

Capella House School

*Minutes of the meeting of the governing body held as a Virtual Meeting
using Google Hangouts on
Tuesday 13th October 2020 at 6.30pm.*

Attendance

Andrew Whiteside (AW)
Peter Heyer (PH)
Peter Bailey (PB)
Naomi Greaves (NG)
Michele Coleman (MC)
Melanie Bywell (MB)
Don Blaylock (DB)
Vacancy (Co-opted Governor)
Vacancy (Staff Governor)

Apologies

None

Absent w/o apologies

None

Also, attended

Helen Bridge (HB) – Clerk, Ivan Pryce (IP), Rebecca Graham (RG), Susie Connor (SC)

Meeting Minutes

All meeting attendees agreed to conduct the meeting as a virtual meeting.

1. Welcome

1.1. All attendees were welcomed to the meeting

2. Apologies/Declarations of Interest

2.1. There were no apologies for the meeting.

- 2.2. Governors were asked to declare any interests relating to any item of the agenda for this meeting. None were declared.
- 2.3. The AAT Register of Interests had been circulated in advance of the meeting (Attached at A). The clerk noted that this would need to be circulated and updated at every FGB going forward. Governor acceptance and any amendments to this were noted and will be reflected on the register.

Action: HB

3. Election of Chair/Vice Chair

- 3.1. Andy Whiteside was elected as chair for a period of office until the first full governing body meeting of the academic year 2021-22. Peter Heyer was elected as vice chair for a period of office until the first full governing body meeting of the academic year 2021-22. Both positions will be supported by governors via ‘thread ownership’ as follows –

Academic Curriculum – MC/PB

Social Curriculum – PB/MB

Therapies – NG/AW

Leadership and Management (Inc. Financial Management) – PH/MB/MC

Safeguarding – NG/AW

Staff Welfare/Advocacy – PH/AW

4. Approval of Minutes/Actions Arising from the Meeting held on Wednesday 8th July 2020

- 4.1. There were no changes to the minutes of the GB meeting held on the 8th July 2020 - they were agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting and were signed by the chair.
- 4.2. 1.2 – Actioned.
- 4.3. 2.2 – Parents group – to be an open action for 2020/21 academic year when pupils are back in school – carried forward

Action: DB

- 4.4. 5.5 – Actioned.
- 4.5. 7.3/7.4/7.7 – On agenda.
- 4.6. 9.1– Approved.
- 4.7. 11.1 – Actioned.
- 4.8. 11.2 – Chair review summary – carried forward.

Action: NG

5. Chair’s Overview

- 5.1. The chair noted that he has been sending out regular email updates – he undertook to circulate the recent SIP report.

Action: AW

6. School Performance

6.1. The head's report to governors and the Development of Curriculum Intent at CHS document were circulated in advance of the meeting (Attached at B).

6.2. The head noted that an external advisor was commissioned to provide a fresh view of the strengths and areas for development at Capella House and their visit took place last week. The head undertook to circulate the report from the visit.

Action:

DB

6.3. The head noted that the school is fully staffed. A therapy assistant was appointed and then decided to withdraw their acceptance – an agency TA was interviewed and has now taken on this role.

6.4. The head noted that the school is still lacking a SALT – an advert has been placed with the Royal College of SALT which is currently on their website and will be included in their November publication.

6.5. With regards to pupil numbers, the head noted that he has received no enquiries for the year 5/6 class. There are currently 6 spaces in this class with no children being put forward (despite the class being staffed as requested). He noted that there have been several enquiries from parents regarding year 6 or year 7 places for September 2021.

6.6. ***Governors raised the question of what the financial impact is of there being no children for the Year 5/6 class?***

The trust CEO noted that the perspective of AfC is that due to covid, pupils did not materialise as primary schools were not having reviews with their year 5 children, therefore children were not being put forward for a special needs provision. AfC are currently speaking to SENCO's in mainstream primary schools to make sure that they are aware of the provision at Capella House and AfC anticipates a year 5/6 class for September 2021.

7. Finance Update

7.1. The trust finance director noted that the financial position of the school is being monitored closely and the future viability of the school rests on being able to increase pupil numbers. The trust CEO noted that he has meetings planned with Senco's (feedback positive so far but for 21/22) as well as the Placement Planning Officer and Director of Education Services at AfC to discuss the local need and how Capella House fits in with this. They have agreed to push local health authorities to identify young children who may have SAL communication needs hence providing a link with potential pupils for the future.

7.2. ***Governors raised the question of whether the catchment area for the school could be extended?***

The head noted that transport arrangements are organised by AfC and casting the pupil net wider will have implications on travel time. Some pupils travel for long periods of time to and from school which they can find very stressful.

7.3. ***Governors raised the question of when current financial reserves will be used up?***

The trust finance director noted that this will happen by September 2021 if the current number of pupils stays the same. Clarendon are currently not charging Capella for utilities, depreciation charges and IT – this debt is accruing and will need to be paid off. She noted that the school is financially viable if it has the correct number of pupils and it is the lack of pupils being put forward by the LA that is putting pressure on finances.

Governors agreed that developing relationships with Senco's and raising the awareness of the provision is key.

8. Safeguarding Update

8.1. The safeguarding governor noted that despite there being several positives in the report from her recent visit to school to review safeguarding procedures, she is still concerned that some safeguarding practices are not properly imbedded at the school and there is concern as to whether there is the capacity for issues to be dealt with which in turn could put the school in a vulnerable position.

8.2. The safeguarding governor noted that she is to organise another LSEB safeguarding audit and she will liaise with the head, the SIP and the Education Safeguarding Adviser at AfC to arrange this. She undertook to send out the results of the audit to governors.

Action: NG

8.3. It was noted that time needs to be devoted to the audit and the recommendations that come out of it.

8.4. The head noted that staff have undergone 3 days of training recently that included safeguarding and e-safety training (carried out by a representative from AfC). He noted that safeguarding remains a priority for the coming academic year - it is an ongoing process that will be managed with the help of the safeguarding governor.

8.5. The trust CEO noted that DSL's from all the trust schools are to develop a self-supporting network and he undertook to recommend an experienced DSL to help with the LSEB safeguarding audit.

Action: IP

8.6. Governors agreed that the secondary senior teacher should take over as the DSL from the head.

8.7. The head noted that governors should check to see if they have been contacted by the school admin officer regarding provision of an original DBS for school records.

Action: ALL

8.8. It was noted that DB, AW and MB are all safer recruitment trained.

8.9. It was noted that some information needs updating on the school website – this is the responsibility of the school admin officer who has had training on this.

8.10. Governors thanked the safeguarding governor for all her hard work in relation to safeguarding at the school.

9. Staffing and Estate

- 9.1. The CHS SDIP Summary 20/21 was circulated in advance of the meeting (Attached at C).
- 9.2. The head noted that this has been received positively by staff. There were no questions from governors.
- 9.3. It was noted that a longer-term development plan needs to be put together – the head and the chair undertook to liaise about a date for another strategy session to be held in school.

Action: DB/AW

10. Governor Visits

- 10.1. It was noted that in the current climate, governors will need to visit the school virtually. The protocol for governor visits is uploaded to Governorhub (standard documents folder).
- 10.2. Governors have agreed to the proposed thread ownership (see point 3.1). The head undertook to provide a list of staff contacts in relation to each link area with a view to building partnerships with support and challenge.

Action: DB

11. School Development

- 11.1. Primary Site – construction has resumed at the primary site and John Kipps (primary site lead) is meeting with the construction team on 14th October 2020. The trust CEO noted that AfC are publicising the school with local Sencos – it was noted that the need for the primary site is to be established by AfC for it to be deemed viable. The head noted that he is to present the CHS offer to a LA Senco group meeting.

12. GB Performance and Development

- 12.1. The chair noted that he has received completed governor self-evaluation forms that were completed and he will summarise and use the information to create a Governing Body Development Plan.

Action: AW

13. Interaction with the Trust

- 13.1. The trust CEO noted that pending agreement by the trust board, the proposal is to release him for 3 days per week to provide additional capacity for CHS and to work on other developments.
- 13.2. The trust CEO proposed that a CHS governor should act as a contact for the trust board in relation to the primary development. IP/JK would update that governor on a regular basis on the proposed timeline of the development, questions that are being asked and decisions that are being made.

14. AOB

- 14.1. The AAT Fire Safety Policy was circulated in advance of the meeting (Attached at D). This was ratified by governors.
- 14.2. The clerk reminded governors to send her their chair's 360 review forms to her and she undertook to send the completed forms to NG to summarise and feed back to the FGB.

Action: HB/NG

- 14.3. The head noted that he is to teach pewter casting as part of the pupil enrichment programme whereby pupils will be making Xmas decorations.
- 14.4. The chair noted that he has provided a short update on CHS for the trust board meeting on the 21st October 2020
- 14.5. It was noted that the finance committee has approved the CHS 1-year budget – the budget is to be revised if pupil numbers increase.

15. Date of Next Meeting

- 15.1. The next FGB meeting is to be held on Wednesday 2nd December 2020.

The meeting ended at 8.00pm.

Signed by the Chair _____

Date _____