



ABU DHABI

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2020

Monday 23rd November 2020

Zoom Webinar

The Hon. Secretary, Ms Reema Traynor, welcomed all in attendance at the British School Al Khubairat's Annual General Meeting for 2020. The Hon. Secretary continued that, due to the restrictions in place resulting from the current COVID-19 pandemic, the decision had been taken by the Board to hold the AGM online via Zoom Webinar. It was the hope that the usual face to face format would return for the AGM in 2021.

She explained that, as in previous years, the meeting was not quorate and would therefore dissolve for a short period of approximately 15 minutes. During that time, the Head Boy and Head Girl of Secondary, Vedant Khanna and Amelie Yazdabadi, would give short video talks on what it meant to be a BSAK student.

Following expiry of the requisite time period, the meeting reconvened and was declared quorate under Paragraph 6 III (ii) of the Constitution.

The Hon. Secretary informed the attendees that she was joined on the webinar panel by her fellow Governors, the Headmaster and the Bursar.

1. Adopt the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of 2019

The Hon. Secretary asked for the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting 2019, which had been posted on the School's website and parent portal from the 1st of November 2020, to be adopted by the meeting attendees using the 'raise hands' function on the Zoom Webinar.

No objections were noted from all present and the Hon. Secretary declared them approved.

Proposed: John Foster

Seconded: Lois Magee

Following the adoption of the Minutes, the Hon. Secretary introduced Mr Sean Magee, the Board Chair.

2. Introduction from the Chair – Mr Sean Magee

Good evening BSAK Community,

On behalf of the Board of Governors I would like to formally welcome you to the Annual General Meeting of The British School Al Khubairat.

As with everything else in 2020 the AGM is not being delivered as normal within the School due to COVID 19 safety restrictions. Tonight we are speaking to you online, rather than in the room, something we are all more accustomed to these days.

2020 has been a challenging year for our School community. The pandemic presented an unforeseen health risk to our families. We are grateful to the leadership of the United Arab Emirates for measures quickly adopted to keep our families safe in Abu Dhabi.

Of course, these safety measures presented logistical challenges, as our school strives to progress the education of our children during these uncertain certain times. This challenge will continue in the months ahead.

I wish to make the following acknowledgements;

To our Staff and Leadership Team – We thank you for your dedication and creativity, adapting to this year's challenges and new working methods. This is not easy and is much appreciated.

To our Parents – We thank you for your continued support of BSAK. You will have found yourselves stretched to the limit this year, overseeing distance learning, often while distance working. This is not easy. We encourage Parents to communicate with the School, to provide feedback both positive and negative. This encourages our Staff in acknowledging our successes and where raising issues, provides much needed visibility to the School, who can assess, adapt and improve where possible.

ADEK – We thank ADEK for working flexibly and collaboratively with us at a difficult time to facilitate the School's work. This has not been straightforward with liaison and approvals required with many stakeholders and our strong relationship supports this process.

Sponsors – We thank His Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, our School's sponsor, and the ruling family of Abu Dhabi for their continued support of our School. BSAK was originally established in 1968 on land which the late President His Highness Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan generously donated and the School was registered by way of His Highness' Emiri Decree in 1971 which amongst other things donates land to the School in perpetuity.

The School has a long association with the British Embassy and the Ambassador is the School's Patron. The School has been formally recognised as an Embassy school this year which solidifies this strong collaboration further.

I thank my peers on the Board of Governors for their time volunteered to support the School in normal times and in times like these. This evening we have 2 positions to fill on the board – of which more later.

Finally, I would like to thank our Headmaster Mark Leppard for his exceptional leadership in a year of constant challenges. We note his hard work and dedication and his vision for the School.

The Headmaster is supported by a great team of Staff working together to make sure we provide the best education possible to our children. You will hear more details in the Headmaster's Report to follow on the achievements of the School and our Students this year. Please also refer to the Governor's Annual Report for the 2019-20 Academic Year, which will be distributed to you all in the coming days and provides further details.

With that, I thank you for joining us this evening and again thank you for supporting BSAK.

3. Report from the Hon. Treasurer

The Hon. Secretary advised the meeting attendees that the Honorary Treasurer's Report and Audited Financial Statements have been posted on the School website and parent portal for review since the Thursday the 12th of November 2020. As the AGM was being held virtually this year, any queries on the Treasurers Report and Audited Financial Statement had been requested in advance. The Hon. Secretary confirmed that no queries on the Honorary Treasurer's Report or Audited Financial Statements had been raised.

The Hon. Secretary proceeded to ask those present to consider and vote on the following resolutions by using the 'raise hands' function on the Zoom Webinar:

1. "That the audited financial statements for the year ended 31st August 2020 be approved and published"

A resolution of the meeting that the audited finance statements for the year ended 31st August 2020 are approved and hereby published.

It was noted that nobody opposed the motion, it was passed unanimously.

Proposed: Gareth Jones

Seconded: Andrew Popplewell

2. "That the auditors KPMG be appointed as the School auditors for the academic year ending 31st August 2021".

It was noted that nobody opposed the motion, it was passed unanimously.

Proposed: Zaheer Nasser

Seconded – Owais Afridi

4. Ballot for Parent Elected Governors

The Hon. Secretary explained that there were 2 vacancies for Parent Elected Governors this year and 4 candidates putting themselves forward for the roles. Each candidate introduced themselves in a short video:-

- Owais Afridi
- Sean Magee
- Pamela Meenagh
- Inderpal Singh

The Hon. Secretary thanked the candidates for their video submissions and explained that a Poll would shortly be launched to allow the parents in attendance to vote for their preferred candidates.

She reminded the meeting attendees that only BSAK parents could vote for Candidates and asked that any attendees who were not parents at the School to refrain from voting. Each parent could only vote for a maximum of 2 candidates as that was how many vacancies there were on the Board.

The Poll was launched and closed after 30 seconds. Whilst the votes were being ratified by the Clerk, the Hon. Secretary introduced the Headmaster, Mr Mark Leppard, for his report.

5. Report from the Head – Mark Leppard MBE

Good evening BSAK community and welcome to the School AGM. As well as a constitutional necessity, we all believe that it is important to have this opportunity to meet face to face.

Unfortunately, being in the same room this year is not possible. The easy thing to do would have been to just circulate the annual report, but as a Board and School we wholeheartedly believe we should still hold a live AGM as it is important to us all.

The more our community is involved in the School, the better we all understand one another and can work together to ensure we provide the students with the very best opportunities we can. Nothing else and I mean nothing else is acceptable.

Before I continue I would like to acknowledge my Senior Leadership Team who support me as Headmaster to ensure we deliver a successful academic program and that the non academic areas support this:

Heads of Schools; Elaine Rawlings, Teresa Woulfe,

Bursar; Michael Mason,

Deputy Heads; James McBlane, Nigel Davis, Pete Collings, Ellie Edgar,

Assistant Heads; Jo Bailey, Charlotte McDowell, Sam Walter, John Foster, Alistair Thompson, Gareth Jones and Rafeef Kadhum.

I would like to take this opportunity to personally thank this amazing team for their dedication and hard work that they demonstrate on a daily basis to ensure our holistic education provision is nothing but outstanding.

I also want to acknowledge and thank our Board of Governors under the Leadership of the Chair, Sean McGee. They play the role of critical friend and I never feel unsupported. Their focus is clear: Are we doing the very best for each BSAK child? This in fact is our focus throughout BSAK.

The 2019-20 academic year was unprecedented and I hope I have managed to capture it in my contribution to the annual report. Despite the global pandemic, I believe, even with all of the challenges faced, it was a very successful year.

Writing my speech for tonight was an opportunity to reflect on the year, celebrate what we have achieved but also challenge ourselves to see if we could do things even better. There is a great deal to be extremely proud of at BSAK for the 2019-20 academic year and it is important, particularly when we are faced with so many unprecedented challenges that we do reflect on the many positives that may be forgotten.

At this stage I think it is important to reflect upon the achievements of the previous year and with the global pandemic I think this is vital as we often forget our achievements when we are in the middle of such a challenge.

BSAK is an exceptional school that offers a first class holistic education. The cornerstone of this holistic education is our academic provision. Despite the disruptions in term 3 our academic outcomes were once again first class throughout the school. I'd now like to share with you a high level summary of our students academic achievements. I deliberately stated high level as in school we have the tools and expertise to drill down from the key stage data, through year and class groups down to individual students. The ability to do this means we can be proactive rather than reactive and also approach each child's academic provision on an individual basis.

The picture in KS2 is very positive and shows a consistent picture over the past 3 years. There are pockets where we feel more attention is required due to Distance Learning, such as Science, but we feel part of this may be due to the lack of practical opportunities due to restricted access to school.

However, overall at the meeting 3 and above and 4 and above we are in a very strong position compared to all schools in the UK.

Key Stage 3 paints an equally positive picture with 94% of our cohort meeting 4 or above compared to 75% in the UK and 35% attaining 7 and above compared to 25% in the UK.

Last year's GCSE and A level situation was extremely challenging, but I believe the rigorous process the school created ensured every student achieved a fair and reflective set of exam results.

Pre Covid our results were predicted to be up on previous years and we see uplifts across the board. In the UK there were improved results as well but our results can stand against anyone. With 69% at 7 and above compared to 28% in the UK and 99% 4 and above compared to a UK figure of 77% BSAK GCSE students have clearly done exceptionally well.

Our A level success is also impressive with:

27% of grades at A*, 56% A-A*, 79% A*- B and 95% A8-C compared to 14%, 38%, 65% and 87% in the UK. Our BTEC results were outstanding for another year and it is important to point out that the BTEC assessment was not impacted by Covid. 93% of BTEC results were at Distinction*, equivalent to A* and 100% were at Distinction, or above equivalent to A or above.

I want to thank all of the BSAK team from our dedicated support staff to our inspirational teachers for these exceptional results.

You know me well enough by now to know we will be striving to exceed these, but the bar is now set very high.

After BSAK we have another positive picture with our student destinations.

To summarise this, BSAK ensures doors are open for pathways our ambitious and talented students wish to follow.

Pre Covid our holistic educational provision meant not only the academic aspect was well delivered, but the co curricular, pastoral and enrichment aspects were also a focus.

With over 100 co curricular activities running on a weekly basis, there really is something for everyone. Our drama and music and sport provision was superb. I am delighted that from the Spring break through to summer we ran hold remote music and sports activities. House competitions continued and we have since built on this to close the gap between what happened pre Covid through to today. It is not identical or an equal alternative, but we are aware how important a part it plays when offering a holistic education.

Our last international sports competition was our U19 students competing in the inaugural U19 BSME Games. I was delighted that we were crowned Champions at the competition in Muscat.

It would be remiss of me if I did not talk about the impact Covid and Distance Learning have had.

Term 3 was completely distance learning and in that time both families, students and staff worked exceptionally hard to ensure a quality education was delivered.

We came to terms with SeeSaw, Zoom and many other new areas. Live and recorded lessons were delivered with great amounts of feedback being sought. This was a particularly challenging time but I feel we lived up to expectations and delivered. In fact we were the first school to receive 'Fully Developed' through the ADEK Distance Learning Evaluation. Was everything working well, 'No' but I feel our reflective approach and attitude to always do better supported our continual improvement.

The biggest concern during lockdown in term 3 and it remains my biggest concern this term is the emotional health and wellbeing of students through this pandemic. We are working on this through various support strategies including workshops assemblies and referrals, but it is a challenge for us all.

Finally I want to take this opportunity to thank you as parents for your continued support. I want to thank and acknowledge the British Embassy particularly the Ambassador HE Patrick Moody and Deputy Ambassador Sophia Brecknell for their support of BSAK as the only British Embassy School in the UAE.

Thank you to our Board of Governors who are all voluntary. Thank you to our amazing, committed and inspirational staff and finally thank you to our students whose sunny presence lights up BSAK on a daily basis.

I am extremely proud to be the Headmaster of BSAK. I smile every day as I am surrounded by supportive colleagues and parents as well as inspirational students.

BSAK really is an amazing school that allows us all to access that BSAK Experience and exceed expectations.

Thank you for listening and for your continued support.

6. Result of Ballot

The Honorary Secretary once again thanked the 4 candidates for standing and confirmed that Sean Magee and Pamela Meenagh had been successfully appointed as Parent Elected Governors and passed on her congratulations to them both.

7. Any Other Business

The Hon. Secretary advised that no resolutions or formal motions had been submitted. However, due to the AGM being held online this year, attendees had been given the opportunity to raise questions with the Board & the Headmaster in advance.

Only one question was raised, albeit a good one and the Board's Vice Chair, Debby Burton Shaw, read out the question and answer.

Question: -

BSAK is now the school of choice in Abu Dhabi, how will the Board support the School Leadership and Staff to sustain this position in the future?

Answer: -

We note the compliment in the question and as a Board we are very proud of the achievements of the School. The desirability of the BSAK offering has been given further emphasis this year by the fact that we currently have a record number of students at our school of 1,950. When the COVID crisis arose, we planned financially and practically that we may suffer a dip in numbers noting that there would be economic challenges arising from the crisis. While these challenges continue, our numbers have risen despite student

turnover as new families see BSAK as a destination of choice, due to quality of teaching and our stability in uncertain times. We thank our Community for its confidence in the School at this time.

The Board will continue to support the School's activities as we always do: -

- We listen to feedback from the School on opportunities and initiatives which it wishes to develop for the benefit of the School;
- We critically evaluate and assess those proposals and the education benefit (direct or indirect) that this would bring to our Students;
- Where the initiative is one we believe will bring benefit, we work with the School to ensure appropriate resources are made available to the School, whether this be for human resources, training, technological resources, or physical improvements in the School's infrastructure.

A good recent example of the benefit of this approach was in supporting the move to Google Chromebooks for our Secondary Students. This move was made noting the electronic direction of education and has been of benefit to our Students. When the COVID outbreak happened, the benefit was made even more tangible. We are looking again at the digital footprint within the School in the second term and will advise on future developments.

The Board and School have been considering upgrades to School's infrastructure by means of a possible Phase V development with a view to modernising certain existing School facilities in a new development, creating space in our existing buildings which can be put to other use. The decision making on this was slowed down as we assessed the impact of the COVID pandemic on School finances, but this will be looked at again afresh in 2021.

So, the approach as always, will be to listen, assess and support implementation where an agreed strategy is reached, and this will continue going forward.

The Hon. Secretary thanked everyone for attending and for their participation in the School community. The AGM for 2020 was declared closed at 8:15pm.