

Woodlands Meed

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Upcoming Events

January 3

Back to School

January 28

Inset Day

February 18

Half Term



We are pleased to confirm in this Christmas issue of the Governors' Newsletter the good news going into the holidays that we have taken one step closer to the new college building.

The Council have confirmed that Asset Hub are minded to recommend funding for the design

fees, ready for Capital Project Review in January.

The next step is for the proposed decision to fund the fees to be advertised in the County Council's Forward Plan of Key Decisions for at least 28 days prior to the decision being taken.

Richard Burrett Cabinet Member for Education has approved the publication of this entry and it should appear before Christmas.

The "J" word may be well over used, but we set out in this newsletter "The Journey" we have taken so far and the next stages towards completion of the college building.

The school website <http://www.woodlandsmeed.co.uk> now has a specific page for college new build updates, but if you have any queries at any time please contact the governors.

Turning to other matters, it is good to note that at long last there is government recognition of the serious underfunding for SEN pupils, and we will continue to press the case for proper funding.

Marion Wilcock

Chair

Who we are

A full list of the governors is set out on the school website.

We are delighted to welcome Alan Robinson as a new Staff Governor.

We would like to thank Boo Savage for her many years of contribution as a parent governor, but who has now stood down for family reasons this term.

We currently have vacancies for Parent Governors who are elected by other parents. Any parent with a child at Woodlands Meed, is eligible to stand for election, and we will be sending out details of the role inviting parents to stand in the New Year.

In June the school had the first short Ofsted inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good when inspected in March 2014, and we were pleased that the inspectors found **"This school continues to be good."** The full statement is set out on the school website and if you have not already done so, we urge you to read it. The inspectors were particularly impressed with the pupils whom they described as "well behaved, polite and thoughtful, respectful towards each other, and proud of their achievements".

From the Governors' point of view, it was important that Ofsted recognised that "This is a caring school in which pupils feel safe and secure". The Governors were regarded as "well informed and said to know the school very well. They, too, are very passionate about achieving the best possible outcomes and opportunities for pupils". They noted the Governors "visit regularly and are very involved in the life of the school".

A key recommendation from the Inspectors was that "careers education is further developed to ensure that all pupils have the same level of opportunity." This will of course be so much easier when we have a new college building with excellent facilities. However, the school is not standing still in the meantime and action has already been taken to implement this recommendation with the available resources. During the summer holidays alterations were carried out to one of the huts to install work benches to allow practical lessons.

As governors we are proud of the excellent work and progress made by both the school and college. It's the people that make a school great and not just the buildings.



WORTHLESS?

No doubt many of you will have been following the Worthless? campaign, the campaign for fairer funding initially for schools in West Sussex, but which has now become a national campaign. This campaign is supported by the Head

and the Governors at Woodlands Meed, who have joined many schools in West Sussex approaching their MPs on the issue of the education funding crisis.

The Local Government Association has just announced that there could be a national deficit on High Needs spending between £1.2bn to £1.6bn by 2021." The recent commitment of an additional £250M towards SEN budgets over the next two years does not even meet the existing local authority SEN shortfalls.

Unlike many schools, Woodlands Meed is not in deficit. The budget is managed most carefully and with an eye to providing financial certainty for a three year programme, but, as for all schools, the effective reduction in funding in real terms, remains a serious concern.

New Director of Education



Paul Wagstaff was appointed as the new Director of Education to WSCC on 4 December 2018. Mr Wagstaff is a school standards expert with a history in school improvement and advisory services in Britain including on the Curriculum Division of Ofsted.

We hope that it will be possible for him to visit the school at some point next year, and that he will be able to see the innovative schemes introduced at Woodlands Meed which assist with the monitoring of progress of each individual pupil.

BUILDING UPDATE

The responsibility for providing the new college building is slightly unusual, and different to mainstream schools. Woodlands Meed was set up as a Foundation School. The Governors are responsible for the school and the land and buildings are owned by the Governing Body. However, unlike Academies and Free Schools, the capital funding for construction work at the school still has to come through the County Council. The Governors and WSCC therefore have to, and are, working together to deliver this important project, and the Governors are encouraged by the officer's commitment to get the best result for our students.



The Journey so far

The Governing Body has been vigorously fighting to complete the school for several years, and has challenged WSCC over their statutory obligation to provide appropriate education accommodation. However, we are pleased to confirm that after many meetings with relevant parties, the Governing Body is now working well with council officers and making progress towards providing the required new building.

- The Council accepted the Feasibility Study which recommended the only solution is to provide a new building on the college site,
- Preliminary ground surveys carried out in the school holidays confirmed that the site was physically suitable.
- The school has agreed with council officers the facilities which are required to meet DfE requirements.



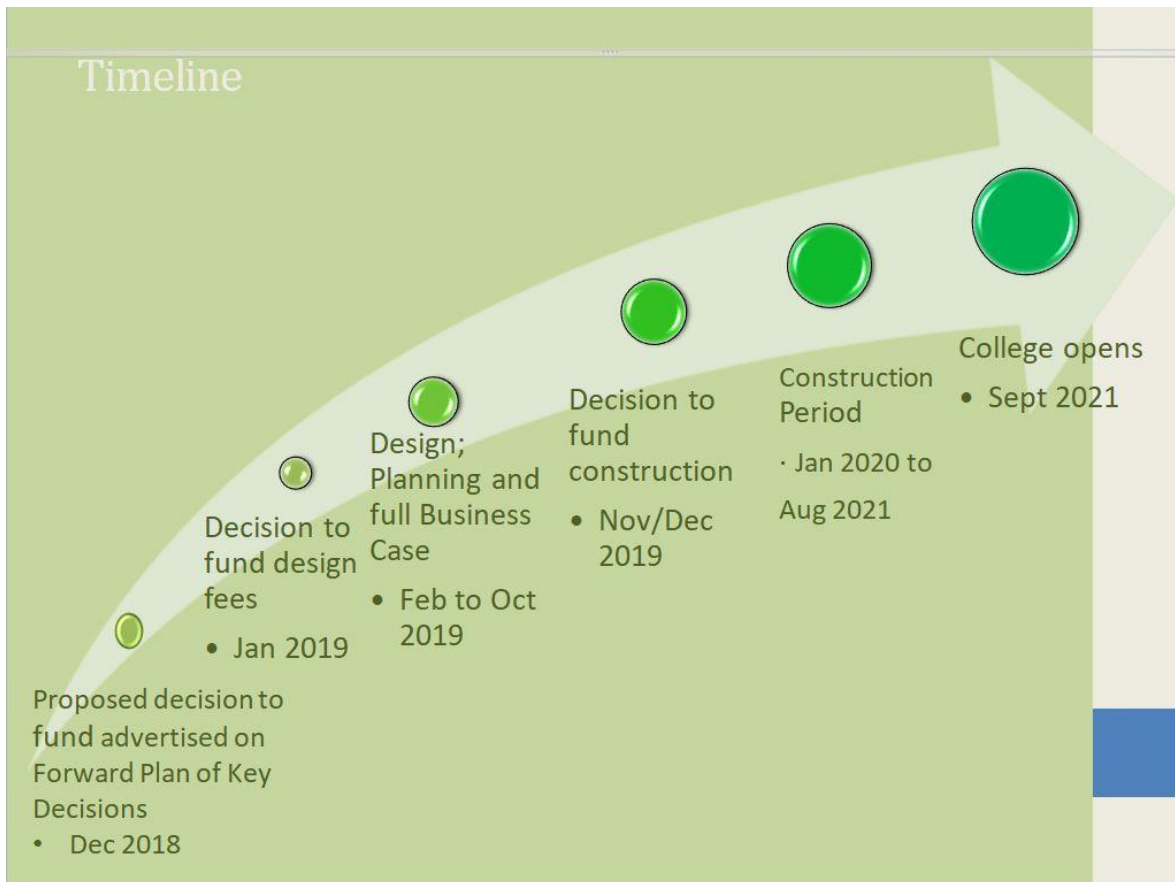
The Journey next steps.

The next stage is for WSCC to approve the budget for £500K design fees.

- The critical entry of the project in the County Council's Forward Plan of Key Decisions is due before Christmas. We monitor these decisions and will notify everyone when this appears.
- The Asset Hub and Capital and Asset Board are due to recommend funding be made available in January.
- The decision to include the building in the WSCC capital programme is anticipated in February.

We will then move into the design and planning stage, ready for a final costing to be available for a decision to fund the build cost by December 2019 so the new building can be ready for occupation in September 2021. Once we have an initial layout, which we anticipate will be around April/May we will consult with all statutory consultees, staff, parents & carers, and local residents.

Broad Timeline for project going forward.



Planned Activities for next term

In the Spring term the governors plan to:

- review the Strategy for the School for the next three to five years
- review the Development Plan to accord with the Strategy
- review subject reports
- recruit parent governors
- carry out the termly governor visit
- monitor the budget for 2018/19 to date
- continue to review curriculum for KS 4 & 5
- support the enterprise initiatives

Parent Response and Contribution

If you have any queries or any matters which you wish to be reviewed by the governors (in confidence or otherwise) please contact by letter via the school office or email

governors@woodlandsmeed.co.uk