

**Minutes of a meeting of Governors of Queen Elizabeth Grammar School,  
Penrith, held on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> October 2018 at 6.00pm in Room B1**

Present:

Mrs G Gravett (P)	Mr M Bauer (CoG)
Miss R McMann (Clerk)	Ms S Warner (S)
Mr R Shephard (CoG)	Mr A Worth (S)
Dr E Mawson (Deputy Head)	Dr T Castles (P) (Chair)
Mrs K Rae (CoG)	Mrs T Boving-Foster (P)
	Ms J Mills (CoG)

Visitors: none

9 Governors in attendance.

Quorum per article 114 – 6 Governors  
(one half of the governors holding office rounded up to the nearest whole number)

GbS – Governor by Statute  
MaG – Member appointed Governor  
CoG – Co-opted Governor  
S – Staff  
P- Parent

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were accepted for Mrs Nicol and Mr Hansford (work commitments) and Mr Buckland who was away on OFSTED training.

2. Declaration of Interest in Agenda Items

Mr Worth and Mrs Warner declared an interest in the pay awards item and thus, would not vote on this.

3. Any changes to the declaration of Business Interests

Miss McMann has circulated a book detailing the Governors' register of interest which has been updated and signed. For those Governors not present, Miss McMann will contact them to either go into school to update / sign the book or if not feasible complete a paper form and send it back to school.

4. Minutes of the Governors Meeting Held Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> July 2018 FG201819(1)

It was noted that there was a lengthy discussion around MATS which is absent from the minutes. In short, there was a desire by Governors to explore this as well as other flexible options around the Sixth Form and working together with other schools like UCC for instance. The Governors' recollection was that they would have liked Mr Buckland to produce a paper detailing these options for discussion. Whilst they were not necessary pro MATS, they felt it is important to explore all available options given the financial situation of the school and that it seems unlikely that the Government is going to increase funding. **Action: Miss McMann to contact Mr Brown, who took the minutes in her absence, to see if he has any notes on this to insert into the minutes.**

5. Matters Arising

There was one matter arising which due to its confidentiality will be minuted separately.

6. Reports from Sub Committees

a) Finance and Pay Committee held 1<sup>st</sup> October 2018 FG201819(2)

Mrs Rae highlighted that these minutes had not yet been approved by herself as this was a challenging meeting and she would therefore like more time to reflect upon them. She went on to summarise that the school was looking at a break even situation and summarised the budget discussions as detailed in the minutes.

Mrs Rae made Governors aware that there has been a potential CIF underspend of £80,000. Dr Mawson pointed out that the exact figure still needed to be checked with E3Cube as she believes it is not that high. However, regardless of the figure, there is still an underspend and these pockets of money are for specific purposes with a specification of what the money is to be spent on. Mrs Rae went on to explain that E3Cube advised that Mr Buckland spent all of the money, which she appreciates but from an auditor's perspective there could be a liability to pay this money back. She went on to add that this should be included as a potential liability and that at the Finance meeting it was agreed money could be used to enhance the new building or; she suggested replace things in the new build as they get damaged but she again emphasised that this should be recorded as a potential liability. Mrs Rae finished by saying this matter was not concluded as more information was required but felt she needed to highlight the discussions from the Finance meeting to the Governing Body as a whole.

Questions and comments from this were as follows:

- *Has some of the money been spent (MB)?* Yes on making the new build fit for purpose and this is already reflected in the figures (KR)

- Mr Buckland was unaware of this £80,000 potential figure until the last Finance meeting when it was first reported by the Finance manager (EM)
- This needs to be made 'clean' and look to pay any unspent money back if the figure is as high as quoted by Mr Chappell (GG)
- The playing fields were meant to have been returned to their original condition but they have not been – could a pocket of money not be used for this and if not carried over as a liability (AW)
- Do not want money spent that the Governing Body are not aware of and carry any money forward as a potential liability (TC).

It was recommended in the minutes that the Governors approve all teaching and non-teaching staff were awarded a 1% pay rise. Mrs Warner sought clarification that for support staff this would be backdated to April 2018 and it was confirmed that the figures reflected this. **It was unanimously agreed. Dr Mawson to notify payroll and clarify the exact percentage with Mr Buckland, though in principle it was 1%.**

With regards to the Risk Register, Mrs Rae reported that she felt it appropriate that all Governors participate in a session on this topic. **It was agreed that as the January Full Governing Body meeting does not have any prior sub-committee meetings, that this be scheduled for then to allow time for proper discussion.**

Questions and comments which arose from these minutes were as follows:

- *How are the staff coping given the discussions about potential redundancies (TBF)?* The Finance committee did not ask Mr Buckland to speak to staff, just explore the options around this. Whilst Mr Buckland's frustrations are appreciated, no conversations should have been started on this subject (KR). It was countered that Mr Buckland had a legal obligation to notify staff if this was a possibility and cannot really criticise nor hold a discussion on this in Mr Buckland's absence (EM).
- In relation to the above, overall morale is not great but staff keep on going (SW)
- *Has the message got back to staff that redundancies are off the table this year (TC)?* There is a staff briefing tomorrow where this will be discussed (EM)
- The budget looks about balanced. The P.E. department have taken a 67% cut. The department can handle this for a year but equipment needs

replacing on an annual basis and moreover, this could have significant effects on the ability to enter competitions and teaching lessons. To conclude, the school is not out of the woods yet (AW).

- A break-even situation is not great especially as income is likely to become static or decline as there appears to be no more funding and staffing remains at an 80-85% cost. Additionally, a point will come where the school cannot cut any more. A realistic working budget needs to be put in place as soon as possible (KR)
- A huge thanks to the staff for their co-operation in making cuts (EM)
- Increasing pupil numbers will increase income (RS)
- In relation to above, what about the strain on staff and facilities – that is also at a cost (JM)
- Cannot carry on as we are and thus have to start thinking about things such as assets to sell (MB)
- Look at obtaining funds from parents. Many other schools operate financial programmes and this can generate £30,000 - £40,000 per year (EM)
- Need to look at the possibility of MATs, look at the idea cited above as well as every other possibility (TBF).
- The solution is to generate more income (RS)

**The finance discussions were concluded by Dr Castles stating that as well as the January meeting focussing on the Risk Register, a full and frank discussion on the way forward would be on the agenda.**

b) Education and Standards Committee held 27<sup>th</sup> September 2018 FG201819(3)

In the absence of Mr Hansford, Ms Mills presented the minutes. It was reported that the Sixth Form Link Report had been postponed until the next meeting and that the Heads of Sixth Form were keen to attend.

Ms Mills summarised the discussion on new ways for conducting link reports and that Mr Hansford would be analysing the committee's comments and suggestions, bringing a proposal to the next meeting.

7. Exam Results FG201819(4)

Dr Mawson circulated a slightly updated document to the one which had been previously distributed prior to the meeting.

A-Level: it was reported that this was a lower average GCSE cohort and thus, they have achievements are even more significant. The results are excellent with 86% attending their first choice university. Mrs Boving-Foster commented that she saw there was less of a gender issue.

GCSE: shows a slight change as the DfE have given a provisional figure of a Progress 8 score of +0.3 which is an increase from last year and thus, proves it was a 'blip' year. Special recognition was given to maths with a score of +0.5 and every bucket being positive. The issues with Modern Foreign Languages are continuing to be tackled.

Questions and comments were as follows:

- Incredibly positive, with the arts and drama subjects having fantastic results which reflects the ethos of the school (GG)
- *Did anyone not obtain a place at university (TC)?* Yes but that was because they did not accept a place (EM). Additionally, staff advice was ignored and chose to apply for an unrealistic place (AW).

Dr Castles concluded this item by thanking Dr Mawson for her data collection and emphasising the importance of the strategy the school has at looking at individuals.

#### 8. School's Admission Policy

Dr Mawson sought ratification from the Governors that the school can increase its PAN intake to 160 for the academic year 2019/20 as offer letters are due to go out tomorrow. Mrs Gravett asked if this had been previously discussed as she was unaware of this proposal or discussed with staff in the first instance, as she felt strongly that this would have a huge impact upon them. Dr Mawson replied that this was discussed in the July meeting Mr Buckland sought ratification from the Governors first. A vote was taken to increase the PAN intake to 160 for 2018/19 entry:

**Votes for: 7**

**Votes against: 2**

**Therefore, Mr Buckland has the authority to increase the PAN intake to 160 for 2018/19 entry.**

Mrs Boving-Foster raised the fact that she thought this item was on the agenda to also discuss the policy itself and how favour pupil premium. Dr Mawson answered that advice had been taken and consultation would take place next year.

9. SIP FG201819(5)

Mrs Gravett queried a figure on page three quoting a surplus of £295,000 which is a figure she did not recognise. Dr Mawson thought it was probably factoring in the school's reserves but would check this with Mr Buckland. There were no further questions or comments.

10. SEF FG201819(6)

There was nothing to add to this at this stage and this will be brought back to the March meeting.

11. Task and Finish Group: Articles of Association

Dr Castles reported that no meeting had taken place yet, as per the action in the previous minutes. Moreover, he reported that whilst he was happy to facilitate a process to re-write the Articles, it is not mandatory.

**It was concluded by the Governors that at this stage there is no need to change the Articles or the process in place.**

12. Vice Chair of Governors Election

Only one volunteer has come forward, Mrs Tine Boving-Foster. Dr Castles nominated Mrs Boving-Foster and Mr Worth seconded it. A vote was taken:

**Votes for: 8**

**Votes against: 0**

**Abstentions: 0**

**Therefore, Mrs Boving-Foster is unanimously accepted as the new Vice Chair of Governors.**

13. Governor Recruitment

In the last few months, there have been three Governor resignations and thus, there are potentially three spaces to fill, though this figure is not mandatory.

The Governors had been circulated a CV for a Mr Justin Ray who has a wealth of Financial experience – a current skills shortage on the Governing Body. Mrs Rae commented that her experience of Mr Ray was that he was personable with commerciality and would be supportive of the school's future plans. Mrs Boving-Foster, who sent the CV on behalf of Mr Ray, added that he was genuinely interested in becoming a Governor and has a long-

**The Governors unanimously agreed to offer Mr Ray a position as a Co-Opted Governor to join the Finance and Pay Sub-Committee.**

Dr Mawson informed the Governors that she has found a potential candidate who is considering the position.

Dr Castles informed the Governors that a parent, Mr Paul Airey, had expressed an interest in becoming a Governor. He is a solicitor and Mr Bauers backed up this nomination. In addition, there are two Governors on file from December 2017: Mr Martyn Worrall and Mr Elliot Percival. On behalf of Mr Buckland, Dr Mawson recommended Mr Worrall who has been involved with the school for fourteen years.

Mrs Gravett felt that all four applications needed to be looked at again. Ms Mills sought verification that all the applicants had been met with as she felt this was an important part of the process. Dr Castles confirmed this was the case.

**To conclude it was decided that the vote on appointing Mr Ray would still stand due to his financial expertise. The other three applicants' CVs would be circulated with for Governors to vote with a yes or a no on each application.**

Mrs Rae left the meeting.

14. Governor Information Booklet FG201819(7)

This has been circulated as it is to be updated for the website and in light of recent resignations there are several gaps to fill on committees. Dr Castles urged Governors to contact Miss McMann if they are able to fill any vacancies on the committees.

15. Headteacher's Report FG201718(8)

In the absence of Mr Buckland, Dr Mawson led on this. She informed the Governors of one change since the report was circulated: there had been one external day exclusion followed by two days internal exclusion for sexual harassment and one day internal exclusion for abusive language towards a staff member.

In response to this, Ms Mills asked if students who are excluded are worked with to understand and correct their behaviour. Dr Mawson confirmed that this is the case and that parents are also involved.

There were no further questions or comments on the report. Dr Castles thanked Dr Mawson for stepping up in managing the school whilst Mr Buckland was away.

16. Number of Meetings

Dr Castles reported that he had been looking to reduce the number of meetings in a year. However, as Mrs Rae pointed out in the Finance meeting, she interprets that the guidelines stipulate a minimum of six meetings per year of the Full Governing Body so there is no room for manoeuvre there. Additionally, he felt the number of Finance meetings needed to remain the same which leaves the Education and Standards Committee. Mrs Boving-Foster commented that if Heads of Departments are going to be asked to attend meeting as per a new link report process, the number of meetings ought to remain the same. **It was agreed to keep the number of meetings as they are currently.**

17. New Governance Handbook

As Mrs Rae, who was going to lead on this topic, had to leave the meeting, this was deferred until the next meeting.

18. Notices

There were no notices.

19. To Consider Any Items to be Minuted Separately

See item 5.

19. Items to be Added to the Next Agenda

- Health and Safety
- Safeguarding
- New Governance Handbook

20. Date of Next Meeting

Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> December 2018 at 6.00pm

The meeting closed at 8.35pm