



**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BOARD OF THE FERMAIN  
ACADEMY HELD ON 26<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2019 AT 4.00PM**

**Governors Present:** Stephen Armstrong (SA) Chair  
 Nic Brindle (NB) CEO the Yes Trust  
 Jo Burrows (JB)  
 Emma Colley (EC)  
 Rob Halsall (RH)  
 Tim Haselwood (TH)  
 Ruth Roberts (RR)

**Also in attendance:** Claire Leslie Clerk to the Governors  
 Lee Cambray (LC) Headteacher The Fermain  
 Damian Sweeney (DS) Headteacher Cornerstone

**PART ONE – NON-CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS**

		Actions
<b>1</b>	<p><b>APOLOGIES &amp; ADDITIONAL AOB ITEMS</b></p> <p>1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Martin Howlett and Tony Smith and were accepted by the governors.</p> <p>1.2 As an item of any other business governors needed to select from their membership governors to form a staff disciplinary committee.</p> <p>1.3 Chris Heptinstall (CH) was officially welcomed to the school and to the meeting. CH was the new Director of Business for the Yes Trust.</p>	
<b>2</b>	<p><b>CONFLICT OF INTEREST</b></p> <p>TH is Business Manager at Tytherington School.          NB is a trustee at the UTC.          RR is a Senior Teacher at the King's School Macclesfield.          There was no expected conflict at today's meeting.</p>	
<b>3.</b>	<p><b>MEMBERSHIP</b></p> <p>3.1 It was noted that Martin Howlett, Emma Colley and Stephen Armstrong's terms of office were due to expire on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2019.</p>	

	<p>Governors were aware that continuing efforts needed to be made to recruit new governors.</p> <p>Governors were pleased to note that a prospective governor was meeting shortly with NB. She has significant Human Resources expertise and works across a number of Tesco stores in that capacity. RH was thanked for his introduction.</p> <p>LC noted that he was in discussions with two possible new governors, one was a police sergeant and another a local business person. Attempts to recruit a parent governor from current school parents continued to be challenging in light of the school's changing cohort. LC agreed to explore the possibility of securing some parent voice through the appointment of a parent ambassador.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> LC to try to identify a suitable and willing parent ambassador.</p> <p>LC and RH were to continue to liaise about a banner to be placed in the carpark at Tesco Macclesfield advertising the governor vacancies. RH was thanked for volunteering this advertising space.</p> <p>SA noted that he wished to stand down as Chair of governors ideally at the end of the 2018/19 academic year. He felt that the school would be better served by a local Chair, SA would continue to support the school and would not step down until a replacement had been found, he hoped to work alongside a replacement for a while to ensure a smooth transition.</p> <p>It was noted that once the Yes Trust was fully constituted there would need to be governors at Trust level and at local level. NB has already drafted the Scheme of Delegation breaking responsibilities down to appropriate levels. At Trust level there will be three major committees:</p> <p>Finance and Assets Education Standards Strategy</p> <p>At local level there will be two smaller committees:</p> <p>Welfare, Ethos and Behaviour Learning outcomes and Teaching</p> <p><b>Action:</b> NB to circulate the draft Scheme of Delegation via the clerk.</p> <p>The cancelled Strategy Committee meeting needed to be reconvened. It was agreed that it would take place on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2019 immediately prior to the Extraordinary Resources and Assets Meeting.</p>	<p>LC</p> <p>LC and RH</p> <p>NB</p>
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	<p><b>Action:</b> Clerk to circulate agenda.</p> <p>The Yes Trust plans had been reviewed by the Headteachers' Board. More detail was required on the financial scheme of delegation. Further planning might impact the local governing board planning. Thought needed to be given to governors' skills and where they would be best placed within the new structure.</p>	Clerk
4	<p><b>PART ONE MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING</b></p> <p><b>4.1</b> The part one minutes of the autumn term Full Governing Board meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2019 were <b>agreed</b> as an accurate record, signed by the Chair and retained by FA.</p> <p><b>4.2</b> The action log was reviewed and the following matters arising addressed from the Part One minutes. These will not be covered elsewhere in the agenda:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• c/f MH would offer Leadership and Management training to governors at 2.30pm on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2019 immediately before the planned FGB meeting.</li> <li>• c/f As part of new governors induction TH offered one to one support sessions on the use of the GVO if required. This training was also available to existing governors finding the platform difficult. Governors wishing to take up the offer should contact TH directly. This was ongoing.</li> <li>• c/f The need to recruit more governors was ongoing and important in the light of the additional needs of the Yes Trust.</li> <li>• c/f RH had produced notes of what would be most useful for a new governor induction. These needed to be reviewed by SA and would be forwarded to both the clerk and SA.</li> <li>• c/f SA continued to work on the Governors skills audit. JL's input was awaited. It was clear that there were some knowledge areas which were well covered by governors but that there were some areas of weakness. Budget monitoring and estate management seemed to be areas of weakness for some governors. It was agreed that CH and TH would offer training in finance before Standards Committee on 18<sup>th</sup> June.</li> <li>• c/f The clerk to look at the governors handbook and produce a draft for approval at the next FGB</li> <li>• c/f Governors who completed Educare training on Child Protection more than two years ago to refresh. All governors to ensure that</li> </ul>	

basic training in Safeguarding, Prevent and Child Protection had been completed. LC would provide a short Safeguarding tutorial before the next FGB meeting.

- c/f DS to send the Cornerstone offering to the clerk to place on the GVO.
- c/f SA to prepare bullet point notes of Jane Lowe’s feedback from recent visits.
- c/f Mark Robinson to provide a note to update governors on the induction programme.
- c/f Governors to ensure that they check GVO notifications and note on the system when they have read and approved policies..
- It was agreed that the disciplinary and appeals committees were to be constituted as follows:

Disciplinary Committee	Appeals Committee
Tony Smith	Stephen Armstrong
Tim Hazelwood	Rob Halsall
Ruth Roberts	Jo Burrows

**5 CHAIR’S ACTION**

Governor’s noted that the right of the Chair to take Chair’s action had not been approved at the last FGB.  
 TH proposed that the Chair be authorised to agree emergency expenditure up to £20,000 per purchase, subject to the normal procurement procedure having been followed and provided always that any payments authorised left the school with a positive budget.  
 RH seconded the proposal.  
 Governors **approved** the proposal.

Governors retrospectively authorised Chair’s actions taken during the 2018/19 academic year:

- Purchase of ChESS (Cheshire East School Services) governor training package.
- Funding, at a cost of £12,900, for the conversion of the balcony area to create a new classroom (essential because of the growth of student numbers from 40 to 60). Governors noted that the normal procurement procedure had been followed. Governors further noted that wherever possible such projects should come before and be approved by Resources and Assets committee.

## 6 REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES

### 6.1 Standards Committee met on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2019.

Governors asked the school to think further about the production of data. The request was based on a concern that there should be a way of capturing progress outside the standard progress measures. Governors were impressed with the range of interventions available and recognised that standard progress measures did not necessarily indicate the value added to pupils education at FA. It was considered important to look at ways of assessing progress for the hardest to reach children. This was a challenging exercise as a result of the need to ensure that all data produced was anonymised.

Governors noted that progress overall remained pleasing despite some additional challenges around behaviour and attendance. Any child attending at 80% or better was making exceptional progress against national targets. Generally behaviour around the school was excellent. The current school cohort contained 25 students permanently excluded from their previous schools who lived in Crewe (or further away). It was inevitable that there would be attendance issues with this cohort. Work was being undertaken on improving attendance and there was a clear flow chart for the management of absence.

Reading remained an issue because of its impact across the curriculum. LC and Jane Lowe were planning to work together on a Raising Attainment Plan (RAP) which would involve a different approach to reading. There would not be a designated reading period every day but there would be focus periods during the week. Reading practice would use innovative support not necessarily around asking students to read books.

**Q:** How would success be measured?

**A:** The student voice would be used for comment on engagement and the school would assess increased confidence through students' willingness to engage with reading aloud and fluency in tackling maths problems set out in writing.

**Action:**

RR would also be coming in after Easter and would do a learning walk.

**Action:** SA and MH would look at attendance and report back.

### 6.2 Resources Committee met on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2019.

It had not been possible to reconcile Budget v Actuals as a result of the

departure of the previous Director of Business and the delay before the start of CH. A short extraordinary meeting had been fixed for 1<sup>st</sup> May 2019 to enable governors to hold the school to financial account.

CH spoke to the accounts which had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

FA had received more income over the academic year 2018-19 than was projected; the figures had been inflated by a payment from Cheshire East Council (CEC) made in advance and due in September 2019.

The financial position appeared positive with an end of year surplus of £51,000 expected.

The Department for Education (DfE) "little extras funding" amounted to £3,939.

The DfE would also be providing extra funding for teachers' pensions for the academic year 2019/20.

Additional expenditure was £14,000 for the minibus and £12,900 for the balcony conversion. This had been rounded to £30,000 to cover some costs for heating and carpeting.

The surplus from Cornerstone was estimated at £10,000 making a combined surplus of £61,000. FA was mindful of the tension between ensuring that adequate reserves were held and spending money for the benefit of the pupils in the school.

Governors thanked CH for his work and noted that he had only just been in a position to work full time at FA.

### **6.3 Reports from Governors with special responsibility.**

NB was keen for there to be a governor with responsibility for Cornerstone. TH agreed to take that on.

RR as SEN governor had arranged to come into school.

### **6.4 Staffing Structure**

The school staff is now looking stable, there have been a number of new recruits including additional teaching assistants required because of the grant of Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). One member of staff had been promoted from an administrative post to a teaching assistant position.

Governors were pleased to note the opportunity for internal promotion. Morale was improving and teachers felt supported by the teaching assistants.

	<p><b>6.5 Curriculum Plans</b></p> <p>These would be available in more detail for the next FGB meeting.</p>	
<p><b>7</b></p>	<p><b>PART ONE PRINCIPAL'S REPORT AND MATTERS ARISING</b></p> <p><b>7.1 Headteacher of FA report</b></p> <p>LC spoke to the report which had been delivered to governors in advance of the meeting.</p> <p>It was agreed that there should be a deadline for the delivery of reports 10 days in advance of meetings.</p> <p>LC noted that he found the exchange of ideas with DS and EC very helpful..</p> <p><b>7.2 Headteacher of Cornerstone Report</b></p> <p>DS spoke to the report which had been prepared in advance of the meeting.</p> <p>Attendance at Cornerstone was currently at 95.4% with no unauthorised absence. There was a spread of children from Reception to one child in Year 7 who was about to move on.</p> <p>The transfer of a child to Cornerstone can be immediate or may take place over half a term. The provision was carrying four assessment places; children at immediate risk of permanent exclusion could be assessed.</p> <p>There were a variety of reasons why children might find themselves in need of Cornerstone support, they could have suffered trauma or bereavement, they might have school hopped or they might be in need of an EHCP and the process may take so long that serious problems were able to develop.</p> <p>There were currently ten children on the roll, a further two were pending and were receiving early intervention.</p> <p>The provision worked on a six week cycle, assessment places can take longer as there might be a need to await panel decisions.</p> <p>The aim was to work on a revolving door basis, as one child left the provision on a Friday another should be available to start on a Monday.</p> <p>Children might be referred to the provision through panel meetings or CEC or schools might contact DS or NB directly to ask about a possible placement.</p>	

	<p>The provision did track the success of leavers.</p> <p>Governors thanked DS for his helpful and clear report.</p>	
<b>8</b>	<p><b>FINANCE</b></p> <p>The 2017/18 audited financial statements had been published on the school website (by 31st January 2019).</p> <p>The auditor's management letter had been submitted (by 31st December 2018).</p> <p>The 2017/18 accounts return had been submitted (by 19th January 2019).</p> <p>It was agreed that the 3 Year Budget Plan should come to the summer FGB for review.</p> <p>Budget v Actuals for the current year 2018-19 were to be reviewed at an extraordinary Resources and Assets committee meeting fixed for 1<sup>st</sup> May 2019 and would come before the summer FGB meeting.</p> <p>Governors would be updated on progress against the 3 year budget plan at the summer FGB meeting. There would be considerable variation because of funding arrangements for Cornerstone and Axis.</p> <p>The cost of the staffing structure for 2019-20 would be evaluated at the summer FGB meeting at that time there would be a draft staffing model for Axis.</p> <p>The annual review of the Financial Manual would be conducted at the summer FGB meeting.</p>	
<b>9</b>	<p><b>SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN</b></p> <p>This was in the process of being readdressed and new strategies and focus areas were under consideration.</p>	
<b>10</b>	<p><b>STRATEGIC GOVERNANCE – ORGANISATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS</b></p> <p>Clerk to work on a governor handbook document.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> SA to share draft with Clerk for her to complete.</p>	SA and Clerk
<b>11</b>	<p><b>CLERKING ARRANGEMENTS</b></p> <p>FA would be buying back clerking services. Governors noted that they had been very happy with the service provided by the clerk during the current academic year.</p>	

	<b>Action:</b> Clerk to provide schedule of likely costs.	Clerk
<b>12</b>	<p><b>TERM DATES</b></p> <p>These had already been set. For operational reasons FA needs to keep to the same term dates as All Hallows Academy.</p> <p>Axis term dates were likely to be different.</p> <p>Governors approved the 2019-20 arrangements.</p>	
<b>13</b>	<p><b>SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PARTNER/EXTERNAL ADVISER/LEADERSHIP PARTNER VISIT</b></p> <p>Helen Phillips has the School Improvement Partner role at Cornerstone. She was a primary specialist and would be preparing a report which would be shared with governors.</p>	
<b>14</b>	<p><b>DIRECTOR'S REPORT</b></p> <p>The spring term report had been circulated to the Governing Board, and was on on the GVO.</p> <p>It was suggested that there should be a governor responsible for mental health. JB agreed to take on this role.</p>	
<b>15</b>	<p><b>GOVERNOR MONITORING TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT</b></p> <p>Governors noted their training needs. All governors must complete the Prevent and Safeguarding training and the safeguarding training should be repeated periodically.</p> <p>LC asked if governors would be interested in attending staff training.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> LC to send list of training sessions to the Clerk to circulate.</p>	LC
<b>16</b>	<p><b>GDPR</b></p> <p>There had been no breaches of GDPR.</p>	
<b>17</b>	<p><b>SCHOOL POLICIES</b></p> <p>The Clerk and Director of Business would be working together to ensure that all policies were up to date.</p> <p>A number would be presented to governors for approval at the next committee and FGB meetings.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Clerk and CH to meet to discuss further. Governors agreed that this would be an additional cost above the ChESS purchase for the year 2018/19.</p>	

18	<p><b>PLANNED RESIDENTIAL VISITS</b></p> <p>The recent residential visit to Wincle to a cottage run by a local charity, Back Dane Trust would be repeated, all students would have an overnight stay of one night and two days of activities.</p> <p>The school planned a day trip to London..</p> <p>Governors approved the visit subject to satisfactory completion of a Risk Assessment and confirmation that liability insurance was in place.</p>	
19	<p><b>MEETINGS</b></p> <p>The next meeting was confirmed for 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2019. A Strategy Committee meeting would take place immediately before at 3.00pm. The rearranged Strategy Committee meeting would take place at 3.00pm on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2019.</p>	
20	<p><b>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</b></p> <p>There was no further business.</p>	
21	<p><b>IMPACT STATEMENT</b></p> <p>Governors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confirmed that necessary financial returns had been made and made arrangements to confirm the three year budgets.</li> <li>• Scrutinised admission arrangements for Cornerstone.</li> <li>• Considered arrangements for monitoring outcomes from Cornerstone.</li> <li>• Discussed arrangements for scrutinising progress of students at FA.</li> <li>• Balanced work between governors and organised membership of committees.</li> <li>• Reviewed extraordinary expenditure.</li> </ul>	

The meeting ended at 6.20pm

.....Chair

.....Dated