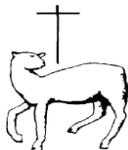


# The Governing Body of

## St John's C of E VA First School



*Together we have the roots to grow and the wings to fly.*

### Minutes of the Full Governing Body Meeting held on the 28<sup>th</sup> January 2021 at 3.45pm

#### Governors present

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

Mr Hugh Haines – Foundation Governor  
Mrs Alexia Loundras – Vice-Chair and Parent Governor  
Mr Brent Milverton – Foundation Governor  
Mrs Fiona Puleston – Co-Chair and Local Authority Governor

#### Attendees

Mrs Rosemary Conway – Business Manager and Clerk to the Governing Body  
Mr Dan Jackson – Deputy Headteacher

#### Apologies

Reasons accepted for: Mrs Gill Driffield – Business Manager  
No reasons given for:

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

Agenda Item	Discussion, decisions and actions	
	The meeting was conducted remotely due to the ongoing COVID19 pandemic.	
1	<p><b>Standing items</b></p> <p><i>Opening prayer</i> Mr Daniels opened the meeting with a prayer.</p> <p><i>Declarations of interest</i> There were no new declarations of interests.</p> <p><i>Apologies</i> Apologies were received as detailed above.</p> <p><i>Governor Business</i> The Clerk informed Governors that she had not heard from the St John's Church Parochial Church Council about the prospective new foundation governor. Mr Daniels offered to chase things up.</p> <p><b>Action: Chase PCC about prospective foundation governor application</b></p>	Mr Daniels

	<p><b>Agree the minutes of the meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2020</b>  The minutes were agreed as an accurate record, and duly approved.  The confidential minutes were agreed as an accurate record, and duly approved. The minutes were later signed, placed into an envelope and sealed.</p> <p><b>Matters arising</b>  There were no matters arising</p>	
2	<p><b>Finance</b></p> <p><b>Month 9 report</b>  The Business Manager presented the month 9 financial report and highlighted the following points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The report was prepared by the school’s Education Finance Officer, in discussion with the Business Managers</li> <li>• The current financial year was different to most due to the ongoing pandemic.</li> <li>• The budget was in an overall better position than at month 6. Some savings had been achieved; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A UPS teacher retired at Christmas and was not replaced like for like.</li> <li>○ Recruitment of apprentice TAs was paused</li> <li>○ A governor asked about whether the PFSA saving was included. The Business Manager responded that it was and was originally in the budget as a HLTA. The Headteacher stated that she wanted to consider recruiting a HLTA as one year group did not have one. There was currently a HLTA on a phased return to work, but it was a slow phased return and their expertise was better used elsewhere. A governor asked if the school was managing without. The Headteacher responded that they were during lockdown but it would be more difficult once school returned to normal provision.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• There was a significant saving in the catering cost centres as the school was not currently being charged by the school’s catering provider. Following the same situation in the first lockdown, the catering provider had approached the Frome catering group and had negotiated a contribution to the provider in order to keep the business viable. There would be every chance the same approach might be made after the current lockdown. The saving was therefore committed but there might be a chance to move it to uncommitted balance in future.</li> </ul> <p>The Headteacher asked if any savings achieved had to be used for catering related expenditure. The Business Manager responded that it currently needed to be held as committed but might be able to be moved in future.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school was not incurring cost in providing vouchers to Free School Meal children as this was funded centrally by the Department for Educaiton.</li> <li>• The Headteacher and Business Manager had done work on the Pupil Premium budget so a lot of the committed balance at month 6 was not allocated to different areas. This had improved the uncommitted balance.</li> <li>• The cleaning budget was significantly overspent due to the pandemic. This would need careful consideration for the new budget depending on</li> </ul>	

pandemic requirements in the new financial year.

- There would be a significant loss in the Wraparound Care budget. The school had incurred a staffing cost of £14,000 but had reduced income due to not charging during the first lockdown and then having lower than usual attendance since. Schools had been encouraged to keep the provision open to support key workers. Governors would need to consider the provision from September 2021 and whether to continue to run it, or change how it was staffed. It was difficult to plan due to the pandemic and not knowing how long restrictions might remain in place. The Headteacher commented that there were no children attending the previous night. **A governor asked if that was regular.** The Business Manager responded that there was a bubble isolating but attendance was minimal. The Headteacher asked if furlough was an option to reduce costs. The Business Manager responded that this could be explored with HR. The Business Manager highlighted that any staffing decisions had to be made early, so that any formal procedures could be followed.
- The Business Manager informed governors that the school had received catch up funding, which could be used to offset the cost of recruiting a new HLTA.
- A saving had been achieved in the LGPS pension deficit charge. This was around calculations at Somerset where the school had not been charged the amount previously budgeted.
- The buildings budget was anticipated to be overspent. However, there was an insurance payment due that may allow the budget to balance.
- The grounds budget was currently unspent but some costs were anticipated such as tree works.
- The utilities were looking positive as building occupation was reduced.
- The report made an assumption that all curriculum budgets would be fully spent.
- Two new cost centres had been set up for the COVID winter grant and the catch up funding. The Business Manager explained what the COVID winter grant was for and that vouchers for Free School Meal children over half term would be provided through a different scheme than the termtime vouchers, due to them being funded from different pots of money.
- The Headteacher asked if the school had received all the income due from the Frome Learning Partnership as that would have a positive impact on the financial position. The Business Manager responded that some was still due.
- The Headteacher informed governors that Somerset Association of Primary Headteachers would make a payment of £1000 for her chairing the network.
- The Headteacher informed governors there would be a Personal Education Plan (PEP) funding of £950 for a child in the school where some resources had already been purchased.

A governor asked if the savings would give a higher carry forward to assist in setting a balanced budget for 2021-22. The Business Manager responded that it would but governors needed to remember that funding would be lower due to the reduction in number on roll. Setting the budget would also be challenging due to the uncertainty around the pandemic and how long restrictions would be in place, particularly with regard to staffing.

### Signatories

The Business Manager asked governors to consider adding the Deputy Headteacher as signatory to the following accounts, to enable him to deputise for the Headteacher;

- IMPREST
- Unofficial Fund

**Governors agreed to add the Deputy Headteacher as signatory to the IMPREST and Unofficial Fund.**

**Governors discussed the Governor Fund and agreed signatories as follows;**

- Mr Daniels
- Mr Haines

### Credit Control

The Business Manager proposed writing off amounts outstanding on lunch and wraparound care accounts for children who had left the school.

Wraparound 2019-2020

- Child A - £109.40
- Child B - £5.00
- Child C - £20.00
- Child D - £32.50

Wraparound 2020-2021

- Child A - £42.20
- Child B - £5.10

Lunches

- Child A - £96.90
- Child B - £86.70
- Child C - £22.95
- Child D - £22.95
- Child E - £22.95
- Child F - £10.20
- Child G - £10.20
- Child H - £2.55

The Business Manager stated that it was unlikely the school could recover these amounts. The Headteacher added that the level of children leaving with outstanding amounts had reduced considerably, due in large part to the efforts of the Finance Team, in particular the Finance Assistant. She also felt it was a bad time to be chasing families for money.

**Governors agreed to write off the stated amounts.**

**Draft budget 2021-22**

The Business Manager informed governors that work would begin on the budget for 2021-22 shortly and that staffing structures would be the first consideration. She asked governors to think about any priorities for staffing and stated that the Leadership structure agreed at the last meeting would be put in to the budget. She went on to ask governors to consider having a governor to scrutinise the budget with the Business Managers and Headteacher in more detail, before it came to a Full Governing Body meeting. Mrs Puleston and Mr Daniels volunteered.

The Headteacher gave two staffing updates for consideration in the budget, which are minuted confidentially.

A Governor asked if the possibility of having a directly employed caretaker was still under consideration, as it might be a way to save some money. The Business Manager responded that it was a value for money exercise that included both caretaking and cleaning. It would be something to think about as part of budget setting as any contract with the current provider would come in to force in the new financial year.

**Schools Financial Value Standard**

The Business Manager highlighted that this would be due by the end of the financial year and requested that governors nominate a governor to draft the return with the Business Managers. Mr Daniels volunteered.

**Action: Complete the SFVS return for 2021.**

**Unofficial Fund**

The Business Manager informed governors that there were not many transactions going through the account. There was some catching up needed to get the spreadsheet up to date as other tasks had taken priority.

**Governor Fund**

The Business Manager informed governors that the balance in the account was £344.40. This could be used for smaller items such as training.

Mr Daniels informed governors that he had started looking at possible grants but had been tied up with other duties. He stated that many were for quite specific items. A governor asked if this was about parental donations.

The Headteacher asked governors to consider a contribution to leavers books. The school did not approach them last year. A governor offered to approach the church about a contribution, as they gave some money the previous year.

A governor raised the governor fund contribution payment item on ParentMail. Another governor responded that it had been agreed to write something to parents. The first governor stated they felt that discussions were ongoing but it didn't feel like things were getting anywhere. The Clerk reminded governors that they had agreed at the previous meeting that someone would write a newsletter not just about funding. Governors discussed the matter further and agreed to write something once school was open to all children.

Mr Daniels /  
Business  
Manager

	<p><b>Action: Write governor newsletter</b></p>	<p><b>Mrs Loundras</b></p>
<p><b>3</b></p>	<p><b>Premises and Health and Safety</b></p> <p><b>COVID-19</b></p> <p><u>Risk Assessment</u></p> <p>The Business Manager explained that the school is operating under the circulated risk assessment for the school being open to vulnerable children and the children of key workers. Questions were invited from governors.</p> <p><b>A Governor asked if the numbers needed adjusting as the risk assessment referred to maximum bubble sizes of 16.</b> The Headteacher responded that there were 19 in reception but other bubbles were mostly at 15 with one group going to 16.</p> <p><b>A Governor asked about families requesting places in school and what the reasons given were.</b> The Headteacher responded that some had not filled in the form correctly the first time round and some had cited concerns around wellbeing and mental health. This was very hard as the pandemic was having a big impact in this area but it did not provide the basis for a school place. The school had increased face to face contact for these children. Two emails had been received in response to the letter sent out providing very positive feedback. The Headteacher was aware of approaches taken by some schools that felt very unfeeling.</p> <p>The Headteacher stated that a 2m gap between staff and the children’s tables in classrooms would be maintained.</p> <p><b>A governor asked if rooms were still being ventilated.</b> The Headteacher responded that there had been an issue with getting classrooms up to an acceptable temperature but the school was now following advice provided by Somerset’s health and safety team. This involved opening windows wide before and after school, closing them while rooms were occupied and opening them a small amount when unoccupied in the middle of the day.</p> <p><b>A governor asked if staff were happy with procedures.</b> The Headteacher responded that on the whole they were. There was a choice between increasing the size of bubbles or creating new bubbles if the number of children requiring a place increased. Opening new bubbles would undermine the team A and B system, which had worked successfully in covering COVID related absences. Increasing bubbles would also result in both more children and more adults on site, whereas increasing the size of existing bubbles would just increase the number of children on site. Governors were generally positive about the team system and they felt it was appropriate. The Headteacher stated that bringing more staff on site would compromise the remote provision. The Deputy Headteacher stated that he felt the current system was working well and that it was supportive to staff mental wellbeing in having the time away from school rather than trying to cover in school and home learning at the same time.</p>	

**A governor asked if the Headteacher had considered restricting the number in school.** The Headteacher responded that the Department for Education had not issued any guidance allowing schools to restrict places and had not capped the numbers in an individual classroom or required social distancing within classrooms. The guidance stated that government was accepting of the fact that some schools would have more children in than others. The governor stated they were aware schools in other local authorities were restricting numbers. The Headteacher stated she felt that was not compliant with the guidance.

**A governor asked how many more children coming in to school would put the team system at risk.** The Headteacher responded that one year group was close to needing a new bubble and another had already been split into two groups. She went on to state that up to 20 in a room would be OK. She went on to state that she felt she had written to parents at a good time but it was likely more requests would come in if lockdown was ongoing.

The Headteacher stated that the March 8<sup>th</sup> date was interesting as it could be a date to give families hope, but she had also heard that primaries may return before secondaries. A governor stated that it would depend on the figures nationwide. The Headteacher stated that it would also depend on how the testing was going in schools as the lateral flow testing may identify a good number of asymptomatic cases.

#### Lateral Flow Testing

The Headteacher informed governors that lateral flow testing would begin for staff in school following receipt of test kits. The Headteacher, Business Managers and Deputy Headteacher had watched the training webinars from the Department for Education. A risk assessment had been undertaken, procedures set up and a briefing sent to staff. The Headteacher had also provided a verbal briefing for half the staff. A briefing for the other half would be provided the following week. The Headteacher explained the testing process and that it was an opt in system. She went on to explain that if someone tested positive, they would need to seek a PCR test.

**A governor asked if most had opted in.** The Headteacher responded that a very small number had opted out so far and that she had been clear that this was a personal choice for staff. Anyone opting out was able to opt in at a later stage if they wished. Anyone not opting in was able to attend work as normal.

#### Confirmed positive cases

The Business Manager informed governors that the school had had 3 positive cases in school and close contacts had been identified and isolated. She was confident that all advice from Public Health England had been followed. A governor asked if the cases had been children or adults. The Business Manager responded that it was a mix.

#### **Condition Survey**

The Business Manager reminded governors that they would need to consider capital priorities for the new financial year as the Diocese would have their funding agreed shortly. A meeting would need to take place with the Diocese, school and governors. Governors would need to consider their priorities against what the Diocese felt should be priorities and what funding was available and how any governor

	<p>contribution would be covered.</p> <p>The Business Manager informed governors that the Diocese had some ring fenced funding for energy related works, that did not attract the governor contribution. Surveys had been undertaken on the heating and lighting systems in school and surveyors had indicated that St John's was a reasonable candidate for funding.</p> <p>A governor asked what the Business Manager felt were priorities. The Business Manager responded that the heating system and the electrical infrastructure were priorities but both significant projects. The governor asked how much funding the Diocese received. The Business Manager responded that it was never enough so prioritisation would be needed and compromises were inevitable.</p> <p>Governors asked if the electrical infrastructure would be a large project. The Business Manager responded that it would be a very large project.</p>	
4	<p><b>Policies</b>  <b>The following policies were approved, subject to any amendments noted below;</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arson</li> <li>• Data Protection and privacy notices</li> <li>• SEND</li> <li>• Admissions Arrangements 2022-23</li> </ul> <p>The following amendments to the Data Protection policy were agreed;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insert ethos statement at 1.5 'We will encourage all members of the school community to take the data protection seriously and raise any concerns.'</li> <li>• Change Data Protection Lead to be Rosemary Conway</li> </ul> <p>The Clerk stated that the variation to the Admissions Arrangements, agreed during the pandemic, had been inserted in to the document and that the Diocese had confirmed that no further consultation was required.</p>	
New	<p><b>Safeguarding Audit</b>  The Headteacher informed governors that the safeguarding audit was complete. Governors agreed that the Safeguarding Governor should review the audit.</p> <p><b>Action: Review the safeguarding audit</b></p>	Mrs Loundras

**Meeting finished at:** 5.30pm

**Date of next meeting:** 25<sup>th</sup> February 2021

### Summary of actions agreed

Action: Chase PCC about prospective foundation governor application	Mr Daniels
Action: Write governor newsletter	Mrs Loundras
Action: Review the safeguarding audit	Mrs Loundras

### Summary of decisions taken

<p><b>Governors agreed to add the Deputy Headteacher as signatory to the IMPREST and Unofficial Fund.</b></p> <p><b>Governors discussed the Governor Fund and agreed signatories as follows;</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mr Daniels</li><li>• Mr Haines</li></ul> <p><b>Governors agreed to write off the stated amounts.</b></p> <p><b>The following policies were approved, subject to any amendments noted below;</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Arson</li><li>• Data Protection and privacy notices</li><li>• SEND</li><li>• Admissions Arrangements 2022-23</li></ul>
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