

By Brook Valley Academy Trust
(Company Registration Number 8020467)
Academy Board Meeting
Wednesday 15th December 2021



Minutes

Present: Rosemary Jago (“RJ”), Graham Pike (Head teacher) (“GP”), Deborah Henshall (“DH”), David New (“DN”), Jaclyn Cross (“JC”), Anjali Kangaratnam (“AK”), Elizabeth Gilbertson (“EG”), Carrie Davies (“CB”), Sarah Wren (“SW”), Edwena Rowell (“EP”), (from 6.18pm) Martin Lowe (“ML”) and (from 6.55pm) Lakmini Harkus (“LH”)

Members in Attendance (until the end of the AGM, agenda item 3, at 6.35pm):
Rosemary Jago (“RJ”) (Chair), Liz Townend (“LT”) (Director and Representative of Diocese of Bristol Academies Company (“DOBAC”), Rosalind Edwards (“RE”) and James Skinner by proxy, David New (“DN”)

In Attendance: Michelle Hocking (Clerk/Company Secretary) (“MH”) and (until 6.30pm) Simon Cunningham, Moores (the company’s auditors) (“SC”) and Cathryn MacDougall (“CM”)

Apologies: None

Item	Minute	Action
	Opening Prayer AK led the opening prayer	
1	Welcome and Apologies RJ took the chair and opened the meeting at 6.01pm. No apologies - ML anticipated shortly and LH anticipated at 7pm. RJ declared that a quorum was present and formally welcomed everyone to the meeting, particularly EP as a new foundation governor and RE, LT, SC, and CM – present for the AGM	
2	Pecuniary and Business Interests Register It was noted that all present had completed the annual Related Parties Declaration of Interests forms and no interests were declared in the business of this meeting.	
3. AGM <i>The meeting adjourned for the AGM 6.05pm – 6.35pm</i> <i>ML joined the meeting at 6.18pm (during the AGM) and confirmed that he had no interests to declare</i> It was noted that during the AGM:		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The accounts for the year ended 31 August 2021 (Accounts) were laid before the members, the auditors provided a summary and members' questions were answered • The trustees/governors (save for EP as a new, incoming governor and trustee) re-affirmed their approval of the Accounts, together with the associated Audit Summary (including Management Letter) and Letter of Representation • The trustees/governors (save for EP as a new, incoming governor and trustee) confirmed the representations contained in the Letter of Representation and that, so far as they were aware, all relevant matters are disclosed in the Accounts and there are no subsequent events to report – i.e., no financial commitments, contractual problems/disputes/contingent liabilities, legal claims – ongoing or anticipated (including staffing), related parties' transactions or post balance sheet events to disclose. 	
4	<p>Minutes of last meeting: 18 September 2021 FGB</p> <p>The minutes of 18 November meeting was unanimously approved as a true and accurate record of that meeting.</p> <p>Matters arising not covered elsewhere</p> <p>All matters carried forward to the January meeting, complete, covered by this evening's agenda, or superseded save as follows:</p> <p>Item 3: GP to communicate with parents about RSE curriculum and policy – GP confirmed that the safeguarding matrix would be out for consultation by the end of Term 2. GP confirmed that circulated was scheduled for tomorrow. <u>ACTION: GP to ensure RSE/safeguarding matrix are out for consultation by the end of Term 2.</u></p> <p><u>ACTION: All other actions arising from the 18 November meeting to be carried forward to the January meeting – Clerk to add to agenda as appropriate.</u></p>	<p>GP</p> <p>Clerk</p>
5	<p>Headteacher Update</p> <p><i>Single Academy Trusts and Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs)</i></p> <p>It was noted that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GP had circulated information received from the Regional Schools Commissioner's Office (RSC) and other sources regarding the benefits of and encouragement to form/join MATs • The strong previous views of both staff and governors had been resistance to forming or joining a MAT – considering the benefits to be negligible for By Brook and working very hard to maintain the autonomy of the school as a single academy for the benefit of the children, staff, and wider school community • Current national focus remains the pandemic – operational and recovery factors – with little proactive appetite for progressing MATs save where struggling schools require sponsorship support • Given the long-term political drive to move towards MATs, alongside adaptations to other elements of an ever-changing educational landscape, the board will continue to regularly reassess the pros and cons of forming or joining a MAT – whether it is in the best interests of the children for the school to become part of a larger group (in whatever format) or remain autonomous - fully acknowledging that any proposals to progress towards a MAT would require detailed discussions with the whole board and full consultation with staff and members <p>It was unanimously agreed that other areas of focus were to be prioritised at present and consideration of forming or joining a MAT to be deferred.</p>	

	<p>Prospectus Progress GP reported that the prospectus had been redrafted (with RJ's input) and sent to the original publishers to produce an e-version – cost = <u>a minimum</u> of £180 (to include update on the school website).</p> <p>Safeguarding/Single Central Record update GP confirmed that there were no significant safeguarding issues to report, and JC reported that the SCR was up to date. JC also noted that, as the Local Authority (LA) audit document is scheduled for publication on 13th January, she has booked a meeting with GP to complete the audit at the end of January. <u>ACTION: JC and GP to complete safeguarding audit and report back on actions arising.</u></p>	JC/GP
6	<p>Policies: Responsible Use – EIA ratification of final version Deferred until the January meeting. <u>ACTIONS: (i) DN to update EIA and (ii) Clerk to add Responsible Use Policy to the next agenda.</u></p>	DN/Clerk
7	<p>Finance, Premises, Staffing & HR Committee – Update on budget recovery plan EG highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reserves: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ as noted in immediately preceding AGM, declining position (currently £66K) ○ in-year deficit: £42K last year and nearly £30K this year ○ this in-year deficit will reduce free reserves to c.£36K by the end of this year - although this just exceeds stated minimum of £35K, the current reserves policy references equivalent of 7-12% of General Annual Grant (GAG) so this trend needs to be reversed <p><i>LH joined the meeting at 6.55pm and confirmed she had no interests to declare</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recovery plans: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Wraparound Care: survey of parents being conducted – including consideration of themed Bubbles clubs (art, music, gardening – which could be run by existing Bubbles staff – with possible contributions towards materials to minimise costs and maximise attraction) ○ Holiday Clubs: GP has been liaising with providers and based on relatively conservative periods of provision, estimating £2.5K net income – proposals will continue to be considered at the next F&P meeting (21 January) including practicalities (e.g., locally-based governors may be asked to join list of keyholders) ○ Increasing Number on Roll (NOR): noting that each child brings £4-5K of revenue, via website ad prospectus celebrating the excellence of the school's provision, drive to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maintain NOR – declining birth rate has hit local schools but not yet By Brook – try to maintain this position 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase NOR – maintaining high standards and marketing these effectively ▪ Reduce departures – focusing on understanding reasons for choosing to leave and, where feasible, addressing any concerns raised <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costs savings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Benchmarking with other similar schools (formally and informally) ○ Investigating sustainable/cost-effective solutions for utilities e.g., solar panels ○ Whilst acknowledging staffing is single biggest cost, <u>no plans to restructure staffing at present</u> 	
8	<p>AOB Carol Service/Other Activities Parents present praised the Yr5/6 Carol Service and extended sincere thanks to all staff involved. DH and CD said they would pass on the thanks and emphasised that staff also thoroughly enjoyed putting on productions – providing moments of normality during these continuing challenging pandemic times, which the children clearly really appreciate.</p> <p>Huge Thanks to Staff On behalf of the full board, RJ extended huge thanks to all staff at the school – acknowledging the significant challenges, the exhaustion and the fantastic flexibility, team spirit and dedication always shown by all staff and in particular throughout the pandemic. All best wishes for a lovely Christmas and well-deserved break were extended.</p> <p>Online Safety Resources Following review of a detailed report on provision and recommendations from CD (thanks to CD) and on the bases that these resources are considered essential, but finances are tight, F&P recommended National Online Safety¹ be subscribed for 1 year. It was noted that longer subscription periods offered little savings and it was prudent to trial use prior to committing to any longer-term arrangements. CD offered to report back on impact at the end of the academic year.</p> <p>F&P's recommendation to subscribe for National Online Safety resources for one year – at a cost of £995 – was unanimously approved. <u>ACTIONS: (i) CD to progress subscription and monitor impact and (ii) Clerk to add CD's National Online Safety Impact Report to the July agenda.</u></p>	CD Clerk
14	<p>How have we contributed to the vision of By Brook Valley C of E Primary School today?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivered approved accounts to the AGM and confirmed assurances that Management letter points have been addressed from an operational perspective 	

¹ <https://nationalonlinesafety.com/>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scrutinised and approved the Letter of Representation • Approved subscription to online safety resources • Received initial update on recovery plan details 	
15	Date of next meeting: Thursday 13th January 2022 (NB starts at 6pm because Governor Safeguarding Training)	Note

The Chair closed the meeting at 7.04pm



Signed.....

Date...15.12.21.....