

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SAMWORTH CHURCH ACADEMY GOVERNING BODY HELD VIA CONFERENCE/VIDEO CALL ON TUESDAY 14TH JULY 2020 AT 3.00 PM

PRESENT: Nick Linney (NL) (Chair), Tiffany Gorski (TG), Val Leivers (VL), Jane Lewis (JL), Lisa McVeigh (LM), Samantha Sykes (SS), Caroline Whitty (CW), Stephen Garner (SG), Michael Arlington (MA) and Joanna Hall (JH)

IN ATTENDANCE: Donna Barnes (DB) (Clerk), Sarah Perry (SP) and David Broomhead (DBR) Director of Student Support.

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Apologies were received from Michael Longdon (ML).
2. **DECLARATION OF INTEREST:** None.
3. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING** held on 13th May 2020 were accepted as a true record and were signed by DB on behalf of NL.

The governing body welcomed new governor JH.

8 (a) Mark 1 Budget

This item was brought forward owing to the attendance of Sarah Perry, Chief Finance Officer.

The Mark 1 budget 2020-21 and commentary documents were shared and presented by LM and SP, Chief Finance Officer. In recent weeks, the forecast for the current year has changed from a £1k deficit to a £46k surplus and it is likely to be a moving picture over the next two months. The Mark 1 Budget shows an in-year deficit of £4k, however the impact of Coronavirus is not yet clear and it is likely that there will be further adjustments which will help to provide a more accurate Mark 2 budget.

The contents of the commentary document were discussed. LM advised that some areas of income are uncertain due to the removal of Year 7 catch up funding but that catch up funding will be allocated with the amount not yet known, therefore estimates have been used. Changes to the strategy and use of Heatherdene were discussed, the plan will be to use the provision for more internal students and to use funding allocations to support this.

SP explained that the budgeted SEN income for next year has been based on the funding allocation from April to March, with an assumption that summer term funding will be at similar levels.

LM advised that maths is overstaffed by one person but due to the difficulties recruiting to this subject noted this is a good position to be in. Reductions in staffing will naturally occur during the first term and reductions in salaries in the right areas will be sought.

SP suggested that governors may wish to consider receiving financial management reports in the same format as the Board of Directors view them, rather than the revised format of dashboard. It would save time producing the information in a different format and ensure the data mirrors that being presented to Directors. SP to circulate example to governors via DB.

OUTSTANDINGS (In Minutes order)

11/12/18	Community Use LM
14/05/19	Governor School Visit LM
22/07/19	Project Portrush LM
10/12/19	Staff Pay NL/LM
10/12/19	IT Development Group LM
30/03/20	Student Leadership, Development and Voice NL/LM/CW
30/03/20	Healthy Eating TG/LM
13/05/20	COVID impact Y10 LM/CV
13/05/20	SCAOT Structure and Funds MA/CW
14/07/20	Management Accounts SP/DB
14/07/20	Professional Fundraising CW/LM
14/07/20	IT Action LM
14/07/20	Finance Review (Due Jun 21) LM
14/07/20	Grievance Policy DB
14/07/20	Capability Policy DB
14/07/20	Policies VL/JH/DB

CONCLUDED
Are listed on the last sheet
(In alphabetical order)

OUTSTANDING SP/DB Management Accounts.

MA queried the reduction in sixth form numbers and the future predictions. LM provided context regarding previous results and tougher entry requirements and confirmed that predictions and aims are for numbers to increase. SP confirmed that assumptions for inflation/deflation are based on 2.75% increases for staff salaries and 2.12% for Age Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU).

MA commented on the surplus being too low and not in line with previous discussions. He suggested reserves need to be higher otherwise this may lead to the condition of the building deteriorating. LM explained that student numbers have declined as planned and in accordance with the PAN for the building and that increased numbers historically have provided an increased income but also contributed to the wear and tear of the building which is not sustainable. The increased GAG was noted as an opportunity to increase reserves to allow for improvements to the quality of plant and equipment. LM confirmed that this was the overall aim and that savings would be made where ever possible and reflected within the revised budget. The historical aspiration of £150k was mentioned and it was agreed that this would need increasing to circa £200k. SP was asked about the reserves for other schools in the MAT and she advised that schools vary. Overall, she stated that the MAT aim is to have 5% consolidated reserves across the whole of the MAT. The academy reserves are currently below 1%.

SS lost connection briefly during the above item.

TG joined the meeting during the above item at 3.40pm and DBR joined at 3.45pm

SP commented that the joint purchasing of utilities is being explored as other schools in the MAT already do this and this may lead to some financial gain. Other joint procurement is also being explored.

NL referred to the need for investment in IT equipment and exploring further savings/reductions elsewhere to enable this to happen. Governors agreed they would like to see a stronger investment in capital expenditure at the Mark 2 budget.

The Mark 1 budget was approved by governors.

CW suggested the academy revisit sourcing other funding through projects and grants. Professional fundraising organisations were mentioned and with little experience of this within the group it was agreed that LM and CW would explore this. **OUTSTANDING CW/LM Professional Fundraising.**

The governing body thanked SP for her attendance and support with preparing and presenting the budget.

SP left the meeting at 3.55pm.

4. MATTERS ARISING AND OUTSTANDING:

(a) **Community Use:** LM reported that the current situation has prevented external use but that systems have been reviewed and are in place ready for when this changes. Marketing of the facilities remains work in progress. Agreed hours could not be located, it was agreed that LM will resolve by deciding what areas and hours are available to let and share this with governors. **OUTSTANDING LM.**

(b) **Governor School Visit:** Due to the current situation, the proposed visit remains on hold. **OUTSTANDING LM.**

- (c) **Project Portrush:** As per last update, the process is paused and LM will continue when able to do so. Governors considered the rest of this item to be confidential. **OUTSTANDING LM.**

JH left the meeting at 4.00pm.

- (d) **Staff Pay:** Progress has been made and hope to have a proposal to share by September with the likelihood that action will start to take place in the autumn term. The inconsistency across staff was discussed including cost of living awards and contracts. Some alignment will be needed by the MAT. LM confirmed that the cost of living increase was awarded to all teaching staff regardless of contract and this had been factored into the budget again. The cost of living is almost entirely funded by central government through the teachers' pay grant. **OUTSTANDING NL/LM.**
- (e) **IT Development Group:** Two meetings have taken place, one with a staff focus group and another with students. This resulted in some interesting opening discussions about how to move forward, looking at audits and skill sets. The next stage is to action some of the issues raised and bring the two groups together. No solid proposals have come from this yet but LM will continue to monitor, seek solid proposals and report back to governors. **OUTSTANDING IT Action LM.**
- (f) **Finance Advisory Group Remit:** NL proposed that a separate advisory group is not required. The current set up with the governing body as a whole being responsible for the budget seems to be working. LM/ES should continue to advise on the relationship with the MAT but that also appears to be working. LM referred to the complexity of the dashboard and the work that it has taken to get it to where it is in the absence of ES. VL expressed concerns that our dependence on ES is an unhealthy position to be in, however LM pointed out that Portrush plans should rectify this problem. Alignment between the Academy and the MAT is ongoing. MA suggested that a review/critical look at the unique processes upon ES return would be beneficial. It was agreed LM would oversee a review of the finance structure and processes with completion by the end of summer term next year. **CONCLUDED NL. OUTSTANDING LM Finance Review due June 2021.**
- (g) **Additional Governor:** JH has joined the governing body. **CONCLUDED.**
- (h) **Student Leadership Development and Voice:** LM is refining this proposal which should be ready to be shared in August. **OUTSTANDING NL/LM/CW**
- (i) **Grievance Policy:** LM and NL have agreed on revised wording. DB to circulate by email and request a response from governors within 7 days. **OUTSTANDING updated to DB.**
- (j) **Healthy Eating:** TG has put together a document and shared with LM yesterday having done some research, this will be shared with governors. Discussed the importance of educating students to support them to make good choices, including the topic of obesity. NL reminded this outstanding stemmed from underuse of the cooking facilities and the need to make the content intra curricular. Aim is to get students cooking and having fun doing it. Need a plan to show next steps and how this will be done. LM advised that the curriculum has already been reviewed and the number of lessons increased. After school clubs are popular and could consider offering more. LM/TG to package this together and report back with a detailed plan of how we will deliver Healthy Eating, "intra curricular". **OUTSTANDING TG/LM.**

SS left the meeting during the above item at 4.50pm.

- (k) **Heatherdene:** At the last Samworth Church Academy Opportunity Trust meeting the purchase of the property was approved subject to SNMAT signing the lease. Other updates have been shared via the notes of the meeting. **CONCLUDED.**

TG left the meeting at 5.00pm.

- (l) **SCAOT Structure and Funds:** CW advised that as per notes, the old company is still live with governors listed as directors of the company. The only purpose this serves is to hold the assets of the trust as all other assets have already been transferred to SNMAT. CW proposed that the Directors sign off the accounts for last year and continue with this set up until the Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) is set up. Once this is done the assets can be transferred and the old company wound up. Browne Jacobson have been instructed to work on the draft document which will conclude first part of process, a formal application can then be made. CW/MA to present a final draft of the CIO document to trustees at their next meeting. DB asked to recirculate the accounts to Directors with a return of 7 days. **OUTSTANDING MA/CW.**
- (m) **COVID impact Year 10:** Will be discussed under item 9 and at the next meeting which Chris Vallance will attend. **OUTSTANDING LM/CV.**
- (n) **Policies:** DB circulated proposal to governors in advance of the meeting with four recommendations.

The first to approve two new covering pages which was supported.

The second to designate responsible person or body for the statutory policies not in place. VL was asked to work with Adam Cave to action the policy relating to children with health needs. JH to work with Carl Bennett on the NQT policy. VL to work with DBR on the exclusion policy. DB to help organise.

The third recommendation was discussed and considered and agreed with advice from DBR that a Looked After Policy is not necessary. The Pay Policy is already work in progress under the outstanding item. Children Missing in Education, DBR to consider including within the safeguarding or attendance policy and it was felt it wasn't necessary to have a separate policy.

DB to locate the SNMAT Finance Manual and share it with NL/MA/LM for review.

The final recommendation to consider duplication at natural review dates, governors supported. NL advised at a recent SNMAT meeting it was recommended that schools have a staff wellbeing link governor. JL agreed to take on this role. DB was asked to update the governor dashboard. **OUTSTANDING VL/JH/DB Policies.**

JL led the group in a prayer. DB asked to update future agendas so that this is the first item.

- 5. **LEGAL MATTERS:** LM advised governors of a further claim that has been made which is currently going through the academy insurers.
- 6. **SIGNING & SEALING:** None.
- 7. **MAJOR TOPICS:** None.
- 8. **FINANCE REPORT:**
 - (a) **Financial Statistics** – LM referred to the fluctuating picture as described under the budget item earlier. There is an overspend within educational supplies and services, but it has been counterbalanced by an increase in income of additional funding for students who are accessing alternative provision. DBR is managing this and the current position is much better than it has been historically. Savings have been made where possible, this has included

furloughing some catering staff and reduced spending in the restaurant. These figures have been reflected in the dashboard. The full impact will be seen after the next two months.

- (b) **Cash Flow** – As per dashboard and above.
- (c) **Capital Expenditure Requests and Pending** – There are no requests pending.

9. STANDARD ITEMS:

- (a) **Principal's Report:** As per the Principal's report for June. LM talked through initial thoughts and plans for return in September. Governors continue to be copied into the daily updates to staff which provide further details. LM's approach and communication with staff was praised and governors are happy to leave the detail and leadership of the plans for return to her and the executive team. If needed they agreed they would be happy to help or support. LM confirmed that support is available from the MAT and that the risk assessments are thorough and will continue to be copied to governors. LM confirmed that the academy is fully staffed from September. LM advised that Year 10 attendance is roughly 50% but this is without any penalty being imposed. It is difficult to predict what attendance will be in September, but staff will offer support to get as many students back into school as possible.
- (b) **6th Form Leadership and Development:** Discussed under item 4 (h) and information will be circulated to governors in August.

*NL and SG left meeting at 5.55pm.
JL took over chairing the meeting.*

- (c) **People, Achievement & Standards Advisory Group Report:** As per the notes of the 10th June. VL reported on the process for centre assessed grades. Door step visits are taking place, DBR confirmed they are going well and the number increasing. DBR advised that a transition video has gone out to students which included a virtual tour and welcome. A further video has gone out on the website today to provide parents with more information. Contact with linked schools has continued with visits to some where it has been welcomed and virtual with others. Transition plans are in place for students first two days in September. There are a couple of Heatherdene students accessing school which has been a challenge, others have chosen not to access. LM hopes to get the new risk assessment out to staff on Friday and consideration will then be given to the one that will be needed for Heatherdene. Further guidance for alternative provisions may need to be considered as well as what provision is suitable for those students.
- (d) **Link Governors Reports:**
Before leaving the meeting, NL confirmed that he remains in regular contact with LM.
- (e) **Opportunity Trust Performance:** As per the dashboard and notes of meeting.
- (f) **Christian Distinctiveness:** JL confirmed the group met on 10th June. The group found it useful to meet but accepted that it is a changing picture at the moment with little to update on, but it will remain on the agenda.

10. MATTERS FOR THIS MEETING:

Policies: The following policies were reviewed and submitted to the Governing Body for approval:

Lockdown Policy
Lost Property Policy

SEND Policy
Staff Disciplinary Policy
Supporting Students with Medical Conditions Policy
Capability Policy
Critical Incident Policy

DBR left the meeting at 6.10pm.

All the above policies were approved, except for the Capability Policy which CW raised a query with about the lack of timeline in the appeals section. DB to clarify the appeals section and timeline. **OUTSTANDING DB Capability Policy.**

11. **CONFIDENTIALITY OF BUSINESS:** Discussions about Portrush in items 8a and 4c were considered confidential.
12. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS/ MINOR TOPICS:**
JL shared positive feedback following the SNMAT meeting last week about online provision over this period and thanked staff on behalf of the MAT. Chris Moodie is working on some guidance to help with any local lockdown or school isolation. There should be access for all students for a full day of online lessons and study if the local area goes into lockdown, guidance on how this will work, and the speed is significant. LM commented that she felt confident about this process. The MAT is encouraging online meetings going forward. Directors have planned for some of their future meetings to be virtual and are encouraging governing bodies to consider how this might work for them and to reflect on this period going forward. Monitoring visits are not to take place physically and online meetings are being encouraged for link governors if convenient. Zarina will continue to do visits with secondary schools in the MAT.
13. **DATE, VENUE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING:**
Wednesday 7th October at 11.00am

Dates of Future Meetings:

Tuesday 8th December at 3.00pm
Tuesday 12th January at 1.00pm
Tuesday 23rd March at 3.00pm
Wednesday 19th May at 11.00am
Tuesday 13th July at 3.00pm

The meeting closed at 6.20pm.