**Homerton Early Years Centre**

**Minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body held on Thursday 6th December 2018 at 7.00pm at**

**Homerton Early Years Centre**

**Present**

Kay Blayney, Sophie Bryce, Kate Daenke, Tandy Harrison, Ken Ong (Chair), Alex Pearson (Head) and Sue Smith

By invitation: Rohiny Garyali, Ray Byford (item 1 only)

Clerk: Gwyneth Barton

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|  |  | **Action** |
| **1.** | **Training Session on Orovia** |  |
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|  | Ray Byford of Education Finance, Cambridgeshire County Council, led a training session on Orovia, the new budgeting software. He used the figures for November 2018 as a basis for his explanation. |  |
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|  | Governors noted that Orovia could be used to: |  |
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|  | * Build and set budgets for the coming financial year and plan budgets for future years |  |
|  | * Record income and expenditure in-year |  |
|  | * Compare planned and actual income and expenditure on a month by month basis and calculate variances. These could also be profiled on a quarterly or termly basis |  |
|  | * Show commitments, where orders had been placed but bills not yet received |  |
|  | * Forecast end of year outturns. |  |
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|  | At Homerton there were two main budgets, Fund 01 covering the maintained nursery school and Fund 08 covering daycare. In both budgets, individual lines could be customised to meet the needs of the school. |  |
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|  | Both Fund 01 and Fund 08 were currently healthy, with year-end carry forwards higher than had been projected, £46,000 in the nursery school and £19,000 in daycare. This was in part because the budget had been based on 80% occupancy, whereas the Centre was fuller than in previous years. However, some adjustments were needed relating to catering, as a final bill had not yet been received from CCS and the new company had not yet sent an invoice. Ray and Sue would be meeting shortly to review the figures. Ray commented that the financial position in the Nest in particular required regular review, as it could change very quickly. |  |
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|  | There was far greater uncertainty for future years. The nursery schools’ lump sum was guaranteed for 2019/20, but the local authority had recently written to nursery schools advising them to look at budget building without the lump sum from 2020/21 onwards. However, without the lump sum, the nursery schools would not be financially viable, hence the latest round of campaigning through the Save Nursery Schools campaign. Ray noted that he personally would be providing local authority support to the nursery schools from now on, because of the period of uncertainty they faced. |  |
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|  | Governors noted that the figures on Orovia did not yet include the carry forwards from 2017/18. Comments were also still being written in by hand but from December onwards were expected to be included within Orovia; comments could then be reviewed each month and carried forward if appropriate. |  |
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|  | In discussion with Ray, Governors covered a number of issues: |  |
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|  | * There had been a number of difficulties with the introduction of Orovia, which had made it hard to set the 2018/19 budget and to gather in-year figures to date. However, Ray commented that the system was now 90% operational and that remaining issues were expected to be resolved within the next month or so. |  |
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|  | * Governors asked why schools had had to move to Orovia. Ray explained that the previous software was no longer supported and that the local authority had been seeking a more robust, web-based solution. The standardised format aided reporting to the local authority, who needed to draw in financial data from all schools in order to prepare their own accounts. Orovia was compatible with a range of prime accounting systems, which was important since from April 2019, schools would no longer be required to use to the same wider prime accounting or information management systems. Alex and Sue confirmed that there were no plans at Homerton to change from the current financial management system, FMS, or from the current management information system, SIMS. This position was shared by the other nursery schools and was considered sensible given the wider financial uncertainty currently faced. Governors endorsed this decision and expressed concern at the complexity of the arrangements already in place. |  |
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|  | * Parents were encouraged to make voluntary contributions to the school fund. This could be a useful source of income. It was suggested that it might be worth seeking donations from Homerton ‘alumni’, given the warmth of feeling that many people felt towards their former nursery school. | **Alex/Rohiny** |
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|  | Governors thanked Ray Byford for his helpful presentation and welcomed his suggestion that he come to a Governing Body meeting again when the 2019/20 budget was being planned. | **Alex/Sue** |
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| **2.** | **Welcome and Apologies for Absence** |  |
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|  | Governors welcomed Rohiny Garyali, a Homerton parent who was interested in joining the Governing Body. |  |
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|  | Apologies for absence were received from Roger Lilley, Mick Patel, Mitali Peckham, Ross Sargent and Marisol Basilio Seyler. |  |
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| **3.** | **Declarations of Interest** |  |
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|  | There were no declarations of interest. |  |
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| **4.** | **Minutes of 20th September 2018** |  |
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|  | The minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body held on 20th September 2018 were approved as a correct record. |  |
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| **5.** | **Matters Arising from the Minutes of 20th September 2018** |  |
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| **a)** | **Children’s Centre carry forward** – Alex reminded Governors that there had been a carry forward of approximately £50,000 from the former South Cambridge Children’s Centre. The local authority had agreed to ringfence this money for use by Homerton and Fawcett in their reach areas. |  |
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|  | Alex had recently met with Matthew Beams, Child and Family Centre Manager for Cambridge City District and Early Help Team, and Fawcett to discuss how the money should be allocated. Fawcett was keen to develop its Forest School and Homerton was proposing to replace its astroturf, promoting children’s outdoor activity. Homerton was hoping also to re-establish a music group at the Centre, possibly on a Friday. Governors suggested approaching Shake, Rattle and Roll, a local music group run by several mothers. Matthew Beams was hoping to set up some groups in the Clay Farm area of Trumpington. |  |
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|  | Matthew Beams had asked the schools to submit bids to a maximum of £10,000 each. Governors noted that the actual cost of new astroturf at Homerton was likely to exceed this. Matthew Beams, Homerton and Fawcett would meet again in January to review more detailed costings and bids. |  |
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| **b)** | **Safeguarding Policy** – Ken reported that he had signed the updated Policy and that it had been updated on the website. |  |
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| **c)** | **Lead Governor for Equal Opportunities/Monitoring Racial Incidents** – Sophie confirmed that she was happy to continue in this role. She noted that there had been no racial incidents at Homerton during her time as Lead Governor. |  |
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| **d)** | **Governor induction** – Ken reported that a process was now in place and had already been followed to induct new Governors. |  |
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| **6.** | **Governor Recruitment** |  |
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|  | Governors noted that there was one vacancy on the Governing Body for a co-opted Governor. Rohiny confirmed that she would be willing to take on this role. Governors agreed to consider her formal appointment at the next Governing Body meeting. | **Gwyneth/**  **Rohiny** |
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| **7.** | **Dates for Governing Body and Committee meetings** |  |
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|  | Governors noted the dates for Governing Body and Curriculum and Resources Committee meetings for the coming year. |  |
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| **8.** | **Governor Training and Development** |  |
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|  | The list of Governors’ attendance at training events for the school year to date had been circulated with the agenda. It was noted that Roger’s Safer Recruitment training on 15th October 2018 had been cancelled and that he was rearranging this. |  |
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|  | Governors were encouraged to make use of the programme of training events run by the local authority, possibly at least one every year for each Governor, relevant to their role or interests. As Homerton had a service level agreement with Governor Services, there was no additional cost for Governors to attend specific events. It was noted that training events could be valuable for networking as well as for their content. The termly Governor briefings were also useful and Governors were encouraged to attend. |  |
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|  | It was also suggested that Governors notify Gwyneth of other training events that they attended professionally. Ken noted that he had recently attended training at Addenbrooke’s on Safeguarding. | **Gwyneth** |
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|  | Governors commented that training sessions at the beginning of Governing Body meetings, such as the one just run by Ray Byford, were very effective. It was agreed to add sessions such as these to the list of events attended. | **Gwyneth** |
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| **9.** | **Head’s Report** |  |
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|  | Alex briefed Governors on the following issues: |  |
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| **a)** | **Staffing** – Lucy Holden, lunchtime supervisor and TA support, would be leaving shortly to develop her career at Morley. Arrangements were being made to backfill her role. |  |
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| **b)** | **Visitors** – Homerton had recently received a number of visitors including the curate from St John’s coming in to read stories; MA students from University College London; PGCE students from the Faculty of Education; and Tandy to carry out a Governor visit on communication and language. |  |
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| **c)** | **Training** –Homerton staff had recently received Steps behaviour training. Homerton would shortly be joining other nursery schools and the Faculty of Education to receive training on Planning in the Moment from Anna Ephgrave. Mitali had recently visited another nursery to share good practice. |  |
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| **d)** | **Parent events** – Both the cake stall and the park run had gone well. Alex’s talk on play at the recent parents’ evening had been very well attended and well received. The Christmas story trail, held the previous day, had been very successful. The Christmas raffle had raised £340. |  |
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| **e)** | **Local authority KIT visit** – Homerton had recently had a local authority Keeping in Touch visit. Some points had been identified: |  |
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|  | * Alex would be drafting a much shorter SEF (self-evaluation framework). |  |
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|  | * Some Governors should have up to date Safeguarding and Safer Recruitment training; this was in hand. |  |
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|  | * All Governors should read the DfE’s Keeping Children Safe in Education, as updated for September 2018. Gwyneth would resend the link to Governors: * <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2> | **All Governors** |
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|  | * Governors should be ready to talk to Ofsted about data, particularly in relation to vulnerable children. Alex would run a briefing as part of a Governing Body meeting next term on interrogating and comparing data. It was important for Governors to challenge as well as to support. | **Alex** |
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|  | * Governors should be aware of the Prevent duty and were asked to watch the online video or to complete the Home Office’s e-learning module:   <https://www.elearning.prevent.homeoffice.gov.uk/edu/screen1.html>  Sue asked Governors to let her know what Prevent training they had done, so that she could add this to the Single Central Record. It was also suggested that Kay Dimelow could be invited to run a Prevent training session at the beginning of a Governing Body meeting; Kay Blayney agreed to ask her about this. | **All Governors**  **Kay** |
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|  | In addition to the Governing Body training sessions proposed above, Ken suggested that it would also be useful to programme in a session on Safeguarding, which he offered to lead. Governors welcomed this suggestion. | **Ken/Alex** |
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| **f)** | **Morley early years building** – Governors discussed proposals relating to the future use of Morley primary school’s former early years base, known as the Annexe. This two-storey building, over the road from the main school, had recently been vacated by the school and renovated by the local authority. The local authority had invited tenders for daycare in the building, with a requirement for provision for 0 to 4 years olds, and opening hours from 7.00am to 6.00pm, with a preference for weekend opening as well. The local authority had stated that there was a need for such provision in the local area, due in particular to parents working in shift patterns on the Addenbrooke’s site. The rent payable to the local authority was £41,000 a year for a five-year term. Governors noted that the tender document had recently been withdrawn by the local authority, but was expected to be reissued in January. |  |
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|  | Governors discussed the implications for Homerton if such provision were to open on the site. Concern was expressed that it could greatly undermine Homerton’s viability, since families already dropping primary-age children at Morley would find it more convenient also to drop pre-school age children off at the Morley site. Young children who started at the Morley site were not likely to be moved to Homerton’s nursery school. Other factors could make the risk to Homerton’s viability even more serious, including the new daycare facility being built at the Faculty of Education on Hills Road; increased opening hours at the nursery at Ridgefield Primary School; and the ongoing uncertainty over funding for nursery schools from 2020. |  |
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|  | Governors discussed the possibility of Homerton itself tendering for the provision on the Morley site. Governors expressed a number of concerns at this: |  |
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|  | * The nature of the provision sought and the opening hours were contrary to Homerton’s ethos |  |
|  | * Homerton was likely to be stretched beyond capacity in attempting to run provision at both sites |  |
|  | * The Annexe was not a good site for a nursery, in a two-storey building with limited outside space and no parking. |  |
|  | * Preparing an operational business case was a difficult and time-consuming process, as had been found with the Trumpington bid |  |
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|  | Governors were minded that Homerton should not tender, but should reassess the tender when reissued. Furthermore, they agreed that Homerton should seek to strengthen its own position through effective marketing. This should emphasise what is unique about Homerton, including its ethos; its pedagogy; its Ofsted ‘outstanding’; and its outdoor space. It was suggested that marketing could be further informed by sending a questionnaire to current parents, asking them why they chose Homerton over other providers. A summer fair held at Homerton would also be a good opportunity to promote the Centre. | **Alex/**  **All**  **Governors** |
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| **g)** | **Save Nursery Schools campaign** – The Save Nursery Schools campaign had recently been re-launched, with a useful meeting held at The Fields on 4th December 2018. Governors noted that nationally, the mood seemed reasonably positive: nursery school funding was not obviously a party political issue, but the main challenge would be to ensure that funding was prioritised over other demands. In terms of timing, the issue was expected to be addressed through the Spending Review, which had been scheduled for autumn 2018 but was now likely to be autumn 2019. Locally, MPs were supportive, with Daniel Zeichner a member of the APPG. |  |
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|  | Signatures were being gathered for a petition to raise a Parliamentary debate, with a deadline of 11th January 2019; if these were on paper, fewer than 100,000 were needed. Governors took petition pages and posters to circulate. Governors also asked for these to be sent out to parents with the weekly newsletter and to be sent to the Faculty of Education. Governors noted the need to demonstrate nursery schools’ passion and to illustrate their value for children through clear case studies. | **All Governors**  **Alex** |
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| **h)** | **Centre Development Plan** – Alex had circulated the latest version of the CDP with the agenda plan. White indicated actions not yet started; yellow work in progress; and green actions that were complete. Governors noted that: |  |
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|  | * Parent Governors were supporting the new class representatives. One Whatsapp group was being set up for each class and that parents were finding these useful. |  |
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|  | * Alex had not yet booked training as a new Head, but was still being supported by Kay Dimelow. |  |
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|  | * Parents’ support for the Save Nursery Schools campaign could now be highlighted in yellow. | **Alex** |
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| **10.** | **Key Issues from Curriculum Committee** |  |
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|  | The minutes of the meetings of the Curriculum Committee held on 15th October 2018 and 19th November 2018 were received. The Committee had: |  |
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|  | * Welcomed Tandy and Marisol as new members. Both had agreed to carry out visits linked to policy reviews, one on literacy and one on communication and language. |  |
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|  | * Reviewed data, considering two possible formats and choosing one. The data would be brought a Governing Body meeting next term. It was suggested that Mitali be asked to present it, helping with interpretation and drawing on the discussions that had taken place at Committee. | **Alex/**  **Mitali** |
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|  | * Suggested that Governors would be more able to support events if they received earlier notification that they were happening. It was suggested that Governors be included on the distribution for the weekly newsletter, which include a bullet point list of diary dates. | **Sue** |
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|  | Kate noted that she had been present at the meeting of 19th November 2018 but that her name did not appear in the minutes. Gwyneth agreed to update the minutes and attendance list. | **Gwyneth** |
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| **11.** | **Key Issues from the Teaching School** |  |
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|  | Alex and Kay updated Governors on key issues from the Teaching School: |  |
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|  | * Nursery schools in China had approached the Cambridge Early Years Teaching School, asking them to deliver eight training sessions over the next two years. The Heads of Histon and Brunswick would shortly be going to China on a fact-finding visit. |  |
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|  | * Kay had recently had a positive meeting with the Head of Education at Anglia Ruskin and it was hoped that the Teaching School would deliver training as part of their courses. |  |
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|  | Governors welcomed these developments and commented that it would be important to keep in sight the Teaching Schools’ primary aims of setting standards for early years and of school to school support. Activities should not be undertaken primarily to generate income; and it was also important to be aware the impact on the nursery schools of Heads’ absences. |  |
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| **12.** | **Safeguarding** |  |
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|  | As Safeguarding lead, Ken noted that there were no specific issues to report. The Safeguarding Policy and training had been covered earlier in the meeting. |  |
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| **13.** | **Key Issues from Resources Committee** |  |
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|  | The minutes of the Resources Committee meetings held on 11th October 2018 and 22nd November 2018 were received. Arising from the meeting, Governors discussed a number of issues: |  |
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|  | * Work on the Accessibility Plan was underway; the Plan covered physical access. |  |
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|  | * The latest round of staff performance management had been completed. |  |
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|  | * Following his recent attendance at a training event, Roger had questioned whether it was appropriate for Ken as Chair to sit on the Headteacher’s Performance Management Committee. Ken agreed to follow up with Roger on the advice he had been given. | **Ken** |
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|  | * Resources Committee had recommended that children in the Nest should not be allowed to take up their 30 hours entitlement. Alex explained that there was not room in the nursery school for children in the Nest turning 3 to move up straight away. It had previously been agreed that children turning 3 in the Nest could access their 15 hours of funding. |  |
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|  | Governors noted that the Committee had recommended that the 30 hour entitlement not be accessible in the Nest due to financial pressures. The payment received from Government for 30 hour places did not cover Homerton’s costs; effectively making more 30 hour places available would intensify financial pressures. |  |
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|  | Governors agreed to confirm that 30 hour entitlement would not be accessible in the Nest. | **Alex/Sue** |
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|  | * Ken led Governors in thanking Sue and Roger for their work on the GDPR policies, which were being developed jointly with the other nursery schools to meet GDPR requirements. Governors agreed to ratify the following, subject to Ian Hoare being identified as the Data Protection Officer and to his contact details being added where appropriate: | **Sue** |
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|  | * + Acceptable Use Agreement: Digital Images   + Acceptable Use Agreement: ICT Equipment   + Code of Conduct for All Adults   + E-Safety Policy   + Personal Information Policy   + Privacy Notice – Pupils   + Privacy Notice – Staff   + Data Protection Policy |  |
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|  | The Governing Body considered whether it should be a requirement for all Governors and the Clerk to use a school e-mail address. It was noted that Governor Services had recently advised that this was best practice, but could not be made mandatory. |  |
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|  | Governors noted that using school e-mail addresses could slow down responsiveness, as people would have to log in specifically to check whether they had any Homerton correspondence. They also commented that if professional or personal e-mail addresses were used, the greatest security risk was likely not to be malicious hacking, but poor personal practice in leaving accounts open, screens unattended etc. These points could be covered in the Governors’ Code of Practice. |  |
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|  | Governors agreed not to require all Governors and the Clerk to use a school e-mail address, although individuals could ask for one if they wished, but rather to follow good personal practice in using emails and computing devices. |  |
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|  | * It was noted that Rohiny hoped to join Resources Committee once formally appointed as a Governor. |  |
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| **14.** | **Budget Update for November** |  |
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|  | This had been covered as part of Ray Byford’s presentation. |  |
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| **15.** | **Any Other Urgent Matters** – none. |  |
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| **16.** | **Date of Next Meeting** |  |
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|  | It was noted that the next meetings would be held on Tuesday 12th February 2019 at 7.00pm at Homerton. |  |
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|  | The meeting closed at 9.20pm. |  |