

BISHOP WORDSWORTH'S ACADEMY TRUST
REPORT IN LIEU OF MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BODY DUE TO BE HELD ON
TUESDAY 24 MARCH 2020 AT 1730 IN THE CARPENTER ROOM BUT CANCELLED
DUE TO THE CV19 ISSUE

Governors sent this Report:	Miss M J Horsburgh (Chair)	Mr K G M Flynn	Mr J Oldham
	Mr J Hastings (V Chair)	Mr M Francis-Pollin	Canon E Probert
	Prof A Bell	Dr S K Ghauri	Mrs J Ranaboldo
	Mr J R B Blake	Mrs R Harwood-Lincoln	Mr A E Willis
	Dr G Branagan	Mrs S Hayward	The Headmaster.

Others Mr G Lloyd (Deputy Headmaster, Colonel B Smith (Bursar), Lieutenant Colonel D J Peerless (Company Secretary).

Due to Government advice on minimising person to person contact the Chair decided that the meeting should not be held. Furthermore, the necessary infrastructure was not yet in place to hold the Meeting by tele or video-conferencing. This Report documents reports, email updates, email comments and email voting on the Agenda. Because the Funding Agreement does not allow email voting, all agreements recorded below, although considered firm, must be considered provisional and will be ratified at the next Meeting. Decisions that should not wait until the next Meeting will be confirmed by written resolution.

IT-EM	SUBJECT	ACTION
1.20	Presentation. N/A.	
2.20	Apologies for Absence. N/A	
3.20	Declaration of Interests. Governors were reminded in the Agenda that they had an obligation to declare any interest which might impact on the business of the School, both as discussed at this meeting, or outside of this meeting. No governor declared any interest other than those in their annual declarations.	
4.20	Minutes of the Previous Meeting. Agreed, to be ratified.	Co Sec
5.20	Matters Arising. 1. Item 78.19 Para 1 – Register of Interests. Forms will be sent to Canon Probert and Mr Blake. AFTERNOTE Posted and returned. 2. Item 94.19 – Video Conferencing. It is hoped that Office 365 will provide a solution but the timing will depend on the health and priority of the IT Dept who are currently ensuring that the pupils' distance learning via Insight is maintained. AFTERNOTE Teams being set up.	
6.20	Members' Items. 1. AGM Minutes. No Comment, a written resolution will be put to Members. AFTERNOTE Agreed by Members in writing. 2. End of Term: Prof Bell. No Comment, a written resolution will be put to Members. Agreed by Members in writing.	

	<p>3. New Model Funding Agreement. The Bursar has discovered that there is a slightly increased likelihood of funding bids being approved for schools with the new model Funding Agreement. The Company Secretary will explore how we could change to the current model and to consider if there might be any adverse consequences.</p>	Co Sec
7.20	<p>Governing Body Matters.</p> <p>1. Link Changes. The following changes were agreed for ratification at the next meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Complaints Policy to Mr Willis from Dr Branagan. b. Whistleblowing Policy to Mr Willis from Mrs Ranaboldo. c. Sports PE to Dr Branagan. <p>2. Vacant Links. The following require filling: Security, H&S (both by members of APHS Committee), Redundancy, ICT, and Maths.</p> <p>3. Committees. Mr Willis to Pay and Staffing was agreed for ratification at the next meeting.</p> <p>4. Resignation. Dr Green’s resignation on 11 Dec 19 was noted.</p> <p>5. Change of Name. The Company Secretary reports that the name of the Academy Trust had now been changed by the deletion of ‘for Boys’ and that the revised name was shown on Companies House website.</p>	<p>Co Sec</p> <p>All</p> <p>Co Sec</p>
8.20	<p>Headmaster’s Report. The normal Headmaster’s update to his Report is below together with comments/ questions by/from governors and responses in italics. Some comments were endorsed by several governors but this is not recorded for brevity.</p> <p>1. The Headmaster added to his report by email as follows:</p> <p>Para 6 – Wessex Partnership. I have now received a response from Sarah Busby, which implies that the institutions within the Magna Learning Partnership (MLP) will do everything possible to avoid permanently excluding any pupil (including sixth form) but that the MLP will assist if needed with independent panels in future: all requests for assistance to be routed through her. I doubt whether I would ever ask for such help given my recent experience of course, and I hope that I do not have to permanently exclude a pupil again. (Company Secretary Comment: School in the MLP refused to help by providing a headmaster member for the recent independent panel.).</p> <p>Para 8 – CV 19. Governors should refer to the webpage at https://www.bishopwordsworths.org.uk/main-school/home/coronavirus-information/. This is the single source of information from the School to ensure clarity and promptness of information. A link to the page is also pinned to the main School twitter account.</p>	

Para 9 – Academic Performance. Details of the curriculum and (revised) timetable structure will be given in July, by which time the model will have been finalised. For now we are switching to a 50 period/week timetable from September 2020, with most lessons being delivered as 1 hour doubles. The structure of the school day and timing of assemblies etc will also change to some extent, but those changes will tend towards evolution rather than revolution...!

Para 10 – Recent Achievements. The senior debate team competed in the Cambridge Union National Final (one of the last 40 teams internationally to do so) but did not make it to the semi-finals this time around. The Oxford Union Finals were cancelled.

Para 11 - Sport. The rugby sevens season has been decimated this year – first by the very wet weather and now by the impact of the epidemic.

Para 12 – Mullins and Other Lectures. I did not secure a Mullins lecturer – but then the lecture would not have happened in any case. Suggestions/contacts most welcome for Spring 2021 please.

Para 13 - Music. The House Music Festival has been put back to the summer term, and the Choral Concert will not take place.

2. Chair of Governors Comment and *HM Response*.

a. Sixth Form applications are most encouraging, with the associated marketing initiatives offering scope for further development. Very interesting to read both provenance and subject choices (good to see stronger potential take-up for art subjects, despite very significant dominance of maths, chemistry, biology).

I agree with the above, but bear in mind that there will be a similarly healthy level of applications to SWGS I am sure. My impression (from a number of different sources) is that boys have sometimes made an application there as an 'insurance policy' in case they do not reach the required level of performance for Bishops. There is now a significant level of disparity of entry grades for Year 12 between the two schools, and marketing is similarly distinctive on both sides I suspect. Of course with the intervention of the current health emergency GCSE exams have been thrown into doubt, so it is difficult to predict what the future might now look like...

b. The Fair Access document (Appendix 2) makes interesting reading.

and, I hope, encouraging – important for the governors to know that we are actually DOING something to address social mobility issues, rather than (as many schools do) just talking about it.

c. The School has risen magnificently to the unprecedented challenges of the coronavirus crisis. The need constantly to reassess and respond, notably in the past fortnight, has placed enormous strain on staff, and most particularly on the Headmaster

and his senior colleagues. I am sure Governors will wish to record formally our deep gratitude to all involved and to offer any support we can as the School moves now to a comprehensive online teaching programme.

Importantly we already had a robust distance learning arrangement in place and were using it; so we knew that the capacity to cope was probably there.

- d. I was also very pleased to read the congratulatory letter from Wiltshire Councils.
- e. I would like to record thanks to those governors involved in the Review Panel and follow up work from the subsequent independent review panel, particularly the Panel Chair, Mrs Ranaboldo. Thank you also to Lt Col Peerless for his indefatigable work to ensure the process ran smoothly.
- f. Staff questionnaire: a valuable exercise – thank you.

3. Question and Answer from/ to a Governor. About the hardship fund that you mention in Sub Paras 4c and d in Appendix 2 of your report: do parents/boys put in requests to access these funds? I hope so.

Parents and boys do put in requests for assistance – a small number each year for a variety of reasons. For obvious reasons I try to avoid long-term commitments here or, if there is a long term (ie more than one year) implication, then I will offer assistance at a lower level. This year (for the first time) we are advertising bursaries at both 11+ and 16+; the former through pamphlets issued at the Open Afternoons in Summer 2019, and the latter through a tick box on the offer letter for a place in Year 12 at Bishops.

This just leaves me to thank you and your team for everything that you have put in place during the initial weeks of the coronavirus outbreak. It is most impressive.

4. Question and Answer from/ to a Governor.

a. **Para 8 – CV19.** As usual a thorough summary of all aspects of School functioning including the excellent handling of the coronavirus situation. I hope we can ensure there are support processes in place to look after the well-being of staff and students over the next few months especially if they go into self-isolation.

b. **Para 21 – Staff Questionnaire.** Question 22 seems the "lowest scoring" - I agree that when everyone is working at such a high level that we take excellent working as a given. Can we have some way of acknowledging good work by all staff at least some point in the year depending on the department and work/project involved ... we all feel good when this happens.

I will give further thought as to how this might happen in due course.

	<p>5. Question and Answer from/ to a Governor. Will doubling the capacity for accessing remote desktop working to 40 or 60 ensure that all staff can work remotely? Is there a shortfall?</p> <p><i>This should be ok I think as it would be unusual for large number of staff to want to use the desktop at the same time. The vast bulk of the traffic goes through Insight of course. If there are peaks in use the system will slow I believe rather than crash, so this may be an automatic way of managing the numbers at any one time. We will evaluate as things settle down under the new arrangements.</i></p> <p>6. Question and Answer from/ to Governor. On Item 8.20, Appendix 2, 2e: what is the "Ever Six" Register?</p> <p><i>'Ever 6' refers to children who have been entitled to free school meals at any time during the previous 6 years. This entitles a claim for Pupil Premium.</i></p> <p>7. Question and Answer from/ to a Governor.</p> <p>a. May Meeting. Please can we make sure that we're set up to have the meeting virtually in one way or another – so please can someone be tasked with making sure that that happens?</p> <p>Company Secretary: see Item 5.20 Para 2.</p> <p>8. Comment by a Governor - Item 8.20 HM Report Para 4 – Sixth Form Applications. The marketing for next year has been outstanding in my opinion - reflected by the staggering number of schools from which we have had applicants. I hope that this is reflected in the numbers that end up attending next year (by whichever means that is decided in the coming months) - well done to all involved</p>	
9.20	<p>Finance and Audit. Dr Braganan reported by email as follows:</p> <p>ITEM 9.20 – Budget Update. The budget update confirms that we have a small surplus at the half year point. The only significant change was a large increase (£107k) in the expenditure on educational support which relates to examination fees. Bursar: <i>The large Educational Support expenditure in February was mostly the payment of examination fees (approximately £90k). Discussions have already started to see how much will now be refunded though some may need need to be returned to parents.</i> Clearly these expenses may not be needed in the current climate but the bigger problem going forward is the reduction in income for lettings and catering over the next few weeks / months with a relatively fixed cost base. We have no control over these events but can hopefully plan and respond to events as they arise.</p> <p>ITEM 9.20 – Budget Issues. The ESFA require annual accounts reporting using an expanded set of groupings and cost centres compared to the headings found in the current budget. The Bursar has proposed presenting the budget for 2020/21 using this expanded set and then continuing to use that set as standard from September onwards. The F&A committee are voting on this. Company Secretary:</p>	

	<i>now agreed subject to ratification.</i>	
10.20	<p>School Evaluation and Review.</p> <p>1. Governor Visits. Dr Branagan circulated his report by email to all governors.</p> <p>2. Trip/Visit Summary. It was agreed that all the trips and visits had educational value. The Chair also commented: 'but sad to realise that all these valuable trips will now be cancelled'.</p>	
11.20	<p>School Development Planning.</p> <p>1. Strategic Plan 2020/23. No comment on the Plan which will be taken at the next Meeting for ratification.</p> <p>2. School Improvement Plan 2019/20. No comment on the update.</p> <p>3. Site Development Masterplan.</p> <p>a. Chair of Finance & Audit Committee Comment. Whilst I agree about the challenges of discussing by email I would urge a strong word of caution about deferring this completely until we can meet face-to-face. Current suggestions are that the current policy of social isolation is set to continue for 12 weeks which will take us to the 11th June. The date of the next meeting of the Governors Body is 12 May so it is entirely probable that we will not be able to have a face-to-face meeting. Hopefully by that point we will be able to video-conference. However, if we only start the discussions about the priorities at that point we may miss opportunities for funding and /or planning permission to be able to put things in place in the timescales suggested by the Bursar. Would it be an idea to have a small group put something together with the Bursar and HM including costs and where the funds will come from as well as timeframes for building / planning permission? This could then be put to the meeting on 12th May.</p> <p>b. Comment by Mr Hastings. Mindful of Dr Branagan's comments about the risks of a delay in our decision making, would the Bursar be able to identify whether a decision in May will adversely impact any funding or planning applications please? If not then consideration of the plan in May seems sensible. If it does, then I agree that a working group should consider it before the relevant dates (and I'm happy – and would like – to be involved with that).</p> <p>c. Response by Bursar. <i>I am preparing a note for governors to give some more detail on some of the proposed projects and highlighting where decisions may be necessary out of committee if we are to meet some key timelines. AFTERNOTE Circulated and provisionally agreed by governors out of committee.</i></p>	Co Sec
12.20	<p>Discipline Panel Report. Mrs Ranaboldo reported as follows: a discipline panel consisting of myself Dr Branagan and Dr Green met on 10 January to review the School's decision to permanently exclude a pupil. The Panel upheld the Headmaster's decision. The boy's</p>	

	<p>parents appealed to an Independent Review Panel who had a choice to uphold our decision, quash our decision or ask us to review our decision. Their request for us to reconsider appeared to be based on an assessment that procedures/ policies were not fully considered or adhered to. Because Dr Green had left the Governing Body, the Panel reconvened with myself Dr Branagan and Mr Alan Willis and we carefully reviewed our decision in the light of the independent panel's comments.</p> <p>We felt that our previous decision was not flawed and should stand.</p> <p>I understand that the only further review now would be by judicial review and add that the time limit for an application to be made has now expired.</p> <p>I am happy to answer any questions when we next meet.</p>	
13.20	<p>HM Mid-Year Review. Chair's comment: 'I note the HM targets for 2019-20, with emphasis on: academic standards (particularly English GCSE developments; Sixth Form marketing; Development Office; International Development – with thanks for all the work undertaken to date by the Headmaster and governors working on this project.'</p>	
14.20	<p>Safeguarding. Mrs Ranaboldo reported as follows: I met with Mr Rodgers and Mrs Lambard last term for a general update and will meet with the latter again when School returns to normal after the current crisis up and running again.</p> <p>I have been into School to inspect the Single Central record this term.</p>	
15.20	<p>International Working Group. No comment on the Report.</p>	
16.20	<p>Company Secretary's Business. The Company Secretary reports that he intends to retire later in the year and that the Bursar and another member of the support staff, yet to be selected, would take on his duties.</p>	
17.20	<p>Any Other Business. Nil.</p>	
18.20	<p>Date of Next Meeting. Tuesday 12 May 2020 at 1700 in The 6th Form Common Room subject to CV19 restrictions</p>	