



Hitchin Boys' School

PART ONE (OPEN) MINUTES FOR FULL BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING 11th November 2021 at 6.00pm

Board Members	Attendance 2021/2022	Present at this meeting
Dr Helen Corkill (HC) Co-opted Trustee – Chair	2/2	Dr Helen Corkill (HC) Co-opted Trustee – Chair
Mr John Turney (JT) Trustee – Vice Chair	2/2	Mr John Turney (JT) Trustee – Vice Chair
Mr Philip Addison (PA) Parent Trustee	2/2	Mr Philip Addison (PA) Parent Trustee
Mr Neil Broughton (NB) Parent Trustee	2/2	Mr Neil Broughton (NB) Parent Trustee
Mr Bryan Gillingham (BG) Trustee	2/2	Mr Bryan Gillingham (BG) Trustee
Ms Kirsty Harvey (KH) Parent Trustee	2/2	Ms Kirsty Harvey (KH) Parent Trustee
Mr David Hutchinson (DH) Trustee	2/2	Mr. David Hutchinson (DH) Parent Trustee
Mr. David Ingledew (DI) Trustee	1/2	
Ms. Hazel Jones (HJ) Co-opted Trustee	1/2	Ms. Hazel Jones (HJ) Co-opted Trustee
Mr Phil Laws (PL) Trustee	2/2	Mr Phil Laws (PL) Trustee
Mr Steven Marlow (SM) Trustee	2/2	Mr. Steven Marlow (SM) Trustee
Ms Jen McCall (JM) Co-opted Trustee	1/2	Ms. Jen McCall Co-opted Trustee
Mr Fergal Moane (FM) Head teacher	2/2	Mr Fergal Moane (FM) Head teacher
Mrs Janet Radley (JR) Co-opted Trustee	2/2	Mrs Janet Radley (JR) Co-opted Trustee
Miss Kathryn Rainbow (KR) Co-opted Trustee	2/2	Miss Kathryn Rainbow (KR) Co-opted Trustee
Mr Bhagwant Singh (BS) Co-opted Trustee	2/2	Mr Bhagwant Singh (BS) Co-opted Trustee
Mrs Liz Taplin (LT) Co-opted Trustee	1/2	Mrs. Liz Taplin (LT) Co-opted Trustee
Mr Michael Taylor (MT) Trustee	2/2	Mr Michael Taylor (MT) Trustee
Cllr Richard Thake (RT) Trustee	2/2	Cllr Richard Thake (RT) Trustee
Ms Jo Weston (JW) Parent Trustee	2/2	Ms Jo Weston (JW) Parent Trustee
Mr Kris Whitmore (KW) Trustee	2/2	Mr Kris Whitmore (KW) Trustee

In attendance:

Charlie Innam – Head Boy
Bob Goldsmith– Clerk

		Action
	The meeting was conducted remotely using MS Teams owing to Covid-19 restrictions. The meeting was quorate.	
1.	Welcome and introductions. Trustees were welcomed to the meeting. A warm welcome was extended to Hazel Jones (HJ) attending her first meeting as a trustee, following her appointment at the previous meeting	

Approved: _____
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2.	<p>To receive apologies and approve absences.</p> <p>Apologies for absence were received and accepted from DH, DI and LT and for late arrival from KR and from MT (because of difficulties remotely accessing the online meeting).</p> <p>Trustees were reminded that, should they have difficulty accessing the meeting remotely once it has started, not to try contacting the chair who by this stage will be unable to resolve the problem for them.</p>	
3.	<p>To declare any conflict of interest that may arise during the meeting and any changes in declarations of interest.</p> <p><i>'Trustees are reminded they must declare a particular interest, financial or other, in any item on the agenda and withdraw from the meeting for that item'</i>.</p> <p>There were none.</p>	
4.	<p>To receive notification of any other business</p> <p>Agreed to consider planting trees for the Queen's Green Canopy for Royal Jubilee at the request of KH.</p>	
5.	<p>To receive the Head Boy's report.</p> <p>CI gave his Head Boy's report. He expressed his confidence in how things were going at the school and pleasure at Ofsted's very recent rating of the school as outstanding. In particular he talked about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 'House Day' held the previous Friday with cake sales, musical performances and sports challenges. • A charity collection at the school to support a local homelessness project and Cancer Research UK and the support given by the whole prefect team over recent days to make this happen. RT offered to give £100 from his county councillor's budget to support the initiative. • He would, the following week, be meeting with HC (Chair) and other trustees to discuss his role as Head Boy and how to work with trustees over the year ahead. • The ways in which he would be keeping in touch with students in his role as Head Boy and providing feedback to them, • The Remembrance Day commemoration held earlier in the day. CI had been moved by the respectful way students throughout the school observed the minute's silence at the outdoor event that brought together around 200 boys from across the school. He had read the poem 'In Flanders' Fields'. <p>The Governing Body thanked CI for his report.</p>	
6.	<p>(Duplicate Entry on the Agenda)</p>	
7.	<p>To approve the minutes of the FGB meeting held on 29th September 2021 The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and were APPROVED. These will be signed electronically on GovernorHub. ACTION 1.</p>	HC
8.	<p>To consider Matters Arising from the Minutes.</p> <p>1. Send out list of committee members</p>	HC COMPLETE

2.	DI-W to confirm what to declare on Declaration of Interest form.	DWI	COMPLETE	
3.	Code of Conduct to be Updated and Details Circulated ACTION 2	HC	OUTSTANDING	HC
4.	Read Keeping Children Safe in Education Sept 2021 and complete the online quiz by 6 th October 2021. Complete confirmation on GovernorHub. (Questions have circulated to governors. Some governors have yet to return their answers and / or sign off on GH). ACTION 3	ALL	OUTSTANDING	ALL
5.	Sign the minutes of FGB 6 th July 2021 on Governor Hub	HC	COMPLETE	
6.	C/F Decide how to report Horizon Scanning in Autumn Term ACTION 4	HC	REVIEW IN SPRING TERM	FM
7.	Arrange equipment for allow remote attendance to be an option at all f2f meetings. Trustees to let HC if they know of any equipment available. (SM had liaised with trustees to ensure that they would have the right equipment to enable them remotely access meetings. Acknowledged ambition to move back to face-to-face meetings when the time is right. Thanks to SM).	SM	COMPLETE	
8.	Pastoral Committee to bring outcome of consideration of Ofsted Review of Sexual Abuse in Schools and colleges to FGB. ACTION 5	PA	COMPLETED	
9.	Consider parental workshop to support personal development curriculum later in year. (FM had subsequently considered the proposal and already lined up an external facilitator for an e-safety workshop , which would address a concern expressed by parents. He would arrange further workshops in due course. A issue here was how hard-t-reach parents, given the small size of the workshops. FM to update the Chair with further details. HC added that she had attended cyber-security . The Police would be working with schools on this. HC Observed that they were keen to go into school to talk with students on this.	FM	COMPLETED	
10.	Check whether University of Hertfordshire can suggest support for parental training or personal development. ACTION 6	DI	OUTSTANDING	
11.	Check page numbering, dates and review dates on the updated policies. (HC reported that dates and page numbers within the Behaviour Policy still needed correction). ACTION 7	FM	OUTSTANDING	

	12. Email details of consultation on Admissions Arrangements.	FM	ON AGENDA	
	13. Send training requirement information to governors	HC	COMPLETED	
	14. Ensure workplace and other training is logged on	ALL	COMPLETED.	
	15. Add Nolan Principles training to FGB agenda.	BG	ON AGENDA	
	16. Ensure DI-W and J Norman Smith know of Trustee appointment dates.	AB	COMPLETED	
9.	<p>Ofsted's Inspection Report</p> <p>The Trust received Ofsted's Inspection Report following their visit to the school on 21st / 22nd September. Its conclusion was that 'the Hitchin Boys School continues to be an outstanding school'. Alongside this, the Trust also received the school's press release, which included the following statement from the headteacher:</p> <p><i>"This judgement recognises the wonderful school that Hitchin Boys' is, and is a testament to the hard work and efforts of the students, staff, parents, governors and everyone associated with the school. This has been a particularly challenging time in sustaining education during the Coronavirus pandemic, and inspectors recognised the effort that had been put into remote learning and ensuring that students were supported to minimise lost learning. The inspectors spoke to a number of students during the course of the inspection. Our students behaved in their usual impeccable way and they acted as excellent ambassadors for us. What was particularly pleasing was the affirmation that things we had introduced recently, such as the HBS Values and new behaviour system, and the blended learning approach with personal technology in classrooms, was working very effectively to support students in their learning. I am very proud indeed of everyone who contributed to this achievement, and to serve this wonderful school as Headteacher. I would particularly like to thank parents and staff for their warm feedback and how proud they are of the school. We will now focus upon how we can continue to improve Hitchin Boys' into the future".</i></p> <p>Alongside the above, the Trust also acknowledged that Ofsted had in 2019 significantly tightened the requirements within their inspection regime for a school be ranked as outstanding, which had reduced the number of schools awarded this ranking. Hitchin Boy's had been adjudged to be in the top 10% of schools nationally.</p> <p>The Trust Board expressed its appreciation of the efforts made by everyone involved, staff and students, in creating Hitchin Boys as an outstanding school and its congratulations. The Board also joined with the headteacher in his focus on how the school could now be improved into the future, acknowledging that there would also be scope for improvement and a need to respond to challenges in the future.</p>			
10.	<p>Headteacher's Report</p> <p>The Trustees received and considered the headteacher's written report. submitted to trustees prior to the meeting, together with appendices setting out the Fisher Family Trust's Governor Dashboards.</p> <p>The Headteacher updated his report on two matters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of live covid cases within the school had (on the day of meeting) reduced to six. There had been a total of nearly 150 students and nine staff with covid, leading to implementation of the school's outbreak management plan which successfully brought numbers down. 			

- 487 applications had been received for admission into the school at Year 7, of which 229 were first preferences. This gave confidence that the school would in September once again be able to fill all 210 places.

The report acknowledged the following achievements, as outlined with the report:

- The covid vaccination programme delivered for 12–15-year-olds, delivered by the NHS, in which 450 students had been vaccinated in one day.
- Celebration of the 'European Week of Languages';
- Participation in 'Black History Month' under the national theme of 'Who Am I?'
- Over 400 students representing their school and house in school sports clubs during the first half-term with a large number of fixtures in rugby, football and basketball including participation in national and district competitions.
- Intensive work by the careers team, using the 'Unifrog' platform, and attendance of students at the 'Generation Hitchin' event to promote apprenticeship opportunities.
- Year 11 students undertaking their first mock exams under controlled conditions with excellent attitude and engagement was excellent. Gaps in knowledge would be attended to with targeted supported groups for those needing it.

The report also provided contextual data for numbers of students on the roll, including a focus on pupil premium and those receiving free-school-meals, special educational needs and those students with Education Health Care Plans. Comparative data was provided through the Fisher Family Trust's assessments. Information was provided on leadership and management using the governing body's agreed standard format, including staffing. Finally, an assessment was provided, at the specific request of governors, on the likely impact of the government's autumn spending review.

The following questions were asked by trustees:

Q1: With reference to the reported GDPR breach, was the ICO Commissioner satisfied with the school's response or asked for further actions?

A: The commissioner's office had been satisfied with the case presented by the school, acknowledging mitigations cited by the school due to the covid outbreak. There were no follow-up actions required of the school.

Q2: Noting legal threats made by anti-vaxxers at the school gates, had there been any basis behind these threats or other matters that the school had needed to pay attention to?

A: There had been no validity behind the threats, the vaccinations being required in accordance with decisions taken by the government at national level and justified by the levels of covid sickness locally in Hitchin and within the school. The Headteacher thanked colleague in Public Health for their practical support following declaration of the local outbreak within the school.

Q3: The report referred to parent push-back on the newly adopted Behaviour Policy. What is this about and we can reduce its incidence in any way?

A: A report addressing this would be submitted to the Pastoral Cttee on 23rd November. The issue related to the new grid setting out consequence for unacceptable behaviour. Parents were contacting teachers about minor consequences (C1, C2) for talking, disrupting lessons etc and that this is inappropriate. The headteacher emphasised that the teacher's word in this must be final and they don't have the capacity to address dozens of minor queries like this every day. The school would be going out with an updated behaviour policy with further refinements and also an appeal to use judgement, to follow the 'Partnership between home and school' agreement and only make contact with Heads of Year with significant concerns.

	<p>The Headteacher acknowledged that the matter would benefit from re-consideration, hence the report to the Pastoral Cttee which trustees could address there. Trustees acknowledged that staff were still learning how most practically to implement the new grids</p> <p>Q4: Reference was made to teaching staff leaving the school, not in significant numbers, but still a matter that trustees should consider. Were these staff being invited to attend exit interviews?</p> <p>A: The headteacher acknowledged that the personal cases of particular teachers must remain confidential and could not be discussed in the presence of staff governors. However, he acknowledged that the Board of Members had asked for exit interviews to be introduced and he was working on introducing these. He suggested that the most appropriate way for trustees to monitor the matter would be for a generalised report to be submitted setting out overall themes from exit interviews. He assured trustees that none of the recent cases involved anything untoward and could be summarised as about people's personal lives moving on and routine issues. ACTION 8</p>	
11.	<p>School Admissions</p> <p>a) Proposed Change to the School's Admissions Policy</p> <p><i>NB: Cllr Thake declared that, as the county councillor for the ward of St Ippolyts, central to the matter under consideration, and also for other local villages also impacted, he would withdraw and refrain from participating within the debate. As the elected representative for villages with conflicting interests and his obligation to represent all equitably, this seemed to be the most appropriate action to take. He emphasised that he would abide by the decision collectively taken as a trustee of the school.</i></p> <p>The Trustees received a report from the headteacher on the school's admissions arrangements for the 2023 - 2024 Academic Year.</p> <p>This addressed the outcome of an Office for School Admissions (OSA) determination with regard to an appeal made by a parent of the Hitchin Girls School living in the nearby village of St Ippolyts whose daughter had been denied a place at the school. Moving forward, the matter would be of equal relevance to Hitchin Boys School, since they shared the same admissions policy, which the OSA had determined to be unfair. In denying a place to the girl, the OSA had concluded that the travel arrangements required for the student to attend her allocated school would be too difficult.</p> <p>The headteacher clarified that on neither the admissions day for 2020 nor 2021 had there been any dissatisfied parents from St. Ippolyts in relation to Hitchin Boys. Nonetheless the school was required to act on the OSA's determination.</p> <p>The report included the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. A power point presentation for trustees considering the way forward, addressing various options that the school might adopt in changing its admissions policy and submitting a recommendation (option six) for approval. Namely to remove parish proportionality and move to 'nearest school rules' as adopted by most other schools locally. The alternative approach to this involved adopting a range of different options involving inclusion or deletion of certain named villages from the proportionality approach, all of which were thought to be unsuitable for different reasons relating to their impact on those villages, neighbouring schools and potential challenges from parents. 	

- ii. A more detailed appraisal of the recommended option to move to 'nearest school rules'.
- iii. A map showing how the current admissions policy had worked out in practice for 2020 and 2021 admissions.
- iv. Draft minutes of the trustees' Allocation Cttee held on 1st November. Following consideration of all the options and advice from Herts County Council, the Committee had decided to recommend the waving of the current admission rules 5 and 6 and their replacement by 'Priority Area / Nearest School' and 'Priority Area / Distance' respectively (as outlined within Option 6 in the presentation). The Board of Trustees needed to take a decision on whether to ratify this.

In the discussion on the way forward, trustees noted that distance was the most common arbiter in schools and that use of proportionality in a way represented a historical anomaly in current times. Moving to nearest distance would favour St Ippolyts as a village very close to Hitchin and less so those further away such as Knebworth. Consideration of bus routes to schools and journey times was a consideration for advocating use of the nearest school option, as acknowledged by the OSA. Other points made referred to the importance of the allocations system being comprehensible to parents and the priority given in any case to siblings which would reduce available places. It was noted that adoption of nearest school (option 6) could lead to allocation of school places across Hertfordshire's County boundary, which was not a relevant factor.

The advice of the Admissions Cttee had been that of the six options for change, Option 6 offered little change for the various parishes, maintained a possibility for Letchworth students to attend the school, and appeared to offer the fairest system for all. It is the most used system nationally.

Trustees acknowledged that the preferred option would still need to be subject of consultation before a final decision is taken. This consultation would be put in place jointly with Hitchin Girls School.

Resolved: that, subject to public consultation, the Board of Trustees adopt 'Option Six' within the headteacher's presentation, namely the replacement of the current Rules 5 and 6 within the school's current allocations policy that prioritise on the basis of parish proportionality with a new provision using nearest school and distance from the school gates as the basis for decision-making. Consultation would therefore proceed on this option with a report back to the Board of Trustees on its outcome.

ACTION NINE

b) School Admissions Committee Membership and Terms of Reference

During consideration of the proposed change in allocations policy (above) it had become apparent that no formal School Admissions Cttee had been constituted by the Board of Trustees. Given the requirement to proceed urgently with consideration of the Office for School Admissions' determination, the Chair of Trustees had convened the Chairs' Steering Group (which included the chairs of each committee of the Board of Trustees along with the Board's chair) to act as an Admissions Committee. The arrangement had worked well.

The Chair therefore submitted a report proposing formalising this arrangement. The report set out the proposed purpose, membership, duties and scheme of delegation to the headteacher, which the Board of Trustees considered.

	Resolved: that the School Admissions Committee be established with the proposed terms of reference, duties, membership and scheme of delegation.	
12.	<p>Safeguarding Annual Report The Trustees received the headteacher's annual safeguarding report.</p> <p>The headteacher explained that the report had been presented in the required format and that the review process had been helpful to the school. The school's Single Central Record had been checked as part of Ofsted's inspection in September. Debbie Cox (Herts for Learning) would be visiting the school on 23rd November and that her report would be made available to trustees. The Headteacher also updated trustees on the staff that had received safeguarding training.</p>	
13.	<p>Looked-After Children: Annual Report from the Designated Teacher Trustees received the looked-after annual report from the designated teacher</p> <p>Q5: Was there a designated trustee responsible for looked-after children? A: Yes, David Hutchinson (who had sent apologies for absence from the meeting). The report had been shared with him.</p>	
14.	<p>Management Accounts Trustees received the management accounts for September. As presented, the accounts monitored spend against budget showing variances, performance against the EFSA's 'Top Ten Planning Checks for Governors' and cashflow. It was noted that audited 2020 – 2021 accounts would be presented to the Audit, Risk and Resources Cttee on 2nd December.</p> <p>BS (Chair of the Audit, Risk and Resources Cttee) introduced the accounts. It was very early year in the financial year really for any conclusions to be drawn.</p> <p>Q6: There is provision of £100k of 'other local authority revenue income. What does this relate to? A: This money is allocated for children in care. It is not currently clear when the money will be received. It will relate to the school's contribution to the care plans for specific students.</p>	
15.	<p>School Governance</p> <p>a) Nolan Principles for Public Life There was a discussion led by HJ about the Nolan Principles for Public Life and how these related to the expectations and role of school trustees. It was noted that these principles applied to representations on all public bodies, "doing the right thing in public life", as thus to school trustees. Particular issues highlighted were the expectation of accountability.</p> <p>b) Confirmation of Link Trustees HC reminded link trustees had been appointed for the year. In case of any doubt, she would clarify these roles to the trustees concerned and ensure the list had been updated on Governor Hub. Trustees were now welcome to contact their teaching leads although, at least until Christmas, these discussions would need to stay online.</p> <p>c) Establishment of the New School Admissions Cttee Already dealt with at Agenda Item 11.</p> <p>d) Terms of Reference for the New Amalgamated Audit, Risk & Resources Cttee. BS told the meeting that, as Committee Chair, he was attending to this.</p>	

	<p>e) Updated Governor Hub Records Trustees were reminded they should regularly be checking their profiles on Governor, to ensure records (eg: training) are up-to-date.</p>	
16.	<p>Review of School Policies: Pay Policy Trustees received the updated 2021 Performance and Pay Policy, which had recommended for approval by the Audit, Risk & Resources Cttee. Resolved: the policy be approved.</p>	
17.	<p>Minutes of Trust Board Meetings</p> <p>a) Teaching & Learning Cttee, 5th October It was noted that NB would be taking over as Chair from the Spring Term. Q7: NB enquired about the current position with regard to chrome books, whether there had been any issues. A: Once initial IT issues had been resolved, there had not really been issues. They had been initially purchased by the school and then generally sold onto parents. Work was being set online using the chrome-books and they were being used heavily, which was good. The school would be upgrading back-up for the chrome-books.</p> <p>b) Audit, Risk & Resources Cttee – 13th October Noted.</p> <p>c) Health, Safety & Premises Cttee – 20th October Noted.</p>	
18.	<p>To Ratify Chair’s Action Taken Since the Previous Meeting Nothing to report.</p>	
19.	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>Planting of Trees at part of The Queen’s Green Canopy for the Royal Jubilee KH asked the school to contribute to the Queen’s Jubilee on February 22nd 2022 by planting trees which would be made available free of charge. 15 to 30 trees could be provided. This was agreed, subject to there being suitable places to plant them. The Headteacher told the meeting about the new Ecology School Cttee, on which 15 students served. He suggested that they might like to liaise with KH about this. It was suggested that trustees might also like to donate trees for planting.</p>	
20.	<p>Date of the Next Meeting Wednesday 26th January.</p>	

At this point the meeting moved into confidential session to consider staffing matters.

Summary of Actions Agreed			
Action Point	Action	Responsibility	Status
1	Sign the minutes of FGB of 29 th September on Governor Hub.	HC	
2	Code of Conduct to be updated and details circulated.	HC	
3	Read Keeping Children Safe in Education Sept 2021 and complete the online quiz by 6 th October 2021. Complete confirmation on GovernorHub.	All	Not all governors have completed this
4	Decide how to report Horizon Scanning	HC	Deferred to Spring Term
5.	Check with University of Hertfordshire whether they can support of parental training of personal development.	DI	
6.	Correct page numbering and dates in Behaviour Policy	FM	
7.	Outcome from Exit Interviews (Overall Themes)	FM	
8.	School Admissions Policy: Report on the Outcome of Consultation on the Proposed Change	FM	

Approved: _____
 FGB: 11th November 2021