

**SUTTON ON THE FOREST CHURCH OF ENGLAND**  
**VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**MINUTES OF A GENERAL MEETING OF THE FULL GOVERNING BODY**  
**HELD ON WEDNESDAY 17<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2020 at 6:00 pm (via Zoom)**

*Small school, big heart, aiming higher together*

*Our vision is to “value everyone” to enable them to develop curiosity, ignite a love of learning, discover talents and reach their full potential in a caring and secure environment.  
This vision is rooted in our Christian values of **respect, compassion, friendship and perseverance** that are at the heart of our school.*

*1 Peter 3.8: ‘...be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble.’  
Proverbs 22:6: ‘Start children off in the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.’*

**Core Functions of a Governing Body:**

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction.
- Holding the Headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils.
- Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

**PRESENT:** Prof H Hall (Chair), Mrs H Pye (Headteacher), Mrs D Craig, Mrs V Gale, Mr G Redfern, Mrs T Comfort, Mr M Graham, Mrs J Fineran

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Christine Knights (Clerk)

Minute No. \_\_\_\_\_

**Gov 1 Prayer**

The meeting opened with the School Prayer.

**Gov 2 Apologies for absence, consents and declarations of interest.  
Reminders regarding confidentiality, gifts and hospitality.**

Apologies for absence from Mrs H Morris were accepted.

There were no declarations of gifts or hospitality.

The Chair reminded Governors of the need to respect confidentiality.

**Gov 3 Approve minutes for signature**

The minutes of the meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2020, were approved with one minor amendment.

The minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> June 2020 were approved with no amendments.

The Chair would sign both sets of minutes electronically and forward the documents to the Headteacher to be filed in school.

**Gov 4 Matters arising from the minutes**

**12<sup>th</sup> May meeting**

No matters arising

**11<sup>th</sup> June extraordinary meeting**

**Gov 3c:** Mrs Pye stated that since the meeting, she is now allocated to a bubble on Thursdays. She also oversees a bubble on Fridays. This has been made available in case of desperate need for keyworker families' children.

**Gov 3k:** The Headteacher had contacted the NYCC advisor regarding opening up two bubbles in the school hall with effect from Monday 15<sup>th</sup> June. The advisor agreed that this would be appropriate, although there had been a misunderstanding at the time about the groups of children involved. This misunderstanding turned out not to be relevant because by Monday 15<sup>th</sup> June, new government guidance had been issued confirming that schools could open to all pupils with priority to be given to keyworkers' children.

**Gov 5 Chair's opening remarks**

None

**Gov 6 Headteacher news updates**

a) The Headteacher explained that lunch was being served in the hall in two sittings and that a gazebo would be set up to provide shelter from either sun or rain during the lunch break. Governors volunteered to help put up the gazebo.

b) The children have chosen names for their bubbles.

c) The Yr 6 bubble currently has 2 free spaces but will be full from Monday 15<sup>th</sup> June.

d) The Headteacher expressed huge thanks for the volunteers who are helping at lunchtimes, giving the staff an opportunity for a break. Three governors volunteered to provide additional help in school, offers which were very gratefully received by the Headteacher

e) The Governors thanked the Headteacher and staff for all their efforts and congratulated them on the success of their approach.

## **Gov 7 Order of business**

The Chair noted that the discussions at the Extraordinary meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> June had covered much of the current agenda. The objective of this meeting would therefore be to conclude the discussion about the school's financial position and recruitment.

The order of business was agreed.

## **Gov 8 Headteacher report**

The Headteacher reported that the most recently confirmed number of pupils for academic year 20/21 was 82. She noted that another family with two children had an appointment to look around the school. Governors commented that it seemed possible that the numbers could increase.

## **Gov 9 Academic year 20/21: strategic, operational and financial considerations**

It had been agreed at the Extraordinary meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> June that the Staff Governor, Mrs Fineran (who prior to her teaching career had trained and worked as an accountant), would gather Governors' questions on the school's financial position in order to clarify the budget and identify any further questions for the Bursar. The aim was to establish whether it would be possible to move to a 4 class structure and recruit additional staff.

a) Mrs Fineran shared spreadsheet data for the base case (the 20/21 Start Budget agreed by FGB in the meeting held on 12th May) and also 3 further scenarios with additional staffing and pupil numbers. She aimed to clarify how school income is generated and the impact on income of an increase in pupil numbers. The analysis demonstrated that staffing is the biggest cost variant and increases in pupil numbers have lower than expected impact.

b) Scenario 1 keeps the pupil numbers as in the base case (75 pupils) and changes the staffing budget to reflect the impact of recruitment of an additional FTE teacher (NQT), a replacement GTA and a new GTA, for September 2020. The figures reflect a change from HLTA hours to GTA hours, a reduction in the GTA hours initially proposed from 37 to 27 hours, and also maternity cover requirements. It was noted that this budget is for the financial year ending April 2021 therefore decisions needed to bear in mind that expenditure on staffing would continue into financial year 21/22.

c) The base case leads to a deficit of -£15,100 in the third year. Scenario 1 leads to a deficit position at the end of the first financial year of -£11,900. Scenario 2 presents the position with 79 pupils and scenario 3 with 81 pupils, both still leading to a deficit position at the end of the first year of -£11,900.

d) Mrs Fineran had analysed why the income was not increasing as expected with the increase in pupil numbers. The *LEA income* and *Delegated funds overview* presented by Mrs Fineran show that the funding per pupil remains

more or less static (at around 5k). Mrs Fineran explained that the lack of movement is due to the fact that the majority of the school's budget is from fixed funding.

e) Mrs Fineran explained that the free school meals funding is static, as is the prior attainment funding. The minimum funding guarantee is a formula run by the LEA based on the government's decisions on school funding. It was noted that other schools could be eligible for additional funding eg depending on the level of deprivation. The school budget must currently meet the minimum funding guarantee of £4,700 per pupil ie the total funding received divided by the number of pupils on roll must be above £4,700. For this school, the £2,700 per head funding shown in the *Delegated funds overview* added to the fixed budget allocations provides a total per pupil funding above the £4,700.

f) The Chair stated that the DfE website indicates that next year there will be an increase in this figure ie the school should receive more than £4,700 per pupil, which would mean that the £2,700 figure shown as static on the *Delegated funds overview* is in fact variable. Mrs Fineran described the £2,700 per head funding as representing a best estimate of income per head going forward. The Chair concluded that therefore the Governors needed to determine whether additional pupils (82 currently confirmed for 20/21) would make sufficient difference to allow Governors to agree to the recruitment being proposed.

g) The Chair stated that Governors need to know whether the second year of uplift promised by the Government could be expected next year. Mrs Fineran reported that the Bursar had said that the school should not expect a second uplift because the school is already above the guaranteed £4,700 this year.

h) A Governor described a budgeting process used by MATs (multi-academy trusts). This process clearly demonstrates the additional budgetary requirements for children with SEN or EHCP which is then presented separately for funding by the local authority.

i) Governors considered approaching NYCC to describe the need for TA support, particularly given the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on schooling. However, in terms of the financial situation relating to the needs of children with SEN and EHCP, Mrs Fineran reported that it had been clear from discussions at the SENCO network that additional funding would not be forthcoming.

j) Governors thanked Mrs Fineran for her helpful analysis of the budget position.

k) The Governors discussed the possible class scenarios presented by the Headteacher. The scenarios are based on a total of 82 children: scenarios 1-4 based on a 4 class structure; scenarios 5-6 based on a 3 class structure.

l) Governors asked the Headteacher which would be the best scenario for the children. The Headteacher stated that the ideal would be to increase to the 4 class structure with a TA in every class.

m) The Chair sought views on how to align this ideal structure with the budget. He asked when the school would need to apply to run a deficit, if that proved necessary in 20/21. The Headteacher stated that this would be in December 2020, and that by then more information on pupil numbers for 20/21 would be available.

n) A Governor asked whether any recruitment would be on the basis of fixed term contracts. The Headteacher confirmed that any new contract would be for 1 year. The Headteacher also explained that the staffing decisions for 20/21 needed to be taken bearing in mind maternity leave arrangements.

o) The Governors emphasised the importance of new positions being offered to in-house staff if recruitment does go ahead, and the need for HR input into a recruitment process. The Headteacher agreed.

p) A Governor recommended a cautious approach because of the challenging experience of having reduced to 3 classes relatively recently.

q) Governors discussed different options for TA time within the 4 class structure.

r) The Headteacher and Staff Governor described the impact of the disruption to schooling on children with SEN. These children would need the support of TA staff going forward.

s) The Headteacher emphasised that if a NQT were to be appointed, this teacher would be most effective in Yr 4 working with an experienced full-time TA.

t) The Headteacher and Staff Governor emphasised the impact of the school closure and disruption on current Reception class children. In order to allow these children to catch up and build solid foundations for their learning, it would be beneficial to have a Reception/Yr 1 class rather than Yr 1/Yr 2 class.

u) Governors discussed holding back on the TA recruitment, however the Headteacher advised against this as it would limit the pool of candidates available.

v) The Chair emphasised that the Governing Body needed to be able to justify an application for running a deficit if this proved necessary. Governors agreed that, given the circumstances, it would be justifiable to risk running at a deficit of the order of around £10k as reflected in the figures for 20/21 as the recruitment of an additional 4 pupils would be sufficient to return the school to a break even position.

w) Governors agreed that a 4 class structure with Scenario 1 would be the best approach for the children from September 2020.

x) Governors agreed the recruitment plans for FTE NQT and 2 TAs on the basis of 1 year contracts. Governors agreed to the recruitment being taken forward as soon as possible.

y) Governors agreed that the budget would be reviewed in January 2021 when the pupil numbers for 21/22 would be known and the sustainability of the structure beyond 20/21 would be clearer. This review would take into consideration the objective of retaining a 4 class structure with either a single year group in Reception or Yr 6.

z) The Chair asked the Headteacher to contact the Bursar for revised budget figures based on scenario 1 with 82 pupils and 84 pupils.

#### **Gov 10 Staff and pupil health and wellbeing**

a) The Headteacher confirmed that although members of staff were very tired, they were well and happy. Arrangements were in place for their own children to attend either this school or their own school.

b) The Headteacher confirmed that the pupils were coping well with hand-washing and sanitising, and keeping in their bubbles.

c) The additional demands on the school cleaner were recognised by the Governors. The Headteacher confirmed that the cleaner was coping.

#### **Gov 11 Safeguarding**

a) The Headteacher noted that NYCC had issued amendments to the Addendum to Child Protection Policy COVID-19 school wider reopening arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection.

b) Governors approved the amendments to the policy.

#### **Gov 12 Correspondence**

There had been no correspondence.

#### **Gov 13 Any Other Business previously notified to the Clerk**

None

#### **Gov 14 Date of the next meeting**

Date of next meeting: Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> July 2020

Those present were thanked for their attendance. Meeting closed at 8:10 pm.

Signed:  
Chair of Governors

Date: