

The Swanage School  
**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FULL GOVERNING BODY**  
Held on Wednesday 16 September 2020, 6.30pm

Present (via remote access): Tim Marcus (Chair), Paul Angel, Alex Duke [from item 1.6], Tanya Hamilton-Fletcher, William Knight, Jenny Maraspin (Headteacher), Joanna Martin, Vanessa Millman [from item 1.8] Amanda Rowley, Jessica Starmer, Alison Stephens, Nicola Taylor [from item 1.4], Isobel Tooley.

In attendance (via remote access): Anna Carvisiglia (Business Manager), Sue Fletcher (Clerk), Matt Walling (IT Manager, for item 1.7)

Item		Action	Lead	By
	The meeting was held by remote access due to guidelines in place in respect of the Covid-19 pandemic.			
FGB 1.1	<b>Welcome</b> The Chair welcomed all governors to a new academic year and extended a special welcome to newly elected governors Tanya Hamilton-Fletcher and Joanne Martin.			
FGB 1.2	<b>Apologies for Absence</b> Apologies were received and accepted from Peter Collins.			
FGB 1.3	<b>Declarations of Interest</b> Governors were reminded of the need to complete an annual declaration for the Register of Interests. There were no conflicts with any agenda item.  [Nicola Taylor joined the meeting.]			
FGB 1.4	<b>Minutes of the Last Meeting</b> The minutes of the meeting held on 15 July 2020 were confirmed as an accurate record. The minutes will be signed at a later date.			
FGB 1.5	<b>Matters Arising &amp; Actions</b> Where not elsewhere on the agenda.  <u>FGB 1.18 Re-opening (Covid response): lettings</u> The Chair reported that the school had decided to reopen the sports hall for external hire by community groups from 14 <sup>th</sup> September 2020, with oversight of the risk assessment (Covid mitigation) having been			

	<p>provided by himself and two other governors (Paul Angel and Jessica Starmer). Hire of the main building would be reviewed at half-term. Any groups hiring the hall were required to submit their own risk assessment in line with guidance provided by the national body for their activity/sport. The school's insurance cover had been checked.</p> <p>[Alex Duke joined the meeting.]</p>			
FGB 1.6	<p><b>Chair's Report</b> The Chair had no business or correspondence to report. He recorded thanks to the Headteacher and staff for their hard work and dedication during the Covid-19 school closure (23<sup>rd</sup> March – 17<sup>th</sup> July 2020) and for work over the summer to ensure the school had been ready to reopen from the start of the Autumn Term, and to governors for their continued diligence and contributions during virtual meetings.</p>			
FGB 1.7	<p><b>SharePoint Demonstration</b> IT Manager Matt Walling was in attendance for this item. He and the Clerk demonstrated the use of SharePoint as part of the wider Microsoft Office 365 suite, noting that it would be useful as a document storage system for meeting papers, preventing the need for circulation by email which had been identified as a potential weak spot for data protection. Web links to relevant guidance documents and articles could also be easily provided through SharePoint and the governors' calendar of meetings will be populated to be accessible from here. SharePoint could also be used for collaboration on documents although care would be needed to ensure final papers and approved minutes are protected from editing. All governors will be able to log-in to the Office suite using their school log-in credentials.</p> <p>[Vanessa Millman joined the meeting.]</p>			
	<p><u>START OF YEAR FORMALITIES</u></p>			
FGB 1.8	<p><b>Election of Chair and Vice-Chair</b></p> <p>I. <u>Election of Chair of Governors</u> The Clerk asked if there were any governors wishing to put themselves forward as Chair of Governors, noting that the present chair Tim Marcus would be happy to continue if desired by the Board.</p> <p>Voted by a show of hands and unanimously <b>RE-APPOINTED</b> Tim Marcus as Chair of Governors for the current academic year.</p>			

	<p>2. <u>Election of Vice-Chair of Governors</u> The Chair reported that current Vice-Chair Alison Stephens would be unable to attend meetings on a Wednesday evening for the foreseeable future due to a work-related training placement and, whilst happy to remain as a governor, had expressed doubts as to the appropriateness of remaining vice-chair. He noted that AS has been very supportive and had played a valuable role over the past year.</p> <p><b>RE-APPOINTED</b> Alison Stephens as Vice-Chair of Governors for an interim period until a replacement is decided upon, with this to be re-visited at the next meeting.</p> <p><b>APPROVED</b> a “leave of absence” from attending meetings for the academic year for Alison Stephens, noting that AS would be happy to remain link governor for safeguarding, mental health and children looked after, if desired by the Board, and would make sure other governors were kept updated on these areas as well as reading and contributing to meetings via written comments and discussions with the meeting chair.</p>	Re-visit vice-chair election FGB agenda	Clerk	Oct '20
FGB 1.9	<p><b>Governing Body Constitution</b></p> <p>1. <u>Education Swanage governor election</u> The Chair recorded that Tanya Hamilton-Fletcher and Joanne Martin had been elected as governors by the members of Education Swanage, each for a four-year term of office, having earlier welcomed them to the Board of Governors.</p> <p>2. <u>Parent governor election</u> <b>AGREED</b> that the process for parent governor elections could be altered such that the ballot is conducted electronically if a fair and simple system can be found, noting that voters would also be able to request a paper ballot should they prefer.</p> <p>3. <u>Staff governor election</u> The Clerk reported that conducting a staff governor election would now be possible under agreed procedures, as the school was reopen, and that the upcoming vacancy (due to Nicola Taylor’s term of office ending on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2020) would shortly be advertised.</p>	Parent governor election	Clerk	Oct '20
FGB 1.10	<p><b>Governors’ Code of Conduct</b> <b>RE-APPROVED</b> the Governors’ Code of Conduct, with the Chair urging all governors to refresh their understanding of its contents given the importance of behaving appropriately and accountably at all times.</p>			

	The Clerk will circulate a checklist to confirm having read it.	Checklist	Clerk	Oct '20
FGB 1.11	<p><b>Governance Evaluation and Review</b></p> <p>1. <u>Evaluation of governance during 2019-20</u> The Chair proposed that before the next meeting governors undertake a retrospective exercise, looking back at the past year and considering what went well, what did not go well and what can be improved.</p> <p>2. <u>Further self-evaluation processes and external review of governance</u> Governors were reminded that the Regional Schools Commissioner's Office had recommended that the school commission an external review of governance (as recorded in a letter dated 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020 following a Trust review Meeting at the school on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2020 (the follow-up letter having been delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic)). It was noted that there appeared to have been concern over the layers of accountability, potentially due to the co-operative Academy Trust membership structure. Whilst confident that the structure is compliant with the requirements outlined in the Academies Financial Handbook, the Chair and Headteacher both noted that an external review of governance could prove helpful to ensure both that governors are appropriately held accountable and performing well.</p> <p>The Chair of the Finance &amp; Premises Committee (which includes the Audit Committee) noted that there is a greater focus in the current Academies Financial Handbook on holding governors to account and therefore that the comments were likely applicable to most schools. He noted that the Education &amp; Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) would expect a review of compliance to be undertaken by an internal audit process which although internally scoped (and not forming part of the full external annual audit), would be conducted by an independent auditor. He noted that the internal audit would review governance as well as finance and that the Audit Committee would be considering the scope for this scrutiny at its next meeting. The auditor could be asked to look specifically at how Academy Trust Members can hold the governing body to account.</p> <p>Others noted that an external review would need to be sufficiently robust to answer any concerns or questions posed by the Regional Schools Commissioner's Officer or potentially Ofsted and it was agreed that it would be sensible to obtain quotes from other bodies specialising in governance reviews as well as asking Albert Goodman (internal auditor) whether such a review would be within their scope and existing charges.</p>	Retrospective exercise	CoG / Govs	Oct '20
		Quotes	AC / Clerk	Oct '20

FGB 1.12	<p><b>Committee Structure, Chairing and Membership for 2020/21</b></p> <p>1. <u>Committee structure for 2020/21</u> Having chaired both the Finance &amp; Premises and Staffing Committee, WK noted that he could see an argument for merging them although with downsides that may be particularly apparent in the present year when the implications of the pandemic were being felt (both financially and in issues relating to staff). A deeper discussion on committee structure was left until the next meeting, tying in with the self-evaluation exercise noted under item FGB 1.11.1 above.</p> <p>2. <u>Internal audit function</u> <b>APPROVED</b> the continued merger of the Audit (&amp; Risk) Committee with the Finance &amp; Premises Committee, noting that this is compliant with the requirements of the Academies Financial Handbook for small schools.</p> <p>3. <u>Committee membership</u> New governors THF and JM were invited to observe the first meetings of all committees before decisions are made on where their skills and interests best lie. For the time being, the existing membership of the committees was confirmed.</p> <p>4. <u>Committee chairing</u> The Chair of the Finance &amp; Premises Committee reiterated comments made in previous years that it would be healthy for the committee to have a new chair given the length of time he had served in the role, and expressed his willingness to continue seeking a chair designate with the appropriate skills.</p> <p><b>AGREED</b> to defer a fuller discussion of leadership and chairing to the next meeting once governors have had a chance to give it more thought, with existing committee chairs and membership continuing until then. <b>AGREED</b> to ask Carl Styants if he would be happy to continue as Chair of the Staffing Committee for this interim period.</p> <p>5. <u>Co-opting of governors</u> <b>APPOINTED</b> Helen O'Connor and Carl Styants as governors for a period to 31 August 2021 under the powers to co-opt (Article 59), having considered the usefulness of the skills and experience offered.</p> <p>6. <u>Committee succession planning</u> The Chair suggested that as part of the deeper review of governance consideration should be given to whether to formalise a position of vice-chair for each committee.</p>	<p>Re-visit: FGB Agenda</p> <p>Re-visit: FGB agenda</p> <p>Contact CS</p> <p>Re-visit: FGB agenda</p>	<p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p>	<p>Oct '20</p> <p>Oct '20</p> <p>Sept '20</p> <p>Sept '20</p>
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FGB 1.13	<p><b>Review and Appoint Governor Roles</b>  <b>AGREED</b> that link governor roles would continue as at present:</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>SEND</td> <td>Peter Collins</td> </tr> <tr> <td>E-Safety</td> <td>Tim Marcus</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Safeguarding</td> <td>Alison Stephens</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mental Health</td> <td>Alison Stephens</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Children Looked After</td> <td>Alison Stephens</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pupil Premium</td> <td>Nicola Taylor, until her end of term 31<sup>st</sup> October 2020</td> </tr> <tr> <td>New Governors' Mentor</td> <td>William Knight</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Heads Performance Review</td> <td>Chair and Vice-Chair of Governors</td> </tr> </table> <p>Filling the Parent Link role would be revisited once the parent governor vacancy is filled, with Vanessa Millman noting that she would be happy to do it if needed.</p> <p>Appointing a Careers Link was deferred for the time being, with the Clerk offering to find a role descriptor or to ask ex-governor Nicola Newman to provide a summary of the role as she had conducted it.</p> <p>THF offered to support AS with the role of link governor for the areas of safeguarding, children looked after and mental health as these reflected her professional experience. JS also offered support with the mental health remit.</p>	SEND	Peter Collins	E-Safety	Tim Marcus	Safeguarding	Alison Stephens	Mental Health	Alison Stephens	Children Looked After	Alison Stephens	Pupil Premium	Nicola Taylor, until her end of term 31 <sup>st</sup> October 2020	New Governors' Mentor	William Knight	Heads Performance Review	Chair and Vice-Chair of Governors	Role descriptor	Clerk	Oct '20
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FGB 1.14	<p><b>Meeting Dates and the Annual Plan of Business</b>  Meeting dates for the year and the annual plan of business had been circulated, on which there were no questions or comments.</p> <p>[IT left the meeting.]</p>																			
FGB 1.15	<p><b>Governor Development, Training &amp; Monitoring</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>NGA online training</u>  Governors were reminded that there is a suite of online training courses offered by the National Governors' Association, to which the governing body subscribes.</li> <li><u>Other developments and training needs</u>  Governors were asked to let the Clerk know of any additional development and training needs.</li> </ol>																			

	<p>3. <u>School monitoring visits</u> JM confirmed that the leadership team welcomes governor visits to school (although at present this is curtailed to some extent by the limits on visitors due to the Covid-19 mitigations) and are happy to facilitate these and to provide any required evidence to governors before or after a visit.</p>			
FGB 1.16	<p><u>SAFEGUARDING</u></p> <p><b>Keeping Children Safe in Education</b> All governors had been asked to read the new edition of Keeping Children Safe in Education, in particular parts 1, 2 and the annex. A summary of changes had been circulated by AS and she noted that The Key (a government guidance website) had a number of good articles which governors could access with a free trial. It was also noted that the school has a subscription to The School Bus, a similar website providing guidance to governors and school leaders, and that governors could request log-in credentials from the Business Manager.</p>			
	<p><u>SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT &amp; STRATEGY</u></p>			
FGB 1.17	<p><b>Headteacher’s Report: Update on Covid-19 Mitigations</b> JM reported that in the first couple of weeks back there had been a leadership debrief after school each day, with continual improvements being made to the school’s Covid-19 mitigation strategy. She noted that new routines were becoming embedded and pinch points reduced as improvements are made, and that by the middle of the first week things were operating much as planned and with ever increasing knowledge of how best to minimise disruption to the school. Lessons had also been learnt from the closure of St Mark’s Primary School due to a staff member testing positive for Covid-19 and from the handling of student cases at another local secondary school.</p>			
FGB 1.18	<p><b>School Development Plan</b> A draft of the School Development Plan (SDP) for 2020/21 had been circulated. JM confirmed that the SDP has been informed by completion of a Self-Evaluation Form (SEF) and having sought feedback from stakeholder groups such as parents, staff and committee chairs, with themes that arose in these surveys having been incorporated into the objectives. She acknowledged that the SDP was long, over which a number of governors had expressed concerns as to whether it would be realistically achievable. Governors were asked to contact JM with any further comments on what is included or omitted, with a view to a final draft coming to the next meeting for approval. In the meantime, the leadership team would consider it a working document to commence actions on the objectives.</p>	Feedback to JM	Govs	Sept '20

FGB 1.19	<p><b>Headteacher Performance Monitoring</b>  The Chair confirmed that he and the Vice-Chair of Governors would meet with JM prior to half-term to conduct a performance monitoring appraisal. It was confirmed that Andrew Lovett remained the School Improvement Partner and would be included in this.</p>	HT performance monitoring	CoG / V-C	Oct '20
FGB 1.20	<p><b>Any Other Business</b>  None.</p>			
FGB 1.21	<p><b>Confidentiality</b>  No item would require confidential minutes.</p>			
	<p><b>Next Meeting</b>  The next meeting will be held on 21 October 2020.</p>			
	<p>The meeting closed at 8.15pm.</p>			