

HERMITAGE PRIMARY SCHOOL

MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BODY HELD ON 27TH FEBRUARY 2014

Present:

Mrs. H. Jarrold (HVJ)

Mr. P. Cresswell (PC)

Mr. D. Janes (DJ)

Mrs. H. Bailey (HB)

Mr. C. Pritchard (CP)

Miss. K. Wilson (KW)

Mr. P. Jenkins (PJ)

Mrs. J. Columbine Corlett (JCC)

Mrs. H. Kirk (HK)

Mrs. J. Birch (JB)

Mr. T. Griggs (TG)

Mrs. A. Chambers (AC)

Mrs. C. Osborne (CO)

Clerk:

Mrs. L Chadwick (LC)

MINUTES PART ONE NON-CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

1. CHAIR AND MINUTE TAKER

Chair: Darrell Janes

Minute Taker: Liz Chadwick

2. APOLOGIES

The following apologies were received:

None received.

3. ANY OTHER ITEMS OF BUSINESS

No other items.

4. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No such declaration was made.

5. ACADEMY CONVERSION DECISION

Background

The conversion process started on 5th March 2013 and a management company, J&G Marshall, were appointed. The drivers for conversion, at that time, were to improve financial efficiency through better control and the ability to plan, and the additional curricular ability that would be gained. This more stable structure would better protect our school ethos from local and national government changes. Nothing has come to light over the past 12 months to challenge these drivers.

Stakeholder Views

HVJ whole-heartedly supports the process and agrees with the reasons for conversion. HVJ stated that she would not endorse any changes that she did not believe would benefit the children and agreed that the ability to plan strategically will enable exciting changes to be made to the curriculum.

Various questions had been raised by staff during the conversion consultation process and the Leadership Team have tried to address these questions fully. Many of the questions related to fears about changes to staff terms and conditions and potential loss of continuous service if staff were to move to another school in the future. HB reported that staff feel more assured now that their questions had been answered and that although there are still concerns, their fears have been allayed to some extent. DJ confirmed that there were no intentions to make any changes to staff contracts.

There have been no questions raised by parents.

Financial Considerations

It is understood that the school will not be financially disadvantaged by the conversion and it was agreed that a decision should be made on this basis. It was decided that the Finance Committee should meet as soon as the budget is known in order to confirm this.

Trustees

DJ explained that there will be 5 Trustees whose roles will be aligned to the registration of, and accountability for, the new company. The Trustees will be:

- Headteacher
- Deputy Headteacher
- Chair of Governors
- Vice Chair of Governors
- Chair of Finance Committee

The Trustees will be the holder of the job description: the post-holder will automatically step up.

Governor Questions

The following questions were subject to discussion at the meeting:

Q. Can we vote subject to not being financially worse off?

Yes – that would be the basis.

Q. Following discussions with Heads from schools that have already converted are there any downsides?

Feedback suggests that the first year is a settling in period and things tend to stay reasonably unchanged. Once confidence is gained school can start to be more selective and start to investigate where changes/ efficiencies can be made. It was reported that some companies charge higher prices for academies so this needs to be considered. There will be a higher degree of accountability for expenditure following conversion. A 'Responsible Person' will be appointed to review school's financial systems and processes. This will be a better quality service than currently received from the LA.

Q. As there will be 5 Trustees will a Governing Body be needed?

Yes. It is a legal requirement that the Trustees appoint a Governing Body. The Trustees can dictate the size of the Governing Body and there is no minimum size but it is recommended that there are between 7 and 2 Governors. It was agreed that the total number of Governors should outnumber Trustees.

Q. Are there any 'lessons learned' by academies post conversion that we know of?

There is a wealth of information available on the internet, particularly from the DFE and National Governors Association websites.

A vote to decide whether Hermitage Primary School should convert to an Academy from 01 April 2014 took place with the following results:

For:	12
Against:	0
Abstained:	1

Q. Should the conversion be recognised with some sort of occasion?

It was agreed that staff sensitivities should be considered. Staff and children should be involved in the decision-making.

It was agreed that this discussion should be picked up again at the Full Governing Body Meeting which is scheduled for 12th March 2014. HVJ agreed to talk to staff and children before this meeting.

Q. Will there be any changes in terms of branding?

There will be no outwardly obvious changes.

6. INDIVIDUAL SCHOOL RANGE

A detailed proposal was circulated to Governors prior to the meeting to move the school's ISR range from L19-23 to L12-18. DJ confirmed that L12-18 is consistent with the size of the school with an uplift added for academy and the resource provision. The range has been benchmarked against peers and HR has supported the change.

Governors agreed the change to the ISR with effect from 01 September 2014.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no other items.

_____Chair

_____Date