



GOVERNING BODY MEETING, Monday, 15th December 2015, 9.30am

Potential Attendees	Initials	Position	Comments
Peter Villiers	PJV	Co-opted Governor (Chairman of Governors)	Present
Sarah Almey	SA	Member Appointed Governor	Apologies
Tracey Amos	TRA	Head Teacher	Present
Laraine Bridger	LB	Parent Governor	Apologies
Pat Grimwood-Taylor	PGT	Member Appointed Governor	Present
Robert Hemsworth	RH	Parent Governor	Present
Paul Jarrett	PJ	Co-opted Governor	Present
Ian Newberry	IN	Parent Governor	Present
Hannah Pettifer	HP	Staff Governor (Non Teaching)	Present
Karen Reeves	KR	Parent Governor	Present
Simon Robilliard	SR	Staff Governor (Teaching)	Present
Lesley Wall	LW	Co-opted Governor	Present
Vacancy		Member Appointed Governor	-
Chris Ward	CW	Business Manager	Present
Rose Elliott	RE	Clerk to Governing Board	Present

GREAT TORRINGTON SCHOOL
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MINUTES

2015-16/ GOV/23	Apologies	SA and LB are both working; they each send apologies.	
2015-16/ GOV/24	Term Dates	TRA presented the Term Dates 2016- 2017 for approval. This item was deferred at the meeting on the 7 th December. As usual we keep the basis dates to fit in with other local schools and transport. The proposal for our 2 occasional days May Fair and the end of the school year is shown in purple/black. There are 5 days of 5.5 hours for In Service training, otherwise referred to as non pupil days. We propose to place 2 of these at the beginning of the Academic Year, one at the beginning of the Spring Term. The hours from the remaining 2 days will be used half for peer observations and half for teaching and learning evening sessions. These dates were agreed as proposed.	I D
2015-16/ GOV/24	Conflicts of Interest	There were none stated and no changes to the completed Business interest declarations.	I

Governors had received the documents Forming or Joining a Group of Schools – NGA and Governance in Multi Academy Trusts – National College of Teaching and Leadership in advance for reading.

TRA commenced the presentation see slides on file.

2. Direction of Travel. TRA spoke about coasting schools. At 2014 there is 3 years of data; some schools where pupil performance had been below the national average of 56% or even below 60% were deemed to be coasting. Schools may be given time to improve but if they don't improve or to assist with their improvement they may be put into a Multi Academy Trust [MAT]. At GTS we are nowhere near being classified as coasting [64%]. Locally all Secondary Schools, with the exception of Bideford who are being sponsored by Launceston, are either single Academies or maintained schools [Holsworthy, South Molton, Park, Budehaven]. The Local Authority is fighting to keep their position.

3. Challenges We Face. Not everyone is affected by the **demographic dip** but locally Holsworthy, Chulmleigh, S Molton and GTS are in the worst position. The whole system is in crisis; we have 2 to 3 years before this should change but only because of our carefully held reserves. Never the less we need to have a major restructuring to survive financially. No one knows what the NFF will bring. This will not benefit the school curriculum. TRA cited the example of not having a Food option last year the potential effect on our numbers and how we got through it.

Exams. We got through the maelstrom this time when lots of schools floundered with their English and Maths results but after this year who knows. Our teaching is great but with the new curricula coming in and no materials exemplars, past papers or examples of grading boundaries it is a step into the dark. We are investing in training but there are many possibilities for coasting on the horizon.

Recruitment and Retention. This is issue was common to a number of schools at a recently attended national conference. Teachers leaving can cause instability, there are pension issues to consider. Teach First may come in. It is difficult to attract teachers into N Devon; those who take up new posts are often lured by ££s. Can be a disincentive for schools to work together.

Professional Development Isolation. We do a lot of professional development, it seems we are ahead of the curve, many schools have restricted or little outside stimulation.

Petroc. Are now not joining with Exeter College, we wait to see how they now plan to develop. Should they take our 14yr olds we would be in a serious situation.

4. OPTIONS

Stay as we are.

Revert back to being a maintained school (2018) earliest opportunity under our academy agreement.

Join an existing MAT. This means joining under their rules

Form our own MAT. We are in a position to do this as we have been in the top 10% performing schools in the country for the second year running.

Form an empty MAT by sponsoring a failing school. TRA cited the example of Bideford recently who are now with Launceston. If we put ourselves up for this we will be allocated a school, geographical distance could be an issue.

Join a Teaching School Alliance. We are in a position to do this. The government needs a secondary training specialist in this region; school improvement will be an ongoing issue.

Open a Studio School. This would be a 14-19, 9 to 5 establishment with no school holidays with hands on links to businesses. Exciting but a big undertaking.

.....or **combinations of the above.**

Further questions/information. Locally all our special schools are in a Trust. The Brighter Tribes Academy Trust was interested in being a sponsor for Bideford; this trust is based in the north east of England and provides a model for arms-length satellites. The Adventure Learning Academy Trust based in Cornwall also showed interest.

5. Key Questions. Do any of these options help offset the challenges we face?

What are the benefits of each option?

What are the risks associated with each option?

6. Other things to consider in a MAT. Each school would be a separate entity with a separate Ofsted judgement.

TRA thinks anything over half an hour travel would be difficult to take on.

7. Governance and Finance in a MAT. CW presents the next few slides based on information from a recent training event.

8. Characteristics of a MAT- Governance

9. Finances.

10. Approach to Delegation.

11. Approach to Delegation, Finance

12. Governance Structure

13. Financial Structure

14. Cluster Structure
15. Cluster Structure Pros and Cons
16. Hub Structure
17. Hub Structure Pros and Cons
18. Centralised Structure
19. Centralised Structure Pros and Cons
20. Centralised Processing Opportunities
21. Centralised Processing Opportunities
22. Central Services
23. Due Diligence
24. Financial Incentives for Forming a MAT
25. Any Further Questions?

A Part 2 discussion ensued.

MINUTE 2015-16/GOV/25

On reviewing the options listed above **decisions** were as follows:

Revert No.

Yes to stay as we are but temporarily perhaps as we **explore the possibility of forming our own MAT**. Our preferred starting point would be 2 primary schools and 2 secondary schools. On balance felt less issues for us in joining with primaries to make all through provision more seamless for pupils; secondaries of our type [vertical grouping for example] not out there and we have no will to move away from our distinctive character and or reverse our decisions so far on our journey of improvement.

Not ruling out the possibility of **becoming a sponsor** at a later date.

Becoming a **Training Alliance** would be a **natural progression**.

Decide to **form a working Party of Governors at our next Full Governing Body Meeting** to begin “dating” involving 2 governors and the Headteacher.

Studio School an exciting venture but not in near future.

The meeting closed at 12.30