



Yvonne Hilditch Chancery MAT [85] 16 September 2019

Excalibur FGB Minutes 20/05/2019

▶ Excalibur ▶ Monday, May 20, 2019 ▶ 17.30 ▶ Chair: Vicky Alsop ▶ Clerk: Sue Lambeth

FINAL: The minutes are confirmed and locked.

Governors Attending: >Lise Houldsworth, Juliet Tomkinson, Vicky Alsop, Nikki Ratcliffe, Jo Bain, Rachel Hackney, Petra Wayman-Zwart, Sarah Sproston, Mike Cross,

Governors Apologies: >Gail Whittingham,

Non Governors Attending: >Sue Lambeth, Yvonne Hilditch

Non Governors Apologies: >

Agenda Item 1 ▶ Apologies and Any Other Business Items

The meeting was quorate and started at 17.33.

The chair welcomed all to the meeting.

Apologies received from Gail Whittingham were accepted.

Governors confirmed that the Code of Conduct has been signed for this academic year.

MINUTE

Items of additional Part One business:

- An absence request received by the chair
- School holiday dates for 2020/21

Agenda Item 2 ▶ Conflict of Interest

No potential pecuniary interest or conflict of interest between an individual and the governing body as a whole in connection with the business to be discussed during the meeting was declared.

MINUTE

Agenda Item 3 ▶ Part One Minutes, Matters Arising and Action Log Review

The Part One minutes of the Spring 2 LGB meeting on 1st April 2019 were reviewed, agreed to be an accurate record of the meeting and will be signed off by the chair.

Comments

Governors noted that PW had attended 'Being Inspection Ready' and 'Effective Complaints Handling' training and was tasked with forwarding SEN training materials.

There were no matters arising.

Action Log review

MINUTE

The actions from the previous meeting were reviewed and marked as complete where appropriate.

The following comments were added:

- JB had explored Trust Governor and found the documents on the system clear. It was confirmed that governors have access to Modern Governor and The Key.
- VA will follow up the action for GW to report to the LGB on the possibility of a self-explanatory new governor pack.
- The Governance survey document has been circulated to governors. A discussion ensued on whether this document is the most recent and it was agreed that it is still relevant, although further information will be sought from the new Ofsted framework.

ACTION

To liaise with GW about a self-explanatory new governor pack.
To RAG rate the governance question sheet and send to VA for collation. (all)
To add an item to the Summer 2 LGB agenda to discuss the governance questionnaire. (Clerk)

Q: Are the questions on the Governance Survey still relevant as Ofsted only met with three governors?

A: The number of governors to meet inspectors will depend upon the focus identified. In the recent inspection visit inspectors requested to speak to the Chair of Governors and the Chair of Trustees. However, meeting minutes were scrutinised. The Scheme of Delegation will determine the governors requested.

CHALLENGE

Q: Could governors still be potentially called?

A: All governors should be up to date and the line of enquiry will be unknown.

Agenda Item 4 ▶ Membership

There were no changes to the membership of the governing board since the last meeting and no current vacancies in accordance with the constitution.

MINUTE

JT's term of office as Staff Governor expires on 31/8/2019 requiring a staff election which will be organised before the end of the summer term. Should JT not be re-elected it was **agreed** that she would continue to attend meetings as a visitor.

No associate members were appointed.

ACTION

To organise a Staff Governor election. (LH)
To ascertain the number of paid hours a governor can work for a school before they are deemed staff. (Clerk)

DECISION

Should JT not be re-elected it was agreed that she would continue to attend meetings as a visitor.

CHALLENGE

Q: Should there be two staff governors?

A: There can only be one staff governor. Staff Governors may not change their designation to any other category. Staff could be encouraged to attend.

Agenda Item 5 ► Finance

YH confirmed that the Budget Forecast Return Outturn (BFRO) due on 21st May has been completed and authorised, and the Summer Census due on 23rd May has been uploaded.

Review and approval of the budget for 2019/20.

The budget for 2019/20 has been approved by Directors and will form the Budget Forecast Return (BFR) by 31st July 2019.

The meeting was referred to the Excalibur 3 year forecast document previously uploaded to Trust Governor and YH highlighted the £76k carry forward, an in-year loss of £1648 and brought forward of just under £78k.

In 2019/20 the in-year surplus is forecast with a carry forward of £97k. This is now a surplus and a larger carry forward than previously shared with governors which has been achieved by careful covering of the maternity leave and the stripping back of all non-essential spending. Staffing decisions have been made at the lowest cost possible but in the best interests of the pupils. For 20/21 a loss is forecast of £28k with a carry forward of £69k. A loss in 2021/2022 of £56.5k is forecast but the school is forecast to be still in surplus in Year 3 by £12789.

Pupil numbers are best estimates and income is based on this and the top slice remaining at 4.8%.

There is movement of teaching staff numbers and support staff numbers as shown on the document and DfE capital monies are being retained to be possibly used for grant funding e.g. work on the school roof.

The Governors **approved** the budget for 2019/20.

The meeting was referred to the Cashflow Forecast, detailed analysis of income and expenditure and a balance sheet.

There were no virements under £10,000 from the original budget, no orders between £10,000 and £30,000, no bad debts to be written off, or assets valued at less than £20,000 for disposal.

School Fund accounts to April 2019.

The accounts are to the end of April 2019 and show a balance of £5118, with £1875 held for Friends of Excalibur and £891 is due back to the school LMS budget. This has arisen due to CE still paying into School Fund which then has to be transferred. A new accounting system at CE will hopefully resolve this issue.

MINUTE

Friends of Excalibur Accounts to April 2019.

Friends of Excalibur have set up a bank account to which JT is signatory and which YH will audit at the end of the year. YH's accounts to April 2019 show the school holding £1925 to be spent on Excalibur children. The bank account is set up but the charity is not and has no charity number. YH confirmed that all money is currently safe.

Parent Mail payments now go into Friends of Excalibur accounts and they pay the charges. Money from the Christmas Fayre was held until the account was set up and then transferred to the Friends of Excalibur account.

A discussion on the accountability of Friends of Excalibur to the governing board if they are not yet a charity took place and governors felt uncomfortable with the situation as the name of Excalibur is involved. There is a lack of clarity around the amount of money taken at events and the profit made. Profit on the Christmas Fayre was thought to be approximately £150. YH has questioned the accounts but had received no response to date.

It was felt that the money was not missing but the cash may have been used for other fundraising events, as no expenses for smarties and Easter eggs were shown. Governors **agreed** the current finances of the Friends of Excalibur are not auditable and had not been set up properly.

The discrepancies in the figures and the lack of audit trail appearing in the figures cause serious concerns and prompt external questions. It was suggested that the committee may be unaware of the requirements.

Governors **agreed** that YH should remain as Treasurer or a member of the school finance team should deal with this going forwards.

RH agreed to draft a letter from the LGB to Friends of Excalibur to ask them to close the account and send the monies back to school. The following wording was suggested 'Due to the delay in the establishment of the charitable status the governors require the money to be returned, which will not be transferred back until Friends of Excalibur have a fully auditable method of dealing with funds in place'.

Governors felt it was imperative to act in order to avoid the school being brought into disrepute and expressed doubts over the capability of Friends of Excalibur becoming a charity, which had been done in order to access further resources.

ACTION

To email GW regarding training completed to establish value for money. (VA)

To write the letter to Friends of Excalibur to ask them to close the account and send monies back to school. (RH)

DECISION

The Governors approved the budget for 2019/20.

Governors agreed the current finances of the Friends of Excalibur are not auditable and has not been set up properly.

Governors agreed that YH should remain as Treasurer or a member of the school finance team should deal with this going forwards.

Q: Has Chess training been factored into the budget?

A: It has not been taken out and represents £1071 per year. The question is whether it is value for money. 6 courses had been completed by those present and those completed by GW were not known. Once known, it will be possible to work out if the purchase is value for money. There was a brief discussion on the value and effectiveness of on-line courses and governors agreed that face to face courses have advantages. The deadline for signing up is 31 August.

Q: Is anticipated income for wrap around care factored in?

A: £40k, the profit for 36 weeks, has been included. Nothing has been included for holiday clubs which will run initially for a year. DfE money cannot be used for this.

Q: Is the education support staff reduction due to natural wastage?

A: This is natural movement. No restructure has been deemed necessary at this time.

Q: Is the after school sports club (ASM) costing more than it brings in?

A: The income is shown at £401 and expenditure at £441. However, there was a balance of £83.90 at the start and there was a brought forward amount.

CHALLENGE

Q: What is holding up the changes to the Friends of Excalibur?

A: YH understands that DBS checks for the committee, a requirement of setting up a charity, are holding up the process.

Q: Why are the monies from the Christmas Fayre not clearly shown on the accounts?

A: This is not known. Expenses show the amount taken from the School Fund for the setting up of the Christmas Fayre including floats. Approximately £907 is unaccounted for.

Q: Is YH in contact with GW?

A: Tracey Mould is responsible but she did not take the money away from Excalibur. Tracey Mould advised the £60 shown came from the Christmas money which was before the accounts started.

Q: Can the money be taken back from the Friends of Excalibur?

A: A governor could write to Friends of Excalibur and YH will not pay the monies currently held for them. The intentions are there but the capacity to action them to the level required is lacking. This is an issue as the annual income could be £9000.

Q: Is there a conflict of interest for GW as Chair of Friends of Excalibur and a governor?

A: It was felt not but she would be contacted in advance of the letter being sent.

Agenda Item 6 ▶ **Chair's Actions**

It was **agreed** that the Chair, and in the absence of the Chair, the Vice Chair, will be given the '**Chair's Power to Act**' on behalf of the LGB as follows:

- MINUTE**
1. Any function of the LGB which can be delegated to an individual;
 2. The circumstances are that the Chair is of the opinion that a delay in exercising the functions would be likely to be seriously detrimental to the interests of:
 - the school
 - any pupils at the school, or their parent, or
 - any person who works at the school

The Chair and/or Vice Chair reported that no decisions had been taken under the Chair's Power to Act on behalf of the board of governors since the last Local Governing Board meeting.

DECISION It was agreed that the Chair, and in the absence of the Chair, the Vice Chair, will be given the 'Chair's Power to Act' on behalf of the LGB

Agenda Item 7 ▶ **School Performance**

MINUTE [Part One Headteacher report/ Assessment data for the summer term 2018/19](#)
A report will be delivered at the summer 2 meeting together with assessment data.

Ofsted Pilot Feedback

LH reported that unofficial feedback had been given but no grading after the visit which focussed on school improvement. It was pointed out to governors that the comments relate to different year groups across the school.

Quality of Education Strengths

There were many strengths including behaviour and relationships, clarity of focus, and challenge with visible prior learning, Maths reasoning in depth, no gender gap, evident progression, Algebra linked to shape work, strong evidence of the development and consolidation of English and Maths skills, good pupil response to feedback, strong phonics and good readers, good vocabulary and sentence development and phonic skills to encode. There was clear intervention for pupils to access school life and learning, clear learning in Science and potential to address misconceptions. Special Educational Needs pupils work was matched to support plan targets, with effective use of Teaching Assistants (TAs) in English and Maths. Strong computing skills were visible with a good range of activities and curriculum intent is in place

NR left at 18.32.

Areas for development

Some evidence of missed opportunities to respond to pupil learning, Science in general is too factual with insufficient investigative and conceptual development. Some greater depth was slowed because of over long whole class teaching and there was some mismatched activity for lower ability pupils in KS1 Maths. Topic work is engaging but lacks a depth of subject knowledge and skills in books. Pride and presentation is high but at the expense of the development of cumulative knowledge. Some learning in topic work lacks depth.

Behaviour and attitudes

Many strengths and no weaknesses were reported.

Personal development / EYFS

Many many strengths and no weaknesses

Leadership and ManagementStrengths

Parents are very positive. Senior leaders have an accurate understanding of strengths and weakness. The Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) is an experienced specialist. There are strong transitions between phases and early intervention is strong. The English lead knows the schematic, Maths shows strong leadership and the LGB is knowledgeable with strong safeguarding understanding. PE leadership is a strength. The Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher show real strength and dynamism.

Areas for Development

There is a small margin of improvement possible in the precision of questioning by the LGB. Some Middle Leaders need a more holistic understanding and have more effective impact. Distributed leadership needs to develop. Middle Leaders need more opportunity for monitoring.

Conclusion

Staff development beyond core subjects is required, as in some subjects pupil work shows coverage rather than quality and some knowledge rather than understanding. Overall Excalibur is a very effective high achieving school. It is clear that school had capacity to improve the identified areas.

The staff worked hard for the visit and the outcomes were extremely positive, with no surprises. All inspectors were very rigorous and the experience has given the school the confidence to move forwards.

Strategic School Development Plan (SSDP) Headlines

LH explained the 2019/20 SSDP to date:

Quality of Education

Priority (P)1 - Science Curriculum

P2 - Humanities

P3 - Greater depth writing

Personal Development

Future aspirations and careers

Challenging stereotypes

Leadership and Management

Strengthening the effectiveness of Middle Leadership

Effectiveness of LGB and questioning

LH proposed attaching a governor to each priority, which governors felt was a good idea. The monitoring role of the trust was also discussed.

Targets on the SSDP have always been smart and Ofsted suggested a column with a clear statement to show what difference each action will make. RAG rating against the action plan will take place and the document will be annotated. The SSDP will be a constantly evolving document to streamline the process and to enable greater accountability.

Ofsted reported that pupil progress is capped due to pupils arriving at levels in line with national expectations and KS1 having been effective. Progress in subjects other than English and Maths is difficult to measure and there are no national benchmarks for subjects.

It was suggested for the future that governors use the data available on tablets in Ofsted discussions.

LGB agendas should focus less on Human Resources (HR), policies and finance and more on pupil learning, progress and outcome, curriculum and school improvement. Ofsted commented positively on the inclusion of impact statements in governors' meeting minutes. However, it could be reworded to 'What is the impact of this meeting on the pupils of Excalibur School?' YH confirmed that finance remains the responsibility of the LGB as are curriculum policies and those specific to the school.

The meeting was referred to Page 14 of the June National Governance Association (Governing Matters) magazine which gave a clear picture of the role of the LGB.

Annual survey of parents Feedback

LH drew the governors attention to the document which is very positive and available on the website. Good ideas and suggestions had been put forward.

Governors agreed that any future parent survey should include a hand in deadline.

Science Development Work(JT)

Intent statements have been mapped out for each year group, showing the progression of skills coverage and skills working together.

JT has contacted Jane Tucker, the Science Lead at Alsager High School, who will look at the Science curriculum.

A staff meeting has taken place to share the work to date, to discuss the importance of working scientifically and the use of skills. Progression of skills has identified key investigations in each year group.

Work on History has started and will move on to Geography. A workshop is scheduled on 24th July to look at greater depth in Science and foundation subjects in order to increase teacher understanding, planning and assessment.

Timetable changes are to be made in KS2 to ensure sufficient time is given to Science teaching in order to provide evidence of work in pupil books. Collaboration with Alsager High School is taking place around investigative formats, GCSE and the importance of Scientific language. An approach is in place for where pupils need to be at the end of each Key Stage. There is an impetus to drive Science forwards which will increase pupils' enthusiasm.

Middle Leadership

Roles will be reviewed and key priorities driven by the appropriate staff with support offered. Planning Preparation and Assessment (PPA) time will be covered differently next year to allow teachers to work with LH on monitoring, which will then become a self-sustaining

Governors thanked the Headteacher and staff for their contribution to the Ofsted inspection.

Q: Is the Headteacher glad the Ofsted visit took place?

A: Yes. The focus is most definitely not solely on Maths and English going forwards.

Q: What have been the MAT level discussions post Ofsted?

A: NR, Liz Martindale and Jenny Whiston attended as trustees. Suggestions included the LGB and trustee minutes need to clearly document where lengthy discussion takes place around pupil progress, including questions and responses and clearly identify challenge. Trustees should set challenging questions around pupil progress for LGBs which should be answered by governors other than the Headteacher.

CHALLENGE

Q: Has the staff survey been completed?

A: Not yet.

Q: How many parents replied?

A: 55 parents had responded which is the greatest number to date. It was suggested that parents could complete it whilst waiting for appointments at Parents' Evenings.

Q: Who are the school Middle Leaders?

A: Anyone who is not a Newly Qualified Teacher (NQT) is expected to have a subject lead role. There are opportunities through the MAT for Science Leads including staging interviews for them to prove the impact of their work. Strengths across the MAT can be shared.

Agenda Item 8 ► Human Resources

MINUTE

Staffing matters

Staffing matters were discussed in the Part Two meeting.

Agenda Item 9 ► Health and Safety

MINUTE

There were no urgent Health and Safety (H&S) issues.

A Cheshire East whole day H&S visit will take place in July, involving a very detailed examination of policies, legionella, asbestos, water and other aspects.

No Health and Safety audit documents had been received since 1st April 2019.

Agenda Item 10 ► Reports from Governors with Specific Responsibilities

Visit reports from governors

Governors felt that the website page on Equality and Diversity was very informative and fulfilled all public sector equality duty requirements, with clear objectives for the whole school and specific groups.

The Racial Equality Policy will come to governors to decide whether to continue it in its present form to or include in the Single Equality Policy with a set of procedures.

JB had assisted with SATs, ensured all procedures were in order, completed the relevant form from The Key and a report will be prepared. A blog was suggested. PW had also attended.

JB has delivered a positivity whole school assembly.

MINUTE

Governors **agreed** that responsibility for SEN be delegated to JB. JB accepted.

MC would like to present on physical literacy at the next meeting.

JB is accompanying Year 3 and 4 school trips.

MC had completed three cohort PE visits and will prepare a blog.

PW had attempted a wellbeing cohort visit in Year 5. However, the nature of the KiVa work and its delivery meant that children might not feel free to speak. It was felt there is some difficulty in knowing how to assess wellbeing and a very interesting meeting with Mrs Bundy had taken place to discuss KiVa. A weekly session every other half term results in the production of a book.

ACTION

To add an item to the next agenda to report on Physical literacy (15 mins). (Clerk)

DECISION

Governors agreed that responsibility for SEN be delegated to JB. JB accepted.

CHALLENGE

Q: How can the effectiveness of the KiVa process be reported?

A: Pupils complete a survey which is reported to Governors. Ofsted felt the best measure of wellbeing is to look at children's faces. Pupils spoke positively about mental health in the Ofsted visit.

Agenda Item 11 ► Safeguarding

MINUTE

The newly appointed NQT is booked on a Level 1 Safeguarding course and JT is to attend the Level 3 training on the Toxic Trio - Domestic abuse, drugs and mental wellbeing.

LH has applied for Level 3 INSET on Managing Allegations.

On September 25th the Safeguarding Children in Educational Settings (SCiES) team are running a training event in Alsager at Pikemere School, which will feed into the school council.

Agenda Item 12 ► Governor Development

Reports from governors who have attended training since 1st April 2019

PW had attended interesting 'Preventing and Tackling Bullying' INSET. Some parents feel their child is bullied and not heard. A discussion ensued around Excalibur parental misunderstanding of bullying as the training had suggested a session for parents or a letter. LH reported that this was dealt with in the response to the parent survey and parents were pointed to the website. Parents may be unaware of or disagree with the definition of bullying or may just hold different views. There may also be a discord between what a pupils says and what parents say. It was felt to be an emotive area.

MINUTE

MC left the meeting at 19.37.

It was felt that the school has a clear policy and a Complaints Procedure.

It was suggested that an explanation of KiVa could be done for governors or for parents at 'meet the teacher' sessions for each year group. Currently there is information on the website and every prospective parent receives an explanation.

Q: Have the parents concerned about bullying spoken to the Headteacher?

A: Some have. No one disagreed that the school handles bullying well.

Q: Are parents aware of the Anti-Bullying Policy and the Complaints Procedure?

A: Schools are privy to a great deal of family information which cannot be shared and this is always difficult to manage but is handled in a professional manner.

CHALLENGE

Q: is the Anti Bullying Policy based on KiVa?

A: KiVa is referred to as one strategy.

Q: Is the wording consistent across documents?

A: Yes.

Agenda Item 13 ► Director of Children's Services Report

The Director of Children's Services Report for Summer 2019 had been read by governors in advance of the meeting and the précis was felt to be useful.

MINUTE

Q: How is the school preparing for Brexit?

CHALLENGE

A: Advice concerns school food, employing staff and alerting parents who may not have citizenship. The responsibility of the school is to put information out to the community.

Agenda Item 14 ► School Policies

Chancery Trust have agreed the following policies:

- • CPD
- • Dealing with Incidents of Abuse, Threats and Intimidating Behaviour Towards Staff
- • Domestic Abuse Policy
- • Leave and Time off Policy
- • Prevention of Extremism and Radicalisation Policy
- • Admission
- • Single Equality Policy
- • Social Media Policy for Staff
- • Social Media Policy for the Wider Community

HR policies have been checked by Cooks Lawyers and are filed in school, with the exception of the Pay Policy for support staff which is with Cooks.

MINUTE

YH has identified Chancery Trust policies and Excalibur policies.

Whole School Food Policy

Work is ongoing to amalgamate relevant section of the Cheshire East policy into the Excalibur one. This will be resolved by the next meeting.

The Curriculum Policy

The document refines everything into one place and includes the intent of the curriculum and the reasons for implementation. The aim is to be aspirational and has been put forward by SLT and staff. It was felt to be a good, concise document.

A discussion ensued about the specific inclusion of tracking and agreed that the wording 'robust tracking of pupil outcomes' should be added, in order to reflect the considerable work done by LH and JT in school. Greater tracking will take place in the future with foundation subjects.

The Curriculum Policy was **approved** subject to the amendments detailed in the minutes.

ACTION To amend the Curriculum Policy to clarify the meaning of SMSC. (LH)

DECISION The Curriculum Policy was approved subject to the amendments detailed in the minutes.

CHALLENGE **Q: What is the meaning of SMSC in the Curriculum Policy?**

A: Social moral spiritual and cultural.

Agenda Item 15 ► Any Other Business

Holiday dates for 2020/21

The dates are in line with the other Alsager schools and are the correct number of days. Discussions are ongoing with Cheshire East over the use of the school as a polling station. If the school is no longer a polling station the dates will be adjusted.

MINUTE

Governors **approved** the holiday dates for 2020/21.

Letter received by VA

Mrs Brooker (a TA in Reception) had requested a day's leave for a surprise 50th Birthday celebration for her husband.

Governors **agreed** to the request for a day's unpaid leave.

DECISION

Governors approved the holiday dates for 2020/21.
Governors agreed to the request for a day's unpaid leave.

CHALLENGE

Q: Who will cover for the requested absence?

A: It can be arranged as it is Sports Week.

Q: Is there a specific policy for Time Off?

A: Yes, this has been updated and this case falls under extenuating circumstances.

Q: Is the leave request late and does it create a precedent?

A: The letter is dated 26th April and LH confirmed that it does not set a precedent as each case is dealt with on its individual merits. The applicant is a good employee with a good attendance record who has submitted a request in the proper way.

Agenda Item 16 ▶ Meetings

The date of the remaining Excalibur LGB meeting for 2018/19 as 15 July 2019.

MINUTE

Governor meeting dates for next year are on Trust Governor.

Agenda Item 17 ▶ Impact Statement

What is the impact of this meeting on the pupils of Excalibur School?

MINUTE

- The post Ofsted plan is directed at pupil improvement.
- The SSDP is based on Ofsted feedback which is pupil centred.
- Ensuring the funds of the Friends of Excalibur are in order is to the benefit of the pupils.
- The strength of the governing board to tackle the Friends of Excalibur financial queries shows commitment to the pupils of the school.
- The governing board reflected on their skills.
- The transfer of the role of SEN Governor to JB is a good use of her skillset.

YH left the meeting at 20.07 and the Part One meeting closed at 20.08.

Governor Agreed Actions set during this meeting: 8

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| ▶ To RAG rate the governance question sheet and send to VA for collation.
For: asap | By: Jo Bain |
| ▶ To RAG rate the governance question sheet and send to VA for collation.
For: asap | By: Mike Cross |
| ▶ To RAG rate the governance question sheet and send to VA for collation.
For: asap | By: Rachel Hackney |
| ▶ To RAG rate the governance question sheet and send to VA for collation.
For: | By: Nikki Ratcliffe |
| ▶ To RAG rate the governance question sheet and send to VA for collation.
For: asap | By: Sarah Sproston |
| ▶ To RAG rate the governance question sheet and send to VA for collation.
For: asap | By: Petra Wayman-Zwart |
| ▶ To RAG rate the governance question sheet and send to VA for collation.
For: asap | By: Gail Whittingham |
| ▶ To email GW regarding training completed to establish value for money.
For: asap | By: Vicky Alsop |

Excalibur LGB Meeting Summer 1 2019 *dated:* 20/05/2019

Minutes approved by Yvonne Hilditch