

# WILLIAM ELLIS SCHOOL



## MEETING OF THE FULL GOVERNING BODY held at the school on Thursday 8 February 2018

### MINUTES

GOVERNORS		Present
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Sam White (HT)	✓
<b>LA</b>	Ms Georgia Gould (GGO)	x
<b>Elected parent</b>	Ms Imogen Sharp (ISH)	✓
	Mr Jonny Woolf (JWO)	✓
<b>Elected staff</b>	Mr Richard Whitenstall (RWH)	✓
<b>Foundation</b>	Mr Richard Ault (RAU)	✓
	Mrs Ronke Coote (RCO)	✓
	Dame Karen Dunnell (KDU)	✓
	Dr Lee Elliot-Major (LEM)	✓
	Prof Conor Gearty (CGE) <b>Vice chair</b>	✓
	Mr Omar Hamon (OHA)	✓
	Ms Fiona Millar (FMI) <b>Chair</b>	✓
	Prof Daniel Monk (DMO)	x
	Ms Selina Skipwith (SSK)	✓
<b>Co-opted</b>	Ms Laura Concannon (LCO)	✓
	Ms Pandora Kay-Kreizman (PKK)	x
<b>ASSOCIATE</b>		
	Mr Abdi Ahmed (AAH)	x
<b>ATTENDING</b>		
	Mr Matthew Scott (MSC) <b>Assistant head</b>	
	Mr Mike Hutchinson (MHU) <b>Clerk</b>	

#### 1. Welcome, apologies and declarations of interest for this meeting

FMI welcomed everyone to this FGB meeting, which began at 5.06pm. Apologies were received from, and permission for absence given to, GGO, PKK and DMO. LCO apologised for an early departure. There were no apologies from AAH. A quorum was present. OHA declared an interest, as a trustee of The Mill, in item 6. There were no other declarations of interest, pecuniary or otherwise, in respect of any items on this agenda. Unless otherwise indicated, all papers had been distributed in advance.

## 2. Elect chair and vice chair

**2.1 Elect chair** FMI handed the chair to MHU; she and CGE then left the meeting.

**[FMI and CGE left the meeting at 5.08pm.]**

**2.1.1** MHU noted that RAU had earlier nominated FMI as chair; this was seconded at the meeting by SSK. There being no other nominations, and FMI having previously indicated that she was willing to stand, MHU declared her re-appointed as chair, retrospectively from September 2017 for four years, to be reviewed every year.

**[FMI returned to the meeting at 5.09pm.]**

**2.1.2** MHU returned the chair to FMI, who thanked governors for their confidence in her.

**2.2 Elect vice chair** FMI noted that RAU had earlier nominated CGE as vice chair; this was seconded at the meeting by LEM. There being no other nominations, and CGE having previously indicated that he was willing to stand, FMI declared him re-appointed as vice chair, retrospectively from September 2017 for four years, to be reviewed every year.

**[CGE returned to the meeting at 5.10pm.]**

## 3. Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising

Given that two governors were still awaited, FMI proposed taking this item out of agenda order. The minutes of the meeting of 30 November 2017 were **AGREED** as a full and accurate record. FMI to sign them after the meeting. There were no matters arising. All actions had been, or were in the process of being, fulfilled.

## 4. Agree committee membership

**4.1 Personnel and Resources Committee** Governors **AGREED** the membership of the Personnel and Resources Committee as follows (chair and vice chair having been agreed by the committee at an earlier meeting – full names used here for clarity):

- Mr Richard Ault **Chair**
- Mr Jonny Woolf **Vice chair**
- Mr Sam White **Headteacher**
- Dame Karen Dunnell
- Mr Omar Harmon
- Ms Pandora Kay-Kreizman
- Ms Fiona Millar
- Ms Selina Skipwith
- Mr Richard Whitenstall.

The committee's adviser was **AGREED** as assistant head Bernie Lane.

**4.2 School Improvement Committee** Governors **AGREED** the membership of the School Improvement Committee as follows (chair and vice chair having been agreed by the committee at an earlier meeting – full names used here for clarity):

- Dr Lee Elliot-Major **Chair**
- Ms Georgia Gould **Vice chair**
- Mr Sam White **Headteacher**
- Ms Laura Concannon
- Mrs Ronke Coote
- Dame Karen Dunnell
- Prof Conor Gearty
- Ms Fiona Millar
- Ms Imogen Sharp
- Ms Selina Skipwith.

The committee's adviser was **AGREED** as assistant head Matthew Scott.

## **5. Receive report on The Mill**

**5.1** FMI reminded governors that The Mill had been discussed at the previous FGB and (briefly) at the subsequent Personnel and Resources Committee.

**5.2** She invited OHA, who has responsibility as a governor for the property and is a member of The Mill's Trust, to speak to this item, which he did as follows, answering questions as he did so. He apologised for tabling a short (two A4 page) paper.

**5.3 Introduction** The Mill, originally a watermill for grinding corn, was set in ten acres in the heart of the Surrey Hills, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Buildings included dormitories and bedrooms sleeping up to 40; around 150 could sleep in tented accommodation outside. A fully-equipped commercial kitchen, two classrooms and a games room completed the accommodation.

**5.4 The property** The property had been purchased in 1930 by St Marylebone Grammar School, financed by a donation from Lord Rothermere. It won charitable status in the 1970s. When St Marylebone Grammar closed in 1980, the charity transferred its objective – subsequently “to promote the education (including social and physical training) of pupils attending William Ellis School” – to William Ellis. Since 1982 the school had used The Mill as an all-year-round residential centre.

**5.5 The charity** “The St Marylebone Camp of William Ellis School” had seven trustees, six of whom had close ties with the school: the headteacher; the chair of the William Ellis and Birkbeck School Trust; three retired staff; and a past parent. Trustees delegated day-to-day management of The Mill to the school.

**5.5.1 Was there a term of office for trustees [LEM]?** There was a three-year term: those serving had done so for several terms. KDU pointed out three terms' service was the maximum for most organisations: OHA pointed out that if that rule were introduced immediately then The Mill would lose three or four trustees overnight. There were no current restrictions on length of service, although three trustees had indicated that this would be their last term. LEM and ISH noted that a lack of restriction on length of service was out of step with recent charity governance guidelines.

**5.6 Current staffing and management** Historically, the school had employed teaching staff in the role of warden at The Mill, which had been costly.

**5.6.1** The school now had a one-year rolling fixed-fee contract with a small, local company called Adventure and Computer Holidays (ACH). Although the current warden was technically employed by ACH, she reported directly to William Ellis School.

**5.6.2 To whom exactly [KDU]?** To Mandy Seeburn [William Ellis's director of operations.] The warden was responsible for the buildings and land, for internal and external groups using the site, and to promote The Mill externally with the aim of earning enough revenue to at least cover costs.

**5.7 Finances** For the last few years The Mill had been cost neutral, but as schools cut back, this financial year (end March 2018) could see it as much as £3k in deficit. [Later correspondence from KDU confirmed that Mill had been in use for 115 days in the financial year 2015-16, for 105 days in 2016-17, and so far in 2017-18, for 72 days, generating income of £48k, £49k and a projected £35k respectively. Nearly two-fifths of income came from William Ellis.]

**5.8 Current use** William Ellis used The Mill for a summer Y7 camp, a shorter Y8 camp, and a Y9 trip. Geography and other departments used the property for low-cost field trips – about half the cost of outdoor organisations such as PGL. External groups were charged a commercial rate. William Ellis students benefited from teaching continuity by having their own teachers lead trips.

**5.8.1** The opportunities for William Ellis boys to relate to each other and to set up long-term mentoring relationships with teaching staff were invaluable. A trip to The Mill could be a life-changing experience.

**5.9 Future staffing** The current warden, who was a director of ACH, would probably retire in March 2019, but could carry on part time, giving continuity, while her daughter and son-in-law could take over, with no change in the contract with ACH.

**5.9.1 Was that nepotism [KDU]?** Over the past decade a number of individuals had fulfilled the role of warden. ACH was happy to continue with no contractual change. The younger people had great skills: he was a paramedic and she had nursery experience. They had a lot of energy and ideas. New blood could help.

**5.10 Future development** The trustees were currently looking to raise funds to improve the games fields for all-year use and to build a "barn" for indoor games and as an educational space. The Rothermere Foundation had supported such initiatives in the past. Mud as a result of inclement weather was a drawback of the grounds.

**5.11 Other options** Continuing to run The Mill but directly employing a warden as a William Ellis member of staff carried huge potential costs, and there were continuity issues. A large PGL-style company would be unlikely to be interested in an outsourcing deal because of the need for investment in the property; this, at a time when outdoor centres generally were closing, not expanding. Industry sponsorship was a prospect, perhaps as a renewable energy educational centre?

**5.12** OHA added that the current "Charity Scheme" did not provide for the sale of The Mill, or alternative use. What would happen if William Ellis gave up The Mill was a grey area. One legal opinion had been that the transfer of the objective of the charity in 1980 set a legal precedent under which the trustees would be obliged to seek to transfer the charity's benefits to another institution.

**5.13** FMI thanked OHA for his presentation and asked for questions and comments, which are recorded here in order of theme rather than chronologically.

**5.14 Why did the school not receive an annual report on The Mill [KDU]?** FMI pointed out that the charity which owned it was independent.

**5.15 Was it acceptable that a third party could decide on who was employed as The Mill's warden [KDU]?** ACH had used a number of individuals to fulfil the role and the school had been very happy with the service so far.

*Sensitive issues were referenced at this point  
which are confidentially minuted elsewhere as item 12.*

**5.16 Could The Mill earn more with what it had to offer, perhaps by hosting more weddings [KDU]?** Given the problem of mud after rain, weddings at the Mill needed good weather: a drawback of The Mill was that it had no large weatherproof communal space. SSK thought events companies brought their own infrastructure, such as marquees: she would consult contacts.

**ACTION Item 5.16** SSK to consult contacts on potential events companies who might be interested in The Mill as a venue.

**5.17** Governors also raised a series of issues and unresolved questions, including:

- What does William Ellis want of The Mill [RAU]?
- How can we use it to greater advantage to benefit the pupils [ISH]?
- William Ellis uses The Mill on 40 per cent of the days available and pays 40 per cent of its costs: the minimum should be to cover that cost – but how [KDU]?
- Governors should explore alternatives, investing more to gain more [LEM]
- Ideally, the school should not just cover its costs but generate enough surplus to cover all William Ellis's costs [KDU]
- Any third-party partner would probably say that The Mill needs investment: was the school willing to provide that investment [CGE]?

**5.18** FMI asked HT for his opinion. He noted that a group of dedicated volunteers had given a lot of their time to The Mill over the years: governors should not lose sight of that. The volunteers would not be around for ever, and no new parents were offering to take their place. A commercial contract could be expensive.

**5.19** FMI drew the discussion to a close.

*A sensitive issue was referenced at this point  
which is confidentially minuted elsewhere as item 13.*

**5.20** FMI thanked OHA again for his presentation and for answering questions.

## **6. Review Ofsted data dashboard**

**6.1** FMI asked HT to introduce this item, which he did as follows, pointing out two of the headline "areas for improvement" in the Inspection Data Summary Report, or IDSR.

- 6.2** First, for at least two years, the school's Progress 8 score had been "significantly" below the national for disadvantaged students generally, and for disadvantaged middle prior attainers and disadvantaged high prior attainers in particular.
- 6.3** Second, the "open" element of the school's Progress 8 measure had been in the bottom quintile (20 per cent) nationally for the last two years.
- 6.4** The data also suggested that the school's English results needed improving. The school should celebrate its maths results, which were the best in Camden, the result of years of hard work to improve the progress of middle and lower prior attaining boys.
- 6.5** HT argued that, in contrast to the IDSR's first headline, results for disadvantaged students were very positive. Nationally, all boys' Progress 8 score was -0.23, the same as William Ellis students'. Nationally, disadvantaged boys' Progress 8 score was -0.53, the same as at William Ellis. The Progress 8 score of non-disadvantaged boys nationally was -0.08, whereas William Ellis's score was positive.
- 6.6** Another positive was humanities, given the number of disadvantaged students who took the subjects. The risk was that the school had lost two good humanities teachers and had not been able to afford to replace them. There was no evidence that low prior attainment or disadvantaged students should not be studying humanities.
- 6.7** William Ellis had not worked the system or changed its curriculum to boost its Progress 8 score as other schools had. However, some other schools with a similar intake and curriculum to William Ellis were doing well. The Progress 8 score of Harris Academy Battersea, for instance, was positive.
- 6.8** The particular problem was the open element of Progress 8. In the Progress 8 calculation, higher grades were expected in the open element than in the EBacc element. However, many William Ellis boys' open element grades were for EBacc subjects with lower grades than those which counted in the EBacc element, typically science or MFL (modern foreign languages).
- 6.9** A thorough analysis of grades was needed, but clearly sometimes EBacc subjects counted in the open element because they were higher than grades gained in art, drama, DT or PE.
- 6.10** Many boys were studying subjects that in other schools would not default to the open element. That said, some individual William Ellis students got their best results in PE and DT GCSEs.
- 6.11** The current Ofsted chief inspector, Amanda Spielman, had highlighted the need for inspectors to ensure that curriculum decisions had been made for students' benefit rather than to maximise a school's Progress 8 score. For instance, the European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL), a computer literacy certification programme not offered by William Ellis, potentially added 0.6 to a school's Progress 8 score: from next year, Ofsted would no longer count it as part of the Progress 8 measure.

**[LCO left the meeting at 6.14pm.]**

**6.12** FMI thanked HT for his presentation and asked for comments and questions, of which she asked the first, and which, unless otherwise indicated, HT and MSC answered as follows.

**6.13 If the ECDL would no longer be useful in gaming the system, how would other headteachers be thinking to replace it [FMI]?** LEM thought that William Ellis should rather be considering what would serve its students best and what it could afford.

**6.14 The school's EBacc results were stunning and though Progress 8 scores were rising they were still an issue: was that a failure of teaching, or the difficulty of specific subjects [FMI]?** Results in GCSE English were half a grade below other subjects, but as the subject was double-weighted then for many boys it had a disproportionate impact.

**6.14.1** Not-too-drastic changes to the curriculum, for instance by giving more teaching time to science, should see better results and better progress. Gaming was not an option.

**6.15 Could researching the gaps between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students in specific subjects nationally be helpful [FMI]?** Unfortunately, there were no national figures on the disadvantaged gap for individual subjects.

**6.16** HT highlighted a scatterplot on p12 of the IDSR, which plotted individual students' Progress 8 scores at KS4 versus prior attainment at KS2. HT and MSC had analysed each individual's results and there was no clear link between prior attainment and progress – in other words, between the results of disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students.

**6.17 Why was the open element so problematic [FMI]?** It was a question of what ended up in that "bucket". Science was one subject which too often defaulted to it.

**6.18 If science results were poor, could the curriculum be amended to give more time to the subject [RAU]?** Yes, but that would mean more science teachers, who were expensive and hard to come by.

**6.19 Was one aspect of gaming the system to remove poorly-performing students [KDU]?** It was, but the IDSR noted that nine students had left William Ellis, which did not game the system, between Y10 in 2016 and Y11 in 2017. Other schools seemed to remove many more students, and refused to accept new students in Y11, as William Ellis did.

**6.20 Now that it was becoming more obvious that schools gamed the system by excluding students and playing with the curriculum, would Ofsted stamp out the practice [RAU]?** FMI observed that, since Ofsted visited schools only once every three years or so, that was unlikely.

**6.21** She thanked HT and MSC for their analysis and turned to curriculum planning.

## **7. Discussion item: curriculum planning**

**7.1** FMI invited HT and MSC to present on curriculum planning, which they did.

**7.2** Modelling suggested that reducing the number of full-time-equivalent (FTE) teachers by two from 54.6 to 52.6 could bring down expenditure enough to allow an acceptable timetable, if that were coupled with a higher roll. The current Y7 roll of 132 suggested that was possible.

**7.3** The most expensive teaching was in the sixth form: it was here that teaching time was best cut back, rather than in Years 7-11. The school was teaching too many periods in the sixth form for the funding it received. The ration of contact time needed to rise from 0.66 to 0.69, and ideally to 0.7 at a later date.

**7.4** HT and MSC had worked through various KS3 models for the subjects taught, balancing teacher supply and subject demand, based on teachers' first choice of subjects. However, to fill gaps in science and languages, the school needed to call on teachers' second choice of subjects.

**7.5** MSC outlined a range of options to reduce and in some cases increase teaching of various subjects.



7.6 The final PowerPoint slide summarised HT and MSC's proposals as follows:

1. Bring in a **BALANCED BUDGET**
2. Reduce FTE teachers – from **54.6 to 52.6** (reduction of two teachers)
3. Ensure contact ratio is at least **0.69 – FOR SUBJECT** teaching
4. Reduction in **SUBJECT teaching offer overall** (primarily at KS5)
5. **Increase teacher second subject** teaching
6. Introduction of **TIMETABLE BANDING** – to help ensure efficiencies/reduction in subject **BLOCKING** (MFL, English, science, maths)
7. **Reduce non-class codes – IER and Sixth Form study** in particular but we will need to find alternative ways to meet need – new sixth form building an opportunity
8. **Risk to intervention** (maths and English in particular)
9. Adjust number of **lessons per subject** in some years – e.g. Y7 maths
10. **Leadership and management** – some alterations/changes with staffing changes
11. **Explore collaboration and joint staffing with Parliament Hill School.**

**[LEM left the meeting with apologies at 6.55pm.]**

7.7 FMI thanked HT and MSC for their presentation and asked for comments and questions, of which she asked the first.

7.8 **Was HT asking governors to agree these changes [FMI]?** HT wanted governors to agree that the current basic curriculum was sound and could be delivered with some amendments. No new subjects would be introduced. Poor performing subjects would have to improve. Y9 would have a limited choice of subjects but given financial pressures there was little opportunity to expand that choice.

7.9 **Was it of concern that any good teachers who resigned would have to be replaced by teachers currently teaching elsewhere in the school, rather than by bringing in fresh talent [CGE]?** HT agreed, but pointed out that the only opportunity for the school to bring in a balanced budget was to cut (currently high) average teacher costs. Even a marginal reduction of £2k per teacher per year would reduce the projected deficit from £289k to £19k.

7.10 RAU noted that this excellent analysis could enable the school to approach Camden for support to eliminate the deficit within three years. HT cautioned that the building project would add to costs. But the rationale of reducing average teacher salary costs was sound. Parliament Hill's average costs were £4k lower than those of William Ellis. That kind of reduction could wipe out William Ellis's deficit overnight. The school's excellent relationship with Parliament Hill would ease collaboration.

7.11 Governors **AGREED** to the plan as proposed in order to achieve a balanced budget within a year. If that proved impossible, Camden would be approached with a three-year plan. Personnel and Resources Committee to discuss further.

**ACTION Item 7.11** *MHU to schedule discussion of curriculum plan on agenda of forthcoming School Improvement Committee.*

7.12 FMI thanked HT and MSC again for their research and report.



**8. Agree Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**

Governors **AGREED** the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

**9. Receive chair's report**

FMI had nothing to add to what had been already discussed.

**[MSC left the meeting with apologies at 7.10pm.]**

**10. Any other business**

There was no other business in this part of the meeting.

**Next scheduled meeting: Thursday 22 March 2018 at 5pm**

There being no further business in this part of the meeting, FMI thanked all present for attending and closed this part of the meeting at 7.13pm. A confidential item followed.

Signed..........

22 March 2018

**Fiona Millar  
Chair of the Governing Body, William Ellis School**

**ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE ABOVE MINUTES**

- ACTION Item 5.16**      *SSK to consult contacts on potential events companies who might be interested in The Mill as a venue.*
- ACTION Item 7.11**      *MHU to schedule discussion of curriculum plan on agenda of forthcoming School Improvement Committee.*

