

MINUTES

of the meeting of Teignmouth Community School Local Governing Body held on Tuesday 5 May 2020 at 4 pm via MS Teams online due to COVID-19 lockdown.

Present:		
Name	Title/Role	Initials
Karine Davies	Governor	KD
Mark McCarthy	Governor	MMc
Vic Millard	Chair of Governors	VM
Sarah Minty-Dyke	Governor, Staff, ER	SMD
Jon Newman	CFO, OLT (for agenda item 7 of the meeting)	JN
James O'Connell	Principal, ER	JPO
Katy Quinn	CEO/Principal ML	KQ
Sarah Sabourin	Governor Responsible for Safeguarding (joined at 4.20 pm)	SS
Annabelle Thomas	Head of School, ML	AT
Luke Williams	Governor, Staff, ML	LW
Gaby Willis	Clerk	GW
Margaret York	Appointed as Governor at the start of the meeting	MY
Apologies:		
Katy Quinn	CEO/Principal, ML	KQ

Action

VM opened the meeting at 4.10 pm. Welcomed and thanked everyone for their efforts to join the meeting in the new online format.		
05.05.01	Apologies for Absence: KQ	
05.05.02	Declaration of Interests: None	
05.05.03	Appointment of a new governor – Maggie York: VM: remind governors that MY attended last meeting and presented information on suitability and background. VM proposed appointment, MMc seconded. All in favour. DULY APPOINTED. Action: GW to issue relevant forms for completion and return when possible.	GW/MY
05.05.04	Minutes of previous LGB meeting and matters arising including update on becoming two schools: VM: content to accept accuracy of minutes. No queries on content. Agreed true and accurate record of the meeting. Matters Arising: VM recommended these should be noted and carried forward by GW - due to current Covid situation and need to focus on urgent matters only: 12.03.04 Strategic plan for website. 12.03.13 Separation of strategic intentions between ML and ER Both, as not urgent for today. All AGREED. Action GW VM asked if anyone had any other matters arising from minutes of last meeting. None raised. In KQ's absence VM referred to the updated '2 school' progress document that had been circulated in advance and confirmed AT is representing ML fully for this meeting. For MY's benefit, a brief background of the discussions so far that it had been agreed as an LGB that we will move towards ER and ML formally becoming two schools rather than the one school model that has proved largely inoperable.	GW

	<p>Believe the document is thorough and shows strong progress and clarity in most areas. One area that still stands out (and is shown in red accordingly) is governance. This is still to be solved as a potential '2 governing bodies' model, due largely to lack of suitable potential governors.</p> <p>VM: View is we should continue with one LGB across two schools until the end of the COVID-19 crisis, with a background of still trying to develop and widen the membership of the governing bodies to pragmatically allow a split of two LGBs.</p> <p>Invited comments. None. AGREED all happy to proceed on this basis.</p>	All
05.05.06	<p>Principal's Report ML: Document circulated in advance.</p> <p>AT: Much is unable to be commented on currently, due to COVID. Lots of detail has been given in EOC and FHRE committee documents so no need to repeat here. Updates include that Reception and KS1 have not got coloured books at home to support with reading, so we have now found online resources to read e-books at home with questions for pupils attached. Guidance around certain groups of students being eligible for a free IT device. This is being looked at for vulnerable students and a grant application has been submitted for 17 students to receive MS laptops - with a response awaited. Update from last meeting is that 65% of students are accessing the online platform for learning and this is growing all the time. Some are still on paper basis, as issues with IT at home or have no internet - so probably nearer to 70%. Aiming for 75% and well on track. Working on current plan for what return to school will look like, and to prepare for September. This plan will be shared with governors when complete.</p> <p>Action: AT to share with governors the return to school plan and preparation for September as soon as complete.</p> <p>Key improvement priorities to move forward as best we can, 95% of daily tasks is responding to changes and national guidance. Highlight KIPs in report. It was noted that the school App has proven a positive way to communicate with parents.</p> <p>LW: Have a new house-point system of putting children into teams and reward and behaviour starting in September. More information to follow.</p> <p>Virtual meetings are running well.</p> <p>AT: Wish to minute that the staff have been amazing at ML. Really stepped up with online learning etc.</p> <p>Q: House-points. Is that moving into 4 houses?</p> <p>AT: Yes. 4 houses which will be called Brunel, Bellamy, Drake, Rowling – tried to keep links for local area. Exciting project.</p> <p>Q: How typical is a house structure in primaries? Are you at leading edge here or is this established more widely?</p> <p>AT: Some use it some do not. Something we have seen when visiting other schools and thought it would be good. We would like to do more 'working together' between the younger and older children.</p> <p>Q: If you are linking younger and older is it going to be a horizontal system? Siblings in same house?</p> <p>LW: We will split the children randomly. Kept siblings in different houses. Will be set days when students will come together, and Year 6 will take a leadership role.</p> <p>AT: It will be linked to our rewards system so will be kind of a double merit, linked with curriculum teams as well as PE/sports day.</p>	AT

	<p>More information was requested on the houses being within Humanities, Art, etc</p> <p>Action: LW to share more documents and keep governors informed.</p> <p>Q: You refer to learning as being 'virtual.' With thinking for this of future websites and apps, are there lessons learnt from the current situation of things that can be improved in future?</p> <p>AT: From leadership point of view - time management. Spend lot of time going to different meetings. Can we spend more time in school with students and do meetings like this online instead? Big lesson learned. Seesaw platform has proved valuable, and this will be rolled out for home learning more. Feedback is the students have loved having communications and dialogue with staff and vice versa.</p>	<p>LW</p>
<p>05.05.06</p>	<p>Principal's Report ER: Document circulated in advance.</p> <p>JPO: Learning is core business, but priority in our current situation is care and support for vulnerable students and maintaining of safeguarding. Big learning point for us is 'simplicity'. Class charts is a good platform. Others also running, and there are pros and cons of each. Some students have felt challenged by the numbers of platforms available. IT for Schools system is bringing some dividends. Had 9 laptops for Year 10 students and another 9 coming for students with social workers. We will be allowed to keep these, so this increases our provision for the future. FSM vouchers has been challenging, but all eligible students are now getting vouchers – the money has come in and is working successfully. Online learning is largely happening well. Feedback generally positive. Parent survey was conducted, we received 112 responses from parents with just over 90% saying their child was coping ok. Online learning, 85% said ok or better, 15% not well, 2% not happening. Is your child getting enough work? 80% said yes, 12% said too much and 8% said not enough. 90% said they felt suitably challenged.</p> <p>In terms of in-school provision, we had over 25 students coming in initially which fell to 12 before Easter and is now rising steadily to 20 now. Suspect numbers will go up. Provision in school is dominated by pastoral care. Mixed bag in terms of age and ability. We are attempting to include a physical activity, cooking or art - and it is working well. Key priority now is planning for how we return to school. Some ideas, such as one-way systems, limited numbers in classes, increased sanitisation stations, staggered starts and ends, breaks and lunches. Key consideration is about response to return to school and how we can offer the pastoral care from assemblies to dedicated lessons to extra support for welfare teams. Biggest concern is about staffing as out of 123 staff, 39 are currently self-isolating for reasons of shielding or health. Some staff will be concerned about returning. Awaiting the Prime Minister's statement this Sunday (on the next phase of lockdown). Looking to run half term or bank holiday provision if needed.</p> <p>JPO: Key Priorities for Improvement - Vocab programme has been fed into the curriculum plan and will be fed into whole school CPD programme. Running online meetings with heads of faculty, and leadership meetings are also happening on Wednesday afternoons. Finalising the leadership structure is critical now. Feedback from staff indicates people feel supported and have responded well and strongly to the situation. Biggest opportunity out of this is to</p>	

	<p>build ethos in the community and get a sense of team. Heads of Year are producing online newsletters and assemblies and I produce regular newsletters as well. Regular letters are going out to keep contact with the community. Need to do a proper evaluation of online learning as we come out of the crisis. Highlighting importance of clarity of instructions and challenge, with differentiating the setting tasks across a group of students. Online feedback is quick and useful, so some positives with situation. Trying to keep abreast of how our community has been hit with COVID. (JPO gave an update on staff affected). Questions invited:</p> <p>Q: In terms of speculation about what will be the requirements when this moves to the next phase, you mentioned social distancing in class as potentially a real challenge. View is, as with all things that are going to be allowed to move forward, it is going to be a staged process. Would imagine that schools will be given the same guidance. Question is that, if students are permitted to return, in groups or half a week each etc, do you pragmatically see that as workable or not?</p> <p>JPO: It is possible, but difficult. Could do lots of things. Re-write timetable and cut in half. It is hugely apparent that children are not good at socially isolating, they get close, and even if we create an absolute military academy style, with lines on the floor, this will still be difficult. Simple solution is to have efficient means of knowing people are clear of the virus and then we just come back to normal. Must also consider the needs and feelings of staff.</p> <p>Q: The challenge is going to be more the staff attitude than the students. You also mention 1/3 of staff are off. Feels a very high proportion, but you think that seems to be the average across all schools?</p> <p>JPO: Association of School & College Lecturers sit close to DfE and this is the picture we are getting. Within that third there are people with, say, asthmatic children, medical conditions themselves, or who have elderly relatives who live with them or that they care for. Within that number, would suggest around 14 or so that may be ok to come back when we resume - and some conditions may be reviewed. Many of these staff want to come back. Have phoned every one of those members of staff, to make contact and get feedback. Out of the 39, 22 are teachers.</p> <p>No other questions.</p>	
05.05.07	<p>FHRE Committee - Key points from minutes: JN joined the meeting at 4.55 pm. Report distributed in advance. Questions in order of report.</p> <p>VM asked if JN has anything to add on the comments in the report regarding Alive and Astro.</p> <p>JN: Issue with Alive performance is it had two quite good months in Jan and Feb, and now we have needed to close the facility, on 20 March, so don't know how things would have progressed. Risks around fact that income there has stopped. Not as significant as the income from Catering, but nonetheless a concern. The Alive staff have been furloughed, and we have received the first tranche of money today to pay them. Anticipate the government will pay what we claim and then auditors will scrutinise to ensure we have not claimed too much, but think we are ok.</p>	

Q: Is your best estimate on the impact of closures of these facilities, that the net result will be neutral, or is there a significant financial risk to ER and ML budget this year?

JN: Not neutral, with the complete loss of income, there are some cost reductions – but there is a gap. Furloughing will mitigate this, but not completely. At Easter, worst case £70k income deficit. If furlough brings in £6k for every 3 weeks, that will be half. Also making savings elsewhere in school, with skeleton staff and very few students, so not that concerned - but is potential risk, yes.

Q: So, you are saying worst case of £40k and best case neutral?

JN: Yes, but it depends on how long this goes on for.

Q: Understand that Alive business plan and responses from the internal audit were due to go to the Trust Board Committee today. Did that happen, and will we get responses from that in due course?

JN: That meeting was completed as a 'paper' exercise - with reports submitted, followed by questions and then responses. Both the plan and the internal audit report were part of that.

Q: Is this flagged to Trust Board as an ongoing risk?

JN: For the primary schools in the Trust their risks are far less, as they do not do their own catering and are still receiving grant income - but no costs.

VM: Has JN anything further to add of any urgent matters around the internal audit report for ML and ER?

JN: Would normally have been things acted upon, but as not in school to speak with people and as financial activity has slowed, the risks are reduced - but these actions will need to take place in the next 2-6 months.

Q: The impact of new curriculum at ER is covered in the report. Can we have more clarity of what the financial impact of that is? Report response talks about potential reduction in staff numbers but does not translate that into a financial estimate.

JN: Difficulty is budget for next year has 3 significant differences within it. First is the ER leadership restructure, which has changed the cost base. Second is the new curriculum, with 2week timetable. Simultaneously curriculum with options in Year 9 not Year 8. Could identify savings from restructure of curriculum, and changes to options process, we also have a cost neutral period. Each of these things will have impact in bottom line of new budget. Quite tricky to isolate one. Budget is close to being balanced and the questions are around giving some flexibility, and how the principals wish to discharge this. Know leadership restructure will save approx £200k in year, and options and curriculum will save around £75k.

Q: Very reassuring that you are close to a balanced budget at this point of the year. Concern is whether, with finances being so tight, we are pushing things to be 'too lean' if that is the case?

JN: From financial point of view it is prudent to cut as hard as we can, and then see our position at this year - end. Within next year's budget we still must find funds to return to reserves - so that is additional cost. Also have extracted for next year all TES operations, particularly catering, from ER budget. This will mean ER is, in essence, balancing its budget without that surplus - and it will be a Trust decision what happens to any potential surplus from TES.

	<p>Q: Does JPO have anything to add? JPO: Just to reassure, have been looking at substantial saving on leadership costs next year - and am confident the structure (that I have worked with before) will be positive. Taking a cut, in terms of reducing numbers of core classes, in Year 9 - which is sustainable. Cutting cloth appropriately, so next year think we will make savings to do really exciting stuff in the following year. Will give us the budgetary capacity to have flexibility next year and beyond.</p> <p>JN: Looking further ahead is that we have a large Year 9 currently (225) who will leave in 3 years. If only replaced by 180, that is a gap in income. As they go from KS3 to 4 income per student goes up. Sixth form numbers are crucial.</p> <p>VM stated this seems a reassuring long-term picture, in terms of financial position.</p> <p>VM: Note that AT has included ML nursery fee increase in the report. Ask is the expectation LGB needs to action this?</p> <p>AT: Unsure of the process for this and would say that fees have not been increased for a long time. Our nursery is low cost compared to others around.</p> <p>VM: Quite happy to ask LGB to agree it if JN felt, in terms of requirements of the finance handbook, that is appropriate route?</p> <p>JN: Good protocol to pass through the LGB, think it is reasonable to keep under review - for the LGB to be aware, but is really an operational matter.</p> <p>VM asked for any comments about supporting the operational decision to change the nursery pricing, as suggested by AT? No objection from LGB.</p> <p>Q: 3 and 4year olds can get funding at £4.08 but current charged hourly rate is £3.70. Is that what you charge parents?</p> <p>AT: Yes. Proposing to put it up to £4.</p> <p>Q: Do you still get funding at £4.08 and by charging £4 is that a loss?</p> <p>JN: Vast majority of funding is the 15 hours per week the government provide free. Some parents choose to increase the hours above the 15 so it is a top up. We receive £7-8k a year from parents, the funding from Devon is in excess of £120k – so, this is a small proportion - just top up.</p> <p>Item FHRE concluded.</p> <p>VM: Thank JN for attending. JN left the meeting at 5.17 pm.</p>	AT
05.05.08	<p>EOC Committee – Key points from minutes: Report distributed in advance.</p> <p>KD stated the focus of questions asked and responses from Principals was on key matters around COVID-19. <i>SMD left the meeting 5.20 pm.</i></p> <p>JPO: Looking at best practice for our approach to this unique situation. All subject leaders have been asked to clarify what objective data will be used to predict grades for those students who were due to undertake external exams this summer: Mock exams, controlled assessments, looking for evidence of work allows us to rank student’s performance. <i>SMD re-joined at 5.22 pm.</i> Online spreadsheets have been set up and all information will be quality assured. Heads of faculty have been given a model of what their grade patterns look like from previous years. It will be modelled statistically from historic data to check there is a consistent pattern. Objective criteria are being shared to maintain an audit trail in case of appeal. Awaiting official process for presenting data. Latest announcement suggested QCA with exam boards will be opening submission on 31 May and we will have all the data ready by half term. Actual process of data collation will happen with DfE and QCA, and exam qualification release dates are</p>	

	<p>the same as if students had taken exams. Timeline is in place and being led by Phil Humphrey and Sammy Atkinson.</p> <p>Q: Concern as to what must be the widening DS gap countrywide. Does that need to feed into the planning for when things return?</p> <p>JPO: Does remain significant challenge and KD rightly pointed out that there are opportunities, and many staff and students are learning the power of independent work. Huge concern is that this crisis will magnify the gap between those supported at home and are motivated and have resources and those who are not. In terms of return, one of the dangers is to start focussing on 'catch up' and interventions, which will risk those students feeling overwhelmed. Must concentrate efforts on rebuilding the sense of community and ensure students have strong support networks - and that issues are picked up quickly. Primary aim is to re-engage with school, structures and routines that enable learning to happen.</p> <p>Q: We have previously mentioned that it may be helpful for governors to give some message of support for what staff are doing. Do we agree that it may be timely to now do so?</p> <p>VM: Believe this may be helpful, and am happy to draft a letter.</p> <p>JPO agreed that would be helpful and supportive of all the great work staff are doing and could be included with his weekly communications.</p> <p>Action: VM to write letter and forward to AT/JPO.</p>	<p>VM/AT/JPO</p>
<p>05.05.09</p>	<p>Safeguarding Policy (COVID-19) ratification:</p> <p>VM reminded governors that they had electronically seen and individually approved the amendment of the Safeguarding Policy to include changes relevant to the current COVID-19 situation. Necessary that we now formally ratify that as agreed within this LGB.</p> <p>VM proposed the LGB ratify those changes to the Safeguarding Policy. SMD seconded.</p> <p>All: AGREED</p> <p>Q: The new policy states "is likely to be reviewed at regular intervals". Is there a more specific timescale or is it 'as needs must'?</p> <p>AT: This was intended to read as only needing review (within the current crisis) on a 'needs must' basis.</p> <p>Agreed governors believe this wording is satisfactory, and we need to be mindful not to unnecessarily delay this or create more work for AT and JPO by making further changes.</p> <p>Action: AGREED wording to be formally reviewed every half term.</p> <p>Q: Hearing that a third of staff are not available for work and with limited scope for training being available, are there risks around numbers of trained safeguarding team being available?</p> <p>AT: All the ML safeguarding team are here. Only 3 teachers off, from 17 and one TA. Also, safeguarding guidelines are slightly different in this situation, as don't have to be onsite constantly - can be contactable by phone and led to leadership member to feedback when required.</p> <p>JPO: AT ER we have 6 Level 3 safeguarding trained people. Have sufficient staff on call, and always a member of the safeguarding team in school. Also, have</p>	<p>AT/JPO</p>

	discussed potential of referring matters to one of AT's team or the Trust. There is an online level 3 course available - so we are looking at putting someone on that.	
05.05.10	<p>Any other urgent matters:</p> <p>SMD: Am regularly in school and seeing things working extremely well, with leadership and JPO doing an excellent job.</p> <p>MY: Feedback from ML has been extremely positive from parents that I know.</p> <p>VM: Echoing these comments, I would like to express the LGB's thanks to all the staff. I will put together the suggested letter to all staff as soon as I can. Thanks to everyone, and we must all work hard to keep dialogue positive and open through these difficult times.</p> <p>GW advised Governors of the help that Jake Templeman in IT has put in to getting us up and running for the 'virtual' LGBs. This was acknowledged and much appreciated by all.</p> <p>Meeting closed at 5.35pm.</p>	
	<p>Meeting moved to part II at 5.40 pm. SMD, GW, LW and AT left the meeting.</p> <p>VM taking confidential minutes, and will supply to GW for secure filing.</p>	VM/GW