

# Colyton Grammar School

## Minutes of the Governing Body – Part One

Date of Meeting: Thursday 10 December 2015

Venue: Room 16

### Present:

Governors	Dr C Bastin, Mr G Davis, Rev H Dawson, Lt Col T J Dyer, Mr A Eaton-Hart, Mr M Goscomb, Mr G Hayne, Mrs L Linnell, Mr M R Marsh, Mr B Salter, Mr R Scott, Mrs J Wainwright, Mrs V Wells and Mrs F H Wilkinson
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Staff	None
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Visitors	None
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Secretary	Mr S R Cook
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Dr Bastin took the chair for Item 1. Mr Cook took the chair for Items 2 and 3.

### 1. Curriculum Presentation: Physics

Dr S Usher gave a presentation on Physics, focusing in particular on the following:

#### *Elements in the recent success of the department:*

- the 3 Physics specialist teachers and the specialist Physics technician
- the good collaboration across the team
- the desire to learn from students, and the benefit of being able to share a passion for Physics
- good resources, with well-designed Physics labs, Prep Room and equipment
- extensive learning resources online for students

#### *Aims of the Physics department*

- to make learning fun and engaging. Dr Usher gave demonstrations of a screaming balloon and displacing a cup balanced on someone's head by air vibrations to demonstrate sound
- to give students personal learning experiences
- to be supportive e.g. through a Physics support group and online resources, revision packs etc.

#### *Other Activities*

- Enrichment activities, including e.g. Ogden Trust activities, Physics Olympiad, Electronics Club
- Science Outreach Programme including the Norman Lockyer Laboratory and work in primary schools
- Educational visits including e.g. the Institute of Physics event at the University of Exeter
- Financial support towards new A Level resources provided by the Ogden Trust

#### *Aspects that the Physics department is particular proud of:*

- 2015 Exam results
- Uptake of Physics A Level

In response to Mr Marsh, Dr Usher confirmed that the University of Exeter still presents a Christmas Lecture, but the numbers involved and the wide range of activities already taking place in school mean that it is not generally possible to attend this.

In response to Dr Bastin, Dr Usher confirmed that the positive Physics experience in lower years certainly assists with the high uptake at A Level, although it is a challenging qualification.

Dr Bastin thanked Dr Usher for her helpful and informative presentation.

## **2. Disclosure of Interest**

There were no disclosures of interest.

## **3. Election of Chair**

Mr Cook reported that he had received one nomination for the role of chair, naming Dr C Bastin. Dr Bastin was invited to make a brief statement to the Board and then left the room.

Mr Cook then read out a statement which had been received from Mr Merrett in which he indicated that he would be voting against Dr Bastin being elected chair for corporate governance reasons. Mr Cook confirmed that Mr Merrett, who had given his apologies for not being able to attend the meeting, had provided a voting slip prior to the meeting.

Votes cast for Dr Bastin were as follows:

Yes – 12; No – 1; Abstentions – 0

Dr Bastin was accordingly elected as Chair of Governors for the academic year 2015/16, and took over chairing the meeting.

On returning to the meeting, Dr Bastin outlined his view of the chair's role in bringing together the views of the Board. The election of the chair is the decision of the Board, rather than an individual or an outside organisation. He reminded the Board of the discussions earlier in the year when the importance of a period of stability over the time when the new Headteacher Designate take up his post was recognised. He emphasised, however, his commitment to a succession plan to provide for a replacement chair in the next two years, should this be the wish of the Board.

## **4. Apologies**

Apologies were received from Mrs S Burns-Price, Mrs S Hopkins and Mr B Merrett.

## **5. Election of Vice Chair**

Mr Cook reported that he had received one nomination for the role of vice chair, naming Mrs F H Wilkinson. Mrs Wilkinson was invited to make a brief statement to the Board, during which she indicated that she concurred with Dr Bastin, and is certainly willing to step down, but governors have indicated their support for a period of stability over the period when the new headteacher takes up his post. Mrs Wilkinson then left the room.

Dr Bastin then read out a statement which had been received from Mr Merrett in which he indicated that he would be voting against Mrs Wilkinson being elected vice chair for corporate governance reasons. Mr Merrett, who had given his apologies for not being able to attend the meeting, had provided a voting slip prior to the meeting.

In discussion, it was clear that the will of the Board was not to change the Vice Chair at this stage.

Votes cast for Mrs Wilkinson were as follows:

Yes – 12; No – 1; Abstentions – 0

Mrs Wilkinson was accordingly elected as Vice Chair of Governors for the academic year 2015/16.

**6. Approval of Minutes of Meeting held on 9 July 2015**

These were approved and signed.

**7. Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

**8. Approval of Minutes of Meeting held on 12 November 2015**

These were approved and signed.

**9. Matters Arising**

(a) Item 7: Proposed Change to Articles of Association

Mr Cook reported that the revised Articles of Association are being prepared for submission to the Charity Commission.

**10. Headteacher's Report**

Dr Bastin drew the attention of the Board to the report which had been circulated prior to the meeting. Mr Marsh thanked Mrs Wainwright for a very full and detailed report.

Dr Bastin expressed the thanks of the Board to Mrs Wainwright for her outstanding contribution.

**11. Chairman's Report**

Dr Bastin reported that he had been in regular contact with the Headteacher and Business Manager.

Dr Bastin has also had several discussions with Mr Tim Harris (Headteacher Designate) who will be attending the March Board meeting.

Finally, Dr Bastin reported that he and Mr Cook are currently dealing with a complaint from a parent relating to an admissions issue some years ago.

**12. Exam Review**

Dr Bastin drew the attention of the Board to the Exam Review which had been circulated prior to the meeting, and had been considered in detail by the Admissions, Learning and Standards Committee at the meeting held on 4 November 2015.

The Board noted the Exam Review, and Dr Bastin congratulated staff and students for the superb examination results.

**13. School Development Plan 2015/16**

Dr Bastin drew the attention of the Board to the summary School Development Plan for 2015/16 which had been circulated prior to the meeting and considered by each committee during the Autumn round of meetings.

Proposed by Mr Hayne, seconded by Mrs Linnell and unanimously agreed that the School Development Plan for 2015/16 should be approved.

**14. Annual Report and Financial Statements for the Year Ending 31 August 2015, Audit Completion Report and Letter of Representations**

Mrs Wilkinson drew the attention of the Board to the documents which had been circulated prior to the meeting. She explained that the Finance and Resources Committee have recommended that the Board approve the Annual Report and Financial Statements which had been considered at their recent meeting. She also reported on the meeting with Francis Clark in which she, Lt Col Dyer and Mr Cook had participated at the conclusion of the recent audit.

She then drew attention to the Audit Completion Report recommendations on internal controls, and Mr Cook confirmed that the additional checks on the recording of prepayments were put in place during the audit visit.

Finally, she outlined the purpose of the Letter of Representations and recommended that it be signed.

Proposed by Mrs Wilkinson, seconded by Mr Marsh and unanimously agreed that:

- (a) the Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ending 31 August 2015 should be approved
- (b) the Audit Results Report from Francis Clark following the completion of their audit should be noted.
- (c) the Letter of Representations should be signed.

#### **15. Funding Update**

Mr Cook drew the attention of the Board to the summary of the Chancellor's Statement on 25 November 2015 relating to school funding, which he had circulated on 26 November. He focused in particular on the commitment to the introduction of a fair funding formula with a detailed consultation in 2015 and implementation from 2017/18.

Governors welcomed this statement but noted that much will depend on the timing and nature of the consultation, and details such as transitional arrangements.

Concern was expressed at the announcement of cuts to the Education Services Grant (ESG), which currently provides c£70k for the range of services previously provided centrally by the local education authority.

Concern was also expressed at the continuing, unrealistic emphasis on efficiency savings and procurement, which the Chancellor indicated would require schools to save over £1b per annum.

#### **16. Governance Review**

Dr Bastin drew the attention of the Board to the paper which had been circulated prior to the meeting, including the detailed paper considered by the Chairs' Committee, the legal advice from Foot Anstey regarding terms of office, and the proposals which the Chairs' Committee had agreed to bring to the Board.

He reminded the Board in particular that the Chairs' Committee had proposed that Mr Goscomb should be asked to undertake an internal review of governance.

Dr Bastin then highlighted the proposals relating to the School Futures Group in the paper circulated prior to the meeting. He drew particular attention to the section dealing with the composition of the School Futures Group, and the proposal that the membership should consist of the Chair and Vice Chair of Governors, the Chair of Staffing, the Headteacher (except in the case of the appointment of a headteacher) and two additional members appointed on an annual basis by the Board. For this year only it was agreed that a third additional governor should be appointed and Lt Col Dyer, Mr Salter and Mrs Wells were selected as the additional members for the academic year 2015/16.

It was agreed that the other proposals brought forward by the Chairs' Committee should be deferred.

Mr Cook was asked to prepare draft governors' Conduct and Grievance policies for the next meeting of the Board.

## **17. Revised Governors' Yearbook**

Mr Cook drew attention of the Board to the revised Governors' Yearbook which contains an updated section on the School Futures Group to reflect the changes agreed in Item 16.

It was also noted that in the Key Documents section, the latest version of the DfE Governors' Handbook is now called the Governance Handbook and this would need to be changed.

Finally it was noted that the Leavers' Celebration Evening, originally scheduled for 18 December 2015, has been replaced by an Awards Evening for Year 14 leavers, Year 11 students and Year 12 and 13 Gold Award winners to be held in the Cottrill Hall on Wednesday 6 January 2016.

It was unanimously agreed that the revised Governors' Yearbook for 2015/16 should be approved.

## **18. Proposal to Increase PAN**

Mrs Wainwright drew attention of the Board to the paper which had been circulated prior to the meeting, and the detailed discussion which had taken place at the Finance Focus Evening in November. She explained the Board needed to reach a decision as an increase in PAN would need to be included in the Admissions Policy for the September 2017 entry, which needs to be consulted upon by 31 January 2016.

Mrs Wainwright outlined the key issues highlighted in the paper circulated prior to the meeting. She reported that CEM have indicated that making an additional 31 students eligible would still result in good Level 5 students.

In response to Mr Scott, Mrs Wainwright and Mr Cook explained that the challenge in filling all the available places up to PAN would be easier with the proposed changes to the curriculum structure. In response to Mrs Linnell, Mrs Wainwright explained that the proposal to increase PAN to 155, rather than 150, reflects the current size of 31 students per tutor group. In response to Lt Col Dyer, Mr Cook indicated that reducing the proposed PAN to 150 would equate to c£20k lost income. Mrs Wainwright reminded governors that selective schools are not required to fill places up to the PAN, as only students reaching the required standard in the entrance test will secure an eligible score.

In response to Mr Marsh, Mr Cook reminded governors of the current modelling of the impact of this change which suggests a requirement for 6 additional classrooms over the first 7 years. In response to Mrs Linnell, Mrs Wainwright indicated that the proposed increase gave the school the opportunity to ensure that pupil premium students are targeted more effectively. The aim would be to ensure that the proportion of Pupil Premium students applying is at least as high as the proportion across the local area.

In discussion, the following points emerged:

- The financial challenges which the school faces cannot be ignored (Mr Eaton-Hart)
- The proposed increase to PAN is the single most effective change to secure the school's long term financial future. This is particularly the case in the light of reduced 6<sup>th</sup> form funding and the indications that a 6<sup>th</sup> form below 250 students will not be financially viable (Mrs Wilkinson)
- A school of 1,000 students is still "small" compared to most other institutions (Mrs Wainwright)
- The introduction of a national funding formula on its own will not resolve all the projected shortfall (Mrs Wilkinson)
- Governors need to retain a clear focus on the educational gain (Lt Col Dyer)
- In response to Lt Col Dyer, Mr Cook explained that increasing the overall PAN should help to alleviate issues with small A Level groups

- Mr Tim Harris supports the proposal to increase to 5 forms of entry (Dr Bastin)
- The need to communicate these changes carefully (Mr Scott)

Votes cast for the general principle of increasing PAN were as follows:

Yes - 11; No - 1; Abstentions - 2

Votes cast for the specific proposal to increase PAN to 155 in September 2017 were as follows:

Yes - 11; No - 1; Abstentions - 2

It was therefore agreed that the PAN for the September 2017 entry should be increased to 155.

### **19. Proposed Change to Curriculum Structure**

Mrs Wainwright drew the attention of the Board to the paper which had been circulated prior to the meeting, and the detailed presentation at the recent Governors' Training Evening. She focused in particular on:

Mrs Wilkinson commented on very helpful briefing, and a strong case for a move to a new structure. Mr Davis reflected that his concerns related to Maths, and that other subjects are very positive about change.

In response to Mr Marsh, Mrs Wainwright indicated that it will be possible for departments to maintain the level of challenge at GCSE, and that there is no reason for not going beyond the GCSE syllabus to include an element of extension work. Mr Davis indicated that the Maths department have already begun investigating possible options.

Mr Marsh pointed to the increasing importance of GCSEs in view of the loss of AS Levels.

The Board then voted on a proposal to move from the current 3 year sixth form model, to a 3 year GCSE model as follows:

Yes – 14; No – 0; Abstentions - 0

Mrs Wainwright then summarised the key issues relating to the timing of this change, drawing attention to the additional paper on timing which had been circulated prior to the meeting. She focused in particular on whether the change should be made for current Year 8 moving into Year 9 only, or should also include current Year 9 moving into Year 10. She noted that Year 9 have already started existing GCSE courses, but there are some clear advantages of implementing the change for this year group as well, including the alignment of new specifications and being able to move to a 2 year sixth form a year earlier.

Mr Eaton-Hart indicated that providing the change is presented carefully, then parents are likely to support the change for Year 9. Lt Col Dyer declared an interest, but indicated that parents would support any move which will make the run-up to the new examination arrangements as good as possible.

In response to Mr Marsh, Mr Davis reflected on some of the pressures on staff in terms of implementing the change for Year 9 as well as Year 8 and also the possible negative response from these students who have already commenced their GCSE courses.

In response to Mrs Wells, Mrs Wainwright explained that a growing number of schools are moving to a 3 year GCSE programme, and there are advantages in commencing the GCSE course in Year 9 where this is possible. Mrs Wells also reflected on the challenge for students following the 3 year sixth form model, given the move to terminal exams only at A Level.

Mrs Wainwright commented on the challenges for staff in re-designing the curriculum for Year 9.

In response to Lt Col Dyer, Mrs Wainwright explained the difficulties of a proposal for current Year 9 to take some GCSEs (for instance in English and Maths) in Year 10 and other GCSEs in Year 11. Again in response to Lt Col Dyer, Dr Bastin and Mrs Wainwright indicated that for a decision of such importance, it would be more appropriate for the Board to decide rather than leaving this to the Head and Senior Leadership Team.

The Board voted on the following two proposals to introduce the change to a 3 year GCSE programme, followed by a 2 year sixth form programme

(a) For current Y8:

Yes – 14; No – 0; Abstentions - 0

(b) For current Year 9:

Yes – 12; No – 1; Abstentions - 1

It was therefore agreed that the current Year 8 should commence a 3 year GCSE programme in September 2016, and that the current Year 9 should move to a 3 year GCSE with immediate effect.

In response to Mr Eaton Hart, Dr Bastin confirmed that this decision should not be discussed outside the Board until Mrs Wainwright has informed parents.

## **20. Multi Academy Trust Update**

Taken under Part Two Minutes.

## **21. Alumni Relations and Fundraising**

Mr Scott drew attention to the minutes of the recent Finance and Resources Committee meeting, focusing in particular on the following:

- The two Finance Working Party meetings which have already been held, and need for opportunity to discuss issues not covered at recent Finance Focus Evening. A further Finance Working Party meeting will be held in January.
- The need to progress the proposal for appointing a Development Officer. Mr Scott is preparing a suitable Job Description, initially for a volunteer and then possibly for a paid post.

Mr Scott noted that Reading School, where the Headteacher Designate is currently working, is one of the few state schools which have appointed a Development Officer, and Mr Harris may be able to supply useful advice in this area.

Finally, Mr Scott reminded the Board that the school is hosting the BBC Any Questions programme on Friday 13 May 2016, and invited ideas for special guests to be invited.

## **22. School Futures Group Report**

The Board noted that the Written Resolution appointing Mr Timothy Harris as Headteacher with effect from 1 September 2016, which had been circulated on 15 October 2015, had been passed on 22 October 2015.

Mrs Wilkinson reported that the School Futures Group had met prior to the Board meeting to review the recent appointment of the Headteacher. She focused in particular on the following:

- The benefit of starting planning as early as possible
- The benefit of good quality external consultants

- The positive outcome of bringing forward the 3<sup>rd</sup> recruitment round in order to secure an early appointment
- The final outcome vindicated the decision not to appoint in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> rounds
- The feedback forms from candidates had not identified any issues
- It would have been helpful to use the National College checklist earlier in the process
- In general the format of both selection days and the focus of the different panels had been effective
- Possibilities for maximising opportunities for staff to meet candidates
- The benefit of having a governor “observer” for the main panel on Day Two
- The need to include a full Board meeting in the recruitment calendar

### **23. Governors’ Succession Planning Statements**

Dr Bastin drew attention to the paper which had been circulated prior to the meeting, which contains the Succession Planning Statements from each of the main committees.

The proposal from the Admissions, Learning and Standards Committee and the Finance and Resources Committee to move the requirement for each committee to produce a succession planning to the Summer term, so that it can inform the election of the chair and vice chair in the Autumn term was approved

In relation to the proposal from the Admissions, Learning and Standards Committee to encourage the rotation of link governors, including the Safeguarding, Data and Prevent roles, it was agreed that this should also be included in the Link Governor programme review at the summer Board meeting.

### **24. Financial Statements for Period Ending 31 October 2015**

Dr Bastin drew attention to the financial statements which had been circulated prior to the meeting, including the detailed narrative. Governors expressed satisfaction with the statements.

### **25. Responsible Officer’s Report**

In the absence of Mrs Hopkins, Mrs Wilkinson drew attention to the Responsible Officer’s report for the Autumn Term 2015 which had been considered by Finance and Resources Committee at the meeting held on 2 December 2015 and circulated prior to the Board meeting.

She confirmed that there were no issues to report.

### **26. Capital Projects Update**

Mr Salter drew the attention of the Board to Item 13 of the minutes of the Finance and Resources Committee meeting held on 2 December 2015, focusing in particular on the bid under the Condition Improvement Fund (CIF) scheme which is due to be submitted next week. He reported that, following the meeting, TFQ Architects have given a clear view that if an academy submits two projects these are considered independently on merit, and he therefore proposed that both the Staff House project and the Feoffees’ roof and windows project should be submitted.

Mr Cook reported that final figures for the Staff House project have still not been agreed with the preferred contractor. He also outlined the benefit of being able to classify the Staff House project as a “Condition”, or “Condition with Expansion” project, as the CIF guidance is clear that there are very limited funds for “Expansion” projects. He is therefore liaising with TFQ Architects as to how the scheme should be presented.



Governors expressed strong support for the use of the Bradbeer Fund to support the Staff House bid.

Mr Salter and Mr Cook then outlined the issues with the Feoffees' roof and the benefits of replacing the original failed double-glazed windows and single-glazed doors. Quotations received for this work indicate a total cost in the region of £180k.

Proposed by Mrs Linnell, seconded by Mrs Wells and unanimously agreed that

- (i) Bids for both the Staff House and Feoffees' roof and windows projects should be submitted
- (ii) Mrs Wainwright and Mr Salter should liaise with Mr Cook over the final presentation of the Staff House project when TFQ provide final figures. Following the discussions at the last Finance and Resources Committee, the aim would be seek a CIF grant for 45% of the total cost of the project and a contribution from the school and other sources of 55% up to a maximum of £500k. The other sources include a projected £30k from the Wolfson Foundation, £100k from the Parents' Association, £19k Devolved Formula Capital and the remainder from the Bradbeer Fund
- (iii) The school should make a contribution of £12k towards the Feoffees' roof and windows project, which effectively funds the cost of removing and re-installing the PV panels.

Mr Cook reported that final inspections of the Sports Centre changing rooms are taking place next week, and that all the outstanding items on the Cottrill Hall, Take Five and East Wing/Site Workshop projects have been addressed with the exception of:

- Some ongoing issues with leaks in the Cottrill Hall
- The canopy over the north east door of the Cottrill Hall
- The metal doors of the Site Workshop
- Some minor heating related control improvements

Negotiations on the final account for the Cottrill Hall are continuing.

## **27. Link Governors' Report**

Deferred.

## **28. Committee Reports**

Deferred.

## **29. Policies for Review**

Proposed by Lt Col Dyer, seconded by Rev Dawson and unanimously agreed that the following revised policies which had been circulated prior to the meeting should be approved:

- (a) Data Protection Act Policy
- (b) School Ethos

## **30. Any Other Business**

### **(a) Staff Recruitment and Selection Policy**

It was agreed that consideration of the revised policy circulated prior to the meeting should be deferred.

### **(b) Preventing Extremism and Radicalisation Policy**

It was agreed that consideration of the draft Preventing Extremism and Radicalisation Policy, which had been considered by the Admissions, Learning and Standards

Committee and circulated prior to the Board meeting, should be deferred.


(c) Draft Admissions Policy for September 2017 Entry

It was agreed that a revised Admissions Policy for the September 2017 entry, reflecting the changes agreed in Items 18 and 19 above, should be determined by the Admissions, Learning and Standards Committee.

There was no other business.

**31. Next Meeting**

Thursday 17 March 2016 at 6.30pm.

Signed:		(Chairman of Governors)
Date:	20. 3. 16	