



**Extraordinary Governing Body Meeting – Part I Minutes**

<b>Date/Time</b>	Tuesday 15 <sup>th</sup> March, 2011 at 6:30pm	<b>Location</b>	Sixth Form Centre, Honiton Community College			
<b>Attendees</b>	<b>Initials</b>		<b>Attendees</b>	<b>Initials</b>		
Lynda Price (Chair)	LP		Kate Smith	KS	David Percival DP	
Keith Turner (V.Chair)	KT		Christine Marsh	CM	Janet Boland JB	
Glenn Smith (Principal)	GS		Emma Stephenson	ES	Julian Phillips JP	
Vera Howard	VH		Stephanie Johnson	SJ	Rob Loader RL	
Cindy Vining	CV		Vicki Wright	VW	Alan Williams AW	
Ron Webb	RW		Alison Salter	AS	Jane McCartney JMc	
Gabrielle Kirby	GK					

<b>Apologies</b>	<b>Initials</b>
Michael Clements	MC

<b>Absent Without Apology</b>	<b>Initials</b>

<b>In Attendance</b>	<b>Initials</b>	
Suzette Perryman	SP	Clerk
Andy Holt	AH	Vice Principal
Victoria McIntosh	VM	Solicitor, Foot Anstey, Plymouth

<b>Minutes to</b>
Attendees
Apologies

	<b>Agenda</b>	<b>Led by</b>
1	Welcome	Chair
2	Apologies for Absence	Chair
3	Discussion & Resolution regarding the future status of Honiton Community College following recent changes to government policy.	Chair

<b>Ref</b>	<b>Action or Decision</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Date Due</b>
1	The Chair opened the meeting and thanked all present for attending at short notice. The Chair also welcomed Ms Victoria McIntosh, Solicitor.		
2	Apologies from Mick Clements had been received and were accepted.		



Ref	Action or Decision	Action	Date Due
3	<p>The Chair explained that the meeting had been called to discuss the Academy Status of Honiton Community College. The key reasons being:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most of our secondary schools are discussing it, some have already applied.</li> <li>• There are financial benefits to going before 1<sup>st</sup> September 2011 &amp; we have the detailed timescales, showing we will need to get moving.</li> <li>• The Government wants every school to become an academy &amp; has relaxed or changed the rules accordingly.</li> <li>• This is neither reason to conform nor a reason not to. What we must do is what is best for our students and staff into the future.</li> </ul> <p>The Overview and Scrutiny (ex. RSA) Committee discussed this couple of weeks ago and agreed to call a special meeting. We will need a first resolution that we apply, which will be followed by a second and only then will the decision be final. The questions ahead of us are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are Academies?</li> <li>• Why would HCC want to be one?</li> <li>• What are the next steps?</li> </ul> <p>The Principal has asked Andy Holt (Vice Principal) to lead on this &amp; he has invited Victoria McIntosh from Foot Anstey Solicitors in Plymouth to join us this evening to answer any specific questions we may have.</p> <p>Andy Holt then began his presentation to the meeting. The first step would be the formation of an Academy Trust, which would sit above the Board of Governors. Academy Trusts are Charities.</p> <p>The Academy Trust would handle all the legal issues. Governance would be split into two levels – Members &amp; Governors. Governors would manage the school on behalf of the Academy Trust.</p> <p>Regarding property, this would not be a capital project, so the Academy would operate from the school's current premises. Clear agreements would be needed on land issues. HCC is a Community School, and a 'peppercorn' rent would be paid to DCC for a 125 year leasehold agreement. An Academy is an Independent School funded by the Government. Other schools in Devon converting to Academy status are: Kings, OSM; Clyst Vale; Teign; Uffculme; S. Dartmoor; Ivybridge; Exmouth; West Exe and others, some have already converted.</p> <p>Funding for Academies comes directly from the Secretary of State. AH explained how the details of funding would work, including the issues surrounding insurance of buildings &amp; contents. VM explained how VAT payments/reimbursements are expected to work. Currently the Dept. for Education (DofE) will refund the cost of any insurance policy in full.</p> <p>Staff. Staff would get TUPE across to the Academy. The Principal at Kings has stated on the record that 'No member of staff would be worse off when compared to their colleagues in a maintained school' and Glenn Smith felt the same.</p>		



	<p>The Conversion Process. AH gave an overview of the conversion process using information on the DofE website. The Principal urged caution in relation to fully joining with another school, in order to get through the 'Gateway' into Academy status. He proposed that a 'Collaborative Partnership' be formed with Kings School, OSM (which has recently been assessed by Ofsted as 'Outstanding') in order to move forward in the Academy process.</p> <p>AH invited the Governors to ask questions.</p> <p>CV asked about timescales and deadlines. AH explained that if HCC moves forward before September 2011, funding levels will remain as currently – in essence there is one more full year of current funding levels available.</p> <p>CM highlighted that, from a logistic point of view Kings School was a good fit. GS explained how the partnership with Kings School would work. HCC would retain complete autonomy. Currently HCC would be unlikely to get through the Academy Gateway on its own.</p> <p>CM offered an opinion regarding funding of Grant Maintained Schools &amp; how beneficial the increased control of funds by the school was.</p> <p>LP asked VM about governance as the information she had from the National governors' association was different to that which AH had outlined. VM responded that the Academy model consisted of three layers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. School = Governors )</li> <li>2. Charity = Trustees ) together these form an Academy Trust</li> <li>3. Company = Directors )</li> </ol> <p>As a result, governors have to wear all 3 hats and become: Directors of a Charitable Trust; a Trustee; a Governor. In addition, 3 to 6 governor members from within the Governing Body may be appointed to become members of the Academy Trust. Consequently, these governors would wear 4 hats.</p> <p>ES asked if HCC would retain absolute independence. VM said that it would.</p> <p>JMc asked about premises &amp; ownership – who would own what? VM explained that the 125 year lease covers land &amp; buildings. Central Government will fund capital expenditure subject to a business case being made.</p> <p>VW said that if the college was leaving the Ofsted system, how would the new inspection system work? GS explained how any future relationship with Ofsted would work if HCC became an Academy. It was noted that a new Ofsted Framework was being introduced next year.</p>		
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<p>VH asked if the length of governors' terms of office would change. VM said that under the <i>Articles of Governance</i> governors would serve a 4 year term. KT asked about procurement issues &amp; increased buying power, economies of scale, joint procurement etc. The Principal explained how this would work going forwards if HCC became an Academy. Discussion took place over buying services from County versus other suppliers. GK noted that the £25k set up grant from central government, could easily be used in full for financial &amp; other planning activities.</p> <p>KS asked about the curriculum &amp; how this would work in practise if HCC became an Academy. AH explained that control of the curriculum would be provided by how the new Academy is measured &amp; assessed. He added that the College is not looking to change its curriculum plan or ethos.</p> <p>RL asked – in connection with staff being transferred under TUPE – about the ability of governors to change/adjust pay scales. The Principal explained how he envisaged the new system working. RL also asked what were perceived as the downside or pitfalls of moving towards Academy status. AH said that there was a massive amount of work to be done and, to a degree, the College was venturing into the unknown (along with other secondary schools). Also, there was currently no Bursar at the College, and this was adding to the workload of others within the College.</p> <p>VM said that becoming an Academy would undoubtedly put additional responsibilities on governor's shoulders. But, there were benefits to schools.</p> <p>DP spoke about his experience, similar to the Academy process, in further education. He said that the risks were not immediate, but these grew with the increasing responsibilities of governors. He said he believed these risks could be mitigated, but that ultimately they would increase. The Government wants to break up the bargaining power of the national unions and, in the end the College would probably be forced to re-visit staff terms &amp; conditions. DP also asked about plans for cash management systems within the College &amp; what plans were in place to appoint an able financial manager.</p> <p>CV asked about redundancies &amp; what would happen if Academy status was achieved. The Principal said that he believed that the current redundancy process would be completed prior to HCC becoming an Academy &amp; this would therefore not be an issue. CV asked about HCC's Science Status. The Principal said that this would be retained. CV asked what the opinion of the Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee re. Academy status. LP said that the committee came to no conclusion as they believed that this should come to the whole GB for consideration &amp; decisions.</p> <p>JP asked about any pitfalls. The Principal said these remained largely unknown at present. The first Academies went on the 1<sup>st</sup> September – Uffculme for example – but it was still too early to assess the downsides.</p>		
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JP also asked what would happen if HCC stayed as we were. The Principal said that in this scenario, HCC would not get the additional funding, but that nothing else would be lost. However, the Local Authority is changing inexorably as they lose control of more & more schools.

AH stated that the funding agreement would be a 7 year deal ie. there would be a 7 year notice period on both sides. If an Academy was deemed to be failing new governors would be appointed & the Local Authority would take over the running of the school.

KT asked what the academic benefits would be. The Principal explained how the increased funding would be used to benefit the students.

AS asked about funding for SEN student groups. AH said that there would be significant changes to the funding mechanisms, but that funding would come from the Local Authority. VM detailed how the funding for SEN students would be allocated.

CM reiterated the need for a competent Financial/Business Manager within the College if it is decided to become an Academy. The Principal explained how other schools were appointing & utilising their Financial Managers.

**Following the above discussions, LP said that what she was asking the Governing Body to do this evening was to, in partnership with Kings School, Ottery St Mary, go out to consultation with different parties & stake holders with a view to becoming an Academy.**

**The Principal said that the proposal to the Governing Body was to pass a resolution as a Governing Body to apply for Academy status. LP said she was happy to be the first proposer of this resolution, CM said she was happy to be the second proposer of this resolution. The Governing Body then voted on the resolution. Thirteen (13) governors voted in favour & six (6) abstained. Therefore, the resolution was passed by a majority vote.**

AH asked the GB to set up a working party of 5-6 governors to work with him & the Principal moving forward with the application & towards the final decision.

LP asked the GB to grant the Working Party delegated powers in order that it could make decisions on behalf of the GB up to and until the time came for the final decision by the full GB. **The meeting voted in favour of delegated powers being granted until the final decision needed to be made.**

It was agreed that the working party should consist of members from all the constituent groups. She requested that the Clerk circulate a request for expressions of interest



	In an unrelated matter, LP asked if the GB would approve the HCC Skiing Trip to Austria, planned for February 2012. The college wanted to send letters to parents in the next 2 weeks & this is prior to the next full GB meeting (30 <sup>th</sup> March 2011). <b>The GB unanimously agreed that the letter could be sent out to parents as requested.</b>		
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The meeting ended at 8.20pm

<b>Details of next meeting:</b>			
Date/Time	Wednesday 30th March, 2011 at 6:30pm	Location	Sixth Form Centre, Honiton Community College