

**THE JOHN OF GAUNT SCHOOL**  
**Minutes of the Resources and Audit Committee Meeting**  
**Monday 14 March 2022**

**Time:** 6 pm  
**Place:** Zoom  
**Present:** Toby Corden (Chair) (TC), Pete Gear (PG), Amanda McClean (AM), Jo Trigg (JT), Sarah Marsh (SM), Eleanor Shergold (Clerk) (ES) Helen Merrick (ABM Catering)  
**Advisers:** Paul Skipp (PSK), Nigel Reeves (NRE), Ellie Green (EGR)  
**Apologies:** Glyn Coy (GC), David Whewell (DW)

Agenda Item	Actions Agreed	Who
39/22	To invite Helen (ABM) back to R&A in 6-12 months' time	NRE
41/22 d)	To look into the best colour for line painting around the school	PG
41/22 d)	To put together an action plan for the accessibility report	NRE/MDO
43/22 c)	Covid risk assessment to be updated to reflect current measures	NRE
43/22 d)	Members to consider selection of auditors for 21/22	DW/ES
46/22	Send Governor Postcards to identified staff	TC

### 37/22 Apologies

Apologies were agreed and accepted.

### 38/22 Declaration of Business Interests

Governors were reminded to declare business interests as necessary.

### 39/22 ABM Catering

Helen Merrick, Schools Operations Manager ABM, attended the meeting to give an overview of catering at JOG and plans for the next 6 months.

Helen was allocated the school at the end of last year. There had been a high turnover of staff – hospitality in general has been really challenging over the last 2 years. A relief catering manager has been in place since Christmas until 2 weeks ago when the new catering manager started. There is a great team on site who hopefully will work well together to move the business forward, with a new offer for students.

There are plans to carry out a student survey to check that the offer is right for students and the team is looking to implement theme days for new marketing. New government guidelines need to be in place, Natasha's law requiring everything to be labelled with every allergen. The calorie labelling law that is in place from the 6<sup>th</sup> April does not apply to senior schools.

**Governors asked if there is anything that works elsewhere that does not work at JOG.** HM – at JOG they do not seem to sell many hot meals, perhaps the offer is wrong or something that students are not looking for. There is a lot more grab and go sales. Schools do vary, different students with different needs. This can be checked via a survey. Various meals have been tried recently, they are just not very popular.

**PSK highlighted the importance of nutritious food, particularly for PP students and expressed concerns re the current menu and asked about plans to develop that.** Helen said that the team have tried and that they track what they are selling. Theme days will provide the opportunity to have meals that include more salad/vegetables. The new catering manager has been asked to put new menus in place, to put a push on nutritious food as opposed to the 'beige'.

**A point was made about presentation. Food is served at different sites across the school, is pre-served and goes into pots. This does not look very attractive. It has to be pre-served, which is a bit of a downfall.** Helen – other schools have more servicing space. It is not ideal having 4 outlets. It is great for the students in terms of speed but not so much for staff and presentation.

**A question was asked about the calorie labelling law.** Helen – ABM have this in place should it come into force for secondary schools.

**It was flagged that the requirements of Natasha’s law are only met for a small minority of what ABM sells at JOG.** Helen noted this.

**Governors asked about service space, whether this is still falling short of room needed after previous work carried out.** PSK – need to bear in mind that this was 3 years ago. When ABM started the cafeteria was for the whole school, it is tiny. ABM’s hand was forced with Covid. The cafeteria has been maintained for Y7 and Y8 as the vast majority of other years opt for grab and go food.

In terms of priorities, Helen said that the team will work on Natasha’s law then a new menu.

**Action – to invite Helen back to R&A in 6-12 months’ time**

**NRE**

Helen was thanked for attending and left the meeting.

After a time of discussion PSK said that other Headteachers express similar concerns (as above) and that he would follow this up with NRE. **A question was asked about parental feedback.** No concerns have been raised.

#### **40/22 Minutes and Matters Arising**

a) 69/21 – Equality Objectives have been revised and circulated for governor information

The minutes of 10<sup>th</sup> January were agreed and signed as an accurate record of the meeting.

#### **41/22 Site**

##### **a) Site Update**

NRE gave an update on work completed since the last meeting

- Some of the toilets were redecorated during half term
- The site team have started to refresh some of the white lining as per the accessibility report
- 8 new ovens have been fitted in DT
- Various windows have been tinted in Mackereth replacing the previous use of paper – an issue raised in the Fire Risk Assessment
- Various electrical and plumbing works have been carried out
- Further work has been completed on the fire alarm system. This is not quite finished. A lockdown system was installed at the same time so that a whole school lockdown procedure can be introduced
- The company carrying out the work on the fire alarm system has been given a prompt re their finish date as the CIF funding cannot be accessed until the project has been signed off
- The team are continuing to work on the dance studio above the 6<sup>th</sup> form common room
- The gym equipment is being installed tomorrow

##### **b) Capital Bids Update (CIF)**

Hopefully the outcome of the 2 bids will be available in the next 2-3 weeks.

PSK and NRE have met with the Head of School Place Commissioning, School Buildings & Places Team. The government have released details of a new scheme to invest billions over the next 10 years. Primarily this would focus on removing the temporary classrooms. Chiltern has been added as the canteen is ridiculously small for the number of staff and students on site, also the condition of some of the classrooms is poor.

A confidential item was discussed.

**c) Fire Risk Assessment**

Circulated for governor information.

There are many action points on the report. One of the main ones is to do with the fire doors, which is one of the CIF bids for this year. 125 signs have been ordered to go up around the site. Tinted glass has been used to replace paper.

**Governors expressed concern about the length of the report, whether the 78 pages will be narrowed down to an actual list to keep track of actions.** NRE said that MDO has been working through it and that ultimately everything on the list needs to be done. The key critical areas will be prioritised.

**A question was raised about lack of staff awareness – extension lead overload, blocked fire exits – whether there is a plan to address this.** PSK – this has been picked up with a few individuals and where things are specific, e.g. tinted windows. There is a need for a more coherent plan.

**Governors asked about mandated annual staff training on fire risk awareness, whether this was something the school could do.** This was discussed. EGR – H&S responsibilities are included in staff induction. Reminders are relatively easy. The problem with requesting self-updating is that it falls down the list of things to do.

**d) Accessibility Report**

NRE said that this is similar in some ways, in that there is lots of work recommended, potentially costing millions of pounds. To be worked towards over the next 10 years.

EGR asked if the report includes a priority list. NRE – no, it is more of a generic outline. EGR – people with different accessibility needs will have different priorities. NRE – it is a good exercise to do, with lots of things that the school is going to have to think about and how they can be addressed.

**Governors asked if there are any quick wins.** NRE – things like painting the white lines and signage but much of the work will need to be done over time – e.g. the cookery rooms are upstairs. CIF bids will need to be considered for more of the bigger items.

EGR asked if white is the best colour for lines. It was thought that yellow is a better colour. After a time of discussion, it was agreed that PG would look into this further.

**Action – to look into the best colour for line painting**

**PG**

In view of the sheer mass of things to work through it was agreed to narrow the report down into actions.

**Action – to put together an action plan for the accessibility report**

**NRE/MDO**

**42/22 Business and Finance**

Documents were circulated in advance of the meeting.

**a) 2021/22 Months 5 and 6 Financial Reports and Cashflow**

The summary reports give a snapshot of the financial position of the school as at 9 February and 2 March 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.

NRE asked governors to note that the school is now at the point where the repairs and maintenance budget has been spent for the year.

## b) Draft 5 Year Budget Plan

The budget plan reflects the summary position as at the 4 March.

2022/23 – projected income of £7,530,815 and £7,430,816 expenditure – this includes building in additional staff required for the September intake. Currently the budget gives an in-year surplus of £100,000. The projected revenue balance of £1,050,000 would leave the school in a strong position.

Years 2 and 3 – the budget rises by just over half a million pounds, which includes lagged funding from 22/23.

These 3 years look sound – this includes accounting for the increase in NI contributions and a 4% pay rise on average for teaching staff this year and a projected increase in September 2023 in response to the school teachers' review body. It also includes additional staff for this September and a 100% increase on energy costs for years 2 and 3.

**Governors asked if the budget for years 2 and 3 includes an assumption that the PAN will reflect this year's September intake.** NRE – no, it assumes that it will drop back down.

**Governors asked about staff pay increases, discussed at a recent governor briefing, significant increased costs for 22/23 and 23/24 within the main pay scales in particular.** NRE – this has all been built in.

**Governors asked if some of the surplus should be ring fenced for major projects.** NRE – not until information re SEN funding and energy costs, etc are clarified. There are potentially lots of exciting opportunities. **Governors asked at what point NRE would feel comfortable to release chunks of money.** NRE – when final figures are confirmed. PSK – one of the reasons that the section 106 funding has not been spent is due to other factors – including the CIF bids and the condition survey carried out before Christmas. If the CIF bids are unsuccessful then it may be necessary to commission some of the reserves for school improvement. NRE – currently years 2 and 3 are indicators. The main year to focus on is 22/23.

Years 4 and 5 – the budget starts to return to normal.

**Governors asked about the conflict between fuel costs and the need to keep windows open because of Covid, whether there is a need to increase projected fuel costs.** NRE did not think so.

Given the monitoring reports and the 5 year budget plan, NRE posed a question re this year's budget. The huge variable with staffing cover will still be there but NRE proposed an additional spend of £50k, allowing for getting on with more repairs and maintenance. The ladies' toilets in Wingfield have been flagged previously. There is a problem with a leak in the roof above one of the classrooms, linked in with repointing the walls. Until these things have been done the site team can't progress to decorating. This is not an overspend as it still fits with the overall budget plan, it will just reflect more overspends in the monthly reports. The budget would still be on target for the £1,050,000 contingency agreed in July, a re-investment of in year savings in repairs and maintenance to include actions from the fire risk assessment and the accessibility report. Governors agreed to the additional £50k spend.

## c) Energy Costs

Updated costs circulated in advance of the meeting. The school is in a fortunate position in that it is in a fixed contract for 1 more year. After that costs are set to double and the increase is included in the draft budget. **Governors asked if there are plans to go greener.** NRE – there are always plans around this though cost is an issue. The school tries to make sure that it does this where it can – for example, changing to LED when lighting is replaced to make it more energy efficient.

## d) ICT Disaster Recovery Plan

Circulated for governors' information. Page 5 details members of staff and the chair of governors – issued with copies in the event of any decisions that need to be made.

#### e) **School Resource Management Self-Assessment**

This was circulated to R&A governors and then agreed at the February board meeting. This was due to the timing of when it needed to be submitted as the submission date did not allow for it to come to this meeting and then go to March board.

### 43/22 **Audit**

Documents were circulated in advance of the meeting.

#### a) **GDPR Updates**

The next review with One West is due at the beginning of April with a more detailed audit in July after the exam period. There have been a few subject access requests recently – it is worth noting that they take a huge amount of staff time. **Governors asked if there is any pattern to this.** NRE responded.

#### b) **Risk Register November 2021**

There are no further changes to this latest version circulated for governor information. As always this is a live document. **Governors asked questions to clarify strategic risks.**

#### c) **Risk Assessment January 2022**

Guidance changed at the end of February when school returned. The risk assessment remains the same. After a time of discussion, it was agreed to leave the risk assessment as it is with one final comment to reflect which measures have been removed and which have been left in place.

**Action – risk assessment to be updated to reflect current measures**

**NRE**

#### d) **Annual Accounts Return**

NRE confirmed that the accounts were submitted in January after Monahans completed the audit. These are the annual accounts signed off by Board in December. Given that it is not easy to print out all of the information NRE extended an open invitation to governors to visit and see all of the figures that sit behind the accounts.

This was the final piece of work that Monahans had to complete for the school to finish off the audit process for 2021. Governors have previously noted that JOG has now gone through its second 5 year phase of using Monahans as the external auditor. Therefore, there is a need to consider tender or a comparison process to select auditors for 21/22 onwards.

**Action – members to consider selection of auditors for 21/22**

**DW/ES**

### 44/22 **Human Resources (HR) Report**

Absence is currently manageable. Though the school has been through an extraordinary amount of absence in comparison to this time last year. Since September 2021 there have been 56 positive cases among staff (3 current). The school has been hit harder since the autumn than the previous 18 months. This has had an impact on cover, though the school has been able to provide cover. In the last week of January 14 members of staff were off at the same time. The average time off is 5 working days per person as a minimum. It is becoming increasingly difficult to obtain supply cover due to a national shortage, which has resulted in asking internal staff to cover lessons more regularly than in the past. All staff have continued to be very supportive of the circumstances and have provided this cover willingly however we must be mindful of workloads and the impact this cover has on their ability to plan their own work effectively.

EGR gave a brief update on recruitment, including posts recently filled and those currently being advertised. The sociology post is being advertised for the third time. **Governors asked what would happen if the school continues to be unable to recruit.** PSK outlined potential courses of action.

The pay award has been implemented for non-teaching staff. This is 11 months late so will be back paid. The knock on effect of this is that negotiations have not started for this year. **Governors asked if the school could have taken the decision to award this earlier.** EGR – this would have been difficult because of the union’s negotiations.

#### 45/22 Policies

CLES exam policies came to R&A this term due to time constraints – the policies needing to be live for the summer exams.

- Data Protection
- Data Breach
- Subject Access Request
- Information (Data Handling) Security
- Examinations
- Exams Contingency Plan
- Exams Emergency Evacuation
- Exams Equality and Access
- Exams Malpractice
- Internal Appeals & Complaints
- Non-Examination Assessment
- Roles & Responsibilities

TC proposed acceptance of the policies, JT seconded the proposal.

#### 46/22 Governor Postcards

This was discussed and agreed.

**Action – Send Governor Postcards to identified staff**

**TC**

#### 47/22 AOB

Free school meals – BACs payments or vouchers were arranged for February half term. The process is being run again for the Easter holidays.

Summer school funding – is still to be clarified for this year.

The meeting closed at 7.55 pm. Date of next Resources & Audit meeting – Monday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2022

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_