

THE JOHN OF GAUNT SCHOOL
Minutes of the Resources and Audit Committee Meeting
Monday 10 January 2022

Time: 6 pm
Place: Zoom
Present: Toby Corden (Chair) (TC), Glyn Coy (GC), Pete Gear (PG), Amanda McClean (AM), Jo Trigg (JT), Liz Summerson (LS), David Whewell (DW), Sarah Marsh (SM), Ben Pope (BPO), Eleanor Shergold (Clerk) (ES)
Advisers: Paul Skipp (PSK), Nigel Reeves (NRE)
Apologies: Matt Doughty (MDO), Ellie Green (EGR)

Agenda Item	Actions Agreed	Who
29/22 a)	Equality Objectives – SLT are reviewing the objectives and advisers will give shape to this before bringing it back to governors	PSK
29/22 b)	Accessibility report from Wiltshire Service Users Network visit to be shared with governors	NRE
29/22 c)	ABM will be invited to attend the next R&A meeting	NRE
29/22 d)	MDO to share fire risk assessment	NRE
35/22	Send Governor Postcards to identified staff	TC
36/22	Admissions policy on website – dates need to be corrected	NRE

27/22 Apologies

Apologies were agreed and accepted.

28/22 Declaration of Business Interests

Governors were reminded to declare business interests as necessary.

29/22 Minutes and Matters Arising

- a) 69/21 – Equality Objectives – SLT are reviewing the objectives and advisers will give shape to this before bringing it back to governors
- b) 71/21 – Wiltshire Service Users Network accessibility visit is taking place on the 20th January
- c) 8/22 – ABM catering will attend the next R&A meeting to give an update. There have been a few staff changes recently
- d) 20/22 – Fire risk assessment has been received – report to be shared
- e) 22/22 – One West recommendations re GDPR – action points from the report are being implemented to enhance school processes
- f) 26/22 – IT solutions for blended meetings is an ongoing discussion

The minutes of 22nd November were agreed and signed as an accurate record of the meeting.

30/22 Site

a) Site Update

NRE gave an update on work completed since the last meeting

- Further fencing has been put up around the Sports Hall to enhance appearance and safety

- The gym project in L23 is well under way. Builders have started the renovations and JMO is sourcing quotes for the equipment
- The dance studio is being refurbished and a decision needs to be made about how the room will be used. There are lots of potential opportunities for the space
- Some electrical work has been carried out across the school
- There is a major problem with Dunston heating – a leak has been found outside the canteen area. The plumber has come up with a plan to bypass the problem. An insurance claim will be submitted for the work
- Work is taking place to refurbish the toilets in the Wingfield boys changing rooms
- Various inspections have been carried out
- Surveyors visited to undertake the condition data survey. Feedback on the day – compared to some sites JOG is in good condition.
- Astro Lights – service due to take place this term

b) Capital Bids Update (CIF)

Work on the fire alarm upgrade is still to be completed. The work needs to be signed off for the rest of the funding to be released.

Both CIF bids were submitted before Christmas for fire door replacement in Gloucester and replacing the Sports Hall roof. The overall cost of the fire doors is £147,440 with a school contribution of £22,264 (15%). The Sports Hall roof will cost £262,967 with a contribution of £39,708. The outcome of the bids should be available around the beginning of April.

- c) Link Governor Report** – SM and MDO have not yet had an opportunity to meet. They plan to meet before the next R&A meeting.

Sarah left the meeting.

31/22 Business and Finance

Documents were circulated in advance of the meeting.

a) 2021/22 Months 3 and 4 Financial Reports and Cashflow

The summary reports give a snapshot of the financial position of the school as at 6 December and 4 January and the estimated balance sheet position as at 31 August 2022. Projected Revenue Balance at year end remains the same at £1,100,000.

The school's position remains incredibly positive. NRE outlined variances at the meeting

- The projected underspend for the year remains at £50K making a contingency of £1.1m
- Rollover balances from 2020/21 were signed off at December's board meeting along with the accounts for the year
- Pupil premium deficit is funded by the revenue balance and pupil premium income
- Repairs and maintenance overspend reflects agreed grant spending as discussed at last R&A
- Supply staff costs will continue to be high and will be offset by funding taken from elsewhere
- Tutoring and catch up – this is in place and students are benefiting from the extra input

Governors are always welcome to visit/ask any questions.

Governors asked about supply costs, whether the need reflects last term or if there has been a higher level of staff absence since coming back after the holidays. NRE – currently absence rates are lower than predicted. However, the school is being proactive in booking supply teachers to cover absence. PSK – whole school testing on the first week back – out of 971 tests there were only 12 positive cases among students, none among staff. But supply cover needs to be booked in advance due to limited

availability. The costs will continue to be higher than normal as the school has made the decision to book cover on the assumption that it will be needed rather than risk not having the cover needed. **Governors asked if the school is able to use the additional cover booked when it is not needed.** PSK gave an overview of how the time is utilised. **An observation was made that it makes perfect sense to have the cover in place.** PSK – absence is not always due to staff illness, in some instances it is due to being a primary carer. Students and staff continue with regular testing every Monday and Thursday.

A question was asked about whether there is any more that the school should be putting in place to address attendance/persistent absence, supporting young people to help make transition easier. PSK – this is one of the ways that catch up premium is being spent. KS4 has two academic mentors. The school is looking to employ KS3 academic mentors, which will help with attendance and catch up. This is currently being advertised. The school is already investing in additional counselling and attendance support.

Additional contingency measures – the school loaned out laptops before Christmas and have asked students to keep hold of them for the time being.

- b) **Link Governor Report** – NRE has not met with GC recently. They will arrange to meet next month.
- c) **Benchmarking Report** – NRE asked governors to bear in mind that the data relates to 2019/2020. However, it is a published report that is useful to look at, showing a positive picture for the school. The slight drop in in-year funding related to planned projects for 19/20 – the reserves position remains strong.

Spending is much in line with other schools. The higher spend on education support staff reflects JOG and decisions made re pastoral support and TAs. Otherwise the school is very similar in terms of spending.

Teaching costs are high, reflecting both how the school looks to support students and also low staff turnover. The latter means that staff continue to move up the pay scales. In the past movement of staff would have made a difference to this, staff lower on the pay scale replacing experienced staff. Various contributory factors were considered at the meeting as the average teacher cost in the report is higher than reality. NRE did not see high teaching costs as a negative, rather a reflection of investing in the school. What works for JOG is key.

An observation was made about staff turnover. NRE – currently student numbers are increasing, putting the school in a strong position. This is not something that the school needs to be concerned about at this time.

- d) **IT update** – G93 IT classroom has been refurbished. Recycled pcs have been utilised for DT. NRE gave an update on Oakford staff changes at the school. The disaster recovery plan will be updated accordingly and come back to R&A soon.

A question was asked about IT strategy and spend on IT equipment, whether there is a plan for 5 years and beyond for both hardware and software. NRE – there have been a lot of updates in the last few years. All wireless points have been replaced, laptop trolley capacity has been increased, the IT room has been refurbished, and in return, DT. There is provision in the 5 year budget plan to update a room every year going forwards. A decision will need to be made about the servers – whether to have some in the cloud or continue to replace those on site. Broadband was upgraded last year. Generally, IT is relatively sound around the school.

A question was asked about expectations, e.g. around replacement time frames and how long kit will last. A discussion took place around this. Currently there is not a 5 year plan. Staff laptops were replaced 18 months ago. It was concluded that it will be worth having a longer discussion about this at some point, with potential options considered.

A question was asked about the contract with Oakford and when this might need to be retendered, in addition to the need to retender auditing. NRE responded. Oakford's contract was extended by 3 years previously. The auditors are just finishing the annual accounts return process, completing the work that the school is currently contracted to them for.

- e) **Catering Update** – there have been quite a few changes in the team, including a new head chef who started just before Christmas. The quality of food has taken a significant uplift and sales have also improved.

32/22 Audit

Documents were circulated in advance of the meeting.

- a) **2020/21 Annual Accounts Return** – Monahans is in the process of finalising the return that has to be submitted later this month. This is the final part of the closure of the 2021/21 accounts.
- b) **GDPR Updates** – there were no additional updates beyond previous discussions.
- c) **FCAR Reports** – governors have decided on the 3 areas they would like to be considered in this financial year. This will be conveyed to the internal auditors.
- d) **Risk Register November 2021** – there are no further changes as the information about staggered returns and measures put in place last term were already captured.
- e) **Risk Assessment December 2021** – as per risk register. Both are live documents and NRE is always happy to receive comments.

33/22 Human Resources (HR) Report

EGR has been busy with return to school LFT testing and has nothing new to report. HR policies will be a focus area for the March meeting.

Non teaching staff pay award – this is yet to be finalised for April 2021. The latest offer remains at 1.75%. Unions have now gone to ballot, which closes at the end of this week. Either unions will decide through their members to go on strike, accept the 1.75% or employers might offer more. Then the review for April 2022 will follow.

Equality objective 2. EGR suggested that this is not measurable in its current format. Objectives are currently under review. The next stage will be the SMARTening of them.

34/22 Policies

Policy review spreadsheet discussed. To be considered at every meeting to give policies a higher profile.

35/22 Governor Postcards

It was agreed to send postcards in recognition of those who had undertaken LFT testing, including EGR in particular. NRE will ask EGR to forward a list of names to TC.

Action – Send Governor Postcards to identified staff

TC

36/22 AOB

Admissions – there are 277 first choice, 11 late applications and 7 EHCP students. A decision needs to be made promptly re PAN, the actual number that the school is able to take. Current PAN for Y7 is 267. PSK, HKE and NRE have discussed this at length. PSK outlined the potential challenges and opportunities. **Governors asked questions to clarify.** The main challenge is around space in the communal areas that

would serve a year group such as the canteen. After a time of discussion, it was agreed to increase the PAN to 270. **More than 270 seems like it would be to the detriment of the school community as a whole.**

An observation was made that some of the dates are wrong on the admissions policy on the website.

Action – dates on Admissions policy on the website to be corrected

NRE

The meeting closed at 7.15 pm. Date of next Resources & Audit meeting – Monday 14th March 2022.

Signed: _____

Date: _____