

AYLESBURY GRAMMAR SCHOOL



FULL GOVERNING BODY MEETING

MINUTES: 18TH MARCH 2016 2.30PM

PRESENT:

Mr J Collins (Chairman)	Dr N Laljani
Mrs J Atkin	Mrs G Miscampbell
Mr P Aston	Mr M Pilkington
Mr P Bown	Mr R Rooney
Mr M Brock	Mr M Sturgeon (Headmaster)
Mr P Buckland	Miss E Treherne
Mr G Gate	Mr R Williams
Mr G Howe	

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs C Cobb Clerk

APOLOGIES: Mrs J Dennis Apologies received and accepted
Mr K Hardern Apologies received and accepted

1 NOTIFICATION OF ANY OTHER BUSINESS

ACTION

The following item was tabled under any other business:

- Governor Impact Folder

2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

3 MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

3.1 MINUTES OF FGB MEETING OF 11TH DECEMBER 2015

The minutes of the meeting held on the 11th December 2015 had been previously circulated. All Governors agreed that they were a true reflection of the matters discussed, and the Chairman duly signed them.

3.2 MATTERS ARISING

Aylesbury High School Event – The Chairman reported that he had been in contact with the Chairman of Governors for AHS and it was planned to hold a social event in the summer term.

Chairman

Staff Governors to join C & D Committee – Mr Aston agreed to continue to seek a staff Governor to join the C & D Committee. Governors agreed if nobody was forthcoming then an alternative would be for Staff Governors to attend the C & D meetings on rotation as an observer as all Governors recognised the value of having a staff Governor present.

Mr Aston

Committee Structure – The Chairman reported that further work had been carried out on the possible separation of the RiF Committee into separate Finance and Resources Committees, and that he and Mr Gate would bring a recommendation to the next FGB meeting.

Chairman &
Mr Gate
Agenda

Independent Appeal Panels – The Headmaster reported that a case was made to Robert Preston to take the matter to IAP's on the impact on the school when IAP's allow students to be admitted in excess of the school's maximum admission number.

3.3 MINUTES OF FGB MEETING HELD ON 3RD MARCH 2016

The minutes of the special meeting held on the 3rd March 2016 had been previously circulated. All Governors agreed that they were a true reflection of the matters discussed, and the Chairman duly signed them. It was noted that these minutes will remain confidential.

The Headmaster updated Governors on the issue in question and expressed his thanks to Mrs Venning for all her very hard work in managing the situation so sympathetically.

Governors thanked the Headmaster and expressed their gratitude to all staff and students for their hard work and understanding in relation to such a very delicate matter.

4 LEARNING AND TEACHING COMMITTEE

This Committee met on 11th February 2016, and minutes had been previously circulated.

Governors noted the minutes – there were no further actions.

5 COMMUNITY AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

This Committee met on 21st January 2016, and minutes had been previously circulated.

Governors noted the minutes – there were no further actions.

6 RESOURCES INCLUDING FINANCE COMMITTEE

This Committee met on 3rd March 2016, and minutes had been previously circulated.

Arising from the minutes Mr Gate reported:

Library Project – The proposals including drawings for the proposed library had been previously circulated.

The Chairman reported that the Foundation had received a generous legacy from Professor William Mead and that the Trustees had approved in principle (following the agreement of the Executors of Professor Mead's estate and subject to reviewing the final drawings) to give up to £130,000 for the library project.

Mrs Miscampbell reported that the Executors of the estate are pleased that it is proposed to recognise Professor Mead's involvement in the school in this way.

The project will be managed through the RiF Committee. The Headmaster reported that quotations have been received for different parts of the development totaling £130,350, which includes an allowance of £35,000 for furniture to accommodate 48 students, which has been agreed as an acceptable number by the Librarian. A meeting is going to take place with a group of students to get their views on the proposed layout.

Dr Laljani asked what impact would the library have on students? The Headmaster responded the current space occupied by the library is a combination of a computer room, study area and library, and as such is not an effective use of space. The computer room is no longer required as most students now have access to mobile devices. There will also be benefits of having a library occupying its own space, and releasing dedicated space for study for the sixth form, which will be critical going forward as the sixth form increases in numbers but the average number of A-levels per head decreases.

Dr Laljani asked if libraries of the future have been considered? The Headmaster responded that he felt very strongly young people should still be given access to books. He agreed that in time the number of books may reduce, and noted that there is a proposed 40% reduction in books being transferred to the new library. However, this reflects books that are no longer being used.

Mr Gate asked for assurance to be given that the library project would come in on or under budget, as there was no additional funding to support it. Mr Buckland requested a 10% contingency to be included in the overall budget as the legacy was £150,000 in total. Governors approved the budget of £130,350 plus a 10% contingency and noted that a sub-committee of RiF would be responsible for overseeing the procurement process. It was also agreed that should the budget move by more than 10% the project would be brought back to the full RiF committee for reappraisal.

Science Campaign – The estimated total for completing the fit out of the laboratories and common parts is £520,000. The Headmaster confirmed that to date £250,000 has been raised by the campaign board; of this, £190,000 has actually been received and £60,000 has been pledged. An application has been made to the Wolfson Foundation for £50,000 and the outcome of this will be known in June. An application is also going to be made to the Wellcome Trust. The Headmaster also reported that the campaign is moving relatively slowly and the Campaign Board is meeting regularly to consider actions to maintain momentum.

The Finance Director, Mrs Wilson, joined the meeting.

Mr Gate asked Governors to consider the possibility of borrowing £300,000 from the reserves, noting that £60,000 of this would be an advance for liquidity

against the money pledged but not yet received and would therefore be repaid quite quickly.

Dr Laljani asked if this would undermine the campaign? Governors agreed that this was a possible cause for concern, but agreed that the benefits if a quicker completion of the project outweighed any risk.

Mr Buckland asked how much there was in the reserves? Mrs Wilson responded that there is £330,000 in unrestricted reserves and £120,000 in restricted reserves, of which £40,000.00 has been spent on solar panels. Mrs Wilson said that she would be very concerned, given the funding uncertainties in future, in releasing £300,000 from the reserves and felt that a sum of up to £100,000 would be more appropriate.

The Chairman proposed and Governors agreed to take £100,000 from the reserves to support completion of the science project, and to borrow a further £60,000 from the reserves to be repaid using the pledged money as it was received.

Mrs Wilson left the meeting.

Financial Procedures – Mr Aston and Mr Williams reported they had met with the Finance Director following the recent RiF Committee meeting to review the purchasing procedures section of the financial procedures manual and amendments to the purchasing procedures had been agreed. The amended version circulated in the meeting pack had been found to be in error and a revised final version as agreed had been circulated. Mr Williams and Mr Aston commented that they felt that the amendments now gave a workable procedure with robust specification / quotation / review processes and with process / approval thresholds set to appropriate levels for the smooth running of the school. Governors approved the amendments to Financial Procedures Manual as circulated.

Health and Safety Review – Mr Aston reported that a sub-committee had been formed at the last RiF meeting to review the health and safety audit report received from the external consultant, Mr Chris Stops, as the content of the report showed an unsatisfactory position that was of concern to all governors / directors, including from the viewpoint of their statutory responsibilities. A detailed improvement process is urgently required as the current management processes have led to a disconnect between documented and actual practices. Mr Aston informed the board that in his opinion the facilities management personnel would need external professional help and closer management control to make the improvements required. It was agreed that the sub-committee would meet every two weeks, Mr Stops would be invited to join the sub-committee and would be an integral part of the process, and minutes reflecting progress against the action plan would be circulated to all Governors.

Please see Restricted Confidential Minutes.

Mr Buckland asked if there were sufficient resources to manage health and safety, and asked if additional support should be put in place? The Headmaster responded that the premises department is extremely busy and that he was actively considering means to provide them with admin support from within the school's current employee base.

Mr Aston further reported that the next meeting of the sub-committee is due to take place on 29th March, Mr Stops will be attending and a clearer view on how best to move forward will be agreed. Governors were fully supportive of additional resources being put in place as necessary.

Governors noted the minutes – there were no further actions.

7 **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

The Chairman reported that Mr Aston, Dr Laljani, Mr Gate and himself had met with AHS Governors to discuss possible areas of commonality and hopefully this will continue going forward how each school can benefit from the other.

8 **HEADMASTER'S REPORT**

The Headmaster had previously circulated his report. Arising from the report:

Staffing – Cornelia Van Der Post has resigned to concentrate on her University teaching. There is flexibility in staffing and there is enough capacity within the existing staff so no additional staff will be recruited to replace her.

Mr Brock asked how many Year 11 have chosen to take Latin at A level?

The Headmaster responded 5.

Mr Aston asked if Heather Murray is being replaced? The Headmaster responded that she would be replaced and the recruitment will start in the summer term.

Mr Aston also asked if matters were in hand to recognise the long service given to the school for two members of staff who are leaving? The Headmaster responded that leaving celebrations have been organised for both members of staff.

Parent Survey – The Headmaster had previously circulated the collated results and all Governors agreed that the results were very positive

Oxbridge – Mr Bown asked if the number of conversions from Oxbridge could be improved? The Headmaster responded that there is a plan in place to try to increase the numbers of conversions. The Higher Education Leader had spoken to other schools to see if they were doing anything different that the school could learn from, noting that the school was broadly similar to others. This year the students had generally fell down on the Oxbridge tests, which are very hard to prepare for.

National Funding Formula – The Headmaster reported that the national funding formula is now out for consultation and encouraged all Governors to respond to the consultation, using the link previously circulated. A soft formula will be in place for 2017/18 and 2018/19 and a hard formula will be in place for 2019/20

Mrs Atkin and Mr Buckland left the meeting

9 **SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

The progress being made on the SDP had been previously circulated. Governors noted the progress - there were no further actions.

10 **POLICIES**

Seven policies were presented to the meeting and discussed by Governors:

- **Drugs Policy** – Governors approved the policy without amendment
- **Shared Parental Leave Policy** – Governors approved the policy upon the recommendation of the RiF Committee.
- **ICT Acceptable Use Policy** – Governors approved the policy subject to the words “me” and “my” being replaced with “staff” and “students”.
- **ITT Policy** - Governors approved the policy without amendment
- **E Safety Policy** - Governors approved the policy without amendment
- **Educational Visits Policy** – The Headmaster confirmed it was a new policy. Governors approved the policy without amendment.
- **Privacy Policy** - Governors approved the policy without amendment.

11 DEVELOPMENT GOVERNOR REPORT

The report of the Development Governor had been previously circulated. Mr Aston emphasised the comment in the report that we will fail to achieve our agreed objective of bringing the skills matrix “into the green” by the end of the academic year.

Governors noted the report – there were no further actions.

12 SAFEGUARDING REPORT

Mrs Venning joined the meeting and updated Governors on safeguarding.

Mrs Venning noted that it had been a very busy term supporting specific students. Two students have been transferred to the school under police protection and they are being very heavily supported. There are other students being supported by both Social Services and the school, although Social Services have continued to be very slow to respond at times and Mrs Venning was concerned the student’s home lives were not improving. There has been four social care referrals; four welfare referrals; five other concerns; four students are on child care plans; four students have children in need plans; seventeen students are being seen by the school counselor and there is a waiting list of four; there have been five full referrals to CAMHS. The Connexions budget has been slashed and the school is therefore likely to lose a Councilor. All schools lost their Educational Psychiatrist and AGS are currently paying for somebody to come in and give a training session to staff.

The Chairman asked if there was anything the Governing Body could do to assist? Mrs Venning responded that she did not think so and all safeguarding matters are currently being managed using the available resources.

Mr Brock asked if the school was adequately resources to manage safeguarding? Mrs Venning responded in general yes but when a referral comes in it takes up a lot of time, which has to be found.

Mr Williams asked if there was any cross over in the statistics given? Mrs Venning responded that all the cases noted were individual cases.

Mrs Venning further reported that attendance is good and the school continue to aim at 96%, excluding study leave, 96% is achieved in most year groups. Unauthorised absence is low, but not being able to authorise holidays has had an impact. In most years there is one student with severe medical needs which

impacts on attendance overall. There has been a big increase in home study and this is owing to the reduction in A levels being taken and there is not enough space in school for years 12 and 13 to study and so they study at home. The timing of public exams, length of terms also impacts on attendance figures. The data is studied regularly and absence is very seriously monitored, if attendance for a student drops then staff know the internal process, which has to be followed. Two students have come very close to the Local Authority being asked to levy an absence fine as the absence has been for holidays. In the summer holidays a trial of texting Year 7 parents is going to take place to inform them if there child is not in school by 11am. If this is successful it will be rolled out to all years.

Mrs Venning left the meeting

13 SEND GOVERNOR REPORT

The SEND Governor had previously circulated his report.

Governors noted the report – there were no further actions.

14 PTA REPORT

The report from the PTA Chairman had been previously circulated and was noted by Governors. Governors expressed their appreciation of the continued contribution of the PTA to the school.

18 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Friday 1st July 2016 at 2.30pm

19 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

19.1 GOVERNOR IMPACT FOLDER

Mr Aston raised the issue that the need to create a Governor Impact Folder, as preparation for any Ofsted visit, had been highlighted initially in Summer 2013 and had been emphasised at several training sessions but remained unaddressed. The Chairman agreed to liaise with Mrs Atkin on a suitable folder and contents to demonstrate the impact of Governors.

The meeting closed at 5.35pm

Signed Date

CHAIRMAN