

GOVERNING BODY OF HARBINGER PRIMARY SCHOOL

MINUTES OF THE GOVERNING BODY MEETING

Date of Meeting	7 th May 2020
Venue	Virtually (Via GovernorHub)
Chair	Martin Young
Clerk & Minutes	Suzette Nicol
Time	5:00 p.m.

MEMBERSHIP

Governor	Category
Martin Young (Chair)*	Co-opted
Andy Smith (Headteacher)*	Staff (Head)
Charlie McKnight	Co-opted
Robyn Bruce*	Co-opted
Father Tom Pyke*	Co-opted
Ranjani Shrutisagar	Co-opted
Vacancy	Co-opted
John Bradshaw*	Local Authority
Susannah Abdelouahed*	Parent Governor
Kiran Rahman*	Parent Governor
Vacancy	Parent Governor
Eddie Miller*	Staff

Also In Attendance	Role/Title
Lawrence Houldsworth*	Associate Member

*Denotes attendance

PART 1 – OPEN SECTION

ITEM

1. **Welcome, Apologies For Absence and Declaration of Pecuniary Interests**

The Chair welcomed all attendees to the meeting.

Apologies for absence were received from Charlie McKnight while Lawrence Houldsworth sent apologies for lateness.

There were no declarations of pecuniary interest in any of the items on the agenda.

2. **Minutes Of The Extraordinary Governing Body Meeting Held On 16th January 2020 & Matters Arising**

Draft minutes of the extraordinary governing body meeting held on 16th January 2020 had been circulated prior to the meeting.

Governors **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the extraordinary governing body meeting of 16th January 2020.

Matters Arising:
There were none.

3. **Headteacher's Report**

The Headteacher presented highlights of his report which had been circulated prior to the meeting. These included the following:

- The school was closed on Friday 20th March in line with government recommendation and opened for one week between 23rd and 27th March.
- A list of key workers and vulnerable parents was established, and they were invited to come into school. Take-up was low. As Cubitt Town Infants and Juniors had formed a hub, some Harbinger children were sent there for the one remaining week of term and the Easter holidays - between the 30th March and 17th of April.
- The school re-opened on Monday 20th April for key workers and vulnerable families and had between 2 and 7 children in school each day. The list of children included one vulnerable child with a social worker who attended every day, one child who has been recently identified as vulnerable due to recent issues in the family, one SEN child with an EHCP who attended two half-day sessions to provide respite for parents and four children of key workers. Parents struggling with behaviour management also called the school asking for advice. The school offered drop in sessions to provide respite for parents.
- The school had been supporting the community. 75 art packs were distributed to EYU parents. Food bags donated by Manorfield Primary were given to the most vulnerable families and Free School Meals vouchers were provided to parents.
- The school had undergone a full deep-clean since it closed.
- The school kept in contact with vulnerable children through phone calls twice a week and with staff every week through a phone tree.

A Governor highlighted the fact that the Head's report did not mention an update on the Ofsted Action Plan. The Headteacher said that Phase Leaders were working on the Action Plan. Teachers and TAs were working on their Educare workplans.

Another Governor asked what would happen when the school re-opened. She said that parents and children were anxious about returning to school. She wanted to know whether the school had given some thought into how the classrooms would look. The Headteacher said that he had been talking to Phase Leaders about their priorities and what a successful school would look like focusing on wellbeing and what the curriculum would look like. There were many options and the team were having discussions around these.

There would be 3 weeks' notice before the school re-opened and this time would be spent on outlining these issues. Governors acknowledged that this situation had been a challenge for all other schools. They advised caution as the school did not need to take these decisions on its own. They advised the Head to go with the guidance from the Government.

Lawrence Houldsworth joined the meeting at this point.

One Governor commended the school for its policy of calling parents who had not responded to emails within a week. He wanted to know how many safeguarding calls had been made and the quality of feedback from the emails. Eddi Miller explained that he had a class of 19 pupils. 15 of the 19 families responded to the school per day. Three of the four who did not respond would not make contact at all and these would then be contacted by phone. The situation was relatively similar in the other Year 1 class. In Year 2 out of 27 pupils only 3 phone calls needed to be made. The response from Year 6 was just as good. However, Eddi said that the response was not very good from Years 3, 4 and 5. He said that the SENCo made regular calls to vulnerable children whether they responded or not.

A Governor wanted to know whether there were any families that the school had not been able to contact at all. Eddi said that there was one family which had no ability to access the Internet. He said that the SENCO and the Headteacher were in contact with them. As a result, there were no families that had not been in contact with the school. The Head said that one family had been referred to Social Services as they were not responding to any calls. However, steps were being taken to deal with this.

The Chair thanked Eddi and the Headteacher for their updates.

4. **Committee Reports (draft minutes circulated)**

- Finance & General Purposes Committee – Minutes of 9 January 2020 & Oral Report of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting of 30 April 2020

Governors received draft minutes of the committee meeting of 9 January which had been circulated prior to the meeting. The Committee Chair also gave an oral report of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting of 30 April 2020. The Chair said that the committee needed a Chair and that the position had been left open should Ranjani wish to take it. The Chair informed Governors that Russ Mitchell, Financial Consultant, had attended the meeting and had started scoping out what needed to be done about the school's financial situation. The committee will be working out the options before a wider discussion could be had with the staff, the unions, parents to see what sort of school Harbinger would be.

- Curriculum and Standards Committee – Minutes of meeting of 16 January 2020 & Minutes of meeting of 5 March 2020

Draft minutes of the committee meetings of 16 January 2020 and 5 March 2020 had been circulated prior to the meeting. Governors did not have any

questions on the minutes. The Chair said that the school was using the closure period to work on the changes that needed to be made. He highlighted the challenges in trying to work on the improvements while also trying to meet the needs of the current situation.

5. **Approval of School Financial Value Standard (SFVS)**

The School Financial Value Standard which had been reviewed at the Finance & General Purposes committee meeting of 9 January was presented to Governors for ratification.

RESOLVED: To ratify the School Financial Value Standard.

6. **Draft Budget 2020/21 (For Approval)**

The draft budget for 2020/21 which had been reviewed and approved at the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting of 30 April 2020 was presented to Governors.

All Governors were made aware of the school's financial situation. They noted that the school had generated a surplus this year. However, the 3-year budget showed that the surplus would be eroded by the end of the next financial year (2020/21) and that the following 2 years were projecting a significant deficit. As a result, the school would need to act on this in the next 6-12 months and this could involve staffing changes.

Governors acknowledged that there was a need to do two things. These were to increase income and reduce expenditure. In 2020/21, the school would need to get the budget to meet these two objectives. It was noted that this situation was not peculiar to Harbinger alone.

Governors **RESOLVED** to ratify the budget for 2020/21 which had been recommended to the governing body by the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting of 30 April 2020.

7. **Policies For Approval**

The following policies were presented for approval:

- Health & Safety Policy
- Visitors Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

RESOLVED: To approve the above-mentioned policies.

The following policies which had been approved at the Finance and General Purposes committee meeting of 30 April were presented for ratification:

- Cash Handling Policy February 2020
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Scheme of Delegation
- Charging & Remission Policy

- Best Value Statement
- Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy
- Data protection policy

RESOLVED: To ratify the above-mentioned policies.

8. Report From Governors

- Training and Visits to the school

Governors received the following reports which had been circulated prior to the meeting:

- Report from Father Tom Pyke

Father Tom presented his report. He said that he had visited the school last term before the Ofsted Report. He said that he undertook a second visit to the school on 27 February which was much more successful. He said that he had checked the Single Central Record and pointed out that everything raised at the previous visit had been brought up to date. Father Tom said that he had looked at the Safeguarding Policy with the Headteacher during his visit on 27 February and the changes that had been made. They also looked at how the CPOMS software worked. He said that he appreciated how much of a management tool it was for the people dealing with safeguarding in the school.

- Report from Robyn Bruce/Susannah Abdelouahed

Robyn Bruce presented the report on a joint visit to the school that she had undertaken with Susannah and Kiran during which they met with some parents. Robyn said that a lot of positives had come out of the meeting with parents and the Headteacher and parents had started working on some of the recommendations.

The Headteacher said that the main issue had been communication. He informed Governors that the school was exploring different ways of improving communication with parents. Regular meetings were being held with parents and a lot of communication had been sent to parents while trying not to overload them. The Chair said that the school would think creatively about how to communicate with parents.

The Chair thanked Governors for their reports.

- Report from The Chair

The Chair reported that he maintained communication with the Headteacher on a weekly basis. He mentioned that the Head and staff were showing that Harbinger was really at the heart of the community. The school was ensuring that Free School Meals vouchers were distributed. He thanked the Head and staff for their hard work in assisting parents during this period.

- Chair's Action

None

9. **Any Urgent Business**

Feedback From Parents Group/PTA – Kiran Rahman gave the following feedback from the PTA:

- The PTA had been a lot more active.
- A lot of parents were grateful to teachers. They were happy with the work that was set for the children as it gave them structure.
- Parents were concerned about what they had been seeing in the news, but they were holding each other up by email.
- Parents were worried about what would happen should they refuse to send their children to school when the school re-opened as some of the children were living with vulnerable people.
- Parents wanted to know how to communicate with the school and who they needed to contact.

The Headteacher thanked Kiran for the feedback.

The Chair asked the Head what parents should do if they did not want to send their children back to school when the school re-opened. The Head advised that parents would need to wait to see what advice would be provided by the Government. He added that there was someone in Reception at the school who was taking questions from parents. Information on the re-opening would be placed in the newsletter following Government advice. The school would not be giving any advice that did not meet with the LA's expectation.

Father Tom asked about resilience within families generally. He referred to a conversation he had had with the Head regarding the possibility of some families accessing the food distribution hub at Christ Church. The families had not accessed the support in the end and he wanted to know whether there were families which needed support. The Headteacher said that the families had not approached the hub as the help was not needed in the end. He mentioned that the school called identified vulnerable families twice a week and asked them direct questions. Some families lacked art material and ICT. Teachers had regular contact with parents. Some of the parents contacted the school to borrow resources they did not have for the children.

10. **Date Of Next Meeting**

Thursday 9th July 2020 at 5:00 p.m.

There being no further non-confidential items to discuss, the Chair closed the open section of the meeting.

Eddi Miller left the meeting at this point.

Chair's Signature: _____ **Date:** _____