

The Swanage School
MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY & ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE
Held on Wednesday 3rd March 2021, 5.30pm

Present (via remote access): Paul Angel (Chair), Jenny Maraspin (Headteacher), Amanda Rowley (from item 3.5.1), Carl Styants (from item 3.5.2)

In attendance (via remote access): Sue Fletcher (Clerk), Adam Hines (Governor Observer), Catherine Starmer-Howes (Governor Observer), Andrew Thomas (Business Manager)

Item		Action	Lead	By
	The meeting was held via remote access in accordance with guidelines relating to the Covid-19 pandemic. The meeting was not quorate until Amanda Rowley joined during item CE 3.5.			
CE 3.1	Apologies for Absence Apologies were received from Kay Lawton (Deputy Headteacher).			
CE 3.2	Declarations of Interest There were no declarations of interest or conflict with any agenda item.			
CE 3.3	Minutes of the Last Meeting The minutes of the meeting held on 18 th November 2020 were confirmed as an accurate record when the meeting was quorate. The minutes will be signed at a later date.			
CE 3.4	Matters Arising There were no matters arising or actions to report on.			
CE 3.5	Reports I. <u>Admissions</u> - <u>Students on roll: 326</u>			

- Update on numbers for entry 2021: a report had been circulated prior to the meeting showing the number of offers made on 1st March 2021 for entry in September 2021, broken down by the primary school the pupils are currently attending. JM reported that whilst it had been known that the number would be lower than usual due to the smaller size of the available local primary cohort, the percentage of the cohort attracted was nonetheless disappointing. 38 offers had been made, with total estimate being 45-50 once late applicants and students with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) have offers. She noted that the number of students with an EHCP is unusually high and that she is discussing the level of support and resources required with Dorset Council.

It was noted that the restrictions created by the pandemic had meant that there had been very little outreach work with primary schools over the past year and that it had not been possible to invite primary school students to visit for such things as the “Maths Challenge” or sports activities. It had also not been possible to stage the annual production (to which primary school children are invited) nor hold an open evening. Only a few tours had been conducted before these had to cease. Opportunities to showcase the school and increase pupil and parent familiarity with it had therefore been severely impacted.

JM reported that, as restrictions lift, such activities will start again. Promotion of sports and academic opportunities were considered key and new STEM initiatives such as the racing team and “Robot Wars” would be excellent opportunities to inspire primary school children. Performing Arts outreach would resume as soon as possible, and primary school involvement in the next school production is still planned. JM noted that the school has good relationships with all the feeder primaries.

[Amanda Rowley joined the meeting, which meant quorum was reached.]

The Business Manager reported that, in terms of impact on the school’s finances, the lower number expected for entry 2021 was compensated to some extent by a small cohort leaving from Year 11, meaning overall total number of students would not be much different. Two future potential “dip years” had been identified for 2026 and 2027 when the local primary cohort is also lower than usual, which would need to be carefully budgeted for.

	<p>2. <u>Marketing & Engagement</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Activities and plans</u> A written report had been circulated, showing recent community and engagement activity. <p>In response to questions on whether the printed media or the Swanage News website had been contacted with news stories such as the Cooking for the Community project, SF acknowledged that they had not and that this would be actioned. It was also suggested that local news may feature a piece on the creation of a racing team.</p> <p>[Carl Styants joined the meeting.]</p> <p>AR offered to send to SF a list of contact details/editors for local press.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Facebook reports</u> Facebook metrics and response to posts had been circulated and continued to show good engagement levels. <p>In response to a question on whether any sponsored posts had been used, SF informed governors that the only sponsored post to date had been the one relating to the school’s promotional video.</p> <p>A governor asked whether the school was planning to launch an Instagram account, noting that a lot of students have accounts. SF responded that this is planned. She observed that the school’s Twitter account also needed managing, as had been dormant since an automatic link from the Facebook account had stopped working.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Google Analytics report</u> A report showing the top 10 visited pages on the school’s website had been circulated, on which there were no questions. 	Press releases	SF	Ongoing
CE 3.6	<p>School Development Plan and Marketing Plan Progress Reports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>School Development Plan</u> The Committee considered the objectives on the School Development Plan for which it has oversight, as follows: 			

- *Objective: Communication with parents becomes a strength of the School, including written reporting.*

JM reported her belief that communication has significantly improved due to a combination of factors. These included the revived half-termly newsletter and by making use of communication features in Arbor for more frequent and targeted emails and text messages. Improved teacher-parent communication had also been put in place, to share praise and concerns. At a recent parents' evening for Year 9, many parents had indicated that they had been pleased with online learning and communication with the school during lockdown. JM expressed that systems for communication are continually evolving and asked those governors with children at the school if their experiences reflected these improvements. They agreed, in particular noting the benefits arising from the use of text messages, the Arbor parent portal, and the newsletter.

- *Objective: Effective marketing raises the profile of The Swanage School in the community and leads to an increase in the number of students on roll.*

This objective is ongoing and was discussed under the review of the Marketing Plan below.

2. Marketing Plan

The objectives on the Marketing Plan had been RAG rated for progress (red, amber, green) and SF briefed governors on the status of the actions, noting in particular that:

- The idea of holding a summer event had been on hold (due to the ongoing pandemic) until a recent government announcement regarding the “roadmap out of lockdown” which, if it progresses as planned, would see restrictions on events and gatherings lifted in late June. An event in July, perhaps tied to Challenge Week, was therefore looking more optimistic but had not yet been discussed by the leadership team for a decision on whether to go ahead. SF proposed that, if it goes ahead, the promotion of the event should be done in such a way that encourages all-comers and avoids being perceived as an “internal Swanage School event”.
- In reviewing publications, SF proposed that a magazine-style brochure, providing more detail than the current prospectus, would be a good addition to the current documentation, to enable those who want more information to have it to hand in one place, and to share with the wider community. It was noted that the prospectus contains overarching themes without detail, and that a larger publication will come with a more onerous need to update year on year. Providing a range of

	<p>accompanying information sheets in a folder alongside the prospectus would be another option. Using the newsletter for general consumption by the local community, by making it less parent-centric, was also suggested.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Projects to refresh the library and to install sail flags on the grounds and gabion benches outside the sports hall had not yet been actioned. - Improving displays around the school is a work in progress, with initial discussion of ideas taking place and a plan being put together. - Improvements to the website homepage had been delayed as the developer is finalising a new content management system and working on improving accessibility. A news feed had been created and initial stories published. - Lockdown had hampered work on photography and videography and SF noted that it was unlikely there would be time and resources available over the next term to achieve planned improvements to the suite of videos and therefore that the current ones would likely be re-promoted. It should prove possible, however, to work with a photographer before the end of the academic year to improve the number and quality of photographs available for promotional use. - A trial alumni survey had produced good quality data which would prove invaluable in promoting the school. SF noted that work is taking place to ensure that data is captured and stored in accordance with the principles of “data protection by design”, it being investigated whether Arbor might be used, but that this had slowed down a full rollout of the survey. - Governors asked when the banner outside the school would be changed. SF explained that new banners had not yet been designed. JM noted that “The Swanage School Rocks” banner had been found (after being thought disposed of) and would be displayed. 			
CE 3.7	<p>Risk Register Annual Review The Committee reviewed the risks of which it has oversight:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Risk: Insufficient demand for places at The Swanage School leaves it unsustainable.</i> It was agreed that whilst this should remain on the Risk Register given the significance of the potential risk, that the school is not at high risk of being left unsustainable through insufficient demand. The actions to improve promotion of, and recruitment to, the School were thought to be appropriate. - <i>Risk: Reputation loss leading to negative impact within the community.</i> The Committee was satisfied that whilst the impact of any reputation loss would be major, the current risk is moderate and managed well. 			

	It was agreed both risks should remain on the Risk Register.			
CE 3.8	<p>Funding Priorities It was noted that the current budget is £5k, to cover publications, banners and some elements of displays.</p> <p>A governor suggested that consideration be given to painting a few more walls, to improve the back-drop to promotional photographs. AT reported that he is working with the Site Manager on a maintenance schedule that will include a plan for repainting, and colour change can therefore be taken into account.</p> <p>The only other potentially costly addition requiring additional budget, suggested by the Headteacher, was to consider installing an LED billboard. AT offered to investigate costs and planning permission requirements. If placed outside the school, an LED display would prevent the need for banners and create a dynamic, modern display that could easily be changed frequently.</p>	Costs and permissions	AT	Apr '21
CE 3.9	<p>Lettings Annual Review The Lettings Annual Report had been circulated, with SF noting this had also been considered by the Finance & Premises Committee. SF reported briefly on the impact of Covid-19 on the hire of buildings, noting that hire had ceased in March 2020, and reopened for only three weeks in September/October before closing again due to a rise in local virus cases and pre-empting the second national lockdown. Facilities had not been re-opened to hirers since and, whilst there was some hope of hiring from April as restrictions start to ease, the impact on income has been significant, as has been the impact on the community groups that use the spaces.</p> <p>There were no questions on the report.</p>			
CE 3.10	<p>Charging & Lettings Policy APPROVED the Charging & Lettings Policy, on which there were no proposed changes.</p>	Republish	Clerk	Mar '21
CE 3.11	<p>Any Other Business JM recorded thanks to the Community & Marketing Officer, Sue Fletcher.</p>			
CE 3.12	<p>Confidentiality One item would require confidential minutes due to potential commercial sensitivity.</p>			

	Next meeting The date of the next meeting is to be confirmed as a result of the governance review.			
	The meeting closed at 7pm			