

SUMMER TERM 2020

MINUTES of the meeting of the Governors of Chalfont St Giles Village School held by Zoom on 14 May 2020 at 7.30 pm due to Covid-19 limitations

PRESENT:

Sonya Agar	Nigel Hobbs
Bob Albery	Katherine Mannion
Ann Alderson	Becky Murray
Nick Brown	Eleanor O'Connor
Melvyn Bleakley	Elen Peal (Headteacher)
Dave Cronen	Sue Salmon
Patricia English	Rose Smith
Lisa Higgin	Donna Westall (Chair)
Elaine Hoare	

IN ATTENDANCE:

Gill Brown	Associate Member
Ann Baines	Clerk

ABSENT: There were no absences.

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

The meeting was held remotely due to Covid-19 limitations and Governors confirmed that they were in a confidential setting.

	ACTION
1 Virtual Attendance Arrangements	
Governors had read the proposed policy and adopted it. The Clerk would amend the Standing Orders accordingly.	Clerk
2 NOTIFICATION OF ANY OTHER BUSINESS	
It was agreed that the following items would be discussed under Any Other Business: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wildflower trail• Behaviour Policy• September admissions	
3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	
There were no declarations of interest or loyalty in items covered at this meeting.	
4 Governor appointments and role	
4.1 Co-opted Governor	
Governors confirmed the appointment of Lisa Higgin as Co-opted Governor.	
4.2 Co-opted Governor reappointments	
Governors re-appointed Sonya Agar and Nigel Hobbs as Co-opted Governors for a period of four years from the end of their current terms of office.	

4.3 PSHE / Pupil Voice Governor

These roles would be assigned in Autumn when all roles would be reviewed.

5 GOVERNING BOARD CONTINGENCY PLANNING

Should Donna Westall and Melvyn Bleakley be unavailable, Eleanor O'Connor and Ann Alderson would be the contacts for the Headteacher.

6 MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING**6.1 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 23 January 2020, having been circulated, were confirmed. The Clerk would keep a copy to be signed by the Chair later as a correct record. The signed Minutes would be handed to the Headteacher for display in the School.

6.2 MATTERS ARISING**6.2.1 GDPR annual check update (Minute 3.2.1)**

This would be posted on Governor Hub when it was ready.

6.2.2 Three school specific Inset days for 2020-21 (Minute 3.2.4)

These had been agreed as Tuesday 2 September, Monday 30 October and Monday 31 May. The LA specified days would be Monday 1 September and Monday 4 January.

6.2.3 Response to the consultation on changing admission arrangements (Minute 7.1)

The response had been sent to the LA.

7 STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT**7.1 REPORT OF THE HEADTEACHER**

The Headteacher reported how well the team was coping with the whole situation. A quick response had been needed to lockdown and the staff had all done the best they could. They were going from strength to strength and preparing for the next phase. Governors had received updates.

7.1.1 Current provision

Children of Key Workers and vulnerable children had been invited into school and the number using the provision was increasing. Child Protection responsibilities and meetings continued and there was awareness of the balance of risks. Staff were delivering learning packs to some families and had also delivered food packs.

Staff had been prepared to help on site and were placed on a rota to do one day in every two weeks to minimise the risk of transmission. Feedback had been

Headteacher

sought from parents and it had been overwhelmingly positive. The Headteacher asked for Governors' help in putting together the views from the letters and e mails to capture the feedback in a coherent way but also to respond to the small number of questions. Whilst the questions tended to be about virtual learning, the responses were likely to be wider so the Governor perspective would be relevant.

The school was not using an IT platform to provide the work whereas other schools were using a range of platforms to send out work. These platforms required training and technical know-how and there had been some problems with them. The Liaison Group discussion had shown that other schools were regretting their choice of platform as the situation developed. As schools reopened, staff would have to manage sending out work on the platform and receiving it back whilst teaching children in school. There could be a work life balance issue.

Governors who were parents gave the view that the provision had been fantastic and the right level of support had been provided. The personal contact with teachers through phone calls was supportive and well-judged. The amount of work had been appropriate. Sending the learning packs out weekly allowed parents to make their own arrangements and juggle the balance between family and work. The story time, videos and e mails from staff had kept in touch with the children in a different way. Experience of the support given by schools elsewhere was not as positive. Some concerns were being voiced amongst parents about progress if the situation continued for a much longer period as parents, although doing what they could, were aware that they were not professionals.

How had SLT come to agree the approach they were using?

They used what was already in place and they knew it worked. Flexibility and creativity had been needed. As parents themselves, teachers were able to make informed judgements about the amount of work that was being sent out. They had been aware of the need to put an emphasis on mental health and wellbeing as parents were going through a period of change as well as the children. The ways of communicating had developed after the need to start suddenly. Calls to parents and children had started later and had proved valuable on all sides.

7.1.2 Next stage

The current system was effective and had been based on research. It would have to be reviewed if it went on for a longer period. Planning focused on working out the arrangements for the next phase when the Government asked for Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 to be brought back into school from 1 June at the earliest. The Chairs of the Infrastructure and Communications Committees agreed to be involved in the planning and communications as sounding boards with a Governor who could give a parent view. Another Governor would also contribute experience of putting work on line and identifying pupils who were struggling.

Phase one would be three mornings on three days for Nursery, Reception, Year 1

and Year 6. Then it would be increased gradually. All staff would have one day when they would not be in class and would be able to plan what they were providing for the other children.

Is it too much to ask staff to cover both aspects?

Staff would step up. Staff who were working remotely might have to do some preparation for those who were in school. Planning for the next phases included thinking this through.

7.1.3 Safeguarding, health and safety

Governors had read the Annex about Covid-19 to the Child Protection Policy and adopted it. It would be reviewed in preparation for accepting more classes onto the site. Time to continue Child Protection activities would not be overlooked in the planning. The action plan on H&S from the LA had been completed. The contingency plan covered H&S and would be shared with SLT and the Chairs of the Infrastructure and Communications Committees.

What was the situation about PPE and its availability? Could the school find a source?

The LA was providing some PPE centrally. There would be packs for each school to be collected the next week. They should include masks, aprons, gloves and a limited number of visors but there was no detail of quality or amounts. There was no information to say that the stock would be replenished. If the PPE was not good enough quality, the school would not be able to open. Other sources would be researched if it was inadequate in any way.

PPE was only one aspect of hygiene. Did the school have enough cleaning equipment in stock? Were there enough cleaning staff to cover the needs and what would the additional cost be? Had there been a deep clean?

The Business Manager was leading on this. There was Government guidance which gave a checklist for the cleaners. Rooms not being used would be cleaned ready to move in. There would be a cleaning pack in every room being used but parents would be warned that it would not be possible to clean everything as perfectly as everyone might like, especially in the Nursery. Parents should know and understand the limitations up front.

The school was active in safeguarding matters. Phone calls were being made to parents of vulnerable children which were really helpful all round. As a result, a very small number of children had been given the opportunity to come into school for a short individual session with a teacher to help them if they were struggling.

How are you recording the phone calls to parents and any issues that are identified?

Staff were making a large number of calls. They were recording key points as they would in a one off meeting when a parent came into school rather than verbatim. They would inform the DSL where appropriate and she would take action quickly. The same applied to any issues arising from e mails or from talking to a family when delivering a learning pack.

Are there more child protection issues?

The situation had increased the pressure on any family with such issues. From their phone calls, teachers were aware of issues that might arise as schools moved to the next phase and the parent wellbeing survey came from this awareness. It was important to give support.

7.1.4 Impact on staff

The LA was preparing a model risk assessment so that all schools would be working on the same basis. The situation was new for everyone and created pressure so the emphasis would be on mental health and wellbeing. A survey would go out to staff to find out if they would be able to work in school, if they were isolating or shielded or if they had childcare needs and to ask about levels of anxiety. If staff were willing to share their anxieties, they could be discussed and perhaps be addressed before returning into school.

A survey would also go to parents once the plans for June had been agreed to find out if anyone needed support straight away. This would build on the phone calls.

Would the survey be for children as well as parents and could the children be surveyed privately?

Because of their age, most of the children in the first Year Groups coming back to school could not be surveyed. For Nursery, Reception and Year 1, the survey would be directed to parents but for Year 6, there would be more for the children. The school was doing what it could.

What was the situation for school staff whose children were not at school? Were they considered Key Workers?

Yes they were Key Workers but the Key Worker/vulnerable groups would also be capped at 15 from 1 June. Potentially staff and others would want to use the service.

7.1.5 Looking ahead – questions and proposals

In the first phase, Year 6 would be in groups of perhaps ten per teacher. Nursery are in a separate building and so could open to a small number of children, planned to be no more than six. Some were already attending the key worker children's group. Year 1 would be the first Infant pupils to come back as they were more able to follow instructions, though the size of classrooms meant that only six could be accommodated in each. Reception would then follow with six pupils in each Reception classroom. Depending on the number of spaces requested, two further groups of six Year 1/ Reception pupils could then be accommodated in the Year 2 classrooms in the next phase. The proposed system would be tried out and might have to change.

The current planning is for Nursery, Reception and Years 1 and 6. The Government want all classes to be back in school for a month before the end of term. How could that be done?

SLT had started to discuss this and set out when and how it would be appropriate

to include further Year Groups. There would be a more detailed plan next week which would include staggered starts and other finer detail. The schools were separate legal entities and the plans would have to be approved. Governors understood parents' anxieties, including the lower priority given in the Government proposal to Year 2 who were about to make a transition and the size of rooms in the school.

Transition between the schools was a concern. Could Year 2 visit the Year 3 classroom?

The LA said that this could not be done until social distancing criteria were relaxed. There was a risk of cross contamination. It might be possible for small groups of Year 2 to do outdoor learning with their new teacher and visit the Junior site later.

The Government had currently given a return date for some Year Groups of 1 June at the earliest. Completing the risk assessment would require a significant number of jobs. Opening in week beginning 8 June was being considered at the earliest for the school. To start earlier would mean staff working through half term to clear equipment, move furniture and remove pinch points. In communications, it would be necessary to be clear that extra time was needed to prepare and be fully safe and ready. A health and safety walk round would be needed to confirm the schools were ready to open. Governors' views were sought on the date of opening.

Would it be necessary to open on Monday 8 June? Would it be better to open later in the week and have time to recover and make any obvious changes?

This suggestion was sensible and was in line with what some other schools were doing.

Headteacher

This was an operational decision but Governors had the opportunity to ask questions as well as support staff in putting Government guidance into practice locally in a safe and successful way. Governors supported the proposals. The Headteacher would draft the letter to parents setting out the proposal for Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 to send out the following week. Bob Albery, Ann Alderson and Sue Salmon would provide comments. Responses were likely to vary. Parents might be reassured by the gradual approach and reasons behind it.

7.2 SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (SDP)

This would be taken at a future meeting.

8 COMMITTEE MINUTES

8.1 Finance Committee

Minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on 26 February 2020, having been circulated, were noted.

8.1.1 Outturn 2019- 20

There had been a small surplus for both schools at the end of the year. This had been lower than anticipated due to additional costs and loss of income following Covid-19 partial closure.

8.1.2 Budget 2020-21 and three year financial plan

The draft budget had been published, questions asked and answered through Governor Hub rather than hold a meeting earlier in the term. The Committee Chair thanked the Headteacher and Business Manager for preparing the budget in such pressured and uncertain circumstances. A summary had also been published for Governors.

Governors noted that the forward plan was likely to change given the number of uncertainties. The note listed the assumptions around the potentially increased costs and losses. The budget forecast a small surplus at the end of the first year at both schools if plans went through to fruition and would be in surplus at the end of three years.

One area of uncertainty was money paid by parents for school trips. The Business Manager would refund these but the school had been able to rebook the PGL trip for next year. It was possible that take up of PGL next year would cover the costs or an insurance claim would be made. The situation was not as clear for other residential trips. Governors approved the expenditure on refunds.

Governors approved submission of the budget and three year financial plan, on the understanding that there would be changes due to the unprecedented circumstances.

8.2 Communications Committee

Minutes of the Communications Committee meeting held on 5 March 2020, having been circulated, were noted.

8.3 Curriculum and Standards Committee

Minutes of the Curriculum and Standards Committee meetings held on 12 March 2020, having been circulated, were noted. The policies due for consideration on 17 March were reviewed by Governors and amended following comments without the need for the committee to meet. The following policies were reviewed and agreed or ratified as appropriate:

- Teaching and Learning
- Science
- Mental Health and Well-being
- Foundation Stage
- Home School Agreement
- Education of Children and Young People in Public Care
- Governor Visits
- PHSE
- Curriculum
- Collective Worship
- Literacy

- Monitoring and Evaluation
- Sex and Relationships
- Assessment Recording and Reporting
- Dealing with Disruptive Visitors
- Drug Education and Incident Management
- Whole School Food
- Mathematics
- Learning Outside the Classroom

8.4 Infrastructure Committee

Minutes of the Infrastructure Committee meeting held on 26 February 2020, having been circulated, were noted. There had been no Walk Round given the current restrictions but the Committee Chair was willing to assist with a H&S Walk if it would help the school.

The Business Continuity Plan would be reviewed later. The Headteacher would send the Action Plan for reopening the school to the Committee Chair. Governors welcomed the work being done on the flat roof.

8.5 Personnel Committee

Minutes of the Personnel Committee meeting held on 27 February 2020, having been circulated, were noted. The next meeting would review policies.

Staffing – an NQT had been appointed for one year to cover a maternity leave and another NQT, who had been placed with the school in the Spring term, had been appointed to replace a teacher who would leave at the end of the year. The appointment had been by virtual interview and the paperwork was being completed. Allocation of class teachers and support staff for September was being considered at the moment. Governors congratulated the Headteacher on being fully staffed for September.

8.6 STAFF DISMISSAL/STAFF DISMISSAL APPEALS/ EMPLOYEE GRIEVANCE/ COMPLAINTS/ PAY REVIEW APPEALS/ PUPIL DISCIPLINE COMMITTEES

These Committees had not needed to meet.

9 DELEGATED REPORTS – GOVERNORS

9.1 REPORT OF THE CHAIR

The Chair had not taken any action under emergency or delegated powers.

9.2 GOVERNOR VISIT REPORTS

Governors had made visits in the Spring term and posted their reports. There was no requirement to do further curriculum visits so that the pressure on teachers was not increased. The Headteacher would contact PE the PE Co-ordinator to see if she had time to be in contact with her PE Governor.

Headteacher

The following meetings had been held:

- the Safeguarding Governor had met the Headteacher by phone and circulated the notes on Governor Hub.
- the SEN Governor had met the SENCo remotely last term and put the report on Governor Hub.

10 DATES AND TIMES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The date and times of the next meeting was confirmed. It was likely to be held virtually.

- Thursday 2nd July 2020 at 7.30 pm

11 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

11.1 Wildflower trail

Discussions were being held with the Church to make a wildflower trail through the churchyard which would be of benefit to children at both schools.

11.2 Behaviour Policy

The Headteacher would review the Behaviour Policy to ensure it met the requirements for Covid-19 arrangements.

Headteacher

11.3 September admissions

There would be 54 in Year 3 and all other Junior Year Groups would be full or almost full. In the first round of admissions, there were 52 first choices for Reception with more allocations to come. This was better than the previous year. The small Year Group would move into Year 2 and additional pupils were expected to join for Year 3.

Has the Village Playgroup closed permanently?

It had closed for the current period and had acquired new funding.

12 CONDUCT OF MEETING

Governors confirmed that the meeting was conducted in an open manner and that all governors were invited to participate and contribute to discussions. It was confirmed that all members of the Governing Board would have access to these minutes.

The meeting closed at 9.05 pm

Signed Date

CHAIR