

Minutes

Goldstone Federation Governing Body Extraordinary Meeting Held on Wednesday 10th May 2023 5.00pm Cheswardine School

In Attendance

Rachael Williams- Headteacher	James Cartwright- Chair
Corrine Davies-Griffith- Associate Member	John Lutner
Mike Pound	Jonathan Deakin
Joanne Davison	Neil Bentley
Ashleigh Routley- Clerk	

1. Apologies for absence

Governors to notify the Chair or Clerk prior to the meeting where possible and governing body to Consent to absence.

Received from	Reason for Absence	Consent for Absence
Kelly Mitchell	Unknown	No
Caroline Henderson	Sickness	Yes
Helen Williams	Work commitments	Yes

2. Introduction from Chair

Chair- The reason for our meeting is to discuss the news of the forced academisation of Cheswardine School. I think we'd all agree that the news hit us really hard and the decision is no reflection on Rachael or any of the staff. We need to discuss what this means for the Federation going forward and we need to be mindful of timelines as we need to let staff and parents know.

Head- So far only Corrine, Danielle and the Governors know.

3. Academy Order

(Appendix A1 & A2)

The Academy Order and letter had been received and read by the Governing Body prior to the meeting.

4. Update on Cheswardine Academisation

Update from Headteacher including proposals from DfE and any correspondence.

Head- Andrew Warren first contacted us in September 22 when the new descriptors came out regarding coasting schools. I feel we should have done more then to start exploring MAT's and we may be in a better position now. However, we have been waiting for an Ofsted visit and if the school were rated good we may have a case to revoke the order although I think that's unlikely to happen. That being said academisation isn't going away and could give real benefits to both schools. More funding is apparent and more capacity to improve as the Headteacher isn't doing everything in isolation.

The Delivery Officer (DO), Catherine Ward, who I spoke to on 2nd May has to put forward the best academies she sees fit within a reasonable geographical radius. She is really interested in creating some cross border arrangements as the academies in Shropshire are presenting capacity issues and maybe introducing outside MAT's and building a Hub on the border would mean faster improvements and greater capacity. She seems to be favouring Collective Vision Trust (CVT) and is having a meeting with the Local Authority (LA) and them on 15.5.23.

I met with the CVT and was impressed by the schools and the arrangements in place; I did feel there would be benefits for our Federation to academise with them. I also had reservations about our small village schools and their more suburban identities but also felt I needed to find out why they had capacity and the ones local to us were thought not to.

I therefore studied financial reports 21/22 from some local trusts and could see issues. The 3 I looked at are running large deficits and one is leading to capacity to support growth issues. Whereas the CVT schools have made great progress since joining and are running no deficits.

Other schools in our area would be set to join CMAT, which is a diocesan MAT with a Christian ethos.

There are very few schools in this area who are not committed to an academy already or when they do will have to join CofE MATs. That could lead us to isolation.

In conclusion I can see exactly why the DO is considering CVT even though I mentioned the Marches for example.

Governor- If Cheswardine weren't being forced would you want to look elsewhere or do you feel the collective vision trust is the right fit?

Head- It's not a decision I feel should be left down to one person.

Governor- What is the staff opinion on MATs?

Staff- I have one child in a maintained school and one in an academy and the academy just feels like any other school.

Governor- My worry is that the collective vision trust may look at Cheswardine and says it's not viable to keep open and close it.

Head- This has been my worry too but equally they have a team there that can help Cheswardine and it may help with numbers and improve our rating.

Governor- How does it work budget wise if both schools joined as a Federation?

Head- Two budgets and the MAT would take 2 top slices as the LA do.

Governor- I have spoken discretely with some of the parents at Cheswardine to see what their general feeling is towards academies and the general thought is actually positive. Not sure what the feeling is at Hinstock?

Clerk- As a parent of a child at Hinstock I have no negative feelings towards academies.

5. Timelines

Head- If just Cheswardine were academising, the DO could push it to September and then it will take 6-9 months to convert. If the federation wants to convert then Hinstock must apply for an Academy order by the 30th June.

The CEO of CVT, Lynn Jackson is coming over to see both schools on 16.5.23. She has expressed the opinion that the Federation is more desirable than Cheswardine alone.

All available Governors expressed an interest to be present at the school visits or meet with the CEO after her visit.

6. Options appraisal for the Federation and Hinstock

Chair- We are being forced to academise at Cheswardine and Hinstock would have to be academised by 2030 anyway. If Hinstock decided to academise as well there may be more options for the federation.

Governor- If we agreed that it wasn't the right time for Hinstock, what would we achieve by waiting?

Governor- My general feeling is that if Cheswardine is going then so should Hinstock. We would achieve nothing by dissolving the federation.

All governors were in agreement that the Federation should remain and that Hinstock will voluntarily academise along with Cheswardine. The governors voted and passed a resolution to convert to academy status with Cheswardine.

Governors are aiming to explore other MAT's throughout May to introduce the GB and see if that would encourage sponsors for the federation. Also to explore how they run governance in those MAT's.

Governor- My concern is with the staff, how do we approach telling them before Lynn comes in later this month?

Governor- I would definitely support telling the staff as soon as possible.

Governor- I think we need to be transparent with the staff. Tell them about the Academy order and that the Governing body have met to discuss every possible option.

Staff- I think it needs to be face to face and I know logistically it will be hard to get everyone together.

Governor- We need to encourage staff to fire questions at the GB and Rachael so we can relay them to the DfE and Collective vision trust.

Head- I'd have to do 2 separate meetings on the same day, starting with Cheswardine.

All available governors agreed to be present at staff meetings to assist the Headteacher and to pass on any questions the staff may have to the LA and CVT.

7. Timelines for joint academisation

Discussed in items 5 & 6.

8. Future role of Governing Body

(Appendix B)

Staff- Would the schools still be able to work together as Goldstone Federation? How would it work with both schools academising?

With the decision of the Federation to remain and both schools to move towards academisation, this will be explored further with the CVT and any other MAT's that are approached to gain a better understanding of the needs and roles of the GB.

9. AOB

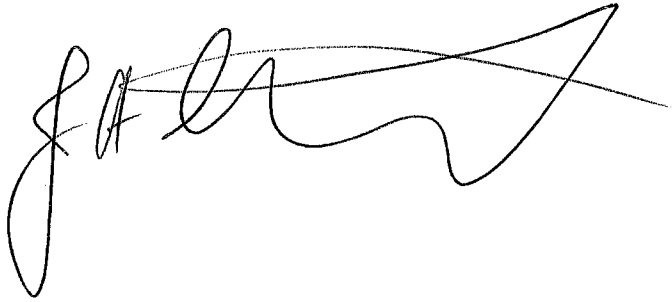
None

Meeting finished at 18:25pm

Summary of actions/activities following the meeting

Agenda Item Number	Task	Responsibility/Timescale
6	Headteacher to inform staff at both schools with the support of Governors	Headteacher Mike Pound Jo Davison Neil Bentley Friday 12 th May 2023
5	To work towards applying for Academy order for Hinstock	Headteacher Governing Body Clerk Deadline: 30 th June 2023
5	Headteacher and Governors to meet with CEO of CVT.	Headteacher Governors Tuesday 16 th May 2023

	Headteacher to seek guidance from DO re: academy application for the Federation	Headteacher Ongoing
	Annex B form to be completed and sent back to LA	Finance & Personnel Committee Next Meeting Tuesday 6 th June 2023

 6/7/23

