



The Blue Tangerine Federation

7.00pm Wednesday 18 March 2020 at St Luke's School

Full Governing Body

MINUTES

Present (by video conference): Anthony Bruton (AB), Poppy Choudhury (PC), Parris Williams (PW), Debbie Dorman (DD), Ruth Hammerson (RH), Claire Kelvin (CK)

Present: Stephen Hoult-Allen (SHA), Rachel Andrew (RA), Josh Pollard (JP), Andy Summerskill (AS), Ros Wood (RW, Chair)

Not Present: Huw Bucknell, Paul Morgan, Pam Stocks

In Attendance: Jamie Caple – JC, Head of School, St Luke's
Manda Sides – MS, Head of Operations, St Luke's
Tracey Norris – HfL Clerk

Agenda item	Action
<p>1. To receive apologies and approve absences The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. The following governors had joined the meeting via video conference and RW thanked Anthony Bruton for setting up this facility: Anthony Bruton, Claire Kelvin, Poppy Choudhury, Parris Williams and Ruth Hammerson.</p> <p>The agenda for the meeting had been changed to address urgent items only:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Resources/budget position b. School's response to coronavirus guidance <p>Apologies had been received from Pam Stocks, Huw Bucknell. Paul Morgan was not present.</p>	
<p>2. To declare any conflict of interest None declared.</p>	
<p>3. To approve the minutes of the previous meeting The minutes of the previous meeting held on 13 January 2020 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting and signed.</p>	
<p>4. To consider matters arising from the minutes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. c/f from previous meeting: JC to upload monitoring schedule to governor hub by Tuesday 14 January: this had been completed. b. Confirm date of "governor visits" training: booked for Monday 23 March. This had now been cancelled by HfL and would be rearranged later in the year. 	

	<p>c. c/f from previous meeting: circulate anonymised summary of pay review process: on governor hub.</p> <p>d. Upload the school pupil premium strategy to the website (even if it was still not completely finished): done.</p> <p>e. Share date of GDPR training with governors: not yet available.</p> <p>f. Non-parent governors to attend HT PM training and volunteer to assist in HT performance appraisal process: AS would book this training.</p>	
5.	<p>To note any other business</p> <p>There were no items of other business.</p>	
6.	<p>Resources Update</p> <p>MS had circulated the latest monitoring report in advance of the meeting. The following was noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Collett had a positive carryforward of £36,000 - this had been reasonable stable throughout the year. ▪ St Luke's position was more erratic, partly as a result of the restructuring and partly because FSS staff were not able to reliably predict what additional income the school would receive. The projected carry forward had fallen from -£21,000 to -£7,000 since the last monitoring report. ▪ FSS staff attributed this to receiving more money for the teacher's pay grant than had been expected although this had not been finalised. ▪ A programme of essential H&S spending at St Luke's was underway. 	
7.	<p>Schools Financial Value Standard</p> <p>PW had prepared a first draft for the SFVS for St Luke's and was working on Collett. He had received responses from management and was in a position to complete them later this evening. The areas of concern raised by the SFVS were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Financial sustainability in the medium term because of low levels of funding. ▪ To mitigate the low levels of funding was impossible as this would require a reduction in the already depleted staffing structure. 	
8.	<p>Budget Setting</p> <p>MS had begun work on two different budget scenarios, starting first with St Luke's:</p> <p>Scenario A: at current staffing level.</p> <p>Scenario B: with staff staffing levels.</p> <p>She reported the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Scenario A: no change to current staffing structure/spending plans → in-year deficit in 2020/21 would reach £166,000. ▪ Scenario B: recruit 18 x additional support staff to create safe staffing level of one teacher and two TAs in each classroom → in-year deficit in 2020/21 of £617,000. <p>These scenarios had been discussed at the action group held on Monday 16 March and SHA summarised the position as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The issue of safe staffing levels had been on the agenda of the finance action group for over a year. ▪ HCC had commissioned a review by three independent special school experts, this had taken place in November 2019. The draft report had been with HCC since December 2019. 	

- The report had not yet been shared with the school but SHA understood that it supported the school's assertions that its staffing levels were too low – ie the pupil's needs were now increasingly complex that they needed more support than their funding band provided.
- Benchmarking of adult to pupil ratios showed that St Luke's was significantly understaffed:

School Type	Class size	Adult Ratio
SLD	10 pupils	5 adults
SEMH	5 pupils	6 adults
St Luke's	12 pupils	2 adults

- Tania Rawle (HCC) had not attended the action group meeting on 16 March and as of 18 March she had not been in touch to provide an update.
- At the January action group meeting, she had confirmed that she was in the process of arranging a meeting between HCC official to consider the outcome of the report – it was not known if this had taken place or not.
- Members of staff who had attended the January action group meeting were disappointed as they had been expecting/hoping that Tania Rawle would be in a position to report back with positive news. It had been intimated that HCC were sympathetic to the fact that the school was being underfunded (the school was funded on a per pupil top based on the St Luke's designation as a LD school, most of its pupils were now SLD or SEMH and required extra support) but had to balance this against the perception of other special schools.
- When SHA had joined St Luke's 75% of pupils were in Band 1, now at least 75% were in Band 3. There were additionally pupils in Bands 4/5 and none were considered to be in Band 1.
- The school was proposing that safe staffing levels were one teacher and two TAs in each class. This would require the recruitment of 18 new TAs as a matter of urgency. This would ensure that staff and pupils were safe and would improve capacity of all staff. This was based on HCC guidance recommending a class of 8 being supported by one teacher and two TAs.
- AS echoed SHA view's and expressed his disappointment that HCC had not sent a representative to the Action Group meeting. The group had received no answers to any of its questions.
- CK recommended that the governing body write to the local MPs, Mike Penning, Bim Afolami and Daisy Cooper to raise their concerns.
- Pupils attended St Luke's from all over Hertfordshire and it was agreed that all MPs should be copied in.
- Governors considered the risks to staff and pupils if the issue of safe staffing levels was not addressed. It was agreed that as a last resort the school should consider closing temporarily in September rather than allow staff or pupil's safety to be at risk.
- SHA was keen to work in a spirit of collaboration with HCC but felt that there had been more than enough opportunities for HCC to share the findings of the report with the school since December.
- It was understood that HCC's focus was on Forest House and its position as a subsidiary of St Luke's. SHA was concerned that the consultants being asked to recommend solutions for FHEC did not understand even the basics of its provision. There seemed to be a misconception that FHEC provided outreach support. The role of FHEC had been explained to all members of the Action

	<p>Group (Tania Rawle and Sally Glossop) at various meetings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Additionally HCC were directing the school to take on pupils for a September 2020 start date which the school did not feel it had the capacity to meet to needs of (eg pupils coming from Haywood Grove who required 1:1 or bespoke interventions, physical interventions etc). ▪ The difference in top up between LD and SLD/SEMH schools was considered. As a LD school, St Luke's received a £4,000 per pupil top up, a SEMH school received in the region of £13,000 top up. ▪ Governors felt it was necessary to write again to Simon Newland (HCC), their original letter of October 2019 was as yet unanswered although Tania Rawle had intimated that the creation of the independent review was in response to their letter. ▪ Parents had been kept well informed by SHA about the school's financial position and it was possible that they could be encouraged to support the school by also writing to their local MP. <p>Governors voted unanimously that the school should submit the Scenario B budget and begin the process of recruitment to ensure safe staffing levels, additionally letters should be written to Simon Newland and local MPs about the school's position.</p>	RW/SHA
9.	<p>Schedule of Financial Delegation</p> <p>This document had been uploaded to governor hub. MS confirmed that only minor changes had been made to it since last year. Reference had been made to the school's on-line banking facility (this was not yet up and running due to bureaucratic anomalies).</p> <p>Governors approved the SFD.</p>	
10.	<p>School Closure</p> <p>The Government had made the announcement earlier in day that schools would be closed from Monday 23 March excluding special schools. JC had prepared some initial modelling of staffing/pupil ratios based on the current number of staff/pupils that were already off school in self-isolation. The following was discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The graph showed the number of staff that had been identified as vulnerable and who should be self-isolating and showed a number of different scenarios. ▪ Governors agreed that these members of staff should not be in school. They should be advised to work from home. ▪ There was concern about the way the government announcement had implied that all pupils on EHCPs were vulnerable – this was not necessarily the case. It was not known how parents would react to this. ▪ Four special schools in Hertfordshire have already closed due to low staffing ratios. ▪ As of 18 March, absence data was: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Collett: 49 pupils and 11 members of staff off sick ○ St Luke's: 78 pupils and 9 members of staff off sick. ▪ The lower pupil numbers meant that at the moment the schools could cope with the staff absences. ▪ There was no budget to afford any supply staff (if any suitable candidates could be found). ▪ It was understood that special schools would be expected to remain open over 	

	<p>Easter.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Safeguarding issues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ There were currently no pupils on CP plans at the moment. ○ There were only a few pupils designated at the “at risk” level. ○ Some pupils were in need of CP plans and were having regular contact with social workers. ○ The potential risks to families from other factors (no job/income) over the coming weeks could only be guessed at. ▪ HCC Children’s Services had asked the schools to prepare a list of all vulnerable pupils. ▪ There was a lack of clarity from the government around Special Schools, SEN pupils were described as vulnerable and therefore should be in 12 weeks self-isolation at the same time as saying Special Schools should remain open. ▪ Parents would not be penalised for keeping their child/children at home. ▪ Ofsted have suspended their inspection schedule. ▪ Autistic pupils needed continuity and routine. ▪ Forest House Education Unit would close on Monday 23 March. Staff absences were too high. ▪ SHA would remain in contact with other special school headteachers. ▪ HCC current advice was to wait for further guidance from the government. ▪ Parents would be naturally concerned about pupil transport and the ability to maintain social distance. <p>SHA had the support of the governors to close either St Luke’s or the Collett as required in response to falling staff numbers. SHA hoped staff would be flexible and supportive during this time of uncertainty.</p> <p>School plans to provide work at home included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ On-line learning ▪ Daily communication 	
11.	<p>Date of next meeting TBC Monday 18 May: Collett Monday 29 June: Forest House</p>	