

Minutes of a meeting of Governors of Queen Elizabeth Grammar School, Penrith, held on Thursday 11th July 2019 at 6.00pm in Room E19

A governor day was held before the FGB. No minutes were taken, but the meeting was well attended and very informative.

Presentations from Heads of Departments included successes and challenges their departments face, presented as they preferred to the governing board.

- Head of English, Mrs. Cooke
- Head of Science, Mr. Finlinson
- Head of Maths, Mrs. Ford
- Ofsted's new framework and implication for QEGS, Mr. Buckland
- "Questions every governing board should ask itself", Mrs. Boving Foster – not covered due to time constraints

Present at the Full Governing Body Meeting:

Miss R McMann (Clerk)	Mr A Martin (S)
Dr E Mawson (Deputy Head)	Mr A Worth (S)
Mr P Airey (CoG)	Mr P Buckland
Mr J Ray (CoG)	Mrs T Boving-Foster (P) (Chair)
Mrs K Rae (CoG)	Mr M Bauer (CoG)
Mr C Hansford	Ms J Mills (CoG)
Mrs G Gravett (P)	Mr M Worrall (CoG)
Mr G Miller (P)	

Visitors: none

13 Governors in attendance

Quorum per article 114 – 7 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

Prior to the start of the meeting, Mrs Boving-Foster wished to introduce a new style to meetings, one which is used by Mrs Rae in her workplace. To begin each meeting she would like each Governor to start by saying something positive – this could be anything from a Governor experience, to something at work or from home-life. She felt it important that each meeting has a specific focus outside of the standing agenda items. At the end of

the meeting, each Governor will be asked to rate the meeting using a scale of 1-10 and commenting on what they thought could be improved as well as the positives.

This evening's meeting will focus on:

The Skills Audit and is there a need for any new Governors?

The SIP

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were accepted for Mr R Shephard (work)

2. Declaration of Interest in Agenda Items

There were no declarations of interest in the agenda items.

3. Any changes to the declaration of Business Interests

There were no changes to the declaration of business interests.

4. Minutes of the Governors Meeting Held Thursday 9th May 2019

It was unanimously agreed to accept the minutes as a true record and Mrs Boving-Foster signed them.

5. Matters Arising

With regards to the action points from the last meeting, the idea of shared learning needs to be carried forward.

Mrs Boving-Foster gave an update as to where she was with looking at the link process stating that she felt it should be linked to the SIP. This is still a work in progress but wished it to be noted that the Head of Department presentations earlier were really enjoyable. Additionally, some Governors are taking on projects as detailed below:

- Mr Worth has volunteered to look at the rounded student and celebration culture and will be preparing a report on this.
- Ms Mills has volunteered to look at the school's career structure, not only within the Sixth Form but how it links with the lower school.
- Mr Ray will be looking at the impact of the increase in intake upon facilities including sports, canteen and science equipment to name a few.

Mrs Boving-Foster concluded by saying that the aim of the link process is to get a rounded picture and not just relying on SLT for information. Dr Mawson reminded Governors that in going about this, normal visiting rules apply. This was echoed by Mrs Boving-Foster.

A project which has been given to Miss McMann is to look at the current system of emailing documents and information to Governors, against the new GDPR regulations. At the suggestion of Mr Worrall it could be that each Governor has a school email address for their time as a Governor. Another idea would be the creation of a secure hub to store documents as opposed to sending them as an attachment via email. Miss McMann will explore the various options and bring a report back to the Governors in the new academic year. In response to a question from Mr Miller, it was confirmed that there is currently no provision on the school system for a portal with secure access for documents.

6. Reports from the Sub-Committees

Education and Standards:

Ms Mills presented the minutes saying that it was a positive meeting. Miss McMann informed the Governors that Mr Shephard had viewed and approved the SEND policy in line with the action points. Mr Buckland was pleased to update the Governing Body that due to a £24,000 VAT return, both the attendance officer and new pastoral role will be recruited to at the end of the Summer holidays. This news was much welcomed by all present.

Finance and Pay:

Mr Buckland had two corrections to the minutes:

- There has not been an overspend in the I.T. budget. The allocation line needed to be checked as it looks like there is an underspend of circa £2,000.
- There has not yet been a transfer of £25,000 to the Investech account

Mr Buckland also updated the Governors that he had managed to persuade the Business Manager at Kirkby Stephen Grammar School to stay on for one more term. Additionally, a lady who is currently working for a primary school MAT will also join the school for one day a week in September (charging £175 per day) to support the Finance team. Mr Buckland felt that this would put the school in a much better position. Mrs Rae questioned who is in overall control. Mr Buckland answered that he is and that the RO audit seemed to have gone well. The report is not yet available but it was verbally communicated that there are no significant issues. Mrs Rae asked to see a copy of this once it is available. Saint and Co will complete the audit. Overall Mr Buckland felt the school is in safe hands and the measures taken have all been about building up resilience. Dr Mawson added that the SLT have picked up a lot of the work and have learnt a lot in doing so.

An update regarding the CIF money was given – this has all been paid back.

As per the minutes Mrs Rae alerted the Governors to the Financial Compensation Scheme and that one of the bank accounts has slightly more than £85,000 in it, albeit a recognised high street bank. Thus, she sought clarification as to whether it should be moved or could the Governors ratify a provision where the Finance Committee can authorise that if it is a strong bank account there may be an occasion where there is a little more than £85,000 in it but that they would review it continuously. There was a short debate on this and comments from this were as follows:

- Money should be transferred (MB & JM)
- It is about risk management versus workload in transferring money (JR)
- It is not easy to move money between accounts and if funds are then required can be difficult to transfer the funds back (KR)
- Finance committee review the bank accounts in every meeting (JR)
- This appeared in last year's management letter so a clean response is needed (KR)
- Sensible to have it as a general rule but not a hard number - should change the policy to 'as far as able to' and review it at every meeting (JR)
- There is no hard figure written in any policy, it is just in the management letter (PB)

To conclude it was agreed that the Finance Committee can use their judgement to move funds with a full review at every meeting against cash flow requirements and economic circumstance.

7. Governor Training and Governor Matters

It was reported that the following courses had been attended:

- Mercia Audit update course (KR)
- Strategic Vision and Ethos on the NGA website and was useful in separating the strategic from the managerial roles (AW)

Mrs Rae told the committee that there is a GovernorHub application which she finds useful in translating acronyms as well as providing the latest news and details of courses / webinars.

Mrs Boving-Foster updated the Governors on the Chair Development programme she has enrolled in and thus far completed one day. She thanked Governors for taking the

time to complete 360 degree feedback. The highlight thus far is meeting other Chairs of Governors.

Finally Mrs Boving-Foster reported to Governors that the Parent Survey was very positive.

8. Governor Skills Audit

Mrs Boving-Foster summarised this into the essential and desirable categories. With regards to the essential categories, she was pleased that none of these were below a three and added that must bear in mind that some of the fields are specific specialist knowledge which not every Governor needs to possess so long as there are one or two on board. Mr Ray added a note of caution to keep a note of weaker areas in case a Governor should resign for example and leave a skills gap. Mrs Boving-Foster answered that it was her intention to do this annually.

Mrs Rae asked how Governors could obtain information to broaden their knowledge of Governance. Mrs Boving-Foster suggested making more use of the resources the school subscribes to (NGA and online training tool), following the news and that it is an ongoing process. Mr Buckland added that OFSTED are more interested in what you know about your own school and that he would be happy to do a presentation on this. Mrs Boving-Foster suggested that a specific policy or subject area could be chosen and the relevant staff member attend to make for more interaction. Whilst not opposed to this Mr Buckland added a note of caution regarding workloads. Mrs Gravett reported that she found The Times and The Guardian often have useful articles relating to education. It was also noted that whilst the school does not pay for Governor access to The Key, there is a facility to download five articles for free.

It was concluded that should a Governor find a relevant news article / piece of information to send to Miss McMann to share with the whole Governing Body. Action point: Mrs Boving-Foster to compare the NGA with The Key.

With regards to the desirable categories, Mrs Boving-Foster felt that the Governing Body was lacking in I.T., pastoral and specialist data management experience. As this is Mrs Gravett's last meeting, the Governing Body has the opportunity, should it wish, to recruit a new member. There are several interested people who were not elected in the previous parent election, one of which has experience in procurement. Additionally, Mrs Boving-Foster was pleased to report that there has been an application made from a retired GP who specialised in mental health and has experience of prioritising expenditure when funds are

low. Mrs Boving-Foster added that she had met this candidate, it was very positive, clear that she understood governance and perhaps most importantly that she has time to give to the school.

There was a short discussion following this with Mrs Gravett making the recommendation that someone with mental health experience would be the most valuable asset to the school. Dr Mawson concurred with this, adding that her experience with budgets in this area would be valuable.

Action point: Miss McMann to circulate the C.V. with a deadline before the end of the school year to vote as to whether this would be a welcome addition to the Governing Body.

9. Health and Safety

There were no updates. As the new Health and Safety Governor, Mr Miller requested that he visited school in September as per the visiting guidelines to look at things such as PAT testing, COSHH and risk assessments. This was welcomed.

10. Safeguarding

There were no issues to report

11. SIP

Mr Buckland summarised the three year plan which feeds into the new one year plan. Key features of the one year plan are to work on the website, keep financial costs down but ensure quality is up and also communication and staff well-being.

With regards to staff well-being, Mr Buckland was pleased to report that as per the previously circulated Staff Survey, it was far more positive. The comments have been looked at and Mr Buckland reported that workload issues will become a priority. With regards to behaviour, this will be looked at in September and re-visited via the new Behaviour Policy.

The Governors were also informed that gender gap work and the celebration culture were ongoing.

A one-year SIP plan will be in place for next year with Governors' assisting with a three-year plan thereafter. The one year plan will be brought to Governors next term.

Mrs Boving-Foster commented that it was very positive to view the staff survey and the responses. Mr Buckland replied that he feels very lucky to have the staff that he does citing their flexibility on activity week as an example. He felt that there are still changes to be made and a long way to go. Mrs Gravett praised the achievement of SLT in the work they have done with the staff.

12. Headteacher's Report

Mr Buckland confirmed that all had read the previously circulated report and as there were no further updates invited questions and comments. Mr Bauer praised the drug awareness work saying it has had a massive impact. Mr Buckland reported that this will be back next term for Year 11 down to Year 9 as well as a parents' event.

13. Elections

Each position was voted on in line with the agenda. There was only one voluntary candidate per position. The results were as follows:

- **Mrs Boving-Foster unanimously voted as Chair of Governors**
- **Mr Martyn Worrall unanimously voted as Vice Chair of Governors**
- **Mrs Karen Ray unanimously voted as Chair of the Finance and Pay Committee**
- **Mr Justin Ray unanimously voted as Vice Chair of the Finance and Pay Committee**
- **Mr Charles Hansford unanimously voted as Chair of the Education and Standards Committee**
- **Ms Mills unanimously voted as Vice Chair of the Education and Standards Committee**

14. Meeting Dates 2019/20

Mrs Boving-Foster provided an update to the previously circulated document stating that the meeting on 30th January 2020 would be a three-hour strategy meeting and thus, asked if a 5.30pm start time would be suitable and also that the first Finance and Pay meeting of the year would include a one hour session on the Academies Financial Handbook after the normal meeting and so could this meeting also start at 5.30pm? Finally, she added that she felt it would be beneficial to organise another Governor Day but would do this much sooner to give Governors as much notice as possible.

Mr Buckland noted that there are a lot of meetings and the NGA commented on this in the training session they ran last year. He asked the Governors to bear in mind the workload for SLT and that they to need to maintain a work-life balance. Whilst he appreciated the need to look at Finances regularly and for the Full Governors to meet, he suggested that the Education and Standards Committee reduced their meetings to three times a year. This led to a short discussion with the following points made:

- Happy to have this as a suggestion to look at (TBF)
- Look at how the data drop fits in and plan Education meetings around that (MW)
- Can work around the above and bring most up-to-date information to the meetings and can also email summary with the headlines to Governors if they are happy with that (EM)
- The issue that the results are presented in both the Education and Standards meeting and the Full Governors' meeting (CH)
- There is a level of detail that is required but would happily just present it once at Full Governors if all Governors are happy to have the extended presentation (EM)
- Would the above not make the Full Governors' meeting too long? (JR)
- Would it be sensible to have all meetings start at 5.30pm (GM)

To conclude it was agreed that the Education meeting in September and the Finance meeting in April could be removed. Mrs Boving-Foster was cautious about removing any more meetings. It was also agreed that all meetings will now start at 5.30pm.

Action points:

- **Miss McMann to update and circulate meeting dates**
- **Mrs Boving-Foster to have a plan for first Full Governors' meeting.**

To conclude the meeting round the table ratings of the meeting were given. Suggestions for improvement were for meetings to be more streamlined but overall the meeting was deemed to be a success with constructive debate and challenges made.

Mrs Boving-Foster made a presentation to Mrs Gravett, former Chair of Governors, who has served the school for seven years and is resigning at the end of August. She thanked her for all her hard-work, dedication and support.

The meeting closed at 7.25pm