

Kirk Smeaton Church of England Primary School

Governing Body

Minutes: Monday, 7th March 2022 @ 7pm



Part 1:

1: Welcome and apologies

Apologies from Paul Hursthouse

Welcome new Governors Harvie Palmer and Alex Henderson

2: Any other business to be agreed

Mrs Cuddy would like to add Schools trips, Parent Questionnaire and Local Authority Visit.

3: Confidentiality & Declaration of Business Interests

EH remind everyone of confidentiality in the meetings and anything discussed stays confidential.

Declarations of Business Interest – HP questions this as from April we'll be buying IT services from the trust. Mrs Cuddy agrees it should be declared. The declaration of business interests form has already been completed.

4: Minutes of meetings dated 30th November 2021

EH commented on the last items relating to the parent session with Governors that it was stated all parents would have written email. This was completed in Nov 21.

Agreed by Governors

Part 2:

1: Headteachers Report

Leadership and Management showing works carried out so far:

- Eco lighting through school. Upstairs and KS2 area to be completed
- Wiring and new sockets in IT Server room upstairs have been replaced as were deemed a fire hazard. All set up now for when Ledger IT take over. New server casing also to be installed which is basically a secure fire-resistant cupboard.
- Parents and Friends money £13K has been used on the clever touch screens in each classroom which have already proved to be fantastic. Remaining £4900 will be spent on the class set of laptops.
- Repainting of external areas to be completed soon when weather allows
- Looking at keycodes for the community gate
- Arbor (new MIS system) to be introduced from April which will include online booking systems for breakfast and after school clubs.
- CCTV will be replaced after April 2022 (to discuss costing later in the meeting)
- In the process of obtaining quotes for updating the kitchen area/KS1 area/IT room and Headteachers Office.

- Decoration of hall corridor and toilets to be completed once quotes obtained
- Reviewing of the NYCC catering package but in the contract for another year.
- Financial impact of the breakfast club and Nursery which has been really positive.
- Heating to be upgraded (a large part of them have already been replaced)

Mrs Cuddy explained we have a 4-year cycle of IT (what we have, what we need to change etc) Questions welcomed and HP to support.

Q: Have you talked to the new Governors about the things that have been allocated to them?

A: Yes, HP and AH both came to parents evening sessions so had a good chat and both happy with responsibilities but expressed how an induction would be helpful. RR would like to be involved in the induction. Mrs Cuddy to organise.

Mrs Cuddy explained how she met with two parents today re fundraising. No-one actually wants to take the role of Parents & Friends on but they would like to help with schools fundraising, Mrs Marner currently looking into closing the Parents & Friends charity down so any fundraised money comes through school accounts.

2: Budget monitoring

EH commented how it's not a balanced budget as we have an ongoing deficit but then a huge carry forward balance. Q: is it accidental each time or could be budget better for something? Also leading into the SFVS ensuring we have a development plan and not just forecasting but having a strategy that ties into the curriculum/attainment goals.

Mrs Cuddy explained how Mrs Marner works with our FMS Officer and often go with worst case scenario to protect funds. Governor agrees we're taking advice from the FMS Officer and it's perhaps more a question of the amount we're carrying forward than in-year. Governor comments how it is difficult to plan a spend when there and in-year deficit forecast. Mrs Cuddy agrees and comments how we need to be looking at using some of the large revenue balance to develop to school kitchen/IT area. Mrs Marner added how when she does the revised budget with FMS officer we're looking at the three-year forecast not just the current year – an example of changes is this year we have 5 x pupils leave unexpectedly and immediately there is over £10K that had been accounted for going forward that is no longer in the budget. FMS officer does comment how we seem to generate income well with our Nursery, After School Club and now our Breakfast Club. We have begun to use the revenue balance for the balance of the laptops (after Parent & Friends money) and for Eco lighting.

Governor agrees we are doing the right thing on spending on items such as laptops etc so all pupils are benefitting as well as being cautious to a certain extent.

Q: Have we factored into the budget the expected energy increases:

A: Yes, Electricity expected increases were given by NYCC and included in the budget. Also, Kerosene is ordered in bulk so expect an increase in this too which hasn't been factored in as yet.

Mrs Cuddy explains to refurbish the kitchen area and IT suite will utilise a huge part of the revenue balance and even though no quotes as yet believes it will be 50K.

Q: We do want to spend some of the money so children benefit and probably better to say our in-year deficit isn't so worrisome due to our large revenue balance but asks have we sat down and actually discussed and agreed on all the things we want to spend the money on?

A: Mrs Cuddy state the IT suite and kitchen and possibly moving the office which needs to be more centralised, need to be done properly. Need to look what we want the school to look like long-term.

Governor comments they agree with the ideas but we need to be able to show how these changes actually benefit the children. Mrs Cuddy explains she would like the current office to become a sensory room and the current kitchen area become a nice space for children to cook/bake in a nicer space and the IT room become a proper reprographics room.

3: Covid Funding

This is being used for tutoring and there is more arranged for the year 2's and year 6's. Will then look at year 3's and 4's. Original £8K was spent on the ipads. Received school led tutoring grant (£607) and recovery premium (£1167) which is paid over 2 finance years. Once this is spent we may use some of the school budget to support as proving beneficial.

4: Devolved Capital update

Expecting just over £5K again in the next financial year. CCTV to be taken from this.

5: Sports Premium update

Sponsorship now received from a parent £500 and looking to get the sports kits printed now the design has been agreed. Q: when do we need to spend this by? A: Can carry forward but do need to look at spending. Mrs Marner confirmed there is approx. £10K to carry forward before sports kits and forest schools paid.

Q: Any ideas what you would like to spend the remainder on?

A: always looking to replenish playground equipment and will ask the children too. Also thinking of having rugby posts on the field.

Governor comments how the new equipment/bars seem really popular and maybe look at having more so more children can enjoy at the same time.

6: Pupil Premium update

Mrs Cuddy confirms she needs to go through this with CC and AH. We do always spend this on the children. Governor asks do we still have parents whose children are in receipt of UIFSM and therefore do not claim income-based FSM? Mrs Marner adds how we do try and promote this on newsletters. Mrs Cuddy confirms we do have the music service providing lessons free to pupil premium children so this may encourage more families to come forward. Governor asks to make sure this is advertised on the newsletter.

7: Governor Action Log

Normally PHu would go through this so to leave until next time. RR explains how the Governor action log is different from the Governor action plans.

8: SFVS

EH just comments how we need to ensure that the 3-year forecast and the budget are tied in with attainment goals from reading through the SFVS guidance. Mrs Marner to add as a recommendation before submitting. Mrs Marner also mentions party related transactions and how we have a NIL return but this may change from April with Harvie (IT) joining us. Governors approved SFVS.

9: Health & Safety with financial implications

Lighting completed. Other jobs are dealt with on a day to day basis. Governor asked about children trapping their fingers in doors? Mrs Cuddy advised it was one of the internal fire doors near where the children stay whilst waiting for the school bus and need to access the toilets. Unable to prop them open as they are fire doors and therefore quite heavy. We have had the door closure looked at to see if it can be loosened.

10. Arbor

New MIS system from April. Parents will be able to book their own breakfast clubs/after school clubs plus it does attendance, assessment, payments online etc all in one system and hopefully more streamlined. Mrs Marnier confirmed parentpay and parentmail will go and communication will all be done through Arbor – Parents will receive links and information regarding the new app once we've migrated. Hopefully going live after Easter break. Mrs Cuddy also confirmed how communication will all be through one system other than Dojo. There will be an overlap. Q: Will there be any demo's? A: information will be sent out and it does look straight forward. Will be sent out with instructions and Governor also comments how we need to be able to offer a drop-in session or something should parents need help. EH offers to have a look as a parent to trial it along with RR once we go live as a school.

11. Governor newsletter articles

Mrs Cuddy asks if anyone has anything to share? Governor suggests maybe introducing our two new Governors and stating their skills and experience to support school and try and get the message across that we are making sensible decision about what parents want. AH confirms how the parent session was a good thing and how he got asked 'What do Governors do?' Would be good to present in a family friendly way and how they contribute to the school. Mrs Cuddy also asks 'How can parents support school?' Mrs Cuddy feels there has been a lot of negativity. Want to express we are a service and here to help everyone but also want to encourage families to help themselves too. Governors adds if we are saying this is a message from the Governors and not just the school we need to be clear about why we are saying these things. Governor also suggests popping a note on Dojo once a Governor has been in for a visit. Mrs Cuddy to look at adding Governors to Dojo. Governor also feels it would be good to explain how there are many skills within the Governing Body and how they do 'check' school and have various responsibilities. Important parents know Governors are a board and not individuals. Alex also to write a blurb for the website and maybe include how nice it was to meet parents etc. Harvie to also write a piece and good to show how we have experience from another school too.

12. Consultation

Mrs Cuddy shared the consultation notes with another governor to have a thorough read through and give quality feedback. Mrs Cuddy gave overview of old school day to current school day since changed due to covid. Governor comments how the concerns came down to 3 issues:

- Not enough food
- Not enough time to eat the food/play
- Impact on the parents working day

Conversation over changes in the school day, recruitment of MSA's, wellbeing for all , staff contracts, children's learning, behaviour, Health and safety reports.

Governor confirmed there were 55 children covered by the consultation which is only half so this raises the issue of how much do we expect to get a positive from everyone and we cannot please every parent.

There wasn't a consultation initially due to covid and even though there has been one now, it doesn't mean we have to change anything but we need to address each issue and give our response and the reason for our decision. We do have after school provision and whilst there is a need to pay for this from 3pm now and not 3.30pm it is important to recognise we have considered this for parents that need childcare and also that it only runs to 5.30pm now and not until 6pm. Arbor will run means it is easier to set up using a one-off payment like we do currently for breakfast club. We have done costings on this and most parents will benefit and approx. £100 less income per term will be received by school, however the admin time outweighs the loss. Governors feel this will be ok so long as we do express that should any parents struggle to let the office know in confidence and that we give plenty of notice. Now would be the better time to change this as Arbor is introduced. We did receive positive feedback from school dinner increase and feels this is a good idea so long as we get advance notice out. Mrs Marnier agreed to inform parents of one-off fee price to £6 per session. Also, not many parents book their children in for just half an hour, only in emergency late pick up cases so most would benefit.

Governor Q: Does the changing of the school day have a negative impact on the children themselves? Another Governor asks how we measure that and can we have data to prove this? We do have some concrete evidence from staff.

Mrs Cuddy comments how we have to look at the impact on pupils but it needs to take covid into account. Confirmed it is calmer in school and more structure and the behaviour for learning and also in collective worship when everyone comes together has been improved. Whilst we don't have national data to prove this we can give positive reasons.

One Governor from another school commented how their school changed the school day and this was received negatively from parents. Believes it was more to do with timings and not knowing the real positive impact of other areas in school for example, improved behaviour.

Governor asks if we've benchmarked against other local schools? Mrs Cuddy confirmed we have and Norton finish at 3pm and Whitley and Eggborough 3.15pm however some schools don't start until 9am. Governor states we are not shortening the number of hours children are being taught as advised by the government so learning isn't affected.

Governor suggests inviting parents in to join children class by class to experience a lunchtime. Mrs Cuddy suggested this could work with each class as we don't have the space to invite all parents at once.

A Governor also comments how each class is individual in its own right and difficult to compare/benchmark to other schools. Mrs Cuddy discussed data and also raised the fact at the end of the day we have been through a pandemic.

Q: Are we comfortable we can explain the data if challenged?

A: Mrs Cuddy agrees and does think the decision needs to be made now but emphasised the issues with recruitment. Mrs Cuddy also feels we need to vote on this and despite we don't need all Governors at the meeting it may be beneficial to have a brief discussion and make a decision at the next meeting and before we finish for Easter. Mrs Cuddy will speak with Alison (Clerk) and rearrange the date. Governor commented how difficult it is and parents need to be aware we've discussed fully.

13. Policies - Code of conduct and managing allegations towards staff

Q: Is this the same as the parent behaviour policy?

A: No that is a behaviour policy for parents and this is the code of conduct for our staff.

Policies approved

14: See Confidential Minutes

15. Academisation

This is something we've been discussing for quite some time. Mrs Cuddy has spoken with Adam Dale (Ledger Trust). Schools are being pushed towards academisation and Mr Dale was asked to see where we stand legally. There is a chance even if Governors are all in favour that the Diocese may not let this happen.

We could also look into the Enhanced Trust which is the Church of England Trust for Wakefield. Distance could be an issue. Mark Randall is the CEO and Mrs Cuddy was going to contact him if everyone agrees. Adam Dale would also like to join a Governors meeting.

Q: Is there a possibility that the Diocese may allow us to join an Academy that isn't a Church of England one?

A: Mrs Cuddy confirmed legally we are allowed but we may need to fight for this.

Mrs Cuddy also confirmed she works closely with Ackworth Howard and knows the Headteacher who is the federated Headteacher of other small schools.

Governor: We really need to have a full context of what we want and not be pushed into anything. Another positive reason to look into it is the support we could gain from other schools. The Leadership of our school is difficult with us being a small school is basically Mrs Cuddy and this is something that can cause issues at times.

Q: What implication does it have on the Diocese if we choose an Academy that isn't a Church of England?

A: Adam Dale did look into this and his legal team said they cannot give a blanket 'no'.

One Governor who is a Chair of Governors at a Church of England School in Kent did confirm he has been through a similar process and believes it would be very difficult to join a non-Church of England School. This was also a voluntary controlled school.

Q: is there another way the Headteacher could get the support needed without the trust being involved?

A: We could look at the new Teacher vacancy as Mrs Yardley has now resigned or our current job share contracts take on the Senco role which is currently done by Headteacher.

Leadership certainly needs looking into as there has been circumstances for example when our Headteacher had covid. We can go to the Local Authority for support if needed. One Governor said we need to be careful asking another Teacher to cover. Mrs Cuddy confirmed HR said this is acceptable for a day or so but not long term.

We have an advert out for a Teacher and hoping we attract a good talent pool.

16. Business case plan- CCTV

Q: Which quote is the cheapest as it mentions 3rd quote but the 1st one looks cheaper? Change of quotes explained.

All governors agreed the CCTV business case plan.

17. Training for governors

Should anyone want to join any training please just let us know.

Succession planning training is important when considering academisation.

Q: If we go into a trust do we have examples of what the different roles will be?

A: There is a lot of information available on social media groups but one Governor feels it's down to scheme of delegation and how much each Governor actually want to take on.

Another Governor who is a local authority Governor for a trust in Kent commented it really depends on how much the trustees want to delegate so they can retain lots of control.

18. Any other Business

Mrs Cuddy went through the action log and confirmed completed items. This was sent out to Governors beforehand. No questions

Staff absence insurance – We have signed into the Local Authority's staff absence insurance again. This is something we will obtain quotes for next year – we do receive insurances without any problems for any staff absence but as the price as increased slightly it may be worth looking at other providers, though advice from the FMS team is to be very careful as many insurance companies require a lot more information and aren't always as good as they seem. The NYCC scheme has proved to be very good throughout Covid.

Mrs Marner to look at our annual premium and compare to the amount of staff absence insurance we've actually received in the same period. Obviously very difficult to predict as all depends on the amount of staff absence we have, which hopefully won't be as much now covid absence seems to be less.

Parent responses from the parent evening –

Mrs Cuddy thanked AH and HP for attending the meeting as it was nice for parent to meet our new Governors. The evening was held in the Hall and we had 62 responses, which were positive. CC kindly took the responses home. The bullying question was asked as this is what is on Ofsted parent view. Query over the meaning of strongly agree and disagree and be mindful of what the response actually means. There were a couple of responses that stated they 'strongly agree' that we didn't deal with the bullying well.

Q: Can we feed this back to Ofsted? Can we comment on the structure of the questions to Ofsted?

A: We do this every parents evening as a back up for any queries that may arise from Ofsted. Ofsted are very aware of the structure of the questions as are designed by leaders and if we change the questions on ours it won't be what they see on the Ofsted questionnaire.

Schools visits – Lions are going to Fairburn next half term and in the process of being organised. Starfish and Dolphins will be going to Canon Hall Farm early April and have been agreed on evolve and risk assessments done.

Q: What happened with the residential?

A: We tried to book something this year with Kingswood to use the money lost but there were no available/convenient dates. We also tried Robinwood but they are fully booked. The next available dates

are September but Mrs Cuddy added that the biggest problem is with staffing the residentials, many staff don't want to go as they have their own families and there has been some resistance there.

(Mrs Sheen is asked to leave the meeting at 9.20pm)

Ian who is the CEO from Selby CP Trust, came into school to visit in replacement of Jill Stubbs the schools LA adviser. He is a lead ofsted inspector. Mrs Cuddy thanked CC for being available for the feedback. It was a really positive day. We need to be refining teaching and learning for each of the year groups in all the non-core areas. Making sure the subject leaders can articulate their curriculum areas well and show progression. Make sure we're not overcomplicating assessment systems. CC commented how frank Ian was and his feedback was good. Mrs Cuddy asked Governors if they wanted to ask anything else on the report – no questions.

Meeting closes at 9.25pm.