

MAGDALEN COLLEGE SCHOOL – BRACKLEY

**Minutes of the Full Governing Body Planning Meeting
held in the school on
Tuesday 9 July 2024 at 6.30pm**

Present:

Dr B Naylor (Chair remote)	BN	Community Governor (joined online)
Mr G Ellis (Chair in the room)	GE	Community Governor
Mr N Arnold	NA	Community Governor
Mr J Bilson	JB	Member Appointed Governor
Mr T Hollis	TH	Headteacher Governor
Mr N Jones	NJ	Parent Governor
Dr M Pobjoy	MP	Foundation Governor
Mrs L Worville	LW	Parent Governor

Apologies:

Mrs L Crossley	LC	Parent Governor
Mr C Harte	CH	Foundation Governor
Prof C Leitmeir	CL	Foundation Governor

In Attendance:

Mrs A Banks	AB	Deputy Headteacher
Mr W Lenhan	WL	School Business Manager
Mrs L Martindale	LM	Deputy Headteacher
Mrs C Powell	CP	Clerk

The meeting was quorate.

Governor questions and challenge are highlighted.

Actions

3.0	3 Governors to complete and return their Skills Audit forms to the Clerk.	NA, JB, MP
3.0	Send the final version of the Governor Monitoring Visit Form to the Clerk to be uploaded and shared on GHub.	JB/ CH
5.2	Add 'appointment of a Governor linked to Careers' to the agenda for September.	Clerk
6.3	Add 'annual elections of Chair and Vice Chair of Governors' to the agenda for September.	Clerk

Decisions

3.0	The minutes of the FGB meeting held on 7 May 2024 were approved without amendment.
4.1	The School Improvement Plan priorities for 2024 – 2025 were approved.
4.3	The 3-Year Budget was approved.
4.4	Governors agreed not to pursue the proposal for a proactive fundraising approach in the short-term.
4.5	A change to the establishment in respect of the SENCo role was approved.
5.2	The revised Terms of Reference for the Health & Safety Committee were approved.
5.2	Three topics for internal audit in 2024 / 2025 were approved.

1. Welcome & apologies for absence

As the meeting chair in the room, GE welcomed everyone. BN joined the meeting remotely via video link.

GE reported the resignations since the last meeting of Mrs Louise Aird and Dr Nick Dixon. On behalf of the Governing Body, GE extended thanks to both for their contributions to the governance of the school and wished them well in the future.

Apologies had been received and were accepted from Mrs L Crossley (LC), Parent Governor, Mr C Harte (CH) and Professor C Leitmeir (CL), Foundation Governors.

2. Declarations of interest in respect of any items on the agenda & notice of any amendments to the Register of Interest

There were no declarations made in respect of any items on the agenda.

3. Minutes of the meeting held 7 May 2024 & review of action points

The minutes had been shared in advance on Governor Hub (GHub) were checked page by page for accuracy. There were no amendments made, the minutes were approved as a true record of proceedings and signed by the Chair in the room.

Review of Action Points

3.0	Follow-up the discussion with TH about the proposal to establish a Governor Behaviour Board and feedback to the next FGB meeting. COMPLETE <i>It was noted that it had been previously agreed with TH that a Governor Behaviour Board would not be appropriate, and he will call on Governors' support with behaviour as required.</i>
3.0	Complete and return the skills audit form by 24 th May 2024. ONGOING <i>The Clerk reported that all but 3 of the skills audits have now been received and added to the dashboard on GHub. GE reminded those 3 Governors to please complete and return their forms as soon as possible. The Clerk noted that the dashboard clearly shows the strengths of Governing Body, with no obvious gaps in either skills or experience.</i>
3.0	Complete Governor monitoring reports for the visits carried out this term. ONGOING <i>JB confirmed that the report has been drafted and a final version should be ready to send to the Clerk by the end of the week.</i>
4.1	Make the agreed changes to the committee membership settings on GHub. COMPLETE
4.1	Consider committee membership for 2024 – 2025 and bring any other changes to the FGB meeting in July. ON AGENDA ITEM 5.1
5.2	Share Governor feedback on the SIP priorities with SLT and use that to edit and amend the document. Bring the next iteration to the FGB meeting in July. ON AGENDA ITEM 4.1
5.2	Add 'Proposed monitoring plan' to the agenda for the next FGB meeting. ON AGENDA ITEM 7.3
6.1	Add 'Carry out consultation on the Admissions Policy for 2026 – 2027' to the Governors' Schedule of Business for 2024 – 2025. COMPLETE <i>The Clerk noted that the Annual Schedule of Business would be drafted over the summer and brought to the Chairs' Committee and then to FGB in September for review.</i>

4. Master's report

The Master's report had been shared in advance on GHub. The key points were summarised by TH and questions were invited.

4.1 School Improvement Plan (SIP) 2024 - 2025

The 'top sheet' of the SIP had been shared on GHub with details of the 4 overarching priorities for 2024 – 2025. TH reminded Governors that these had been reviewed based on their feedback at the last FGB meeting.

Governors asked whether the fourth priority around ‘Personal Development’ relates to staff? TH confirmed that it refers to the Personal Development of students. He added that the wording in the SIP has been amended for clarity and noted the addition of a focus on attendance, which relates to both students and staff.
The School Improvement Plan Priorities for 2024 – 2025 were approved.

4.2 Risk Register

It was noted that TH will work on this over the summer, and an updated version will be shared with Governors in September.

4.3 3-Year Budget

The 3-year budget spreadsheet had been shared on GHub by WL.

TH highlighted the deficit position in Year 1 of the budget, and noted that this had been discussed in detail by the Finance and Audit Committee at their meeting on 4 June. Following that meeting, it was noted that some adjustments have been made to the budget, and specifically to the ‘Agency Supply Staff’ allocation, which has been increased to more realistically reflect the need based on experience in recent years.

Governors’ concern about the lack of allocation for capital projects in Year 1 was also noted. TH reported that an update on the CIF funding bids is still awaited and noted that it had been paused as the result of a due diligence exercise being carried out by the DfE, and ten days ago, that situation was confirmed as ongoing. TH explained that once the situation is confirmed with regard to the CIF bids, it may be possible to consider re-allocation of capital funding to other projects.

Governors queried whether this delay is specific to Magdalen? TH confirmed that it is not, and is affecting a proportion of all CIF bids.

Governors asked whether agency staff cost more than contracted staff? TH confirmed that they do, although some of the costs are offset against the main staffing budget.

WL presented an overview of the 3-year budget and explained that pupil funding is based on the expected admission numbers for 2024 – 2025. He highlighted that the loss resulting from the low cohort numbers in the current Year 12 will continue to have a negative impact on the budget position in Year 1, so this has been factored in. WL added that staffing costs for the next 3 years include the 3.5% pay award for teachers as agreed by the last government, as well as increased pay for support staff.

WL reported on energy procurement, and noted that the school’s subscription to a purchasing ‘basket’ (consortium). The good news to note was that electricity costs are expected to fall by at least 21% and gas costs by at least 29%. WL explained that the school also needs to reduce consumption of both through ongoing projects such as the introduction of energy efficient lighting and improvements to insulation where possible.

Governors asked if there is a cost for subscription to the energy purchasing basket? WL reported that the school has bought into a 4-year deal, ending in September. The resultant benefits and savings were noted.

Governors noted that the budget shows the allocation for gas increasing over the 3 years and asked if this would be revised if the expected decrease in costs is realised? WL confirmed that those figures will be revised as long as consumption allows. He added that any savings could be diverted to capital projects and reiterated that the plan regarding capital allocation is to reconsider at the point of budget revision.

LW reported the robust discussion held by the Finance & Resources Committee meeting on the budget, and noted that the Committee recommend this 3- year budget to the FGB for approval.

Governors thanked WL for his work on the budget.

Governors noted the agreed need for the deficit budget position balanced with reserves. The good news about energy costs was welcomed.

Governors queried what is covered by the £180,000 allocated for exam costs? WL explained that this covers exam entry fees for GCSE and A-Levels, which have increased significantly.

Governors noted that income from 'Lettings' is predicted to fall significantly in Year 1 and then gradually increase over Years 2 and 3 of the budget. They asked why this would happen? WL explained that Lettings used to be managed by an external company, which folded following the pandemic. Lettings are now managed in-house by premises staff, who have limited capacity. However, work is being done to maximise and gradually build up capacity and income from premises lettings over the next 3 years.

Governors asked for an update on expected admissions to the Sixth Form in September? TH reported that 127 potential students attended the induction, which was very positive. He noted that numbers will not be confirmed until after the GCSE results are published in late August, but it might be reasonable to expect around 120 admissions. TH added that the entry criteria do allow some flexibility.

Governors noted that this seems to be a more optimistic picture.

Governors asked if any correlation has been drawn between the decrease in Sixth Form admissions last year and factors impacting that? TH reported that the availability of more vocational courses and different qualifications, coupled with the ongoing impact of the pandemic on educational outcomes have been identified as the main reasons for the drop in numbers. He added that this is being addressed through plans to return to a pre-pandemic approach, including improved communication and marketing incentives such as the refurbishment of the TGC, the offer of GCSE re-takes and the device purchase scheme. TH reported that other local Headteachers also have high numbers of applicants to their Sixth Forms for September.

Governors asked if numbers of applicants are higher for other Sixth Forms? TH confirmed that they are similar. It was noted that there will be some overlap, with some students applying to multiple locations.

Governors asked about the demographics of next year's Sixth Form applicants compared to this year? TH reported that they are similar.

Governors were pleased to note the proactivity and work being done to attract as many applicants as possible.

Governors queried the Minimum Per Pupil Funding line in the 3-year budget, which appears to jump significantly in 2025 / 2026 from £87,957 to £285,303 and then back down to £65,690 in 2026 / 2027. After discussion it was agreed that this funding is based on analysis of the GAG over the last few years, and that there is a balancing mechanism built in to safeguard this allocation of funding.

Governors thanked staff for the very useful budget discussion.

The 3-Year Budget was approved as presented.

Staffing

TH gave an update since his report was written and noted that one of the new appointments made has since accepted a position elsewhere. He added his thanks to the staff and members of SLT who have been covering vacancies in the interim period.

Governors asked whether there had been a good number of applicants for the vacant positions? TH confirmed that there were a good number of applications for the Assistant Headteacher positions, but for other positions the field was very small. In most cases there were not even enough applications to require shortlisting. The challenge of recruitment to teaching positions was noted as significant.

Summer site projects

TH reported that the work to install new fencing and gates on the Waynfleete site over the summer break has now been confirmed with the contractor.

Governors asked if the summer site projects are all within the budget for 2023 – 2024? TH confirmed that they are.

Governors noted that the access to toilet facilities for students had been a subject of discussion in recent committee meetings and asked if repairs to these would be a priority over the summer? TH confirmed that the refurbishment of all student toilets would be carried out. The challenge of replacing some complex door mechanisms was discussed and WL noted that this is in-hand.

4.4 Proposal for a proactive fundraising approach

TH summarised the proposal outlined in his report, which is to approach current parents and former students to make a monthly donation to fund capital projects. Governor views were invited.

Governors asked how successful other schools are with this approach? AB explained that it is variable and comes down to personal belief and principles.

The role of the Friends of Magdalen College School as the fundraising body was discussed and it was noted that in the past, they have raised £30,000 for the astro pitches as well as funding a minibus.

Governor views were raised, discussed, and then summarised by GE as follows.

Governors expressed some discomfort about the principle of the school leadership asking parents for money, when they have already paid for state education through taxation. Governors proposed a two-tier approach, the first tier being fundraising done in conjunction with the Friends of Magdalen College School, with a focus on raising money for specific projects that add value over core education provision. These projects should have a clear benefit for current students, for example the suggestion of additional benches for students to use at lunchtimes was noted as one that could work.

Governors agreed that approaching local businesses for sponsorship would be a second tier, and agreed that this would require more work.

TH proposed parking the proposal in light of Governors' views, noting that SLT do not have the capacity to undertake the two-tier approach suggested.

Governors agreed that they should not be asking SLT to take on work over and above their focus on teaching and learning. They also noted that there is no capacity within the Governing Body to lead on this at the moment.

Following this discussion, Governors agreed not to pursue the proposal for a proactive funding approach in the short-term.

4.5 Change to establishment re the SENCo role

The proposal presented in his report was explained by TH for clarity. He added that the remuneration would be similar, but the change would entail a move to recognise this post as a 'specialism', and to identify it as different from other Head of Faculty roles.

Governors asked if the salary offered is high enough to attract the right person to the role? TH confirmed that it is.

Governors approved a change to the establishment in respect of the SENCo role.

5. Committees

5.1 Committee membership for 2024 – 2025

The revised list of Governing Body and Committee membership for 2024 – 2025 had been shared on GHub. There were no further changes to note.

5.2 Committee reports

The minutes of the last Committee meetings had been shared on GHub and were taken as read.

➤ **Health & Safety Committee – met 7 May 2024**

GE noted the revised Terms of Reference and reminded Governors of the reason for the changes.

The Terms of Reference for the Health & Safety Committee were approved.

- **Personnel Committee – met 21 May 2024**
MP summarised the key points covered in the meeting and noted that all the updated EPM policies will be brought to the meeting on 1st October for review.
- **Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee – met 4 June 2024**
GE summarised the minutes of the meeting and highlighted the three topics proposed for internal audit in 2024 – 2025, which are;
 1. Attendance
 2. Safer recruitment
 3. Environmental impact / sustainability of the school

Governors approved the topics for internal audit in 2024/25 as proposed.
GE noted that these audits would be done in addition to the usual financial checks and balances. He added that reports have been received for 2 of the 3 audits completed this year and both were good. The third report is being prepared and is expected soon. GE also reported that the Committee agreed to roll-over the contract with the current auditors, Moores, for another 2 years.
- **Finance and Resources Committee – met 4 June 2024**
LW noted that the Committee had discussed the budget in detail at this meeting, as already reported at item 4.3 on the agenda.
- **Education and Welfare; Curriculum & Standards Committee – met 23 April 2024**
JB summarised the key points covered in the meeting and noted that;
 - The gap for disadvantaged students has decreased, which is good
 - The gap for students with SEND has increased, but this is due to the larger numbers of students in this cohort
 - The EPQ results in Y12 were good; students and staff were commended for these outcomes
 - The wide range of extra-curricular activities on offer is exceptional and thanks were offered to staff for supporting this programme
 - The need for a Governor linked to 'Careers' was identified and will be added to the agenda for the first FGB meeting in September.
- **Education and Welfare; Pastoral Committee – met 11 June 2024**
JB summarised the minutes of the meeting. There were no questions raised.
- **Chairs' Committee – met 25 June 2024**
Governors queried the decision to remove the role of Staff Governor from the constitution and asked for the source of good practice guidance on this? TH advised that this comes from the Academies Trust Handbook, which advises that other than the Senior Executive Leader (Headteacher), 'no other employees should serve as trustees' (para 1.22). He reminded Governors, that the term 'trustees' applies to them since the conversion from LA-maintained to academy status. TH explained that this is a more recent update to the Handbook, and is based on the potential for conflict of interest.
Governors noted that they would miss having staff on the Governing Body to offer expert advice and keep them in touch with the staff point of view.
It was discussed and agreed that staff can still be invited to come to Governor meetings and report on specific topic areas as and when appropriate, and SLT will continue to sit as regular members of the Committees. Ways of engaging with the wider 'staff voice' were considered and it was agreed that ongoing Governor participation in recruitment, staff exit interviews, and monitoring visits would be used to maximise opportunities to gather staff feedback.

6. Governance

6.1 Constitution update

The clerk reported on the constitution of the Governing Body as below, following the recent resignations and removal of Mr Neil McLaren-Dobbie as Parent Governor for non-attendance. This shows the current vacancies as follows;

- Up to 1 Community Governor
- Up to 1 Foundation Governor
- 1 LA Governor
- Up to 4 Parent Governors

6.2 Recruitment to Governor vacancies

The clerk reported on plans agreed by the Chairs' Committee to work on two versions of an advert over the summer; one seeking Parent Governors and the other to go to local businesses and organisations seeking LA and Community Governors. Both will refer to the need for a diverse range of backgrounds, skills and experience.

6.3 Appointment to the position of Vice Chair of Governors

The vacancy for the Vice Chair of Governors created by the resignation of Louise Aird was discussed. BN proposed that an appointment be made following the annual process in September, unless anyone wishes to take on the position over the summer. He offered to field any questions about the role. There were no immediate expressions of interest and it was agreed to carry this forward to the next meeting.

6.4 Governor monitoring plan for 2024 – 2025

It was agreed that a plan linked to the SIP would be drawn up at the first meeting of the new school year.

7. Policies for approval

There were none for this meeting.

The updated schedule of policy reviews for 2024 – 2025 will be brought to the next meeting in September.

8. Any Other Business

8.1 JB offered a vote of thanks to the members of SLT for the progress made this academic year in so many areas and in spite of the ongoing challenges resulting from the pandemic. This was echoed by GE and BN.

BN added that the SIP looks very strong and highlighted the many achievements made so soon after a period of considerable change.

8.2 GE proposed that the next meeting of the Chairs' Committee should review whether the Governing Body is suitably aligned to effectively support the school priorities.

8.3 The Clerk thanked those Governors who have agreed to form a Pupil Discipline Committee to meet on 2nd September and noted that a second meeting may be required on 5th September involving a panel of 3 'untainted' Governors. She noted that an email request would be sent and asked Governors to respond to that as soon as possible.

9. Date of next meeting

- Tuesday 17 September 2024 6.30pm – FGB business meeting

Agenda items to include;

- Election of Chair and Vice Chair of Governors

- Appointment of Governor roles and responsibilities for 2024 / 25 including a Governor linked to 'Careers'
- SIP and Governor Monitoring Plan
- Risk Register
- Annual Schedule of Governing Body Business
- Schedule of Policy Reviews updated for 2024-2025

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8pm.

Signed..... (Chair)

Dated.....