

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
WALTHAMSTOW SCHOOL FOR GIRLS
GOVERNING BODY
HELD ON TUESDAY 19 MAY 2020 AT 6.30 PM
VIA VIDEO CONFERENCING**

Present: Ms Gillian Barker (Chair) - **Co-opted Governor**

Co-opted Governors

Mr Jeroen van Dinteren
Ms Janeen Hayat
Ms Debbie Lewzey
Ms Alexandra Wills

LA Governor

Mr Aktar Beg (7.30pm to 8.22pm only)

Staff Governor

Mr Ashesh Ramlagan

Parent Governors

Mrs Nina Mikolajczyk
Dr Aneela Shah
Mr Sami Urrehman

Headteacher

Ms Meryl Davies

Also present: Mr Romi Jalil (School Business Manager); Ms Sally Kennedy (Deputy Headteacher) and Ms Jane Snowsill (Deputy Headteacher)

Clerk to the Governors: Lynne Troughton

Summary of agreements and actions:

Minute reference	Formal agreements and/or actions identified	Named person(s) for action(s) identified	Completion date
3.2	Janeen Hayat reappointed as a Co-opted Governor with effect from 11 May 2020.	Donna Miller	Immediately
3.3	Ashesh Ramlagan's term of office to be extended by 12 months.	Donna Miller	Immediately

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting. Janeen Hayat joined the meeting after item 3.3.
- 1.2 Apologies for absence were accepted from Dr Rhys Morgan. (Mr Aktar Beg was present for part of the meeting only due to problems joining the meeting. He was present from 7.30pm to 8.22pm but was unable to get his microphone working.)

- 1.3 The clerk confirmed that the meeting was quorate with 10 out of 12 governors present.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 2.1 Meryl Davies and Ashesh Ramlagan declared interests as members of staff.

3. GOVERNING BODY

- 3.1 The clerk did not have the Governing Body membership but the Chair confirmed there were three vacancies – two parent and one co-opted. The parent governor election is in hand but won't be completed until after half-term.

3.2 Election of co-opted governor

The Chair informed governors that Janeen Hayat's term of office ended on 11 May. She has indicated she is willing to be reappointed and her reappointment was proposed by Gillian Barker, Chair and seconded by Dr Aneela Shah. Governors agreed unanimously.

AGREED That Janeen Hayat be reappointed a co-opted governor backdated to 11 May 2020.

Janeen Hayat joined the meeting.

Action: Governor Services

3.3 Staff governor

Gillian Barker explained that Ashesh Ramlagan's term was due to end on 16 June. Given the difficulty of running an election for a staff governor, she had sought advice from governor services who suggested that staff be asked whether they were happy to extend his term by one year. Meryl Davies had emailed this recommendation to staff and it was accepted. The election would be run next May/June.

AGREED That Ashesh Ramlagan's term of office be extended by 12 months.

Action: Governor Services

4. MINUTES

4.1 Decision tracking document for the meeting held on 24 March 2020

The document was noted and would be logged in the minutes for this meeting.

AGREED That the decision tracking document be noted and endorsed.

4.2 Matters arising

There were none.

4.3 Minutes Finance Committee 5 May 2020

The minutes had been circulated with the agenda for this FGB meeting.

AGREED That the finance committee minutes of 5 May 2020 be noted.

4.4 Matters arising

There were none.

5. CHAIR'S ACTION

- 5.1 Gillian Barker confirmed that she had signed off the school's SFVS because it had to be submitted to the LA by 30 April. It had already been considered by the finance committee, and members were happy with it. There were some action points that will be picked up by the committee over the coming year.

- 5.2 Gillian Barker informed governors that she had signed off the LA's Covid19 addendum to the Safeguarding Policy. It is now on the school website.

AGREED That the action taken by the Chair on the Governing Body's behalf, be endorsed.

6. END OF YEAR FINANCIAL REPORT (2019/20)

- 6.1 End of Year Financial Report to Finance Committee

- 6.1.1 Gillian Barker directed governors to the report sent out with the documents. She suggested that as the finance committee had already been through the report in great detail, as noted in the finance committee minutes, that Romi Jalil be asked to highlight the main points to governors and then to invite questions.
- 6.1.2 Romi Jalil explained the year ended with an in-year surplus of £122k, after 3 years of deficit. Governors commended the turnaround.
- 6.2 CFR Outturn 2019/2020
The CFR Outturn report was for noting only.
- 6.3 Virements Log – 2019/20
The virements were set out in a spreadsheet. Romi Jalil explained that these were mostly for the ski trip and TSST income and expenditure. It was simply a list of income that the school had received over and above that contained in the original budget. At the end there were details of the SEND funding for a child receiving that funding from out of borough. The log would need to be signed off. Meryl Davies and Gillian Barker confirmed they had electronic signatures for this purpose.
- 6.4 Large financial transactions
This report related to transactions over £10K during the 2019/20 financial year. Again this would need to be signed off electronically by the Headteacher and Chair of governors.
- AGREED** That the end of year financial report be noted and that both the virements log and large financial transactions report be signed off by the Headteacher and Chair of governors.

7. **BUDGET REPORT (2020-23)**

- 7.1 Outturn 2019/2020 including Devolved Capital Outturn (CFR) and earmarked funding for 2019/2020
- 7.1.1 Romi Jalil presented his financial report for the fourth quarter and 2019/20 outturn. The figures in the report correlate to those in the CFR outturn report.
- 7.1.2 The LA now requires the SEND funding to be split between in-borough and out-of-borough. All other codes are the same as the finance output for the end of year accounts and show a £16,476 carry forward.
- 7.1.3 Capital income and expenditure for the year left a carry forward of £35,260.
- 7.1.4 The LA has turned the accounts more towards management accounts, which are more comparable with other schools.
- 7.1.5 The overall cash balance was £51,736 on 31 March 2020.
- 7.1.6 The March VAT is repaid in arrears and should be received soon.
- 7.1.7 The summary outturn statement is what governors need to sign off.
- 7.1.8 The figures are calculated by the new LA finance tool from data exported by our accounting package (FMS) and then checked by the SBM. The earmarked funding that cannot be spent for any other purpose, is shown separately.
- 7.1.9 Gillian Barker, Debbie Lewzey and Meryl Davies confirmed that the finance committee had reviewed the figures thoroughly and were happy to recommend the figures to the Governing Body to approve.

AGREED That the 2019/20 outturn be approved:

Brought forward 2018/19		
Revenue		-£108,579.83
Capital		<u>£ 37,436.01</u>
Net brought forward 2018/19		-£ 71,143.82
Revenue Income 2019/20	£6,339,616.28	
Revenue Expenditure 2019/20	<u>£6,214,560.18</u>	125,056.10
Capital Income 2019/20	£ 19,018.75	
Capital Expenditure 2019/20	<u>£ 21,194.40</u>	-2,175.65

Committed Revenue carry forward	£	14,743.00
Uncommitted Revenue carry forward	£	1,733.27
Capital balance carry forward	£	<u>35,260.36</u>
		<u>£ 51,736.63</u>

7.2 School Budget Share (Income) 2020/2021

- 7.2.1 Romi Jalil confirmed the format set out in item 7.2 (Appendix 2) was unchanged and contained deprivation factors that are agreed by the Schools Forum. These will however change when the National Funding Formula is applied.
- 7.2.2 The pupil premium funding is indicative based on the October 2019 census: the January 2020 census will cause adjustments and any over-allocation would be recalled.
- 7.2.3 The pay and pension grants were government funded, to cover the teachers' pension and pay increases.
- 7.2.4 De-delegation is the funding that is agreed the LA can take for core services, which is £19.78 per pupil, such as safeguarding and occupational health, which have reduced over the years. There are other services that the school opts to buy from the LA's traded services.
- AGREED** That the school budget income share 2020/21 totalling £6,149,287, be noted.

7.3 Proposed One and Three-Year Budget Plans (2020-23)

- 7.3.1 Romi Jalil explained that the allocations were summarised for 3 years with a commentary and presented in a spreadsheet in Appendix 3, which is what governors need to sign off.
- 7.3.2 The key assumptions include those that are Covid-related. The budget has been modified to include the loss of £25k of lettings income on the assumption that lettings would not restart until September. There was also a £5k loss of some music service letting income, though the school would still receive The Lodge rental income because the music service was still using and working from there.
- 7.3.3 Another key assumption is the cost of catering and cleaning, which is governed by TUPE regulations. There has been no income from parents but the services are still costing the school £13k a month which must be budgeted for. The school has negotiated to get most of the staff furloughed and will review that when service resumes. The SBM hopes at least half of the £75k cost will be offset by the furlough payments. He has based the figures on the worst-case scenario and will report further to the finance committee in due course.
- 7.3.4 Unfortunately, these factors will have an impact on the projected carry forward which, had Covid-19 not happened, would have shown a decent surplus.
- 7.3.5 The SBM was hoping also to get something back from the exam boards.
- 7.3.6 In the absence of any further information, he had assumed a teacher pay increase of 2.75%. For the last 2 years, government has funded any increase over and above 2%, so the SBM has assumed it will be the same this year.
- 7.3.7 The budget for premises and ICT has been increased in view of the new portable devices, ICT learning, and the replacement of old kit. The building maintenance budget was cut a few years ago and some items now need repair so the SBM has readjusted those budgets.
- 7.3.8 Learning resources and faculty budgets have not been cut or pro-rata'd in the light of Covid-19, in anticipation there will be a peak in demand in September.
- 7.3.9 In the catering area, governors had decided to implement a 5p annual escalator to cover food inflation and increased costs, which is factored in.

- 7.3.10 The agency supply budget had a significant reduction this year, which is now more tightly managed. There have been few unfilled vacancies in the last year but the SBM will be allowing for some this year to make sure the timetable can be delivered. There has also been some long-term sickness so he has allowed for that, as well as any staff movement that the school leadership is not currently aware of.
- 7.3.11 The traded services budget includes education psychology, legal services, health and safety, communications, TU facility time, DPO, PRU and governor services.
- 7.3.12 In capital income and expenditure, the biggest expenditure would be the leasing of iPads purchased last year, from the capital reserves.
- 7.3.13 The summary shows the carry forward for, for example, the steel pan concerts.
- 7.3.14 The SBM has taken a prudent approach with no cuts to teaching and learning and tried to factor in Covid-related issues such as £8k for additional deep-cleans. He was trying, with some difficulty, to source sanitisers and wipes for re-opening and hoped to recover the costs of this from government grants.
- 7.3.15 **Gillian Barker asked what would happen if sufficient safety resources could not be sourced?** Romi Jalil responded that as soon as he could assess the numbers, he would make the calculations but hoped to have enough basics. He was able to source gloves but not sanitisers and wipes so far, mainly because until 8 days ago, government had instructed suppliers not to supply outside the NHS. Hopefully, the supply chain would soon be freed up. The school will buy whatever is needed to create as safe a learning environment as is possible.
- 7.3.16 The difference in the 2-year lettings income is the Covid effect.
- 7.3.17 Regarding the examination invigilators, the LA has advised that schools should honour their payments in the summer term, amounting in this case to about £15k, because it is the right thing to do. Also, the government has given schools the money to pay them.
- 7.3.18 **Gillian Barker asked whether any progress had been made in terms of asking invigilators to bank their hours to cover students who want to retake their exams in the autumn?** No further information had been received as regards this. *(The next day the school confirmed that this had been agreed with the invigilators.)*
- 7.3.19 **Sami Urrehman asked whether there would be more maintenance on the toilets and general cleanliness around the school?** Romi Jalil responded that more funds were allocated to maintaining the building generally but not specifically for remodelling the toilets and cubicles, or the sinks and taps which, along with the water heaters and driers, were routinely maintained by plumbers.
- 7.3.20 Meryl Davies added that there had been an issue where staff had to reduce access to all the toilet blocks in early spring, due to some minor vandalism plus lateness to lessons. Some students had also raised that the toilets open throughout the day were at times unpleasant due to limited ventilation, this had been noted. Some of the toilets do have external windows and when school returns that will be reviewed. During the pandemic, all were re-opened throughout the day and there had been no issues.
- 7.3.21 Alexander Wills added that her form reported the soap was not regularly refilled. Gillian Barker suggested implementing a system of hourly checks. Meryl Davies stated there is already a cleaner employed expressly to clean and check the toilets at different times throughout the day. Meryl Davies further responded that the school would be in a different regime altogether going forward. Also, prior to closure individual soaps were bought for every wash basin throughout the school so there were no shortages.

AGREED

That the 1- to 3-year budget plan be approved;

That the 2020/21 budget be approved:

School Budget Share

£6,149,287

School-generated/other Income		£ 20,700
Revenue Expenditure	£6,363,771	
In-year Surplus	<u>£ 6,216</u>	
	<u>£6,369,987</u>	£6,369,987
<u>Balances</u>		
Revenue b/fwd 2019/20		£ 16,476
Add In-year surplus 2020/21		<u>£ 6,216</u>
Cumulative Surplus to c/fwd		<u>£ 22,692</u>
Capital Income 2020/21		£ 19,019
Capital Expenditure 2020/21	£ 42,000	
Less In-year Deficit 2020/21		<u>£ 22,981</u>
	<u>£ 42,000</u>	£ 42,000
<u>Balances</u>		
Capital b/fwd 2019/20		£ 35,260
Less In-year Deficit 2020/21		<u>£ -22,981</u>
Cumulative Surplus to c/fwd		<u>£ 12,279</u>

7.4 Earmarked Funding (2020/21)

These were the same as in the outturn statement and were detailed in Appendix 4.

AGREED That the earmarked funding of £14,743 for 2020/21 be approved.

8. **SCHOOL DOCUMENTS**

8.1 End of Year Debt Write-Offs (2019/20)

This item was remitted from the Finance Committee for approval by the Governing Body and was a nil return. Romi Jalil explained that in previous years, there used to be a lot of debts to chase but the finance team now chase them immediately, reducing the number of debts to nil.

AGREED That the nil return be noted.

8.2 Best Value Statement (2020/21)

8.2.1 Romi Jalil explained that the statement was unchanged and though it was no longer a requirement, it was good practice to maintain and review the statement.

8.2.2 Gillian Barker reported that the finance committee made one change which was that as part of the SFVS, governors would receive budget expenditure and income updates six times a year, so that has been added. It was not proposed to increase the number of finance committee meetings: the SBM will simply send the reports out more frequently with a brief commentary at the time. Governors will be invited to raise any questions they may have.

AGREED That the Best Value Statement 2020/21 be noted.

8.3 Direct Debit and Standing Order Mandates 2020/21

8.3.1 Romi Jalil explained this was related to the regular commitments paid by direct debit and standing order, which are self-explanatory; for example, business rates, utilities, payroll, insurance for the minibus, and so on.

8.3.2 **Governors asked how the school processed the payments for gas, electricity, and phone from the Lodge?** Romi Jalil responded that the school paid the full cost and recharged the Music Service. The total for the year amounted to about £3k. A purchase order would be raised and they are invoiced every six months in arrears. It was not worthwhile to do this more frequently as the sums involved were so small.

AGREED That the list of direct debit and standing order mandates 2020/21 be noted.

8.4 SLAs and Contracts 2020/21

8.4.1 Romi Jalil explained that these covered all kinds of services the school received, whether related to communications, software, premises, or learning support. The report showed the annual costs, terms and review dates, and whether each service was covered by a formal contract or based on invoicing.

8.4.2 **Governors thought that cloud calls seemed costly?** Romi Jalil explained that this was the VOIP system, charged by number of users, and included all calls except international calls. The £7.5k covered all the calls as well as the phones and handsets, which are covered for damage and service for their mobile app. When the school reviewed the contract this was the cheapest of all the options.

8.4.3 Occasionally international calls were needed. Meryl Davies confirmed her phone was blocked for international calls and Ashesh Ramlagan explained that permission to make an international call had to be requested and would be activated when needed so people did not accidentally make international calls.

AGREED That the SLAs and contracts be noted.

9. HEADTEACHER/CHAIR'S UPDATE

9.1 Gillian Barker explained this update was sent separately to governors prior to the meeting. A lot had been happening since lockdown so the update was to bring governors up to speed with that.

9.2 Meryl Davies added that this was an example of stepping into completely unknown waters for everyone. She had communicated regularly with the Chair who had been able to herself log the school communications during the lockdown period and note what the school had done to address a situation the school was not out of yet, and may not be for at least six months.

9.3 The Headteacher and other colleagues had attended a seminar with Browne Jacobson where it was acknowledged it was probably the most challenging time anyone has had in their career as senior leaders (aside from one-off critical incidents). Two new heads in the borough, who have been partially supported by the Headteacher, had been thrown into first time headship at the deep end. Elements of the press and members of the government were vilifying the profession for being cautious and unions were pressurising school leaders not to open so school leaders were constantly needing to make difficult decisions based on the safety of all and the learning and wellbeing of students and staff.

9.4 Gillian Barker confirmed that the update would give governors an idea of what had been put in place since the school closure. Free school meals arrangements had been problematic due to issues with the voucher scheme. She and the Headteacher had been in regular contact throughout.

9.5 Governors appreciated the report and that it was a diarised account. They had great respect for how the response had been put together in such a short space of time. Meryl Davies paid tribute to her leadership team who had worked extremely hard to put the necessary measures in place. Generally speaking, parents had been supportive. The leadership team had considered the pressure on families with home learning, and on teaching staff with their own children, so decided to set work on a Monday, for completion by Friday each week, with two tutor time activities per week. This model had been well received.

9.6 **Governors asked what the school's view was of the government trying to get children back to school?** Meryl Davies responded that she would not have confirmation from the government until 28 May as to whether their five tests had been met. It was not an exact science; it was about keeping everyone safe, 2 metres distancing, frequent handwashing and so on. There was currently no PPE in school

as it had been donated to Whipps Cross hospital and other health centres, but the school anticipated getting some from the local authority. She was also in dialogue with the unions. It would be impossible to open for all of Year 10 on 1 June, without unacceptable risks. She was meeting her leadership team the following day to consider what planning could be put in place for Year 10. There were some who had not accessed remote learning and will be at great disadvantage for next year. The team will review their supervision. She was unconvinced pupils could go straight into full days of lessons and would consider whether part-time education would be necessary. They will risk-assess the position as the responsibility is on school's leaders and governors to ensure pupils and staff are safe when they eventually return.

- 9.7 The SBM had been asked about road markings outside the school gates. The head of St Mary's, a partner primary with whom we have a link via the Teaching School, had approached the school about using the school's premises in order to accommodate Year 6 classes, so ground floor classrooms in block A were being sectioned off to accommodate them. This had come about because St Mary's was unable to fit all the Year 6 children into their building while following government guidance.
- 9.8 School will now open for vulnerable children and the children of key workers after half term. To date, the school had accommodated keyworker and vulnerable children by linking with other schools in its hub, but from 1 June they would be on site. The accommodation of Year 10 was yet to be decided..
- 9.9 Aneela Shah offered to share her school's plan which included, from 14 June, Year 10 students having 15-minute meetings with subject tutors to review what they had been doing.
- 9.10 Gillian Barker had received an email from the LA about admitting more students into school, which would be subject to the governing body signing off a detailed risk assessment. Meryl Davies confirmed the school was still working on the assessment and Gillian Barker confirmed that approving the risk assessment may require a meeting or decision because the governing body had to agree that any risks were mitigated as much as possible and that they were satisfied that students and staff would be as safe as they could be.
- 9.11 Meryl Davies added that the planning and ensuring safety would take as long as was needed. The document she received had been sent to primary schools only and was to be completed by bank holiday Monday: it was a significant responsibility for schools and the borough to ensure corporate safety. The vulnerable and keyworker children would continue in school whatever else happened with other year groups.
- 9.12 Gillian Barker added that she had noted as a primary governor that the guidance says "from" 1 June not "on". She concurred that schools needed to take as much time as was necessary to work out what was needed.
- 9.13 Gillian Barker also informed governors that some staff, including the Headteacher, had been ill with Covid-19. Staff are therefore well-aware of the implications of opening the school more widely.

10. GOVERNOR SERVICES SLA FOR 2019/2020

- 10.1 The clerk declared an interest but with the consent of governors remained in the meeting.
- 10.2 Gillian Barker stated governors had been given no information on the current package and the alternatives. The school was currently taking the platinum package but had to her knowledge not utilised the full package, which included a full governing body training session, in recent years and could possibly downgrade. She would like

to look into this in more detail with a view to possibly switching to the gold package instead of platinum.

- 10.3 Governors agreed they wished to continue with the current clerking arrangements.
AGREED To delegate the decision on whether to remain with platinum or switch to gold to the Chair of governors.
Action: **Gillian Barker/ Romi Jalil/ Donna Miller**

11. DATE AND AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 7 July 2020 at 6.30pm.

The agenda will be largely determined by whatever is happening as regards Covid-19 and standard items.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS/CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

12.1 Replacement of A-block roof

12.1.1 Romi Jalil explained this had become necessary because of issues with the concrete roof beams. The local authority was still finalising the procurement under a framework agreement where they can choose preferred contractors on the government list.

12.1.2 The SBM had been informed the major works would take 8 weeks; waterproofing would take longer. He has suggested to the LA they work back from 31 August as the completion date. They would have contingencies in place were the works to overrun.

12.1.3 In terms of safety, it was not considered the roof was at risk of collapse but the LA deemed it poor enough that it needed to be replaced urgently. The issue related to the concrete used in the 1970s which has developed defects. It would be convenient if the work started in June or July while there are few students on site.

AGREED That the proposed replacement of the A-block roof be noted.

12.2 Headteacher's performance review

See confidential minutes.

The meeting ended at 8.20pm.

Chair: (sign)

(Print) Date:.....

Chair of Governors' Initials:
