

MINSTHORPE ACADEMY TRUST
MINUTES OF THE FULL GOVERNING BODY MEETING

17th JULY 2012 @ 4:30PM

THOSE PRESENT OR ABSENT

Mr S Parkinson Chair of Governors	✓	Mrs A-M Spencer Vice Chair of Governors	✓
Mrs T Boughen	Apologies	Mr B Johnson	✓
Mr T Cawthorne	✓	Mrs S Lewis	✓
Mrs G Earith	✓	Mr S Newton	Apologies
Mrs W Evans	Apologies	Mr I Oxley	✓
Mrs V Gilmore	✓	Ms A Parkinson	Apologies
Mr J Gregory (Principal)	✓	Mrs B Semper	✓
Mr N Hawkins	✓	Mr R Tonge	Apologies
11 /16 Governors present. This meeting is quorate.			

ALSO INVITED

Mrs J Germain	Clerk to the meeting
Mrs E Fairhurst	Associate Governor
Ms H Williams	Associate Governor
Mr B Dickinson	Associate Governor
Mrs C Green	Personnel and HR Director
Mr J Fowler	School Improvement Partner

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1 Conflicts of Interests

There were no conflicts of interest.

2 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs T Boughen, Mrs W Evans, Mr S Newton, Ms A Parkinson and Mr R Tonge.

Chair proposed these absences were consented to, the Principal seconded this proposal.

RESOLVED#22

The Governors resolved to consent to the absences of Mrs T Boughen, Mrs W Evans, Mr S Newton, Ms A Parkinson and Mr R Tonge.

3 Minutes of the Meeting held on 27th March 2012

Governors were asked to confirm they had received and read the draft copy of the minutes from the meeting held on the 27th March 2012. Corrections were requested by the Chair, of which there were none.

All other Governors present confirmed their receipt and accuracy resulting in their approval to be signed as a correct record of the meeting.

RESOLVED 23

The Governors resolve that the minutes of the meeting held on 27th March 2012 be signed as a correct record.

4 Matters Arising from the Minutes (not included below)

There were no matters arising.

5 Correspondence

The Chair had dealt with correspondence relating to the following issues:

Unison and NUT letters and emails – Correspondence had been received from Unison and NUT regarding national changes to the Appraisal process and model policies had been proposed by them.

Staff grievance – three letters had been received from one member of staff expressing concerns regarding disciplinary procedures he had been subjected to, and this was on-going. The member of staff in question had written to the Chair as a first point of contact.

6 Chair's Actions

Chair had attended the following events since the previous meeting in March 2012;

- Appraisal and Capability Training with the Principal,
- Awards Evening,
- MFL Interviews/Appointments,
- Two Leadership Team meetings to discuss the College Strategic Plan
- NGA Conference,
- Governors' Open Morning,
- Behaviour and Discipline and Standards and Students sub-committee meetings.
Thanks given to Mr Cawthorne who stepped in as Chair of the Resources Committee at the last minute.
- SIP selection process
- Awards Evening for Years 7 – 10

The Principal thanked the Chair of Governors for his attendance at all the above events, and also to all other Governors who support events at College. Their attendance is always valued by College staff.

7 Membership Changes

Chair advised the meeting Mr S Taylor had resigned as a Member due to securing alternative employment. Chair had written to Mr Taylor personally to thank him for his work during his time as a Member in what was a difficult inaugural year.

8 Board Changes

Chair advised the meeting Mr Taylor had also resigned as a Director (Staff Governor).

9 Statutory books and Filings

The Company Secretary was instructed to make all necessary entries into the Company's statutory books and file all returns at Companies House arising from the business transacted at the meeting, including:

- Updating the registers of members and directors;
- Filing form(s) TM01.

10 External Advisor Report

Chair thanked Mr Fowler for his attendance and asked him to summarise his report, a copy of which Governors had seen prior to the meeting.

In his summary, Mr Fowler touched briefly on each aspect on his report, referring to outcomes from the March 2012 Ofsted Inspection, and indicating where and why his professional judgement differed from Ofsted's gradings.

Mr Fowler continued by placing the recent Ofsted Inspection and changes to the framework against which College was judged into context for Governors. He advised how the shift in focus by the new framework had not been expected by SIPs or the Local Authorities, and

was still catching some establishments out. Historically Inspectors looked at Colleges 'in the round', and whilst achievement and progress were always fundamental, in essence judgements were refined by the type of school and local factors affecting it.

Judgements by Inspectors implementing the new framework stem solely from pupil progress and no longer in the round. If pupil progress is judged as satisfactory, almost on every occasion, the final judgement is the same. The majority of schools have fallen by one level, some by two, which has resulted in a rise in the number of 'Inadequate' judgements. The implications of how high the bar had been raised had not been clear and new criteria are being applied retrospectively to 2011 results.

To put the Inspection grading into context further, Mr Fowler insisted the inspection was accurate by the way the framework was interpreted, in a data driven way, but he considered Minsthorpe is better than the judgement given.

Mr Fowler advised College and Governors need to take the judgement and move with it. Prior to March College was looking for an 'Outstanding' judgement, or at least good with many outstanding features. College needs to build on what it has got but keep in mind the new framework - there is no lea-way.

Chair asked Governors if there were any questions, of which there were none.

Chair thanked Mr Fowler for his report and reminded Governors this was the final report of his contract. Although there is no longer a requirement for College to have a SIP, an independent view is still required. Mr Fowler was thanked for his valued input and direction. Governors were reminded the SIP was not here for the College Staff, but for the Governors.

The Principal thanked Mr Fowler for his erudite context of the Inspection judgement and outcome.

Governors noted and thanked John Fowler for his report.

Mr Fowler left the meeting at 4:55pm.

Chair continued by advising the meeting how Mr Fowler had come to the natural end of his contract and had expressed his intentions in an email, suggesting a change of view of College, would be of benefit and enable College to move forward.

Meetings had taken place involving Chair, Vice Chair, the Principal and two Vice Principals to discuss a possible way forward. ASCL had been contacted and three candidates had been suggested. The preferred choice is a practising secondary head who would appear to be an astute external advisor or 'Professional Partner'. The suggested contract would be for 5 days plus the Performance Management role for the Principal's review

The Principal added how the preferred candidate could be invited into College to meet the Chair, Vice Chair, Principal and two Vice Principals. He is a serving Head teacher at a school with an attached nursery recently judged as outstanding and a vocational education centre also attached. This meeting, whilst informal, would form part of a selection process.

Q Mr Oxley asked the meeting whether the OFSTED Inspection would affect the number of students attending Minsthorpe, and was College permitted to publish the External Advisor's Report to put the Inspection into context. Mr Oxley believed approximately 99% of parents would send their children to Minsthorpe, regardless of the Inspection outcome.

Whilst the Principal agreed with the unique catchment area and steady transition of the majority of pupils from local primaries to Minsthorpe, there does come a point at which

College's must listen to Ofsted and Colleges who do not do so are at risk of being taken over.

Mr Oxley added that the Inspectors do not really look at our students and their aspirations (work in the trades etc.) and are favoured for schools whose students go down the more academic route.

The Principal confirmed this was the challenge for College. Minsthorpe is determined not to change its role in the community. However College has to do that and demonstrate progress in a different way, and not go for progress at all costs. College does not want to be given Notice to Improve, have an enforced take over and a complete change to the ethos of the College. Mr Oxley suggested discussions should take place with the local MP to advise him of what was happening in Colleges.

Chair requested Governors authority to continue the process of appointing a new Professional Partner.

Mr Oxley proposed Governors consented to the Chair, Vice Chair, Principal and two Vice Principals continue with the SIP (Professional Partner) selection process. Mrs Semper seconded this.

Resolved 24

Governors consented to the Chair, Vice Chair, Principal and two Vice Principals continue with the SIP (Professional Partner) selection process.

11 Principal's Report

i) College Strategic Plan

The Principal began by referring to Ofsted's comments regarding the previous plan (Single Strategic Plan - SSP) which was intended to be thorough and detailed, however Ofsted believed this to be over complicated, advising the plan needed to be simpler. The challenge for College was to ensure the plan still reflected the ethos of Minsthorpe.

The Principal introduced Ms Williams and Mrs Fairhurst (Vice Principals) to the meeting and advised they would elucidate the work undertaken and aims of the newly produced College Strategic Plan (CSP).

Leadership were in the process of revisiting the SSP as it reached its natural end; however the decision was taken to focus on the two areas for development suggested by Ofsted, which were:

Priority 1: Raise standards & accelerate progress throughout the college including Post 16, particularly in Mathematics.

Priority 2: Strengthen the impact of senior and middle leaders to drive improvement.

The Leadership Team and Chair discussed areas within these priorities which were important to individual roles. To ensure coherence in the CSP, Leadership worked up the details along with Chair, College Team Leaders contributed and the draft plan is before Governors for approval. As the Governors had been sent a copy prior to the meeting, each section would not be referred to in detail, however key aspects were highlighted.

The front page remains very similar to the previous plan, detailing the Mission Statement, what College wanted to achieve and how it would work to do this, including No Child Left Behind and Capacity and Care.

The key areas of work planned for each priority were explained to Governors and included the introduction of the 'Securing Good' programme to contribute to priority 1 being addressed. This is a training and coaching programme to support teaching staff who have received consistently 'satisfactory' lesson observations in the last two or three years, giving them the tools to ensure their lessons are observed and graded as good.

Eleven members of staff have been chosen to take part in the programme, with two additional staff volunteering to take part. The programme will be launched during the two INSET Days at the beginning of September.

To support priority 2, the key themes will be support, consistency and rigour. The newly appointed and specialist Data Manager is already refining systems to provide staff with the analyses required. By working in a coordinated and consistent method the framework will be there to talk through the plan to Ofsted, ensuring they know the complexities of our College.

The Vice Chair expressed her concerns the plan was not explicit enough, that within the 'Overall Effectiveness' section nothing was stated clearly. Further discussion took place regarding the amendments and enhancements required to the document to enable the Governors to ratify the plan.

To further address priority 2, College Leadership has redefined the Leadership/Curriculum Area Link role. These enhancements will take the form of formal agenda-ed meetings, Learning Walks, the Securing Good programme and Advanced Skills Teachers (ASTs).

The previous plan was believed to be too unwieldy and a short concise plan was needed. It was also noticed the QACS process is included in 15 sections of the plan.

During the development of the new plan College was adamant the Community Dimensions were to be included and, following a contributory process, two priorities were formed.

Priority 1: To increase usage and maintain financial stability across the dimensions to ensure self-sustaining centres.

Priority 2: To maintain Customer Service Excellence status.

The wording of these was deliberately kept succinct, however each dimension has annual action plans to support the CSP.

Q Is the 'Full/part demolition of Fitness changing rooms to create an extended free weights area' necessary?

The Sports and Fitness Centre is used hugely. The weights section is tight for space and is becoming increasingly popular. Currently there are two sets of changing rooms, both of which are in need of modernisation.

Vice Chair proposed Governors adopt the College Strategic Plan, after including the amendment 'to improve Learning and Teaching to be consistently good'. Mr Hawkins seconded this proposal.

Resolved #24

Governors resolved to adopt the College Strategic Plan, after including the amendment 'to improve Learning and Teaching to be consistently good'.

ii) Dates for 2012/13 Meeting Cycle

Governors had received details of the proposed dates for the 2012/13 meeting cycle prior to the meeting. The proposed cycle ran on the same weeks as the current schedule with the exception of the Resources Committee meeting moving to before the Standards and Students Committee meetings. This was to allow longer for the more complex and lengthy Resources minutes to be completed and distributed to Governors prior to the Full Governing Body meetings.

Mr Oxley proposed the Governors approve and adopt the meeting cycle. Mrs Semper seconded this proposal.

Resolved #25

Governors resolved to approve and adopt the meeting cycle.

12 Ratification of Academy Policies

- i) Personal Harassment
- ii) Sickness Absence Policy
- iii) Capability Procedure
- iv) Disciplinary Procedure
- v) Grievance Procedure
- vi) Work Life Balance Policy
- vii) Whistleblowing Code of Practice
- viii) Job Share Policy
- ix) Appraisal Policy

The Resources Committee had reviewed the proposed policies on behalf of the Full Governing Body and had resolved to accept the policies and recommend to the Full Governing Body for implementation from 1st September 2012.

Governors were asked for any questions, of which there were none.

Mr Oxley proposed the Governors accept the policies for implementation on the 1st September 2012. Mrs Spencer seconded this proposal.

Governors also voted by a unanimous show of hands to accept the policies.

Resolved #26

Governors resolved to approve the policies for implementation Sept 1st 2012

Mr Oxley raised an issue regarding a PA of a company not connected to Minsthorpe Academy Trust, who had purchased goods and services on behalf of the company on her personal credit card to be claimed from expenses at a later date. In the meantime the Administrators wound up the company and the PA's expenses were not included in the winding up order, leaving the PA with a large amount of debt.

The Business Manager assured Mr Oxley this would not be the case for employees at Minsthorpe. The introduction of a company credit card, as approved by the Resources Committee at a previous meeting, would ensure this would not be the case.

Mr Oxley also raised the issue of the recent fines imposed on major high street banks for their involvement in the 'LIBOR rate fixing' scandal. As the College has a large deposit with a high street bank, how can the Governors be sure the interest rate being applied to this investment was not adversely affected? Would it be of benefit to be in touch with their legal department to ensure this was not the case?

The Business Manager reminded Governors how, as the Academy had been in its inaugural year and cash flow was uncertain, the investment route chosen was the safest one. Other choices gave greater return but with greater risk. No legal challenge to the banks had been made. It was requested the Business Manager would monitor the situation.

Governors noted the Business Manager would monitor the investment with a high street bank in question.

13 Ratification of the Minsthorpe Academy Trust (MAT) Budget.

The Resource Committee had reviewed the MAT Budget 2012 - 2013 at their recent sub-committee meeting and resolved to approve and recommend this budget, including the major projects programme, to the Full Governing Body.

Governors were asked for any questions, of which there were none.

Mr Cawthorne proposed the Governors resolve to approve the MAT Budget 2012 – 2013, including the major projects programme, Mr Oxley seconded this proposal.

Governors also voted by a unanimous show of hands to approve the MAT Budget 2012 – 13, including the major projects programme.

Resolved #27

Governors resolved to approve the MAT Budget 2012 – 2013, including the major projects programme.

14 Reports of Committees

The Chair gave the Governors the opportunity note each of the separate committee minutes and raise questions or discuss matters arising.

Reports of Committees

i) Behaviour and Discipline Committee 31.05.12
Questions were requested, of which there were none.

ii) Standards and Students 03.07.12

It was brought to the Governors attention that within the Standards and Students minutes was the proposed Post 16 Dress Code for implementation from 1st September 2012.

Q Mr Oxley asked how the proposed dress code compared to other Post 16 Colleges in the area, as he has heard they were much more lenient than our own and he would not want to lose students to other Colleges on this issue.

Mr Oxley was reassured the dress code was actually being relaxed, whilst insisting Post 16 students retain modesty. The difference between stand-alone 6th form colleges and our Post 16 is we have to be aware they are sharing a campus with 11 year old students. Any amendments have been in direct response to consultations with current Post 16 students.

Mr Cawthorne proposed Governors approve the Post 16 Dress Code for implementation in September 2012. Mr Oxley seconded this proposal.

Resolve #28

Governors resolved to approve the Post 16 Dress Code for implementation September 1st 2012

iii) Resources Committee 10.07.12
Questions were requested, of which there were none.

Governors noted the minutes for both the Behaviour and Discipline and Resources Committee meeting.

15 Governor Training and Development:
Exchange of Information with the Training Link Governor

Mr Cawthorne informed the meeting of a training need for those Governors who form the Behaviour and Discipline Sub-Committee following the introduction of new exclusion guidelines from September 2012. Mr Cawthorne had spoken to Ms Hammerson (Schools Exclusion Team) and had suggested we hold a pyramid wide training session, with the possibility of including the Hemsworth pyramid also.

Key considerations would be the cost element, numbers and the venue.

Mr Cawthorne asked for the Governors support and approval to proceed with these plans.

Governors noted these training plans. Mr Cawthorne will proceed with the organisation of this training.

Mr Cawthorne also informed the meeting of the date of the Local Authority Annual Governors' Conference (27th October 2012) at Woolley Hall. The guest speaker has yet to be confirmed.

Last year Chair and Mr Cawthorne attended, again there may be a cost element to College.

Further information will be given as soon as received by Mr Cawthorne.

- 16 Confirmation of the Time and Date of Next meeting
- Tuesday, 11th December 2012

Governors were requested to note the date of the next meeting of the Full Governing Body.

Governors noted the date of the next meeting of the Full Governing Body (11th December 2012).

- 17 Advance Notice to Members of AGM
– Tuesday, 23rd October 2012

Governors were requested to note the date of the Annual General Meeting (23rd October 2012).

Governors noted the date of the Annual General Meeting (23rd October 2012).

- 18 AOB

- a Barcelona comments

Very positive comments had been received from a member of the public who had travelled on the same flight home as students taking part in the Barcelona trip. This member of the public had taken the time to email College to express their pleasure at our students' behaviour and relationship with their teachers on the flight. A reply of thanks had been sent, along with letters to the boys' parents congratulating them on their sons' behaviour.

- b Timed items going forward

Suggestion made to introduce timed items on busy agendas, to ensure meetings do not continue beyond 6pm. This meeting's agenda had been a busy one and was currently running to time.

An issue to note when planning agendas for future meetings.

- c Names of Students/ Governors

At the Inaugural General Meeting, Mr Cawthorne had requested a list of all those attending Minsthorpe, as it transferred to academy status, to be noted. This should include students, staff and Governors.

These names will be displayed in an area of College yet to be decided.

- d FSM query – Gill

Mr Oxley had requested clarification regarding the cost of a meal in the College canteen and the current amount allocated for a Free School Meal (FSM). This is following a complaint from a parent whose son was arriving home hungry after not being able to purchase enough food with his FSM allowance.

The Business Manager advised the meeting the allocation was set at £1.90, following discussions with Kingswood Catering. This amount is sufficient to purchase a 'meal deal' of the day. Examples of the food on offer were given. The amount is loaded onto students' accounts before break time for students to spend as they wish, as the style of cafeteria did not allow College to dictate what was bought with the funds. Students are given the freedom

to choose their purchases. Some students spend their funds at mid-morning break, some at lunch break. If the boy in question is eating at 10:15, he may well be hungry by the time he arrives home.

Mr Oxley requested the average amount a student spends during the week but College were unable to provide an accurate figure. This was because some students may buy only a drink and bring a packed lunch, others may buy at each break, spending more. Mr Oxley requested a visit to the canteen to see the portion sizes given to students. He was advised this was entirely appropriate and that the meals he would see were nutritionally balanced and calculated to national standards. If Kingswood were to increase the cost of a daily 'meal deal', then the value of FSM would follow in line. A suggestion was made College request a printout of the student in question's spending in the canteen to check his daily purchases.

It was decided Mr Oxley would visit the canteen and receive a printout.

Mr Cawthorne suggested the reintroduction of a tuck shop.

College advised Mr Cawthorne this was not feasible as College would be unable to sell students the items they wished to purchase (carbonated drinks, crisps and chocolate). Tuck shops selling confectionary are not in line with the 'healthy schools' ethos College had promoted in recent years. A reminder was given that students are not allowed off college campus at break times.

e Governor Links

Mrs Fairhurst informed Governors details of their links would be sent out by the Clerk and there had been very few changes. The Curriculum Team Leaders are also aware of these links and Governors were encouraged to contact their link department to arrange a visit.

19 Identification of Confidential Items.

There were no confidential items.

The Principal thanked the Governors for their work during this year.

The Chair read out a quote from the NGA Conference which served as a reminder of why Governors became involved with College and Education in the first instance.

The meeting closed at 6:10



Signed as a correct record
Mr S Parkinson - Chair