



'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 6<sup>th</sup> February 2025 at 7.00pm**

## **Minutes**

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

#### **Present**

M. Norbury (Headteacher), C. Kirk (Chair), R. Duncan, G. Jessop, C. Armstrong, D. Quinn (joined at 7.06pm) J. Walters and K. Hart (left at 7.44pm)

#### **Also Present**

L. Wright (Christian Distinctiveness Lead)(left at 7.13pm) and J. Harris (Clerk)

<b>No</b>	<b>Agenda Item</b>
1	<b>Opening Prayer</b> An opening prayer, which reminded governors about the school vision, was led by the Chair.
2	<b>Welcome and Apologies</b> The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, including L. Wright who was to give a presentation relating to spirituality. Apologies were received and accepted from A. Pickstone.
3	<b>Presentation – Spirituality</b> L. Wright explained that spirituality had become an area for development following the last SIAMS inspection. Pupils now had a good understanding and this was support by a shared and visual language, which had been developed by the school, based upon advice from the Diocese. Pupils were familiar with the meanings of the mirror, window, door and candle and these were on display in the hall and classrooms so that they could be referred to when necessary. Teachers had been thinking about how these could be linked into different areas of the curriculum. Each term had a different theme for Collective Worship, for the current term this was 'respect'. <b>A governor asked about development of the spirituality policy.</b> It was explained that, when the policy was next reviewed, next steps would be identified. Governors thanked L. Wright for her presentation, which was to be shared with governors, and she left the meeting at this point.
4	<b>Declarations of Interest</b> There were no declarations of interest.
5	<b>Agree Minutes of the last meeting</b> The minutes from the meeting held on the 12 <sup>th</sup> of December had been shared prior to the meeting. <b>Governors were happy to approve the minutes as a true record,</b> subject to the date being corrected.

6	<p><b>Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Last Meeting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• R. Duncan advised that he had completed refresher training relating to the budget and finance.</li> <li>• Governor details on the Department for Education database 'Get Information about Schools' had been updated.</li> <li>• Pupils had not yet completed the National Younger Leadership Groups programme but would feedback to governors at the end of the programme.</li> <li>• The Headteacher had explored capital spends.</li> <li>• The kitchen staff salary had been added to the costings spreadsheet for August.</li> <li>• A school meals taster session had taken place.</li> </ul>
7	<p><b>Correspondence</b></p> <p>The Chair had not received any correspondence since the last meeting.</p>
8	<p><b>Governance</b></p> <p><b>Exploring Academisation Updates</b></p> <p>The Chair advised that she had met with the Chief Executive Officers for both ACT and DEMAT recently to discuss traded services.</p> <p>The Chair explained that currently DEMAT had 39 primary schools. The schools were split into 'hubs' which were overseen by a Hub Director. Lots of services were centrally based, these included finance, sites and contracts, and a top slice was taken for these. DEMAT was to open a secondary school in Alconbury Weald in September 2026. The Chief Executive Officer was happy for staff and governors to access DEMAT training at no cost. DEMAT did not offer any traded services.</p> <p>The Chair had spoken to the Chief Executive Officer for ACT in May and earlier that day. They had also offered access to training for staff and governors at no cost and there was a link on their website to access this. ACT was to introduce an 'Associate Membership Scheme', this was for bespoke projects and was costed on an individual basis. The Chair had asked if ACT were able to support with the Headteacher's Appraisal and they were happy to support this if governors and the Headteacher wished to access it.</p> <p><b>Membership</b></p> <p>The governing body had a vacancy for 1 staff governor and the term of office for parent governor C. Armstrong was to end 25.04.25. It was agreed that a parent governor election would be held before this date.</p> <p><b>Monitoring Visits</b></p> <p>Three visit reports from C. Armstrong had been shared prior to the meeting. These had been discussed at the December meeting. Follow up visits were to be arranged after February half term.</p> <p>The Chair advised that she had completed a finance visit and a copy of her report had been shared prior to the meeting. She advised that the Headteacher and Finance Manager knew the budget well.</p> <p>K. Hart had arranged a safeguarding visit for the 5<sup>th</sup> of March and J. Walters was to 'shadow' this.</p> <p><b>Training Feedback</b></p> <p>The Chair asked governors to complete Smartlog training as they received notifications that this was due.</p> <p>Governors were reminded that the school subscribed to Cambridgeshire's Governor Training Programme and encouraged to see if there was any relevant training that they could complete.</p>
9	<p><b>Headteacher's Report</b></p> <p>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"> <li>• A governor was pleased to note that the school was to have two trainees from the University of Cambridge. They asked if the Headteacher was confident that the school would be able to support them. The Headteacher confirmed that she had worked with trainees previously. Two experienced members of staff would be providing support, who had previously worked with students, and they were looking forward to this.</li> <li>• A governor asked for more information about a recent fire drill which had identified that some pupils were missing. The Headteacher explained that she had hidden the pupils in her office in order to see how staff and other pupils reacted. She was pleased to report that this had been picked up quickly.</li> <li>• A governor asked for more information about persistent absence and if this was high. The Headteacher explained that persistent absence was below 90% attendance and this was higher than normal due to illness and some term time holidays. There were also issues with the coding for some pupils who were attending alternative provision, and this was impacting attendance data.</li> </ul> <p><b>See confidential minutes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A governor asked if Reception class numbers for September 2025 were known yet. The Headteacher advised that she was still not aware of numbers from Peterborough and numbers had not yet been confirmed by Cambridgeshire. It was possible that numbers would be low but the school may get some children for whom Folksworth was the second choice. The Headteacher did have a plan in mind for if numbers were low. A governor asked if it had been a challenge to start drafting the budget for 2025/26, not knowing pupil numbers for September. The Headteacher explained that the budget was based upon 6 Reception pupils joining the school and 20 year 6 pupils leaving at the end of the summer term. The school had been in a similar position this time the previous year and 12 children had joined the Reception Class. The budget would be adjusted once numbers had been confirmed.</li> <li>• A governor asked about a Class Teacher who had completed a national professional qualification. The Headteacher explained that they had already been completing this before they joined the school and their knowledge would benefit the school. They had now applied for a SENCO qualification, which was funded by the government.</li> <li>• A governor was pleased to note that the Data Protection Consultancy Team Data Protection Compliance Feedback Form, which had been shared prior to the meeting, showed that the school was compliant with everything.</li> <li>• A governor asked about the Headteacher and SENDCo meeting with a specialist teacher from the Local Authority. It was explained that they met termly to discuss SEND provision and the teacher also delivered training to staff. This term the training had been organised to cover autism.</li> </ul> <p><b>(K. Hart left the meeting at this point)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Chair agreed to share a copy of the autumn term report completed by foundation governors, which had been submitted to the Parochial Church Council.</li> <li>• Governors thanked the Headteacher for her informative report.</li> </ul>
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10	<p><b>Resources</b> Vice Chair R. Duncan took over as Chair for agenda items 10 and 11.</p> <p><b>Budget</b> Two budget reports, one for December and one for January, had been shared prior to the meeting. A governor asked why the year-end deficit had increased since the previous forecast. The Headteacher explained that it was mainly due to higher than expected pay increases for teachers and support staff and increased electricity costs. A governor asked about educational visits expenditure and it was explained that this balanced with payments from parents but the income from this had not been budgeted for. A governor asked if the forecast deficit was likely to decrease and was told that the report was realistic and this was unlikely. A governor asked why I.T. learning resources were overspent and it was explained that payment for licences had been taken for the previous year and the current year. A governor asked when work on drafting the budget for 2025/26 would begin. The Headteacher advised that she had met with the Local Authority Finance Advisor the previous week and they had been pleased with the budget so far. The Headteacher had started to look at the 2025/26 budget but was not sure how much the grant to offset increased national insurance contributions that were expected was going to be. Although the school was expecting to end 2024/25 with a £5,000 deficit the Headteacher was confident that the school would in a better position the following year. If the census figures were low this would impact the future budget and the staffing structure would need to be reviewed. The Chair and Vice Chair, R. Duncan, were invited to join the Headteacher when she next met with the Local Authority Finance Advisor. The Headteacher was to share the date for this. The Chair asked if governors would be happy if the school did not renew the service level agreement for governor training with Cambridgeshire County Council as this would be a saving of £2,500.00 and this was confirmed by all governors. Governors were made aware that they would be asked to approve the 2025/26 budget at the next meeting, scheduled for the 20<sup>th</sup> of March.</p> <p><b>Benchmarking</b> Benchmarking reports had been shared prior to the meeting. Governors were pleased to see that the school had been compared with schools that were more similar than previous reports. The school spent more per pupil on educational support but teaching staff, support staff and premises per meter costs were less. Catering costs were difficult to compare due to the school's unique situation with the Headteacher managing this. Governors were reminded that it was good practice to benchmark each year and this was something that needed to be evidence for the School's Financial Value Standard.</p> <p><b>Health and Safety Monitoring</b> There were no updates since the last meeting.</p> <p><b>Lettings</b> There were no updates but the policy would be due for review soon.</p> <p><b>Premises Development Plan Update</b> The plan had been shared prior to the meeting. A governor asked if blinds needed to be fire proof and was advised that they did not.</p> <p><b>School Meals</b> The Headteacher advised that she continued to keep costs updated.</p> <p><b>Skills Matrix</b> Prior to the meeting governors had been asked to complete and return a skills matrix for financial management responsibilities. The Chair had collated these and outcomes had been shared prior to the meeting.</p> <p><b>Staffing</b> Updates had been included within the Headteacher's report.</p> <p><b>Breakfast/Stay and Play</b></p>
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	<p>The Headteacher continued to monitor numbers closely to see if there were any trends and would continue to do this. Breakfast provision was doing well. A governor asked why after school numbers were higher on a Tuesday and it was explained that this was due to Brownies being held at the school in the evening. A governor asked if charges had been increased and it was confirmed that they had increased from January. Governors asked if there had been any feedback from parents and were advised that there had not as costs were inline or below the charges for other providers in the area. A governor asked if parents were able to use childcare vouchers and this was confirmed.</p> <p>The Headteacher had explored wrap around care and found that the school would have to offer every pupil a place. Funding was reclaimed after spending and the school was not in a position to do this. Staffing would also be an issue.</p>
11	<p><b>Approve School's Financial Value Standard</b></p> <p>A copy of the School's Financial Value Standard and evidence to support this had been shared prior to the meeting. It was explained that there was a requirement to submit this to the Local Authority on an annual basis. It was the responsibility of governors to complete the return, which had 30 questions. Governors considered and agreed the responses for questions. Despite challenges governors were confident that the school had met standards and efforts were being made to reduce spending to avoid a deficit. R. Duncan was to complete the summary of agreed actions. Governors were happy to approve the School's Financial Value Standard and this was to be submitted to the Local Authority for the 14<sup>th</sup> of March deadline.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the Headteacher and asked for governor thanks to be passed on to the Finance Manager for their work on the budget. Governors were thanked for completing a skills matrix and thanks were to be passed on to three members of staff who had also completed one.</p>
12	<p><b>Standards and Ethos</b></p> <p>The Chair took over for the remaining agenda items.</p> <p><b>Pupil Progress</b></p> <p>Governors continued to monitor this through visits.</p> <p><b>Christian Distinctiveness/Collective Worship/Spirituality Policy Update</b></p> <p>These items had been discussed through the presentation and Headteacher's report. G. Jessop had joined pupils for Collective Worship and found that they were all engaged, enjoyed singing and spirituality language was in use. A governor asked if the incumbent was aware of the agreed language and information was to be shared with them.</p> <p><b>Behaviour Curriculum Update</b></p> <p>It was explained that each week there was a different focus. A governor asked if pupils were responding positively and it was confirmed that the majority of pupils were. A common language was used and consistent expectations were coming through. A governor asked about outdoor learning and was advised that pupil loved this. An unexpected outcome had been that pupils were more responsible for keeping the area neat and tidy. A governor asked about pupils who were working outside the classroom. It was explained that this was done at different times so that they did not always miss the same things and teachers supported missed learning.</p> <p><b>Spring Term Events</b></p> <p>Updates were to be shared at the next meeting.</p>
13	<p><b>Policy Review</b></p> <p>Copies of all policies had been shared prior to the meeting.</p> <p><b>1. Anti-Bullying</b></p> <p>A governor asked if a record was kept of contact made with families and it was confirmed that this was recorded on CPOMS.</p>

	<p><b>2. Bullying and Harassment</b> It was explained that this was an updated model policy from Education Personnel Management.</p> <p><b>3. DBS Ex-Offenders</b> It was explained that this was a model policy from Education Personnel Management.</p> <p><b>4. First Aid</b> A governor asked if incidents were monitored to see if there were any trends and this was confirmed.</p> <p><b>5. Flexible Working</b> A governor asked if the policy needed to include more detail relating to governor panels for appeals. The Headteacher agreed to check and if necessary add this.</p> <p><b>6. Mental Health and Wellbeing</b></p> <p><b>7. Probation Procedure</b> A governor asked if notes were taken at meetings with new staff. The Headteacher explained that meetings were informal so notes were not retained. However, she would explore this further.</p> <p><b>8. Physical Restraint</b> Governors were made aware that the policy linked to the behaviour policy.</p> <p><b>9. Redundancy</b></p> <p><b>10. Policy for the Application of Time Off for Training or Study</b></p> <p><b>11. Share Parental Leave (Adoption)</b> Governors were happy to approve the 11 policies.</p>
14	<p><b>Any Other Business</b> There was no other business. The Chair thanked everyone for their contributions to the meeting.</p>
15	<p><b>Date of Next Meeting</b> Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2025 at 7.00pm (virtual)</p>
The meeting ended at 8.50pm.	

Summary of Actions	
Agenda Item	Action
3	The spirituality presentation was to be shared with governors.
5	The Clerk was to correct the date of the last minutes.
8	The Chair was to share details of ACT/DEMAT training for governors and the Headteacher would share details for staff training. A parent governor election would be held before C. Armstrong's term of office as parent governor ended.
9	The Chair was to share a copy of the autumn term report which had been submitted to the Parochial Church Council.
11	R. Duncan was to complete the summary of agreed actions. The School's Financial Value Standard was to be submitted to the Local Authority for the 14th of March deadline.
12	Updates on spring term events were to be shared at the next meeting.
13	The Headteacher was to explore probation procedures to see if notes should be retained from meetings with new staff.

