



THE GOVERNING BODY OF ST. JOHN FISHER CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

Minutes of a meeting of the Governing Body held at 7.15 pm at the School on Monday 15 October 2012 in the Library.

PRESENT: Rev. Dr J D Cortis (Chair), Mrs. B Blackham, Mr. P Booth, Mr. N Dalzell, Mgr P F Fisher, Mr. J Higgins, Mr. K Higgins (Headteacher) , Mr. T Hinchcliffe, Fr P Mungovin, Mr. A Quinn, Mrs. F Wilson

In Attendance: Mrs. A Hutchinson (Minute Clerk)

Adrian Quinn was welcomed to his first meeting as a Foundation Governor and introductions were made.

1 WELCOME AND OPENING PRAYER

Mgr Fisher opened the meeting with a prayer.

The Chair advised Governors that Mrs. A Farrow-Deighton had tendered her immediate resignation earlier in the day due to personal reasons. Mrs. G Lowe's term of office as parent governor would end on 23 November 2012. This meant that there were 3 Parent Governor vacancies and a letter will be circulated to parents asking for new Parent Governors. There were also 2 Foundation Governor vacancies. Issue has been raised with Mgr Fisher, newly appointed dean.

There was a need to replace Mrs. Farrow-Deighton on the Admissions Panel and Mr. J Higgins agreed to join Fr. Smith and the Chair on this Panel.

Mr. Quinn accepted an invitation to join the Health and Safety Committee.

A provisional date for the Head Teacher's performance review was set for 16 November 2012.

12/36 **RESOLVED:** (i) That Mr. J Higgins become a member of the Admissions Panel.
(ii) That Mr. A Quinn becomes a member of the Health and Safety Committee.
(iii) That Mrs. Farrow-Deighton's resignation be accepted

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE, CONSENT AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Mr. M Collins (consent) and Fr P Smith (consent). There were no declarations of interest.

3. PARTNERSHIP WORKING AND ACADEMIES

The Chair confirmed discussions held over the last 12 months around partnerships and academies, based on recommendations from the Diocesan Council of Education and the Bishop regarding a Multi-Academy Trust. The discussions had extended to South Kirklees and Calderdale schools. There had also been useful discussions as part of a Governors' review (January 2012) trying to get a vision for Catholic schools in the area.

Governors confirmed that they had received and read the background and briefing documents on academies sent out prior to the meeting.

The Chair referred to the minutes of a Working Party meeting held on 24 September 2012, which asked Governing Bodies to consider 3 options with regard to moving towards academy status based on a Multi-Academy model with each individual school being an academy in its own right. No school would be supported to become an academy alone – they could become part of a multi-academy or maintain the status quo. The options regarding academy status were agreed as:

1. Yes, and a wish to move to the next stage
2. Yes, in principle, but not yet
3. Absolutely not

The Head Teacher confirmed that those schools wishing to move forward would develop a Business and Mission plan and then start consultations. There was discussion around lack of response from some schools and the need to make progress. It was agreed that staying the same was not an option for schools, even though the local pyramid worked reasonably well.

Chair confirmed that the Diocese would not force any school to become an Academy but they would not allow any school to stop the progress of others. They would like the multi-academy model to be fully discussed and would then wish to know the views of Governing Bodies. The multi-academy model would allow good and outstanding Catholic schools to help others in difficulty. Government legislation could otherwise allow an Interim Executive Board to be appointed to govern a struggling school.

In response to a question, it was confirmed that the process would continue even though there was currently no Bishop of Leeds.

A Governor asked what would happen to schools choosing option 3. It was confirmed that all schools would be kept informed and asked to contribute to discussions. Schools wishing to progress would, if agreed, form a Trust and others could join later but the leadership would remain with the original Trustees for several years. If no schools wished to progress, they would continue to try and strengthen informal partnerships.

Governors were referred to a chart in the Diocese of Leeds Guidance Document (October 2011) showing the formal partnership decision-making process following agreement in principle. Various aspects were discussed and an outline was given of safeguards in place. The difficulties of trying to reach consensus with 17 schools were discussed. There were also challenges with dealing with different LAs and diocese boundaries. Progress made in other areas was noted and discussed.

Options 1, 2 and 3 were put to Governors and 10 were in favour of Option 1 with 1 abstention.

12/37 RESOLVED: That Governors wish to move to the next stage in forming a Multi Academy Trust with other Catholic schools in the area. Chair signed the necessary paperwork

4 PAYMENT OF 10% GOVERNORS' LIABILITY ON LATEST BUILDING PROJECT

The cost of the school's share of the traffic management works was £31,179 – a little over the authorisation limit of the Finance Committee. This figure had been discussed and agreed at a recent Budget Monitoring meeting. There was discussion around whether the bill should be paid from the diocese-held fund or from contingency funds.

12/38 RESOLVED: That the payment of £31,179 for traffic management project was approved and paid out of the delegated contingency fund held by the school.

5 INVESTORS IN PEOPLE ASSESSMENT

The Chair was pleased to advise that the school's Investors in People Award had been upgraded to Gold Standard status following a recent re-assessment. A report from IIP would be scrutinised by the Staffing Committee in the first instance.

Governors offered their congratulations to the Head Teacher and all involved on achieving this high standard IIP Award.

12/39 RESOLVED: to congratulate the School in achieving the Gold Standard in the Investors in People Award and for the Governors' Staffing, Appointments and Dismissal Committee to consider the report once received.

6 CHANGES TO DATE OF GOVERNING BODY MEETING

Due to church commitments, some Governors would not be able to attend the meeting planned for 20 March 2013. Governors agreed to meet on Tuesday 19 March 2013 instead.

12/ 40 RESOLVED: That the meeting planned for 20 March 2013 is changed to Tuesday 19 March 2013.

7. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

(a) Mock OFSTED inspection using the latest framework

Chair reported on a recent LA Review which agreed with the SEF grading of 'Good'. The Report had not yet been received but would be scrutinised by the Curriculum Committee or full Governing Body.

It was noted that, due to trade union actions, 6 lessons were observed rather than 20 so a full mock inspection was not possible. Every joint observation was agreed and all the senior team together with some middle managers were involved. Governors expressed their thanks to all who took part and were pleased to see that the team supported the judgments made by the School as stated in the School's Self Evaluation Form (SEF).

The Review made positive comments on governance. A paper was tabled which contained questions collated from recent OFSTED's inspections exploring the issue of governance.

12/41 RESOLVED: to note Chair's report on a recent mock-OFSTED inspection carried out by the Local Authority and for Curriculum Committee to consider the report once received.

(b) Adjudication Report

Copies were tabled of an Adjudication Report provided by Langtry Langton Architects. This reported on the competitive tender process for the new Inclusion Unit. The 3 tenders had been received and the lowest tender was recommended for acceptance. This was for £149,400 from M High Contractors Ltd. It was confirmed that this was the same firm who had completed the new turning circle and the ICT suite.

It was agreed that Langtry Langton to be instructed that any future tenders would be put out to a wider number of bidders, probably 5, to ensure transparency.

12/42 RESOLVED: That the tender from M High Contractors Ltd for £149,400 to build the Inclusion Unit be accepted.

8 AGENDA, MINUTES AND RELATED PAPERS – SCHOOL COPY

12/43 RESOLVED: That no part of these minutes, agenda or related papers be excluded from the copy to be made available at the school, in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.