



**WYMONDHAM HIGH ACADEMY TRUST  
GOVERNING BODY MEETING**

**Minutes of a Board Meeting  
held on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> September 2014**

Present:	Mr N Collins - Chair	Mr A Fehners	Mr J Lansdell	Mrs S Roskrow	Dr J Winpenny
	Mr S Blease – Vice Chair	Mr J Gillett	Mrs P Lee	Mr M Savage	
	Mr R Boulton	Mr M Heard	Mr S Mears	Mr M Scharff	
	Dr R Cross		Mr J Robson	Mr P Wadlow	
In Attendance:	Mrs L Fox	Mr J Rockey	Mr J Dickson	Mrs V Dinwoodie	

The clerk took the chair for the first two items.

**1. Governance Matters**

**1.1. Apologies and Confirmation of Quorum**

Apologies were sent by Mrs Hunter. Mrs Lee had advised that she might be late.

**1.2. Election of Chair**

Neil Collins was nominated by Mike H and seconded by John W. No other nominations or self-nominations were made and Neil was duly elected as Chair.

Neil took the chair. He advised that his plan was to stay on until the next Ofsted. A discussion on succession planning took place at the last chairs meeting. Steve Blease has advised that he would be willing to stand as vice chair for this year and Jeff will work closely with Steve this year, hopefully taking over as vice chair next year and then potentially step up as chair in the future.

**1.3. Election of Vice Chair**

Steve Blease was nominated by Neil and seconded by Rodney. No other nominations or self-nominations were made and Steve was duly elected as Vice Chair.

**1.4. Declaration of Interests Form – please complete and return to the clerk.**

Paula joined the meeting at this point.

**1.5. Reminder about Articles 136-141 – Steve B is the LA governor, Neil asked whether anyone else was employed by or classified as an associate of the LA. John Robson advised that he is currently employed by the LA in an advisory capacity to help support another school for two days a week. This is likely to end at Christmas.**

Neil welcomed John to the meeting and introduced him to the Board.

John gave a brief resume of his career which including in his previous role as Head of Hobart HS taking it to two successive Outstanding judgements from Ofsted. Neil added that John has a reputation for financial soundness. Neil introduced and welcomed to the meeting the new Director of Advanced Learning, Victoria Dinwoodie.

**1.6. Annual Return filed with Companies House – the clerk confirmed that the return had been filed on time.**

**1.7. Terms of Reference – Neil asked that governors review the terms of reference and feedback any comments to the clerk. ToR for the committees will be considered in committee this term. The formal adoption of the ToR will be at the December meeting.**

**1.8. Delegation of Functions – Neil asked governors to review and feedback to the clerk – formal adoption in December.**

**1.9. Membership of Committees and Allocation to Houses/Departments/Special Responsibilities**

Neil advised that this would be reviewed under item 6. If governors have any particular preferences please advise Neil or the clerk.

**2. Minutes of the Last Meeting**

With one minor amendment the minutes were agreed as a true record and signed by the chair.

### 3. Matters Arising

Neil took governors through the action points summary sheet.

**Website development** – Adrian advised that this was his main task this half term and would be completed this half term. Another potential provider was considered but it was decided to stay with our current provider.

Q. Neil asked what the main issues were.

A. Adrian replied that he had to set priorities. Neil asked that Sixth Form and the statutory information go on as a priority.

Q. Mike H asked what the turn-around time was.

A. Adrian advised that it was fast, usually only a day or two. He would aim to have the website updated by half term. The school calendar will also be uploaded to the site.

**Network filtering** – Russell advised that he could not open wireless access to the rest of school until we upgrade the filtering system. It was agreed that Kevin Sait would attend the next Premise & Community meeting to advise on a revised proposal.

**Action: Clerk**

**Item 16 – planning application re rugby club** – Julian raised a concern in relation to the developer's application suggesting that Hethersett offer to take our pupils within their catchment area and there not being a specific response to this in Neil's submission.

Neil advised that his letter in response to the area plan for Wymondham had been circulated and sent in. He and Russell would be attending the planning review in October. NCC have submitted their disagreement to suggestions that our students go to Hethersett. If they did we would not get the section 106 money.

Neil suggested that we restrict admission numbers to no more than 2050 students, limiting proposed housing development to 2200 houses.

Julian noted that the developer's letter in response to NCC is now in the public domain, he suggested that we needed to challenge their argument as there had been no response from NCC. Russell advised that Neil had responded to specific questions in the review.

**Action : Neil said that he would contact Chris Hey in relation to a lack of response from them to the developer.**

Q. Julian asked whether catchment areas exist for academies as they have their own admissions arrangements.

A. Peter advised that we have a published admission policy detailing our catchment area. We set our own admission criteria but have a duty to consult with the LA and public. Hethersett would have to consult with us if they wished to change their catchment area and we could challenge this.

Peter suggested reviewing our catchment area and consider reducing it as we serve a very wide area of outlying villages. He said he would not want to lose Wymondham town students to Hethersett.

Neil said there was a strong case for developers to build in Hethersett but not Wymondham.

### 4. Exam Results Headlines

#### GCSE – Jonathan

Jonathan provided a summary of the GCSE results, he advised that he would provide more detail at Standards next week. It was a positive picture this year. Overall A\* to C was 85%. The gold standard of 5 A\* - C slipped down to 65%, the sole reason being the disappointing English results. However, this was reflected nationwide with issues with AQA in terms of changes to the grade boundaries and the removal of speaking and listening assessments. Performance across the county was 54%.

#### Subject Analysis

Concerns about Spanish drama and food tech last year led to changes to the curriculum and staffing.

New Head of Drama has made a massive impact on results.

Food tech went up to 64% from 42% with an excellent food tech teacher now in post.

Spanish – the curricular change has taken results up to 83% from 49% - this is the first time the subject has been given curriculum time.

Maths results are very positive – the HoD decided to go ahead with early entry (first results counting in the league tables) and 81% was achieved validating his decision. From this year students can no longer take early entry with all exams taken in the summer term.

Overall 70% of subjects improved.

Arts maintained their incredibly high standards. These subjects excel at GCSE.

Slight falls in triple science to 95%. External adviser is working with the new Head of Science.

Slight fall in graphic products and this will be under review.  
All students gained an A\* or A in further maths.

Rodney commented that these comparisons were against Norfolk schools when we should be measuring against the national results. Jonathan agreed that national benchmarking could be included, however was difficult to get the data outside our LA.

Rodney commented that the Head of English had assured governors that results should not be significantly affected. Jonathan advised that a lot of papers had been submitted for a re-mark, some had already been returned with higher grades and there is an expectation that the English result will rise.

Neil asked that VA figures be included for Standards next week.

**Action: Jonathan.**

Steve B asked for final figures to be sent out after the re-marks. Russell advised that these would be available for the December meeting.

**Action: Jonathan**

Maths and English against the national figure were given. Jonathan advised that individual teacher set results were being reviewed and addressed through meetings with HoD.

Focus for 2014 – 15

Jonathan advised that he had received positive comments from staff this year and there was a different atmosphere. There will be a focus on English and continued improvements in food tech, drama, D&T, science and languages. The English staff need support, staff were very disappointed with results. Maths will be very hard to maintain. There are concerns with CES, music and media.

Neil said the key issue was English.

### **AS and A level Results – Victoria**

AS – overall results were above the national average. The A grade has gone up from 19% to 23.5%. General Studies still affects our results; this will change next year with a move away from GS.

Q. Mike H asked what measures we can put in place to help students.

A. Vic advised that students can retake subjects and we have extra classes in place to support this. However, re-takes now have to be taken in the summer alongside A levels.

Vic advised that the 4<sup>th</sup> subject still remains an issue with students not putting the effort in.

Progress generally is very good, however we need to build on this at A2.

Vic took governors through some subject by subject comparisons and department by department results.

A2 - overall 50.4% slightly lower than last year, however the pass rates were higher.

Fewer students achieving Bs so there will be a focus on the B/C borderline.

A\* to C - 78%. A\* to E was down to 98%.

Vic took governors through the subject by subject and dept by dept comparisons.

Neil advised that this data will be looked at in more detail at the Standards meeting next week.

The Friends report was taken next as Sally had to leave after this item.

### **8. Friends Annual Report**

Sally advised that she would briefly go through the report prepared by Jane Bull, she would forward the full report to the clerk. She advised that the report was not hugely positive.

The key aim for last year was to improve member numbers through different targeted events and a number of new members were recruited.

They have a good number of parent members on their database but only 6 or 7 attend at meetings and only 3 to 4 are active.

One area Jane had stressed in the report was the lack of support from the school over this last year. Justin was the nominated representative, but he only attended 3 of the 7 meetings. Mark Harrison and Mrs Jessop continue to support and attend meeting and the admin support was appreciated. They didn't achieve all their aims and objects and it was felt this was directly due to the lack of school support.

The Y11 formal organisation was taken over by the school at no notice and with no discussion or communication. Jane has now stood down from the Friends and was left feeling very de motivated. The Y7 disco very successful as was the annual trip to Pleasurewood Hills. The Friends have provided refreshments at all Parents' Evenings; provided £5k towards the outside gym; provided support for the Lego Club, which the Friends are very proud to support. They meet once every half term and their AGM is on 9<sup>th</sup> October. Sally extended an open invitation to Russell and all governors to attend. She will distribute the dates of all their meetings.

Sally advised that a positive development for the Friends was that Mr Dickson, who served on the committee for many years, has agreed to re-join as the school's representative. Sally ended the report by saying there was a need to clarify the role of the Friends.

Russell advised that with regard to the Y11 formal, the previous chair had handed it back to the school to do. A member of staff took this on only because she was asked to do so as a favour. Neil commented that the main issue seemed to be one of communication. Jeremy said that he saw fundraising as a vital part of the Friends' role. He added that the Friends had made significant financial contributions to various projects over the last 10 years through their enthusiasm and energy.

Neil said that governors would monitor the relationship and communications with the Friends in future through the Premises and Community Committee, he added that we needed to improve our links with parents. Action: Jeremy to report to this committee.

Julian added that he welcomed the report and agreed that governors and staff should support the Friends. Neil thanked Sally for giving the report and asked her to pass on the Board's thanks and advise that they will monitor issues in future.

*Sally left the meeting at this point.*

## **5. Sixth Form Role Numbers**

Vic took governors through a brief summary of sixth form numbers and funding produced by Julie Cooper. The budget was based on 200 entering Y12. 188 was the actual number, which was higher than last year. Conversion rates on offers were much higher with internal students so she is looking at developing positive relationships with our external applicants. Tours of the school will be offered outside our open evening and applicants will be given the opportunity to have an informal meeting with Vic. In Y13 a few students have left, but then returned and converted to Y14. An intake of 190 has been budgeting for next year, which is more realistic.

Q. Peter asked whether we were linking with 11-16 schools to recruit.

A. Vic confirmed this was the case.

Q. Neil asked how effective the marketing campaign had been this year.

A. Jeremy advised that 120 of our students had accepted their offers. Work with taster sessions last autumn upped awareness amongst our students. We relaxed our entry criteria to allow schools with 11-18 students, however this only gained us a few students. Student numbers from Hethersett were down to 20 this year. Jeremy commented that it was very difficult to find out where students are going as there are so many providers chasing fewer students. He believed that we did well to recruit 190 and would support a budget based on this next year.

Q. John W asked whether we could get feedback from external applicants who didn't take up their offers.

A. Vic suggested that in future she could ask at their meeting whether we are their first choice or only second or third. Reasons for not coming her include having to wear smart dress, unable to leave the site when not being taught and in addition to this some did not meet our criteria at GCSE.

Russell advised that he supported having informal meetings with prospective students and that he has the school council busy making twitter feeds.

Jeremy advised that over 400 offers were made, however conversion rates have been dropping over the past few years and now stand at only 50%.

Rod suggested making a data base of entry criteria for other sixth forms. Vic advised that the students coming here are not from the higher ability range.

Neil proposed revisiting the criteria at curriculum. The clerk advised that the 16 – 17 Admission Policy was on the agenda.

## **6. Academy Improvement Plan 2014/5 Year Strategic Plan (plus item 9)**

Russell advised that he had met with the publishers and will bring a final document of the 5 year plan to the next Board meeting in December.

**Action: Russell**

Neil referred to the Governors' Annual Plan that he had publish on GovernorHub. The details the key aspects of the AIP which governors will monitor and who/which committee will be responsible for that monitoring. The primary route for monitoring is via committees and the plan sets out targets for each committee to monitor.

Neil has regular calls with Russell and the chairs will meet regularly with their SLT link.

Governor subject links will remain and during visit governor should ask about 3 key aspects of the AIP:

- Teaching and learning;
- Impact of CPD; and
- Effective use of data.

*Jeremy left the meeting at this point.*

Sixth form – Steve Blease will pick up this area of responsibility working with Vic and reporting back to the Board. Governor link visits should take place once per term with arrangements made via the clerk.

Russell advised that staff were subject to a six week accountability cycle and two weeks of this are learning walks and observations. This will allow for effective monitoring of teaching and learning. He suggested that governors might like to accompany him on these walks. Jonathan added that he would encourage governors to try and attend a Tuesday afternoon CPD session.

Russell added that governors should ask staff about school action plus students and vulnerable groups. He added that the exam report is used throughout the year and is a key doc for discussion.

Russell advised that he and Jonathan currently have a rota to visit every classroom every day and governors were welcome to attend. They spend just 5 minutes on each visit to focus on student behaviour. This has been very well received by staff.

AIP - Russell advised that this would remain a live document throughout the year; he has amended the action plan about relationships and communications with parents as a result of feedback.

## **7. Premises Developments Summer 2014**

Governors considered the report supplied by Julie Cooper.

Mike commented that he was sad to see that the Hornbeams had been taken down. Russell agreed but said that this decision had been taken on health and safety grounds. The stumps will be used to make sculptures. Julie has reintroduced the rolling programme of classrooms refurbishments.

## **8. Governor Visits**

This item was covered in item 6.

## **9. Policy Statements**

### **9.1. Policy on Policies - the policy was ratified and signed by the chair.**

Julian raised a concern about how policies were being monitored. Paula advised that this was an agenda item at the next Personnel meeting. Neil advised that Adrian would review the list of policies to ensure only statutory policies came to governors.

## **10. Any Other Business**

Pay Policies – governors considered the paper prepared by Julie Cooper detailing the current situation and options for governors to make a decision on.

### *Teachers' Pay Policy*

Russell advised that in terms of pay, as an academy, we are free to set our own pay scales. We cannot afford to pay more than the scales set out in the STPCD (School Teachers Pay and Conditions Document) and having a different pay scale to other schools and academies could make recruitment difficult. The pay scales needed to be fair and transparent. This year the STPCD only states minimum and maximum scales. The ACSL has agreed a policy on pay with all the teaching unions which details the amounts for each point in the scales.

Two Options

Option 1 would allow the SLT to set pay ranges based on min and max values – this could create difficulty with budgeting, transparency, fairness and recruitment.

Option 2 to adopt ACSL's recommendation on pay scales setting the increments within the max and min of scale.

Q. Neil asked which option Russell would recommend.

A. Russell replied that he would recommend to adopt the ASCL pay scales for the reasons stated. It had been signed up to by all the teaching unions. There is still performance related pay in place.

Neil asked John R for his views. He replied that he would support this for clarity and to reduce claims from staff.

Russell added that he would still have the freedom in exceptional circumstances to raise a salary by up to two points.

**Peter proposed adopting Option 2, this was seconded by Neil. All were in agreement.**

*Support staff pay increase proposal.*

Russell advised that teaching staff had a 1% uplift from September, however, because the unions for support staff had not agreed to the proposed 1% increase and were still in dispute about this no uplift had taken place for support staff. The proposal was to give an uplift of 1% to support staff immediately and then make up the final amount once the amount has been agreed.

This would ensure an equitable policy for all staff. A 1% uplift had already been budgeted for.

Mike H asked that it be made clear that this is in anticipation of a 1% rise and should this be less it would be recouped next year. Paula asked that Julie make sure that if the rise is more than 1% the increase being paid in two stages does not become cumulative.

**Neil proposed adopting this measure and Peter seconded it, all were in agreement.**

**11. Items Deemed Confidential**

None.

**12. Date of the Next Meeting** – Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> December 2014 - AGM followed by GB Meeting

**The meeting closed at 8.00pm**