

# ST OLAVE'S AND ST SAVIOUR'S GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Minutes of the *Meeting of the Governing Body* held  
by Video Conference, on  
**Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2020** at 4.30pm

<b>Present</b>	The Ven. Dr P Wright ( <i>Chairman</i> )	Mr H McAleer ( <i>from item 10</i> )	
	Mr A Rees ( <i>Headteacher</i> )	Mrs B Nunn	
	Mr A Adeloje	Rev'd N Poole	
	Mr S Bandi	Ms S Rose	
	Ms C Benham	Dr D Ryall	
	Mr A Boyd	Mrs S Sharma	
	Mrs S Chaudhary	Ms M Sullivan	
	Cllr R Evans		
	<b>In attendance</b>	Mr D Budds ( <i>Deputy Headteacher</i> )	
		Ms R Maxwell ( <i>Assistant Headteacher</i> )	
	Mr R Walters ( <i>Clerk</i> )		

## ACTION

### 1. FOUNDATION PRAYER

The Foundation Prayer was read by The Ven. Dr P Wright.

### 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

The Clerk noted that governors had been asked to complete the annual declaration of interests form electronically. The Chair invited those present to declare any interests in the items on the agenda. Ms Benham and Ms Sullivan noted that they were teachers at the school and Mr Boyd that his children attended the local Scout Group. No other interests were declared.

### 3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Mrs A Fabian and Mr McAleer had indicated that he would be late. The Rev'd Rogers had only been appointed two days prior to the meeting and was unable to attend. The meeting was quorate.

## PART A

### 4. ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR

The Clerk took the Chair and noted that there had been one nomination received for Chair, the Ven. Dr P Wright, for the year to the first GB meeting in the academic year 2021/22. Dr Wright was elected unanimously.

Dr Wright took the Chair and noted that there had been one nomination received for Vice-Chair, Mrs B Nunn, for the year to the first GB meeting in the academic year 2021/22. Mrs Nunn was elected unanimously.

### 5. NEW GOVERNOR APPOINTMENTS

The Chair introduced Mrs Sharma and Mr Adeloje to the meeting, welcoming them to the Governing Body. He explained that since the papers had been circulated, the Rev'd George Rogers, the new incumbent of All Saints Church, Orpington, had been appointed by the RDBE, noting that it had been insufficient notice for him to join this meeting, but he would be joining to the November GB meeting.

## 6. RESIGNATION OF GOVERNOR

Whilst it had been noted at the previous meeting, the Chair confirmed that Mr Ganatra had resigned from the GB due to work commitments.

## 7. SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

- (i) Instrument of Governance: governors noted the Instrument of Governance and confirmed no changes were required.
- (ii) Governing Body Terms of Reference: governors noted the GB terms of reference and confirmed no changes were required.
- (iii) List of Current Governors: governors noted the list of current governors, recognising the addition of the Rev'd Rogers.
- (iv) Governor Attendance Record 2019/20: governors noted the governor attendance record.
- (v) Committee meeting dates 2020/21: governors noted the committee meeting dates for 2020/21.
- (vi) Committee membership and Chairs 2020/21: governors approved the appointment of the Chairs of the committees and noted the members. The Chair explained that he would be discussing appointment to committees with the new GB members.

***Decision: governors approved the Chairs of committees for 2020/21***

***Action: Chair to discuss with the new governors which committees they might join***

**PW**

- (vii) Link Governor Programme: the Deputy Headteacher noted that there had been some changes to reflect the requirements of Covid-19, recognising that visits would not be possible in the immediate future. He had asked Heads of Departments to contact governor leads to ensure engagement continued. Mr Bandi noted that he worked with Cllr Evans on Maths and Computing and Ms Rose confirmed that she had offered to take on the SEND role. The Chair said that he would discuss with the new governors how they might engage with the Link Governor Programme. The Deputy Headteacher noted his concern that Creative Arts Faculty had been without a link governor for a year and remained so.

**PW**

***Action: Chair to discuss with the new governors how they might engage with the Link Governor programme***

- (viii) Governor Training: Mrs Nunn noted that training was currently online and that new governors should seek out the introductory training as soon as possible. She highlighted the need for every governor to undertake at least 6 hours of training each year, as previously agreed. The Clerk confirmed that new governors had received the Induction Checklist (which included the training audit document) and that Octavo had been informed of their appointment. Once their school email addresses had been set up, they would receive further information from Octavo. Mrs Nunn confirmed that she would be available for any questions in relation to training.
- (ix) Code of Conduct: governors noted the code of conduct and that they normally signed it at this meeting. The Clerk said that it would be circulated after the meeting and all governors asked to confirm, electronically, that they agreed to be bound by it.

*Action: Clerk to circulate the Code of Conduct*

*Action: governors to confirm their agreement to the Code of Conduct, electronically*

## 8. COMMITTEE ANNUAL SELF-REVIEW

The Clerk confirmed that the GB and committees were encouraged to undertake a self-review process each year, to ensure they continued to work effectively. The Chair noted that this was undertaken during the training and review session held in early January which he planned to continue with in 2021. He confirmed that this was focussed on developing the GB with a focus on areas where the GB, as a whole, benefited from training and discussion and where the wider strategy could be reviewed. It also provided an opportunity to discuss how the GB itself could operate more effectively.

## 9. MINUTES (PART A) OF THE GOVERNING BODY MEETING OF 10<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2020

The minutes of the meeting on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> June 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

*Decision: Governors approved the minutes of the Governing Body meeting of 10<sup>th</sup> June 2020*

All actions had been completed. There were no further matters arising.

17.05: Mr McAleer joined the meeting.

## 10. HEADTEACHER'S REPORT

The Headteacher introduced his previously circulated report. He noted that the Year 7 and Year 12 entry numbers had held up and were at the intended levels. A governor asked how many Year 11 students had not come back into Year 12, and why. The Headteacher explained that one had left to study in the USA and one had not returned as their grades were insufficient. All others who had not achieved 63 points had returned.

The Deputy Headteacher explained that previously, the school had modelled on 70% of external students getting an offer to join the school in Year 12, would do so, but had reduced this to 66% for 2020. This had led to a total of 227 against a target of 225. A governor noted that there had been a reduction of four going from Year 12 to Year 13 and asked why. The Headteacher said that three had left the school and one had chosen to redo Year 12.

The Headteacher explained that the Year 7 entrance tests for 2021 had been delayed such that the first round scheduled for 18<sup>th</sup> September would now take place in November and the second round moved from November to January. This reflected the loss of learning time for students in Year 5 and the desire for the school to give them the best opportunity at the tests that they could. He said that he did not believe it would affect recruitment and LB Bromley were giving students more options due to the difficulties arising from the impact of Covid. A governor asked how the tests would be modified to allow for Covid requirements to be met. The Headteacher said that the first test would move from one day to two, to enable the school to provide the necessary physical distancing.

The Headteacher explained that following the return to school in June (for years 10 & 12) and September, attendance had been good, but was slowly declining as students were required to isolate. No student cases had been reported but isolation was required by some due to family members. 52 students were not in school on the day of the meeting, with attendance still around 95%. One member of staff was isolating and another whose husband had symptoms and had now tested positive. The school was identifying those staff which had come into close

contact with this person and would be sending them home and asking them to isolate. This would have an impact on them and cover. Those isolating without symptoms would still set work and communicate with their classes. On being asked, he explained that all staff maintained at least 2m distance from students in class, hence students did not have to isolate. Staff were also working in “bubbles” and therefore there should be limited impact on other staff.

A governor asked if students were complying with behavioural requirements and the wearing of masks when necessary. The Headteacher confirmed that they were. He noted that students were staying in the same rooms and staff were moving between rooms, rather than the other way around. This had a particular impact in science and the inability to work in labs as normal. He said that staff were finding the whole environment difficult and were working both with a recovery curriculum and undertaking assessments to establish where students were following the period away from school. Staff were unable to talk to students in a normal way and did not have the opportunity to talk to other staff. Teaching was more didactic, which went against teachers’ ways of working and increased workloads, making work-life balance increasingly difficult. A short afternoon break had been introduced which was proving useful. Ms Benham noted that the teaching style was a culture shock to staff although they were now adjusting to the new ways of working and Ms Sullivan agreed that staff were adjusting, but that IT could be difficult as it varied between rooms.

A governor asked if there was anything the GB could do to help. They asked that the thanks of the governors be passed onto staff to recognise all that they had done and achieved with the students. The Headteacher said he was mindful of not pushing too hard on aspects such as the School Development Plan as it currently felt like a new and different school. He noted that the summer holidays were intended to be a period of reflection and re-energising, however this year they had been consumed by changes in regulations and how to re-open.

***Action: Chair to send a message to staff from the governors thanking them for their contribution in these difficult times***

PW

A governor noted that with students being absent, much more communication was required, which was proving difficult for staff, especially those with heavy teaching loads. A governor asked what impact the situation was having on the community of the school and Ms Benham noted that it was proving difficult for staff, having lost their support networks due to the “bubbles” and distancing. A governor noted that as autumn comes, it will become even more difficult emotionally for staff and students and how staff were provided with social support was important. The Headteacher confirmed the staff “bubbles” and that they had mini-staff rooms although agreed that the distancing requirements made providing that social support very difficult.

In relation to results, the Headteacher noted that GCSE 9-7 grades had increased from 89% to 94% and for A level A\*-B results had increased from 92.5% to 96%. He reminded governors that the grades had originally been set by the exam boards but had then moved back to the centre assessed grades (CAGs). Results were in line with prior years and he noted that there were concerns by a few parents in relation to the CAGs, with some inevitably being disappointed. The Chair congratulated the staff for getting students to the latest position in what had been a complex academic year. He noted that they sustained the school’s reputation and that maintaining students’ learning had been difficult. A governor noted that they had received a number of queries and concerns from year 13 parents re CAG scores, which had been redirected to the school. The governor also noted that the SIP had mentioned in her report from her July visit to the school that ‘As the school has only recently moved out of a period of extreme parental concern over the previous 6<sup>th</sup> form admissions process all possible action should be taken to ensure that the unusual means of awarding grade and anxiety due to

the pandemic do not result in any parents taking matters out of the schools' hands again'. Governors agreed that this should be reviewed at the November meeting.

**Action: Clerk to include CAGs on the November GB agenda**

RW

A governor asked if there had been any formal complaints regarding the CAGs. The Headteacher confirmed there had been one with several concerns raised which had been addressed. The Deputy Headteacher confirmed that questions related to the data used for student assessments together with the methodology applied. In all cases, the data had proven robust with only those cases where a pastoral issue was not known by the school at the time of assessment, leading to genuine cases for appeal. 28 enquiries for 13 pupils had been received, 11 for Year 13 and 2 for Year 12. Six appeals had been made to the exam boards. Only one appeal had so far been successful, for a pastoral issue. A governor asked if there was much uptake for the November exams. The Deputy Headteacher said that 26 students were applying to take 45 exams, compared to 726 A levels in 2020 and in past years, around 12-15 students resitting around 28 papers. He confirmed that Heads of Departments had put in place additional teaching which was mainly in Maths, Physics and Chemistry. Not many students were attending as many were already at University. A governor asked if they were on the school roll and if not, how they were covered by insurance. The Headteacher said they were not on the school roll and were treated as visitors for insurance purposes.

The Headteacher noted that the Head of Finance role had been re-advertised and some interest had been expressed, but not as much as hoped. An agency had been approached and it was recognised that there was one week left before the advert closed.

Governors noted the change in staff.

A governor noted the School Improvement Partner report and explained that they felt that it was starting to get less useful in its feedback. The Headteacher noted that the SIP was a LB Bromley appointment and confirmed that he also felt it was time for a refresh and to get a new view on the school. He agreed to open a conversation with Bromley.

**Action: Headteacher to discuss the SIP with Bromley with a view to a new SIP being appointed**

AR

Governors thanked the Headteacher for his report.

## 11. SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Deputy Headteacher introduced the previously circulated summary School Development Plan. He noted that the only change from the version seen by governors in the summer was the inclusion of the subjects which would be focussed upon and which, recognising the loss of the exams in 2020, would revert back to those identified in the previous plan. A governor noted that there did not appear to be a reference to governors. The Deputy Headteacher explained that the third bullet under leadership and management included the governors and that governors were woven throughout the vision.

**Decision: governors approved the School Development Plan**

## 12. FINANCE ISSUES

Mr Boyd, Chair of the Finance Committee noted that Mrs Dines, Finance Manager, had circulated a summary of the latest financial position, with the Clerk providing some strategic overview. He noted that the overall position at the present time was good, however there were may ups and downs relating to the impact of Covid on the school expenditure. This could lead to significant changes by the year end. He reminded governors that the major item of future

expenditure related to the all-weather sports facility which had been previously approved. This would be picked up further under the Premises report.

A governor asked regarding progress in tendering the external audit. The Clerk noted that this was still planned, however it was believed that it would be most appropriate for the new Head of Finance to be involved, hence the process was waiting for that appointment. Should no appointment be made this time, the process would be implemented. Mr Boyd noted that the bigger concern was the LB Bromley internal audit, where there was significant concern regarding the quality of reporting and follow up.

A governor noted that they had been present at the presentation made by the Headteacher to new parents regarding the Voluntary Fund. They said that it had come across as a very balanced presentation and asked on progress. The Headteacher said that they would only know about the standing order position in October.

The Clerk noted that the in-year deficit, pre-Foundation funding, was around £125k with year end reserves across all sources, predicted at around £1.25m, prior to the all-weather sports facility commitment.

### 13. PREMISES ISSUES

The Rev'd Nigel Poole, as Chair of the Premises Committee, introduced the premises issues noting that the Phase I roof works were due to complete in the coming weekend, with snagging and defect periods to come. He noted that the works to various toilet facilities had been completed and were snagging over half-term. The fives courts were more difficult with the Headteacher having circulated an update by email. He noted that his view was that these must be sorted before any further major projects were undertaken and until final costs were known. He highlighted the need for the new contractors to complete their due diligence before committing to the work and a cost, which was currently being undertaken and was expected to complete in two weeks. Assuming all was satisfactory, he anticipated work commencing in November and completing in January, at which point, a decision could be taken on the all-weather sports facility. He anticipated that this would be retendered and then installed in the summer of 2021.

A governor noted that this would leave the school with significant reserves at the end of the financial year, which would require careful communication, as well as the risk that Brexit would have a significant impact on the cost of the all-weather facility. A governor asked whether the installation of the facility could be brought forward. The Headteacher noted that the space where it would be going was currently being used to provide "bubble" space for students during break times. A governor asked if sport and the use of the facility, were being compromised by Covid requirements. The Headteacher said that at present, there were no issues as outdoor sport could continue. A governor asked that the role of Barkers, as project managers, be evaluated and alternative options be reviewed.

***Decision: governors agreed to postpone the all-weather sports facility until after the fives courts were completed***

Ms Sullivan noted that planning permission had not yet been granted for Thursden Hall, with an acoustic engineer's report required, which would be submitted shortly. The Council was also looking at traffic flows.

The Rev'd Poole noted that due to lockdown, he had still been unable to undertake his H&S walk around the school, however, was hoping to arrange to do so soon. He confirmed that there were no other H&S issues that the Premises Manager wished to bring to governors' attention.

**14. NEW SCHOOL WEBSITE**

Mrs Nunn noted the new website and said that she felt it was looking fantastic. She gave her thanks to Clare Slyfield for implementing the project. She also noted that there was further work to ensure all documents had transferred across and all links worked. The Headteacher said that he had met with Mrs Slyfield earlier in the week and that work was underway on these issues with final sign off likely to be after half term. A governor asked if some of the photos could be updated. The Headteacher said that a photographer had been booked to address this issue.

A governor asked how the website would be managed and maintained into the future. The Headteacher said that Mrs Slyfield was the school lead and that the system was maintained by Clever Box. He noted that XMA, the new IT providers were not involved. He took the opportunity to note that the introduction of XMA had been challenging, particularly with the difficulty in XMA recruiting an on-site engineer although they believed they had appointed in the last week. Recognising that the lockdown period had generated additional difficulties for a provider alongside additional needs for the school, the contract had required considerable input from the SLT. He said that the account manager had recently spoken to staff to explain what was being done. Some server/infrastructure work had been completed alongside the renewal of hardware in IT2 and 3, which had made a significant difference. The school WiFi system had been identified as requiring upgrading which would come at a significant cost. Overall, he was not confident in their provision and that this needed to be built with him and staff over the short term.

**15. STRATEGY INITIATIVE**

Mr McAleer referred to the document he had previously circulated. He noted that it had been updated for the agreed, 3-pronged strategic approach and that the next stage was for the working group to finalise the content. He asked how it would be best to communicate the final version. A governor recommended after Christmas to allow the current changes to the way the school operated, to bed in and settle. The Chair asked governors to review the material circulated and feed comments to Mr McAleer, with a view to the working group meeting in the next 4-6 weeks, prior to the next GB meeting.

*Action: governors to feed comments to Mr McAleer to enable the working group to finalise the strategy prior to the next GB meeting*

**Governors**

*Decision: communication of the new strategy to commence in January*

**16. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was noted that the date of the next meeting of the Governing Body would be on **Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> November 2020 at 16.30.**

**17. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no further business.

**PART B (CONFIDENTIAL – SEE CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES)**

The meeting closed at 18.45.

**Signed .....**      **Date .....**