**MINUTES FOR A MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BODY OF**

**SHENFIELD HIGH SCHOOL**

**THURSDAY 8th SEPTEMBER 2016 at 4:30 pm**

**Present:**

Mr DJ Barron Teaching Staff Governor

Mr Graham Herniman Parent Governor

Mrs Leanne Hedden (Chair) Governor

Mrs Gill Jones Governor

Mrs Rachel O’Hara Parent Governor

Miss Emma Prince Support Staff Governor

Mr Neil Purbrick Parent Govenor

Mrs Jane Swettenham Governor

Mr Andrew Worth Parent Governor

Ms Carole Herman Headteacher – Ex Officio

**In attendance:**

Mrs Jenny Comerford Deputy Headteacher

Mrs Karen Whordley HR Manager/Clerk

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | **ACTION** |
| 1 | **APOLOGIES** Apologies received and accepted from Andy Lunn and Steve Beckett.  Retrospective apologies were received from Dave Simpson. |  |
| 2 | **NOTIFICATION OF ANY OTHER BUSINESS**  None noted |  |
| 3 | **DECLARATION OF BUSINESS INTERESTS/CONFLICT OF INTEREST AND GOVERNORS’ REGISTER OF BUSINESS INTEREST**  No Governor present declared any personal or financial interest in any item on the agenda.  New forms had been circulated via Weebly and email. Governors were asked to complete these and return to KW at the end of the meeting. |  |
| 4 | **ELECTION OF CHAIR/VICE CHAIR**  LH passed the chair of the meeting to KW as Clerk. A request had previously gone to governors to ask for nomination for Chair and Vice Chair of Governors. There had been no new nomination. LH was willing to stand again so a vote was taken. RO proposed LH and AW seconded. LH was elected unanimously by the governing body. LH resumed as chair of the meeting.  As GH was late to the meeting LH would come to the Vice Chair nomination later in the meeting. |  |
| 6 | **ORGANISATION OF GOVERNING BODY COMMITTEES**  Jane Swettenhamagreed to be the new chair for the Standards and Performance Committee. |  |
| 7 | **GOVERNORS’ CODE OF CONDUCT** The code of conduct had been circulated via Weebly and email. Governors were asked to sign the document and return it to KW at the end of the meeting. |  |
| 8 | **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**The minutes of the 7th July 2016 meeting, having previously been circulated, were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair of Governors |  |
| 9 | **MATTERS ARISING**  * Item 7-Responsibility had been delegated to the staffing committee to deal with the outcomes of the consultation for the staff restructure. There had been a nil response from consultation. Using their delegated authority, Staffing Committee had confirmed the restructure could proceed. KW had sent out paperwork to the people concerned with regards to their new positions. This was now being formally recorded for good governance purposes. * Item 12-LH asked if AW had managed to make any progress with developing his ideas on potential changes to the complaints policy. He hadn’t so the item would be considered again when appropriate. * Item 13-KW had confirmed that only the main meetings were needed for the annual report. | **AW/AL** |
| 10 | **HEADTEACHER’S REPORT**  Governors’ had received a copy of CJH’s report via email and Weebly.  CJH was pleased to confirm numbers in to year 7 were 189. There had been 1 ‘no show’ and one child had been taken out on her first day as she had a place in another school. The PAN was 150. There is now a waiting list of 7 students. Form groups are 32/33 students so at the maximum. We still have mid-year entrants applying to come.  16:38 Graham Herniman arrived.  The 6th Form needed 350 students a target which has been met. 167 have stayed in year 13, dropped by 7, a far greater retention rate than previously, and 216 have been recruited in to year 12. This will be on the back of the outstanding A level results.  Once the exam review meetings have taken place CJH will visit primary schools before Open Evening. There was a tremendous interest in the aptitude test last year and CJH will be promoting this again. GJ asked if the details of the aptitude test could be sent to some of the local dance schools. GJ to email CJH the details.  The new staff listed in the report are settling in well.  **A Level**  CJH highlighted the results below and said the A Level results are the best state school results in the area.   * 100% A\* to E – no Us! * Only 2 E grades. * A\* to B – 54% - up 8% on 2015; up 18% on 2014 * A\* to C – 83% - up 8% on 2015; up 17% on 2014 * 14 ALPS red subjects, 6 black, 2 blue. * BTEC Extended Diploma – D\*-D – 91% (+1% 2015) * BTEC Subsidiary Diploma – 81% (+6% 2015)   **AS Level**  The AS level results were healthy and were highlighted below.   * Difficult to make a direct comparison because we have a mixture of AS and internal exams. * 96.36% pass rate * A-B 53% * A-C 77% * Only 9 Us * 17 ALPS red subjects, 3 black, no blues.   **GCSEs**  CJH was pleased to report that the GCSE results were also good. Progress 8 was a positive 0.44, meaning students gained nearly ½ a grade higher than was expected of them.   * Attainment 8 – 5.3 * 5 A\*- C including En & Ma – 66% the best in CJH’s time. * A\*-C in En and Ma – 67% * 5A\*- C – 79% * English A\* - C – 84% * Maths A\*- C – 72% * Ebacc – 16%-Students aren’t forced to do Ebacc. The subjects are not suitable for all and students need to want to take MFL and Computer Science to be successful   CJH reported that she believed it was likely that SHS has made the most progress out of all of the Brentwood Schools.  The above data will be looked at in more detail by the S&P committee. In CJH’s report she had bullet pointed areas that S&P need to look at.  LH asked governors to be careful with the data as some of it contained students’ names and was therefore strictly for their eyes only.  CJH highlighted in her report the School Improvement headlines. Bullet points had been tweaked and wording updated.  The report also contained a link to the newsletters and various dates for the diary. Particular attention was drawn to the open evening on 29th September, a critical event as it was the opportunity to persuade prospective parents that SHS is the school for their child. Governors’ presence was always a good sign of support and confidence, so governors were encouraged to attend if only for part of the evening.  CJH reported that the School Teachers’ Review Body had confirmed a 1% increase for teaching staff from 1st September 2016. Governors were asked if they could agree this increase so that it could be implemented now rather than waiting until the December FGB meeting. Payment was in line with the School’s Pay Policy and the increase has been allowed for in the budget. Governors agreed the increase. | **GJ/CJH** |
|  | Reverting to Governing Body appointments, LH had only had interest from GH in becoming the new Vice Chair. This was proposed by AW and seconded by GJ. GH was elected unanimously by the governing body.  LH referred back to the ongoing issues around future financial forecasting and financial management resource which had been consistently raised by CV as areas of concern. She reminded them that work was to be done in this area to try to secure a consensus on what further action was needed and the management of risk, as further reassurance to governors that the decisions they had already made on the direction of travel were sound. CV/GH/CJH and LH had met, had had further detailed discussions. LH, GH and CJH had left that meeting believing a consensus had been reached. However, it was now clear that CV remained unhappy as LH had received his resignation from the Governing Body the previous evening, to take effect immediately.  So that the record could show clearly CV’s ongoing concerns, they were:  five year forecasting demonstrated a deficit from 17-18 which would accumulate even with the improved intake numbers to £945k; further cuts were needed now;  Schools Forum should be told we would not deliver a balanced budget without assistance by 20-21 as we had said we would; and  the arrangements being made to support the School’s financial management were unsound and breached EFA guidelines  Taking each of these points in turn, CJH had long maintained that the volatility of school financing was such that reliable five year forecasting was impossible, hence why the Essex Finance Team used the less complex models than CV’s, and urged careful monitoring to enable any remedial action to be taken in time, but not in advance of need. Taking the change in CV’s own forecast deficit from July’s FFB meeting (his “optimistic” prediction then was a deficit by 20-21 of £1.6m) to the September one (£945k) demonstrated how positions shift very quickly. The £945k also only came about because CV had factored into his calculations the full costs of recruiting to the vacant SBM post from January 2017 and additional teaching staff from September 2016, which CJH had specifically said was premature as the reviews planned to be carried out by JM on her return would be looking at how the curriculum needed to be reorganised to meet the needs of students, particularly in KS3, and this would give opportunities for efficiencies. Had CV’s figures been reworked without those additional costs, the budget would have been closer to balancing going forward and may even have done so. No-one was saying that we wouldn’t fill the SBM post in due course or that additional staff would not be needed, but it was premature to factor that in when more work had to be done, and it would certainly be premature to ask CJH to deliver plans now to secure further cuts. It needed to be understood that we were close to the point where reductions could alter the nature of the School, threatening the hard won gains in behaviour and attendance and therefore standards. Governors needed to hold their nerve.  As for Schools Forum, at present we were delivering what they expected of us and there was currently no need to suggest that we wouldn’t be able to do so going forward. If the position changed as the year went on, then FGB would need to consider alerting Schools Forum, but to do so now would be premature. CJH reminded governors that all non-free schools were feeling threatened financially at present (her advice had been sought by colleagues from other schools on how to approach restructuring because they too were struggling to balance the books) and that lack of finance was likely to become an increasingly systemic and political issue over the coming year. We should not single ourselves out if there was no pressing need to do so. LH confirmed that the only reporting requirement of Schools Forum at present was to confirm that we were hitting our intake targets.  Turning to financial management support, LH knew that governors would be keen to hear the views of our other accounting professional on the governing body, and, as AL was unable to attend the meeting, she had secured his approval to sharing with governors the views he had expressed to her by email. She read verbatim the relevant parts, the key component of which was that he shared concerns about the risk around current arrangements for financial management and would need to be satisfied that they were strong enough going forward, but was prepared to support the current direction of travel. He was also concerned that governors should revert to being “critical friends” to the School rather than descending into management of the operational detail.  GH thought LH had reflected accurately the gap between CV’s views and the School’s, and was satisfied with the previously agreed direction of travel, subject to understanding how governors could know that the solution being put in place for financial management was sound and working well. In response to a question from JS, CJH confirmed that she has confidence in the support being bought in from Essex. They work with all schools in Essex in some form or another and are both professionally qualified and knowledgable about the vagaries of school finance. She had arranged for the team leader, Kim Cannon, to talk to F & P at their next meeting about the Essex approach to forecasting, so we can have more confidence in the work they do with DM and, increasingly, SR as he undertakes his SBM qualification. SR would also be undertaking a suitably targeted short finance and accountancy qualification. Additionally, we can call on our accountants for support. As discussed at meetings last year, we would not use our accountants for budgeting support as they do not have the educational environment expertise and for them to secure it would prove prohibitively expensive to the School. LH had read the relevant sections of the EFA’s Financial Handbook and she was satisfied that it allowed the School to meet its criteria by buying in support. She had done some searching against recruitment sites and had not found one vacancy for an SBM or equivalent where being a qualified accountant was a requirement; the emphasis was on the right balance of skills, knowledge and experience. An SBM role was much broader than just financial management.  CJH reminded governors that the Government is due to consult on a national funding formula which will change forecasts yet again. CJH was aware that governors’ confidence had been dented by last year’s funding issue and completely understood why they would continue to monitor both forecasts and the quality of financial management support carefully, but she asked that governors note that major changes have already been made in how finance is run. Despite a very challenging year financially, the School is still running a balanced budget and the job we are therefore is being done very well: we have the best exam results we have ever had.  CJH confirmed that S Roberts is proving to be an excellent project manager in the premises arena, regarding all the work that has taken place over the summer  Governors asked about the future chairing of F & P Committee. LH said that only having had CV’s resignation the previous evening, she had not had a chance to discuss it with anyone, but she was going to do some further thinking on an idea she had been considering for some time: merging Staffing and F & P to form a Resources Committee. She felt there was some duplication at present which might be eradicated by such a merger. She would develop her proposal and circulate it to governors to consider.  LH wanted to be able to clearly record governors’ decisions in relation to CV’s areas of concern so:  Governors agreed that CJH should undertake the curriculum review planned and should bring to them early in the spring term her proposals which would include forecasting for 2017-18 and how her plans would deliver a balanced budget; we did not expect those plans now  Governors did not think it necessary to contact Schools Forum now to alert them to a potential issue in future years  Governors were content to allow CJH to develop and deliver her solution for financial management going forward; they would want her to produce criteria by which success would be judged, so that they could monitor progress against those criteria and be satisfied that the solution was secure.  LH said she would contact DS separately, as a member of F & P, to update him on the position, as she knew he had been concerned about CV’s views in the past.  LH confirmed that governors were happy for her to write to CV after the meeting to thank him for the considerable amount of work he had done over the years and to send him best wishes. |  |
| 11 | **ATTENDANCE TARGETS**  Three documents had been issued from JIC, two regarding pupil premium and one with attendance targets. LH said that some of the pupil premium progression figures looked superb and they would be discussed at more length at the next S&P meeting, when the plan for the new year would be considered and signed off.  JIC confirmed the attendance targets for 2015/16 were:  Overall attendance Years 7-11 was 95.3%  Overall PA (under 90%) was 11.3%  Overall PA (under 85%) was 4.3%  The figures were broken down further in the report.  There was some discussion about seeing results presented both including and excluding SEN, as had been suggested by the RSC’s representative, and it was proposed that that split of figures be seen by S & P. |  |
| 12 | **SAFEGUARDING/CHILD PROTECTION**  JIC had complete whole school staff training on the inset day. Staff will receive updates throughout the year via a newsletter. Staff had been issued with a booklet about Keeping Children Safe in Education and Safeguarding policy. Staff signed to say they had read and understood these documents. Staff had also been asked to complete Prevent training online and confirm when they had completed this.  JIC confirmed she is currently reviewing the files of the new intake. There are 3 open child protection cases. |  |
| 13 | **CHAIR’S ACTION** The chair had no action to report. |  |
| 14 | **CHAIR’S BUSINESS/CORRESPONDENCE**  The chair had received no correspondence |  |
| 15 | **GOVERNOR MONITORING,DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING**   1. **To receive any reports from governors who have undertaken monitoring visits to school.**   None   1. **To receive a report from the Training Governor.**   Nothing to report   1. **To receive feedback from Governors who have attended training courses since the previous termly meeting of the Governing Body.**   Nothing to report   1. **To identify any training needs for the governing body including self-development session for the current year.**   It was intended that the next training session will be on Safer Recruitment in Education, led by JIC. However, depending on how far work on the strategy to become a sponsor MAT had got, the session might be used to take governors through MAT issues.  Governors were asked to let LH know which monitoring visits they could attend. |  |
|  | **AOB**  **Governors Handbook and Governors Visits Policy**  LH asked governors to note the updated the strategic piece in the Handbook, which she planned to use as a draft for the strategic section of the director’s report for the annual accounts. The only other part of the Handbook she had amended was in relation to governors’ visits, which now reflected the system in use. The Visits Policy had also been rewritten to reflect that system and governors were happy to approve it.    Meeting closed at 17:36 |  |

Signature of Chair of Governors………………………………………………………..

Date……………………………………………..