



THORNER'S CE VA PRIMARY SCHOOL, LITTON CHENEY

**Minutes of Full Governing Body meeting held on Monday 21 June 2021
at 5.30pm via Microsoft Teams**

Present: *Foundation Governors:* John Vercoe JV (Chair), Heather Goffee HG, Helen Jones HJ, Nicole Forbes-Marshall NFM, Revd Jane Williams JW from 5.55pm

Headteacher: Mike Sitch MS

Staff Governor: Felicity Smith FS

In attendance: Natalie Green NG (Clerk), John Alexander (Newly Appointed Clerk)

Absent: Lisa Metcalf LM, Amy Toms AT, Caroline Morrish-Banham CMB

1. Welcome and Prayer

JV welcomed all present, in particular new Clerk JA, who briefly introduced himself. JV then opened the meeting with prayers. As a large number of governors were not present, the necessary quorum was confirmed by the Clerk.

2. Apologies

These were received and accepted from Anna Morley AM and Peter Strange PS.

3. Minutes of Meeting on 26 April 2021

The minutes were unanimously agreed as a true record and virtually signed off.

4. Matters Arising

- (8) All governors to email office to indicate that they had read KCSIE and Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy. Two returns were still outstanding and HJ would follow up again in the Autumn Term, when further updates would be due. ONGOING
- (11) Communication & Ethos Committee to continue work on developing school values with SC Ethos Committee - this was now underway and HG, JW and MS would report further on the Agenda. COMPLETED
- (10) MS to seek response from DC on Safeguarding Audit - MS reported that he had checked with other West Dorset Collaboration Heads to see if there had been a response as he had only received an acknowledgement from DC to date. Nothing had been forthcoming. COMPLETED
- (11.4) MS to speak to CMB about renewal at end of Foundation Governor term. - MS replied that CMB had replied in the affirmative so NG would set up the renewal as part of the handover meeting with JA. There was a discussion about Foundation Governor terms but it was thought that this would be CMB's third term. Fourth terms were not accepted by SDBE. COMPLETED
- (11.6) MS, JV, AT and AM to meet to discuss DA next steps - MS confirmed that a meeting had taken place on 11.5.21 and there would be a follow up meeting next month. COMPLETED
- (12.2) HG to set up date for Communication & Ethos Committee - this had taken place on 24.5.21 and the minutes had been included in the pack. COMPLETED
- (12.3) JV, HJ, MS to liaise with PS about a suitable date for the Staffing & Curriculum meeting. - this had been delayed so teachers could do assessments and be in a position to report on progress and would take place on 1.7.21 at 3.30pm. COMPLETED

There were no other matters arising that would not be covered by the Agenda.

5. Declaration of Any Other Urgent Business

JV noted some end of term items to cover at the end of the meeting.

6. Declaration of Interests

There were no interests declared in respect of the Agenda.

7. Correspondence

None.

8. Headteacher's Written Report

MS referred to his written report, which had been included in the meeting pack, and highlighted the following:

8.1 JV noted that Parent Governor LM had been appointed to a teaching role in school and a new Parent Governor would need to be elected in the Autumn Term.

8.2 Enrichment activities were noted as pleasing.

8.3 MS noted issues with the new heating system for the swimming pool, which were now resolved.

8.4 **Q/C Governors asked about continuing with the Maths No Problem Schemes of Work and MS confirmed that the school would continue with this. Q/C Governors asked about Maths No Problem costs.** MS said that this was now less than the initial set up costs and the school had decided not to purchase the online element this year.

9. Chair's Report

9.1 JV reported that he and HJ had attended a virtual Chairs Briefing on 15.6.21. The main speaker was Hanna Woodhouse, the Regional Schools Coordinator (RSC) for the Southwest. He noted that the RSC's key role was to provide oversight and scrutiny of academy trusts' performance and her focus was on promoting academies as an alternative to maintained schools. She had stated that the Secretary of State's ambition was that all schools should be part of a multi academy trust, though noted that there was no statutory requirement to do so. JV noted that the Government did have their eye on what they see as vulnerable schools – schools which were not keeping within budget, not offering a balanced curriculum and schools which had reducing pupil numbers. Collaboration between schools was seen as an important advantage for academies – sharing of staff, curriculum expertise and effective teaching practices. The school's membership of the West Dorset Schools Collaboration satisfied this and on balance JV felt that the school would not come under pressure to join a MAT if governors felt that it was not in its best interests to do so, adding the caveat that there was still a pressure to perform. 58% of Dorset schools were now academies.

There were also presentations from a Principal Teacher and an Education Challenge Lead from Dorset Council (Chesil Area) who gave an overview of the work they did to provide support and advice to schools. MS noted that Thorner's was part of group of schools who would be working with Education Challenge Lead Sheila O'Donnell.

The final main speaker was Vanessa Eddey, Team Manager, Schools Finance in Dorset Council. She talked about Finance after a year of pandemic funding. She confirmed that Dorset Council would not claw back any unspent covid catch up premium so this could be reallocated back onto the budget and used for other purposes. She also talked about Primary Sports Funding and particularly what this could and could not be used for. It could be used to: develop or add to the PE, physical activity and sport that the school provided; build capacity and capability within the school to ensure that improvements made now would

benefit pupils joining the school in future years. It could not be used to teach the minimum requirements of the national curriculum – apart from top-up swimming lessons after pupils’ completion of core lessons, and on funding capital expenditure. JV noted that two schools present at the meeting were planning to build running tracks round their playing fields. There was some philosophical discussion about whether this was adding to physical activity or was capital expenditure. The advice was to consult the Local Authority.

9.2 JV noted that this was the final FGB of what had been an extraordinary year. During these challenging times, the GB had kept its schedule of meetings virtually. With MS's help, governors had kept themselves informed of any developments in the school regarding pupil and staff well-being, finance, curriculum and health and safety. He noted how impressed the GB had been with the hard work and dedication of teaching and non-teaching staff through these unprecedented times – adding that they had been amazing, but with special mention to MS in his first year as HT. After taking over the role he immediately had to cope with problems and obstacles that he could not have foreseen. He had done this admirably and with good humour. Governors had also been impressed with pupil engagement and resilience and parental support. JV expressed his particular thanks to governors for their support during the past year noting that it had been a privilege to work with them.

Looking forward, JV noted that the focus for next year would be on delivering the school improvement plan, keep safeguarding at the forefront, and continue to ensure that the school's financial situation remained healthy. With the school improvements scheduled to take place over the summer holidays, and hopefully with a lifting of restrictions, the school had much to look forward to.

10. Vice Chair’s Report

10.1 *Safeguarding* - HJ noted that the key issue relating to this was awaiting feedback from the recent Safeguarding Audit.

11. Governance

11.1 *Policy Adoption* - the Complaints Policy was now ready for adoption and would be deferred to Staffing & Curriculum meeting 1.7.21. The Financial Procedures Policy, Scheme for Governor's Allowances and Disaster Recovery Plan (devolved to Finance & Premises) had been included in the pack for governor's information.

11.2 *Governor Monitoring Reports* –

- Health & Safety (JV) - The inspection had been carried out on 14.6.21 and the report had been included in the pack. There were no further comments.
- Numeracy (NFM) - this had been deferred from last meeting and FS and NFM had met and a written report to governors would follow. **Q/C NFM noted that FS had raised the matter of a devolved budget for Maths and NFM noted that she was surprised that FS did not have a such a budget.** MS explained that this was historic, and whilst the budget had been in deficit, subject leads had approached the HT for funds, with the exception of the ring-fenced PE budget. MS had since set up class budgets for teachers, and now that the budget was in surplus, he would move forward in this direction from the Autumn Term. MS added that considerations would be made about specific subject focus in terms of CPD over a two-year programme, looking at the best aspects of the Maths Mastery approach and its tension with statutory assessments, SATS and Ofsted grades. This would be covered at the INSET at the end of term. MS went on to describe gaps in schemes of work, which the school was working with. NFM noted how enthusiastic FS was in terms of working on this and that this enthusiasm should be harnessed.
- Modern Foreign Languages (AM) - MS had met with AM and she would provide the report shortly.
- Litton & Fledglings (JV) - this had been included in the pack and there were no further comments.
- Eco Schools (JS) - JV would contact JS about his role as Associate Member going forward.

- Literacy (PS) PS was ill and had to cancel his meeting therefore the report would follow.

11.2 Governor Training Feedback - the Governor Training Record had been included in the pack and governors were asked to notify the Clerk of any anomalies.

11.3 Succession Planning - there would now be a Parent Governor vacancy and NG recommended starting a new process during the Autumn Term; NG would begin the Foundation Governor reappointment process for CMB.

11.4 Governor Induction Pack - NG would review and update this pack as part of the handover process with JA. JA was also working through the pack in preparation for the Clerk role.

11.5 Notice of Chair and Vice Chair Elections September 2021 - NG noted that the elections would take place at the first FGB of the 2021/22 year and invited self-nominations. These should be sent to the Clerk in good time for the meeting, should any ballot papers need to be prepared.

11.6 Meeting dates for 2021/22 - NG noted that she had included in the pack a proforma of meeting frequency, timings and deadlines, to guide the process of setting up dates for next year. JV and MS would meet with JA outside the meeting to finalise. The first meeting of 2021/21 had already been set.

12. Committee Reports and business

12.1 Report of Finance & Premises Committee – The minutes of the meeting on 15.6.21 were included in the pack. The main item had been the Outturn Declaration Approval, with JV noting very little change since meeting the last FGB. This was approved. JV noted that it was now Month 2 of the Financial Year, and figures were on track.

12.2 Report on Communication & Ethos Committee – the minutes of the meeting on 24.5.21 had been included in the pack. HG noted the process of refining the school values rooted in the Christian foundation of the school, this would involve both parents and children. MS had set up a meeting with the School Ethos Council on 28 June at 10am, which HG and JW would attend virtually. A questionnaire had gone out to parents and MS gave an overview of the questions and responses, adding that he hoped to include the responses in the refined vision for the school, which would build on that already established. He would look to review this periodically and build in flexibility. The responses from parents had been positive and the pupil voice from the School Ethos Council would add to this. MS aimed to finalise the work by September 2022. He added that the guidance of the Diocese, who had given positive feedback of the process, had been invaluable.

12.3 Report on Staffing & Curriculum Committee - as noted above, this meeting would take place on 1.7.21. MS noted that PE funding would continue and this in addition to Covid catch up monies would help to prioritise facets of the SDP.

13. Any other urgent business as declared at the start of the meeting

JV noted that Marion Harp (MH) was starting a collection for two departing members of staff and governors were invited to contribute to that, rather than give a separate gift. Governors agreed this approach.

Governors had previously provided a lunch for staff on the INSET day at the end of term. MS had confirmed that this would be appreciated on the INSET on 23.7.21 and JV said that he was happy to plan this. Governors agreed to this.

JV noted that this would be the last FGB under NG's Clerkship, adding regret that the goodbyes could not be face to face. JV would be in touch with her before she finished the role, but he took the opportunity to thank her for all the support and good advice that she had given to him personally and to the GB generally during the time that they had worked together, noting that it had been much appreciated.

14. Date and time of next meeting: Monday 27 September 2021 at 5.30pm.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 7pm.

Item. No	Action	By Whom	Date
4 (4 (4 (8)))	Any outstanding governors to email office to indicate that they had read KCSIE and Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy.	Relevant governors	ASAP
11.2	JV to contact JS about continuing as an Associate Member in the future	JV	ASAP
11.2	Numeracy, MFL and Literacy reports to be provided	NFM, AM, PS	ASAP
11.3	Start Parent Governor election process	JA	Autumn Term
11.3	Start Foundation Governor re-appointment process for CMB	NG/JA	ASAP
11.4	Update Governor Induction Pack	NG/JA	ASAP
11.5	Send Chair/VC self-nominations to Clerk	Any interested governors	ASAP but before 27.9.21
11.6	Set Schedule of meetings for 2021/22	JV/JA/MS	ASAP