

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING NESTON HIGH SCHOOL		
Date:	Thursday 25th March 2021, 18.00 – 19.30pm	
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) Paul Reilly (PR) 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 Staff Trustee Parent Trustee
Apologies:	None	
Absent:	None	
In attendance:	John Pilcher Kirsty Cunningham (KCH) Joe Vosseveld (JV) Karen McCarthy (KMC)	Clerk Deputy Head Teacher Deputy Head Teacher Deputy Head Teacher

AGENDA ITEM 1	WELCOME & APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
Discussion:	Governors were welcomed to the meeting and the Chair noted the Members meeting will take place directly following the Board of Trustees.
AGENDA ITEM 2	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
Discussion:	There were no new declarations of interest to note.
AGENDA ITEM 3	MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING
Discussion:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To confirm the accuracy of the Part 1 minutes from the meeting of 25.2.21.
Decision:	Resolved. Trustees agreed to approve the previous minutes as a true and accurate record.

AGENDA ITEM 4	MATTERS ARISING		
Discussion:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Action Log <p>(5) KS to meet with Trustees to discuss 6th Form & Capital. Open.</p> <p>KS noted this is ongoing and elements will be discussed under Part 2. Meetings will be held with Trustees going forward.</p> <p>(9) Advertise for a Parent Trustee. Open.</p> <p>The Chair commented in relation to Trustee recruitment, noting that a document was sent to trustees which includes a 'broad-brush plan' for the next six months. After Easter, KPIs and vision work streams will begin again with Trustees.</p> <p>The Chair proposed that after easter, the Board should appoint a Staff Trustee and begin the process to appoint Parent Trustees. Two Community Trustees' terms of office will also expire in 2021. Following brief discussion, it was agreed that the Clerk will write to the current Community Trustees and ask them to submit a 100-word statement to the Board if they are seeking re-election.</p> <p>In relation to Parent Trustees, KS added that there will be a new cohort in September. KR noted, as lockdown eases, parents might feel they can contribute more. There may also be an opportunity to attract parents that served as Governors in Primary Schools. IM agreed, noting that new parent applications would be good for the school. The Chair clarified, if a parent election process took place in September, appointments would come into effect in November 2021.</p> <p>Question: IM asked, could we approach new parents before September? Answer: KS agreed this could be possible, the school has the vast majority of Year 6 families' details, they could be approached midterm, with a view to appointing from September 2021.</p> <p>Trustees agreed with the above approach.</p>		
Actions:	What?	Who?	By when?
(10)	TP to initiate Parent Trustee election process.	TP.	Information to be issued before half term.
(11)	Clerk to write to existing Community Trustees.	Clerk.	As soon as possible.

AGENDA ITEM 5	COMMITTEE REPORTS		
Discussion:	<p>The Chair noted that a Finance and Audit team met on 9.3.21 and draft terms of reference will be circulated soon. There is a requirement for all Trusts to have an element of audit overview, but this can be as part of a Finance and Audit Committee.</p> <p>The Chair reported that benchmarking was discussed, as well as VMFI and SRMA and planning and prioritisation around audit and risk. It was largely an information gathering session but some of the discussion points will be picked up under Part 2.</p> <p>Going forward, any recommendations and committee minutes will come back to the BoT for approval. The Clerk was asked to share draft Terms of Reference as soon as possible.</p>		
Actions:	What?	Who?	By when?
(12)	Clerk to circulate draft Finance and Audit Committee terms of reference to BoT members.	Clerk.	As soon as possible.
AGENDA ITEM 6	FINANCE REPORTS		
Discussion:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Monthly Management Accounts <p>TP noted the management report to end of February/Period 6 had been uploaded to Teams. Trustees noted that Covid (C-19) catch up funding of £120k has been received from central government. A spending report will be published on the school website.</p> <p>C-19 exceptional expenditure includes cleaning supplies and sanitisers, IT costs (and the loss of catering income) equates to £58k. TP noted that since re-opening catering sales are increasing.</p> <p>Trustees were also advised that on the first day back one positive C-19 case was identified via a lateral flow test.</p> <p>TP continued to note that some savings are expected in relation to exam costs. In addition, some savings will be achieved in relation to utility costs (estimated at £35k). However, this could be offset by heating costs, arising as a result of the need to keep rooms well ventilated.</p> <p>The previously reported deficit figure was £153k which also reflects low Year 13 numbers. However, the in-year deficit position is currently reported at £128k, significantly lower than expected.</p> <p>Overall, the school continues to be in a reasonably healthy financial position, but any updates will be shared with Trustees.</p> <p>The Chair thanked TP for the report noting the school's cautious approach to budget setting is proving to be effective.</p>		

AGENDA ITEM 7	HEAD TEACHER'S VERBAL REPORT
Discussion:	<p>KS noted an interim report had been circulated to Trustees covering the previous twelve months. There was an emphasis on how the team had worked together, with students and within the wider community. This has been the school's emphasis and KS suggested the school has felt the positive support from the BoT as well. Parental feedback received to date is also testament to the school's approach.</p> <p>KR noted the report was particularly insightful and thanked KS and the wider team for their efforts. It was also noted that the level of forward thinking and strategic planning that has taken place under such circumstances is exemplary. The Chair agreed.</p> <p>Question: DH asked, in relation to the few negative parental comments, what response has there been?</p> <p>Answer: KS explained that the Board does take all comments seriously and endeavours to make a fair return to all parents. At times, the school has taken legal advice, particularly in relation to intensely complex requests surrounding C-19. Ultimately, the response continues to be that the school are following national guidance and have the children's safety and best interests in mind at all times. However, due to concerns over the 'mask issue' one family has chosen to home school their children, which remains the right of all parents.</p> <p>KS added that the school are proud of the work in relation to the testing centre, having completed nearly 5000 tests to date. The school have also emphasised support for students to home test. Trustees also noted that SLT members visited a test centre in Ellesmere Port. The running of the Neston High School test centre has been extremely successful and there has been a lot of professionalism and confidence within the team.</p> <p>KC added from a parent's perspective, she has been impressed with the school's efforts.</p> <p>Question: The Chair asked, how many positive tests have there been so far?</p> <p>Answer: KS confirmed there was only one positive test. TP noted that this is in line with national levels.</p> <p>KS continued to note attendance has been very strong. Some year groups now have better attendance than pre-covid figures. The staff are very pleased to see students back in school and parents are also extremely appreciative. Due process has always been followed, in terms of managing movement around the site and maintaining bubbles, in accordance with the risk assessments.</p> <p>Trustees were also advised that a small number of children are demonstrating post C-19 emotional stress and the school are working with these families accordingly.</p> <p>Question: CR asked, are any parents keeping children at home due to health and safety concerns?</p> <p>Answer: KS explained this is not really the case. There has been some anxiety from a small cohort in relation to returning to school, but no one is absent due to health and safety concerns.</p>

	<p>KS added that in terms of safeguarding, the LA are offering psychological support for extreme cases.</p> <p>In relation to staff absence a small number of staff are shielding but are preparing to return to school. One staff member has also recently tested C-19 positive. The school continue to support colleagues where 'long covid' has been an issue.</p> <p>KS confirmed that, with regards to parental feedback, positive comments were also circulated to Trustees, alongside some more negative comments. CR commented, in relation to parental concerns, they are not really reflecting criticism of the school and the school's systems and processes. Rather, it is the school's duty to implement government advice, which the school is clearly doing. The positive comments far outweigh these and are reflective of the school's efforts.</p>
AGENDA ITEM 8	POLICIES
Discussion:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Attendance Policy ▪ Behaviour and Discipline Policy <p>Trustees agreed the above two policies were very comprehensive. KS thanked KMC who had led on the development of the policies.</p>
Decision:	Resolved. To adopt the i) Attendance and ii) Behaviour and Discipline Policies.
AGENDA ITEM 9	ANY OTHER BUSINESS
Discussion:	There were no items of additional business under Part 1.
AGENDA ITEM 10	DATES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS
Discussion:	<p>May 2021</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ BoT 13.5.21 at 6.00 pm (with a key focus on feedback from KPI meetings) <p>June 2021</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ BoT 17.6.21 at 6.00 pm <p>July 2021</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Week commencing 12.7.21: vision launch events, details to be confirmed with a provisional meeting date of 14.7.21 which could be an awards event, to note the work of the school during the previous year.
AGENDA ITEM 11	PART 2 CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS
Discussion:	Trustees are referred to the Part 2 confidential business agenda.