

**HITCHIN GIRLS' SCHOOL
MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BODY
HELD AT 7.15PM ON TUESDAY 4 DECEMBER 2012**

Present:	Mr. D. Ashley (items 1-7)	Mrs. M. McPhail
	Mr. S. Burgoyne	Mr. S. Middleditch
	Mr. K. Down	Mr. C. Minton (Chairman)
	Mr. T. Fitzakerly	Mrs. S. Morrison
	Mr. C. Hall	Mrs. K. Rowe
	Mrs. N. Job	Mr. M. Seaman-Hill
	Mrs. M. King	Ms. T. Stojko
	Mrs. F. Manning (Headteacher)	Mrs. L. Vallance
	Mrs. J. Marland	

In attendance:	Mr. T. Hankin	Clerk
	Miss C. Taylor	Head Girl
	Miss G. Hammond	Deputy Head Girl
	Mr. A. Kariya (items 1-6)	MHA MacIntyre Hudson
	Mr. A. Small (items 1-8)	Stone King

1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence

Mr. Minton welcomed Mrs. Vallance, newly appointed Parent Governor to the meeting, along with Mr. Kariya and Mr. Small.

Apologies were received and accepted from Mrs K. Smith. Mr. R. Johnson was absent.

2. Student Global Institute Presentation

The Governors received a presentation from the three Sixth Form students who had been chosen to represent the school in August 2012 at the SGLI in Hawaii. Participants came from 7 countries including the USA, Jordan and China. This was the first time that a school from the UK has been invited to participate and there were only 3 other students attending from the rest of Europe.

The focus for the 2012 gathering was health, and participants were involved in research, community tasks, data collection and presentations on a variety of health related issues.

Each attending school has returned home with a project to organise in their local area and the project the three have chosen relates to body image and anorexia.

All three referred to the impact that attending the SGLI has had on their future education and career plans and thanked the governors for supporting their attendance.

Mrs. Manning reported that the school has been invited to participate again in 2013 and will be undergoing a selection process for attendees next year.

Mr. Minton thanked the students for their presentation.

3. Notification of items to be raised under Any Other Business.

Mrs. McPhail advised that she wished to raise matters relating to the School Equality Policy.

4. Declarations of Interest

Governors were reminded of the need to declare any interest in the items for discussion. Mr. Ashley declared an interest, as the applicant for Village Green status, in item 8 and advised that he would leave the meeting at that point.

5. Minutes of previous meeting.

5.1 Approval

Subject to correction of some minor formatting issues, the minutes of the meeting held on 19 September 2012 were approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

5.2 Matters arising

Examination results (from item 7.1). Mrs. Manning advised that, following re-marks, the percentage achieving 5 A* - C incl. English & Maths has risen to 84%.

Sixth Form Centre (from item 8 Future Projects). Mrs. Manning reported that the planning application for a new Sixth Form Centre was unanimously approved by the Council Planning Committee. Mr. Minton and Mr. Hall had spoken in support of the application at the meeting. The application to the Department for Education for funding will be submitted within the next week with the decision due on 5 April. If successful, funds will need to be spent by March 2014.

Classroom space for Social Sciences (from item 12). Mrs. Manning advised that following completion of the new classroom block which replaced the mobile, room changes in the timetable have allowed Social Science lessons to move to larger teaching spaces.

6. Financial Statements 2012

Mr. Kariya introduced this item by confirming that the audit process has been very smooth, no major issues were identified and he was presenting a clean set of accounts. The draft statements were reviewed in some detail at the November Finance Committee meeting. The Governing Body were now asked to approve these, after which they would be submitted to the Department for Education, Education Funding Agency and Companies House. He confirmed that once submitted to Companies House, they will be available as a public record.

6.1 Schedule of Professional Services: Assurance on Regularity schedule

The schedule was unanimously **APPROVED** and Mr. Minton signed the document on behalf of the Governing Body.

6.2 Management Letter

The Management letter from MHA MacIntyre Hudson was **NOTED**.

6.3 Financial Statements for the period ending 31 August 2012.

Mr. Kariya was asked about restricted funds and the pension liability showing in the accounts. He confirmed that the liability is ring fenced and is being funded over a number of years from revenue funding. As these are first year accounts, they show the full liability transferred on conversion to academy status.

Mr. Kariya was also asked whether he was aware of any interest or issues regarding Academy accounts once they are made public. He confirmed that he was not aware of any issues.

Mr. Minton asked Governors whether they were happy to approve the Financial Statements of Hitchin Girls' School for the period ending 31 August 2012 and this was unanimously AGREED.

Mr. Minton thanked Mr. Hankin and Mrs. Smyth for their work on the school's accounts which has resulted in this very good Auditors' report.

6.4 Letter of Representation

The Letter of Representation to MHA MacIntyre Hudson was unanimously **APPROVED** and Mr. Minton signed this on behalf of the Governing Body.

Mr. Kariya left the meeting at this point.

7. Appointment of Auditors

Mr. Minton thanked MHA MacIntyre Hudson for their audit work and proposed that they be re-appointed as auditors for 2012/13. This was seconded by Mrs. Job and unanimously **AGREED**.

Mr. Ashley left the meeting at this point.

8. Benslow Field

Mr. Small, from Stone King Solicitors, gave a report on the current position regarding the Village Green Application, referring to his recent visit to the school and the forthcoming Pre-Inquiry hearing.

Governors discussed with Mr. Small the basis on which the application has been submitted and the possible outcomes of the Inquiry to be held by the Planning Inspectorate in April 2013. The impact on any future use of the field by the school if the application succeeded was considered. It was noted that if the application was successful, the school would still be liable for maintaining the field.

Governors acknowledged the importance of considering the views of the local community regarding future use of the field.

Mrs. Manning referred to another Village Green Application lodged against another school in Hertfordshire in similar circumstances.

It was suggested that Counsel's opinion regarding the application should be obtained as soon as possible to aid future discussion. This is likely to cost approximately £1,000 and this was agreed. Mr. Small was therefore instructed to obtain this prior to the Pre-Inquiry meeting.

9. Reports

9.1 Headteacher's report

Mrs. Manning referred to her report, distributed prior to the meeting. Items highlighted included:

- Progress on the School Improvement Plan
- The student 'Learning Leaders' project
- A credit based training scheme for staff CPD
- Progress on Headteacher's Objectives
- A staffing update

Mrs. Manning mentioned the focus being given to teaching & learning at staff meetings. In response to a question regarding this, she explained that meetings used to have a more administrative basis, but now included round table discussions, peer assessment and sharing of good practice, all linked to enhancing teaching and learning.

Mr. Minton noted the forthcoming retirement of Mrs. Molloy, Head of Business Studies and ICT after many years' service. Governors recorded their thanks to Mrs. Molloy and Mr. Minton will write to thank her on behalf of the Governors.

9.2 Admissions Committee

Mrs. Job reported on the meeting held on 15 November 2012. There had been detailed discussion regarding the admission criteria for the school and it was agreed that no change should be made to the rules for September 2014.

It was noted that the Local Authority are currently reviewing the future demand for secondary school places in Hitchin with additional places likely to be needed from 2015.

The report was received.

9.3 Asset Management Committee

Mr. Seaman-Hill reported on the meeting held on 23 October 2012. He referred to the work regarding plans for the Sixth Form Centre and that this would be a major enhancement for the school.

There are currently issues with regard to drains which are being discussed with the school's insurers. Repair work on the guttering at the rear of the school is in hand.

Mr. Hall reported that the new Pavilion sports facilities and the new two storey classroom block are very much appreciated by students and that they are noticing the improvements being made around the school.

Mr. Seaman-Hill advised that the Access Plan has been reviewed and is recommended for approval. **The committee NOTED AND CONFIRMED approval of the Access Plan.**

The report was received.

9.4 Curriculum & Performance Committee

Mr. Hall reported on the meeting held on 23 October which included a thorough review of the summer examination results. Particular focus had been given to Science results and the issues relating to GCSE English grades.

The committee had also seen a demonstration of the new Go4Schools assessment system which appears to be a robust, effective solution to management of assessment data. Mrs. Manning advised that the rollout of this is a little slower than hoped, as staff are currently under pressure from a number of national educational changes and initiatives. Some departments are already using the system well.

The report was received.

9.5 Finance Committee

Mrs. McPhail reported on the meeting held on 15 November 2012. It had focussed on the draft financial statements and the new accounting practices. New reports for budget monitoring were reviewed. The committee are aware of the need to balance a reducing budget against the needs and expectations of staff and students.

It was confirmed that following receipt of the latest VAT claim, a further amount of money has been placed on a fixed term deposit.

New cleaning and grounds maintenance contracts have been entered into, each with a financial saving when compared to the current contract.

Mrs. McPhail advised that the Scheme of Financial Delegation has been reviewed and is recommended for approval. Governors were reminded of the need to refer to this document when making decisions.

The committee NOTED AND CONFIRMED approval of this document.

The report was received.

9.6 Head Girl Report

Miss Taylor reported on a number of items including:

- The work of the Prefect team and their links with the other two schools in the Consortium
- The inter-school Sixth Form competition
- The Christmas Fayre
- The School Council Meeting and students' concerns particularly regarding the condition of some of the school toilets.
- Consortium Council links with the Hitchin Rotary Clubs

Miss Taylor was thanked for her report.

Miss Taylor and Miss Hammond left the meeting.

10. Link Governors

There were no visits for report.

Mrs. Vallance agreed to become the Link Governor for Business Studies and ICT, although she will not arrange a visit until a new Head of Department is in place.

Mr. Minton advised the meeting that Mr. Johnson was resigning as a Governor at the end of the month as he was moving abroad. There are now two vacancies for Community Governors. It was agreed that people with links to the ethnic community, the local Council and Cambridge University would help expand the skills and knowledge of the Governing Body and Governors were asked to consider potential names.

Mr. Minton confirmed that he will write to Mr. Johnson thanking him for his time as a Governor.

11. Any Other Business

11.1 Equality Policy. Mrs. McPhail reported that she had recently completed training on new Equality legislation and that she believed that the school policy required updating. Mrs. Manning confirmed that this was in hand, but would welcome assistance from Mrs. McPhail in reviewing the new draft version. It was important that support for all students is available and referenced in the equality policy.

12. Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Governing Body will be on Tuesday 12 March 2013 at 7.15pm.

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PART II – CONFIDENTIAL

13. Committee & Performance Committee Part II report

The Part II minute of the meeting held on 23 October 2012 was noted. No further action is required.

14. Personnel Committee report

Mrs. Job reported on the meeting held on 15 November 2012. The meeting reviewed a profile of staff age and grade and requested a similar profile of length of service to allow consideration of a scheme to recognise Long Service.

Arrangements for the Headteacher's Performance Review were made and the annual Leadership Pay review completed. The Committee also reviewed the following existing policies, which are based on the Hertfordshire County Council model documents, and were recommended for approval:

- Disciplinary Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Recruitment Policy
- Teachers Pay Policy

The above Policies were unanimously APPROVED.

The report was received.

15. Children Looked After report

Mrs. Manning explained that the school is required to bring this report to the Governing Body each term. It provides anonymous information on the number of designated Children Looked After, the support provided to them and relevant staff training.

The report was received.

The meeting closed at 9.15pm