

The London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames



Sheen Mount School

**Minutes and Action List of the Full Governing Board Meeting**  
**Held Virtually on**  
**20 May 2020 at 7pm**

**Constitution, Membership and Attendance**

<b>Local Authority Governors - 1</b>	Maria Widdowson (MW)
<b>Parent Governors – 2</b>	Nikki Christmas (NC) Justine Hebert (JH) (Chair)
<b>Staff Governors – 2</b>	Avani Bakrania (AB) Ian Hutchings (IH)
<b>Co-opted Governors – 10</b>	<i>Vacancy</i> <b>*Kelly -Ann Cahillane (KAC)</b> Helen Edward (HE) Anna Hare (AH) Kathryn Higgins (KH) (Standards Committee Chair) <b>*Dan Jameson (DJ)</b> Pukar Mehta (PM) Catherine Riley (CR) (Pastoral Committee Chair) Julia Sandell (JS) Tilly Walters (TW) (Resources Committee Chair)
<b>Associate Governors – 3</b>	Laura Jeffery (LJ) Maria O'Brien (MOB) Marianne Paemen (MP)
<b>Clerk to the board</b>	Sarah Bellingham (SB)

\* Absence(s) in Bold

<b><u>Minutes</u></b>
<p><b>1. Apologies and Declarations of Interest</b></p> <p>1.1 JH welcomed governors to the first FGB of the summer term.</p> <p>1.2 It was noted that due notice of the meeting had been given to all members of FGB, a quorum was present and that the meeting could proceed. KAC had given her apologies to JH prior to the meeting. DJ did not attend.</p> <p>1.3 The Clerk was attending remotely to take the minutes.</p> <p>1.4 It was noted that all the documents to be referred to in the meeting had been posted onto Governor Hub prior to the meeting for governors to read or had been circulated by e-mail in advance. It was also noted that the meeting was taking place virtually, hosted by IH via the school's Google Meet account. A virtual meeting protocol had been posted onto Governor Hub with the other documents available prior to the meeting.</p>

Signed.....

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- 1.5 JH expressed her sadness at the death of a school parent due to Covid-19. Jennie Sablayan was a mother of a girl currently in year 5 and a second daughter who has left Sheen Mount. IH had been in contact with the father and had offered support. JH had sent a letter on behalf of the governing board.
- 1.6 JH asked the governors if they approved the virtual meeting protocol. All governors approved this and they had no questions to raise.

## 2. Minutes and Action List from FGB Meeting of 5<sup>th</sup> February 2020, and Minutes of Safeguarding Call of 27<sup>th</sup> March 2020

### Minutes of 5<sup>th</sup> February 2020

- 2.1 It was noted that the FGB meeting scheduled for March 2020 had been cancelled due to the impact of Covid-19 and that a safeguarding call had taken place instead on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2020 between CR, HE, JH and the school.
- 2.2 No questions or comments were raised by the governors on the minutes of the FGB meeting of 5<sup>th</sup> February 2020. These minutes were approved by JH. The Clerk asked JH to sign a copy of these after the meeting and JH agreed to send this signed copy to the school office for the paper folder, and to e-mail the Clerk a scanned copy for online record-keeping.

### Actions from 5<sup>th</sup> February 2020

- 2.3 JH confirmed that the Clerk had been in touch with the governors prior to the meeting to check on progress in relation to the actions in the list. There were only three items which were either not completed or not due to be completed shortly and these were discussed.
- 2.4 In relation to action 18, it was agreed that the mental health project budget item would still sit with TW and would be looked at in due course (**ACTION**).
- 2.5 In relation to action 26, MOB and LJ confirmed that staff had been updated about the latest complaints policy.
- 2.6 In relation to action 21 and the provision mapping system review, LJ would require time at the start of the next academic year to relaunch this software and to provide training on it. AH and JS agreed to have this on their radar for one of their visits in the next academic year (**ACTION**).

### Safeguarding call of 27<sup>th</sup> March 2020

- 2.7 The minutes of this call had been circulated via Governor Hub prior to the meeting.
- 2.8 The governors did not raise any comments or questions about them.

## 3. Governing Body Membership

- 3.1 JH asked MW to update the governors about the two recent governor resignations. These resignations meant that there were now two additional governor vacancies to the one which already existed. MW had described this situation in her proposal note, which also asked governors to approve JH's transition to co-opted governor in light of her ceasing to be a parent of a child at the school at the end of the 2020-21 academic year. MW's proposal had been circulated via Governor Hub prior to the meeting.
- 3.2 MW asked JH to leave the meeting whilst a vote was held to determine whether the transition to co-opted governor was approved. JH left the meeting. MW asked if any governor had an objection and said that if not, she would understand that everyone had voted in favour of the proposal. No governor raised an objection. MW confirmed that the transition had been approved as of that day's date. The clerk noted that she would amend the governor records (**ACTION**).

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- 3.3 JH re-joined the meeting and was informed of the result of the vote. It was agreed that the suitable time for governors to vote on whether JH should continue in the role of Chair would be at the September FGB.
- 3.4 MW asked KH for an update on the recruitment process for the co-opted Standards Committee vacancy. KH confirmed that one candidate had shown an interest in coming for an interview, and that she was setting that up. There was another candidate that KH was waiting to hear from.
- 3.5 MW confirmed that she had placed an advert for the other co-opted governor vacancy on Inspiring Governors and on Governors for Schools. Both the new co-opted governor and the new parent governor would need to fill positions on the Resources committee, which would require strong financial skills, with one taking the Resources Chair role.
- 3.6 **Q:** Was it necessary to appoint the parent governor first, before assessing the suitability of any independent candidate, given that it was harder to ensure the required skills via a parent body vote?  
**A:** IH agreed that previously it had been challenging to obtain a parent governor with the exact skills required at that time. JH asked governors to please talk with parents of children at the school whom they thought might have, or might know of another parent having, the right skill set for the position. JH confirmed that both recruitment processes would run in parallel, so as to save time but to ensure adjustments could be made if required.

#### 4 Governor Skills, Training and Induction Update

- 4.1 JH confirmed the postponement of the planned summer term Ofsted training, and asked governors what they thought of doing a virtual learning session this term instead. The governors discussed this and it was agreed that it should take place in the Autumn Term (**ACTION**).

#### 5 Head Teacher's Update

##### SDP Update and Questions

- 5.1 JH asked if there were questions from any governor after this document had been circulated prior to the meeting, and none were raised. IH commented that he thought that good progress had been made especially given the Covid context.

##### School Opening Plans for June to July 2020 (Reception, Year 1 and Year 6)

- 5.2 IH had produced a document prior to the meeting containing the proposal for the period from 1 June 2020, and the Clerk had circulated this via Governor Hub. Based on this, an updated draft communication had also been e-mailed to the governors earlier that day, with a view to discussing it at the meeting and sending it to parents the next day.
- 5.3 JH asked governors to focus on strategic oversight rather than discuss the details. For example, it would be helpful to assess the broad principles underlying the plan and also to look at differences in the proposals being suggested by comparable local schools.
- 5.4 IH confirmed that the plan proposed would remain provisional until 28<sup>th</sup> May 2020, as this was the date the government was due to confirm any re-opening of schools to these year groups. He asked governors to note that Sheen Mount had remained open for the entire period of the lock-down to care for keyworker and vulnerable children. IH said he would welcome questions about the proposed plans, and asked governors to note that whilst he and his team were confident about the proposal, it was not possible to guarantee safety from the risk of Covid-19, however they had done all they could to limit the risks. IH explained that the school had looked at all of the available guidance, had consulted with AfC and taken on board their recommendations, and had also liaised extensively with the local network of primary schools about logistical challenges.

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- 5.5 IH highlighted various aspects of the proposal, to include lunch provision, the cleaning rota, access to the computer suite, use of the playground, as well as the size and make-up of pupil and teacher 'bubbles'. He also confirmed that it would be offering a four day per week teaching schedule, with the fifth day made available for teachers to plan and follow-up from lessons and to continue assisting with the provision of online learning to the remaining year groups and to children who would be remaining at home. The vulnerable and key worker children would continue with five days a week. IH explained that there was a possibility that the government would require all year groups to return for the final month of the school term. Whilst IH acknowledged that this was unlikely to happen, he said that the school's current proposal for 'bubbles' and distancing would need a significant re-think due to the number of children and the space available. IH would keep the situation under review and update governors as needed.
- 5.6 **Q:** How did Sheen Mount compare with other local primaries in this respect?  
**A:** IH said that the ten local primaries whose plans he was aware of, were suggesting similar arrangements with some differences in how the part-time week was structured for the various classes. IH said that there was a presumption by the government that pupils would return on a full-time basis, and that any deviation from that needed to be justified. AfC had already approved the school's proposed model. IH added that there was a huge amount of risk-assessment activity taking place behind the scenes and he confirmed he was meeting MW the next day to progress this work.
- 5.7 **Q:** How was the school helping to bridge the class divide, in terms of things like access to digital resources facilitating effective learning?  
**A:** IH explained that the school didn't qualify for the receipt of extra technical equipment from the government. However, if the school assessed that children were not accessing the online learning provision, the teaching assistants were reaching out to offer support. For example, some families were receiving work dropped outside their front door if they did not have a printer at home.
- 5.8 **Q:** What would happen if all 70 vulnerable children attended, compared with the 20 currently at school?  
**A:** IH said that the school would not have the capacity to provide a safe environment if all 70 returned, but the school would have capacity for up to 45, based on classroom availability. If the full 70 were intending to return, IH would need to do a form of Red-Amber-Green (RAG) rating of requests to establish priorities.
- 5.9 **Q:** Would any consequence exist for parents who chose not to send their child back at this time?  
**A:** IH confirmed that there was no obligation for parents to send their children back to school at this time and there would be no consequences, for example in terms of attendance records. IH said that based on a survey carried out by a local primary school, 45% of parents were planning on sending their children back at this time. Sheen Mount had planned to work at capacity, with maximum bubble sizes of 15 pupils. However, fewer children were expected in the first week, with numbers rising gradually as parent confidence grew.
- 5.10 **Q:** Was there any capacity to support these year groups' learning for the fifth day each week?  
**A:** IH said that given the returning pupils would be taught at school for four days each week, the school would not be making specific provision for learning on the fifth day. He did not think this would be expected by parents, and it might be a stretch to find sufficient teacher availability for monitoring google classroom for this purpose. IH would keep this under review.
- 5.11 **Q:** What approach would school be taking in terms of parent and pupil preferences for being in a bubble with close friends?  
**A:** IH said he felt strongly that friendship and learning went well together and was trying to factor this in when planning the bubble groups. However, he would not be informing parents in advance about the children allocated to each bubble, and there would be no swapping of children between bubbles once they had returned to school.
- 5.12 **Q:** What guidance was available for when staff cover was needed?  
**A:** IH said that the guidance was not clear about the scenario where a member of staff in charge of a bubble might go off sick. The options in that scenario included keeping the whole bubble of pupils at home until the staff member came back in, or if the absence was for the longer term, allocating a new staff member to that group. For safety reasons, the school was having to be extremely strict about not swapping teachers or teaching assistants across bubbles.

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**5.13 Q:** How was the school supporting teachers at this time, and linked with this had any teachers raised concerns, or had any indicated how they were feeling about returning to teaching in the classroom?

**A:** IH said that given the school had remained open, albeit with fewer pupils, many staff had been back at school via operation of the new staff rota and were now comfortable with how things would need run for the remainder of term. IH thought that on the whole, staff found that the situation was being handled positively and safely, and trusted that it was based on a careful review of the applicable guidance. There was some concern, but the ones most worried were those who had not yet been back in to school. IH explained that the school was trying to support all of its staff as best it could, to include phase leaders reaching out to colleagues. Two staff members were pregnant, and they had been advised by a medical professional not to return to school at this time, which the school would respect. Another staff member had received a shielding letter from the government based on vulnerability, so also would not be returning at this time. IH thought the rest should be able to return. A RAG rating had been conducted in respect of all staff, and even staff members who had flagged themselves as 'red' were keen to return to classroom teaching nonetheless. If any teacher decided they could not return, IH would look at this on a case by case basis. LJ added that the school's emotional health service provided staff with useful resources.

**5.14 Q:** How would parents' expectations be managed in terms of hygiene and protective equipment?

**A:** IH explained that children would wash hands as soon as they were on site. Personal protective equipment (PPE) would not be worn by teachers unless working in the medical room with an unwell pupil or staff member. There had already been clear rules in place before the lock down and these would continue in relation to illness on site, albeit now with extra elements such as PPE. Some staff had asked about the availability of PPE and IH had told them that it was up to individual staff members as to what would make them feel safest. IH would not be refusing requests to wear it, although hopefully teachers requiring this would be in the minority. IH confirmed that he would address elements of this in his planned communication to parents.

**5.15 Q:** Was there any more information about the possibility of schools being required to open over the summer holidays?

**A:** IH said that there was no formal guidance about this currently.

**5.16 Q:** Should the school be taking children's temperatures before allowing access to the site each morning?

**A:** IH confirmed that the guidance advised that this was not necessary. Testing temperatures would be likely to produce ambiguous results, not least because of the warm weather and children riding bikes or running before school started. There was also the fact that genuinely ill children might have received Calpol or similar medication before coming in, meaning that a morning test would not detect a raised temperature in some cases. MP said that she thought it more sensible to do it on a case by case basis if the child was showing other symptoms of illness.

**5.17 Q:** What procedures were in place if a pupil or teacher within a bubble became unwell?

**A:** MP said that the guidance was unclear and that it should be remembered that children can fall ill for many reasons other than Covid-19. The school would look at this on a case by case basis and would encourage the unwell person or child to get a test done for Covid-19 immediately on feeling unwell. If the test came back positive, it is not yet clear what requirement there would be to either send the bubble home to isolate or the whole school. IH said that the Public Health England helpline would be a helpful resources in this type of instance. If anyone was sent home unwell the school would organise a deep clean of the area that bubble or person had been in contact with.

**5.18 Q:** Would the school be communicating with parents about the possibility of upscaling the provision of teaching to other year groups?

**A:** IH said that he had not planned to mention this, because he thought it was very unlikely to happen this term. The governors discussed it and agreed that it would be worthwhile giving this item a small mention in the next parent communication from IH, so that parents were better informed and so that the school would not need to respond to as many questions on this point.

**5.19 Q:** How wide was the academic gap in line with progression expectations?

**A:** IH said that he did not have enough information about this currently. IH hoped that the gap would not be too wide, given the provision of weekly online learning. IH commented that he and staff members would not be rushing to answer this now.

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The school first needed to settle children back into the school environment so that they were happy and ready to learn. LJ said that it was key for children to feel emotionally secure. LJ and IH also discussed a recovery curriculum resource which might be of help to parents who were concerned about their child catching up. JH asked IH if he would please include wording in his planned communication to parents to help manage expectations about the emotional and social focus of the time at school for the remainder of term. IH agreed to do this.

5.20 **Q:** What mental health support would be offered to the year groups not returning this term?

**A:** LJ and MP discussed the information available on the well-being tab of the school's website, which was updated weekly. MP suggested reminding parents about this in the next newsletter (**ACTION**). For those returning, the governors agreed that it would be sensible to address matters such as: how children might feel about friends not coming back this term, not being able to come back when they would like to, coming back when they are happy at home, or how key worker and vulnerable children might feel about other children returning to the school and might feel about a new routine, after their group had enjoyed more space and less formality than normal. LJ said that she would be helping to manage children's anxieties by sharing photos and stories of the new style learning environment.

5.21 JH asked the governors to vote on whether the proposed return to school plan from IH was approved by the board. The Clerk counted 11 positive governor responses from the 'chat' function of Google Meet. It was also noted that no-one provided any objections. JH said that she therefore understood that the board had approved the plan. JH also expressed to IH and the staff governors that if the board was extremely willing to help at this challenging time and for them to please ask if support was required.

## 6 Financial Management Update

### Update on budget for financial year ended March 2020

6.1 MP discussed the key aspects of this document, to include the in-year deficit and surplus, swimming pool costs, and the agreed financial tramlines. She said that overall the school's finances had been sound and that there would be more financial leeway for the next financial year as a result.

### Update on proposed draft budget submission for 2020/2021

6.2 TW explained that the slides in her presentation showed only the current financial year (to March 2021). At the June FGB meeting, Governors could expect a presentation of a 3-5 year budget proposal. TW confirmed that it was incredibly difficult to be accurate in the outer years as there were so many variables. The current information presented was how TW and the school saw things for the coming year. At end of June the five year submission would be submitted to the borough and much could change before then due to the impact of Covid-19. MP added that a lot of important information had not yet been confirmed by the government, such as updated pension contribution or salary increase details.

### Swimming Pool – progress update

6.3 **Q:** With such a large proportion of the budget related to swimming pool costs and Swimway payments, how had Covid-19 impacted Swimway's business and would it survive?

**A:** TW confirmed that she had not received any indication that the business was struggling. The school had already received £100k from Swimway and was still expecting £50k each month on the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month for the next three months. It was confirmed that the school only needed to receive one of these £50k payments to stay cash flow positive this academic year. JH said that she had spoken to Dan recently and thought he was astute and reasonably well-covered financially. MP added that Dan's ability to maintain his payments per the schedule would be tightly linked to the extent of any delay to the end of the build project. The governors discussed various items which might contribute to or mitigate against such delay, to include the timing of the builder's receipt of windows and doors from the suppliers and builder staffing issues. Currently the builders were estimating completion by the end of August 2020, meaning over a two month delay. It was noted that this would also impact the monthly rental that Swimway were due to start from the beginning of July.

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**7 FGB Standing Items**Safeguarding

7.1 It was noted that the minutes of the Safeguarding call in March had been discussed earlier in the meeting.

Equality & Diversity, and SEND

7.2 It was noted that current planned actions had been postponed and would be picked up as soon as possible in light of the circumstances. KAC was working on her equality report with MOB, which would not require a physical visit. In terms of SEND items, AH and JH were due to speak soon (**ACTION**).

**8 Link Governor Update / Policies Update**

8.1 Prior to the meeting, JH had circulated a prioritisation update and she explained that it was a list of the priority items for attention this term. JH said she was aware of the enormous pressure on IH and his team currently, and would if possible talk with individual governors about priorities and avoid chasing anyone at the school unless essential.

**9 Committee Updates**Resources

9.1 There were no questions or comments raised other than for the governors to express their sincere thanks to PM and TW for all their hard work and to say how sad the board would be to see them go. They would be missed.

Pastoral & Standards

9.2 There were no questions or comments raised in relation to these minutes or committee outcomes.

**10 Communication to PSA, Staff and Newsletter**

10.1 JH focused on two main items, which were firstly that IH was due to communicate with parents the following day about the school re-opening to Reception, Year 1 and Year 6.

10.2 Secondly, JH had not been able to give a board update in the February newsletter due to family commitments and she apologised for that. Instead JH suggested that she write a letter to parents supporting the school's re-opening plan, and asked for views on the content and timing of this.

10.3 The governors discussed this in detail, and JH asked that any further comments be e-mailed to her and IH after the meeting. JH would discuss this with IH before deciding to send any letter out.

**11 AOB**

11.1 Meetings schedule for 2020-21 academic year had been circulated prior to the meeting.

11.2 JH commented that the existing meetings schedule had not been reviewed for 15 years. She described the proposed new schedule, which sought to reduce the overall number of meetings annually, to introduce more flexibility on the frequency and timing of committee meetings, and to support more strategic oversight than operational activity. JH asked that the relevant governors consider the best time for the Curriculum visit, which might be compatible with a Spring term committee meeting or even in the Autumn term as a driver for activity (**ACTION**).

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11.3 The governors discussed the possibility of using virtual calls to help with flexibility going forward, and MW said that this technology could also be used for governor training sessions to avoid governors or staff having to travel to, or stay late at the school on week-day evenings.

11.4 JH closed the meeting, thanking TW and PM again for their hard work and contributions to the board and school.

11.5 The date of the next full governing body meeting was confirmed as 24 June 2020.

Signed by the Chair: \_\_\_\_\_  
Justine Hebert (JH)

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_