



# The Blue Tangerine Federation

7.00pm Wednesday 29 September 2021 at St Luke's School, Redbourn

## Full Governing Body MINUTES

- Present:** Aurele Mes Boaye (AMB), Poppy Choudhury (PC), Ian Dignum (ID), Ruth Hammerson (RH), Stephen Hoult-Allen (SHA), Josh Pollard (JP), Andy Summerskill (AS)
- Not Present:** Debbie Dorman (DD), Laura Lilley (LL), Pauline Mills (PM), Parris Williams (PW)
- In Attendance:** Huw Bucknell – HB, Head of School, Forest House Education Centre  
Jamie Caple – JC, Head of School, St Luke's  
Jenny Witter - JW, Head of School, Collett  
Tracey Norris – HfL Clerk

Agenda item		Action
1.	<p><b>Appointment of chair</b></p> <p>The clerk invited governors to ratify the appointment of Ian Dignum as chair of governors. Notification of ID's offer to stand as chair had been made to all governors via Governor Hub immediately after the last meeting. No other nominations had been received and ID was unanimously elected.</p> <p>Andy Summerskills was similarly reappointed as vice-chair.</p>	
2.	<p><b>To receive apologies and approve absences</b></p> <p>Ian Dignum welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the new school and his first as Chair of Governors. Apologies for absence had been received from Debbie Dorman (family birthday), Laura Lilley (unwell) and Pauline Mills (moving house). Parris Williams (associate governor) was not present.</p>	
3.	<p><b>Annual declarations</b></p> <p>The clerk reminded all governors of the need to complete their annual declarations, these could be made on Governor Hub (under the declarations tab) and were required for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Update governors' pecuniary interest;</li> <li>▪ Confirmation that the governors has read and will abide by the code of conduct; and</li> <li>▪ Confirmation that the governor has read the KCISE update.</li> </ul> <p><b>Action: Governors to complete annual declarations by Friday 1 October 2021.</b></p>	All
4.	<p><b>To approve the minutes of the previous meeting</b></p> <p>The minutes of the previous meeting held on 5 July 2021 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting. Matters arising were considered:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. SHA to reissue staff survey: sent 29/9/21.</li> <li>b. AMB to review staff survey questions: Outstanding: <b>SHA to send questions to AMB.</b></li> </ol>	SHA

Approved by Chair: \_\_\_\_\_

Governor challenge highlighted in RED

	<p>c. Agree date for governor drop-in clinic (to meet staff) in Autumn term: these would take place on either Mondays or Tuesdays at Collett and St Lukes at 2.45/3 or 3.15pm (depending on the day). <b>Action: JW to share dates/times with governors (first session to take place before 22 October).</b></p> <p>d. Exit interviews update: AMB had undertaken a number of exit interviews with staff at the end of last term and provided feedback to the FGB meeting in July. It was agreed that these interviews did not always have to be conducted by AMB; any governor could undertake one. A folder had been created on Governor Hub: Governor Visits &gt; Exit interviews. AMB would create an exit interview form and file this in the Exit Interview folder. It was agreed that at the end of each term, governors would perform a sample of exit interviews (TA/teacher/admin staff). <b>Q What would be the impact of this?</b> This would inform governors' decision making with regard to wellbeing, recruitment and performance appraisal. The Federation was in a position that it could respond quickly to changing circumstances. For example, in response to governor challenge at the last FGB meeting regarding diversity, job adverts had been reworded to encourage/promote more applications from a wider pool of candidates. <b>Action: AMB to create exit interview form.</b></p>	<p>JW</p> <p>AMB</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p><b>To note any other business</b>  Three items raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Heating maintenance (taken at agenda item 9.d).</li> <li>▪ HCC meeting on Monday 4 October</li> <li>▪ Debt write-off (taken at agenda item 9.a)</li> </ul> <p>The Chair invited SHA to share with all governors the recent developments with HCC regarding Forest House Education Centre and St Luke's finances. The clerk took this opportunity to remind all governors of the confidential nature of governing body discussions in general and this matter in particular. Items discussed should not be disclosed to staff outside of the FGB until such time as the minutes had been approved and were a matter for public record.</p>	
<p>6.</p>	<p><b>HCC proposal re Forest House Educational Centre</b>  SHA provided the following context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ St Luke's school had been struggling with budget setting for a number of years and governors were well aware of the strategic decision made to ensure safe levels of staffing (ie minimum of one teacher and one TA in each class of 8 pupils) this was based on the HCC recommended staffing structure for special schools. <i>(SHA to confirm safe staffing level)</i></li> <li>▪ A review of the needs of pupils at St Luke's had been commissioned by HCC in November/December 2019 which concluded that since its original designation as a LD School, the needs of the pupils had significantly increased and recommended that the per pupil funding of St Luke's should be brought in line with SEMH/MLD schools. Tania Rawle (HCC) has reported that these findings have been disputed by other members of staff at HCC (it was not clear who or why).</li> <li>▪ A deficit budget was submitted in 2020/21 but did not materialise as planned due in part to the pandemic which saw a freeze on recruitment and in part to unbudgeted income (ongoing issues with FSS service/lack of transparency of SEND payments).</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A deficit budget was submitted for 2021/22. At every step all appropriate notifications and disclosures were made to HCC about the projected deficit.</li> <li>▪ A request was made for a cash injection in September 2021 (as the school would run out of funds at this point).</li> <li>▪ An element of the deficit budget at St Luke’s was the operating costs at Forest House which was funded by a fixed amount each year (which did not cover its operating costs).</li> <li>▪ The funding levels at St Luke’s and Forest House had been raised on many occasions with HCC (Tania Rawle, Sally Glossup and others).</li> <li>▪ Tania Rawle’s proposal was to move Forest House to a newly created multi academy trust (formally Roman Fields Special School).</li> <li>▪ SHA has made it clear to HCC that the Federation does not want to lose Forest House, it just needs the appropriate funding for Forest House and St Luke’s.</li> <li>▪ After many months of no communication from HCC, a meeting had been called by Tania Rawle and Tony Fitzpatrick (interim ISL leader) for Monday 4 October.</li> <li>▪ Ian Dignum and Andy Summerskill would attend and the clerk would take notes.</li> <li>▪ Tania Rawle had indicated that the meeting would cover: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Removal of FH to Roman Fields.</li> <li>○ Deficit budget at St Luke’s</li> <li>○ Issues with leadership, appointments and curriculum at St Luke’s.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ SHA has since spoken to the Headteacher at Roman Fields who was not aware that HCC were pursuing this option as he had been told by Tania Rawle in the summer that the Blue Tangerine governors did not want FH to leave the federation.</li> <li>▪ Tania Rawle would not elaborate on the content of the meeting.</li> <li>▪ Governors noted the frustrations of the leadership team regarding the lack of clarity or strategy from HCC and the continually changing targets and measures being applied to the school.</li> <li>▪ Governors were unapologetic about the need for safe staffing levels and asked school leaders to be ready to demonstrate with data the number of behaviour incidents involving staff (ie receiving verbal abuse/physically hurt by pupils).</li> <li>▪ Over time this number had dropped due to the consistent application of Herts Steps but was recorded by JP in his weekly safeguarding report which was shared with heads of schools/EHT and governors.</li> <li>▪ Any injury resulting in a hospital appointment were recorded on an HCC data management system.</li> <li>▪ During the budget setting process different staffing scenarios had been shared with governors; St Luke’s would be in deficit even if it had not increased its staffing levels.</li> <li>▪ During 2019/20 and 2020/21 monthly monitoring reports were regularly incorrect; FSS had often been unable to account for income correctly. For 2021/22 the school had purchased a Plan A financial package so that FSS staff could oversee the entire process (FSS staff blamed school in-putting errors, MS was confident that this was not the case and wanted FSS to take responsibility for the whole process to prove it).</li> </ul> <p><b><i>Addendum: Tania Rawle cancelled the meeting on 4 October and it was subsequently rearranged for Tuesday 12 October.</i></b></p>	
7.	<b>Federation-wide School Improvement Plan</b>	

	<p>The Federation’s three-year strategy had been circulated in advance of the meeting and SHA highlighted the two priority areas (curriculum and quality of teaching):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Curriculum development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The curriculum offering needed to be relevant, have purpose and intent.</li> <li>○ Naturally this would be different at each of the three sites.</li> <li>○ The increasingly complex nature of pupils at St Luke’s meant that attainment of GCSE level qualifications was becoming more of an anomaly than had been the case 5+ years ago. Current cohort trajectory projections did not see a reverse in this picture.</li> <li>○ The curriculum at both schools was based on the school ethos: <i>“Our vision is a world where people with learning disabilities and mental health difficulties thrive”</i>.</li> <li>○ Governors should ask pupils (during governor visit): what are you learning, why this now, what will be next? The curriculum should be sequenced and demonstrate progression through the year groups.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ The heads of school would report on the impact of curriculum development in subsequent Head of School reports.</li> <li>▪ Separate to the above priorities and equally important was the safeguarding of pupils.</li> <li>▪ Internal self-evaluation by EHT had judged the schools to be good at all three sites with elements of outstanding practice. This would be verified by the Federation’s HIP, Richard Hill during planned visits on 1 October and 4 October.</li> <li>▪ <b>Q What areas had been identified as requiring urgent improvement/attention?</b> The consistency of the quality of teaching and learning could be improved.</li> <li>▪ <b>Q What should governors focus on during visit?</b> When talking to staff, governors should ask about their wellbeing, what CPD they had undertaken, how had this impacted their working practice.</li> </ul>	
8.	<p><b>Termly reports</b></p> <p><b>a. Safeguarding</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Josh Pollard the DSP for the Federation had been sharing weekly safeguarding updates with governors. These had been made available on Governor Hub.</li> <li>▪ The termly safeguarding audit would be conducted by Laura Lilley.</li> <li>▪ Governors had submitted some questions in advance of the meeting which JP responded to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Q 1:</b> Staff training and awareness were key to ensuring consistent and accurate recording of incidents. JP described how staff were able to judge if an incident was dangerous or difficult. A schedule of mini training sessions had been planned for each staff meeting to embed this practice.</li> <li>▪ <b>Q Were staff aware of the different levels of need?</b> Whenever an individual risk assessment was in place for a particular child, this was shared with the staff body.</li> <li>▪ <b>Q How were staff made aware of this?</b> This was during face-to-face meetings with the DSP.</li> <li>▪ <b>Q When a dangerous incident took place, how did the school respond?</b> Following any incident, a full review of the events leading up to the event would take place and a risk assessment made. For example, recently a pupil had been able to access the roof space at Collett, the pupil was followed by a</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

	<p>member of staff and returned to safety. The access arrangements to the roof have now been adapted.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ EHT described another pupil who was accommodated in one of the cabins at Collett, this pupil was extremely vulnerable and at risk and had attempted to cut through the electrical wiring in the cabin.</li> <li>▪ <b>Q What mechanisms were in place to support the staff who were working with this pupil and others with similar levels of need?</b> It was hard for staff to maintain a positive attitude when working with pupils with such challenging behaviour. There was a wellbeing help line (part of the staff absence insurance policy) and lots of support from senior leaders, covering lessons etc.</li> <li>▪ <b>Q Was Collett the right setting for this pupil?</b> This was complicated, staff at Collett had established a relationship with this pupil and family, and expressing this concern sometimes felt like a rejection of the pupil. In some cases, parents had no desire/interest or in some cases the ability to seek out and select another provision.</li> <li>▪ <b>Q Levels of attendance – could this be reported to show whether a percentage was due to one pupil with multiply absences or a number of pupils with one absence?</b> Yes, this would be possible.</li> <li>▪ Current year to date attendance was 90% (Special School average was 84%).</li> <li>▪ <b>Q What was causing the higher than usual levels of absence?</b> Some pupils had tested positive for covid and were on 10-day isolation periods.</li> <li>▪ <b>Q What triggered a fixed term exclusion (now called a suspension)?</b> Suspensions were always in response to dangerous/harmful, violent behaviour and not in response to a pupil’s special needs.</li> <li>▪ <b>Q Did a re-integration meeting take place with pupil/family?</b> Yes, and this was attended by the Head of School, the class teacher and JP. It was an opportunity to talk about the issues, consider what strategies/adjustments would be made and gently reintegrate the pupil back into class. It might be that on the first day the pupil might return on a part time timetable.</li> <li>▪ <b>Action: LL to arrange safeguarding meeting with JP before half term.</b></li> </ul> <p><b>b. Pupil premium &amp; Sports premium:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A PP review had been undertaken by HfL Liz Shapland and the recommendations from this would help inform the decisions made this year. The reports would be updated with input from the new heads of teaching and learning on PP spending and would be ready to publish on the website by the end of October.</li> <li>▪ <b>Q What was the rationale behind different strategies?</b> The school would adopt those strategies which were research-based and demonstrated that impact was positive.</li> </ul>	LL
9.	<p><b>Resources</b></p> <p>The following documents had been circulated in advance of the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Collett: budget summary September 2021</li> <li>▪ Collett: cashflow August 2021</li> <li>▪ Collett: P5 summary spreadsheet</li> <li>▪ St Luke’s: Budget summary September 2021</li> <li>▪ St Luke’s: P5 summary spreadsheet</li> <li>▪ St Luke’s cashflow forecast August 2021</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Cashflow advance agreement for St Luke’s</li> <li>▪ Special school top up funding</li> <li>▪ Record of work undertaken by FSS (Collett and St Luke’s)</li> <li>▪ Email from FSS describing additional finance costs</li> </ul> <p>Manda Sides (MS) provided the following update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The monthly monitoring report had recently changed and now more clearly showed how the projected in year deficit/surplus was made up.</li> <li>▪ It transpired that P2 and P3 had not been reconciled by FSS staff at the time and in order for P4 and P5 to be completed the new finance adviser had to backtrack considerably.</li> <li>▪ The summary for governors showed the variances against each budget line (either positive or negative) with a brief explanation.</li> </ul>	
9.a	<p><b>Collett financial position</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The revised carry forward had increased to +£22,000.</li> <li>▪ Additional income had been received: £36,000.</li> <li>▪ Additional expenditure had been recorded: £27,000</li> <li>▪ This had created an overall positive variance of £9,000.</li> <li>▪ <b>Q How confident was MS that the figures were accurate?</b> MS was assured by FSS staff that the figures for Collett were accurate (there were ongoing issues with St Luke’s NB premises coding).</li> <li>▪ <b>Q Where was the main financial pressure at Collett?</b> Agency staff – already the school had spent £41,000 on this budget line.</li> <li>▪ <b>Q What was the cause for so much cover?</b> There had been high levels of self-isolation which had required cover. Some staff were on long term sick leave but their posts needed to be covered. School leaders were constantly moving staff around to cover absences and avoid agency staff but sometimes this was not possible.</li> <li>▪ <b>Q Were staff absence levels being monitored?</b> Yes, and return to work interviews were being conducted. Some staff may be placed on improvement plans to address poor attendance levels.</li> <li>▪ JW explained the juggling act she faced with staff, they were often abused by pupils (hit, spat at, kicked, etc) but school leaders had high expectations of attendance, however to support their wellbeing it was recognised that sometimes a member of staff would become overwhelmed with the stresses of the job.</li> <li>▪ <b>Q Cashflow at Collett?</b> No issues to report.</li> <li>▪ <b>The following virements between budget codes were approved:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ E20 to E27: ARBOR costs to move to ICT curriculum.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ <b>The following “write-off” was approved:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A member of staff had changed contracts from TA to unqualified teacher. In order to prevent the payroll system claiming back £355 payment in August (which was due to the member of staff) the amount needed to be written off. TAs were paid for 39 weeks a year, spread out over 12 months.</li> <li>○ MS confirmed that the member of staff had not been overpaid.</li> <li>○ The new contract would start from 1 September 2021.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
9.b	<p><b>St Luke’s Financial position</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The revised in year deficit had fallen from £617,000 to £597,000.</li> <li>▪ Additional income had been received: £37,000</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Additional expenditure had been recorded: £18,000</li> <li>▪ FSS adviser had stated that E18 budget line had not yet been reconciled so the final P5 re-forecast would be subject to adjustment.</li> <li>▪ <b>The following virements between budget codes were approved:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ I01 to I18: AWPU income incorrectly coded.</li> <li>○ I03 to I07: income received from another LA (not HCC).</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ A cash advance had been applied for from HCC for £144,000. The FSS adviser had recommended that the governors write to HCC to state that the school would not be in a position to pay back the cash advance at any point in the immediate future.</li> <li>▪ Interest would be charged at the current rate.</li> <li>▪ It was agreed that MS would draft a letter on the governors' behalf to send to Sue Provenzano at HCC finance team.</li> <li>▪ <b>Action: MS to draft letter and circulate on Governor Hub.</b></li> </ul>	<b>MS</b>
9.c	<p><b>FSS request for additional payment</b></p> <p>MS referred governors to the correspondence on Governor Hub from FSS. In summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Federation would not be charged for work completed by financial services in April and May due to the work not being completed accurately, nor would the Federation be charged for the additional hours it has taken to correct the inputting errors.</li> <li>▪ FSS staff have advised that the transaction inputting was taking far longer than budgeted for due to the volume of transactions that need posting and proposed increasing the service charge by £5,000 (E28). This will bring the total spend to £12,067.</li> <li>▪ <b>Q what alternatives are available?</b> MS was aware of the same service being delivered by Bedfordshire LA.</li> <li>▪ Governors agreed the need for FSS to complete the Plan A service during 2021/22 to ensure consistency but would only agree to increased charges being applied from September 2021 onwards and instructed MS to inform FSS accordingly.</li> <li>▪ <b>Action: MS to notify FSS that governors would not approve the backdating of addition charges in June/July/August.</b></li> </ul>	<b>MS</b>
9.d	<p><b>Premises</b></p> <p>MS referred governors to the heating quotes for the contract at St Luke's. Previously, there had been no formal contract in place to service the heating system and a nominal amount had been allocated in the budget for boiler servicing (£600). MS recommended the appointment of Oakray whose quote included TMV checks. <b>This was a cost of £2890 pa which was approved.</b></p>	
10.	<p><b>Policies</b></p> <p>The following policies had been updated, circulated in advance of the meeting and were approved;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Governor visits.</li> <li>b. Behaviour for learning.</li> <li>c. Biometric data.</li> <li>d. Charging and remissions.</li> <li>e. Commerical cards.</li> </ol>	

	<p>f. Debt recovery</p> <p>g. Governor allowance</p> <p>h. Admissions: St Luke’s</p> <p>i. Admissions: Collett</p> <p>j. Recruitment and promotion: <b>Q Was item 7.5 re contacting previous employees even if not listed as referee appropriate practice?</b> This would only be done if an appointment was likely and there was a reasonable cause of concern. <b>Q How would this policy be shared with staff?</b> A new programme was in place which signposted the key policies (statutory and otherwise) for staff to be aware of, once the member of staff had read the policy, they could tick this off in the online tracker. All updated policies were added to a staff area of the school website. In addition, some policies were covered during whole school training sessions.</p>	
11.	<p><b>Governor Matters</b></p> <p><b>a. Governor composition:</b> the forthcoming vacancies were considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Staff governor:</b> SHA would re-advertise the staff governor vacancy (including information on the staff governor role as provided by the clerk).</li> <li>▪ <b>Co-opted vacancy:</b> ID would make contact with Inspiring Governance/Governors for Schools.</li> <li>▪ <b>Debbie Dorman (parent governor):</b> term of office expires on 7/12/21 (to note).</li> <li>▪ <b>Parris Williams (associate governor):</b> term of office expired 17/9/21. This was renewed.</li> </ul> <p><b>b. Governor emails:</b> ID reminded all governors to use their @bluetangerine email address for any governor business.</p> <p><b>c. Governor roles and visit expectations:</b> ID had contacted all governors individually during the summer holidays to clarify expectations on governors. His hope was that through the process of governor visits, relationships could be built between staff and governor to better support governor understanding of operational matters so that discussions at FGB meetings could focus on strategic matters. He thanked everyone for responding so positively and apologised if there had been any misunderstanding of the term “expert””. Governor visits (and subsequent visit reports) were an excellent way for governors to demonstrate challenge. The deployment of roles would be reviewed at the end of the academic year.</p> <p><b>d. Governor attendance record for 2020/21:</b> this had been circulated in advance of the meeting. There were not changes to make and it would be uploaded to the website.</p> <p><b>e. Governor training:</b> It was agreed that an in-house training session should be booked on exclusions training. <b>Action: Clerk to book.</b> Governors were encouraged to complete any online training (via Modern Governor on Governor Hub) that related to their link subject.</p>	Clerk
12.	<p><b>Equality and Diversity</b></p> <p>It was agreed that greater prominence would be given to this agenda item at the next meeting. Consideration would be given to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Commissions School Visit: Equality in Schools –</b> the report would be circulated and recommendations considered.</li> </ul>	



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Recruitment: the Federation was actively encouraging applications from candidates from diverse backgrounds.</li> <li>▪ A Diversity team had been created to look at the curriculum.</li> <li>▪ Black history month was celebrated.</li> <li>▪ Parent governor elections (in January) : these could be anonymised to reduce unconscious bias.</li> <li>▪ Working party to review the use of pro-nouns/titles.</li> <li>▪ Introduction of a prayer room to accommodate all faiths.</li> </ul>	
13.	<p><b>Any other business</b></p> <p><b>Q When would the S&amp;L therapist position be advertised at Collett?</b> Governors urged SHA to reconsider this cut back. Speech and language was essential for pupils to be able to access the curriculum (at any level). SHA confirmed that the advert was ready but that due to budgetary constraints the decision was made to recruit an additional TA instead. This position would be advertised as soon as the budget allowed.</p> <p><b>Action: update to next meeting on S&amp;L provision at Collett</b></p>	JW
14.	<p><b>Meeting dates for 2021/22</b></p> <p><b>Autumn term</b> Monday 22 November 2021</p> <p><b>Spring term</b> Monday 31 January 2022 Monday 21 March 2022</p> <p><b>Summer term</b> Monday 23 May 2022 Monday 4 July 2022</p>	

Meeting closed at 9.35pm

Governor Attendance Record						
	29 Sept	22 Nov	31 Jan	21 Mar	23 May	4 July
Aurele Mes Boaye	P					
Poppy Choudhury	P					
Ian Dignum	P					
Debbie Dorman	A					
Ruth Hammerson	P					
Stephen Houlton-Allen	P					
Laura Lilley	A					
Josh Pollard	P					
Pauline Mills	A					
Andy Summerskill	P					
Parris Williams *	A					
In attendance						
Huw Bucknell	P					
Jamie Caple	P					
Manda Sides	P					
Jenny Witter	P					

\*Associate governor (responsibility finance): not required to attend FGB meetings

<b>Key</b>	
Present	P
Apologies received	A
Not present	N