

Action List

Davenant Foundation School

Governing Body Meeting 10th December 2024

Action	By Whom	Due Date	Action/ Resolved
FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS			
Minute 1806: To liaise regarding proposals to engage Davenant alumni.	AT/JG	March 2023	Resolved
Minute 1900: To discuss the viability Youth Alpha Course with the Head of R	AT	May 2024 Amended to December 2024	Resolved
Minute 1936: To send the updated Link Governor List to the GB.	JM	November 2024	Resolved
Minute 1940: To add a disclaimer to the letting forms regarding staff consuming alcohol on site.	AT/JB	November 2024	Resolved
ACTIONS FROM THE MEETING			
Minute xxxx: AT to speak to SIAMs re next inspection date and report back to the Governors on plan for meeting SIAMs requirements across each year group	AT	December 2024	Ongoing

DAVENANT FOUNDATION SCHOOL

Minutes of a Meeting of the

GOVERNING BODY

Held at school on

10th December 2024

At 6.30pm

MEMBERSHIP: *Mr G Anthony (Chair) (**GA**) *Mr J Goldsworthy (Vice Chair) (**JG**)

*Mrs A M Allen (**AMA**)

Mrs A Crombie (**AC**)

Mrs C Hands (**CH**)

Mr D Prosser (**DP**)

*Mr A Thorne (**AT**)

*Mrs C Cantle (**CC**)

Mrs D Nelson (**DN**)

*Rev C Davies (**CD**)

*Mrs L Folkes (**LF**)

*Mrs N Lee-Johnston (**NLJ**)

*Mrs S Temple (**ST**)

*Mr H Smith (**HS**)

Indicates attendance

In Attendance: Mrs J Dennison (**JDN**), Ms S McVittie (**SME**) Mrs J Beaumont (**JB**) and Mrs M Gipson (**MG**)

Apologies accepted from: *Mrs A Crombie (**AC**) *Mrs C Hands (**CH**)

Rev Davies opened the meeting with a prayer.

18:43 DP arrived

The meeting commenced with coffee and mince pies and the governors enjoyed meeting the Head Boy and Head Girl for academic year 2024/2025. GA stated how much he enjoyed meeting them both during the interview process and asked both to share their journey so far in their new roles and plans for the remainder of the year. A discussion took place around students' perceptions of non-uniform day and the HB/HG will consider the suggestion of canvassing KS3/KS4 for their feedback.

ATE noted that it has been a pleasure working with both.

1941	Business Interests	None declared	
1942	Minutes of 22/10/24 and Matters Arising	The governors reviewed the minutes and accepted them as a correct record of the meeting. There were no matters arising.	
1943	Academy Business HJ arrived 18.59	<p>2023 – 2024 Audit</p> <p>Three documents that need approval and then signing;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The letter of representation• The statutory accounts• The Going Concern assessment <p>The three documents have been approved by the finance and audit committee and now need to be approved by the Governing body, so the Chair and Headteacher can sign them ready for submission.</p> <p>A synopsis of the accounts which is the Note prepared by NLJ: <i>the reporting requirements and the general issues we face are essentially the same as for the last couple of years, although the financial position and reserves require additional focus now.</i> NLJ presented her report as follows:</p>	

		<p><u>Letter of Representation</u></p> <p>This confirms that the information we as an organisation have given the auditors is complete, accurate and presented in accordance with the appropriate accounting policies and is essentially assurance to the auditors that the financial statements are an accurate representation of our financial position and performance. It confirms that we believe the organisation is a going concern, that we have no unrecorded liabilities, and there are no misstatements.</p> <p>The wording remains unchanged from last year as this is an industry standard letter and the Finance committee are happy to recommend that it is signed.</p> <p><u>The Statutory Accounts</u></p> <p>Once again probably the most pressing issue remains our financial deficit and relatively low levels of free reserves. In the <i>note the key to the financial position in the accounts remains in understanding the nature of the funds we hold</i>. The majority of our £3.4m funds are restricted in the sense that they are made up of fixed assets such as buildings, which are separate to our free unrestricted funds. So whilst we have a balance of £3.4m, we only have £303k available to us to fund any budget deficits.</p> <p>We ended the year with an overall audited deficit of £249k, once adjustments have been made to the pension fund and fixed assets funds we had an operational deficit as per the accounts of £52k.</p> <p>Looking at the balance sheet on page 30, our overall total funds figure is £3.478m. Of this £3.1m is made up of restricted funds such as fixed assets, the remaining £303k is our total general fund or free reserves.</p> <p>Concentrating on the General funds (page 11 for a breakdown), this means that given that we have set an initial deficit budget for 2024/25 of -£115k our closing balance next year will be £169k. With this in mind the auditors have pointed out in their post-audit report that the level of reserves is a concern, but taking into account our careful close monitoring of our budgets, they are satisfied that our free reserves will be maintained in the short and medium term. However the original policy of having one month's salaries as our reserve levels (approximately £500k) isn't realistic in our current position.</p> <p>One unusual item is that we have a surplus on our pension fund But this is actually shown as a zero on the face of the balance sheet (page 30) as we are not able to access these funds. Within the post audit report as well as the reserves, the other key findings specific key findings were Capital projects.</p> <p>Our sixth form block redevelopment and mains upgrade resulted in £247k of capitalised expenditure being added to our fixed assets , of which £168k were assets under construction. This will increase once the 6th form buildings are completed.</p>	
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		<p>There were 6 more general key audit issues which are; Fund account, Income recognition, Regularity, Related party transactions, Management override of controls and accounting estimates, which are generally finance topics not specific to us.</p> <p>There has been one audit adjustment of £20k, detailed in the post audit report on page 15 which related to Early Career Teaching funding. This falls well below the materiality level of £137k, but it is important that you are aware of it.</p> <p>The finance committee were satisfied that the statutory accounts were accurate and a true and fair view and recommend that they are signed.</p> <p><u>The Going Concern assessment</u></p> <p>Our level of reserves continues to be an issue, in order for us to sign the going concern assessment we have to satisfy both ourselves and the auditors that we have enough financial resources to continue operating for the next 12 months. We are asked to assess the risks and circumstances that may impact our ability to continue, taking into account the evidence including the 2024/2025 budget, key assumptions and risks, the reserves policy and our current financial position. We have done this and are satisfied that the going concern basis is appropriate and the disclosures made are adequate.</p> <p>NLJ stated that the auditors thanked JB for their extra work. GA thanked both for their efforts.</p> <p>There were no questions and it was agreed that the accounts should be signed off.</p> <p>There was additional discussion around the funding provided by the government to partly cover the recent pay increases. Also question asked re support for the NI changes to which we have not yet been advised about. We will remain cautious in the budget and revisit in due course.</p>	
1944	Headteacher Report	<p>Report is in two parts.</p> <p>Christmas boxes beat the record from last year. Last post celebrated as always and found a school magazine in the archives with an obituary for the first Davenant boy to lose his life in the trenches.</p> <p>Behaviour and attendance. We are still significantly below national average when it comes to suspensions and we use it as a last resort and take individual needs into account and make adjustments e.g. send and safeguarding students. A session is am and pm. 2 sessions in a day.</p> <p>Disproportionate boys to girls in line with national trends. One Y12 suspension which is unusual and one Y7 which you would not expect.</p> <p>OSDs – we have six in from other schools (including one from a PRU) and two DFS students at other schools. An OSD is often used to avoid permanent exclusions.</p>	

		<p>JDN reported we are now taking a more consistent approach to OSDs with one main point of contact overseeing them.</p> <p>Question was asked about number of students in Y11 being suspended – was this usual at this stage. It was confirmed that not unusual due to high levels of stress at this and a small number of students persistently not following instructions when asked to or being repeatedly rude. Also one physical assault. It was noted that the majority of the year group are settling well.</p> <p>ATE noted that Essex thinks of us as a school that tries to do our best to keep students. The average PEX in schools is 3 to 4 a year however only 4 PEX in 8 years at Davenant.</p> <p>268 Safeguarding issues raised. Question asked is it a small group with a number of concerns. ATE confirmed no not necessarily but it can be a broad spectrum. JDN listed the many outside interventions we use to support the students with approximately only 10% of referrals being successful. CC noted that it is a 2-year waiting time for a CAMHS report. She also noted what a difficult job safeguarding is in schools.</p> <p>Progress checks – Profile of years 7, 8 and 9 very different from 10 and 11. 7 & 9 50% of students high on entry. Last years' Y11 did not reach the same academic grades as current Y13 but the progress 8 was better. Question was asked re measure as no progress 8 for next few years. SME explained how we would be measuring students' progress over that time.</p> <p>Now CofE Ecumenical school therefore we are SIAMs regulated. As noted in the HT report there are some areas that we will need to work on to ensure we are SIAMS compliant across the school. Discussions are taking place and the senior leadership team will come back to the Governors with a proposal. We are currently due to be inspected in September 2025 however AT is in contact with SIAMS to try to push this back.</p> <p>ATE highlighted that he has added in a performing arts and sports report.</p> <p>Access arrangements – a discussion took place re how we are now processing requests to ensure we are JCQ compliant. We have to maintain integrity as an Exam centre. We have received a particularly challenging exams access request from a parent via a solicitor which we are currently reviewing. We do not allow private assessments, all our assessments are via our own external assessor.</p> <p>There were no further questions from the Headteacher Report. AT stated to email him if any questions after the meeting.</p>	
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1945	Update on Attendance	<p>SM confirmed that the new Attendance Officer was now in place. SM discussed the new Absence and Attendance Policy noting the change in times for register completion. SM had a scheduled meeting with Essex to discuss attendance however unfortunately this was cancelled by Essex due to illness and they have yet to offer a date to reschedule. SM will look for clarity with regards to fining.</p> <p>A wider discussion took place around the use of fines with some not in agreement however AT and SM stated that this will be an Essex fine rather than one issued by the school although the school would still have to go through the full process to reach that point.</p> <p>SM reviewed attendance for the year groups with Y11 highlighted as low.</p> <p>SM will be writing to parents with the new attendance policy with specific reference to requests for holidays.</p> <p>In January students below 93% attendance will be receiving a model 1 Essex letter and those below 90% will receive a model 2 letter. We wait until January to get a fuller picture of student attendance</p> <p>AT noted that we are generous when authorising absence for sporting events, theatre and supporting churches and synagogues.</p>	20.14pm JG left meeting
1946	Charities Update	<p>Looking at Alumni Association through Future First. Also offers a portal. Maybe have a day in the summer for ex pupils to visit. AT working on this and reported there is a new archive room. The event would be great for possible donations and creating a wider list of ex-students who can do career talks.</p> <p>SM reported that one staff member invited some ex- students to talk to current students during black history month.</p>	
1947	School Development Plan	AT confirmed that this had been circulated and we fully rolling. Any questions please email him. It is likely a new section will be added in detailing a five-year plan for ITT.	
1948	Committee Reports	<p>Reports have been circulated. GA asked if anything from any of the committees they want to raise by exception then could they please do so.</p> <p>JB confirmed (via Jo McCallig) that CD has been to review the single central record. CD confirmed.</p>	
1949	Governors Code of Conduct	Please read and digest. GA has signed on behalf of the Governors. There were no changes from last year.	
1950	Policies /Policy Review	<p>JB noted that the Pay Policy has been adopted with no concerns.</p> <p>The remaining outstanding policies were agreed and accepted by the Governors.</p>	

1951	Acceptance of Committee Terms of Reference	<p>Discussion around creation of more generic appeals governors committee concentrating on staff and separate committee for students. This would be unnamed governors as not everybody can make each appeal.</p> <p>This item was formally approved.</p>	
1952	School Trips	<p>Two trips:-</p> <p>JDN reported on and recommended a new venue for Y7 residential which she visited with the head of year. The site is on Mersea Island called Essex Outdoors. A campsite on the beach and it will be Friday to Sunday.</p> <p>Request for agreement in principle. Trip to France, Lille Christmas market (December 2025). Thursday to Saturday. JB stated that we cannot levy a charge if Thursday to Saturday, can only request a voluntary contribution, so dates are being reviewed to ensure majority of time is non-school hours to enable charging. The focus of the trip is to practice conversational French.</p> <p>Both trips were approved in principle.</p>	
1953	Risk Register	Nothing to add	
1954	AOB	<p>JB making progress on adopting the new articles for the academy. We need to hold a members' meeting. JB had hoped to have the resolution ready for signing but it will now be done in the new year.</p> <p>There must be a majority of non-governor members, for Davenant this is 4. GA stated that we need to find three new members; the Diocese will appoint the 4th. Mary Vine-Morris and Mike Hicks have agreed (past governors) and AT is looking for one other.</p> <p>There was no other business.</p>	

Date of Next Meeting: Saturday 1st March 2025

The Meeting ended with the saying of Grace at 8.50pm

_____Chair

_____Date