

Minutes of a Governing Body meeting of Lord Lawson of Beamish Academy on Wednesday 9 March 2022 at 5.30pm

Governors Present: Guy Currey (Chair), Alison Logan, Andrew Fowler (Principal), Katie Barron, Guy Currey, Louise Doran, Cllr Sheila Gallagher, Joel Greenwell, Andrew Mears, Heather McClean, Chris Smith, Kevin Thompson

Clerk: Kim Ashford

The meeting started at 5.39pm and was quorate.

1. Apologies for absence

- Apologies were received from Dr Jane Halpin, Claire Gibson, Claire Godfrey. Consent was given for their absence.

2. Declarations of interest in any items on the agenda

- There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of the last Governing Body meeting held on Wednesday 8 December 2021

3.1 Approval of the minutes

- Governors received the minutes of the last Governing Body meeting on Wednesday, 8 December 2021, as circulated with the agenda by email prior to the meeting. The minutes were **approved** as a correct record.

3.2 Matters arising

- Page 1 – Audit and Risk Committee:
It was noted that Louise Doran met with James Pedlingham before the half term break to discuss the establishment of an Audit and Risk Committee. It was **agreed** that this matter will be brought to the upcoming Academy Management Committee. **Action: Louise Doran, Clerk.**
- Page 5 – Road Traffic Accidents occurring outside the Academy:
Cllr Gallagher **confirmed** that she has spoken to the Highways Manager, who confirmed that he had received an incident report but that there were no enforcement issues. He stated that a pedestrian had walked out in front of traffic. Cllr Gallagher has written to the Highways Manager asking if the local authority intends to take any action to improve safety on this stretch of road. Cllr Gallagher will update Governors once she has received a response. **Action: Cllr Gallagher.**

4. Governing Body

4.1 Governing Body membership and vacancies

- Governors received the Membership and Vacancies report, as circulated with the agenda by email prior to the meeting.
- It was **noted** that since the last meeting, Andrew Chanse has resigned as Staff Governor. The Principal stated that he will be seeking expressions of interest for the Staff Governor vacancy, opening this up to support staff in the first instance, and then teaching staff. **Action: Principal.**

4.2 Governing Body meeting attendance

- Governors received and noted the Governing Body meeting attendance report, as circulated with the agenda by email, prior to the meeting.

4.3 Governing Body training and development

- Governors received the Governor training and development report, as circulated with the agenda by email, prior to the meeting.
- It was noted that Exclusions training was held on 9 November 2021 and was attended by Kevin Thompson, Cllr Sheila Gallagher, Guy Currey, Louise Doran, Joel Greenwell, Heather McClean, Alison Logan and Dr Jane Halpin.
- The Principal stated that he attended an Ofsted webinar on Inspecting Safeguarding on 4 February.
- Alison Logan stated that she attended an online training programme on Safeguarding and Child Exploitation, run by Sunderland Council.
- Andrew Mears confirmed he will be attending New Governors Induction training at the end of this month. **Action: Andrew Mears.**
- The Clerk agreed to check with James Pedlingham as to the status of the Academy's possible subscription to The Key. **Action: Clerk.**

4.4 Link Governor roles list and visit reports

- Governors received the Link Governor roles list, as circulated with the agenda by email, prior to the meeting.
- It was noted that Chris Smith has been replaced by Dr Jane Halpin as Safeguarding Link Governor. The Clerk **agreed** to amend the local authority's records to this effect. **Action: Clerk.**
- It was agreed that Andrew Mears will be linked to Curriculum Implementation (Finance/Staffing/HR). **Action: Clerk.**
- The Chair encouraged Governors to begin to plan meetings with their link staff, and that these meetings should take place in person at the Academy wherever possible, or via Teams if an in-person meeting is not feasible. **Action: Governors.**

- Heather McClean stated that she is due to meet with her link subject lead, Kate Kendall next week, and the focus will be on improving reading age, raising attainment, and the enjoyment of Reading. It was noted that Kate has introduced a Reading curriculum, following a suggestion from the School Improvement Partner. Heather will bring her monitoring report to the next Student Progress Committee meeting on 18 May 2022. **Action: Heather McClean, Clerk.**

5. Committees

5.1 Committee membership

- Governors received the Committee membership report, as circulated with the agenda by email, prior to the meeting.
- It was noted that Andrew Mears and Claire Gibson would join the First Committee and the Second Committee. **Action: Clerk.**
- It was noted that Andrew Mears would join both the Academy Management Committee and the Student Progress Committee. **Action: Clerk.**
- It was noted that Claire Gibson will join the Student Progress Committee. **Action: Clerk.**
- The Chair agreed to check whether Claire would also like to join the Academy Management Committee, and will then advise the Clerk on this matter. **Action: Chair.**
- Governors were advised that the next Student Progress Committee meeting would take place at **5.30pm on Wednesday 18 May**, and not the previously agreed time of 4.30pm.

5.2 Committee meeting attendance

- Governors received and noted the Committee meeting attendance report, as circulated with the agenda by email, prior to the meeting.

6. Principal's Report

- The following documents were received from the Principal, as part of the Principal's Report, as circulated with the agenda by email prior to the meeting:
 - Safeguarding Audit 2021/22, from Clennell
 - Admissions and student numbers 2022, from the Principal
 - Desktop Review 2021/22, from the SIP Mark Wilson
 - IT Update, from James Pedlingham
 - Staffing Report, from James Pedlingham
 - Support Staff Pay Award approval request, from James Pedlingham
- It was noted that Governors **agreed** the Support Staff pay award.

6.1 Update on School Improvement Plan

- It was noted that the School Improvement Plan is covered under item 6.4, the Desktop Review conducted by the SIP, Mark Wilson.

6.2 Safeguarding

- Governors received Safeguarding Audit 2021/22 from Clennell.
- It was noted that Jane Halpin had previously **agreed** to review the audit document, which is a very thorough report. **Action: Dr Jane Halpin.**

6.3 Roll and Admissions 2022

- Governors received the Admissions and Student Numbers 2022 document, from the Principal.
- It was noted that apart from Year 11, which is over PAN, all Year Groups are currently under PAN. While all schools take in their fair share of hard-to-place pupils as a matter of course, schools that are under PAN are likely to be asked to take in more students from this category as they have the space to do so. Being under PAN also has a wider implication in terms of staffing, as the Academy is currently over-staffed in relation to the number of students on roll.
- The Principal stated that the Academy is in the process of reaching out to applicants who have been given a place at Lord Lawson and not at any of their three preference schools, and those who did not make any application, to try to encourage them to accept their place at Lord Lawson.
- The Principal stated that it would be prudent to consider reducing the PAN to 240 to avoid having unfilled spaces on roll, with the understanding that the PAN can be adjusted upwards again should there be a need to do so. Governors **agreed** that they should consider a proposal to reduce the PAN to 240. The Principal **agreed** to check with the local authority as to how much notice the Academy needs to give, prior to reducing the PAN, and to bring a proposal to Governors. **Action: Principal.**

6.4 Desktop Review 2021/22

- Governors received the Desktop Review 2021/22, conducted by Mark Wilson, the Academy's School Improvement Partner. The Principal informed Governors that this document will form the basis of the Academy's School Development Plan. Mark Wilson is an Ofsted inspector, therefore his review and suggestions also focus on areas where the school may need to improve in terms of Ofsted requirements.

The Principal gave the following responses to questions from Governors:

- *Are there any areas that have been identified as more worrying than others?* Behaviour and Attitudes are the most concerning areas. SEN was not overly effective in the past, but we have made some progress

here. Attendance is currently at 89.2%, which is better than the national average. There are only 6 confirmed Covid cases among students, and only 1 staff member with Covid.

- *Where would you say this report adds value?* In one succinct document, it brings together everything that we knew but that we had not articulated as clearly or effectively until now. The document gives us a sharpness of focus and clarity that we did not have before.
 - *How does this document compare with the Opportunity North-East Plan?* While the new document does not cover finances, as the Opportunity North-East plan did, it does include Sixth Form, which was not mentioned in the previous Plan. This Plan will evolve into our new School Development Plan, rather than merging it with the Opportunity North-East Plan. I am currently working on writing the new Plan, and will have this drafted for the next Governing Body meeting on 13 July. **Action: Principal, Clerk.**
 - *How will we know if we are making progress in all of the necessary areas?* This document gives us a list of actions against which we can audit progress and we will be able to present evidence. Mark will be coming back to assess progress.
 - *Has this document been shared?* Only with SLT and now with you as Governors. It will also be helpful for Governors' link staff to see this.
 - *Should we not already have been aware of everything that is presented in this document?* Yes, we were. However, Mark's document brings everything together with a clarity and sharpness of focus that was not there before. There are no surprises, but neither would I expect there to be. This is a comprehensive document and provides what we need.
 - *How will we ensure that we improve across all areas, and how will we measure improvement?* These matters will be addressed as part of the next plan.
 - *Will Mark Wilson conduct return visits before the next Governing Body meeting?* I hope that this will happen, as this is the plan. Mark has a very full diary, but he has offered to come back when he can.
- A Governor commented that Governors need to be able to confidently articulate what they know, and how they know it, in order to be able to provide appropriate responses during an Ofsted inspection. The Clerk **agreed** to check whether there was any local authority training on preparing for an Ofsted inspection. **Action: Clerk.**

7. Admissions Arrangements

- Governors were asked to confirm that:
 - Admission arrangements for 2023/24 were determined by 28th February 2022, and appropriate bodies were notified;
 - A copy of the full determined admission arrangements for 2023/24 will be sent to the LA by 15th March 2022;

- Determined admission arrangements will be published on the school website and will be displayed for the whole offer year (the school year in which offers for places are made).
- The Principal stated that he would check that Academy is compliant with the above Admissions Arrangements. This item will be brought to the Governing Body meeting in the Summer term. **Action: Principal, Clerk.**

8. Information to publish on a school website

- It was noted that good progress is being made with the website, which is now much improved. This item will be brought to the Governing Body meeting in the Summer term. **Action: Clerk.**

9. Dates and times of future meetings

- Governors noted the date of the Summer term meeting, as follows:

Summer Term

Wednesday, 13 July 2022 at 5.30pm (preceded by Governor Conference)

10. Any other business

There was no other business.

The meeting finished at 7.15pm. The Principal and Katie Barron left the meeting.

Date..... Signed.....