

ST JOHN'S CHURCH
OF ENGLAND (VA)
FIRST SCHOOL

"LEARNING TOGETHER – AIMING HIGH"

The Governing Body

Minutes of the Full Governing Body held on the 27th January 2020 at 6.00pm

Governors present Mr David Daniels – Co-Chair, meeting chair and Foundation Governor
Mrs Claire Marsland – Headteacher

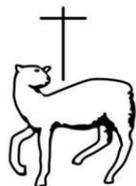
Mrs Alexia Loundras – Vice-Chair and Parent Governor
Mr Neil McCormick – Foundation Governor
Mr Brent Milverton – Foundation Governor
Mrs Fiona Puleston – Co-Chair and Parent Governor

Attendees Mrs Rosemary Conway – Business Manager and Clerk to the Governing Body
Mrs Gill Driffield – Business Manager

Apologies Reasons accepted for: Mrs Beth Coates – Foundation Governor
No reasons given for:

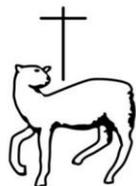
Key: **Decisions** **Challenge** **Actions**

Agenda Item	Discussion, decisions and actions	
1	<p>Standing items</p> <p>Opening prayer Mr Daniels opened the meeting with a prayer.</p> <p>The Chair welcome new Foundation Governor, Brent Milverton to the meeting.</p> <p>The Clerk reminded Governors that Mr McCormick's term of office was due to end on 23rd February 2020 and so this would be his final meeting. The Chair thanked Mr McCormick for his contribution to the Governing Body.</p> <p>Declarations of interest New interests were declared as follows;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mr Milverton has a child at St John's First School. This has been recorded on the Register of Interests. <p>Apologies Apologies were received as detailed above.</p>	



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	<p>Agree the minutes of the meeting held on 16th December 2019 The minutes were agreed as an accurate record, and duly signed by the Chair.</p> <p>Governor Recruitment Governors received updates on Governor recruitment;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• There was no response to the posters put up around Frome.• A Governor spoke with a couple of people but they did not pursue things when they knew more about the commitment involved.• A Foundation Governor informed Governors that a new member of the St John's Church congregation may have suitable skills and experience to become a Governor. <p>The Headteacher informed Governors that she had sent an email to the Service Manager of Somerset Governance Services, the Diocese School Organisation and Governance Adviser and the school's Diocesan Schools Adviser. The email was also copied to Headteacher Support. In the email the Headteacher stated that she felt that the school would be put in to Special Measures by Ofsted under Leadership and Management, due to current issues with Governance and recruitment of Governors. She went on to say that issues were raised with both Somerset Governance Services and the Diocese 14 months previously, but nothing had happened, despite promises of help. At the time of the meeting, a response had only been received from Headteacher Support.</p> <p>Governors discussed recruitment and expressed concern. Various options were considered including the Chair contacting representatives at the Diocese. No decisions were taken at the meeting.</p>	
2	<p>Premises and Health and Safety update</p> <p>Premises update report Governors discussed the Premises Update with the following of note;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Business Manager reported that there would be costly work required in the coming financial year.• The Business Manager reported that the school was responding to various issues that couldn't wait until the new financial year, including standing water on the flat roof outside Maple classroom and an ongoing leak in the PE cupboard.• A Governor asked why the cost was approximately £5,000 for the fixed wiring testing. The Business Manager responded that the testing would take around a week and so would incur a high cost.• The Headteacher expressed frustration that work had not taken place that was promised in July 2018, when she met with representatives from the Diocese and Local Authority about the school site not being fit for purpose. These	



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included a heating and ventilation survey. The Business Manager reported that these had been chased a few times, but to no avail.

School Condition Allocation (SCA) priorities

The Business Manager informed Governors that the school's surveyor from Hookway had emailed to ask what the school's capital priorities were so that bids could be put in for money from the SCA. Previously discussed areas included;

- Playground surface
- Gutters and fascia redecoration
- Air Conditioning in 2nd floor classrooms
- Toilet refurbishment

The Business Manager advised that all these works were required but that Governors would be required to contribute 10% of the cost, in line with the regulations for Voluntary Aided schools. Although Governors could borrow the money for this, they would be required to have a repayment plan in place. The Business Manager advised that it was not possible to budget for the 10% within the school budget as the budget would already be very difficult to balance. A Governor asked what was needed with guttering. The Business Manager responded that some replacement and some cleaning was required. Much was at height.

The Business Manager informed Governors that they would need to consider what works to budget for, and which to seek capital funding for as part of the budget drafting process. **A Governor asked what criteria should be used to decide.** The Business Manager responded that Hookway carry out regular condition surveys and use those to prioritise capital funding.

Governors discussed how to respond to Hookway's request for priorities. A Governor noted that it would be difficult to decide what works to pursue until quotes were received, detailing the amount of the 10% liability.

It was agreed to pursue all options until the cost of the 10% liability was clearer.

Action: notify Hookway to pursue all capital priorities for 2020-21

Governor Fund

Governors discussed the Governor Fund and how best to raise funds for any 10% liability for capital works. Various options were put forward, including approaching parents for donations and approaching local businesses. A Governor commented that they felt Governors should be realistic about how much these approaches might raise, perhaps at most a few hundred pounds. Another Governor commented that they felt parents may not appreciate being asked to help fund toilet refurbishment.

**Business
Manager**



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	<p>Governors re-visited the possibility of asking for donations from parents. The Headteacher stated that she received a lot of negative feedback the last time this was attempted.</p> <p>A number of Governors expressed their frustration with the requirement for the Governing Body to fund 10% of capital works and asked where other schools got money from. The Business Manager responded that only Governing Bodies of Voluntary Aided schools are required to contribute to capital works. A Governor commented that they were aware another Voluntary Aided school provided the 10% liability from the school budget.</p> <p>Governors agreed that the issue needed to be discussed further outside the meeting.</p> <p>Action: Meet to discuss the Governor Fund</p>	<p>Mrs Puleston, Mr Daniels, Mrs Loundras</p>
3	<p>Financial Management</p> <p>Month 9 Report</p> <p>Governors discussed the month 9 report with the following of note;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Business Manager reported that the main difference from the Month 6 report was that the anticipated year end carry forward would be approximately £47,000. This would be required to balance the budget in 2020-21.• Information about teacher salaries for the new budget is not yet known. Any changes would usually be funded.• The Headteacher stated that she believed that any gains from the national funding formula would not be capped in 2020-21 as it had been in previous years. The Headteacher asked the Business Manager if she was aware if this was definitely correct. The Business Manager responded that she did not know the answer but that the school's Education Finance Officer had not mentioned it when preparing the month 9 report. A Governor asked whether St John's gained from the National Funding Formula. The Headteacher responded that she thought that many schools in Somerset were due to benefit. The Business Manager offered to clarify the situation.• The Business Manager reported that numbers were reasonable but that the outgoing year 4 cohort was large. It was not anticipated that there would be an issue with balancing the budget in 2020-21.• A Governor asked why there was an overspend in the Admin/clerical cost centre. The Business Manager responded that there had been some staff absence, resulting in the need for overtime from other staff. There was also an amount due to be invoiced to the Frome Learning Partnership.• A Governor asked for an explanation of the Twilight and Early Birds cost centres. The Business Manager responded that the two cost centres would be	



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combined in to a single 'Wraparound Care' cost centre in the new financial year. When the two cost centres were put together, there was not an overspend.

- The Headteacher stated that curriculum cost centres were not fully spent as under the new Ofsted framework there was a focus on staff wellbeing, with schools advised to consider purchasing schemes of work in order to reduce teacher workload. She went on to advise that schemes would be likely to become available but that she would rather wait until a few were out, to see which were decent ones.

Credit Control

The Business Manager reported that Finance staff had done much work on credit control and that a new policy had been put in place around non-payment for lunches and wraparound care. Weekly payment request emails were being sent, with the Business Managers getting involved with anyone not responding to those emails, and who owed more than £50.

The Business Manager tabled details of a number of outstanding amounts and asked Governors to agree to write off any from previous financial years. All the amounts had been chased for payment without success. Governors discussed the amounts owing and agreed that they did not warrant the staff time cost involved in continuing to chase payment.

Governors agreed to write off the tabled outstanding amounts.

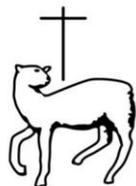
Unofficial Fund update

Governors noted the figures received.

Governors discussed the Business reserve account. The Business Manager reported that no one knew why it was in place and was set up a long time ago. Possibly it could have been set up as a high interest account.

A Governor asked if anyone had managed to find out what was the small income to the Governor Fund account. A foundation Governor suggested it may be income from a bequest from a will.

A Governor asked if anyone was aware if the Governor Fund account had to have that title. They suggested that potential donors may be put off by the name. The Business Manager responded that the account name could be changed by completing a bank mandate. Governors discussed a few suggestions for a new name that helped communicate the fund's purpose of making the 10% contribution to capital projects. No decisions were made.



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Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS)

Mr Daniels reported that he had started work on the SFVS with the Business Manager.

The Business Manager informed Governors that there were some new questions, some changes in wording to other questions and a new dashboard, providing RAG ratings. The Business Manager sought advice from the school's Education Finance Officer, who advised that 2018-19 Consistent Financial Reporting data could be used, as the spreadsheet workings use 2017-18 data. The RAG ratings therefore do not use real time data.

A Governor stated that the first two questions were difficult. Governors agreed that Senior staff in school did have financial experience and skills but Governors did not. Mrs Loundras suggested that the reference to her working with budgets be removed as she did not do so in a professional capacity.

The Business Manager informed Governors that the Business Continuity plan was being reviewed and that the inventory and asset register were due to be reviewed by the Finance Assistant, but it didn't happen due to absence.

A Governor proposed forming a finance committee, particularly as the draft budget would need to be considered in the coming months. The Headteacher asked if Governors would have capacity to meet during the school day to avoid the need to pay for school staff to remain in school in to the evening. She also proposed that any meetings be clerked. Governors agreed that it would be possible to meet during the day.

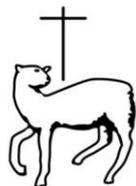
The Clerk advised Governors that the Standing Orders and Scheme of Delegation would need to be reviewed and terms of reference written for any new committee. She went on to advise that while Governor numbers were low, Governors could consider just having additional Full Governing Body meetings with a finance focus, during the school day. If new Governors were recruited, the Governing Body could consider introducing a committee at that point.

The Governor proposing the committee stated that two additional meetings would be required. Governors agreed that Tuesday would be a suitable day to meet.

Governors agreed not to form a finance committee but to add some additional Finance focussed Full Governing Body meetings.

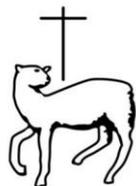
Action: Set and communicate additional meeting dates

Mrs
Puleston



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<p>4</p>	<p>Budget Planning 2020-21</p> <p>Budget Priorities</p> <p>The Business Manager distributed Local Authority guidance for Governors around budget planning.</p> <p>The Headteacher proposed budget priorities as follows;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Computing – there were currently not enough iPads to deliver the Key Stage 1 computing curriculum and some staff also needed them to use tracking software such as Tapestry.• Outdoor play equipment – there was currently no play equipment.• Schemes of work.• High premises needs.• Spending to ensure the school could deliver a decent curriculum under the new Ofsted framework. Preparing for the new framework had involved reviewing the curriculum from scratch. For example, staff had been reviewing the English reading books used as class texts and for topics. If different texts to the current ones were chosen, multiple copies would need to be purchased. Work had started with English, but would continue across the curriculum, meaning curriculum costs would be likely to increase from previous financial years. The Headteacher proposed that any curriculum budget unspent at the end of the 2019-20 financial year be carried forward to the new financial year. <p>The Business Manager stated that they were reviewing some key areas of expenditure, to ensure the school would continue to get best value for money. The printer lease was reviewed in 2019-20 and staff absence insurance would be reviewed for the 2020-21 budget. There had not been many claims made in 2019-20 due to most absences being shorter than the excess period. There had been an increase in the use of supply teachers as it had not been possible to use HLTAs to cover short term absence. Reasons for this include some of the challenges with behaviour meaning it was a concern to leave a class with a HLTA unless additional support was also in place and HLTAs were also often timetabled elsewhere.</p> <p>The Business Manager stated that it was difficult that the budget would not be known until March 2020 when the new financial year would start in April 2020. It would mean that significant decisions would need to be taken quite quickly. Governors noted this.</p>	
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Staffing

The Headteacher tabled a paper detailing three options for the teaching staffing budget from September 2020 to August 2021. All options assumed that those eligible to progress on the pay scale following successful performance management would do so, and on costs of 35%. All options included leadership release time of 5 days per week (not including Headteacher time) and a total class teacher time of 50 days per week. The options did not include release time for Early Years Foundation Stage teachers during the summer term. Options 2 and 3 did not include middle leadership time for the English and Maths subject leads.

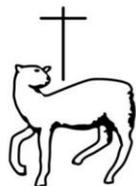
- Option 1 – no change from 2019-20. Total anticipated cost of £665,767.
- Option 2 – introduction of a fulltime Deputy Head via internal recruitment. Total anticipated cost of £666,004.
- Option 3 – assumed one teacher on the upper pay scale would leave, and external recruitment of a fulltime Deputy Head. Total anticipated cost of £676,115.

Governors discussed the three options with the following of note;

- There was at most £10,000 between the least and most expensive option.
- A Governor asked the Headteacher which option she would prefer. The Headteacher responded that she was torn. As option 3 depended on someone leaving, it may not be an option if that didn't happen. If it was a choice between 1 and 2, she had concerns around how leadership release time might be used. When leaders were out of the classroom under the current structure, much of their time was taken up with managing safeguarding or behaviour issues. This meant they were not able to focus on leading the school. Whilst it was possible to look at how behaviour issues were managed, the safeguarding would remain a significant workload.
- The Business Manager advised that the Education Finance Officer will budget for the most expensive option, until firm decisions were made.
- As the budget and any teacher movements were not yet known, all agreed it was not possible to make any decisions yet but that it would be sensible to work to the most expensive option for the time being.

Governors agreed to work to option 3 when drafting the budget for 2020-21.

The Headteacher informed Governors that she had not yet drafted a structure for teaching support staff and Planning, Preparation and Assessment time cover. A recent attempt to recruit a fulltime Higher Level Teaching Assistant was unsuccessful. The post would be readvertised with some adjustments.

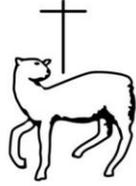


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	<p><i>Caretaking and cleaning</i></p> <p>The Headteacher reported that a review of spending on cleaning and caretaking was underway but that more work was required. The review needed to involve an analysis of current spending with the school's maintenance contractor as there would be some work that could be done by a competent caretaker. The Headteacher commented that she had asked for costings before Christmas but that these were ongoing.</p> <p>The contract with the school's cleaning and caretaking service provider would run from April to March which doesn't fit with the school cycle.</p> <p>A Governor asked the Headteacher and Business Managers for their opinions on how the current contractor had performed. The Business Manager responded that it was up and down. They have responded to emergency issues when needed but could be slow at other less urgent requests. The contractor made jobs needing more than one person easier to arrange and jobs working at height could be accommodated. The Headteacher suggested that the school could consider having its own scaffold tower, or look into borrowing one from the middle schools.</p> <p>The Headteacher recommended that the Business Managers contact the current provider to ask if the school can commit for the summer term rather than a full financial year, to allow more time to carry out the review. Governors were happy with this.</p> <p>Action: Contact cleaning and caretaking contractor to ask about committing to summer term rather than full year.</p>	Business Managers
5	<p>Agree the confidential minutes of the meeting held on 16th December 2019</p> <p>The minutes were agreed as an accurate record, and duly signed by the Chair then sealed in an envelope.</p>	

Meeting finished at: 7.30pm

Date of next meeting: 24th February 2020 at 6.00pm



**ST JOHN'S CHURCH
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FIRST SCHOOL**

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Summary of actions agreed

Action: notify Hookway to pursue all capital priorities for 2020-21	Business Managers
Action: Meet to discuss the Governor Fund	Mrs Puleston, Mr Daniels, Mrs Loundras
Action: Set and communicate additional meeting dates	Mrs Puleston
Action: Contact cleaning and caretaking contractor to ask about committing to summer term rather than full year.	Business Managers