



'A cord of three strands is not easily broken.' Ecclesiastes 4:12
Inspiring a love of learning through the
bonds of **family, faith and friendship.**

Folksworth Church of England Primary School

Virtual Full Governing Body Meeting Thursday 8th February 2024 at 7.00pm

Minutes

KEY: **Governor Challenge** **Governor Approval**

Present

M. Norbury (Headteacher), C. Kirk (Chair), R. Duncan, A. Pickstone, C. Armstrong, G. Jessop and D. Quinn

Also Present

J. Harris (Clerk)

Not Present

K. Hart

No	Agenda Item
1	Opening Prayer The Chair opened the meeting with a prayer, which reminded governors of their responsibility to ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction.
2	Welcome and Apologies The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. There had been no apologies prior to the meeting.
3	Declarations of Interest There were no declarations of interest.
4	Agree Minutes of the last meeting held on the 14th of December 2023 A copy of the minutes of the last meeting, including confidential, had been shared prior to the meeting. The minutes were agreed as a true record and were to be signed by the Chair.
5	Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Last Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Clerk had updated the requested wording in the minutes from the October meeting.• The Chair thanked governors who had been able to join the virtual session for small Church schools on the 8th of January organised by the Diocese.• The Chair advised that she had met with parents to discuss a complaint, completed an investigation and shared her findings with them.• Elections for staff and parent governor elections had been held in January but there had not been any nominations.• An updated version of the SIAMS self-evaluation form had been shared.

Signed by.....

Chair of Governors

Agreed at Full Governing Body Meeting 18.03.24

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Chair had made the Diocese aware that the school was waiting for a new incumbent to start before beginning work on the Parish School Covenant.
6	<p>Correspondence The Chair had received a response from parents relating to a complaint but they had not requested that it be escalated to stage 3.</p>
7	<p>Governance Chair's Updates Notes from the virtual session, which considered the sustainability of a small church school, had been shared prior to the meeting. The options suggested were to do nothing, investigate the two Ely Diocese multi-academy trusts or consider federating with another small school. See also confidential minutes A governor asked about pupil numbers for September. The Headteacher advised that currently there were 94 pupils on roll and after half term this would increase to 95. There had been 90 pupils on roll on census day. The school was expecting between 9 and 10 pupils to join the school in September. Headteacher's Appraisal Review It was confirmed that in-year review had been completed and a further review was planned for May. Training The Headteacher advised that the Local Authority had offered training for Headteachers of small schools. The training was over six sessions and she had now completed the first session. The Chair advised that she had completed SIAMS training. Governors confirmed that they were happy with the allocation of link roles. It was agreed that the remaining meetings for 2023/24, apart from the one in July, would all be held virtually. Vacancies The governing body had vacancies for 1 parent and 1 staff governor. It was agreed that a parent governor election would be held in the summer term. A governor suggested that a note, about the vacancy for a parent governor, be put on the school website and the Headteacher agreed to do this. Monitoring Visits There were no reports for review. C. Armstrong advised that she was to arrange visits to look at Mathematics and Writing. G. Jessop was to shadow C. Kirk or A. Pickstone when they completed a Christian Distinctiveness visit.</p>
8	<p>Resources R. Duncan took over as Chair for the Resources agenda item. Budget Updates A December CFR report had been shared prior to the meeting. The report included explanatory notes. A governor asked if a carry forward was expected. The Headteacher advised that the forecast was for a negative balance at year-end but this may change. A governor asked about the Headteacher and Higher Level Teaching Assistant providing cover for Stay and Play due to staff absence and was told that additional hours were claimed. A governor asked if the teachers' pay grant had been received and this was confirmed. A governor asked if the school had received additional funding to support staff pay increases. The Headteacher explained that the increases had been built into the budget. A governor asked if learning resources were overspent. The Headteacher explained that this line included</p>

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educational visits but these would balance with trip income. Governors were made aware that it had cost £4,000 to replace a steamer for the kitchen and this had been an unexpected spend.

Benchmarking

A benchmarking report for the 2022/23 financial year had been shared prior to the meeting. R. Duncan explained that the report compared Folksworth against other similar schools and gave a level of risk. The areas that had been coloured amber were not a surprise. However, most areas were green, which was broadly in-line with similar schools. The school had needed to invest in premises so that was why this area was high. A governor asked about other staff costs and it was thought that this was for breakfast club and after school staff as not all schools had this provision.

Internal Financial Procedures

Internal financial procedures had been shared prior to the meeting. The Headteacher explained that they were a new model that had been adapted for the school. The only change had been made to the process for handling cash, as there were not enough staff members to split this due to being a small school. Governors were happy to approve the internal financial procedures.

Scheme of Financial Delegation

A scheme of financial delegation had been shared prior to the meeting. The Headteacher explained that this was a new document as previously it had been included within the internal financial procedures. Governors were happy to approve the scheme of financial delegation.

Premises Hire Policy

A premises hire policy had been shared prior to the meeting. The Headteacher explained that this was a model that had been adapted for the school and replaced the current lettings policy. She advised that she was waiting for seating capacity to be confirmed but wanted to seek governor views relating to charges for use of the playing fields only. A governor suggested that 'hire of recreational areas' be added. It was agreed that the school should make a charge if the outside areas were used. Charges for the outside area were agreed as £10.00 per hour. Charges for community use of the hall were agreed as £15.00 per hour for regular use and £20.00 per hour for one off bookings. Charges for both the hall and outside areas were agreed as £15.000 per hour. Use of the kitchen would be charged at £5.00 per hour. The Headteacher was to update the agreed charges and add the seating capacity once confirmed. The updated policy was to be put on the agenda for approval at the next meeting.

A governor asked if the playing fields ever flooded as she was aware that this was an issue for other venues. The governor suggested that the school could be an alternative venue for local football clubs etc., if the fields they used were flooded. The Headteacher advised that the fields did not flood but expressed concern about some uneven ground and arrangements for unlocking and locking the school for this type of use. The Headteacher and A. Pickstone agreed to explore this further.

Local Authority Finance Audit Outcomes

A letter relating to the outcomes of a Local Authority finance audit had been shared prior to the meeting. R. Duncan had reviewed the recommendations included in the letter and found that the majority were already in practice at the school. The Headteacher advised that in-line with recommendations she would ensure that for spends over £3,000 she would seek two quotes and for spends over £5,000 she would seek three quotes. A new scheme of financial delegation had been adopted. Contractors were to be asked for copies of their public liability insurance and then this would be recorded on Smartlog.

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	<p>Instead of handling cash for charity collections the Headteacher was to look at setting up a 'Just Giving' page instead to support the school to become cashless.</p> <p>School's Financial Value Standard Preparation A draft copy of the school's financial value standard (SFVS) for 2023/24 had been shared prior to the meeting. The Headteacher asked governors to forward any questions or comments. The SFVS would be put on the agenda for approval at the next meeting. This would then be submitted to the Local Authority for the 31st of March deadline. The Headteacher advised that she was putting together an evidence folder to support the SFVS. The Chair and R. Duncan agreed to arrange a visit to check this.</p> <p>Health and Safety Updates The Headteacher advised that a neighbour had reported an area of fencing as being unstable. The Headteacher had contacted the Local Authority to check who was responsible for this fencing as it was next to a footpath used by the general public. The neighbour had made a temporary repair so the school was waiting for a response from the Local Authority.</p>
9	<p>Headteacher's Report A report from the Headteacher had been shared prior to the meeting. The main areas of discussion included the following:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Local Authority's English Advisor had recently visited the school. They had looked at writing progress and agreed next steps. A governor asked when they were next due to visit the school and was told this it would be in the next academic year. • A governor asked if the work to be carried out on trees was significant. The Headteacher explained that some elm trees had died so were to be removed, some branches were to be cut back and some work was to be done with a willow tree. • A governor asked if fixed penalty notices were for five pupils or five families. The Headteacher confirmed that they were for five pupils. • A governor asked if the meeting for early year's foundation stage parents had been well attended and this was confirmed. The governor asked if there was any follow up for parents who did not attend. The Headteacher confirmed that the school followed up by sharing presentation slides with all parents. Staff also tried to catch up with parents who did not attend through one to one meetings or parent evenings. • Governors agreed that they were happy with the clear format of the Headteacher's report.
10	<p>Safeguarding Updates The safeguarding link governor had not shared a report for review.</p>
11	<p>SIAMS Parish School Covenant This had already been discussed under agenda item 5.</p> <p>Self-Evaluation Form A copy of the updated self-evaluation form (SEF) had been shared prior to the meeting. Areas highlighted in yellow may need to be reviewed and changed at the time of inspection to reflect the current context. The Headteacher explained that the SEF had been reworded based upon feedback during a visit from Dr Simon Hughes. He had suggested that the Headteacher list good examples and impact. He had also advised her to shorten the SEF to a couple of pages and focus more on impact. It was agreed that the SEF was a good snapshot. A governor asked when the school was next due for a</p>

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	<p>SIAMS inspection and was told that it could be in the summer term. It was agreed that it was good to highlight areas in yellow that may need to be changed. The Headteacher advised that she was putting together a folder of 'treasures' which included thank you cards and information about fund raising carried out in school. A governor asked if the SEF had been shared with teachers and this was confirmed. Governors agreed that the SEF was very comprehensive and thanked the Headteacher for her work on this.</p>
12	<p>Report from SENDCo A report had been shared prior to the meeting. A governor asked if the SENDCo needed administration support. It was explained that the SENDCo was given release time and provision was the responsibility of teachers.</p>
13	<p>Document/Policy Review Copies of all documents/policies had been shared prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Data Protection The Headteacher explained that the Data Protection Officer completed an audit every year and this included a review of documents and policies. A governor asked how often the school had contact with the Data Protection Officer. The Headteacher advised that they supported the school with data breaches and subject access requests. Over the last two years they had supported the school four or five times. A governor asked if their responses were helpful and quick and this was confirmed. Governors were happy to approve the data protection policy.</p> <p>Privacy Notices Governors were happy to approve the seven privacy notices.</p> <p>Trade Union Membership Recognition The Headteacher explained that this was a model statement from Education Personnel Management. A governor asked if the statement was on display and it was explained that staff were able to access it through Teams. Governors were happy to approve the trade union membership recognition statement.</p>
14	<p>Any Other Business Governors asked for their thanks to be passed on to the Finance Manager for her work on the budget.</p>
15	<p>Consider Governing Body Impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governors had reviewed and approved policies to ensure that the school was compliant. • Governors had considered the sustainability of small schools and were aware of risks and taking steps to address them. • Governors had approved internal financial procedures and a scheme of financial delegation to ensure that good practice was being followed. • Governors had reviewed the SIAMS self-evaluation form to support their understanding of this and enable them to help the school prepare for an inspection. • Governors had reviewed the budget, benchmarking information and the school's financial value standard and gained a detailed understanding which enabled them to support the school in prioritising expenditure and ensuring the school had a sound financial base. • Governors had considered the workload of the SENDCo to support staff wellbeing. • Governors had agreed visits for monitoring progress against the objectives of the School Improvement Plan.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The governing board had held the Headteacher to account by asking questions.
16	Date of Next Meeting Thursday 18 th of March 2024 at 7.00pm The meeting ended at 8.35pm.

Summary of Actions

Agenda Item	Action
4	The agreed minutes from the December meeting were to be signed by the Chair.
7	A separate meeting was to be arranged in the summer term to discuss options for small schools.
	Remaining meetings for 2023/24, apart from the one in July, were all to be held virtually.
	The Headteacher was to arrange for a message to be put on the school website regarding the parent governor vacancy.
	C. Armstrong was to arrange visits to look at Mathematics and Writing.
	G. Jessop was to shadow C. Kirk or A. Pickstone when they completed a Christian Distinctiveness visit.
8	The updated premises hire policy was to be put on the agenda for approval at the next meeting.
	The Headteacher and A. Pickstone were to explore the use of the playing fields for local football teams etc.
	Governors were to forward any questions or comments relating to SFVS to the Headteacher.
	SFVS was to be put on the agenda for approval at the next meeting.
	The Chair and R. Duncan agreed to arrange a visit to check the SFVS evidence folder.

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