

## SPRING TERM 2022 – MEETING 2

**MINUTES** of the meeting of the Governors of Chalfont St Giles Village School  
held via Zoom on 21 March 2022 at 7.30 pm

<b>PRESENT:</b>	Sonya Agar Bob Albery Ann Alderson Melvyn Bleakley Patricia English Lisa Higgin Elaine Hoare Nigel Hobbs Katherine Mannion	Becky Murray Eleanor O'Connor Elen Peal (Headteacher) Sue Salmon Rose Smith Jessica Svensson Felicity Warner Donna Westall (Chair)
<b>IN ATTENDANCE:</b>	Ann Baines	Clerk
<b>ABSENT:</b>	Gill Brown Dave Cronen	(Apologies received and accepted)

NB. Governors' questions are highlighted in *italics* throughout these minutes.

	<b>ACTION</b>
<b>1 NOTIFICATION OF ANY OTHER BUSINESS</b>	
There were no items of other business.	
<b>2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b>	
There were no declarations of interest in items covered at this meeting.	
<b>3 MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING</b>	
<b>3.1 MINUTES</b>	
The Minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2022, having been circulated, were confirmed as an accurate record. The minutes were retained by the Clerk and would be signed by the Chair at a later date for retention in the school.	<b>Chair / Clerk</b>
<b>3.2 MATTERS ARISING</b>	
<b>3.2.1 Communications Committee terms of reference (Minute 3.2.2)</b>	
The Committee Chair had redrafted the terms of reference and would send them to the Clerk to arrange adoption and publication on Governor Hub.	<b>Bob Albery /Clerk</b>
<b>3.2.2 Parent Survey (Minute 5.2)</b>	
The Communications Committee would carry out the Parent Survey.	<b>Comms Cttee</b>
<b>3.2.3 DfE Cost of School Uniform Guidance (Minute 8.2)</b>	
The branded uniform was minimised and the contract, currently with PMG Schoolwear, was tendered regularly.	

### 3.2.4 Allergen labelling of pre-packed food regulations (Minute 8.3)

The Clerk had raised the question of charity cake sales with the Food Standards Agency. Members of the public and other organisations that do not need to register as a food business are not legally required to provide information on the presence of allergens in the food they donate. Whilst there is no legal requirement to provide allergen information, it should be encouraged, and it is considered best practice to do so.

## 4 GOVERNOR E MAIL ADDRESSES

The suggestion for Governors to have e mail addresses through the school account to use for Governor business came from safeguarding and additional cybersecurity perspectives. The addresses could be set up easily. Views were invited.

### ***What was the additional security?***

*The school system was actively monitored regularly. The technician and Turn It On offered support but also monitored and identified threats.*

### ***Would the school e mail address be used for everything to do with Governor activity outside the school, for example, correspondence with the LA?***

*Ideally, yes but the immediate priority was to use them for internal communications.*

### ***Governor Hub was secure but could it be used to e mail individual Governors?***

*That was possible but the message would be visible to everyone on the noticeboard.*

Governors agreed to use e mail addresses from the school system. The Business Manager would make the arrangements.

## 5 SCHOOL TRIPS

Governors considered the affordability of school trips given the current financial situation. Whilst trips were valuable, did enough parents want and could afford three trips in three years at the Junior school? Views would be taken initially around Junior School trips. A survey would go out later in the week to ask parents about trips and affordability.

Governors agreed that a Working Group would be helpful to analyse the survey findings, follow up as necessary, identify options and make recommendations to the GB. Sue Salmon, Eleanor O'Connor, Jessica Svensson, Elen Peal, Nigel Hobbs and Bob Albery would form the Working Group.

### ***A voluntary contribution was requested. What proportion of parents made a contribution?***

*The proportion was dropping over time and, rather than allow the decline to continue, it was best to start the conversation now. The residential trips were the most expensive. Previously, the school had asked parents for one contribution to*

*cover other trips and workshops for the whole year but views on this would be sought as well as on the number of workshops might be appropriate.*

***When would the survey findings be available?***

*Parents would have until Easter to reply. The group could meet early in the term and make recommendations by half term so that plans would be in place for next year.*

***Do parents pay into the School Fund every term?***

*They are invited to contribute but not all do so. Some parents will make one off donations.*

***Do some parents make larger donations to support the school in providing trips?***

*The school was having to subsidise trips. This year the subsidy would be £5,000. The Headteacher had received a donation of £500 from a charity and was chasing other options. Some parents might give a little extra for day trips and generally they were covered.*

***Did the school set a charge high enough to cover costs if some did not pay? This would put some people off.***

*No, it would be illegal to do that. The school had to prove what was covered by the contribution and that it was eligible. Staffing costs had to be factored into the overall costs and it could be difficult to get staff to cover a longer residential, for example.*

Governors would await the recommendations from the Working Group.

## 6 STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

### 6.1 Headteacher's report

Governors noted the Headteacher's report which had been posted on Governor Hub and asked the following questions.

**Q1 *Is the school-led tutoring six week programme for the PP children compulsory? How are families encouraged to engage, given that it is extra time in school? Has it been welcomed by parents?***

*Children from Years 1, 2, 5 and 6 had been invited. Most parents have welcomed the tutoring programme and there is about 90% attendance. It is not compulsory but we are positively encouraging all invited children to attend. Staff are planning and preparing the sessions and teachers and LSAs are leading the sessions. They are making a lot of difference.*

**Q2 *Do you have evidence of how effective the session have been?***

*The hard measure would be progress over time but it was difficult to separate out the impact of the sessions from the Quality First teaching provided every day. These harder impacts would show over time but in the meantime soft impacts had been noticed. Staff had reported an impact on children's attitude to learning. Individual and small group sessions gave the opportunity to have proper conversations with the children who were now engaging more fully in learning. Teachers in the meeting said that the sessions gave them an opportunity to pre-teach or consolidate what had been taught during the day which gave children more confidence in class in all*

*Year Groups. Some younger children had difficulty in getting to school on time. When they came in for the sessions before school, they were in a more settled frame of mind and ready to learn when lessons started.*

**Q3 Will there be more Catch Up Funding?**

*Funding had been given to the end of the academic year. The original intention had been to continue for three years but reducing each year.*

**Q4 Are the laptops given to the PP children for home or classroom usage?**

*The laptops have gone home with the children and will be returned at the end of the year. In September we will do the same thing again after they have been checked over and updated if needed.*

**Q5 When is the next staff wellbeing survey?**

*The most recent wellbeing survey was done three weeks ago.*

**Q6 How were plans for handover to the new Headteacher?**

*A full day visit had been planned so that he could meet SLT, staff and all the children. In addition, EP would work with him on the School Plan, plans for staff meetings and the Wellbeing Plan for next year. Discussions were going well and there might be other opportunities to meet.*

**Q7 'Our identified low attendance families are even lower as they are reporting illness and in some cases using Covid as an excuse for non-attendance.' What proportion was definitely due to Covid and how much do you think are not?**

*The usual attendance would be around 95% and was only a little lower at 93.51% for the Infant School and 92.78% for the Junior this year. Some families had struggled where children were reluctant to come to school and changing from more permissive routines in lockdown had been challenging. It was a small group of families. Staff were meeting those families to move the situation forward without damaging the relationship. The LA was offering support but most support was being provided by the school who knew where children were ill. Some parents took the opportunity to fit attendance and punctuality around their working pattern.*

*The Government expectation was that all children would be in school all the time. There was a standard process whereby a warning letter was sent to all families where attendance was below 95% even if this was due to Covid. Parents who had not had these letters before were now receiving them and the response was quite negative.*

**Q8 Why did parents whose children had lower attendance for Covid reasons get letters?**

*The school had to fulfil its legal responsibilities and follow the standard Attendance Policy which had criteria for sending the letters when attendance was below a certain level. Usually there would be a phone call or conversation to explain that a letter would be sent but the volume of letters meant that this had not been possible.*

**Q9 Would the situation happen again?**

*It was not possible to say it would not. In line with the Policy, it would depend on improvement over time.*

**Q10 Was the low attendance in any particular age group?**

*The Headteacher was working with individual families. Perhaps some Reception parents were aware that their children had missed some opportunities during lockdown and wanted to take those opportunities now.*

Governors understood the need to implement the Attendance Policy but recognised the widespread issue which was a side effect of the pandemic. Receiving the letters caused distress to parents who were stressed when children were ill. The number of letters had meant that individual conversations had not been possible. Perhaps something in the newsletter could raise awareness of the process and reasons for it and invite parents to talk to someone at school about any concerns. An e mail could explain and refer parents to the Every Day Counts page on the website.

Headteacher

**Q11 Some aspects of the Behaviour Policy had been changed and staff wanted to review the Policy more. What more was there to do?**

*Staff had been trained on Norfolk Steps and the Policy had been updated to reflect that approach. Staff had talked about how to record positive behaviour choices around the school and asked for this to be reviewed in a meeting during the Summer term.*

Governors noted a DfE consultation on Behaviour Management Guidance with a view to changing the DfE Guidance. It would be best to tie all the changes together.

**Q12 The number of children needing SEN Support was higher in two Year Groups than others. Was there a reason for this?**

*Those cohorts had a larger proportion of children needing SEN support throughout their time at the school. There had been no major changes in the cohorts.*

**Q13 Governors were aware of the pressures on staff in recent weeks and congratulated them on keeping the school running. How were staff and children coping with the continuing disruption from Covid?**

*The absences due to Covid and other viruses were relentless and staffing requirements needed constant tweaks to ensure that all classes could remain in school. Last week LSAs had taken some classes which meant that they could not provide interventions. Staff were trying to avoid disruption for the children by keeping them in school but they were being disrupted anyway through changes in the staff available and in lunchtime supervision. In practice, the school was trying to support the whole community and provide a safe learning environment for the children. There was hope that the last two weeks of term might be more settled. It was disheartening that the Government did not recognise the current continuing disruption to children whose lives and learning had already been disrupted. For some children the current disruption was greater than before. Advice had been sought from central and local Government with no response.*

**6.2 School Development Plan**

The SDP progress had been covered comprehensively in the Headteacher's report.

**7 COMMITTEE MINUTES**

**7.1 Communications Committee**

The primary outcome of the last meeting had been to tidy up GDPR Policies in liaison with the Business Manager. The next meeting would be on Monday 28 March.

**Would the Committee pick up the Parent Survey?**

*Yes it would be done this term.*

Comms Cttee

**7.2 Curriculum and Standards Committee**

The current focus was on policies that should be reviewed in Spring term. These would be updated by the end of term. The Committee would meet on 5 April.

**7.3 Finance Committee**

Minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on 17 February 2022, having been circulated, were noted. The Committee Chair highlighted the following points:

**Budget** – the budget across both schools was breaking even. The outlook for three years was tight but the pupil numbers were increasing slightly. No major issues were expected. The provisional budget had been submitted as delegated and was ratified.

**Nursery** – the expectation was that it would take a few terms to establish the Nursery. Currently there was a small deficit but more children were coming in. The situation would be reviewed in September.

**Funding school trips** - the Committee discussion would be taken forward by the Working Group agreed in this meeting.

**SFVS** – the SFVS self assessment had been completed and submitted as delegated. Its submission was ratified.

**7.4 Infrastructure Committee**

Minutes of the Infrastructure Committee meeting held on 17 February 2022, having been circulated, were noted. The Committee Chair highlighted the following points:

**Flat roof** – the flat roof over the Art room had been repaired and had not leaked again.

**Tree survey** – a lot of work had been identified as necessary and had been done.

**Building Condition Survey** – the LA had commissioned a condition survey from an outside body which had identified and costed a number of matters requiring attention. Some of the costs for repairs identified for this and next year were significant but there was no indication of who would pay. The Business Manager was following this up. Some of the smaller matters could be dealt with at Easter.

**7.5 Personnel/Pay Review Committee**

The Committee would meet the following day. The Committee Chair drew attention to two matters on pay:

- It appeared that a pay freeze for teachers would have an adverse impact on retirement benefits. This was a known issue and could be resolved by an increase of £1. This increase had been agreed by e mail and was ratified in the

meeting. Governors' agreement to this amendment to the Pay Policy was ratified.

- An increase had been agreed for support staff on Bucks pay and conditions.

## **7.6 HR Related Panels/Complaints Panel/Pupil Discipline Committee**

These Committees had not needed to meet.

## **8 Governor Recruitment/ Literacy/ EYFS Governor roles**

### **8.1 Parent Governor vacancy**

The Chair had received two nominations before the deadline and, slightly afterwards, an expression of interest that had been delayed by technical issues. Governors agreed that the third nomination would be accepted given the reason for delay and an election would be held. The Chair would send the ballot papers to parents this week for return before Easter. The process would be paper based to maintain anonymity.

### **8.2 Forthcoming Co-opted Governor vacancy**

Rose Smith would leave the GB at the end of her term of office in July and parents who were not successful in the election might wish to be considered for that position. The appointment would be made by the GB. If so, using the skills audit once the Parent Governor election was done as criteria, interviews for the Co-opted Governor place would be held if those candidates wished to be considered. Lisa Higgins, Flic Warner and Eleanor O'Connor would join the Chair on the panel. It was desirable to maintain a balance between parents and others on the GB. The GB's view had been that there should be no more than six current parents and appointing another parent would not exceed this number.

### **8.3 Literacy and Early Years Link roles**

Current Governors were asked to consider taking on these roles which had been fulfilled so well by Rose Smith whose representation of the school's curriculum and achievements to Ofsted had been very thorough. Eleanor O'Connor was appointed to the Early Years role and discussions around Literacy would take place outside the meeting. Handover from Rose Smith would be valuable.

## **9 Sustainability – the role of schools**

The Chair reported that the increasing focus on sustainability had been raised in briefings this term. Both curriculum and infrastructure were involved. The advice from one school which had done a lot of work in the area was to be prepared with a plan so that funding could be taken when it became available. Governors discussed what should be done.

The Headteacher would discuss with the Headteacher Designate and include this strategic matter as a School Plan initiative. They would form a Working Party with the Chairs of Infrastructure and Curriculum and Standards Committees which would focus on curriculum, campus, community and culture. Capital priorities such as boiler replacement and sources of funding would be researched. Involvement of children and parents going forward would be a benefit.

## 10 REPORTS

### 10.1 THE CHAIR

The Chair had not taken any action under emergency or delegated powers. She had attended the BEP Briefing which had covered issues arising from recent Ofsted inspections, including the areas that Governors would be expected to cover. It was likely that the Infant School would be inspected in 2022-23.

Governors' curriculum visits were important but had been limited by circumstances. The Headteacher explained that SLT had a plan of Learning Walks but this had been derailed by the lack of capacity when covering Covid absences. SLT did not have such strong evidence as it usually would and this had been reflected in their assessment of the school. Governor visits would provide welcome evidence but some flexibility might be required.

The Briefing had also covered new DfE Guidance on First Aid which recommended a First Aid Policy. This had also been raised in the Safeguarding Audit each year. A model would be found and adapted in the light of the new Guidance.

Headteacher

### 10.2 DEVELOPMENT GOVERNOR

The Headteacher would provide generic safeguarding training on 16 May and Governors were welcome to attend. Training was also available through Governor Hub by BEP and Modern Governor.

***Was it acceptable for Governors to visit the school before doing the safeguarding training?***

*Yes as Governors would not be unsupervised whilst with the children. As Governors they needed to have a high awareness of safeguarding issues.*

Next term, the training supplier would be reviewed to compare the offer of BEP and the new LA provision.

Clerk: agenda

### 10.3 SAFEGUARDING GOVERNOR

The Safeguarding Governor had met the Headteacher on 10 March 2022 to work through the Safeguarding Audit. The actions points were:

- Staff Prevent training – people who had not done the Prevent training would have the opportunity to complete it.
- The LA was asking Safeguarding Governors to complete SCR training, although their role was to make sure that the school was maintaining the record correctly. She would follow this up.

### 10.4 WELLBEING GOVERNOR

Wellbeing had been covered in the Headteacher's report and was raised in Personnel Committee.

**10.5 EQUALITY GOVERNOR**

There was nothing to report.

**10.6 SEND GOVERNOR**

The SEND Governor would arrange a date to meet Sarah Pierpoint, the SENDCO, and report to Governors.

**10.7 CURRICULUM GOVERNOR REPORTS**

Governors noted the report of a Numeracy visit on 2 February which had been posted on Governor Hub. The Governor had also attended a staff meeting on Maths and resources on 14 February.

Governor Days had been arranged for 31 March and 1 April when most Governors would be able to go into school. Other visits would be arranged at a later date. Due to absence, a meeting to look at Pupil Premium data had been deferred to early next term when data from two terms would be considered.

**11 FUTURE MEETING DATES**

The dates and times of future meetings were:

- Thursday 12th May 2022 at 7.30 pm
- Thursday 7th July 2022 at 7.30 pm

**12 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Governors thanked staff for their task of keeping the school going in such difficult and disrupted circumstances when many staff were ill.

The meeting closed at 9.15 pm.

Signed ..... Date .....

CHAIR