

BEAUMONT SCHOOL
(Company Number 8104190)
MINUTES OF MEETING OF GOVERNORS HELD ON
Wednesday 3rd September 2020 at 6.30pm
Virtual Meeting via Google Meet
(during Covid-19 pandemic situation)

Governors Present:

Alex Hall (“AHa”) (Chair items 4-19), Martin Atkinson (“MAt”), Yvonne Powdrell (“YPo”), Jonathan Mountstevens (“JMo”), Alison Wallis (“AWa”), Mike Cameron (“MCA”), Gary Kellett (“GKe”), Lianne Sherwood (“LSh”), Ian Johnston (“IJo”), David Lee (“DLe”), Simone Kilka-Green (“SKi”), Peter Mayne (“PMA”), Andy Gray (“AGr”), Anna Battaglia-Geymonat (“ABa”), Brenda Austin (“BAu”), Michele Lloyd (“MLi”), Stephen Edbury (“SEd”) and Catherine Hopkin (“CHo”).

In attendance:

Sharon Banks (“SBa”) - Clerk to the Governing Body (Chair for items 1-3)

Actions Agreed at the meeting:

	Action	Responsibility	Timescale
1	Provide an update regarding replacement of the old boilers vs installing a different system and whether a tender process would proceed.	MAt	Autumn term
2	Consider the use of Google Drive for Governor document access and storage.	AHa/SBa	Autumn term
3	Investigate online exclusions training for Governors to complete before 24 January 2021.	SBa	Next meeting
4.	Review how other schools have addressed diversity via their websites to see if there is anything that might assist building the school’s equality action plan.	MAt	Autumn term
5.	In relation to the management accounts, school to provide an update of costs being incurred as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.	MAt	Next meeting
6.	Academies Financial Handbook to be circulated to Governors.	JWe/SBa	ASAP
7.	Covid-19 to be added as standing item for all FGB, Resources and CTL Committee meetings going forward.	SBa	Ongoing
8.	Designated Teachers’ and Governors’ list for 2020/2021 to be circulated to Governors for final approval via email.	YPo/SBa	ASAP
9.	Department Links 2020/21 to be updated and circulated for final approval. Outstanding History department link to be filled.	JMo/SBa	ASAP
10.	Recommendations for skills audit categories to support the new proposed Academies Trust structure to be circulated to Governors.	AHa	Autumn term
11.	Achieving diversity to be added as a recurring agenda item for future meetings.	SBa	Next meeting
12.	Update PSI to ensure that the Governing Body strategic priorities are reflected in the new strategy document	JMo/AHa	Autumn term

13.	Child Protection Self Review Checklist deferred.	MAt/AHa	Next meeting
14.	Review the Schedule of Financial Delegation	MAt/AHa	Next meeting
15.	Invitations to members to join the Academy Trust to be issued.	MAt/AHa	ASAP

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Tim Pugh (“TPu”). Consent was given for his absence. All other governors were present at the meeting and the meeting was quorate.

2. Declaration of any conflict of interest foreseen in relation to agenda items and undertaking to declare any conflict 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. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair and agreement as to deputising arrangements with effect from the first governors’ meeting in the academic year 2020/21

SBa acted as Chair and noted that nominations for the positions of Chair and Vice-Chair for 2020-21 had been received at the 8th July 2020 meeting. AHa and AWa agreed to re-stand for the positions of Chair and Vice-Chair respectively.

It was unanimously agreed to appoint AHa as Chair and AWa as Vice-Chair in both cases for a period of one year until the first Governors’ meeting of the academic year 2021-22.

It was noted that BAu’s term as Staff Governor was due to expire on 12th September 2020. The Chair thanked BAu for her commitment, re-iterated the value the Governing Body placed on having the contributions of Staff Governors, and wished her well.

Governors also unanimously agreed to the following deputising arrangements:

“In the event that the chair of governors is not available to carry out necessary duties and approvals, then authority to perform these duties and approvals is delegated to the vice-chair and then to the next available person, taken in order from the chair of the Resources Committee and the chair of the Community, Teaching and Learning Committee.”

It was agreed that AHa would chair the remainder of the meeting.

4. To receive notification of any other business for item 18

One item was raised.

On the basis that governing body and committee meetings would continue to be held virtually via Google Meet until at least December 2020, the Chair requested that governors inform the Clerk via the meeting chat when they joined and/or left the meeting (if they were not present at the beginning or end of the meeting) in order to keep an accurate note of those present at the meeting.

FGB

5. Approval of minutes of the meetings on 8th July 2020 and matters arising.

The minutes of the meeting on 8th July 2020 were agreed as drafted.

The action points from the meeting were considered as follows:

	Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Update
1.	Proposed new skills audit categories to be circulated for review.	AHa	Autumn Term	On agenda
2.	Consider use of Google Drive for Governor access and document storage.	AHa/SBa	Autumn Term	In progress
3.	Provide update regarding replacement of the old boilers vs installing a different system and whether a Tender process would proceed.	MAt	Autumn Term	In progress
4.	Confirm date for next Training session.	LSh	September FGB	On agenda
5.	Review how other schools have addressed diversity via their websites to see if there is anything that might assist building the schools diversity plan. Insights provided by another Governor to be circulated.	MAt AHa	September FGB ASAP	In progress
6.	Approval of the Plan for School Improvement (“PSI”) 2020/2021.	MAt	September FGB	On agenda
7.	Approve amendments to the Schedule of Financial Delegation.	MAt	September FGB	On agenda
8.	Strike off the BeauSandVer Company.	SBa	ASAP	See below
9.	Proceed with next steps to amend the Governance structure to meet the requirements of the AFH.	AHa/MAt	Autumn Term	On agenda
10.	Approval of the updated Child Protection Policy (due Sept 20).	YPo	September FGB	On agenda

In relation to item 3 above, it was noted that some quotations had been obtained and the school hoped to acquire some funding to replace the boilers as part of the next CIF bid.

In relation to item 5 above, it was noted that some initial ideas had already been circulated to Governors for consideration.

In relation to item 8 above, it was noted that the forms would be sent to MAAt that week in order to obtain the relevant BeauSandVer directors’ signatures, so that the strike off could proceed.

6. Committee reports and updates:

A. Resources

Governors were advised that the draft minutes were still in the process of being approved by the chair and would be distributed in advance of the next meeting.

B. Community, Teaching and Learning

Governors were advised that the draft minutes were still in the process of being approved by the chair and would be distributed in advance of the next meeting.

7. Acknowledgement of receipt and review of the Management Accounts

Governors had considered the Management Accounts for Period 10 (June) which had been circulated prior to the meeting.

Governors asked if the school was separately recording the specific costs incurred due to the Covid-19 pandemic. MAt advised he would investigate and provide an update at the next meeting. *MAt*

8. Constitution and legal operation of the Academy for the academic year 2020/21:

a) approval of terms of reference for committees

Governors had considered the terms of reference for committees which had been circulated before the meeting. In relation to the FAB working party, it was agreed that this should remain part of the terms of reference until the final account with the contractors was settled. It was agreed that the MAT working party should be removed, but could be reinstated if required, in the future.

In terms of required changes to the sections of the terms of reference relating to the Resources Committee, it was noted that there had been some updates to the Academies Financial Handbook which specifically related to internal audit: it was no longer possible for the external auditors also to be the school's internal auditors and members of staff could also no longer attend the Resources Committee as members when the Committee was performing the internal audit function. On this basis, it was agreed that the terms of reference would need to be updated to reflect these changes. AHa agreed to update the terms of reference and circulate a draft version for Governors consideration and comment. *AHa*

It was agreed that the Academies Financial Handbook should be circulated to Governors for their review following the meeting. *JWe*

It was agreed that no changes were required to the Community Teaching and Learning section of the terms of reference.

b) agree membership of committees including membership of Admissions Committee (with delegated power to the Chair of Governor to vary this where necessary)

Governors had considered the updated governance structure chart which had been circulated before the meeting.

It was noted that a number of Governor vacancies were being carried as a result of Governor terms ending and their positions not being replaced during the Covid-19 pandemic. DfE Covid-19 guidelines did permit this state of affairs. It was agreed that the best way forward was to finalise the new Academy Trust structure and then appoint positions based on the requirements of the new Articles of Association.

It was agreed that the Chair of Governors had delegated power to vary membership of the committees where necessary.

c) approval and annual signature of the Code of Practice for School Governors

The Code of Practice for School Governors (as approved on 23rd March 2017) was circulated in advance of the meeting for Governor review.

It was noted that, in the absence of a physical meeting at which this document would usually be signed by all Governors, all Governors would email SBa following the meeting with a statement that they would abide by the Governors' Code of Conduct for the academic year 2020/2021. *FGB*

AHa reminded governors that they had a duty of confidentiality in relation to confidential or sensitive matters that were discussed at governors' meetings.

d) completion and checking of the Governing Body Register of Business Interests by all Governors published on the school's website

Governors had considered the Register of Business Interests which had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

AHa reminded governors about the rules which provide that governing bodies have a duty to publish on their website their register of interests setting out the personal and business interests of governors. The register should also set out any potential conflicts of interest arising as a result of governors personal/family relationships.

It was agreed that Governors should email SBa any changes within seven days so that the register could be updated on the website. *FGB*

e) Appointment of the Headteacher as Accounting Officer for the school

The re-appointment of the Headteacher as Accounting Officer was approved

f) Update on changes to the Trust structure

AHa advised, as had been discussed at prior meetings, that the first step in the Trust restructure was to appoint new Members for the Trust. It was noted that, whilst a letter had been drafted in February 2020 to invite appropriate individuals to become Members, it had been agreed that it was prudent to wait until after lockdown before proceeding with contacting them. It was agreed that AHa would update the letter and send it to the potential new Members. *AHa*

It was noted that, once the new independent Members had been appointed, all Governors would then resign as Members in order to keep the two tiers of governance separate and independent. It was expected that all Governors would remain as Academy Trustees, except for Staff Governors. All Staff Governors (save for the Headteacher) would step down as Trustees, but staff would continue to attend full Governing Body and committee meetings in order to continue to bring expertise and advise Governors.

9. Chair's Update including;

a) review of the Strategic Direction for 2020/21

Governors had considered the 2020/21 vision document which had been circulated for the 2020 Extended Meeting in February and again in advance of this meeting. It was noted that, under normal circumstances, this document would have been discussed at the school's LT away weekend. However, this did not proceed, due to the Covid-19 pandemic. It was acknowledged that work on strategy had not progressed, but that it was important to keep sight of this and continue to review strategy carefully when practical.

The Chair passed on thanks to the school, on behalf of the Governing Body, for all the work conducted over the summer break to make the school ready for the safe return of both students and teachers and formally thanked staff for their continued commitment.

It was noted that Covid-19 should be added as a standing item for all committee meetings going forward. *SBa*

b) approval of the list of Designated Teachers/Governors 2020/21

Governors had considered the list of Designated Teachers/Governors which had been distributed prior to the meeting. It was agreed that YPo would send an updated version to SBa for circulation and approval via email. *FGB/SBa*

c) to note the Governor work plan for the year 2020/21

Governors had considered the work plan which had been distributed prior to the meeting. Governors were asked to submit any changes to SBa within the week or it would be taken as approved. *FGB / SBa*

d) to note and approve the links to departments 2021/21

Governors had considered the list of department links which had been distributed prior to the meeting.

It was noted that Media Studies needed to be added, and that JMo would send an updated department link list to SBa for circulation to Governors for approval via email. *JMo/SBa*

It was noted that the History link remained vacant and the Chair asked for a volunteer to email AHa, SBa or JMo to submit their interest. *JMo/SBa*

e) Discussion of Governor positions, succession planning and future election requirements to meet the requirements of the AFH

It was noted that two parent vacancies and one staff vacancy existed. It was recommended that the governance structure be amended first (as previously agreed) and then any appropriate elections could follow. It was noted that the DfE had advised that, during the Covid-19 pandemic, vacancies were permitted. It was agreed that the vacancies could continue pending the change of governance arrangements.

f) Proposed skills audit categories

It was recommended that these be reviewed following the governance structure changes and that AHa would put forward some suggestions for consideration then. *AHa*

g) Promoting diversity

The Chair thanked a Governor for putting forward some suggestions for consideration in relation to meeting the diversity challenge, which had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

It was agreed this should be kept on the agenda and Governors were asked to review the information already circulated and were asked to share any further suggestions/insights via email. *FGB*

h) ESFA letter from Eileen Milner to academy trust accounting officers; July 2020 DfE School Governance update; Message from local RSC

Governors had considered and noted the above documents which had been circulated in advance of the meeting, and had no further questions.

10. Head's Report

MAt reported how pleased he was to have the students return to school albeit under a constant Covid-19 secure regime of one way systems, hand washing and sanitising.

It was noted that there had been two positive cases of Covid-19 in Year 13 prior to the start of term and that the school was following the advice of Public Health England on a case by case basis. It was noted that one student had contracted Covid-19 abroad and the second infection was from the same source. It was noted that the work completed by staff over the summer (in terms of one way systems and keeping year groups in 'bubbles' in separate parts of the school, with seating plans in classrooms, staggered start times, break times and end of school times) had so far kept infection to a minimum.

It was agreed that, as this was new territory, at times a judgement call (in line with government and PHE advice) would need to be made as to whether a student or member of staff should be sent home in order to minimise infection.

With regard to exam results, the school was pleased to report strong A level and GCSE grades (following the

process for centre assessment during the pandemic). It was noted, however, that, due to last-minute Government changes, there was a handful of students across both cohorts who were not satisfied with their exam outcomes. MAt advised however that meetings with their parents had predominantly been positive. It was noted that, this year, appeals could only be made on the basis of a perceived administrative error and that the deadline was 14 September 2020. It was agreed that, should any appeal be made, these should be sent directly to the exam board for review rather than being dealt with via the school's usual complaints policy. It was noted that students also had the opportunity to re-sit the exams if they felt they could have done better.

Regarding the sixth form, MAt reported that there had been a very positive start, with 108 external students joining (this being 44% more than the previous year), making a total of 460 students for 2020/21 (compared to 75 external students joining making a total of 395 students in 2019/20). It was agreed that this was a very strong result as the school had thought the number of external students might have been lower due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Governors asked how the school was managing to meet the social distancing requirements with this significant increase in the 6th form cohort. MAt advised that there was provision for students who could not go home between lessons; and that the remainder of the students were required to come into school only for their lessons (with the exception of lessons which spanned a break time).

With regard to the PSI which had been circulated in advance of the meeting, it was noted that, as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, the number of key objectives had been reduced to 5 with the key priority being to manage health and safety effectively during the crisis. It was noted that, in order to achieve this, all staff had committed to extra responsibilities including: supervising handwashing and overseeing two separate lunch intervals. It was also noted that senior staff were on duty all the time, meaning that there was not the usual space available to reflect and focus on innovation and driving forward new ideas (although MAt noted that this did not mean that the leadership team did not continue to have new ideas). It was agreed that the key aim was to continue to ensure the best possible provision for students in the circumstances, and that the PSI would reflect this with a narrower focus in the short term.

The Governors agreed and approved the revised PSI but asked that the section regarding Governing Body strategic priorities be updated in due course to reflect the vision document discussed at the Extended Meeting in February 2020.

AHa/JMo

MAt queried the approach to be taken to the upcoming Secondary Transfer Evening and sought Governors' advice as to whether to try to support physical tours of the school as well as providing a virtual alternative. After discussion, it was agreed that a virtual alternative was the most prudent way forward given the priority to keep staff and students safe and avoid bringing additional people on site. It was agreed that good online video presentations (including students providing their views) would be the optimal solution.

Regarding SEC2 and CIF, it was reported that the finalisation of phase 1 of SEC2 was still outstanding. It was also noted that there had been some delays to the tarmacking of the new playground area (on the old science block foot print) due to bad weather.

With regard to CIF, MAt reported that the new eating area was looking good and should be completed by the end of September 2020. It was also reported that there had been a gas leak identified at the end of the summer break. It was noted that the complete replacement of old pipes under D block had been required at a significant cost. It was noted that this had been an emergency situation where the normal procurement process could not be followed; therefore the expenditure had been approved by the Chair under emergency conditions. Governors ratified this decision.

Governors commended the senior team on their unwavering commitment to the school during a very difficult time, the outstanding exam grades, their care for the wellbeing of staff, and also on how well the students had adjusted to the new timetabling and processes put in place due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

11. Update on staff recruitment

It was noted that the school was fully staffed and that it was looking to increase the number of Teaching Assistants due to a higher number of Year 7 students joining the school this year with EHCPs and special needs.

Governors asked how many Year 7s were joining with EHCPs. It was noted that there were eight with an additional two going through the appeals process, and another student joining further up the school who would require fulltime supervision.

12. External Examinations Results update

It was noted that, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, this year's A level and GCSE examinations process had been badly managed at Government level. JMo reported that he felt the school had conducted the most rigorous and professional job possible, and staff had done their very best to predict the most likely grades that each student would achieve. It was noted that the school had a strong track record in doing this.

It was noted that, for the A level exams, 25% of students' grades had been downgraded, compared to 39% nationally. It was agreed that this was a good indication of the accuracy of the school's processes.

Furthermore, it was reported that half the students were offered places at Russell Group universities, with 92% being accepted into the university of first choice. Governors asked how many students had been accepted into Oxbridge and it was advised that two students had been accepted to Oxbridge, and a further nine had been accepted onto medicine or dentistry programmes.

It was noted that headline A level highlights included 72% of students achieving all A* to B grades and an APS of over 41 (which corresponds to an average grade of B). It was noted that, whilst both were school records, they were not dramatically different from the previous three years. With regard to GCSE grades, it was noted that the school had achieved an Attainment 8 score of 62.6, which was the highest ever, with 94% of students achieving 4+ in English and Maths.

Governors agreed that the grades awarded did reflect previous expectations of this strongly-performing cohort.

It was noted and agreed that, under the circumstances, any further exam analysis detail would be inappropriate and therefore formal analysis by staff would not be conducted this year.

It was also noted that there was concern for this year's Year 11 and Year 13 cohorts, given the multiple unknowns (in terms of when or whether exams would be held) and also the fact that so much learning had taken place remotely. The school would continue to do its very best to support these students.

13. Receive and discuss the annual report on the food standard checklist prepared by Chartwells (deferred from June meeting)

It was noted that three weeks of data was required to complete this review, so – on the basis that students had just returned to school – it was agreed to postpone this update to the next Resources Committee meeting.

14. Safeguarding Update – approval of updated Child Protection Policy (due Sept 19)

Governors had considered the updated policy which had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

Governors were advised that the updated Hertfordshire model Child Protection Policy incorporated a new Appendix 5 which covered Covid-19 and the return to school of students. YPo advised that there was also a new section on domestic violence and that the section regarding Operation Encompass (Information sharing from Police regarding Domestic Abuse notifications) had also been updated. The school would be providing a training document for staff with regards to what this means for the school. YPo advised that Governors would

also need training on Operation Encompass.

YPo also reported that there was a big shift in the focus of the document to mental health, domestic violence and criminal exploitation of children. AGr and Natalie Moody were commended on the work they had been doing to provide greater support in KS3 and KS4 respectively to help address mental health issues.

YPo also advised that all staff were required to read the updated document Keeping Children Safe in Education issued by the DfE and recommended that all Governors read this too. *FGB*

It was agreed that the document would be taken as approved unless any further questions were raised by Governors by Friday 11 September. *FGB*

15. Safeguarding – Self Review Checklist update (schools progress vs action plan)

It was agreed, based on current workloads, to defer this to the next meeting.

16. * Policies – consideration and approval of the following policy (bearing in mind the responsibility to carry out an equality impact assessment in accordance with the school's Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010):

Governors noted their responsibility as part of the review and approval of all policies and procedures to ensure that none of the policies/procedures approved had any disproportionate benefit or detriment and did not contain any discriminatory statements or have an adverse impact on any disadvantaged or vulnerable group.

i) consideration and approval of the following policy:

a) Schedule of Financial Delegation (postponed to October following Resources Committee Review)

Governors had considered the Schedule of Financial Delegation which had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

It was noted that, due to new requirements in the AFH, recommendations had been made that needed to be approved by the Resources Committee, which would then go to the next FGB meeting for review and approval. *MAt/AHa*

It was agreed that the documents approved at the meeting did not have any disproportionate benefit or detriment and did not contain any discriminatory statements or adverse impacts. A statement to this effect would be included in the documents as confirmation they had undergone an equality impact assessment in accordance with the school's Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010.

17. Governor Development Co-ordinator Update.

In terms of their continuous professional development, Governors were encouraged to be proactive in their learning on the basis that there were so many free online resources and webinars now available to them. *FGB*

It was noted that the HFL training previously organised would not proceed due to Covid-19 and that SBa would investigate the online training resources available specifically for Governors to complete their exclusions training (required to be renewed by 24 January 2021). *SBa*

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

It was noted that it was BAu's last meeting as Staff Governor. Governors thanked BAu for her time and for taking on the data protection link and noted that they hoped that she had enjoyed the experience.

19. Date of next meeting

FGB – Wednesday 14th October 2020 at 6.30pm

There being no further business, AHa declared the meeting closed at 8.27 pm.

Signed:
Chair of Governors

Dated:.....