

BEAUMONT SCHOOL
(Company Number 8104190)
MINUTES OF MEETING OF BOARD OF TRUSTEES HELD ON
Wednesday 24th March 2021 at 6.30pm
Virtual Meeting via Google Meet
(during Covid-19 pandemic situation)

Trustees Present:

Alex Hall (“AHa”)(Chair), Martin Atkinson (“MAt”), Mike Cameron (“MCa”), Gary Kellett (“GKe”), Ian Johnston (“IJo”), David Lee (“DLe”), Alison Wallis (“AWa”), Simone Kilka-Green (“SKi”), Michele Lloyd (“MLi”), Ronnie Davidson (“RDa”) and Peter Mayne (“PMa”) (10-17).

In attendance:

Jonathan Mountstevens (“JMo”)
Yvonne Powdrell (“YPo”)
Sharon Banks (“SBa”)

Deputy Headteacher
Deputy Headteacher
Clerk to the Board of Trustees

Actions Agreed at the meeting:

	Action	Responsibility	Timescale
1	Secure date for extended meeting in person in school.	SBa	ASAP
2	In relation to the appointment of Tute as the school’s provider to utilise the DfE allocated catch-up premium; review contract and check against spend authorisation limits in terms of required approvals and determine whether it needs to be brought to the next BOT meeting for formal review and ratification.	JMo/MAt	ASAP
3	Terminology updates in relation to use of ‘Trustees’ instead of ‘Governors’ to be made to the Business Continuity Plan.	SBa	ASAP
4	Finalise Trustee training session topic with a preference for a diversity focus.	SBa	ASAP

A. General

1. Apologies for Absence

Peter Mayne (“PMa”) joined the meeting from Item 10. All other Trustees were present at the meeting and the meeting was quorate.

The Chair noted that, following the transition to the new Academy Trust structure, Governors would now be referred to as Trustees and therefore the reference Board of Trustees (“BOT”) would now replace all references to Full Governing Body (“FGB”).

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

Trustees 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 16

No additional items of business were raised.

4. Approval of minutes of the meeting on 4th February 2021 and Part 2 confidential minutes and matters arising

The minutes of the meeting on 4th February 2021 and the Part 2 confidential minutes were agreed as drafted. The action points from the 4th February 2021 meeting were considered as follows:

	Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Update
1	SBa to circulate final Annual Accounts with signatures.	SBa/JWe	ASAP	Complete
2	Child Protection Self Review Checklist (deferred to March meeting).	YPo	Next meeting	On agenda

B. Reports and Updates

5. Covid-19 Update

MAt reported that the school had now completed more than 4,000 lateral flow tests for Covid-19. It was noted that one Year 13 student had received a false positive lateral flow test which, under the current government guidance for Covid-19, required 20 students to self isolate. MAt advised that this coincided with the Year 13 mock exams, so the school had needed to make arrangements for these students to complete these exams remotely. This created a greater workload for staff in terms of supervision, but the school felt this had been accommodated as effectively and securely as possible.

It was noted that there had been one additional false positive lateral flow test in Year 9 which had required a further 40 students to self isolate.

Special thanks on behalf of the school were extended to Julie Wells and her team and to Sue Hicks who had been a tremendous help in facilitating the successful lateral flow mass testing programme in school.

Special thanks were also noted for YPo and Sue Hicks for their excellent job setting up the Covid-19 testing facility within the school. The Trustees also extended their thanks to all staff and volunteers (including parents) involved in running the Covid-19 testing facility.

As part of the gradual transition out of the Covid-19 group bubbles, it was noted that planning was in place to move Year 7 and Year 8 to year group bubbles (rather than class group bubbles) in addition to opening up special rooms for Music, Drama and Art.

It was noted that the infection rate for St Albans was 18 cases per 100,000 people and the school hoped this would continue to reduce so that extracurricular sport could commence after the Easter break.

The Board of Trustees extended special thanks to the staff and volunteers who had carried out the testing in addition to their normal workloads. It was noted that the school had sent gifts of appreciation to the parent volunteers to thank them for their time. A Trustee (who had been one of the parent volunteers) advised the receipt of the Easter egg and card had been a really thoughtful gesture from the school.

6. Student and House Leadership Update

MAt reported that one of the Academy Trust’s Members, Lionel Wallace DL (newly appointed High Sheriff of Hertfordshire) had been asked to work with the Archbishop of York’s Trust and had sought the involvement of

two of the school's students. It was noted that this was pleasing in terms of leadership experience for the students and for enhancing the public profile of the school.

7. Committee reports and updates:

A. Resources

It was noted that the minutes of the last committee meeting were still to be circulated due to its close proximity to the BOT meeting, and therefore that they would be circulated in due course.

B. Community, Teaching and Learning

It was noted that the minutes of the last committee meeting were still to be circulated due to its close proximity to the BOT meeting, and therefore that they would be circulated in due course.

8. Acknowledgement of receipt and review of the Management Accounts

The Trustees had considered the Management Accounts for Period 5 (January) and Period 6 (February) which had been circulated prior to the meeting.

It was noted that the reports had been reviewed in detail at the Resources Committee meeting. There were no further questions and the Trustees thanked MAT for his update

9. SEC2 and CIF update

It was noted that it was the intention to reach the final settlement in relation to SEC2 and CIF by next term.

10. Chair's Update including:

a) Update on Governance restructure and plans for extended meeting in the summer term.

The Chair confirmed that the governance restructure had been completed at the extraordinary general meeting on 25th February 2021 and that the various administrative tasks were in progress in terms of lodging the resolution and new Articles of Association with Companies House and various register updates.

There was a discussion about whether the school would like to co-opt staff as Trustees on the basis that the Articles of Association allowed this and that it was deemed a positive move from a staff perspective. It was agreed that this would be kept in mind as the new structure was embedded.

SBa

In relation to the extended meeting, it was noted that the preference was to have a meeting in school after the Government milestone for 21st June when this would be allowed, preferably also including the new Academy Trust Members. It was agreed that SBa would circulate some dates and secure one suitable.

b) Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The Chair confirmed that he hoped that a representative from the BAMEed Network may be able to attend and present at the extended meeting in June if possible.

The Trustees agreed that the need to achieve a more diverse Board of Trustees needed to remain a priority and that the opportunity to co-opt some people with complementary skill sets to the BOT might be an opportunity to assist this focus.

In terms of other items raised, it was noted that the new school minibus had now been purchased as approved by the Chair on behalf of the Board of Trustees in advance of the meeting. The purchase was formally ratified.

In addition, Trustees asked, given the amount of funds assigned to the tutoring Catch-Up Programme, whether the school had gone through the appropriate tender process. JMo explained that a number of providers had been shortlisted from the National Tutoring Programme. However the others did not meet the school's requirements of being able to deliver online tutor sessions for students working remotely at the scale required. Therefore Tute had been selected. It was noted that most providers under the National Tutoring Programme would not offer home tuition. Trustees asked if the school was faced with a level of risk, having selected a provider outside of the National Programme. JMo reported that Tute were approved for the National Tutoring Programme, but that the school had chosen to work with them privately in order to enable tuition to take place at home.

JMo/MAt

The importance of following due process in relation to procurement was noted and it was agreed the school would review the tender process and contract and check against spend authorisation limits in terms of required approvals and, if required, this should be brought to the next BOT meeting for formal review and ratification.

MAt reported that the school had received a letter from Simon Newland (Asst Director Education Provision and Access at HCC), advising that there would be elections for Hertfordshire Schools Forum and that Hertfordshire Academy Trusts could nominate a representative. MAt advised he was keen to be a nominated representative to gain greater insight regarding future budget allocations. The Chair agreed to take forward MAt's nomination on behalf of the Trust.

11. Head's Report

Trustees had considered the Headteacher's report which had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

It was noted that the administration of the mass testing and associated isolations in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic had continued to absorb a lot of staff time within school.

In relation to the process of Teacher Assessed Grades, required as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, it was noted that the school intended to conduct a robust process, that would also be fair and transparent. It was noted that the school had been proactive in its communication with parents, via letters home, including an outline for each student of the portfolio of evidence that would be required to account for the grade in each subject.

It was noted that, given the circumstances, the Year 13 mock assessments had been conducted in a less formal manner within the classroom, invigilated by staff under exam conditions. It was noted that there was an additional workload for all staff, in terms of the marking load, moderating and input of grades, and that an additional inset day had been arranged on 7th June to allow staff time for final moderation of Teacher Assessed Grades, with 18th June being the final date for these grades to be submitted.

In relation to the anticipated increase in staff workload to support the Teacher Assessed Grading process, it was noted that, whilst exams for Year 10 and Year 12 would need to be held at a later date, it was likely that the exams usually held after the May half term break for Years 7 to 9 would be cancelled to allow teachers extra marking time.

With regards to Sixth Form numbers for September 2021, it was noted that the school had received 156 internal and 150 external applications to date, which was felt to be promising, given the restricted virtual open day presentations this year.

In relation to the CIF submission for new boilers, it was noted that the school was not expecting to hear the outcome until April.

MAt advised that it was the school's preference, given current workload, that the planning for the PSI be postponed until next term. This was agreed.

In relation to the school's focus on increasing diversity, it was noted that MAt had attended a head's virtual conference on diversity at which Professor Gary Younge had delivered a very powerful presentation which was both thought provoking and inspirational. (Professor Younge was originally from Stevenage, and was now listed as one of the top 100 of the most influential people in the UK from African/African-Caribbean descent).

In order to obtain student insight in relation to diversity, it was agreed, given current circumstances, that a student survey was the most practical tool. However it was noted that the questions needed to be carefully considered in order to gain meaningful insights and that, when the opportunity presented itself, it would be helpful to move to establishing a face to face forum in a confidential environment.

In relation to Teacher Assessed Grades, the Trustees advised that they felt JMo's letter to parents had been very clear and helpful. Trustees asked if the school had received any response from parents. There had been no comments regarding the letter. However, it was expected there would be some feedback in relation to a letter (to be sent next week) explicitly outlining the evidence upon which assessments would be based, which would also offer parents an opportunity to highlight any specific concerns where they felt adjustment might be required.

Trustees asked to what extent the school was still waiting to receive Government guidance rather than moving forward and making decisions based on proven internal best practice. It was noted that the school was still waiting to receive guidance from the Joint Council Qualification (JCQ). However it was noted that, if the information was not issued before the Easter break, the timings would make it very difficult not to proceed.

Trustees asked if there was a broad consensus across St Albans schools, should delivery of this guidance be delayed. It was noted that, based on consultation with other local schools, the approach varied but that the school appeared better prepared than most and was confident about its decision-making and approach.

Trustees advised, based on the detailed reports provided, that they felt the school had developed a robust process and was they were in complete support of the proposed approach.

Trustees had no further questions and thanked MAt for his report.

12. Safeguarding update

YPo advised that parents had been provided with information in relation to Operation Encompass (a police and education early information sharing partnership enabling schools and early years settings to offer immediate support to children and young people experiencing domestic abuse).

Trustees asked if they would require training in relation to Operation Encompass. YPo advised this would not be necessary and that the current process was that, if domestic violence was reported, the school is informed by the police within 24 hours, the parents know the school has been informed, and the student knows that they can speak to someone in school.

In addition, it was noted that the key focus continued to be keeping staff, students and the community safe via the mass testing programme. It was noted that 95% of the student body was conducting home testing and reporting (with special thanks to Helen Purple who was managing the reminders to home and associated reporting links which was assisting in getting the students into the right routine to commit and test properly from home).

Trustees thanked YPo for her update.

13. Child Protection Self Review Checklist (school's progress v action plan)

Trustees had considered the Safeguarding update which had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

It was noted that key items had been covered under item 12 above.

C. Policies and Governor Development

14. * Policies – consideration and approval of the following policy and plan (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):

Trustees noted their responsibility as part of the review and approval of all policies, procedures and schedules 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.

a) Business Impact Analysis and Business Continuity Plan (due March 2021)

Trustees had considered the Business Impact Analysis and Business Continuity Plan which had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

In relation to the Business Impact Analysis, it was noted that this was on the list for the new internal auditors to review and provide comment to ensure the document was achieving what it needed to do.

SBa

In relation to the Business Continuity Plan, it was noted that the terminology in relation to Trustees needed to be updated and a phone number removed.

There were no further questions and both the Business Impact Analysis and Business Continuity Plan were approved.

b) Review of the Risk Register

Trustees had considered the Risk Register which had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

It was noted that the document required the format to be updated before the next review on the grounds that, whilst items were RAG rated when assessing initial risk, they were not re-rated after mitigation, and therefore there was no obvious way to see if the mitigations were sufficient. Trustees agreed this update would enable a better view of current risk profile. It was noted that the preference would be to move to a model where risk and mitigations were ranked.

AHa/ JWe

It was agreed to accept the Risk Register in the current format for this current review but have the internal auditors review it in due course. It was agreed that AHa would locate an appropriate template which would enable a review of the two stages to better understand the risks and, after consultation with the internal auditors, the Register would be updated for the next review. It was agreed that this was a live document that should be reviewed more regularly and not just annually.

15. Trustee Development Co-ordinator Update

A Trustee who had attended the HFL Annual Conference provided an update regarding the sessions attended. It was noted that HFL had two main priorities – becoming carbon neutral and working towards becoming a more diverse, anti-racist organisation. Consideration was also given to the need to have a dedicated Governor focussed on mental health and wellbeing and for schools to take a proactive stance coming out of the Covid-19 pandemic in relation to asking students how they are and avoiding the words “catch-up” and “recovery”.

SBa

In addition, it was agreed that SBa would investigate a course on diversity for the next all-Trustee in-house training session with HFL.

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

No other business had been notified.

17. Date of next meeting

BOT – Tuesday 22nd June 2021 at 6.30pm via Google Meet

AHa declared the meeting closed at 8.04 pm.

Signed:
Chair of Trustees

Dated:.....