews every two years, it was about to carry out its first pastoral review, and part of that would involve feedback from students. It was noted that if the review were successful, then it would be carried out annually for both Key Stages 3 and 4, it being also noted that feedback from Key Stage 5 was sought differently through the BeauSandVer consortium, as the heads of sixth form were very experienced in pastoral support.

Governors agreed that the pastoral review would be very interesting, but said that they would also welcome

the opportunity to hear directly from students. The question of how students could be encouraged to attend governors' meetings was discussed, and it was agreed that the Extended Meeting was a good opportunity for students to attend as it would take place during the school day.

AHa agreed to consider further inviting students to attend the Extended Meeting.

AHa

6. Committee reports and updates:

A. Resources

Governors had considered the minutes of the last committee meeting which had been distributed prior to the meeting. There were no questions arising.

B. Community, Teaching and Learning

Governors had considered the minutes of the last committee meeting which had been distributed prior to the meeting. There were no questions arising.

7. FAB updates on the:

a) progress of the construction of the access road by Charles Church

AHa reported that there had been a FAB meeting with Hertfordshire County Council ("HCC") on Friday 19th January 2018 at which HCC confirmed its understanding that the access road would be available for use after February half term 2018.

Governors noted that there were contracts in place between HCC and Charles Church which required that the road was to be ready for use within 12 months of Charles Church starting work on site, which was on 6th March 2017. Concern was expressed that Charles Church appeared to have little incentive to progress the access road given that it was being used to store materials and for the workers' parking. AHa explained that HCC had indicated to the FAB Group that it would take steps to enforce the terms of the contract, and the school had made it clear to HCC that it wanted to progress access to the road as quickly as possible.

AHa explained that the school was due to start the fencing work at what would be the front of the school site on 29th January 2018 so that it would be ready for when the road could be used.

b) Resources Committee having agreed the Phase 1 costs put forward by HCC by email on 20th November 2017 and the subsequent discussions with HCC regarding those costs

Governors had noted from the minutes of the last Resources Committee meeting that the costs proposed by HCC for the new playing fields (Phase 1) by email on 20th November 2017 had been agreed. That approval was confirmed and ratified.

AHa reported that HCC had tried to attribute an additional £50,000 of costs (which had been accounted by HCC to incorrect budgets) to the Phase 1 costs. That was strenuously resisted by the FAB Group, as a result of which HCC agreed to allocate the additional costs to other budgets, and to adhere to the costs presented on 20th November 2017.

c) the latest Project Budget

Governors had considered the updated Project Budget which had been circulated in advance of the meeting, and were very pleased to note the overall project surplus set out.

Governors thanked the school and the FAB Group for the excellent management of the project and the superb

outcome.

It was noted that the project was not completed; the outstanding matters were the new bike sheds, the front gates, and also the snagging items which had not been completed by Ashe. It was noted that the school had a significant retention which would more than cover the remaining costs, and it had been hoped would serve as an incentive to Ashe to complete the job.

MA explained that some work was planned for February half term, and it was agreed that the school would then consider whether it would engage alternative contractors to complete the work and take the cost of that out of the retention monies.

Governors suggested that the school conduct a post-project review to identify any lessons that could be learnt for the SEC2 project. It was noted that there would also be a final review of the Development Agreement with HCC and that the school would be raising the question of how the surplus funds that HCC would have from the FAB project would be utilised.

8. Chair's Update including:

a) to note the school's entry in Tatler Magazine on its list of the top 20 state schools in England

Governors had considered the Tatler article which had been distributed at the time of publication. It was agreed that the recognition for the school's achievements within the article was gratifying, and it served as beneficial marketing for the school.

b) to note and discuss the Ofsted Report on Verulam School from the inspection on 11th and 12th October 2017

Governors had considered the Ofsted Report regarding Verulam School which had been distributed to governors shortly after its publication earlier in the month. It was agreed that the report made unpleasant reading, and governors questioned whether there were any lessons that the school could learn from the report.

The report and its findings were discussed at length. YPo explained that she had been looking at the position on safeguarding at the school in any event, and although the issues that were highlighted at Verulam were not issues for Beaumont, since the report was made public she had taken steps to tighten up the registration process for the 2 students who were educated at college one afternoon per week. The registers for those students were already being obtained and logged from the college at the end of each week; that was changed to the same afternoon. She was also looking at tightening the school's position in relation to 2 additional students who were dual-registered and did not attend any lessons at Beaumont at all, as it was not clear what responsibility the school would have for those students.

Governors encouraged the school to review its processes carefully and challenge the ways that things had 'always been done', as that appeared to be part of the reason for the issues that Ofsted identified at Verulam.

Governors questioned the school's position on the embedding of British Values. YPo explained that she had already spoken to Liz Cleverly, who was leading on PSHCE (which was taught to all year groups up to and including Year 10), and was of the view that, although it was already well embedded in the school, the school would put in place an action plan to audit the current position and identify any steps needed to further embed it into the school's culture. It was noted that the pastoral review discussed earlier in the meeting would also feed into that.

Governors discussed the school's culture and ethos, and agreed that, although the issues that Ofsted identified at Verulam were not issues at Beaumont, the work that the school was doing to review its position was sensible, as a review and checking exercise.

Governors questioned how the underlying issues highlighted at Verulam had not been identified earlier by the

school's leadership team or its various stakeholders, and spent some time discussing whether students would be more forthcoming about issues affecting them when speaking to someone they viewed as 'external' to the school, such as governors. Governors were particularly conscious that, hypothetically, a student who was being bullied might be likely to want to keep quiet about it.

It was agreed that governors' experience of speaking with students as part of Department reviews was that they were generally very open and honest; however it was acknowledged that the contrary view is that students experiencing issues could be more open with members of staff that they knew and trusted. It was agreed that both an internal view and an external view would be valuable, particularly if there were any disparity between the two, and that the most important aspect was that the students should feel that they trust whoever they were speaking with.

AGr explained that the Year 7 students had recently completed a survey, which was anonymous, which it was hoped they felt able to complete openly and honestly. The survey was useful for staff, and the students did appear to have been forthcoming.

After some debate it was agreed that having a governor involved in the pastoral review would be useful, it being noted that it would be the first time that such a review had been carried out, and there was therefore some concern on the part of the school to ensure that such a broad review (covering all year groups in the relevant key stage) would be manageable. YPo confirmed that, if the KS3 review went well, then it would also be carried out at KS4.

MAt said that, in his view, whilst the review of the position is important, ultimately the school should not be diverted from the matters that were set out in the Plan for School Improvement for the year. He confirmed that the Verulam Ofsted report had not been raised in the sixth form tours that he had led on 19th January 2018, and that the position remained unchanged in that the three schools in the BeauSandVer consortium continued to work together.

c) update on the recruitment process for the new clerk to the governors

AHa reported that an application had been received for the position and an interview would be arranged. He thanked SKi for continuing to perform the clerk's role in the meantime.

d) update on the election process for the new parent governor

SKi asked for confirmation that the parent governor election process should be commenced in the light of the discussions on the structure of the governing body on the agenda for the meeting. It was agreed that that would be reviewed at the end of item 14 on the agenda.

e) plans for the Extended Meeting on 8th March 2018

AHa outlined the plans for the Extended Meeting to include the evaluation of the contribution of governors, to hear the views of students, a discussion on Multi-Academy Trusts, and succession-planning.

Governors agreed that they would like to spend the earlier part of the day shadowing a student, and it was agreed that governors would email to SKi any particular requests for the day by Friday 2nd February 2018.

All

9. Head's Update

MAt reported that two new members of staff had been recruited to MFL and Economics & Business. In addition, two trainee teachers had also been recruited. There were outstanding adverts for teachers in Geography, Computing, Science and a maternity cover for RE.

MAt informed governors that Laura Dine had stepped down from her position as an Assistant Headteacher, but had agreed to remain as SENCO. There was therefore an internal advert for Assistant Headteacher and

governors would be involved in the appointment process.

Governors noted that the sixth form evening on 11th January 2018 went very well with 128 external students who signed in. There were 45 families who attended daytime tours. The expectation was that 130-140 of the current Year 11 students would apply to the sixth form; the deadline for applications was noted as 7th February 2018.

On SEC2, MAt informed governors that, based on advice from St Albans District Council Planning Department (“SADC”), a second planning application was made for the extension to the new science block, which was itself dependent on a successful CIF bid. SADC subsequently rejected the application on the basis that it was not possible to apply to extend a building that did not already have planning consent. SADC had agreed to refund the planning fee paid and governors agreed that it would therefore be sensible to await the outcome of the CIF bid before re-submitting the application.

On SEC3, MAt informed governors that the school had not been successful on HCC’s 4 tests; STAGS and Sandringham had been successful. It was noted that STAGS moving to a Pupil Admission Number of 240 was anticipated to have an impact on the school’s gender balance, it being noted that the school already had a higher number of boys than girls - a situation that could be further impacted by the Ofsted report on Verulam discussed earlier in the meeting.

Governors expressed their disappointment at HCC’s decision, and noted that the feedback from HCC on the school’s bid was that it was not unreasonable nor too high, which had been a concern.

MAt informed governors that the Inspection Data Summary Report, which had been circulated to governors on 12th January 2018 had been amended by Ofsted to include sixth form data. It was agreed that SKi would email the updated version to governors. MAt explained that the new report referred to the school’s data for 2016 on the front sheet, whereas the school’s data for 2017 was even better.

SKi

On Multi-Academy Trusts, MAt reported that he had heard from the DfE about the school’s application to become an academy sponsor. The application would be considered by the Headteachers’ Board in February 2018.

On 80 in ’18, MAt reported that plans for Rob’s Festival were underway, the committee had been appointed and the plans were progressing. In addition, the school was planning a Ball on 14th July 2018. He also gave governors dates for the vocal concert on 30th January 2018, the Jazz Evening on 24th February 2018, Alice in Wonderland performances from 7th to 9th March 2018, and the Junior Drama Company Comedy night on 16th March 2018.

10. To note the definition of ‘coasting schools’ published by the Department for Education in November 2017

Governors had considered the definition of coasting schools as:

“in 2015 had fewer than 60% of children achieving 5+ A-C GCSEs including English and mathematics, and below the median percentage of pupils making expected progress in English and mathematics, and in 2016 and 2017 their Progress 8 score was below -0.25.”*

and noted that the school did not fall within those categories.

11. Approval of the extension of the cleaning contract with Cleantec

Governors had considered the report prepared by Lyndsey McCutcheon in which she had set out the rationale for the proposed extension of the contract with Cleantec for a further two years from 31st March 2018. Governors noted that the school was satisfied with the performance under the contract, and that the costs charged had not increased since the addition of A Block to the campus.

Governors queried whether the Schedule of Financial Delegation permitted the proposed extension without any alternative quotes being obtained. SKi agreed to check that with the School Business Manager. The extension was approved, subject to compliance with the Schedule of Financial Delegation. SKi

12. Election of Chair of Governors with effect from 1st September 2018

SKi invited nominations for the position of chair of governors.

The structure of the governing body was discussed in some detail, and in particular the question of what the structure of the governing body would be in the short term, bearing in mind the impact of becoming a Multi-Academy Trust. It was agreed that the only position that could be elected at that point in time was the Chair of the current governing body, as currently constituted. If and when the school were to become a Multi-Academy Trust, the whole structure would have to be re-considered.

One governor indicated that they would be interested in the position, but said that they would need more information on the time commitment involved before putting themselves forward. Another governor also indicated an interest, but said that they would prefer there to be an election for the position, rather than the only candidate being elected by default.

It was agreed that the structure of the governing body would be considered in greater detail at the Extended Meeting on 8th March 2018, which would include succession-planning and concerns expressed by some long-standing governors about the benefit of longevity of service versus potential staleness. FGB

Following that discussion, the election of the next Chair would then be at the FGB meeting on 22nd March 2018 – as it was recognised that the decision should not be delayed until the Summer Term.

13. Update on MAT working group discussions

JMI gave an update which was recorded in Part 2 confidential minutes.

14. Further discussion of the content of the recommendations with the Management Letter from Hillier Hopkins regarding the structure of the GB and a) the Headteacher being a trustee and b) the separation of the roles of governor and trustee

Governors had considered the management letter from Hillier Hopkins which had been circulated for the FGB meeting on 12th December 2017. The recommendations were noted as follows:

“Updated governance guidance: staff trustees

Risk: Low

The Academies Financial Handbook 2017 has updated advice regarding staff trustees. Although the head is a trustee, the DfEs’s strong preference is for no other employees to serve as trustees in order to retain clear lines of accountability through the senior leader.

Implication:

There is a risk that best practice will not be followed.

We recommend that the composition of the members and the board of trustees is examined and amended for the updated guidance.”

Governors discussed the implications of following the recommendation, which would be that the only staff governor would be MAt as Headteacher. It was noted that the risk as identified by Hillier Hopkins was low, and that what had been highlighted was best practice, which was not mandatory, although there was an expectation that the school would follow best practice.

Governors agreed that consideration of the structure of the governing body was inextricably linked with the question of Multi-Academy Trusts, which was to be discussed at greater length at the Extended Meeting on 8th March 2018. It was noted that the intention was to agree a course of action on the Multi-Academy Trust question, which would then resolve the question of the structure of the governing body.

The second recommendation was noted as follows:

“Updated governance guidance: Members and trustees

Risk: Low

The Academies Financial Handbook 2017 has updated advice regarding members and trustees. The Department of Education’s (DfE) view is that the most robust governance structures will have a significant degree of separation between the individuals who are members and those who are trustees. The DfE’s view is that, if members also sit on the board of trustees, this may reduce the objectivity with which the members can exercise their powers.

Implication:

There is a risk that best practice will not be followed.

The DfE’s recommendation is for a majority of members to be independent of the board of trustees. We recommend that the composition of the members and the board of trustees is examined and amended for the updated guidance.”

Governors agreed that, although it would require an amendment to the articles of association, following this recommendation would be easier than the first recommendation. Once again it was noted that the recommendation was best practice, which was not mandatory, and the identified risk was low.

It was noted that part of the Multi-Academy Trust structure which had been discussed would involve changing the membership structure such that the only three members would be entirely independent of the governors, and that three members had been identified (with proposals as to an additional two to bring the total to five members).

It was agreed that this issue would also be resolved as part of the discussion on Multi-Academy Trusts at the Extended Meeting.

It was further agreed that, in view of the discussions about the structure, the election process for the parent governor discussed under agenda item 8) c) above would be commenced. SKi

15. Confidential item – report on the outcome of the review of the permanent exclusion on 8th January 2018

AWa gave an update which was recorded in Part 2 confidential minutes.

16. Safeguarding - update

MAat reported that the new fencing was due to be installed at what would be the front of the site in the week commencing 29th January 2018.

17. Annual review of the parent feedback on ParentView

Governors had considered the feedback that was available on ParentView and noted that there were only 22 responses on it. It was agreed that additional feedback would be useful, and AHa confirmed that he had already mentioned it in his January Beaumont Life article.

Governors suggested that the school consider adding a link to it on the Beaumont School app.

18. Report on Governor’s review of the school’s complaints file

AWa reported that she had attended school to review the complaints file, and that since her last visit there were 11 additional complaints, which was a similar number to the previous period.

AWa confirmed that there were no themes to the complaints which ranged from neighbour complaints about parking to issues raised by parents. It was noted that in all communications the school had adopted a conciliatory tone and was not defensive.

Governors thanked AWa for her work on that.

19. Governor Development Co-ordinator Update including reminder of the in-house training session on understanding assessment data and to note the date for the Hertfordshire Governors’ Annual Conference 2018 – Saturday 17th November 2018

LSH reported that she was waiting to hear from Herts for Learning on the date for the next in-house training session, and would confirm the date as soon as possible.

LSH

20. To receive any other business as notified in item 3

There was no additional business raised.

21. Date of next meeting

Governor Day and Extended Meeting – Thursday 8th March 2018 11am – 3pm and 3pm to 6.30pm
FGB meeting – Thursday 22nd March 2018 – 6.30pm

There being no further business AHa declared the meeting closed at 8.35pm.

Signed:
Chair of Governors

Dated:.....

