



'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 15th May 2025 at 7.00pm

Minutes

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

Present

M. Norbury (Headteacher), C. Kirk (Chair), R. Duncan, , D. Quinn,
K. Hart, G. Jessop, J. Walters, A. Pickstone and C. Armstrong (joined at 7.05pm)

Also Present

J. Harris (Clerk)

No	Agenda Item
1	Opening Prayer The Chair opened the meeting with two prayers. She explained that these had been read out by Maple Class pupils during Collective Worship. One of the prayers related to Victory in Europe (VE) Day and the other courageous advocacy.
2	Welcome and Apologies The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. There were no apologies as all governors were present.
3	Declarations of Interest There were no declarations of interest.
4	Agree Minutes of the last meeting held on the 20th of March 2025 A copy of the minutes from the last meeting had been shared prior to the meeting. The minutes were agreed as a true record , subject to the Clerk adding the time that she had joined the meeting.
5	Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Last Meeting A copy of the safeguarding training presentation from the Local Authority had been shared with governors. The Chair had uploaded prayers for meetings to a folder on Teams, under Ethos. The Chair had uploaded a copy of the autumn term report, which had been submitted to the Parochial Church Council, to a folder on Teams under Ethos. The folders could be accessed using the link below https://teams.microsoft.com/v2/
6	Correspondence There had not been any correspondence since the last meeting.
7	Resources R. Duncan took over as Chair for agenda item 7. Review of Contracts

A list of contracts had been shared prior to the meeting. It was agreed that it was good practice to review contracts in advance of them ending. R. Duncan asked if there were any contracts that needed to be reviewed in more detail. The Headteacher advised that all of the contracts were necessary and value for money was always a priority. A governor felt that it would be beneficial to list the contracts in sections. The Headteacher explained that it was a working document for the Finance Manager but she would ask if it could be reformatted to make it easier for governors to follow. A governor asked about the contract for ICT and it was explained that this was provided by Cambridgeshire County Council. A governor asked why there were two contracts for copier rental. It was explained that one charge was for a licence and the other for maintenance. A governor asked why one of the contracts for copiers was for 3 years and the other for 5 years. The Headteacher explained that it was so that both contracts ended at the same time. The Headteacher made governors aware that the school would be losing access to the 'School Grid' which was provided by ScholarPack. The school was moving over to Arbor but this had a meals option. This was to be reviewed when the school had completed the transfer. A governor asked about a contract with Cambridgeshire County Council with a charge of £1100.00 for 'Primary Offer'. The Headteacher explained that this was the charge for Performance Management support and guidance. A governor asked if the move from Scholar Pack to Arbor had been allowed for in the budget forecast for years 2 and 3. The Headteacher advised that there was an additional cost of £1800 for year 2. A governor asked about a contract for '5 a day fitness'. It was explained that this was access to online five minute workout videos. P.E. and Sports Premium funding was used for this. The videos were used in the classroom when pupils were not able to use the 'daily mile'.

End Of Year Balances

A final closedown budget vs actuals report had been shared prior to the meeting. The school had ended the year with a deficit of around £5000.00. This had mainly been due to pay awards that had been higher than expected. The school had spent all of the capital funding. Governors thanked the Headteacher and Finance Manager for their work on managing the budget.

Approve 2025/26 Budget

A 3 year budget forecast, for years 2025/26, 2026/27 and 2027/28, had been shared prior to the meeting. It was agreed that there were likely to be changes to the budget in years 2 and 3 as there were so many unknown factors. A governor asked about the main changes that governors should be aware of. The Headteacher explained that, when she had set the budget for 2025/26, she had been mindful of years 2 and 3 so had been extra careful. Instead of employing lunchtime staff, teaching assistant hours were being used. Pupil numbers were likely to increase in future years but there had been a drop for 2025/26. Costs from the previous year had been reviewed to see where increases needed to be made and this would be monitored closely. A small carry forward had been planned as income for year 2 was expected to drop. Savings needed to be made to balance this. The Headteacher, Chair, R. Duncan and the Local Authority Finance Advisor had gone through the budget line by line. It was felt that funding figures for years 2 and 3 were a better reflection than in previous years. The Headteacher had allowed for a 3% pay award for teaching and support staff but the awards may be higher than this. The pay awards had not been reflected in years 2 and 3. A governor what would happen if a school presented a deficit budget? It was explained that schools had to apply for a deficit licence and have plans to address this and it needed Local Authority approval. The Headteacher was aware that other local schools had bigger deficits. The Local Authority Finance Advisor had no concerns about Folksworth. It was hoped that the drop in pupil numbers would only be for a year. If numbers did not increase

	<p>the following year consideration would need to be given to the class structure. A governor asked if the school had any children joining the Great Haddon development in Peterborough. It was confirmed that one family was joining the school. A governor asked if there were any other funding streams. R. Duncan agreed to explore grants for schools. The Headteacher advised that, in the past, when she had received information about grants she had checked and found that the school did not meet the criteria. Governors were happy to approve the budget and thanked the Headteacher and Finance Manager for their work on setting the budget.</p> <p>Premises Plan Update</p> <p>A plan had been shared prior to the meeting. Governors were able to see, through colour coding, that up to two years ago the school had managed to complete a programme of work. Unfortunately, due to limited capital funding, some work had not been completed. The Headteacher explained that the plan now was more of a wish list if funding allowed for all of the work.</p> <p>The Chair took over for items 8 to 10.</p>
8	<p>Headteacher's Report</p> <p>A report had been shared prior to the meeting.</p> <p>A governor asked about the initial teacher training placement. The Headteacher advised that it was going well and the teacher had received her first report. A governor asked if the school was able to offer the teacher a job for the following year and was told that it was not.</p> <p>A governor asked for more information about plans to have year 1 pupils in Acorn and Maple classes. The Headteacher explained that she had considered this in depth. There were some Reception pupils who were not quite ready for year 1, due to their individual needs. She had discussed a flexible approach with parents, which would enable these pupils to remain in Acorn class but access some year 1 learning in Maple class when they were ready. A governor asked if this structure had been used in the past. The Headteacher confirmed that there had been a mixed Reception and year 1 class. Odd pupils may have had a staggered start in year 1 in the past. A governor asked about plans for the future and was told that the intention was for the pupils to spend more time with Maple Class and agree with parents when pupils were ready to move permanently. A similar approach might be required for these pupils for year 2. The Headteacher had been able to put the flexible approach in place due to lower Reception numbers for September so had used this to benefit these pupils.</p> <p>A governor asked about staff recruitment. The Headteacher advised that no applications had been received for the kitchen staff role. For this reason the Headteacher had increased the pay scale to attract more applications. A governor suggested that the Headteacher contact the local college to see if a student might be interested. A. Pickstone agreed to explore this. A governor asked about the minimum requirements for school meals. The Headteacher advised that the role would be advertised again over half term and, if there were no applications, she would explore the minimum requirements. It was too early in the year for teaching assistants, who wanted to leave at the end of the summer term, to resign.</p> <p>A governor asked if the school ever received any feedback from secondary schools relating to Folksworth pupils who had joined them. The Headteacher explained that there was no 'official' feedback but when staff visited to discuss transition they were told that Folksworth pupils settled well and made good progress. Positive feedback had also been passed on by parents with children at secondary school and a sibling at Folksworth.</p> <p>A governor asked for an example of how the school dog was supporting pupil wellbeing. The Headteacher explained that a pupil, who required movement breaks, was now motivated to focus on work on the days that the dog was in school. The pupil's teacher had noticed that they were more settled on these</p>

	<p>days, as they wanted to be allowed to visit the dog. Pupils were responding well to the dog and gaining confidence.</p> <p>A governor asked if the SATs booster sessions for Mathematics had been during the school day. The Headteacher confirmed this and advised that there had been a focus on fractions.</p> <p>A governor asked if SATs had gone well. The Headteacher felt that pupils had done their best and were well prepared. Pupils had been focussed, there had not been a stressful atmosphere or any tears.</p> <p>The Chair had visited the school for May Day celebrations and felt that there had been a lovely atmosphere. It was suggested that people from the village be invited to attend future events.</p>
9	<p>Governance</p> <p>Exploring Academisation Updates - 'Decide whether or not to explore one of the options further'</p> <p>The Chair had collated information about the Diocese of Ely Multi-Academy Trust (DEMAT), ACT Multi-Academy Trust, the Spirit Federation and remaining as a maintained school but working with other local schools for comparison. This information had been shared prior to the meeting. A working group, which consisted of the Chair and two Vice Chairs had been exploring academisation and governors were asked what they wished to do next. It was agreed that it had been helpful to have the information collated for comparison. A governor asked if information relating to local governance could be added and this was summarised as follows:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DEMAT and ACT – Each school had a local governing body but governors had less responsibility than maintained school governors. • Spirit Federation – The federation had one governing body. • Spirit Federation (Partner/Associate) – Each school retained its governing body and retained the responsibilities of a maintained school governor. <p>A point was raised relating to Folksworth being a voluntary controlled Church school and the Chair agreed to clarify any limitations relating to this.</p> <p>A governor noted that the multi-academy trusts and federation had different leadership models. Some schools retained their Headteacher and some had different models for leadership.</p> <p>The Chair invited governors to share their views relating to next steps.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A governor felt that the school was currently in a good position, it needed to keep options open and see what benefits there were for the school with each of the options. • A governor expressed concern that by joining a multi-academy trust the school would lose autonomy. They agreed that the school needed to know more about benefits. If the school joined a multi-academy trust it could not change its mind but it may be easier to leave a federation. The Chair explained the differences between a 'hard' and 'soft' federation. • The Chair advised that the Local Authority and Diocese were keen to support schools to join a multi-academy trust or federation. • A governor expressed concern about schools needing to be viable if they joined a multi-academy trust. There was a risk that if they were not sustainable they would be closed. It was agreed that this risk would apply whether the school joined a multi-academy trust or federation. The Headteacher was aware that the Department for Education would need to be involved. • A governor was aware that if the school joined a multi-academy trust staff and pupils would be able to move within the trust.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governors were reminded that choices were limited for Church schools and the Diocese would need to give their approval. • It was agreed that governors needed more information in order to make an informed decision. • Currently the school's finances were secure but consideration needed to be given to future years. An academy would have economy of scale. • A governor noted that all of the 39 schools who were part of DEMAT were small Church schools. • A governor expressed concern about joining a federation and if this was best for the school. • It was agreed that there were positive and negative points for all of the options. • Some other local maintained schools had mixed year group classes and it would be beneficial for teachers to network with others in the same situation. The benefits of sharing needed to be explored further. The school might be able to buy into the services used by a federation. • A governor was aware that there were other multi-academy trust schools in the area but they were not Church trusts. • The Spirit Federation was a mixture of maintained and Church schools. • The Headteacher wanted to be able to afford 'good' staff and benefit from economies of scale. She wanted staff to be able to work with other schools, develop strategies and benefit from the experience of other school staff. She wanted to retain some autonomy so that she could do what was best for the school and pupils to support them to be able to do their best. Other considerations included optimising the school's strengths, developing staff, receiving support when needed and strategic planning. • A governor suggested that the school explore the Meridian Trust as the feeder secondary school, Sawtry Village Academy, was part of this trust. • A governor suggested that the Spirit Federation be invited to speak with governors from Folksworth, as their presentation had been given to a group of local schools. <p>The Chair agreed to contact the Chief Executive Officer of DEMAT to invite him to speak with governors at a separate meeting, she would also speak to Jacqueline McCamphill from Ely Diocese.</p> <p>It was agreed that the Headteacher had put the school in a good position to be able to explore options.</p> <p>Membership</p> <p>The governing body had a vacancy for 1 staff governor.</p> <p>Monitoring Visits</p> <p>The Chair had completed two visits that week, the administration of SATs and Collective Worship, and was to complete reports for these.</p> <p>R. Duncan was to complete a health and safety visit.</p> <p>C. Armstrong had arranged a Mathematics visit and was to arrange one for Writing.</p> <p>Training Feedback</p> <p>J. Walters had joined a Local Authority New to Governance training session. He had also booked a place for an Ely Diocese training session but this had been moved to a date in July.</p> <p>The Chair and R. Duncan continued to join Local Authority Governor Briefings.</p>
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	A quote was being sought for Local Authority governor training in 2025/26.
10	Pupil Premium Strategy Statement The statement for 2025 to 2028 had been shared prior to the meeting. The Headteacher explained that the majority of the funding was used for teaching assistant support, which focussed on the four outcomes. The school was to continue with what it had been doing. Teaching assistant support was timetabled to benefit pupil premium pupils. A governor asked if there was evidence of impact. The Headteacher confirmed this but explained that, as a small school, this could identify individual pupils. This evidence had been shared with the link governor for pupil premium, D. Quinn.
11	Standards and Ethos A. Pickstone took over for agenda item 11. Pupil Progress Updates The Headteacher advised that currently National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) assessments were being carried out. Year 6 SATs had now been completed. Christian Distinctiveness This had been discussed under agenda item 8. Collective Worship This item had been discussed under agenda items 1 and 9. Summer Term Events Events included sports day and Year 6 transition. Opportunities were to be given for families to come into school. The school had put together a V.E. Day display for the Village Hall. A governor asked where the display would go next. The Headteacher advised that it was now in the school hall but she was to ask if the Church wanted to have it for a while. A. Pickstone agreed to ask the Church about this. A governor advised that the display had been well received by the local community.
12	Policy Review Copies of all policies had been shared for governor awareness prior to the meeting. The Headteacher explained that these were guidance for teachers. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Addition and Subtraction Calculation 2. Fractions, Decimals and Percentage Calculation 3. Multiplication and Division Calculation 4. White Rose Mathematics Calculation (Nursery and Reception)
13	Any Other Business The Chair thanked governors for completing monitoring visits and joining training sessions.
14	Date of Next Meeting Thursday 10 th July 2025 at 7.00pm (in person) The Headteacher advised that year 6 SATs results should be available for this meeting.
The meeting ended at 8.47pm.	

Summary of Actions	
Agenda Item	Action
4	Clerk to update minutes from March meeting and then share them for the Chair's signature.
7	R. Duncan to explore grants for schools.
8	A. Pickstone to contact the College about a student.
9	A point was raised relating to Folksworth being a voluntary controlled Church school and the Chair agreed to clarify any limitations relating to this.

	Chair to contact the Chief Executive Officer of DEMAT to invite him to speak with governors at a separate meeting, she would also speak to Jacqueline McCamphill from Ely Diocese.
	Chair to complete reports for visits to monitor the administration of SATs and Collective Worship.
	R. Duncan to complete a health and safety visit in the summer term.
	C. Armstrong to arrange a visit to monitor Writing.
11	A. Pickstone to ask if the Church wanted to use the V.E. Day display.