



## MEETING MINUTES

**Meeting:** BASG EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

**Date & Time:** Monday 11 October 2021 at 5.00pm

**Location:** Virtual meeting via Zoom

**Present:** Paul Randall (PR) (Chair), Anne Sheddick (AS) (Vice Chair), Maggi Bull (MBL), Bernadette Allison (BA), Andrew Brown (AB), Gwyneth Langley (GL) (Secretary), Jo Pearce (JP), Peter Lerner (PL)

	<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Action</b>
<b>1.</b>	<b>Apologies for Absence</b>	
	Martin Baxter (MBR) had sent apologies for absence.  Paul Randall, Jo Pearce and Andrew Brown had advised that they would be late arriving to the meeting.	
<b>2</b>	<b>Notification of Any Other Business</b>	
	There were no items tabled for discussion under Any Other Business	
<b>3</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>	
	Gwyneth Langley – BEP	
<b>4</b>	<b>Approval of Minutes From the Meeting Held on 13 September 2021 and Review of Actions</b>	
	The minutes of the meeting held on 13 September 2021 were confirmed as an accurate record and approved.  <i>It was agreed to take item 6 next</i>	
<b>6</b>	<b>Local Networking Groups</b>	

	<p><u>Jordans Group</u></p> <p>The Jordans Group would next meet in early November 2021. AS would advise of the date.</p> <p><u>Aylesbury Group</u></p> <p>The Aylesbury Group had met on 23 September 2021. AS had attended the meeting. MBR had circulated notes following the session.</p> <p>Headteacher Performance Management had been discussed. AS considered that there were some inaccuracies in the notes circulated that were of concern. The independence of external advisers to HTPM processes had been discussed as a follow up. There had been a history of School Improvement Advisers carrying out this role. This was thought to be a conflict. Best practice advice was that the external adviser was changed every few years. Separation of duties / roles was good practice. AS had consulted DfE and NGA advice to confirm this. AS would write a communication on this which could be sent out via a newsletter. The importance of referencing DfE / NGA documentation that confirmed the advice being given was acknowledged and this would be included.</p> <p><u>Chesham, Amersham, Wendover and Great Missenden Group</u></p> <p>This group would meet on 1 November 2021.</p> <p><b><i>Paul Randall and Jo Pearce joined the meeting</i></b></p>	<p><b>AS</b></p> <p><b>AS</b></p>
<b>5</b>	<b>Communications with Bucks Council / BESST</b>	
	<p>PR addressed a number of concerns that had been raised by committee members relating to the launch of BESST at the beginning of the Autumn Term 2021 and BASG's involvement in this.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- PR considered that BASG continued to provide challenge to the LA. Involvement in the BESST programme did not mean that BASG was 'in cahoots' or 'in bed' with the LA. PR proposed that he would draft a Memorandum of Understanding to avoid any lack of clarity on this. This would be circulated to BASG and the School Governance Consultative Board for review.</li> <li>- The requirement for BASG to remain independent was acknowledged in order that the group continue to hold the LA to account.</li> </ul> <p><b><i>Andrew Brown joined the meeting</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- PR explained that the timeframes presented to PR / AS for agreement regarding the BESST programme over the summer period had made it very difficult to communicate plans to the rest of the group before they were finalised. Decisions had had to be</li> </ul>	<p><b>PR</b></p>

made quickly and in line with the LA's desire to launch the programme at the beginning of the Autumn Term 2021.

- AS had met with some LA trainers to clarify that the focus of training should be on the role of governors.
- The offer of payment to BASG for training was made by the LA. They considered this ethical. Payments would be made directly to the BASG bank account. PR clarified that the BASG constitution did allow for voluntary contributions. The funding could be used to develop the website. PR did not believe that this compromised the independence of the organisation.
- It was clarified that governor training had been provided free of charge last year and had been marketed in a similar way.

***Peter Lerner left the meeting***

- PR had not had sight of the advertising for the BESST programme prior to this being distributed. PR had now clarified to the LA that no advertising should go out with the BASG name on in future without permission.
- PR / AS had sent views to the LA on the recruitment of a Governor Support Officer. It was not thought that the advertisement for this role had gone out as yet.
- The desire to have a closer link to elected members was noted. There had not been an elected member present at the last meeting of the School Governance Consultative Board and this had been disappointing.
- It was thought that NGA membership, currently funded by the LA, may be at risk in the future. The LA may believe that the Governor Support Officer they plan to recruit would be able to replace NGA membership. PR was highlighting the value of NGA at every opportunity. It was thought that some members of the Education Services team understood the importance of this.
- PR acknowledged that discussions and plans should have been better communicated to the whole group. It was accepted that there was a need to discuss big issues and decisions as a collective in the future.

A number of members reiterated concerns previously communicated in e-mails about lack of knowledge of BASG's involvement with BESST prior to communications to all governors and lack of consultation with the group as a collective.

PR confirmed that the constitution of BASG did allow for individual committee members to make decisions on behalf of the group in

	<p>between meetings. However, it was agreed that there should be an opportunity for discussion around big decisions or issues.</p> <p>AS suggested that there was a need to be mindful of what the LA wished to be in control of or participate in in the future. This may include services that they have previously stepped away from and that it may be relevant for the LA to provide. AB highlighted that Simon James had indicated that he had identified an opportunity for a traded income stream and he was keen to develop this.</p> <p>JP highlighted the importance of reaching out to a wider pool of governors to gain views and diversity of thought. There were c. 3500 governors in Bucks but very few were consulted by the LA on plans or involved in the focus groups that had been held. There were a multitude of training opportunities now available for Governing Boards and this could be confusing. It was agreed that finding a way to reach out and help clarify would be helpful. The Chairs Network group could help with this.</p> <p>GL suggested that the launch of BESST had prompted additional discussions within Boards around governor training which was positive.</p> <p>AB suggested that Patricia Birchley may be a useful elected member to contact and offered to contact her to understand availability to meet and engage with BASG.</p> <p>MBL explained that she had been contacted by the Diocese of Northampton to represent them on the Children’s and Education Select Committee.</p> <p>It was highlighted that the Children’s and Education Select Committee had recently concluded a Parent Governor representative election process and this may provide a different perspective and additional focus on governance. The vacancies had been widely advertised. It was known that Primary Parent Governor vacancy on the committee had been filled but not known whether governors had been elected to the other two vacancies.</p> <p><b><i>Jo Pearce left the meeting</i></b></p>	<b>AB</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>BEP Update</b>	
	<p>GL gave a brief update.</p> <p>Governing Board engagement with the BEP training programme remained strong. BEP were adding course dates on popular topics where necessary and had included some new courses (such as Pay and Performance: The Role of Governors, Equalities and Risk Management) following feedback and requests from Boards.</p>	

	<p>GL was not aware of any key issues that should be raised with the LA through the Governance Consultative Board.</p> <p>The next BEP Chairs Strategic Briefing would take place on Friday 12 November 2021. This was a free event for all Chairs or their representatives regardless of engagement with BEP. GL thanked PR for highlighting this at the Executive Directors Briefing.</p>	
<b>8</b>	<b>BASG Newsletter</b>	
	<p>GL confirmed that the next BEP newsletter would be at the end of the Autumn term 2021 and GL / PR would discuss this nearer the time.</p>	<b>GL / PR</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>Buckinghamshire Challenge Group</b>	
	<p>AS considered that there was confusion around the programme. There had been very tight timescales around the last event / workshop which had made it difficult for schools to attend.</p> <p>It was noted that there were several events and activities happening simultaneously which created confusion.</p>	
<b>10</b>	<b>Side by Side Reference Group</b>	
	<p>The Side by Side Reference Group had met in the first week of September 2021. There had been no minutes of this meeting published as yet. There was currently no date set for the next meeting. PR would chase on this.</p> <p>It was agreed that the delays to this should be raised at the next meeting of the School Governance Consultative Board. Schools were unclear where they should seek support and was little communication on this.</p> <p>MBL expressed frustration that the grading of schools had not moved despite the Side by Side programme. It was acknowledged that some, but not all, of this was due to the pause in Ofsted inspections.</p>	<p><b>PR</b></p> <p><b>PL</b></p>
<b>11</b>	<b>Schools Forum</b>	
	<p>The next meeting of Schools Forum would take place on 12 October 2021. It was anticipated that the Forum would discuss High Needs Block Funding and SEND funding.</p>	
<b>12</b>	<b>Governance Consultative Board</b>	
	<p>It was disappointing that there were no elected members present at the meeting on 29 September 2021.</p> <p>AS had produced an action list to support the Board and help follow up actions.</p>	

	<p>MBL suggested that the Board may be able to help focus the work of LA Officers. The Children's and Education Select Committee were currently doing this and were looking at the recruitment of social workers.</p> <p>The next meeting of the Consultative Board would be on 8 December 2021.</p>	
<b>13</b>	<b>AOB</b>	
	<p>The continued challenges faced by schools in managing the ongoing Covid-19 situation were noted.</p>	
<b>14</b>	<b>Dates / Times of Future Meetings</b>	
	<p>A date / time for the next meeting was agreed as follows:</p> <p>Monday 8 November 2021 5pm</p>	

The meeting closed at 6.35pm