

ST OLAVE'S AND ST SAVIOUR'S GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Minutes of the *Meeting of the Governing Body* held
by Video Conference, on
Wednesday 3rd March 2021 at 4.30pm

Present	The Ven. Dr P Wright (<i>Chairman</i>)	Mrs A Fabian
	Mr A Rees (<i>Headteacher</i>)	Mrs B Nunn
	Mr A Adeloje	Rev'd N Poole
	Mr S Bandi	Rev'd G Rogers
	Ms C Benham	Ms S Rose (<i>from item 6 iii</i>)
	Mr A Boyd	Dr D Ryall
	Mrs S Chaudhary	Mrs S Sharma
	Cllr R Evans	Ms M Sullivan

In attendance Mr D Budds (*Deputy Headteacher*)
Miss L Crawford (*Head of Finance – to item 6*)
Mrs C Dines (*Finance Manager – to item 6*)
Ms R Maxwell (*Assistant Headteacher*)
Mr R Walters (*Clerk*)

ACTION

1. FOUNDATION PRAYER

Prior to reading the prayer, the Chair announced that the Rev'd Hugh Broadbent had passed away since the last meeting. He noted that he had been Chaplain at the school and then a governor. A moment's silence was held in his memory. The Foundation Prayer was read by The Ven. Dr P Wright.

2. REAPPOINTMENT OF GOVERNORS

- i) Reappointment of Mrs Sarika Chaudhary for a four year term to March 2025: governors confirmed the reappointment of Mrs Chaudhary as a co-opted governor, following email approval.
- ii) Appointment of Mr Adrian Boyd by the Lord Bishop of Rochester: the Chair noted that Mr Boyd, previously a co-opted governor, had moved to being appointed by the Lord Bishop of Rochester. His term of appointment would remain the same, to September 2022.

The Chair also welcomed Miss Lucy Crawford, Head of Finance, to her first meeting.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

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. No other interests were declared.

4. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received and accepted from Mr McAleer. The meeting was quorate. Ms Rose had indicated that she would be late and join the meeting at 17.00. Mr Birtchnell (Head of Sixth Form) had presented his apologies.

PART A

5. MINUTES (PART A) OF THE GOVERNING BODY MEETING OF 4TH NOVEMBER

2020

The minutes of the meeting on Wednesday 4th November 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

Decision: Governors approved the minutes of the Governing Body meeting of 4th November 2020

All actions had been completed. Cllr Evans noted that he had undertaken two telephone link governor visits with Ms Lawrence, the Head of Maths and would write these up. The Deputy Headteacher said that he believed most Heads of Department had been in touch with their link governors. There were no further matters arising.

6. FINANCE ISSUES

- i) Summary Financial Position: the Head of Finance introduced the previously circulated papers. She noted that the anticipated overspend for the year was £40k without any transfer from the Foundation, against an initial budget of a £170k deficit. The £130k favourable variance related to the school being closed. A governor asked why the bought in professional services line was £10k over budget. The Finance Manager said that she would circulate details after the meeting.

Action: Finance Manager to circulate details of the £10k overspend in the bought in professional services line

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A governor said that at the Finance Committee, it had been agreed to bring the Bromley Y funding into the public funds rather than the voluntary fund, demonstrating that it was considered a core activity. The Head of Finance confirmed that this would take place for the next financial year.

The Head of Finance noted that the five courts under construction would be completed by the end of March, however the second half had now been demolished and awaited a visit by the loss adjustor to confirm whether or not insurance would pay for its reconstruction. The Chair of the Premises Committee said that it was likely that this process would take some time.

Phase II of the roof repairs would be starting in the new financial year and the all-weather sports facility was expected to be installed and open for September 2021, however the Scout Hut was now on hold. She said that she and the Premises Manager were working on a five year plan for the premises and technology maintenance.

She confirmed that the Priority 1 internal audit report items had now been closed.

- ii) IT WiFi and Wiring proposal: the Chair noted that governors had approved the project to upgrade the WiFi over the Easter holidays, by email. Governors confirmed their approval.

Decision: governors confirmed their approval of the project proposal to upgrade the WiFi and IT wiring across the school

17.00: Ms Rose joined the meeting.

- iii) School Financial Value Standards (SFVS): the Head of Finance referred to the previously circulated report. The Chair of the Finance Committee said that he had been through the report in detail and recommended approval. Recognising the previous concerns over tendering of contracts, a governor noted their concern that the WiFi contract had not been tendered. The Head of Finance said that she had been in

regular contact with the internal audit department and they had agreed that circumstances were such that staying with the current suppliers would be an appropriate approach and had supported it. A full waiver form and explanation was being produced for the Chair and Headteacher to sign. A governor noted the relationship with XMA had been difficult in the past and asked that a close watch be undertaken on the project as it progressed.

Action: Head of Finance to provide regular monitoring of the WiFi project as it is implemented

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Miss Crawford and Mrs Dines left the meeting.

7. HEADTEACHER'S REPORT

The Headteacher introduced his previously circulated report, noting that the return to school and overall planning changed on a regular basis as guidance changed. He said that the plans for St Olave's had been discussed with Union reps, SLT and staff and he believed the school was in a strong position for the return and in line with union and government guidance. They had also discussed their process with other similar schools and were in line with the general approach. The process developed had been designed with the safety and well being of staff and students as a priority.

He said mass testing would commence on Monday with the first students back, being Years 11 & 13. Each student would receive two further tests, 3-5 days apart, which would impact on assessments and lessons, however the testing days were being built into the programme. Staff testing was already underway with home tests. As students returned, the staggered start times, zoning and bubbles would remain in place. In class, staff could choose whether or not to wear a mask as they could remain 2m apart from students. A governor noted that there they had received a number of comments about the wearing of masks and the potential impact on mental well being and during assessments under exam conditions. They flagged up the possibility of objections. The Headteacher said individual cases would be addressed as they arose and that government guidance noted that students should be wearing masks, including during assessments. Mrs Maxwell noted that students were not far enough apart during assessments to avoid the need for masks. Governors noted the need to monitor the situation.

A governor noted that communication with parents had been good. They noted that mock exams were being run and asked about any further exams. Another governor asked how students isolating or shielding would take the exams. Mrs Maxwell explained that no students were isolating or shielding at the moment, but online learning and exams would be made available if necessary. The Headteacher added that blended learning, when some students were present and others online, had been working and would be used where necessary.

The Headteacher said that the consultation on summer exams had completed and results published recently. He said there had been many responses to the consultation, the majority from parents and students. Guidance from the JCQ and Headteachers' associations was anticipated and would be followed. A sub-group of the Curriculum Committee would be overseeing the process and the assessment process was currently being reviewed by Heads of Departments and the SLT. Further information was anticipated over the Easter break. A governor noted that the changing environment made it difficult to maintain student well being leading up to final exams. They said there was a perception that St Olave's was particularly strict in marking assessments. The Headteacher asked that the sub-group discuss this matter but he felt that those students who had undertaken mocks at other schools in December might have had a different mindset in relation to those tests as they expected to take full exams in the summer. Ms Sullivan noted that students at St Olave's welcomed exams and wanted to do well.

The Chair of the Curriculum Committee said the working group would meet and include well-being of students in relation to exams, in their discussions.

A governor asked what the position was regarding students progressing to the sixth form. The Headteacher said that all were looked at on an individual basis and where a student was below 63 points, their A level subject choices were looked at, influencing a decision around whether it was considered that the student would flourish at the school.

The Headteacher asked if those present would mind if he recorded the next session for his NPQH qualification. All agreed to be recorded. The Headteacher explained that he was undertaking a school based assignment based around research of the Education Endowment Foundation and focussing on support for students in the school and what the school could do to help them catch up. A governor asked how the quality of teaching had been during lockdown and how it compared to his expectations. He said that he had seen an improvement in the quality of teaching in this lockdown, as seen across the profession, as teaching staff had got to grips with the technology however, had not been surprised at St Olave's due to the quality of teachers.

A governor asked what lessons had been learnt from this lockdown that could be carried into future teaching. The Headteacher noted that online classes could be continued in some cases, for example Year 13 on a Wednesday afternoon not playing sport, could go home and login to speak to teachers rather than being required to stay on at school. Parents' evenings and other evening activities could be a mixture of online and face to face, giving greater opportunities for more people to engage. A governor asked about the challenges of working with teaching staff with different IT abilities. He said that the school had undertaken a tiered training programme, with some staff being moved to a good basic level of IT proficiency so as to ensure that students could fully engage with and enjoy their lessons, with others working together to find new and innovative ways of working, which could then be shared with the less proficient staff.

A governor asked how practical subjects, such as the sciences, were being taught. The Headteacher explained that teachers were using webcams to demonstrate practicals, noting down the results so that students could write up the experiments. These write ups were then marked for assessments. A governor noted that students would have had very different experiences of lockdown and asked how the school would bring those students who had dropped behind, back up to the expected level. The Headteacher said the critical issue was to assess the current position of each student. The Covid catch up funding was being used to help with this and would then be applied where gaps were identified. He said the approach was being used across all year groups, not just the exam groups.

A governor noted how the academic side appeared to be well covered but asked how the school would be monitoring and improving health, fitness and obesity. The Headteacher said that St Olave's was lucky in having students who generally wanted to be involved in sport and other activities, so the PE department was looking at ways to bring students back up to a normal level of fitness through PE lessons, as soon as they were back in school. Online fitness had been encouraged, but he was well aware that many students would have spent most of their time in front of screens, doing little other activity.

A governor noted how the teachers were doing a good job and asked how the challenges of supervising and quality controlling lessons online had been addressed. He said that this had been discussed at the Curriculum Committee, noting that normal drop into lessons had not been possible although some drop into online lessons had taken place. Year groups had been regularly surveyed and had given positive feedback on the quality of remote learning and limited feedback from parents had been positive. If issues were identified, Heads of Department addressed them.

A governor noted the loss of the school community and co-curricular activities, particularly for new students in Years 7 & 12. The Headteacher agreed and said that the rebuilding of the community and growing of the students would have to begin as soon as they returned to school. He said that the new senior prefect team elections had been brought forward so that they could start as soon as the school returned, with a major drive to bring the clubs and societies back to life.

The Headteacher stopped recording the meeting. Governors thanked the Headteacher for his report, giving particular thanks to the SLT and staff as a whole, for the considerable additional work they have continued to do over this second lockdown.

17.50: a five minute break was taken.

8. SAFEGUARDING

See confidential section.

9. ANALYSIS OF AUTUMN 2020 EXAM RESULTS

The Deputy Headteacher introduced the previously circulated paper. He reminded governors that these exams had been an exceptional arrangement which allowed for students to seek to improve the grades they had been awarded in the summer. He noted that there had been only 45 entries for A levels; this figure included those “Year 14” students who had wished to take A level re-sits in the summer of 2020, and who the school had not been able to accommodate in the main Year 13 CAG process for summer 2020 (owing to a lack of like-for-like data for ranking purposes).

He said that for the Autumn 2020 exam series the exam boards had less evidence on which to determine grade boundaries (owing to the relatively small size and atypical composition of the autumn exam series cohorts compared with the typical summer exam series cohorts); for this reason, grade allocations in the Autumn 2020 exam series relied purely on examiner judgement and were not informed by statistical evidence, quotas or grade distributions (as is usually the case for small entry awards).

The results for both A level and GCSE in the Autumn 2020 series at St Olave’s were encouraging, as in many cases they enabled students to improve their grades, and the school was broadly in line with the national picture in terms of the percentages of students improving their grades, remaining at the same grade, or receiving a lower grade.

10. POLICIES

- i) Staff Grievance Policy: the Chair of the HR Committee noted that that committee had considered this policy. A governor noted that it was a high level policy, compared to the detail in the staff discipline policy. It was recognised that the staff discipline policy needed to be very detailed and followed the NGA template, however the Chair of the HR Committee asked that this policy be approved and then the committee could have a further look to consider whether the level of detail should be increased.

Decision: governors approved the Staff Grievance Policy

Action: HR Committee to consider whether it would be useful for the Staff Grievance Policy to have an increased level of detail regarding the process

BN

- ii) Staff Discipline Policy: noting the comments relating to the Staff Grievance Policy, governors approved the Staff Discipline Policy.

Decision: governors approved the Staff Discipline Policy

- iii) Child Protection Policy: governors noted the change to the new Deputy DSL and approved the Child Protection Policy.

Decision: governors approved the Child Protection Policy**11. PREMISES ISSUES**

The Chair of the Premises Committee noted that all elements had been addressed during the finance presentation. He commended the Head of Finance and the Premises Manager for establishing the fine year maintenance plan which would develop over time. A governor asked if that could be used to help with fundraising, particularly with parents through the Voluntary Fund. The Headteacher said that a conversation with the PA had already started, however it was likely to focus more on projects than the day to day maintenance.

12. STRATEGY INITIATIVE UPDATE

The Chair referred governors to the short paper he had circulated and noted that the strategy meeting had not taken place, but that he hoped it would do so after Easter. A governor noted a reference to a possible increase in the number of GB meetings, which they would support, recognising that some could be done face to face and some virtual, in the future. A governor highlighted how busy the Headteacher and SLT had been in recent months and asked governors to reflect on increasing the number of meetings. The Headteacher accepted the richness of the conversation between the committee chairs which had led to the paper which had been circulated and recognised that wider discussions required more time, with a less set agenda. A governor noted that it was for the SLT and staff to drive the school and the discussions held by the GB, with the GB discussing, challenging and ratifying their proposals. The Chair asked the Committees to think about their ideas on how to develop the workings of the GB, what could be done by email and how they linked into the work on the strategy that had already been undertaken.

A governor noted that some other large secondary schools had shifted away from committees and held more GB meetings, recognising that governors should be aware of all aspects of the school. A governor noted the difficulty of making the best use of the time available and asked that more, where possible, be done by email. The Chair agreed, asking that replies be made in a timely fashion, when emails were circulated.

13. LINK GOVERNOR REPORTS

Governors noted the link governor visit reports. Mrs Fabian noted the issue of WiFi which was a regular item of concern and was pleased to see that it was being addressed.

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the date of the next meeting of the Governing Body would be on **Wednesday 9th June 2021 at 16.30.**

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no further business.

PART B (CONFIDENTIAL – SEE CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES)**PART C: For information**

