



| MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING NESTON HIGH SCHOOL | | |
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| Date: | Wednesday 9th December 2020, 1800 - 1930 | |
| Venue: | Remote Meeting (Microsoft Teams) | |
| Present: | Kevin Mothersdale (KM) Kath Roberts (KR) Keith Simpson (KS) Paul Airey (PA) Duncan Haworth (DH) K Elizabeth Jones (KEJ) Ian Mellor (IM) Colin Randerson (CR) Kathryn Clarke (KC) | Community Trustee and Chair of Trustees Community Trustee and Vice Chair of Trustees Headteacher Community Trustee Community Trustee Community Trustee Community Trustee Community Trustee Parent Trustee |
| Apologies: | None | |
| Absent: | None | |
| In attendance: | Kirsty Cunningham (KCH) Tina Phillips (TP) John Pilcher (Clerk) Joe Tyrrell (JT) Liane Littler (LL) | Deputy Head Teacher Business Manager Clerk Deputy Head Teacher Finance Lead |

| AGENDA ITEM 1 | WELCOME & APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE | | |
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| Discussion: | The Chair welcomed Trustees to the meeting, and it was noted that there were no apologies for absence. The Chair added that MS Teams training will also be provided for Trustees and asked the Clerk to liaise with the school to circulate possible dates. | | |
| Actions: | What? | Who? | By when? |
| (8) | Dates for Teams training to be circulated. | Clerk/TP | As soon as possible. |
| AGENDA ITEM 2 | DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST | | |
| Discussion: | There were no new declarations of interest. | | |

| AGENDA ITEM 3 | MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (PART 1) |
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| <p>Discussion:</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To confirm accuracy of the minutes from the meeting of 4.11.20 <p>Trustees agreed that the previous Part 1 minutes represent a true and accurate record.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Matters Arising/Action Log <p>Carried Forward</p> <p><u>Action 46:</u> KS discuss the Visit/Policy Procedure with PA. Closed. <u>Action 2:</u> KS to request applications of the Staff Trustee vacancy. Closed. <u>Action 5:</u> KS to meet with Trustees to discuss 6th Form & Capital. Open.</p> <p>From 4.11.209</p> <p><u>Action 7:</u> Clerk to organise a date with KS and Trustees regarding the Strategy and Vision document. Closed.</p> |
| <p>Decision:</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Resolved. To approve the previous Part 1 minutes from 4.11.20 as a true and accurate record. - Resolved. To carry forward Action 5 – meeting with KS & Trustees re 6th Form & Capital planning. |
| AGENDA ITEM 4 | GOVERNING BODY |
| <p>Discussion:</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Vacancies & Resignations <p>The Chair informed Trustees of three resignations: Paul Sweetman, Simon Roberts and Andy Liptrot which leaves three vacancies; two Parent Trustee vacancies and one Community Trustee vacancy. TP confirmed that a generic application form will be issued for a parent trustee in January.</p> <p>Question: IM asked, have the Trustees resigned midterm and if so, is this unusual? Answer: The Chair confirmed all resignations are midterm. The reasons are mostly as a result of work pressures in light of the current pandemic.</p> <p>Brief discussion followed and Trustees reflected on the limitations of online meetings. In addition, this makes it hard for new Trustees to feel truly engaged with the school. However, Trustees agreed that in the current circumstances and in accordance with the school’s risk assessments, in person meetings are simply not possible at this time.</p> <p>KS added that it is hoped that things will ease in the Spring and potentially smaller group meetings in the evening may be a possibility. KS suggested it could be an opportunity to focus upon how the Board works and from Spring 2021, the new vision and KPI’s could be targeted via ‘in person meetings’.</p> <p>CR added, in relation to new Trustees, they could be ‘buddied up’ with existing Trustees. The Vice Chair noted that this has worked in the past and the Chair agreed this could be</p> |

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| | beneficial. Brief discussion followed noting that the skills audit took place last Autumn. The Chair asked if a few Trustees could meet to decide what skills are needed as a prelude to recruiting new Trustees. KS agreed, adding that selecting Parent Trustee skills is extremely useful; a Community Trustee appointment is also critical, Trustees agreed a meeting should take place in early 2021. | | |
| Actions: | What? | Who? | By when? |
| (9) | Advertise for a Parent Trustee. | TP | January 2021. |
| (10) | Clerk to liaise with KS/school office to circulate dates for an early 2021 meeting (skills audit review for new Trustee appointments) | Clerk/School Admin | As soon as possible. |
| AGENDA ITEM 5 | HEAD TEACHERS VERBAL UPDATE | | |
| Discussion: | <p>KS screen shared a report and provided a verbal commentary of the key points as follows:</p> <p>Trustees noted that the school will stay open until the 18th of December and KS proceeded to discuss the SWOT analysis. Key strengths have been staff attendance and delivery of the recovery curriculum. Opportunities exist around the curriculum and development of the KPI's which will be discussed with members at the AGM. KS also noted that the addition of a new site manager has been an extremely positive development for the school. Covid-19 and its impact upon the normal running of the school remains a key threat. At present there is still not clarity in relation to the 2021 series of exams. Capacity planning and admissions represent both a threat and an opportunity and discussions are ongoing in this regard.</p> <p>KS then drew attention to the number of Covid cases across year groups, noting that Year 8 had been particularly affected. Staff cases had also increased over recent weeks. It was also noted that ten days is the longest period the school has run without recording a case. KS thanked staff for managing the processes arising from Covid cases – which has been an intensive daily task. Trustees were informed that attendance figures overall (especially when compared against national data) are exceptionally good. Ofsted will also be using attendance data as one of the key benchmarks for the visit programme starting in 2021. Staff absences have increased to 410 total staff days lost. KS noted that 'long Covid' is also having a significant impact and this has affected some senior staff members.</p> <p>With regards to behaviour, Trustees noted that interventions and exclusions have been well managed across all year groups. The SLT are working hard to avoid fixed term exclusions and KS suggested that the culture of the school is now much calmer, and colleagues have commented that 'we've got our school back'.</p> <p>KS summarised that the main areas for comment are i) the success of the recovery curriculum ii) the re-stating of strategic aims and the school vision and iii) building trust and keeping children safe, as reflected by the attendance data. KS added that the efforts of staff and the wider team have been outstanding, and the school has successfully navigated through what has proved to be the most complex terms in the school's history.</p> | | |

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| | <p>The Chair invited questions and brief discussion followed highlighting recent DfE guidance in relation to Permanent Exclusion processes during Covid-19, the document has been circulated to Trustees and allows for online panels to convene and caters for extended timescales where absolutely necessary.</p> <p>Question: CR noted the school has a new information management system in place and asked if it is working well?</p> <p>Answer: KS stated that the feedback from teachers has been exceptional. The system provides tracking for assessment and attendance data. The school are still working with the company to refine the process and implementing a new system midterm is not easy. CR agreed and emphasised this reflects the quality of the staff team for the way the school is being run in the current climate.</p> <p>The Chair thanked KS for producing a report in addition to the verbal update.</p> <p>Brief discussion followed highlighting that there is now a strong team in place as the school approaches the Spring Term. In this regard it was agreed that a meeting should be convened with the new site manager and selected Trustees to discuss sixth form and capital planning. [<i>Clerks note:</i> please see Item 3, carried forward action (5)]</p> <p>There were no further questions or comments.</p> |
| AGENDA ITEM 6 | SCHOOL VISION |
| Discussion: | <p>The Chair explained that the relevant document had been circulated and confirmed that a small group had convened to work on the text. It was noted that KPIs have now been adopted and the mission and vision will take the school forward with a sharp focus. KC and TP were thanked for their contributions; the core SLT leads now each have a set of KPIs – and progress will be reported to the BoT in the Spring and Summer terms. DH added that Trustees need to be aware that the KPIs are based on an unprecedented nine-month period and will need to be reviewed in six months’ time, but they represent a great starting point.</p> <p>Question: The Chair clarified that there are two documents - the vision statement and the School Development Plan (SDP). In relation to the KPI’s, the Chair asked did the group agree these?</p> <p>Answer: DH confirmed that the KPIs were agreed by the working group.</p> <p>Brief discussion followed and Trustees debated the nature of the KPIs and what success measures would look like in the current scenario. It was agreed that not everything can be measured numerically but there was a view that perhaps the KPIs need to be revisited in 2021 to include reference to measurable outcomes. In addition, the Chair suggested that perhaps future KPI’s could reflect issues such as financial performance and parent and student satisfaction rates. KS suggested the current KPIs could remain in place, with a review post Spring 2021 to include reference to the revised Ofsted visit programme.</p> <p>CR added that KPIs are there for Trustees to provide overview and scrutiny. These will need to be developed and the process of overview agreed throughout the year.</p> <p>The Vice Chair agreed that the document - as presented, was seen as the right balance of a ‘critical friend’ that can be reviewed on a termly basis up until August 2021. DH agreed,</p> |

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| | <p>noting that post Spring 2021, the Board will be able to form a view as to what data and KPIs are actually realistic and meaningful.</p> <p>This led to discussion about the most effective way for Trustees to monitor progress. It was noted that previously, Trustees were aligned to four discreet working groups. The Chair agreed that working groups should continue to monitor the KPIs so that the BoT can maintain an overview.</p> <p>KS suggested that in January 2021 it would be useful to re-align Board members back to four core groups. Trustees will then be able to review SDP areas, and develop measurable KPIs but there will need to be a degree of fluidity in both evidence gathering and setting of KPIs. This process will then be ratified by the BoT. KS added, this will help Trustees feel more attached to the school and smaller group meetings will be more appropriate to measure progress.</p> <p>The above approach was agreed and there were no further questions.</p> | | |
| Actions: | What? | Who? | By when? |
| (11) | Four core groups to be established with a specific focus for monitoring KPIs. | All/Clerk to liaise with school to circulate dates for initial discussion. | As soon as possible. |
| AGENDA ITEM 7 | FINANCE & AUDIT | | |
| Discussion: | <p>The Chair confirmed that a Finance and Audit Committee was held on 1.12.20, chaired by IM. The audited accounts (to August 2020) need to be submitted to the DfE. IM commented that the audit report was very positive, and the budget remains healthy. The audit report was very clean, and TP and the team should be congratulated for the high standards achieved.</p> <p>TP thanked the wider team, noting that LL has been a great addition to the finance department. TP also noted that the auditors are very complimentary of the school's financial management.</p> <p>The Chair added that the accounts need to be returned to the DfE signed by the Chair and Headteacher and asked if Trustees agreed to approve the annual accounts and audit report.</p> <p>The Vice Chair proposed that the accounts should be approved, and CR seconded the proposal which was subsequently resolved.</p> | | |
| Decision: | Resolved. That the audit report and annual accounts are approved, signed, and submitted to DfE. | | |

| AGENDA ITEM 8 | MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS | | |
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| <p>Discussion:</p> | <p>TP presented the item and noted all relevant reports had been circulated. With regards to costs incurred as a result of Covid-19, the school estimates circa. £40-50k of unplanned expenditure (yearend impact and not offset by other income). This is in large part due to additional cleaning requirements and the purchase of PPE.</p> <p>There has been additional 6th form funding linked to Maths programmes of £21k. The in year overspend is estimated at £159k – this is being monitored weekly and monthly reports will be provided. TP noted that the 3 Year Budget report will be discussed at the next Finance and Audit Committee.</p> <p>Question: DH asked can PPE equipment costs be reimbursed? Answer: TP answered that a Covid-19 grant claim was submitted at the end of the summer term for circa. £53k. However, the school received only £4.5k and have been informed via the DfE that they are not entitled to any further reimbursements.</p> <p>DH noted that a second funding round is due, and TP suggested this is likely to be in support of staffing costs, but the school will submit a bid, nonetheless.</p> <p>The Chair added that two new funding rounds are expected, one for staffing, the second being in relation to re-opening for any costs that were not claimed for originally.</p> <p>Thanks were expressed to TP and there were no further questions.</p> | | |
| AGENDA ITEM 9 | POLICIES FOR REVIEW/ADOPTION | | |
| <p>Discussion:</p> | <p>TP screen shared a list of statutory policies. It was noted that link trustees have reviewed their respective areas and some policies remain in progress and will go to Trustees for adoption at the January Board. TP agreed to circulate the latest spreadsheet.</p> <p>The Vice Chair noted that five documents require approval, but TP confirmed that the CCTV Policy remains valid until 2021. The Vice Chair subsequently proposed that the BoT adopt the i) Accessibility ii) Charging and Remissions iii) Exams and iv) NQT Policies. All agreed and this was unanimously resolved.</p> | | |
| Actions: | What? | Who? | By when? |
| (12) | TP to circulate the latest policy schedule. | TP/Clerk to ensure Policies on the agenda for Jan 2021 BoT. | As soon as possible. |
| Decision: | Resolved. The Board resolved to adopt the above policies. | | |

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| AGENDA ITEM 10 | SCHOOL HOLIDAY DATES |
| Discussion: | Trustees noted the CWAC dates which are adopted by Neston High School. However, KS suggested in the current circumstances it is not possible to agree the inset days for 2021. |
| AGENDA ITEM 11 | ANY OTHER BUSINESS |
| | There were no items of additional business. |
| AGENDA ITEM 12 | DATES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS |
| | Dates for future meetings are available via Teams (click here for link). The next meeting of the BoT is scheduled for 14.1.21 at 6.00 pm via Teams. |

There being no further items for discussion the Part 1 meeting closed at 19:10 pm.