

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING NESTON HIGH SCHOOL		
Date:	Thursday 13th May 2021, 17.15 – 19.15pm	
Venue:	Remote Meeting (Microsoft Teams)	
Present:	Kevin Mothersdale (KM) 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) Kath Roberts (KR)	Community Trustee and Chair of Trustees Headteacher Community Trustee Community Trustee Community Trustee Community Trustee Community Trustee Community Trustee Staff Trustee Parent Trustee Community Trustee and Vice Chair of Trustees (from Item 6)
Apologies:	None	
Absent:	None	
In attendance:	John Pilcher Kirsty Cunningham (KCH) Joe Vosseveld (JV) Karen McCarthy (KMC) Tina Phillips (TP)	Clerk Deputy Head Teacher (from Item 7) Deputy Head Teacher Deputy Head Teacher School Business Manager

AGENDA ITEM 1	WELCOME & APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
Discussion:	<p>Governors were welcomed to the meeting and noted there were various circulations sent in advance. Trustees were also encouraged to use the notification functions or chat in order to ask questions during the meeting.</p> <p>Apologies were received from KR who attended the meeting from Item 6/6.00pm.</p> <p>Apologies were received from KC who attended the meeting from Item 7/6.08pm.</p>

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:	Correction: TP confirmed she was present at the previous meeting [Clerks note: now amended].
Decision:	Resolved. Trustees agreed to approve the previous minutes from 25.3.21 as a true and accurate record with the above addition.

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>(9) Advertise for a Parent Trustee. Open.</p> <p>(10) TP to initiate Parent Trustee election process. [Clerks note: same as above action]</p> <p>(11) Clerk to write to existing Community Trustees. Closed.</p> <p>(12) Clerk to circulate draft Finance and Audit Committee ToR. Closed.</p>
Decision:	Resolved. Trustees agreed to carry forward actions 5 and 10.

AGENDA ITEM 5	GOVERNING BODY		
Discussion:	The Chair noted that there are several processes underway i) Parent Trustee elections (later in the term) ii) Community Trustee elections (extra vacancies to be advertised later in the term) iii) Current Trustees with terms expiring – both IM and PR have provided statements to be shared with Trustees as soon as possible. iv) Staff Trustee to be recruited this term.		
Actions:	What?	Who?	By when?
(13)	Clerk to circulate Community Trustee statements.	Clerk.	Prior to next BoT.

AGENDA ITEM 6	FEEDBACK FROM SLT/TRUSTEE MEETINGS
Discussion:	<p>The Chair noted that Trustees had met and emphasised that these discussions will feed into the new vision statements. SLT members were then invited to provide verbal updates in relation to recent meetings.</p> <p>KMC met with KEJ and KR last week and plans are in place to develop student leadership structures within school. KEJ agreed the meeting was very worthwhile and noted two posts have been appointed to (internally) in relation to professional development posts to lead on key areas within the life of the school. This work will also support the vision and values to be launched in September.</p>

KS added that the areas around support for pupils including Safeguarding are putting extreme strain on the staff team. The practical issues are extensive, but KS noted the emotional and mental health of staff is also being affected by this. Trustees reflected that the consequences of Covid-19 are extensive and far reaching across the entire school community.

Question: Trustee: are the structures now in place sufficient for the current demand?

Answer: KS suggested, the response also needs to include financial investment and time investment for pupils and also the need to connect with families. However, KS emphasised the costs are not simply financial, there is a need to recognise the emotional capacity needed within the staff community as well as physical capacity. Trustees also noted the pressure upon local services provision, in the context of Social Care and that wider partnerships are also under immense strain.

CR noted the depth of work that the school undertake is consistently high and information provided is always in depth and comprehensive. CR added that if there was any way for the Board to show its support for the work of the school, particularly in relation to building capacity, this would be forthcoming.

KS recognised the continuing support of Trustees and reflected that the pressures faced by schools, in the context of Covid-19 are, of course, national. However, any messaging and positive communication from the Board to staff colleagues will be welcomed.

Question: Trustee: is the source of pressure mainly related to managing pupils or is it external pressures upon staff, or both?

Answer: KS advised that the problems coming into school with pupils are severe and these largely include SEND.

It was suggested that in reality, from a Trustee point of view, more support needs to be resourced. KS confirmed that internally, these conversations are happening but there are financial realities surrounding the budget that also need to be managed.

The Chair agreed, noting that the Boards priority is the welfare of staff and pupils adding that the Board will be keen to look in detail at proposals to support the school in building capacity.

Question: Trustee: in relation to the summer holidays, clearly students will not have the same level of support from the school, does this pose an additional risk and can any emergency funding be accessed?

Answer: KMC noted that students in transition years are a key priority due to the risks associated with this. The school will build in time to connect with priority children in order to provide additional support, prior to re-integrating back into school following the summer holidays. The school are trying to think creatively in relation to 'post Summer' but there are going to be some real pressure points for certain cohorts.

KS added that if those students are known to services, they will continue to receive support during the summer holidays. Staff are currently only looking at the last week of the summer as a holiday – due to Summer School commitments and TAG processes.

	<p>The Chair invited TP to feed back.</p> <p>TP met in person with DH and IM, and they had a tour with TP and the site manager. The SIP priorities were reviewed in relation to admissions and further analysis will be undertaken. The school has received a grant to run a Summer School for Year 6 going into Year 7. TP is also looking at branding and marketing to support the launch of the vision and strategy. Good partnership work has taken place with the Police services and this could lead to student and family workshops. The 3G pitch opened on 19.4.21 and this has been incredibly positive for the school. The website will also be relaunched to support mobile devices.</p> <p>The Chair invited JV to feed back.</p> <p>JV noted that she met with KM and CR and the meeting focussed on the TAG process and 6th Form. Trustees were updated in relation to UCAS applications and Year 12 mental health issues were also discussed. JV confirmed that virtual work experience is being organised and taster sessions for Year 11's have also been provided with a view to support admissions for Year 12. 184 Year 11's have put in applications but not all are first choice, circa. 125 have put Neston High School as a first choice. For first choice students, the school is analysing what courses are preferred and are also analysing course choices for those that did not make Neston the first choice. Trustees noted that teaching staff are working extremely hard to support the TAG process which, as previously referenced, is adding to the pressure that staff are currently under.</p> <p>PA noted, in relation to meeting with KC, that discussion focussed on the early years framework and changes to the teacher induction programme. The school are also building a coaching culture within the school. A teaching and learning development group is taking place to share best practice, particularly between NQTs and experienced staff. PA noted there was also a discussion about teaching outside the classroom. Remote education was also discussed and the benefits of a virtual library. KC agreed the meeting was extremely useful and the work to develop remote learning is very exciting.</p> <p>[Clerks note: KR joined the meeting at 6.00pm].</p> <p>KS noted that virtual learning is an exciting area for the school to explore, learning outside the classroom is also developing across the school.</p> <p>There were no further questions.</p>
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AGENDA ITEM 7	HEAD TEACHERS REPORT
Discussion:	<p>KS presented the item and highlighted the significant work being undertaken by all staff to support a large cohort of students. Trustees noted that a report had been circulated in advance of the meeting. KS drew attention to the SWOT analysis and emphasised that the key strength of the school is the staff. The admission numbers and work being undertaken across the community are also key strengths and opportunities.</p> <p>[Clerks note: KCH attended from 6.08 pm].</p>

Due to time constraints, KS asked for questions from each page of the report.

KS highlighted P2 – positive C-19 cases. A significant number of colleagues have had long Covid, 2 staff were affected, one staff member is having to revisit hospital, and this is having a significant impact. KS advised the Board that this is an ongoing issue that will have wider implications.

Question: Trustee: were there any positive C-19 cases since re-opening?

Answer: KS noted that one Lateral Flow Test was positive, which led to a bubble closure. However, the full test proved negative, and all students were brought back into school.

Question: Trustee: Ref P4 , why has Parkgate increased admissions to Neston High School?

Answer: KS noted a lot of work was undertaken to target the CH64 postcode.

Trustees thanked the school for the results, specifically in relation to CH64.

KS noted that there are a number of admissions appeals going through the process.

In relation to attendance, KS confirmed this continues to be at around 95-96%.

Discussions moved onto safeguarding, KS noted that the 'Everyone's Invited' programme continues to be a priority and will appear on agenda's going forward. This work is being led by Stuart Nuttal who will be invited to present at the next meeting.

Next year's Year 7 cohort includes a lot of complex needs. Wirral LA provision for SEND is under extreme pressure and more SEND pupils are being allocated to Neston High School. DH noted that the situation is the same across CWAC.

KS added that some students are struggling to reintegrate into school in terms of behaviour. One permanent exclusion panel is underway, following an adjournment.

Question: Trustee: is poor behaviour spread across a large number or just a small cohort?

Answer: KS explained that it is a very small cohort of children.

The school continues to support Alternative Provision students, but Trustees do need to consider how the school can support the right Alternative Provision pathways.

KS reported that the vast majority of staff are in the building and are well and many have received their second C-19 vaccine. Information will go out to families in relation to the reduction of mask wearing next week.

KS added that communities and partnership work continues. The junction traffic lights work are also moving forward. The 3G pitch is a great success story and the school have had extremely positive feedback, with potential for professional clubs also showing interest.

KS then expressed sincere thanks to the wider staff team for the work they have done during another difficult term. There were no further questions.

AGENDA ITEM 8	TEACHER ASSESSED GRADES/TAG
<p>Discussion:</p>	<p>The Chair invited JV to present the item noting that a presentation was circulated to Trustees in advance of the meeting.</p> <p>JV noted TAG will replace examinations this year, but guidance continues to evolve. Year 11 students in Alternative Provision need an equal opportunity and the school are ensuring the same level of access. The school are thinking about assessments and evidence for GCSE and A-Level students with sufficient training and support for staff. It is important that everyone is clear about expectations and work is standardised according to national requirements. JV added that a lot of time is being committed to ensuring the process is both fair and robust.</p> <p>Assessments have been taking place in school and where appropriate, access arrangements have been put in place to support students and to ensure no child is disadvantaged.</p> <p>Trustees also noted that highly detailed evidence will be gathered to support the TAG process. Some Departments are approaching the grading phase. Going forward, the school is waiting to see if they are questioned about their TAG policies, however, the school are ready and can easily evidence the robust approach taken.</p> <p>JV added that the school will be looking at national trends to benchmark against results achieved from 2017 – 2020.</p> <p>One A-Level subject will be sampled and two GCSE subjects, one of which will be either English or Maths and the school will have 48 hours to submit evidence. JV emphasised that the process is taking a lot of time and the logistics involved with this are also extensive.</p> <p>Trustees noted that Governor training for TAG is also available and details of such were circulated via the Clerk.</p> <p>The Chair thanked JV and noted that the school’s approach is rigorous and fair. Trustees agreed, noting that the extensive level of work is also adding to the pressures that staff are under.</p> <p>Question: Trustee: will pupils come into school to pick up their results, which falls in the middle of the summer holidays this year? Answer: KS noted this is an issue, the school will have to be open fully for that day and staff will also need to be present. This simply adds to the demand upon the school.</p> <p>Question: Trustee: what is the general mood among pupils? Answer: JV noted that the process has certainly taken its toll on pupils. There are concerns in relation to fairness, there is a broad spectrum, but some are relieved, and some are worried. Exams do not suit all pupils, but they do work well for others. KS added that the right of passage for students has, historically, been exams. Some students are taking four assessments a day. The decision in relation to the last day of term has been taken in order to alleviate as much pressure as possible.</p>

AGENDA ITEM 9	FINANCE
Discussion:	<p>TP presented the item noting that papers were circulated in advance of the meeting. The in year deficit has reduced to £128k and is currently on track to reduce to £101k. A mass testing grant was also received. Significant savings have been made enabling the school to reduce the deficit in year by circa £50k.</p> <p>TP noted the three-year budget plan and forecasts are currently works in progress. Pay freeze will be in place for next year, then 3% for the next two years and a 1% income increase. However, TP will factor this into the budget forecast.</p> <p>Question: Trustee: in relation to the planned surplus, is this cautious? Answer: TP, yes this is a cautious estimate. Further savings could be made but specific areas are being explored.</p> <p>A Trustee suggested, the monies therefore saved, could have an impact upon previous discussions in relation to support for capacity.</p> <p>Question: Trustee: has the school factored in building compensation events? Answer: TP explained not yet, but there could be some funds available in this regard.</p> <p>Trustees agreed that the monies saved could be earmarked to support capacity building to alleviate current pressures.</p> <p>KS added that the C-19 recovery curriculum remains a priority. The Chair suggested that scenario planning could be discussed at the next Finance and Audit Committee (note: date to be agreed). Potentially this could be looked at further within the next two to three weeks. There is a need to balance immediate priorities against the plans for capacity building.</p>
AGENDA ITEM 10	POLICIES FOR APPROVAL
Discussion:	There were no policies for approval.
AGENDA ITEM 11	ANY OTHER BUSINESS
Discussion:	Trustees discussed the potential for an in person meeting if the 17.6.21 was moved.
AGENDA ITEM 12	DATES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS
Discussion:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ June 2021 – as above, to be confirmed. ▪ July 2021 - Week commencing 12.7.21: vision launch events, details to be confirmed with a provisional meeting date of 14.7.21 which could include an awards event, to note the work of the school during the previous year.