



# Tring School *a specialist humanities college*

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## MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE GOVERNORS OF TRING SCHOOL HELD ON WEDNESDAY 25 MAY 2011 AT 6.30PM

### Part One

#### PRESENT

Mr B Scarth (Chair), Rev Huw Bellis, Mrs W Copper, Mrs G Davies, Mrs J Donald, Miss J Harding, Mrs K Hughes, Mr J McMunn, Mrs S McGregor, Mrs J Smith, Mrs C Thompson, Mrs D Turner, Mrs L Whitesmith, Mr A Watson, Mrs T Watson.

#### IN ATTENDANCE

Ollie Beckwith (Head Boy), Evie Price (Head Girl), Mrs A Wiltshire (Clerk)

Rev Huw Bellis opened the meeting with prayer.

#### 1. WELCOME, APOLOGIES AND APPROVAL OF ABSENCES

The Chair welcomed Ollie Beckwith and Evie Price, recently elected Head Boy and Girl. Thanks and good luck for exams were extended to Max and Jennie, for their term as previous Head Boy and Girl. Apologies were received from Mrs S Wheatley, Mrs S Hall, Mrs A Walters. These were accepted and approved.

#### Additional item

#### EXAMS

Mr Hencken presented a short report on examination analysis so far. There had been positive feedback from Year 11 and confidence in predictions. English C+ 91.9% which was an improvement on last year's 82%. The lower ability students took GCSE in November and passed. Maths C+ 82%, last year this was 77%. In both cases predictions were just under FFT D target, but it was the third year running that English and Maths has raised levels of attainment. Mr Hencken reported that he would continue with analysis for the rest of the subjects and report back to Governors.

#### 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

#### 3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 30 MARCH 2011 (Part One)

Approved.

#### 4. MATTERS ARISING

5a) Equality Scheme. This needs to be reviewed at the next Students & Families Committee.

*Action: Agenda item for next Students & Families Committee.*



## 5. BUDGET APPROVAL

**a) 2010/11 Final Outturn** – This showed a surplus of £168,000, this fortunate position was due to the freeze on budgets and the fact that Mrs Davis and Mrs Wynd had been focussing on this. Resources now had a better understanding of what was happening. This sum was, however, committed. Most departments would have a carry forward, but the allocation of money monthly would affect management of monthly expenditure and the £168,000 would be a cushion.

The Chair recommended approval for final outturn. Mr Watson seconded this.

Mrs Wynd requested that a note be sent to Mrs Davis from the Governing Body for her excellent work on the budget.

**b)~Draft Budget 2011/12** - Mrs Davis presenting reports on facilities/premises highlighted that she and Mr Rennard were working well as a team. A budget proposal had been set over 3 years, but changes would continue to affect figures. Cuts had been included, especially Sixth Form funding, to show worst case scenario.

The Chair proposed approval – this was approved by the Governing Body.

## 6. COMMITTEE REPORTS

### **a) Resources**

(i) Mr Scarth presented the minutes of the committee's meeting held on 9 May 2011 (copy filed with signed copy of these minutes).

(ii) **Minute 5 – Year End Report.** Mr Scarth reported that this had taken up most of the meeting. The true carry forward not committed amounted to £8,000, which was less than 1%. A draft budget had been presented based on a 3-year forecast.

(iii) **Minute 8 – Update on Governor Section of School Plan.** This would be covered as a separate item agenda.

(iv) **Minute 12(b) – Dual Use.** Mrs Wynd, Mrs Davis and Mr Rennard were gaining a better understanding of this and progress was being made.

### **b) Curriculum & Teaching**

(i) Mrs Donald presented the minutes of the committee's meeting held on 4 May 2011 (copy filed with signed copy of these minutes).

(ii) **Minute 5 – Gifted and Talent Policy Review.** It had been reported that this policy along with Teaching and Learning Policy and Curriculum had been discussed thoroughly. These would need to go to the Leadership Team before being brought back to governors.

(iii) **Minute 7 – Humanities Discussion.** Mrs Chapman made a presentation on raising awareness of Humanities, very similar to the presentation which the Full Governing Body had received prior to this Governing Body meeting.

(iv) **Minute 9 – Kirkland Rowell Survey.** Governors had expressed concern regarding low staff moral which had come out of the survey. This would need to be addressed in the future.

### **c) Students and Families**

(i) Mrs Whitesmith presented the minutes of the committee's meeting held on 5 May 2011 (copy filed with signed copy of these minutes).

(ii) **Minute 5 – Admissions Policy.** Mr Dan Hardy, HCC Admissions Policy Strategy Manager had attended the meeting. There had been a good discussion regarding allocations based on religious grounds, which was historical. It had been suggested that Rev Huw Bellis have sight of supporting letters from parents in this respect with the possibility of creating a ‘checklist’ for a more transparent process.

(iii) **Minute 3 – Humanities.** Mrs Chapman had also attended this meeting to make her presentation on the Humanities specialism.

(iv) **Minute 7 – Safeguarding and Exclusions.** There had been 7 bullying incidents and 2 racist incidents. Mr Barlow has proved the committee with a report on exclusions.

At this point the Chair reported that Mrs Wheatley had met with Health & Safety auditor in preparation for the audit scheduled for 16 June. Good work on this had been undertaken by Mr Rennard.

## **7. POLICIES FOR APPROVAL**

### **b) Governors Expenses**

**This policy was recommended for approval. It was approved by the Governing Body.**

## **8. GOVERNOR VISITS**

a) Mrs Davies distributed an up-to-date list of Roles and Responsibilities which provided good evidence of who had been coming into school. This had been going forward with more visits this year.

b) The recording system on the Learning Platform last year had not been consistent. The introduction of a proforma for governors to complete after each visit would improve this, Mrs Harding had briefed governors on how this should be completed, which over the years would show actions and key themes emerge. The forms were to be kept on file and brought to each Governing Body meeting. This would provide the opportunity of governors updating any of their proformas.

c) In summary, governors would complete the form electronically after the visit and a brief discussion with a member of the Leadership Team. This would be shared with the Subject Leader. The document would be placed in the file and kept by the Clerk who would bring to each meeting.

d) It was explained that the links would remain the same to enable governors to build up a relationship with the department. It was up to individuals to decide on the frequency of visits; they could communicate with Subject Leaders by email which would also be filed.

e) Mr Watson reported that he had recently attended a Lifeskills sessions and made valuable contribution and reaffirmed that governors have a lot to offer the school.

f) Discussion then followed about how valuable it has been for some governors who had attended department meetings which had enabled them to gain a better understanding of how departments operated and for staff to understand that governors were there to offer support. Also how valuable it had been to attend lessons remarks on the confidence of students were shared.

*Mr McMunn arrived.*

## 9. STUDENT REPORT

- a) The Head Boy and Head Girl presented their report (copy filed with signed copy of these minutes).
- b) Plans for Charity Week had started, this would take place before February half term. This would take the form of all Houses competing in different events on each day. It was felt that student involvement was important and consultation regarding events they would like would take place.
- c) Discussion then followed regarding the promotion of charity week, through assemblies, and form tutors.
- d) The Head Boy also felt it was important that students in the Sixth Form were informed as to the budget situation in the school, so they had a better understanding of cuts which would affect them. This idea stemmed from the last GB meeting before which the Head Boy and Head Girl did not have any understanding of the reduced funding the school would receive.
- e) The Head Girl informed governors how they would like to resurrect the School Council, with questionnaires issued to all forms requesting information as to what they would like to the Sixth Form to do for them.
- f) It was felt that one project would be more manageable, and this would focus on student involvement, opening up the Eco-Council to the whole school. The School Council would continue and the Achievers' Wall which had been set up by the previous Head Boy and Girl. The Politics scheme would be continued by Alex Ray in Yr 12 who would like lower school involvement, with more of a focus on waste and understanding budgets.

## 10. SCHOOL PLAN

- a) Mrs Davies distributed papers, the Review of Governing Body Objectives 2010-11 and GB Objectives for 2011-12 (copies filed with signed copy of these minutes) Each Committee had reviewed their 3 objectives at previous Committee meetings.
- b) **Resources** – The Chairman presented the objectives for 2011-12.
  - (i) Action (1) To ensure best practice for school going forward. The Chair reported that although things had settled in terms of support staffing structure, there would probably be more changes, the Leadership Team were stretched, and were having to rely on, and include, the extended LT to a greater extent than in the past. Governors should not be surprised if more changes were proposed at the top level.
  - (ii) Action (2) Return on Investment (best value). Premises, Personnel and Finance were working well as a team.
  - (iii) Action (3) 2-3 year Budget Planning Cycle. This was now in place.
  - (iv) Action (4) Governing Body Skills and knowledge had been further developed through training and sharing knowledge with the SIP. Resources committee now had a better understanding of the budgetary position. Plan for next year to same actions.
- c) **Students & Families** – Mrs Whitesmith presented the objectives.
  - (i) Action (1) Communication, school/community. This to be linked in with Humanities.
  - (ii) Action (2) Strengthen GB participation. This had been helped through governor visits. Governor photos and profiles to be kept updated on the website.

(iii) Action (3) Informal feedback. Governor visits will continue to capture feedback and the new proforma will ensure that this is kept in a documented way and will continue as work in progress.

(iv) Action (4) Develop Departmental links. This will continue with Governor visits.

Mrs Whitesmith added that communication with the wider community and links are moving forward.

d) **Curriculum and Teaching** – Mrs Donald presented the objectives.

(i) Action (1,2,3,4,5) Humanities, key theme in all the objectives. There had been a lot of discussion and work with Mrs Chapman on the Humanities status Work which had been started would continue to develop and grow and would be a standard item on agendas.

The Chair thanked Mrs Davies for all her work on putting the information together. It was agreed that the School Plan should be an agenda item once a term and on the Chairs agenda.

*Action: AWi to add the new sections to the School Plan and arrange for all governors to receive bound copies.*

## **11. SAFEGUARDING**

a) It was agreed that the regular conferences should continue next year with feedback to the Governing Body.

b) Governors were informed that a Health & Safety Audit was scheduled for 16 June 2011.

## **12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

a) Moodle – Governors were informed that the Learning Platform was now obsolete and a Governors area would be set up on Moodle. Judith Holstein would be running a workshop/introduction session for governors before the next Full Governing Body meeting on Thursday 7 July, from 6pm in Connexions.

b) The Chair had received information from HCC with regard to involvement with the Olympics. The school link was Andrew Dobberson. Wendy Copper, Brian Scarth and Andy Watson to discuss whether the school to benefit from such involvement.

c) The Headteacher expressed her concern regarding low staff morale stating that the recent discussions nationally involving unions, NUT and ATL regarding pensions affected staff morale.

d) The matter of whether governors meeting socially e.g. holding meetings off-site, would be beneficial was raised. Governors work hard as a body and as individuals and there was little opportunity, especially for new members to get together informally. This would be discussed further among governors.

*Rev Huw Bellis left the meeting*

e) Governing Body Structure – The Headteacher wanted to acknowledge the work of the Governing Body, stating that it was by far the most proactive and professional Body she had worked with. She was grateful to the key members who had been instrumental in making improvements over the years. It was announced that Brian Scarth, Chair, would be stepping down from his role in October and Gill Davies, Vice Chair would be also be stepping down in February. Both of these individuals had been brilliant for the Headteacher and

the Governing Body, and had brought real professionalism in terms of moving things forward.

Brian Scarth expressed his interest in becoming an Associate Member, and would, therefore, be around to advise. He also reported that Nickie Jeffery would no longer continue as a governor and so, therefore, there would be a vacancy for parent governor.

He then proposed that Sue Collings write to Cllr Nick Hollinghurst inviting him to consider taking the role of Community Governor from September 2011.

*Action: Sue Collings to write to Nick Hollinghurst. AWi to action Parent Governor process, September 2011.*

*Self Nomination request for Chair and Vice Chair roles be sent to all governors by AWi.*