



MINUTES OF THE FEDERATION RESOURCES TRUST MEETING

Thursday 8 October 2020, 8.15am
The Gallery

Present

Emma Gautrey (Chair), Judith Gilboy, Rob Guthrie, Andrew Holt, Martyn Rhowbotham, Stuart Williams (Executive Principal).

In Attendance

John Harrison, Kelly Jackson, Natalie Ray, Sheryl Wilson (Clerk).

1. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

Following an email sent to trustees in which expressions of interest were invited for the positions of Chair and Vice Chair, Emma Gautrey was nominated as Chair and Sam Hearth was nominated as Vice Chair. These appointments were unanimously approved by those present.

2. Welcome introductions and apologies for absence

Emma Gautrey welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies for absence were received from Ian Dodd and Sam Hearth; these were accepted by the committee.

3. Declarations of Personal Interest and Pecuniary Interest

Stuart Williams, John Harrison, Natalie Ray, Kelly Jackson and Sheryl Wilson all declared an interest in the Pay Award agenda item 9.

4. Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 2 July 2020.

The minutes were signed as a true and accurate record.

5. Matters arising from previous minutes

None

6. Clerk's Business

The attendance record for the Resources meetings 2019-2020 was shared with trustees and they were advised that this is published on the website, together with the Register of Business Interests. The link for the annual safeguarding up-date had been emailed to Trustees in order for them to complete the training at home.

A CV from Guy Magrath had been circulated prior to the meeting. Trustees unanimously agreed that Guy's experience and skills would be beneficial to the Resources committee, the next stage will be for ratification by the Trust.

John Harrison and Rob Guthrie have also met with Matthew Holt, a potential new governor for Harington School's Local Governing Body. Andrew Holt declared a personal interest. Trustees' endorsed Matthew's application and agreed for Harington's Local Governing Body to proceed.

7. Harington Budget

Stuart Williams explained that whilst Harington's ethos, culture and product works, unfortunately admissions into Year 12 were lower than expected. The School has a strong reputation for academic excellence in the local area, its results, the success of students progressing to university and its 'Outstanding' Ofsted grade are well established. The issue is therefore not one of performance, either perceived or actual. All of the early indicators through the tracking of student admissions indicated that the School would be admitting to capacity or would be oversubscribed. The reasons for students not choosing Harington is difficult to ascertain. More students this year went to Melton Vale from UCC which would suggest the issue is likely to be a reaction to being under lockdown in Rutland for 6 months or perhaps a curriculum or ethos issue, rather than one of travel. As a result of lockdown, only students from Catmose had the opportunity for a face to face interview and to spend time in the Harington building to experience first-hand its ethos. Catmose numbers therefore remained at their usual level. Research suggests the reason that Catmose students who could study A levels at Harington do not, is because they want a more FE College style experience or, that Harington does not offer the subjects they want to study. Induction sessions were completed virtually which meant that students did not have the same degree of personal contact with the School compared to 2019.

With the pandemic ongoing, the School will be unable to offer an open evening or other on-site experiences that would help to ensure the low admissions numbers are not repeated. The School cannot rely on recruiting students from schools outside of Catmose or UCC in numbers greater than those they have done previously. The strategy therefore needs to be to recruit more effectively from the two main feeder schools; Catmose and UCC whilst maintaining at least 35 students from other schools.

The impact of the fall in admissions is immediate on the School's budget and will unfortunately impact on staffing and resources budgets as a result. More significantly, if an effective plan is not implemented this year to improve numbers, then the financial impact on Harington's budget will be more serious next year. The committee were presented with a detailed briefing paper for discussion, which included a marketing strategy. Discussions also took place as to the curriculum offerings, work had been done through a student survey and what subjects' students were looking to study at A level. Consideration was being given to offering Business Studies and potentially Theatre Studies. It was also agreed that the Harington Admissions Policy should be reviewed, in particular amending the entry criteria.

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John Harrison left the meeting at 9.17am.

8. College Expansion

Natalie Ray handed out the Terms of Reference paper from Rutland County Council for a proposal to proceed with Stage 2 of expanding the College to an 8 form entry. Trustees agreed for Stage 2 to proceed. RCC have commissioned NPS to prepare a feasibility study with Stage 2 dealing with the detail of the preferred site.

Stuart Williams left the meeting at 9.20am.

9. Financial Reports

Teachers' Pay Award

Natalie Ray presented the union and teachers pay proposals with the main teachers' pay range increasing by staged percentages from 0.6% - 2.75% with effect from 1 September 2020. The support staff pay proposal was an increase of 2.75% with effect from 1 April 2020. Natalie Ray, Kelly Jackson and Sheryl Wilson left the room whilst Trustees discussed the proposals.

Trustees unanimously agreed to adopt the nationally proposed pay awards.

Natalie Ray and Sheryl Wilson returned to the room.

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Financial Scorecard

Natalie Ray reported that the audit finished last week and the final report will be presented at the Trust meeting in December. The audit will bring about slight changes in presentations such as IT equipment not arriving by 31 August, the adjustments will be minor.

The 3-year budget proposal had been submitted to the committee prior to the meeting. If the proposals for the Harington budget are adopted, all 3 schools should forecast to break even in 2020-2021. However, forecasts for 2021-2022 are not so positive. The National Funding Formula will begin with effect from 1 September 2021 which will bring an increase to the student funding, but will see the end of the grants received to mitigate the impact of the Teachers' Pay Awards and the increase in Employer Pension Contributions. The funding increase will not be as great as the loss of the grants. Natalie advised that she would continue to check updates on the NFF and would keep Trustees informed of developments.

Question: As the catering deficit out turn is £53,955, why were staff not furloughed?

Natalie Ray explained that at the beginning of lockdown the government advised that staff could not be furloughed if the organisation was funded by the public purse. During lockdown, key worker and vulnerable children did return to school and the catering team were required. They were also deployed to help with cleaning of the site. A claim has been submitted for the loss of catering.

Responsible Officer Audit

Trustees agreed that the report was a good account and valued the feedback.

BACS and Credit Card Statement

Emma Gautrey approved the BACS payment and Principal's credit card statement.

Bank Mandate

A new bank mandate was completed and signed with Emma Gautrey as a signatory in her capacity as Chair of the Resources committee.

10. Response to Covid-19

Trustees were impressed with the findings from the Covid-19 independent audit by Browns across the 3 schools. Trustees commented that the Site team along with staff and students are all to be commended for their work.

11. Sports Centre Update

An email had been received from Rutland County Council indicating that due to Covid-19 they had been unable to proceed with the tender for the Stevenage Leisure lease, therefore it will be extended for another year.

12. Staffing Update

The HR Scorecard was shared prior to the meeting. There are currently two long-term absences.

13. Stuart Williams' PR document

Trustees noted that Stuart's PR targets includes the Harington admissions target. This is a Trust-wide accountability and targets within it will cascade to staff.

14. Policies

Trustees ratified the following policies:

- Federation Safeguarding Policy
- Federation Dress Code Policy
- Federation Stakeholder Financial Management Policy

15. A.O.B.

A letter from Eileen Milner (Chief Executive of ESFA) was shared with Trustees.

Date of Next Meeting

Thursday 10 December 2020 8.15am, The Gallery