

**HITCHIN GIRLS' SCHOOL**  
**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BODY**  
**HELD AT 6.00PM ON TUESDAY 16 SEPTEMBER 2014**

**Present:** Mr. K. Balfe Mrs. M. McPhail  
Mr. K. Down Mr. C. Minton (Chairman – items 1 & 2)  
Mr. T. Fitzakerly Mr. G. Montgomery  
Mr. C. Hall (Chairman - from item 3) Mrs. S. Morrison  
Mrs. N. Job Mrs. K. Rowe  
Mrs. M. King Mr. M. Seaman Hill  
Mrs. F. Manning (Headteacher) Mr. S. Sprawson  
Mrs. J. Marland

**In attendance:** Mr. T. Hankin (Clerk)

**1. Welcome & Apologies for Absence**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting which was held in the new Sixth Form Centre. Apologies were received and accepted from Mr. S. Burgoyne and Mrs. K. Smith. Mrs. L. Vallance was absent.

**2. Student Global Leadership Institute Presentation**

The 3 Sixth Form students, Carrie Shipley, Hannah Kingsland and Laura Mitchell, who represented the school and the UK at the SGLI conference in Hawaii gave a presentation on their trip and proposed project.

The theme of the conference this year had been 'The City' and covered matters relating to Transport, Health and Infrastructure. 70 students from 21 schools in 9 countries attended and students worked in mixed groups on projects, community service, leadership and teambuilding events and heard from eminent speakers on a number of topics relating to the theme.

The conference has helped them to become more confident, develop their leadership skills and learn how to work with people from different countries and cultures.

The project they will now run in the community is called 'Get on yer Bike' and is aimed at getting students to look at how they travel to and from school and promoting safe bike use, with the associated health and environmental benefits. They will be investigating bike safety and training schemes, the formation of a cycling society and fundraising towards improved bike and helmet storage facilities.

They thanked the governors for the support given which allowed them to attend the SGLI.

Governors congratulated the students on their presentation and advised that they looked forward to receiving progress reports for the project.

**3. Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair**

Mr. Hankin advised that, at the start of each year, the Governing Body are required to appoint a Chairman and Vice-Chair. He reminded Governors that, after 14 years in the

role, Mr. Minton did not wish to be nominated again. Mrs. Job proposed that Mr. Hall be appointed Chairman. She advised that she has worked with him on the Curriculum and Performance Committee and also in meetings with the Ofsted Inspector and believes he has the required skills and experience to undertake the role. The nomination was seconded by Mr. Minton.

There were no other nominations and Governors were asked to vote on the proposal. There were 13 in favour with one abstention. Mr. Hall did not vote. Mr. Hall was therefore **APPOINTED** as Chairman for 2014/15.

Mr. Hall thanked the Governors for their support and asked for nominations for Vice Chair. Mr. Minton proposed Mrs. Job and this was seconded by Mr. Fitzakerly. Governors were asked to vote on the proposal. There were 13 in favour with one abstention. Mrs. Job did not vote. Mrs. Job was therefore **APPOINTED** as Vice Chair for 2014/15.

#### **4. Notification of items to be raised under Any Other Business.**

Mr. Balfe advised that he wished to raise the issue of how to appeal against decisions taken by the Governing Body.

Mr. Hankin advised that the Academy Trust and Governing Body are governed by the Articles of Association adopted when the school became an Academy and that these are in accordance with The Companies Act 2006. Decisions taken at a meeting of the Governors are determined by a majority of the votes of the Governors present and voting on the question, provided that the meeting is quorate. There is no appeal process against a decision made by the Governors. A Governor may ask for a matter to be discussed at a future meeting, with appropriate notice given so that it can be included on the agenda. Mr Hall offered to meet with Mr. Balfe to discuss his concern and Mr. Balfe agreed that this would be helpful and that the matter therefore did not require further discussion as an item of Any Other Business.

#### **5. Declarations of Interest**

Governors were reminded of the need to declare any interest in the items for discussion. Mr. Balfe, Mr. Down, Mrs. Manning and Mrs. Rowe declared an interest in the Part II business of the meeting.

#### **6. Minutes of previous meetings.**

##### 6.1 Approval – 17 June 2014.

Mr. Balfe queried the minute relating to Learning Walks (item 6.1) as he had commented that they were seen as stressful by a significant number of staff. He was asked how many the significant number referred to? He advised that he did not have this number but could report that there were 24 members of the NUT, and their instruction to members was that they should take 'Action Short of Strike Action' and not participate in any appraisal or performance management process which did not meet NUT guidance. He could not confirm that all 24 held this view regarding Learning Walks but believed that some members of the NASUWT may also have this opinion.

Mrs. Manning advised Governors that discussions have already started at Curriculum Steering Group looking at how lessons will be assessed in the light of new Ofsted guidance.

Mr. Balfe also advised that he had previously queried the clarity of the minute relating to the appointment of a Community Governor (item 8.2). He had been advised by Mr. Minton that the proposal made was a suggestion made to Governors, but that any appointment would need to be voted on and agreed at a meeting of the Members of the Academy Trust.

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 September were amended to add 'Mr. Balfe expressed the opinion that significant numbers of staff found these stressful' in the section relating to Learning Walks and the final sentence of section 8.2 changed to read 'Governors unanimously supported this proposal which will need to be considered and voted on at the next Members meeting of the Academy Trust.'

Subject to these changes, the minutes were approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

## 6.2 Matters arising.

There were none.

## 7. Appointment of Committees

### 7.1 Committee membership

Mr. Hall asked whether any Governor wished to change the committees on which they serve for the forthcoming year. Governors were reminded that they are all entitled to attend any committee, but only those appointed as members are eligible to vote. Mr. Down advised that he would withdraw from the Personnel Committee and move to Finance. Mr. Minton proposed joining Personnel, Admissions and Finance. Mr. Sprawson offered to join Personnel and Admissions. As Chairman, Mr. Hall is a member of all committees.

The changes were **AGREED**. The full list of committee members is attached as Appendix 1.

### 7.2 Appointment of Committee Chairs

Mr. Hall requested nominations for committee chairs and the following were received:

Admissions Committee - Mrs. Job.

- Nominated by Mr. Minton, Seconded by Mr. Down.

Asset Management Committee - Mr. Seaman Hill.

- Nominated by Mrs. McPhail, Seconded by Mr. Montgomery.

Curriculum & Performance Committee – Mrs. Marland

- Nominated by Mr. Minton, Seconded by Mrs. Job

Finance Committee – Mrs. McPhail

- Nominated by Mr. Hall, Seconded by Mr. Montgomery.

Personnel Committee - Mrs. Job

- Nominated by Mr. Hall, Seconded by Mrs. Marland.

No other nominations were made and the meeting therefore **APPROVED** the appointments:

Each Committee will appoint a Vice Chair at their next meeting.

### 7.3 Committee Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference were reviewed. It was noted that one of the functions of the Admissions Committee is to monitor and review Sixth Form admissions and it was agreed to discuss how this should be carried out at the next meeting of the committee.

There were no changes made and the Committee Terms of Reference were unanimously **APPROVED** for 2014/15.

## 8. **Examination results summary and Headteacher's update**

Mrs. Manning presented an overview of the summer examination results. A full analysis will be given at the next meeting of the Curriculum & Performance Committee and all Governors are welcome to attend.

Highlights are as follows:

### **A Level**

- An increase of nearly 3% in the top A\* and A grades to 34.5% - the best results for 12 years.
- 59% of students attained grades A\*, A or B.
- 83.7% of the A level grades were A\* to C.
- 17 students gained 3 or more A and A\* grades.
- The average points score per student is 723.5, a large increase on the previous year figure of 678.8. Some students do return to school to continue study into Year 14, or only take one or two A levels and this does affect the APS. This will not change and the school will continue to do what is right for the student.

### **AS Levels**

- 68% of the results were at A-C.
- The percentage of A and B grades is 46.9%, but is above target.
- 90.4% of all entries were A –E passes, a slight decrease on the previous year. The reasons behind the fall will be discussed with staff at the forthcoming exam review meetings.
- The average points score per student for AS has increased by 5.4 points to 370.4.
- 7 students achieved all 4 A grades in their AS results and 30 students achieved all A or B grades.

### **GCSE**

- 86% of Year 11 students gained 5 A\*-C grades.
- 84% of students gained 5 A\*-C including English and Mathematics. However, performance tables will only report on first entries and the figure for this is 76%.
- 43.6% of the grades were at A\* and A (up 5.3%) and 68.7% were A\* to B (up 2.7%). 20 students attained all A\* and A grades.
- 100% of students achieved 5 or more A\*-G grades.

A small number of papers have been sent for re-mark, but there are no large numbers for an individual subject as has occurred in previous years.

Mrs. Manning was asked whether marking of examinations appeared harder this year. She advised that grading in Geography appeared harder, and there has been some turbulence in English, although this did not affect Hitchin Girls'.

### **Other updates:**

#### Priorities for the year

Mrs. Manning reminded Governors of the vision for 2014/15 from the School Improvement Plan and the three priorities of:

- Getting the curriculum right
- Sharing good practice
- Developing student independence in learning

One of the main issues at present, in relation to the curriculum changes, is whether AS and A2 can be co-taught. This may be possible in some subjects, but not others and discussions are being held within the Consortium.

#### Student numbers

There is still some fluctuation but there are currently 127 students in Year 12 and 122 in Year 13. 26 external students have joined this year (last year 18). Once numbers have stabilised, analysis will be undertaken on destinations for Year 11 students who did not join the Sixth Form. Lack of facilities has been an issue in the past, but hopefully this will not cause a problem with the new Sixth Form Centre. A maximum number for the Sixth Form is hard to quantify as it does partly depend on subject choices. This year, there was a need to advise a few external applicants that some subjects were full.

173 students have started in Year 7. The PAN for this year, is 172, a temporary increase over the published figure of 165, as agreed with the Local Authority following their error in the admission allocation process.

#### Local press article

Mrs. Manning updated Governors following the article in the press on a student who did not meet the minimum entry requirements for the Sixth Form. The school has now been advised that, due to her additional needs, a reasonable adjustment would be to change the entry requirement for A level study for this student. The student has now joined Year 12.

#### Governors complaint hearing

A governor panel to hear a parent complaint was postponed earlier this month at the request of the parent. The hearing will now take place in October.

Mr. Seaman Hill thanked Mrs. Manning for her report.

## **9. Link Governors**

The list of Governor links to Departments was reviewed. Mr. Balfe advised that Drama should now be listed with Music and not English and Media. There were no other changes.

Mr. Minton reported on the World War 1 commemoration day arranged by the history department. He found it a very enjoyable and moving occasion and thanked the department for organizing it.

**10. Any Other Business**

None

**11. Date of next meetings**

Tuesday 2 December 2014

The meeting closed at 7.25pm.