

# THE QUEEN'S SCHOOL BOARD OF GOVERNORS

## THE QUEEN'S C OF E SCHOOL CUMBERLAND ROAD KEW SURREY TW9 4HF

Minutes of the Meeting of the Governors of The Queen's School  
held at the school on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> June 2018 at 7.00pm.

Present: *Foundation Governors (9)*  
(LC) Laura Coughtrie (*Chair*) (ER) Emma Roberts  
(DD) David Durie (CR) Caroline Roberts  
(KA) Kristen Anderson (*Co-Vice Chair*) (LMF) Luci Mitchell Fry  
(IH) Inga Hall (*Co-Vice Chair*) (HC) Hatty Cadman  
(NW) Nigel Worn

*Non-Foundation Governors (4)*  
(KB) Katie Bentham (*Headteacher*) (JM) James Merel  
(BCW) Bethany Claus Widick (CC) Catherine Christmas

*LA Governor (1)*  
(MO) Mark Ollard

*Co-Opted Governors (1)*  
(HJC) Harry Charrington

*Non-Voting (1)*  
Philippa Anderson (*Clerk*)

*Opening Prayer (led by Father Nigel Worn)*

### **1. APOLOGIES AND WELCOME**

Apologies received from Jean Utshudiema.

### **2. DECLARATION OF FINANCIAL AND OTHER MATERIAL INTERESTS**

All Governors and Associate Members are reminded of the need to declare any direct or indirect pecuniary interest which might relate to any matter under discussion.

### **3. TO RECEIVE ANY NOMINATIONS FOR THE ROLES OF CO-CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR FOR 2018/19 AND TO VOTE AS NECESSARY**

LC gave an overview of the thinking for moving back to the Co-Chair model in the next academic year, with a Vice Chair in support. IH put herself forward as potential Co-Chair and HC as Vice Chair. Given that no other nominations were received for either role, DD proposed and KA seconded the appointments as above, with LC remaining as Co-Chair.

### **4. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 10<sup>th</sup> MAY 2018**

A query was raised regarding wording at top of page 5, which was clarified as correct. The minutes were then approved as an accurate reflection of the meeting and signed by LC.

Matters arising:

Any matters arising are on the agenda of this meeting.

## **STRATEGIC – Linked to Vision**

### **5.a. TO RECEIVE FINANCIAL OUT-TURN FOR 2017/18**

MO reported on seeing several versions of last year's out-turn, with another version circulated at this meeting for maximum clarity. The budget last year stated a deficit of £240k, and in the end the school made a surplus of £4k, which is a significant difference and, frustratingly, a big deficit is still being forecast with only a month to go, with more income than anticipated and less expenditure than expected - £11k more from PSA than budgeted for; £18k more donations from RNST; the Governors' Appeal made £8k more than last year; the Year 6 School journey with more income than thought as it was very well attended this year. Lettings was below budget due to the wait for the Community Use Agreement. In terms of recharges, £23k extra income was received; £23k on supply teacher insurance claims; SEN up £9k on budget – this is therefore nearly £100k of unbudgeted revenue. MO noted that this is not necessarily unusual – the school does not budget for unknown monies, so there is always some extra in any year.

In terms of spend, MO reported on staff costs very close to budget and then took the committee through a line by line analysis of the spend, with a total of £147k less spend, giving the out-turn of £4k surplus.

**Q:** Some of this underspending from last year presumably carries over into this year as committed expenditure?

**A:** Yes.

The Chair advised that the Finance committee were particularly concerned about this vast differential between forecast and actual out-turn, with the school still believing there would be a huge overspend as late as February this year. LC then drew attention to two points that AR had pointed out at Finance committee: that due to the cash accounting system, the school will end up paying for two school journeys in this financial year; and has also repaid some insurance this year that should have been paid last year. Whilst an actual out-turn of £4k in excess is shown, with those two items taken into consideration, there will be an out-turn of c. £26k.

MO reported that AR has broken the budget down into the underlying running of the school separate to the one-offs, with a deficit on the running of the school costs of £28k.

A governor stated, that in not being a member of finance, it had been extremely frustrating to continue to be told the school was facing a situation that he didn't believe was the case and that the school should not have erred on the side of excessive prudence, as this serves to cut down options, and although the school did get through the previous year without having to take drastic decisions, this had been due to happenstance.

It was acknowledged that there will be far more accurate information through the current financial year due to appointment of an SBM and it was noted that the Finance Chair has worked very hard with AR to have a monthly financial forecast so that the school is in position to know where it is at any point through the year. MO pointed out that it was not a bad budget 12 months ago, but that it was not updated to reflect the changing situation, and that the appointment of a full-time SBM will inevitably make a huge difference to the previous situation of a 10-hour per week employee in this role.

**Q:** How was that budget signed off last year?

**A:** It reflected the core running of the school plus additional committed items, some of which are still committed. At FGB this time last year it was thought there would be a huge overspend, but the school was in the fortunate position of having reserves and such in depth analysis took place in order to keep those reserves, as a safety blanket. Those reserves have not now been used fortunately. The Finance committee has done a lot of difficult work to enable this and the school is in a far better position now.

### **b. TO APPROVE THE FINAL BUDGET FOR 2018/19**

MO took the committee through the Final budget breakdown, explaining in detail the information and figures provided. MO noted that this is presented in a very clear way, focusing on the core running of the school, which shows a deficit of £27k, and whether this is acceptable, and highlighting the reasons to believe the school may do better than that, particularly with plans in

place to raise further funds for the school e.g. through Amazon affiliation; Easy Fundraising and the PSA, etc.

**Q:** Where is the ring-fencing in this budget?

**A:** This is the one-off column, showing RNST donations which have to be spent on specific items.

**Q:** Where are other PSA contributions during the course of the year shown?

**A:** They are not budgeted for – the £10k shown is already committed.

**Q:** Is the £27k projected deficit with the heightened austerity of last year?

**A:** With more austerity if anything, although staffing budget has not been cut. The board will still need to keep this as a focus throughout the year. There is not much flexibility in the budget.

MO advised that he will run through the latest position with AR at every Finance committee meeting, report at every FGB and send a report out to governors in the months when no meeting is scheduled.

**Q:** Is there any element of contingency in the budget?

**A:** No - that is what the reserves are for, which ideally remain there untouched. The reserves should not go below £50k. There is potential for a decision of at least a 2% increase in teacher salaries next year, with no knowledge of where the funds will come from.

MO noted the new funding model for schools' - a national Funding Formula – with London weighting removed, which is not at all bad news for LBRUT as the Borough currently receives far less funding than most schools.

A governor then raised the question of catering income in relation to school lunches and queried the difference in incoming and outgoing catering costs. KB responded, noting that the Borough contract has changed, and now the Borough do not monitor it, and any profit made is considered school profit. However, the school then needs to pay for any catering maintenance required to equipment, which is likely to require investment all at the same time.

The Chair asked for any further questions on the Budget prior to approval.

**Q:** The Lettings income is forecast at £51k in the draft budget versus a final figure now of £141k – is this a sound figure?

**A:** MO believes this figure could in fact come in higher.

**Q:** Does the income from Facilities' figure in the budget relate only to Lettings?

**A:** No. Lettings is only a part of this income. It was £11k last year, with £17k further budgeted for this year. IH, in response to a further question regarding Lettings, pointed out that the demand for the astro pitch is during evenings, Saturday afternoons and Sundays, when under the terms of the CUA, the school cannot let it out and this affects realisation of income potential. Hopefully the hours can be increased or at least shifted to meet this demand when the CUA is reviewed in two years. The budgeted figure is therefore what the school feels comfortable with at the present time, with the internal space proving very popular.

**Q:** Is there any opportunity to demonstrate to the Council what the school is losing in terms of revenue before the two years is up?

**A:** The base work is being done now to build a strong case for expanding CUA hours and reducing restrictions. It is very positive that no complaints have been received and this supports our 'case' that community use works. A community liaison meeting needs to be set up for the Autumn Term.

**Q:** Will the unspent money from last year on IT be spent this year on IT?

**A:** Yes – management time is a factor and the appointment of AR should help in this respect.

**Q:** Is it the one-off committed expenditures that create the difference between the £152k overspend and the actual overspend of £27k?

**A:** Yes.

**Q:** What is the reserve?

**A:** £333k going into the year.

**Q:** The forecast for the end of this year is £182K reserves?

**A:** Yes.

It was agreed that the potential to keep overspending at a rate of £30k per year will very quickly impact on those reserves and LC pointed out that this still needs addressing, hence Item 6. of the agenda.

MO, as a final point, drew attention to the single most important factor in school finance being the numbers on roll, in an area with falling birth rates and fewer young families, which ultimately may well have a negative impact on the current figure and thus affect the school's income.

MO recommended the budget for approval and it was approved unanimously. DD commended the work done by the Finance committee, and in particular MO and AR were thanked for the very valuable work done.

## **6. TO RECEIVE PAPERS ON SUSTAINING OUR FINANCIAL FUTURE 2018-21 AND TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM FINANCE COMMITTEE AND FINALISE**

LC pointed out that this item is the product of the additional finance meetings held last year and that even though out-turn was not as bad as thought, there are still challenging times ahead and the school is still in a place where it needs to increase income, if not decrease expenditure.

*This item has been minuted confidentially.*

## **7. TO NOTE THE HEADTEACHER'S REPORT**

KB highlighted a drop in pupil numbers, pointing out that every summer the school inevitably loses a number of children, so this is not unusual. However, the difference falls in waiting lists for each year group with no explanation. The school is therefore recruiting, but cannot offer places until September, as directed by the LA. Places which already exist are being offered out. Some leavers are due to Brexit, some thinking of moving, but not sure when, so the numbers are still flexible; some going into the private system and in this latter respect, KB is not meeting with parents if it is about class size, otherwise KB is having exit interviews to establish why they are moving to the private sector. Michelle Jones is expecting to be able to replace 17/18 children. The number on roll in September may or may not be at 417, but the census does not take place until October, which is a critical date.

**Q:** Is 20 a normal number of leavers?

**A:** Yes, roughly – maybe 15+. It is not an unusually high number, but the difference lies in the lack of waiting lists in some year groups. KB pointed out that Year 2 is a historic time for leavers as it is a good point for getting into the private system and this happens across the Borough.

**Q:** Are children going to private sector across all year groups?

**A:** Years 2 and 3.

**Q:** Is there a breakdown of how the 20 children spread across the year groups?

**A:** Reception – 2

Year 1 – 2

Year 2 – 7

Year 3 – 7

Year 4 – 1

Year 5 – 4

of which 3 overseas, 2 x twins (4) going private, 2 x Brexit and in the majority of cases, families moving.

**Q:** Is there any other cause for concern in respect of leavers?

**A:** The waiting list situation is different from usual, with only one child on the Reception waiting list. If not everyone takes up their September place, the school could end up with

some classes that are not full. In Year 2 there is no waiting list and many leavers. A governor pointed out that the waiting list issue is key, not just in terms of admissions, but also how the school portrays itself within the community and could question why the school does not have more on the waiting list. The school needs to be very sure of its message – there is a perception that unless you have a church place you will not get into Queen’s, which is incorrect. It was agreed that the school needs to reconsider its marketing to get the right message out there.

The HT then gave context to this situation - low birth-rate, local schools that are not full where Queen’s is and it was agreed that whilst this is very positive, there may be an opportunity to communicate more widely about getting on a waiting list further up the school and the distance map being widely available – possibly on the website.

**ACTION: LMF will explore this further and report back to FGB.**

KB then moved on to give clarity on a referral to Single Point of Access and a confidential staffing issue, which will be communicated widely next week, plus staff allocations to year groups. It was agreed that this was a very concise and full report.

With regards to Gifted & Talented, KB reported that there does not appear to be much lower down the school and there are far fewer activities throughout the Borough. Queen’s participates in Battle of the Books, but most events are now run by private schools. A girls’ science event has just been held at this school, but all schools are more reliant on schools working together to put things on. There is scope for doing a lot more, but the capacity to do it is the issue as are finances, which presents a constant challenge across all areas.

**Q:** What is the right forum for a volunteer structure to be rolled out?

**A:** One of our Vision Priorities is to develop volunteering capacity and we will be focussing on this in the next academic year.

**Q:** When you have had exit interviews, will you share the information with FGB?

**A:** It depends on what is said – information will be shared with whichever committee / governors are appropriate.

## **8. TO RECEIVE A SAFEGUARDING REPORT FROM THE HEADTEACHER (Standing Item)**

This item has been covered within the HT Report.

## **9. TO RECEIVE A VERBAL UPDATE ON SCHOOL’S PLAN FOR GDPR ROLL-OUT**

KB reported that there is a Locality group of SBMs who have worked very hard on GDPR, together with a group solicitor at a shared cost. Photo and video consent forms have been sent out, which have raised a number of issues with parents. This has been and will continue to be very time-consuming, particularly with regards to the Year 6 Yearbook and the videoing of the Year 6 production. No photos can be taken at school, because some parents have refused and this is causing challenges. The Privacy Notice has been updated and is on the website – this was done with help from the group solicitor. It has been a huge admin task getting consent forms on to Integris so that data sorting can take place. It was noted that additional work and expense will be incurred with no government support. KB has received very conflicting views with regards to who can be appointed. AR is the school’s interim DPO. A GDPR email address has been created and will not be monitored through the summer, but will be dealt with on return, which meets requirements.

## **10. a. TO RECEIVE A VERBAL UPDATE ON PLANNED PHASE MEETINGS & VISITS**

CC advised that Phase III is taking place tomorrow, with Phases I and II this week. Minutes were requested within one week of the meeting so that these can be discussed. Phase Visits will take place during week of 9<sup>th</sup> July, International Week – instructions have been issued to governors for this.

CR then gave input regarding an amendment to the Visit Report Forms regarding Christian Distinctiveness following on from the recent Kairos meeting, which CC confirmed will be

implemented. CC welcomes any improvements or amendments which would add clarity.

**10. b. TO NOTE THE PROGRAMME OF GOVERNOR VISITS FOR 2018/19**

CC noted that every governor is expected to do at least one visit a year, even if it is a sporting/ religious event and that a Visit Report form should be completed after each visit, with a short discussion taking place at each FGB to share views.

**11. TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM THE CHAIRS, INCLUDING ITEMS OF GENERAL SIGNIFICANCE CONSIDERED BY THEIR COMMITTEES SHOULD BE DRAWN TO THE ATTENTION OF THE FGB AND TO NOTE THE MINUTES CIRCULATED**

i. Premises – Risk Assessment report has been circulated. When discussing the Year 5 school journey, it was clear there needed to be greater certainty about the Risk Assessment update process. ESFA sign-off with the building contractor has taken place – certified satisfactory completion of all outstanding defects, which is not a school decision. However, the school is still dealing with Paul Forrest at SDBE – with classroom temperatures hitting 30 degrees – and PF agrees with the school's interpretation that the holistic environment is more important than the very noticeable difference between two sides of the building.

ii. Pastoral – ER reported concerns raised regarding bullying, with incidents on the rise, and with the same thing happening in other schools. ER highlighted the ways in which the school has addressed this, noting that the interpretation of bullying needs to be thought about. This is being kept on the Pastoral agenda and will be fed back as necessary.

iii. Kairos – CR reported on Learning Certainties and noted that NW will be running training for Prayer Ambassadors. CR drew attention to Phase Visits and KA was thanked for her all her work.

iv. Finance – nothing further to add. Very aware of policy updates.

v. C&S – in JU's absence, nothing to report.

vi. P&P – minutes fairly full – nothing further to report.

vii. Admissions – nothing to report.

**STATUTORY**

**12. TO DISCUSS CHANGES TO GOVERNOR POSITIONS OF RESPONSIBILITY AND COMMITTEE STRUCTURE FOR 2018/19**

LC noted that it has come to light that there are a relatively large number of governors who are parents with children in Phase II, which has required some juggling to place governors in phases where they do not have children. LC has now met with all governors and will circulate the outcomes at some point soon. LC thanked all governors for meeting with her, noting that it has been a really worthwhile exercise.

**13. FOR NOTING:**

i. Chair's Report, including correspondence.

LC pointed out that this is largely self-explanatory. Eleanor Lamberton has stepped down. LC drew attention to the wonderful school celebration, and particularly gave thanks to the staff and children who were all magnificent.

LC went on to highlight that KA is leaving the governing board at end of this term, having taken on nearly every role, and having been an incredible governor. KA was thanked by all for her contributions over the years. A presentation was made and KA thanked everybody, noting it had been an absolute privilege.

ii. To note verbal Policy Progress Report

An update has been sent to all Chairs and CC will now circulate this to all governors.

Committees are asked to look at those that have slipped. LC noted, that having attended a recent grievance panel at a Borough school, it became very clear that policies need to be followed explicitly and it has flagged concerns regarding some of the policies, which must be as up to date as possible. LC/CC will liaise on this.

**ACTION: LC/CC will liaise on updating of various policies causing concern.**

iii. Proposed Schedule of Dates – noted, with governors asked to give this scrutiny.

#### **14. GOVERNORS' TRAINING (*Standing Item*)**

IH reported on a recent Joint Partnership Meeting, noting a lot going on with SEND and also rolling out the signs of safety as a different approach to Safeguarding, which will require governor training – IH will revert once this has been organised. A couple of induction courses need to take place with new governors and lots of training has taken place.

#### ***OTHER/AOB***

**15.i. FOR/FROM OTHER COMMITTEES:** None.

#### **15.ii. AOB**

**Q:** Given the current turnover, are there any reputational risks currently being faced by the school which need to be considered?

**A:** No.

KA volunteered for oversight / Co-ordination role for the Staff/Governor Party and BCW noted governors will be asked to sign up with their contributions.

*The meeting concluded at 9.00pm.*