

THE GOVERNING BODY OF BATLEY GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL

Minutes of a meeting of the Academy's Governing Body held at 5.00 pm at the School on Tuesday, 15 January 2013.

PRESENT

Mr J L W Townend (Chair), Mrs J A Eames, Mr G Goddard, Mrs P Johnson, Mr M Limbert, Mrs E Loughhead, Mr S Mayet, Mrs P A Pickles, Mr P G Rout.

In Attendance

Angela Hutchinson (Minute Clerk)
Chris Schofield (Partner at Schofield & Sweeney, Solicitors)
Wendy Beasley (School Business Manager)

The Head Teacher welcomed everyone to the meeting and offered apologies for the change of date, due to a clash with the Sixth Form Open Evening and the late change of time due to the inclement weather.

134. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE, CONSENT AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Dr R J B Asby (consent), Mr E Bhatti (consent) and, Mr S Khan (consent).

There were no declarations of interest.

135. NOTIFICATION OF ITEMS TO BE BROUGHT UNDER ANY OTHER BUSINESS

One item was notified.

136. CLARIFICATION OF ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES OF GOVERNOR DIRECTORS AND TRUSTEE MEMBERS

The Head Teacher advised that Chris Schofield would be joining Governors to help clarify their roles and responsibilities. He was a Partner at Schofield & Sweeney Solicitors and was a specialist in Company and Commercial Law.

Mrs Eames tabled the school's Annual Report and Financial Statements for the period ended 31 August 2012. She drew Governors' attention to the descriptions of Governors both at the front of the document and within the Organisational Structure section. These had been discussed and agreed with RSM Tenon, Auditors.

The Statement of Financial Activities included in the Annual Report had been discussed in detail by members of the Finance Committee with representatives from RSM Tenon, as noted in the minutes of their meeting held on 13 November 2012. The Academy's financial position was healthy and, thanks to the expertise of Wendy Beasley, all accounting procedures were correctly followed.

With regard to governance, it was agreed that filling vacancies on the Governing Body required some action. The current vacancies were for 2 Co-opted and 2 Parent Governors, but Mrs Johnson would be leaving at Easter, making a further Co-opted vacancy. There was discussion regarding encouraging potential Parent Governors.

The role of the Strategy Group, attended by Trustees, was clarified.

At this point, Chris Schofield joined the meeting and was welcomed by Governors. He explained that he was part of his company's Education Team which had helped more than 150 schools to convert to Academy status and was now more focussed on how academies governed themselves after conversion.

The Chair explained that the Trustees were responsible for the buildings and the entity but the Governing Body was responsible for all other decision making regarding the school, as set out in the Annual Report.

The differences between Trustee Members and Director Governors was clarified and discussed. Mr Schofield confirmed these roles and elaborated on some issues raised by Governors.

There was considerable discussion regarding the role of Governors and how their role could be reinforced. The needs of corporate governance were discussed and it was confirmed by Mr Schofield that the Academy was a limited company, a legal entity limited by guarantee. It was also an exempt charity but not regulated by the Charities Commission. The regulatory body was the DfE but members' powers were prescribed by the Companies Act. The Head Teacher emphasised the need for the school to retain its values and vision whilst complying with the legal requirements of company law. The school Charter was carefully thought out to ensure clarity for staff. It was not legally binding but was very helpful.

There was further discussion regarding the roles of Trustees and Members and Governors were reassured that all major decisions were taken by the full Governing Body. Financial decision making was discussed and it was confirmed that value for money was judged by whether it would drive up standards of teaching and learning.

Discussion regarding the Strategy Group led to a decision to formalise the Group's terms of reference into a written document. Other Committees would also scrutinise their terms of reference to ensure they reflected current needs.

It was agreed that committees should utilise the skills of all Governors. A Skills Audit was suggested and agreed.

Mr Schofield confirmed that, in his opinion, the school's Annual Report and Financial Statements for the period ended 31 August 2012 was legally correct and reflected practice in the school.

After further general discussion, Mr Schofield was thanked for his excellent help and advice.

137. REPRESENTATION

The following matter of representation was noted:

Resignation

<u>Name</u>	<u>Category</u>	<u>With effect from</u>
Simon Clark	Parent	21.12.11

Pauline Johnson advised that she would be moving house in early April 2013 and would, therefore, be resigning from the Governing Body with effect from 31 March 2013.

138. ORGANISATION AND FUNCTION OF SUB COMMITTEES

The organisation and function of sub committees had been discussed as part of the clarification of roles and responsibilities.

It was agreed that terms of reference of Committees would be scrutinised and, if necessary, amended to suit the needs of the Academy rather than following the LA models.

Terms of Reference would be written for the Strategy Group and their meetings would, if possible, be minuted in the future.

139. LINKS TO SCHOOL LEADERS

This had been highlighted as part of the Roles and Responsibilities discussion. Governors were pleased to confirm that members of the Senior Leadership Team were involved with each of the main Committees as follows:

- Standards Achievement Deputy Head
- Staffing Respect Deputy Head
- Premises Transformation Deputy Head
- Finance School Business Manager
- Every Learner Matters Assistant Head

140. FORMAL RATIFICATION OF THE ANNUAL REVIEW

The Annual Review had been used as an aid in the roles and responsibilities discussion. It was agreed that the content was accurate.

RESOLVED: That the school's Annual Report and Financial Statements for the period ended 31 August 2012 be agreed

141. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 22 NOVEMBER 2012

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 22 November 2012 be approved and signed by the chair as a correct record.

142. MATTERS ARISING

No matters arising were raised.

143. EXECUTIVE HEAD TEACHERS' REPORT AND GOVERNORS' QUESTIONS

After discussion, it was agreed that the Head Teacher would produce a formal Report termly, leaving more time for discussion on other topics at alternate Governing Body meetings.

144. REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES

Minutes of a meeting of the Finance & Premises Committee held on 13 November 2012 were attached to agendas and noted.

Minutes of a meeting of the Staffing Committee held on 22 November 2012 were attached to agendas and noted.

Minutes of a meeting of the Standards Committee held on 22 November 2012 were attached to agendas and noted.

145. STANDING ITEMS

Deferred.

146. BATLEY & BIRSTALL EXCELLENCE IN SCHOOLS TOGETHER

Nothing reported.

147. GOVERNOR TRAINING AND GOVERNOR VISITS

Nothing reported.

148. EDUCATIONAL VISITS

Nothing reported.

149. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(a) Auditors

Governors discussed the appointment of the academy's auditors.

RESOLVED: That RSM Tenon be re-appointed as auditors to the academy.

(b) Jean Cunningham

Ellen Loughhead advised Governors of the recent death of Jean Cunningham. Jean had been involved with the school for over 20 years and was remembered fondly by many members of staff, ex-pupils and long-serving Governors.

50. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

RESOLVED: That the next Governors' meeting be held at 7.00 pm at the school on Thursday, 21 March 2013.

151. AGENDA, MINUTES AND RELATED PAPERS - SCHOOL COPY

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.