

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
THE GOVERNING BODY OF WALTHAMSTOW SCHOOL FOR GIRLS
HELD ON 16TH MAY 2023 AT 6.30PM AT THE SCHOOL**

Present: Gillian Barker (Chair) Co-opted Governor

Co-opted Governors

Hannah Cheston *online*
Andrea Corbett (arrived at 6.58pm)
Lucy Hutchinson
Sami Urrehman (co-opted during the meeting)

Headteacher

Helen Marriott

Local Authority Governor

Aktar Beg

Parent Governors

Mari Paz Balibrea *online*
Rukaiya Moola

Clerk to the Governors/Trustees: Neil Taylor

Also present: Romi Jalil (School Business Manager)

Summary of agreements and actions:

Minute reference	Formal agreements and/or actions identified	Named person(s) for action(s) identified	Completion date
3.3	Sami Urrehman co-opted onto the Governing Body.	Governor Services to note for actions required	a.s.a.p
4.2.3 (6.1)	Liaise with Governor Services to ensure that Andrea Corbett's safeguarding training record was updated	Chair & Governor Services	a.s.a.p
4.2.3 (6.1)	Check own training records	All governors	a.s.a.p
4.4	Liaise with Governor Services about the disappointing quality of the draft minutes of Resources Committee on 2 nd May 2023	Chair	a.s.a.p
7.2	The outturn statement 2022-23 was RATIFIED .	Governor Services	
7.3	Governors noted the End of Year Write-offs statement.		

7.4	The Virements Log was approved .	Governor Services	-
7.5	The Large Transactions Log was approved .	Governor Services	-
8.1	The budget share allocations were RATIFIED .	Governor Services	-
8.2	The one-year and three-year budget plans were RATIFIED .	Governor Services	-
8.3	Governors RATIFIED the proposed earmarked funding for 2023-24.	Governor Services	
9.1	The Best Value Statement was approved , subject to an addition about the Teaching School Review – Hub Improvement Plan	-	-
9.2	The Direct Debit and Standing Order mandates were approved	-	-
9.3	The SLAs and Contracts Schedule was approved	-	-
10.2	The updated Risk Register was approved	Governor Services	-
11.1	Sami Urrehman was elected as Vice Chair of the Governing Body	Governor Services	-
13.1	It was agreed to purchase the platinum package SLA from WF Governor Services	Governor Services	-
15.1	Date of next meeting: 11 July 2023 at 6.30pm at the school	All / Governor Services	11/7/2023
	Agenda items for next meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding Audit Report • Code of Conduct for Parents & Carers 	Governor Services	11/7/2023

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed all those present to the meeting.
- 1.2 Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Pete Saunders. Apologies for lateness were received from Andrea Corbett.
- 1.3 Edyta Ballantyne and Marlene Service were not present.
- 1.4 It was noted that the meeting was quorate, with 7 governors (and later 9) present (and 4 vacancies).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 2.1 The register of interests was **received**.
- 2.2 There were no declarations made pertaining to any of the agenda items for this meeting, apart from Helen Marriott declaring an interest as the Headteacher.

3. GOVERNING BODY

- 3.1 The Clerk confirmed that there were currently two Co-opted Governor vacancies, a Parent Governor vacancy, and a Staff Governor vacancy.
- 3.2 The Chair reported receiving a message from Meg Webster after the March FGB, that she was moving away from the area and was no longer a candidate. She had previously been interviewed online by the Chair as a prospective Co-opted Governor and recommended in principle for appointment at the March FGB, subject to receipt of satisfactory references and a face-to-face interview with the Headteacher. Given the recruitment process had not since been completed, her appointment could not be confirmed at this meeting.
- 3.3 The Chair reported that Sami Urrehman was keen to continue on the Governing Body, following the end of his term of office as Parent Governor. His application had previously been circulated with the papers for this meeting. Governors considered his application and resolved to co-opt Sami Urrehman onto the Governing Body with immediate effect.

Sami Urrehman joined the meeting.

- 3.4 The Chair reported that she and the Headteacher would be meeting with another potential co-opted governor, who had previous governing body experience in a local primary school, including as a vice-chair.
- 3.5 The Headteacher reported that an advert for the vacant Parent Governor vacancy was being published presently and the staff governor election process was underway.

4. MINUTES

- 4.1 Governors received the minutes of the Governing Body meeting held on 28th March 2023 and agreed these to be an accurate record of the meeting.

4.2 Matters arising:

- 4.2.1 Item 5.18: The Headteacher had circulated the document requested about student voice concerning the toilet facilities. She spoke to the report on Student SLT actions in the autumn and spring terms. The strategies used to improve the facilities, included: piloting one set of toilets for use by Year 7 only and student SLT patrols. The impact of the measures had been reviewed during the spring term. Students had now confirmed that they felt safe, via feedback from Student Ambassadors. The biggest concern is safety when not in school and issues around reporting unsafe behaviours of peers

The feeling of safety had been confirmed by the recent external safeguarding audit which had taken place on 3 May 2023. Students know who to go to if they have concerns. The Headteacher said that the audit findings were really positive compared with the situation a couple of years previously.

- 4.2.2 **A governor asked about a reference in the audit to some issues relating to student safety which have been highlighted.** This related to students' reluctance to report safety concerns about peers. The Headteacher said that this was being

explored with the Student SLT so that they could suggest both reasons and solutions.

- 4.2.3 Item 6.1: The Chair said that she would liaise with Governor Services to ensure that Andrea Corbett's safeguarding training record was updated.

Action: Chair & Governor Services.

All governors were reminded to check their own training records for completeness.

Action: All Governors.

- 4.2.4 Item 6.2: The Chair reported that the anonymised comments in the skills audit summary would be shared at Governors Day on 20th June 2023.

- 4.2.5 Item 7.15: The Chair reported that an additional Safeguarding Report, following the Safeguarding Audit would be presented to the next Governing Body meeting on 11th July 2023.

- 4.2.6 All other actions had been completed. There were no other matters arising other than those already on the agenda.

Andrea Corbett arrived at 6.58pm

- 4.3 *Resources Committee held on 14th March 2023*

The minutes of the meeting were **received**.

- 4.4 *Resources Committee held on 2nd May 2023*

The draft minutes of the meeting were received, but had not yet been reviewed by governors or the school. The Chair would be liaising with Governor Services about the disappointing quality of those draft minutes.

Action: Chair

5. SAFEGUARDING LINK GOVERNOR REPORT

- 5.1 The report of the Safeguarding Link Governor was received and noted, in her absence.

- 5.2 **A governor asked how the Safeguarding link visit differed from the Safeguarding Audit.** The Chair said that the link governor visit was a monitoring visit, whereas the audit was a very thorough review of safeguarding provision within the school, linked to a RAG-rated action plan. The Safeguarding Link Governor, as well as the Chair, had been interviewed by the external reviewer as part of the process. The Headteacher confirmed that the audit had been a thorough and robust process.

- 5.3 The Chair reported that she had visited the school on 24th January to review all aspects of the work in respect of maintaining the Single Central Record. It was well administered and she had no concerns to report. Both the Headteacher and the Business Manager undertook regular checks of the SCR.

6. CHAIR'S ACTION

- 6.1 The Chair reported that following some issues concerning parental behaviour, it had been agreed with the Headteacher that a Code of Conduct for Parents and Carers was needed. This is common in other schools. A document was drafted, which she had approved via chair's action, so that it would be in place for the Year 7 Parents' Evening this week. The policy would be presented to the next meeting in July for endorsement by the whole governing body. It would then be referenced in the Home: School Agreement.
- 6.2 The Headteacher said that there had been three unrelated incidents in swift succession which meant that a Code of Conduct for Parents and Carers was needed. It was important that staff felt protected.
- 6.3 A governor asked if there were any further details about the incidents. The Headteacher said that one parent had sworn and was very abusive towards a staff member in Reception. There had also been cases of parents contacting the school with egregious communications, and demanding action in unrealistic timeframes.
- 6.4 A governor asked if parents were being asked to sign the Code of Conduct. The Headteacher said that this would happen in the future. It was being circulated prior to the Year 7 Parents' Evening as a matter of urgency, though.

7. END OF YEAR FINANCE REPORTS

- 7.1 The Business Manager confirmed that the end of year finance reports had been scrutinised in detail at Resources Committee on 2 May 2023. He took governors through the end of year (period 12) outturn report and related appendices:
 - 7.1.2 There had been a net carry forward into the current financial year of £391,119K, comprising £332,232K revenue surplus and £58,887K capital.
 - 7.1.3 The Business Manager said that actual figures had been compared with forecasts, with variances monitored and reported to governors regularly throughout the year. A commentary on significant income and expenditure variances was included within the report.
 - 7.1.4 The Business Manager highlighted the variance of £54.9K on teacher salaries. This reflected the national pay settlement. The budget had been set with a 2 to 3% increase expected, below the actual increase of 5%, which was then unfunded by the DfE.
 - 7.1.5 The Business Manager also reported considerable expenditure on ICT because of ageing equipment. This was part of a refresh programme and could not be delayed due to the potential impact on teaching and learning. There had also been a rise in the costs of curriculum-related professional services. This reflected the growing SEND needs within school, but was partially offset by additional income.
 - 7.1.6 **A governor asked if there had been a national rise in SEND needs.** The Headteacher said that there appeared to have been an exponential rise in needs within Waltham Forest. Multiple headteachers were concerned that their schools were receiving Year 7 pupils whose needs they could not adequately meet. It was clear that there were more pupils with SEMH and mental health needs, as well as a burgeoning number of other needs.

- 7.1.7 The Business Manager highlighted the outturn statement (Appendix 4), using the DfE ledger codes, which would feed into the national benchmarking exercise. Appendix 1 was the proposed CFR for submission to the local authority to which the SBM referred in his written report.
- 7.2 The final outturn figure (and net carry forward into 2023-24) of £391,119 was **noted**. It was further **noted** that due to the in-year revenue deficit, £32,714K had been drawn down from the school's reserves.

Governors agreed to **RATIFY** the outturn statements as presented.

- 7.3 End of Year Write-Offs (Appendix 3) The Business Manager reported that there were no debts to write off. There had, though, been some drawdowns on the Hardship Fund. Governors **noted** the End of year Write-offs statement.
- 7.4 Virements and additional allocations were reported in Appendix 2. The Business Manager reported that the Virements Log had been checked every term. No virements had been made from the contingency budget of £469,860, but there had been additional income received during the financial year.

Governors **approved the Virements Log**.

- 7.5 Appendix 6: The Large Transactions (over £10K) Log was received and **approved** by governors.

8. 2023-24 BUDGET REPORTS

- 8.1 Governors **RATIFIED** the LA's school budget share allocation for 2023-24.
- 8.2 The Business Manager spoke to the previously circulated Budget Plan 2023-26.
- 8.2.1 He reported that core funding for the current year would amount to £6,63M. This represented an increase of just over 4% on the previous year.
- 8.2.2 **A governor asked about the DFC being shown as £19,103 in the latest budget, but this differed from £18,934 in the 3-year budget.** The Business Manager said that the figure of £19,103 was a local authority projection, but he had used £18,934 as this was based on the actual census numbers.
- 8.2.3 The Business Manager reported that the Budget Plan was based on a number of key assumptions. These included: a stable student roll (around the high 890s) and increased LA delegated funding of 3% per year. Teaching School Hub income continues for the full 3 years of the initial award; lettings income continues to increase back to pre-Covid levels; and parental contributions remain steady at present levels.
- 8.2.4 The Business Manager said that the budgeted expenditure reflected a 4.5% pay award for staff for the current year, and 3% thereafter. A flat rate of £2,229 had been assumed in respect of support staff. Employer pension contributions for support staff would increase by 0.4%. Inflation costs for school resources were included. There was a considerable amount of maintenance required to the premises, as well as ICT refresh costs. Energy costs would increase, partly offset by the Government rebate scheme. The catering and cleaning contracts would be re-tendered: these would be

affected by annual rises in the national living wage. Exam fees had risen from around £65K to £75K; local authority services were costing more - for example, those for the Educational Psychologist and Data Protection services that the school buys into.

- 8.2.5 The Business Manager reported that energy cost rebates had been reduced. Electricity was a big expense. Lights were being changed to LED to reduce expenditure, and low energy PCs were being brought in through the refresh programme. Also, solar panels are being installed.
- 8.2.6 The Business Manager reminded governors of the agreed annual 5 pence escalator on meal prices, which was proving a challenge as food inflation was running at 20%+. There was currently a good uptake of school meals, which was likely to be because of the fair price of £2.45. He had told the caterers that portion sizes could not be reduced.
- 8.2.7 **A governor asked if the school meals were eaten.** The Business Manager said that typical uptake was 709 out of 900 pupils. Student voice meant that the school got clear feedback about what students liked and did not like. He met with the food group regularly.
- 8.2.8 The Business Manager said that some allowance had been made for staff sickness and maternity cover within the budget, although there were no expected long-term sickness absences currently. Buying staff absence insurance was not likely to be cost effective.
- 8.2.9 The Business Manager said that reserves were currently at around 5% of income, but it would be necessary to use some of this to balance the budget going forward, especially if pay awards were again unfunded. The picture over time, showed an in-year deficit of £200K forecast this year, and a £59K forecast deficit in 2024-25, but a budget surplus being achieved again in Year 3 (2025-26).

Governors **noted** the in-year deficit budget proposed for 2023-24, the likely requirement in 2024-25 and the impact on the school's reserves. They acknowledged the SBM's tight financial management strategy over the 3-year period of the plan.

- 8.2.10 Governors **RATIFIED** the proposed one-year and three-year budget plans.
- 8.3 The School Business Manager reported the proposed Earmarked Committed Carry Forward Balances (Appendix 3) to governors and asked for approval.

Governors **RATIFIED** the proposed earmarked funding for 2023-24.

9. SCHOOL POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS

- 9.1 The Best Value Statement was **approved**, subject to an addition about the Teaching School Review – Hub Improvement Plan.
- 9.2 The Direct Debit and Standing Order mandates were **approved**.
- 9.3 The SLAs and Contracts Schedule was **approved**.

- 9.3.1 **A governor asked if the school sought out the best deals.** The Business Manager said that arrangements were regularly reviewed, although some could not be changed annually.

10. FINANCIAL RISK REGISTER

- 10.1 The Chair reported that the Resources Committee had reviewed the Financial Risk Register. The SBM's updates from March had been marked in red. The Chair and Chair of Resources had proposed an additional item – marked in purple - that of potentially unfunded staff pay increases, compounded by on-costs.
- 10.2 The Financial Risk Register was **approved**.

11. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR OF GOVERNING BODY

- 11.1 Sami Urrehman was **elected unopposed** as Vice Chair of the Governing Body.

12. REVIEW OF ASSET REGISTER AND ASSET DISPOSALS

- 12.1 The Chair said that she would liaise with Pete Saunders (Chair of Resources Committee) regarding the suggestion that Sami Urrehman conducts the review in his place this term.

13. GOVERNOR SERVICES SLA FOR 2023/2024

- 13.1 It was **agreed** to purchase the platinum package from WF Governor Services.
- 13.2 Governors were asked to consider what bespoke training for the governing body may be useful as one free training session is included in the package.
- 13.3 It was noted that there would be a whole staff CPD day in October about diversifying the curriculum. Governors would be welcome to attend that day too.
- 13.4 The Chair said that she would liaise with Governor Services about the allocation of a permanent clerk to the school.

14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

14.1 Deputy Headteacher Appointment

The Chair reported that, after two intense days of interviewing, Ms Rachael Futo had been offered the post as Deputy Headteacher, subject to references, which had since been received and accepted.

The Chair reported that a thorough and robust selection process had been followed and she thanked Ms Moola for her participation on the panel.

Governors were asked to ratify the selection panel's decision. Governors **AGREED** to the appointment of Ms Futo subject to the required employment checks.

14.2 LBWF Governors' Briefing

Governors were reminded of the next briefing on 24th May at 6pm via Teams. At least one governor needed to attend and report back at the July FGB.

15. DATES OF THIS TERM'S MEETINGS

15.1 The dates of future meeting are as follows:

Curriculum Committee – 13th June 2023

Governors' Day – 20th June 2023

Resources Committee – 27th June 2023

Governing Body – 11th July 2023

The meeting closed at 8.14pm