



MINUTES
FROM THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING
OF THE MAIDEN BEECH ACADEMY
LOCAL GOVERNING BODY
HELD ON
MONDAY 9 NOVEMBER 2020
AT 6.00pm VIA TEAMS

Chair: Jonathan James; Head Teacher –Carl Winch;

Members

✓	Jonathan James	(JJ)	Chair
✓	Flossie McGhee	(FM)	
✓	Neville Mapstone	(NM)	
✓	Debbie Wakeman	(DW)	
✓	Carl Winch	(CW)	(Head Teacher)
In Attendance			
✓	Karen Johnson	(KJ)	

✓ those present

1. Procedural Matters

This meeting has been called to discuss one item – Update on School Reorganisation in Crewkerne and Ilminster. As this is an extraordinary meeting to discuss one item, procedure matters will be dealt with at the full LGB meeting on Thursday 26 November.

1.1 Apologies Received – acceptance/non acceptance

All Governors were in attendance.

2 Update on School reorganisation in Crewkerne and Ilminster.

CW provided an update to Governors following the cabinet meeting in which councillors voted unanimously to go ahead with a formal consultation.

CW wrote to Cllr Purbeck stating this was the wrong time for any consultation to take place (letter was shared prior to this meeting).

CW raised concern that this letter was not acknowledged in the cabinet meeting and CW has asked if the councillors have had sight of his letter.

CW hasn't had an adequate response from Cllr Purbeck with regards to this question.

CW reported that the meeting referred to the numbers of pupils reducing from over 400, to at best, 150. These numbers were shared in the meeting but CW had not received sight of these numbers prior to the cabinet meeting taking place.

CW reported that Peter Elliot (PE) has written a letter to Julian Wooster (JW) following his comments at the cabinet meeting, requesting that CW receives an apology for his insensitive comments regarding staff jobs at MBA. It is also noted that BTCT does not agree with the LA proposals. In the letter PE has also challenged JW on remarks he made to the contrary at the cabinet meeting.

CW has met with Liz Smith (LS) from LA and pointed out that parents may choose to send their children to St Barts as MBA doesn't have the experience of teaching those younger year groups. This would mean that by 2023 MBA could potentially have just 50 children in the school. CW asked LS:

- what protection does MBA have that this wouldn't happen
- what evidence is there to justify 3 primary schools in Crewkerne

LS confirmed that the LA couldn't provide a guarantee and that the figures provided are a best case scenario.

CW has sought advice regarding the issue with Nigel Wyatt of the National Middle School Forum. He noted that the 4-week process was relatively short for this type of consultation.

CW is trying to raise the issue with parents and is concerned that they are not aware of the impact this reorganisation will have on children's education. CW is also concerned that parents can't fully engage during these times due to Covid-19 restrictions and a meaningful consultation is jeopardised by the timing of the consultation i.e. during a 'lock-down'.

CW reported that there is a meeting being held by the LA for MBA staff on Wednesday 11th November at 7pm. The LA have conceded to have a meeting for each school rather than staff surgeries due to feelings running high. MBA staff will be more greatly affected by these changes as they're not suitably trained for reception and year 1. CW commented that important questions regarding staff jobs in a re-organisation need to be raised at this meeting.

CW also reported that there is a Unison meeting taking place on Tuesday 10th November to decide on questions to raise at the staff meeting. CW is concerned that the LA have reassured the union reps that jobs will be protected.

A Governor commented that redundancies were inevitable and who is going to pay for those redundancies.

CW noted that the next 4 weeks are an important period to ensure objections are raised.

The Governors discussed the issues raising several points: -

- It was felt parents needed to see the numbers forecast on the documents supplied by the LA.
- Could a parent's Zoom meeting be organised and the presentation provided by the LA be shared
- What is the real objective of the LA with this re organisation

CW made the point that MBA is not a failing school. This reorganisation is taking place simply because of the finances of another school.

It was noted there is reference in the documents referring to MBA being a new school and would require significant funding to modify the sites. It was also raised what is the reference to 'mothballing'

CW has queried with LS. CW confirmed that no figures for the changes have been provided yet but that BTCT would have to fund the changes even though changes are being made by the LA.

What is the best way for parents could have their say

- CW has asked Simon Rawlings if an email can be sent to all parents
- Parents FaceBook page.
- Social media such as Twitter and FaceBook could be a way of reaching parents.
- Using Survey Monkey.
- Sending out an open letter to the local press

It was pointed out that action needs to be taken quickly. It was also asked if the Governing Body needs to put out an official response to the consultation/reorganisation.

CW informed the group that BTCT is considering its options which include

1. building a link with Stanchester.
2. Exploring the idea of secondary provision at MBA .
3. That Swanmead and Wadham become part of BTCT and the LA clears the deficit.

CW explained that the cost of the LA proposal would be greater but the other options means the whole system could remain the same and that all schools remain open. Standards would be raised. BTCT would be carrying out a financial modelling exercise.

CW reported that the LA have only basically put forward one proposal which results in a very limited consultation process.

The governors agreed the following plan of action: -

- Contacting some 'active' parents to inform them about the proposed changes and ask for a meeting to provide facts and discuss actions.
- Using information from the consultation papers to ensure parents are better informed about how the proposals will affect children's education.
- Noted that Andy Berry and Peter Elliot are meeting to ensure a coherent approach to the proposals.
- Letter from Governors to be drafted. CW asked to pull together major points of objection i.e. bad timing, during a pandemic, children already gone through enough, mental health of the pupils, future of MBA – this reorganisation is not being driven by a reduction in quality and that there is an alternative option.
- Exploring marketing techniques such as survey monkey and parent's meetings.
- NW and FM volunteered to attend parents group.
- CW to work with Nigel Wyatt with regards to legality.
- Promote the alternative option.
- Letter to local press.
- School Governors expressed a wish to attend parent's meetings to show their support.

It was also noted that more regular meetings should be held specifically to deal with this matter.

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Date of next meeting - Thursday 26 November 2020