



OATHALL COMMUNITY COLLEGE MEETING OF THE FULL GOVERNING BODY

**Minutes of a meeting held virtually via Zoom on 15th
 March 2021**

Present: Brenda Brown (Vice-chair, BB), Julie Burgess (JB); Penny Canepa-Anson (PCA); Richard Carter (CRC), Rowena Chalk (Chair, RC), James Horsman (JH); Carol MacTaggart (CM); Jon Parry (JP); Pete Robinson (PR) Eddie Rodriguez (ERZ), Nicky Wastie (NW)	
In attendance: John Blackholly (JBH)	
Minutes: Alison Carter (Clerk to Governors, AC)	
1	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE None
2	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BB declared an interest (see section 8, Business) as a volunteer for the Haywards Heath Food Bank.
3	<p>JBH gave a detailed report on the progress of the farm during the pandemic. During the first school closure JBH and Sean ran operations alone, and in September a small team of students returned. External and internal improvements to the farm site are nearly complete. The classroom area with wi-fi, screen and Chromebooks is now a more formal and attractive space. Students are able to do computer-based work and assessments without the need to move to other buildings. All these improvements are very much benefitting the Animal Care course. Wi-fi also allows contactless payments in the farm shop. JBH thanked ERZ, premises manager Nick Sutton, governors and everyone who has supported these developments. He described the current farm stock, including new litters of piglets, beef cattle (and recent slaughter for sale in the shop), ewes returning soon from pasture at Walstead, and 26 lambs due in late lambing. Decisions about stock are driven by the needs of the Animal Care course e.g. amounts of stock, when lambs are born, the balance of larger animals (cattle, pigs, sheep) and smaller ones (guinea pigs, bearded dragon, chickens). JBH is confident that the farm offers a vibrant experience for students but also has an efficient level of stock.</p> <p>JBH reported on recent decisions regarding cattle. Vet and insemination costs are modest but to justify the cattle stock, milking must be included in the mix. The current old-style milking parlour with its age-related maintenance and cost issues will be replaced by a portable milking system (cost c.£1000). It is simpler to operate and will give more students the chance to try milking,</p>

both as part of formal qualifications and in extra-curricular activities. On the day of the meeting, Daisy the cow had unfortunately been found not to be in calf (ready for a September birth) as expected, so the insemination process will begin again for possible calving in nine months' time. Purchase of the new portable milking system will therefore be delayed.

New security fencing has put an end to some low-level trouble on and near the farm site. A new Forest Schools development alongside the farm's growing space, funded by Fairfax 'Building Young Futures' project, is complete. It is used by KS3 students who are following an alternative curriculum, and JBH is pleased with the new provision.

Woodlands Meed School's use of the farm and accredited courses is coming to an end, with students moving to more work-experienced-based activities. JBH said that he regrets the change, but stressed that the Animal Care course is a strong feature of the Oathall curriculum. He is positive about the farm in its current state and about its ongoing place in school life. JBH reminded the governors that the shop is regarded as a by-product of the educational work of the farm – it is a bonus.

With the help of the Business Manager and Assistant Business Manager, JBH is calculating the cost of keeping a pig from birth to abattoir, and the resulting profit. He will report to the governors in due course. He described the challenge of sending animals to slaughter: slots must be booked four months in advance and farm staff have to estimate the future size of an animal.

JH asked if JBH has heard from the South of England Show about the possible participation of Oathall students. JBH said he has been focussing recently on the return to school, but will certainly be taking some students to the show. No definite request has come yet from organisers, but it is likely that the show will be smaller this year, with a focus more on retail and less on animal display and parades.

JH asked if there are any plans to put the farm shop online, but wondered if doing this might result in too much interest. JBH described the current system: there is a sign-up form on the school website where people can register interest. A customer database of around 600 people is emailed when meat is ready for sale. The system has worked well for several years; emails, and opening of the shop at particular times, result in good sales and very few leftover goods. The shop will re-open in two weeks. RC added that the more shop-led approach has been tried in the past, without helpful results. It was decided that reducing the stock to manageable levels, and not being influenced by commercial demand, was the best method. **JH asked if there is potential for a website,** and JBH reminded the governors that farm staff time is limited. He added that going down a more commercial route can end up driving stock levels. Current thinking is to keep students and courses at the centre of decision-making. But he reviews regularly. **JH asked if particular counts of stock are needed to allow the farm operation to work.** JBH said that this is the case e.g. 15 breeder ewes is an efficient number: they fit in a single trailer for transport. A number between 15 and 20 is large enough to give an engaging and exciting farming experience to students, but keep costs at a manageable level.

RC thanked JBH for his report, and said that she has seen the work done on the farm site and it is impressive. JBH left the meeting.

4	<p>APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 08.02.20</p> <p>Minutes of the meeting held on 8th February 2021, and Part II minutes of the same date, were tabled to the meeting and approved as a true record. They will be signed the Chair after the meeting and sent to the clerk.</p>	
5	<p>MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS</p> <p>RC invited JP and AC to introduce a fledgling idea to create a 'one-stop' document for the induction of new governors. Following initial WS training, JP will liaise with the clerk.</p>	JP
6	<p>URGENT MATTERS</p> <p>none</p>	
7	<p>POLICES AND PROCEDURES</p> <p><u>Curriculum Structure policy</u> JP asked about Year 10 options subjects. He noted helpful KS4 information on the school's website and wondered if some of it could be included in the document, possibly via hyperlinks. ERZ agreed that this was worth considering. He gave a brief explanation of the thinking behind how option subjects are offered. Whilst students are supported in their option choices there is inevitably some level of disappointment as not all courses will be viable.</p> <p><u>Curriculum policy</u> PCA asked about the varying points at which setting is implemented by different subjects. ERZ explained that these decisions have often developed as a result of long experience: Heads of Faculty, for instance, use GCSE course structures to best determine when to set. Maths, for instance, favours mixed ability teaching in the early years followed by a rapid move to setting. Science has followed this model in the past, but more recently has found that mixed ability teaching works well.</p> <p>PCA asked about the following wording: 'It is the role of the Deputy Head and Heads of Faculty to monitor and review the appropriateness of the curriculum'. She asked how appropriateness is determined. ERZ replied that a wide range of measures are used with a view to maintaining the breadth of the curriculum, including student outcomes, post-16 pathways and national developments.</p> <p>ERZ said that the Millais Teaching School Alliance mentioned in the policy will be ceasing operations - this news arrived after the policy was reviewed. Oathall will therefore not continue as a strategic partner. The clerk will remove this mention before the policy is published.</p> <p>All three policies reviewed (Curriculum Structure; Curriculum; Assessment & Marking) were approved by the governors.</p> <p>ERZ drew the governors' attention to proposals in the Curriculum Structure document for changing the teaching of MFL. These changes will be introduced with the new year 7s in September; MFL in current years 8-11 will be unaffected.</p>	AC

	<p>JH asked for clarification on senior faculty staff job descriptions, for information on ‘who’s who’ in school, and information on school staffing structure. The clerk will add these documents to the governors’ shared drive, along with photographs of faculty leaders.</p>	
8	<p>BUSINESS REPORT</p> <p>BB declared an interest. She is a volunteer at the Haywards Heath Food Bank which is using the Albermarle Centre. Her husband is now also a trustee of the Food Bank.</p> <p><u>Finance meeting</u></p> <p>RC reported on the Finance meeting held before this FGB meeting and attended by herself, ERZ, Jo Godbolt, Karen Crockford, JH and BB. She expressed her appreciation of the excellent reports given, and recommended all resulting documents to the GB. She will bring these to a later meeting, including a report on the proposed budget.</p> <p><u>Farm</u></p> <p>ERZ said that the work recently completed on the farm has significantly improved the appearance of the school site, situated as the farm is at the main school entrance.</p> <p><u>Year-end outturn and the state of school finances</u></p> <p>CRC asked if the £225k outturn is unusually high. He asked if there might be claw-back from WS. ERZ said that while the amount is higher than is usual, it does not exceed the 5% limit which could trigger a claw-back from the local authority. Next year’s budget of around £6m involves a significant increase. Oathall has also benefitted from the parameters of the National Funding Formula and Minimum Funding Guarantee. Increases in student numbers have attracted funding – both the difference between the size of the current year 7 and year 11, and the likely large increases to come. Oathall will also benefit from the growth fund again this year.</p> <p><u>Insurance</u></p> <p>ERZ said that in the past the school has routinely bought insurance as part of the WS SLA. Premiums have been steadily increasing. A decision has been made to use a mutual insurance provider instead, a route favoured by the DofE, and bringing cost savings. RC added that features of the policy (e.g. online medical support) also make it a good choice.</p>	
9.	<p>ACADEMY/LOCALITY ISSUES</p> <p>No separate report.</p>	
10	<p>CHAIR’S REPORT</p> <p>RC reported on the funeral of Stewart Boyling, which she and ERZ attended. It was, she said, a delightful occasion and a celebration of Stewart’s life, with fascinating testimonials. Stewart’s family have asked for the contribution that ERZ and RC made, for their own store of memories There was fly-past by Air Ambulance Kent, Surrey, Sussex.</p> <p><u>EHCPs</u></p> <p>RC signed off on an EHCP 10 days ago. She was concerned at the student’s high level of need. She had met Emma Green and Carly Slade, by phone. There is still poor information coming in from some feeder schools, with an increasing number of students arriving who have complex</p>	

	<p>issues. RC would like to find out if there is work that the GB can do to support school staff with this situation. CRC reported a conversation with a primary school governor about the efforts that Oathall is obliged to make for these students. This governor said that over half the primary's applications for EHCPs are refused. CRC asked if there is a tendency towards delaying the granting of EHCPs until secondary level. RC agreed that this is the case. She added that services don't have enough capacity; children's needs can be missed. Small schools also sometimes struggle to produce the data that is increasingly required for applications. ERZ agreed and said that it becomes harder and harder to successfully apply as a student gets older, and that SEND provision in primary schools is variable. Although Carly Slade has a particular skill in putting together applications, he is concerned about the number that are returned. Another obstacle may be that if an application for (e.g.) a year 5 student is returned, a school may not repeat the application, and may instead rely on the secondary schools to deal. RC said that GBs are challenging these problems at county level. CM asked if support can be offered to primary schools by teaching departments: can teachers support transition via direct dialogue? ERZ said that this might be possible, but added that Oathall does begin work with these children as soon as the team is made aware that they are in the system. There are 26 feeder schools and often knowledge is shared at the last minute. CM suggested that another possibility might be primary school staff visiting Oathall in some sort of CPL session to learn about Carly's work. ERZ will raise this. PR asked if there is data available on the number of students at other schools with EHCPs: is Oathall getting more than its share? And if the school is seen by parents as skilled in this type of work, will that bring extra students with complex needs? ERZ replied that available data suggests that all schools are seeing an increase. WS Higher Needs budget has been overspent for some years. More granular data is hard to come by. Some schools (e.g. Warden Park) have been allocated a Special Support Centre (SSC) and so are able to accept higher numbers. He added that he has seen some evidence (e.g. during school tours) of parental interest in Oathall in this regard, but it is hard to determine numbers. PR asked if Oathall can be considered for an SSC. ERZ said that the school had registered an interest (he has reminded WS of our relevant facilities e.g. the Albermarle Centre) but there are no plans. RC added that the issue is high on the agenda of WS Governors' Association meetings, and that she will report back on progress.</p>	
11	<p>HEADTEACHER'S REPORT</p> <p><u>Return to school</u></p> <p>The school reopened fully on March 8th with a staggered return of students, as permitted by government. The students who have been attending during lockdowns were successfully merged with their year groups, freeing up classrooms as necessary.</p> <p>Lateral flow tests (not compulsory) are being offered – three tests per student over two weeks. Jo Godbolt and Laura Griffiths have led the process, which has been a logistical challenge but has gone smoothly. There are ten testing bays in the hall and up to two whole year groups can be tested in a single day – around 450 tests.</p> <p>Students have been greeted by form tutors on their arrival in school, and tutors have spent time with students as they wait for test results in the sports hall. ERZ has spoken to every student as they wait for a test. Behaviour, and a sense of responsibility among students, have been exemplary. Uptake of tests is very strong. 95% attended their first test, including 99% of year 7s</p>	

and 97.7% of year 8s. Once second and third tests are complete, students will receive home testing kits. Around 1800 tests had been done by the end of the day of the meeting, with no positives.

Students seem well settled, and positive about the return. ERZ will continue to monitor. Learning is disrupted by testing but the speed of the process (a tutor group can be tested within ten minutes) is helpful. **JH recalled a report by ERZ at a previous FGB of a Loughborough University webinar advising on how to test a whole school, and asked if Oathall's rate has exceeded expectation.** ERZ said that it has been a great success; being able to fine-tune methods via the testing of students attending school during lockdown has been helpful. Testing, he said, has gone well across many schools. **JH asked PR if staff morale is good**, and PR replied that staff seem happy, and see a sensible and reassuring approach to the return to school. The disruption of testing, he said, is not noticeable.

Site developments

Following a lack of communication from WS on building projects, ERZ was invited at the start of March to a meeting which included architects. Projects are at the feasibility stage with producing broad plans in production. ERZ emphasised that these are projects to be funded by Section 106 money (from commercial developers), not Basic Needs Funding or funding as a result of rising rolls.

The proposals are for improvements at Oathall in:

- Dining facilities
- School entrances
- Toilets
- Covered areas for students

(All connected to breaks and lunchtimes)

CRC asked if the Section 106 money will definitely be made available; in his experience this category of funding can be fragile. ERZ said that as far as he is aware, it is secure. WS manages the money by gathering it for use in a number of projects, with a funding window of ten years. The figure has also been consistent for some time. But he added that he will watch with interest to see how much is absorbed in design and consultancy fees.

Student numbers

WS has asked Oathall to exceed its PAN (270). The projection for September 2021 was 290. As a result the school will need to plan for 10-form entry. A significant rise over the PAN brings with it staffing implications, not in a straightforward way (e.g. the need to recruit one maths teacher) but requiring small numbers of additional hours across many subjects.

Oathall has enough physical space for the September 2021 increase in numbers - the school has operated below its PAN for some years. New funding is intended to improve the space that already exists. Student numbers in later years are more uncertain: plans for the building of the Burgess Hill Arc secondary school seem ambitious in terms of timescale. If there is a delay in building the school, or it is small, there will be a significant impact on Oathall. ERZ is raising these concerns.

	<p><u>Staffing</u> History: Annie Quinnell, an NQT at Oathall, has been appointed as maternity cover. There was a strong field for two new Maths posts. Daniel Nicholson (currently PGCE at Oathall) and Will Farrow have been appointed. A new MFL post, and an English post (needed because of increased numbers) are currently being advertised.</p> <p>JH asked if the national drive to recruit teachers in STEM subjects may have had a positive impact on numbers of candidates applying for the Maths posts. ERZ said that there is still a shortage nationally; early recruitment in this case may have been helpful.</p>	
12	<p>SAFEGUARDING BB met Emma Green on 09.02.21 for a termly safeguarding visit. Her report was shared with the GB before the meeting. BB said that it has been a challenging time for the team and expressed her appreciation for the work done. RC added her thanks. JH asked if national reports of an increase in domestic abuse during lockdowns has been reflected in issues among students. BB said that reports to the school by Operation Compass have increased. This is an initiative – in place for some time - whereby police notify schools of any incidents in homes where there are children. But BB said that there is no specific data on domestic abuse. She added that the school being made aware is a positive development. There was a discussion on the increased numbers of local families in need. BB has seen more referrals to the food bank from social services, police and schools. RC and BB noted that families who may not previously have come forward in times of need are now placing trust in the school. BB added that families receiving food bank deliveries mention the support given by Oathall.</p>	
13	<p>PUPIL PREMIUM MATTERS No separate report.</p>	
14	<p>ATTENDANCE Attendance on the day of the meeting stood at slightly less than 97%.</p>	
15	<p>GOVERNORS' VISITS AND INDIVIDUAL REPORTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RC has visited school and observed the amazing work of staff. • JP visited for his new governor HR procedures. • JB attended WS courses in SEND and effective questioning, both (she felt) very good. 	
16	<p>ANY OTHER BUSINESS BB asked if material on the plan for Covid catch-up funding is on the school website, and ERZ guided the governors in locating it under the Coronavirus menu.</p>	
	<p><i>The meeting closed at 20:50 hrs</i></p>	

DATE & VENUE OF NEXT MEETINGS Summer term: April 26 th ; May 24 th ; June 21 st ; July 19 th Meetings are virtual until further notice.	
--	--

Distribution: Governing Body, Leadership Team, Head's PA, WSCC

FGB meeting action log

Meeting at which action raised	Details	Who?	Timescale	Completed?
15.03.21	Liaise with clerk on review of new governor induction	JP	As time allows	yes
15.03.21	Minor edit to Curriculum policy	AC	asap	yes
15.03.21	Add documents to governors' shared drive: who's who' in school; school staffing structure; generic job descriptions. Also photos.	AC	asap	yes
Actions completed				
08.02.21	Share new strand descriptors with GB	RC/AC	asap	yes