

GRANTA SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY MEETING

THURSDAY 8th October 2020 6.00pm
Via Zoom



MINUTES

Governors: Ruchi Datta (Head Teacher), Caroline Ilott (CI) (Chair), Jeff Andrews (JA), Lucinda Billington (LB), Sarah Crouch (SC), Paul Ilott (PI), Elaine Markham (EM), David Jones (DJ), Ian Wilson (IW), Paula Nixon (PN), Tony Orgee (TO), Alison Walker (AW).

Associate Governor: Linda Alefounder (LAF).

Ann Abineri: Clerk

The meeting was quorate.

1. **Welcome and Apologies for absence were received and accepted from:** Chris Seaton.

Not present: Tanya Seaton.

2. **Election of Chair & Vice-Chair**

The Clerk confirmed that she had not received any nominations prior to the meeting.

CI stated that she was willing to stand again as Chair: unanimously agreed

JA stated that he was willing to stand again as Vice Chair: unanimously agreed

Succession planning: CI explained that she intends this to be her last year as a Governor and Chair.

3. **Governing Body Membership**

CI reminded Governors that all governors can attend all committee meetings except HR Committee.

Curriculum Committee

Caroline Ilott, Lucinda Billington, Alison Walker, Tony Orgee, Paul Ilott, Elaine Markham, Sarah Crouch

Chair: PI unanimously agreed

HR Committee

Ruchi Datta, Caroline Ilott, Alison Walker, Paul Ilott, Linda Alefounder, Sarah Crouch

Chair AW: unanimously agreed

F & GP Committee

Ruchi Datta,

Caroline Ilott, Paula Nixon, Lucinda Billington, Tony Orgee, Jeff Andrews, Ian Wilson, Linda Alefounder, Sarah Crouch

Chair: TO: unanimously agreed.

Health & Safety:

Ruchi Datta, Paul Ilott, Jeff Andrews, Linda Alefounder.

Action: CI to contact Chris Seaton to ask if he is still able to sit on this committee.

Chair: JA unanimously agreed.

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It was agreed to appoint Mathew Seymour as an Associate Member of the Governing Body, to sit on this committee.

Action: Clerk to deal with paperwork

- **Vacancies and Elections.**

Note – we currently have one Parent and one Co-opted vacancy

Discussion on further Co-option of Governors whose term is due to expire (Chris Seaton, Jeff Andrews and Ian Wilson in next 6 months) JA and IW to be considered for Co-option again

Action: formalise at next FGB (December 2020)

Confirmed PN still within term of office as a Parent Governor.

Governors were reminded to encourage members of the community to consider applying to become a Governor (Co-opted vacancy.)

Action: CI to contact Linton News.

Parent Governor vacancy election to be held. It was noted that some parents may be able to attend meetings now they are remote.

Action: LAF to run parent Governor Election.

- 4. **Check of Governors contact details**

Governors reminded to notify the Clerk of any changes.

- 5. **Standing Orders Review**

Discussion took place on how many FGB meetings to hold per year.

The HT pointed out that it is possible to keep Governors informed in different ways and that it would help pressures on workloads.

A Governor suggested the change to the meetings schedule could be trailed.

The general consensus that the FGB meeting should be in the second half of each term.

The timing for decision making was discussed so that committee meetings should be placed in order for essential business to be reviewed prior to reporting back to FGB.

Governors could use their extra capacity to join committees and do school visits.

A Governor pointed out that an FGB should not go on longer than 2 hours.

A Governor pointed out that the Clerk's workload and therefore remuneration would be reduced.

Following this discussion it was agreed to remain the same for this term. New dates to be discussed at December FGB. A further review of the Standing Orders would be required at that point to reflect changes.

Action: Committees – to discuss how changes could be made to their structure and frequency and report back to FGB.

- 6. **Declarations of pecuniary Interests for this meeting:**

DJ and PN are Trustees of the Cambridge Joint Playscheme.

AW member of FOGS (item 15.)

Annual Declarations of Pecuniary Interest

The Clerk has circulated these by email and will collate the Register. To be physically signed in due course.

- 7. **Code of Conduct Review**

For adoption by the GB as a whole

Adopted.

- 8. **Minutes of Full Governing Body meeting 9th July 2020.**

Agreed as a true record.

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To be signed when Chair able to go into school.

Actions arising:

Letter from LA.

Training Links shared.

Clerk reported that she had attended the Governors Termly Briefing on 30.09 20 and will attend the Camclerk's Termly briefing on 13.10.20.

AW will attend the Schools and academies online webinar on the future development of Special Schools.

JA asked for password to the Key Action: LAF.

9. **Committees**

- Membership Review – already covered
- Governor roles – already covered
- Terms of Reference Review. Committees were reminded to review their Terms of Reference and report back to FGB. *F&GP already reviewed.*
- F&GP unapproved minutes of 24th September 2020
TO outlined key points of circulated Minutes.

PI reported that HTPA panel (PI, AW, JA and EM) meeting with the HT on 9.10.2020

10. **Details of the financial consequences of Covid on the school**

LAF explained staff pulled together and no extra costs were incurred.

Loss on lettings but energy bills reduced.

Claim for additional costs (approximately £40,000) not added into BMR yet.

Covid catch up for 130 pupils, £240 each.

A Governor asked LAF to check that the solar panel company will not penalise us for reduced usage.

11. **Head's Report –including update on the Hive**

The HT reported that in addition to the full Hive updated in the circulated F&GP Minutes, the recent meeting has resulted in the LA now being aware of further work that needs doing. **A Governor pointed out** that it is the LA's building and their due diligence should have identified the further work earlier.

Funding for the hoist is child specific.

It is likely that the building will not be fully ready for use until the summer term 2020. The HT pointed out that with some pupils still returning to school, transition in the summer term is suitable.

A Governor asked who is responsible for the building until it is fully in use. LAF confirmed that Granta is not paying the insurance yet – the insurers have been informed that the building is still in the LA's hands. **Action: LAF agreed to get further confirmation of this.**

SC said following the recent meeting, Matt Seymour. Site Manager is having fruitful communications with the LA.

Governors reminded the HT that they will fully support the HT and LAF if the LA does not respond promptly to requests for funding and action.

12. **School Development Plan**

The HT introduced the following documents which had been circulated prior to the meeting:

Mission Statement

Core Values

These had been reviewed by staff and the Staff Charter had resulted from the staff survey 2020.

Key Priority Headlines:

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Excellence in Leadership at all levels

- Strengthening curriculum pathway planning and implementation (overview circulated)
- Digital Technologies (including increasing effective use of digital systems we already subscribe to and reducing paper)
- Strengthening our position with the local and wider community – raising awareness with local firms, working collaboratively with other educational communities including the Special Schools Heads and online.

These headings are then broken down into the Three Year Plan. This had been circulated and questions were invited.

A Governor asked about ‘formal, informal and semi-formal communications’. The HT explained this approach is in line with other Special Schools and offers consistency, for instance if a child changes schools.

A Governor commented that the GB has previously voted against a Facebook presence. The HT said that if this concern related to privacy settings she could manage these and overcome concerns.

Several Governors commented that it seems a good time for this as during the current circumstances, digital communication is key, and that it is also a more immediate way of communicating. It also helps counteract feelings of isolation in families, including isolation resulting from geographical distance.

A Governor pointed out that social media would need to be managed with excellence and this would create a significant workload. The HT responded that previously as a Head, she updated Facebook and Twitter on a regular basis, At Granta, the Communications Manager is also available for this.

Discussion took place on whether Governors needed further information before the HT moves ahead with this and how this would be presented.

Action: The Chair asked the HT to present information on this to the FGB by email and for Governors to respond. The HT would base the decision on responses received.

A Governor asked about the criticality of updating the outdated IT system and the HT responded that funding applications have already been made and she has started gathering quotes. Priorities have been identified and staff have reported on the condition and functioning of the whiteboards in their rooms.

A Governor asked if there is any specific IT funding from the LA and the HT explained that the only provision has been specifically for laptops for pupil’s home learning. A Governor suggested a contact; **Action: PN to send contact information to the HT.**

The Chair reminded Governors that they can send questions to the HT and Senior Leadership Team in between meetings and do not have to wait for FGB.

13. Policies Review

Safeguarding

SC explained that this comprises three policies:

- Safeguarding,
- Adults at Risk of harm.
- Looked after Children Policy.

These are LA model policies.

PI commented, as Safeguarding Governor that these are comprehensive policies.

CCTV

Following a short discussion it was noted that this is a necessary policy.

A Governor asked if the IT Policy will need to include social media and this was acknowledged.

Action: for FGB Agenda

Harassment and Existing Complaints

Action: for HR committee.

Equality & Diversity

Action: for HR committee

14. Governor training and briefing sessions

Already covered under item 8.

15. Friends of Granta School (FOGS) Request for defibrillator

CI passed on a summary that this was an essential item that should be provided by the LA and is not within the remit of FOGS which raises funds for 'extras'

SC explained that the nearest defibrillator is situated at LVC and access to this can be a problem. School has a key. A Governor asked if that could be mounted externally. It was questioned whether it is a legal necessity for the school to have one.

A Governor commented that she is aware that some defibrillators are provided, with training, by charities.

A Governor commented that if the current situation worsens and the emergency services are delayed access to a defibrillator could be even more crucial.

In summing up the discussion the Chair asked

Health and Safety Committee to consider this.

FOGs to be kept informed.

16. School Council.

LB reported that representation will be increased to cover all years. Meetings are currently within bubbles and the bubbles will be given activities to work on with their fellow pupils and feedback.

Open invitation for Governors to join online meetings.

17. Any Other Urgent Business

DJ wished to thank Governors and staff for enabling the Cambridge Joint Playschemes summer scheme to be able to access the Granta site. Parents had given excellent feedback. Governors agreed that this is a valuable service for families.

The HT explained that the committee's request for 3 days at Half Term had been agreed.

The HT raised the possibility of using GovernorHub which she had already discussed with the Chair and Clerk. The LA does not subscribe to this but Granta could.

The HT explained the ways in which this could benefit use of the GB.

Several Governors commented favourably as did the Clerk although she pointed out that statutory documents will still be required such as those for publishing on the School website.

It is a move towards paperless meetings.

A Governor asked if we could afford this and LAF agreed that we could.

The HT explained this would ensure she could access past documents which is currently an issue.

Action: Clerk to send the HT the last academic year's minutes.

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The remainder of this item was subject to a Confidential Minute.

LB left the meeting.

18. Date of Next Meeting: Thursday 3rd December 2020 at 6.00pm

Meeting closed 8.20 pm.