

**SUTTON ON THE FOREST CHURCH OF ENGLAND**  
**VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED PRIMARY SCHOOL**  
**FINAL MINUTES OF A GENERAL MEETING OF THE FULL GOVERNING BODY**  
**HELD ON WEDNESDAY 22nd SEPTEMBER 2021 at 7:00 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 J Fineran, Mr M Graham, Mr G Redfern, Dr K Forsey

**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 T Comfort were accepted. Mrs D Craig was unable to connect to the meeting.

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 14<sup>th</sup> July 2021, were approved subject to amendments, would be signed electronically by the Chair and filed in school.

**Gov 4 Matters arising from the July 14<sup>th</sup> 2021 minutes and from the Action Plan**

The Headteacher apologised for having had to leave the July meeting after receiving advice to close the whole school because of a positive COVID test. The Chair and Governors assured the Headteacher that it was entirely

appropriate that her priorities had been to deal with the situation requiring urgent attention.

There were no further matters arising not covered in the agenda.

### **Action Plan July 14<sup>th</sup> 2021 update**

**1 and 2.** The Headteacher would send the Chair links to the contracts on NYCC website to allow him to review and update contracts.

**3.** To be confirmed.

**4.** Governors were working alongside the staff on the School Development Plan. The priorities remained largely unchanged (see 17d).

**5.** The Chair informed Governors that Mrs Gale (due to pressing family issues) and Mrs Morris (due to workload increase) had resigned from the Governing Body with immediate effect. Governors joined the Chair in noting the dedication and valuable input of both Mrs Gale and Mrs Morris, and thanking them for their time with the Governing Body.

There were now three Governor vacancies and the Chair stated his aim to recruit to fill two of these vacancies now if possible from amongst new parents. He had sent a draft letter for parents to the Headteacher which would be included in the weekly newsletter. The Chair would also investigate the possibility of publicising the vacancies through the local newsletters. The Headteacher would contact the Diocese of York.

**6.** The 2020-21 Pupil Premium report would be finalised as soon as possible with the newly appointed Bursar. The 2020-21 Sports Premium report was included on this agenda. The Headteacher noted that the new website had not yet been completed and this was taking much more time than expected. These reports would be uploaded on the new school website as soon as possible.

**7.** The Chair had written to FOSS as had been agreed but had not received a reply. Governors discussed next steps to be taken by the Governing Body, emphasising their own and parents' concerns regarding FOSS governance, financial management and information sharing, and the importance of setting a timescale for concerns to be addressed and action taken. It was noted that FOSS had not as a charity yet fulfilled its obligations to submit reports to the Charities Commission for the latest reporting year to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2020. Mr Redfern and Mr Graham stressed the high importance of resolving matters urgently, for legal avenues to be pursued by FOSS to recover the money, and noted that too much time had already passed without FOSS having responded to the Governing Body. Governors expressed serious concern that there had been no reply from FOSS to the Chair's letter.

The Chair noted that the role of the Governing Body was to question FOSS regarding the plan and the timescale to recoup the money, and to continue to

emphasise that FOSS needed to explain what had happened within FOSS and what is going to happen next. The Chair also emphasised that the Governing Body has oversight of money coming into the school and should receive an annual statement of accounts from FOSS. Despite the Chair having asked for this statement of accounts, it had not been received.

Governors stated that parents needed information from FOSS on how problems within FOSS had been resolved. It was noted that FOSS needed a more formal and transparent system. Mrs Fineran emphasised that the money had been donated to FOSS for use in the school. Governors agreed that the enthusiasm of parents for the school was very much appreciated and must not be jeopardised.

The Headteacher shared Governors' concerns. She noted her appreciation of the fundraising efforts by FOSS. The Headteacher expressed a willingness to set up a meeting with FOSS in school to establish a positive way forward. Dr Forsey sent this offer out via the FOSS WhatsApp and both Dr Forsey and the Headteacher received responses during this Governing Body meeting. The Headteacher received an email from FOSS regarding setting up a meeting, and also referencing the need for FOSS to hold its AGM.

The Chair concluded that he would draft a further letter to FOSS and that his aim would be to set up a meeting with FOSS within a week.

- 8.** The Headteacher would draft a monitoring plan with learning walks and share the document so that Governor monitoring could take place.
- 9.** Recent initiatives taken by the Headteacher to develop a leadership team involved specific lead roles for staff and a framework for further leadership development. Projects would be developed as needed in the future.
- 10.** Mrs Gale had resigned from the Governing Body due to family commitments (see update 5 above).
- 11.** Pending development of new website.
- 12.** Caretaker options would be reviewed at October meeting.
- 13.** Pupil Premium update would be included on October agenda. Sports Premium report 2020-21 received (see update 6 above).
- 14.** The Headteacher noted that the pandemic seemed to have had an impact on local school music club providers but she would continue to investigate options. She had set up music lessons for Yr3/4 pupils this term.
- 15.** Work on premises planned for summer 2021 had been completed.
- 16.** The Chair had sent the Governor file to Dr Forsey.
- 17.** See update 7 above.

#### **Gov 5 Chair's opening remarks**

**a) Welcome.** The Chair welcomed everyone to the start of the academic year. He expressed his hopes that this year would allow the children to recover academically and emotionally after a turbulent couple of years.

#### **b) COVID.**

**The Chair questioned** whether the school had a clear plan of action to put in place should there be cases of COVID in school. The Headteacher explained that the latest risk assessment outlined actions to be taken in different circumstances. The Headteacher would circulate the latest risk assessment to Governors. Cluster heads were planning to discuss the issues.

**A Governor questioned** whether the school could decide to take different actions from other schools nationally and ask for siblings to be kept at home if a member of the family had COVID. The Headteacher stated that the school could not go against Government guidance.

**c) Energy costs.** The Chair noted the significance of increases in energy prices for school and the need for a focus on energy saving practices eg switching off lights and equipment on standby. The Headteacher committed to establish what the increase in the school's costs could be, given that the budget last year was £8,500 for electricity alone and 2% inflation had been factored in to this year's budget.

#### **Gov 6 Headteacher's opening remarks**

It was agreed that these would be included in HT report Item Gov 17.

#### **Gov 7 Order of business**

Agreed

#### **Gov 8 Annual register of business and personal interests (to be signed)**

All Governors agreed to scan, date, sign and return by email to the Clerk.

#### **Gov 9 Register of Gifts and Hospitality (to be signed)**

Headteacher to file a "nil return" on behalf of Governors. All Governors confirmed they had not received gifts or hospitality in their role as Governors.

#### **Gov 10 Disclosure declaration (to be signed)**

All Governors agreed to sign and return by email to the Clerk.

#### **Gov 11 To adopt the terms of reference, instrument of government**

All Governors agreed to adopt the TORs and Instrument of Government.

#### **Gov 12 Review of Standing Orders and Code of Conduct, Delegation Planner and Scheme of Delegation for Headteacher (to be signed)**

All unchanged and approved by Governors. The Chair would send in the Standing Orders with the school information included. Headteacher confirmed

that she would sign and file the Delegation Planner which includes the Scheme of Delegation for Headteacher.

**Gov 13 Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)**

All Governors confirmed that they would read KCSIE documents and sign on the Google Drive to record that they had done so (see HT report).

**Gov 14 To elect Committees: Complaints Committee, Pay Panel, Pupil Discipline Committee and Staff Appeals Committee, HT Performance Management**

Vacancies due to Governor resignations were filled as follows:

Pay and Conditions Committee: Dr Forsey

Complaints Committee: Mr Redfern

Staff Appeals Committee: Mr Graham

Governors otherwise agreed to continue as in 20/21.

The Chair thanked Governors and noted that the above committees only met if required.

**Gov 15 Review of Governor Links and Named Governors, including Single Central Record and Training Governors**

a) Vacancies in Governor Specialisms due to Governor resignations were filled as follows:

Governor training: Mrs Comfort

Finance, including pupil premium/sports premium: Prof Hall.

b) It was agreed that a new Governor would be invited to join Mrs Craig in the Safeguarding/SCR and SEND specialisms.

c) Governors otherwise agreed to continue as in 20/21 in their specialisms.

The Chair thanked Governors for taking on these roles.

**Gov 16 Virtual attendance and voting**

a) Governors approved virtual attendance at Governing Body meetings. It was agreed that should a vote be required, there would be a show of hands.

b) Governors agreed to continue to meet and vote virtually as the default. Meetings would however be held face-to-face (with advance notice and an earlier start time to be agreed) if necessary. The Headteacher would review the schedule to identify which meetings would preferably be held face-to-face.

**Gov 17 Headteacher's Report**

The Headteacher's Report had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

**a) Pupil numbers.** The Headteacher reported that there were 93 children on roll, with 17 in Reception, 2 new starters in Yr 3 and one new starter in Yr 1. All the children had settled well. Parents had been in school and their feedback had been very positive.

**b) Premises.** The Headteacher recorded her thanks to Mr Redfern and Mr Graham for their involvement in work over the summer, including with respect to lighting and gardening. The Headteacher also thanked the decorators for work on Yr 3/4 classroom, and noted the improvements in the outside courtyard thanking everyone involved there too. There were plans for further decorating. The Headteacher noted that plans were in progress to avoid disruption next summer by organising work on the driveway for this half-term break.

**c) Staffing.** The Headteacher reported recent staffing changes, noting how well new and established staff had settled in this term. The Headteacher recorded her thanks to Mrs Berthinussen for her outstanding efficiency as School Administrator. The Headteacher was pleased to be able to report that Mrs Berthinussen would be continuing to be involved in school albeit in a different capacity.

**d) School Development Plan (SDP).** The Headteacher stated that the SDP key priorities had largely remained unchanged for this academic year: embedding the curriculum; early reading; writing.

- **Quality of Education.** The Headteacher explained that lockdown had had a noticeable impact on writing for Yr 5/6 children in particular because of school work being carried out on tablets etc. Mrs Fineran explained the Talk for Writing tool which would be used to build up skills across Yrs 3,4,5 and 6. The Headteacher noted that children were demonstrating good reading routines, reading for pleasure at school and home, and that this would also feed into their writing. **A Governor questioned** whether there had been an impact on other subjects for children in Yr 5/6. The Headteacher stated that the disruptions had not had an impact on other subjects. **The Chair questioned** whether there was an emphasis on writing across all subjects. The Headteacher confirmed this was happening. The Chair noted that a lot of discussions about “catch-up” focus on intensity of learning but that writing was an iterative process that needed feedback in a step-by-step approach.

The Headteacher stated that there had been an impact on learning in general and phonics specifically for the children in Yrs 1 and 2. A Governor commented that in these year groups the impact would continue to be present for a time but that also there was more time to mitigate the impact.

- **Behaviour and attitudes.** The Headteacher reported that there was a focus on resilience and also “learning how to learn”.

**A Governor questioned** whether the school were focusing on extrinsic or intrinsic motivation, and whether any guidance could be provided for parents to allow them to follow up on school's approach. The Headteacher noted that motivation can come from enjoyment of learning, and that the possibility of providing guidance to parents would be looked at in school.

- **Personal Development/Leadership and Management.** The Headteacher noted that there was a full team approach in place. The role of Mrs Comito now included TA management and the role of Mrs Fineran now included leading on school data.

The overall aim would be to ensure that the School Development Plan was fulfilled this academic year.

**e) School Improvement.** The Headteacher reported a change to the level of support provided by NYCC to five and a half days. The Headteacher and Chair would be meeting the NYCC School Improvement team on 8<sup>th</sup> November. It was noted that the Diocese of York had been invited to be involved in the Headteacher's Performance Management.

**f) Attainment and Progress.** The Headteacher reported that there was to be a new tracking system "Insight" which would improve tracking and allow Governors direct access to anonymised data. She noted that Reception children were currently undergoing baseline assessment.

**The Chair questioned** whether the children were aware that they were being assessed. The Chair assured Governors that the children were not aware that assessment was being carried out and were happily engaged.

**g) Safeguarding and wellbeing.**

- **Governors were informed that there were no current safeguarding concerns.**

**A Governor questioned** whether there was anything further to report with respect to a safeguarding issue that was being monitored (*Governing Body meeting minutes June 2021 and July 2021*). Mrs Fineran, Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (Deputy DSL), reported that this had been passed on to the next school.

- **Child Protection Policy.** The Headteacher had previously circulated the Child Protection Policy updated in line with KCSIE 2021 and the briefing to Governors. The Headteacher drew Governors' attention to peer to peer abuse, County lines, and sexual exploitation. She stated that age appropriate resources were available from NSPCC for use in school and that there was work ongoing to improving recording and work with different agencies as required. Staff had been briefed again on the Safeguarding software CPOMS and the aim was to use this more consistently and more widely over the next academic year.
- **Self-harm and Suicide Ideation Policy.** The Headteacher noted the advice from NYCC to ensure this policy is adopted in schools and included with the Child Protection Policy.

- **Mental Health and Wellbeing.** Mrs Carter had completed paediatric mental health training over the summer, which had been paid for by the school. Mrs Fineran, as Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead, would be leading NSPCC training within school.

**h) Extra-curricular.** YoYo would be working in school on 7<sup>th</sup> October for National Poetry Day and the live assembly would be streamed to the cluster schools. This would be followed by a poetry workshop.

**i) School and community links.** The Headteacher noted that prospective parents were already making contact and visiting the school.

**A Governor questioned** whether there would be or had been any contact with pre-school. The Headteacher confirmed that Jodie Pugh would be taking this forward and visiting the pre-school. The Headteacher noted that nursery children could come to sessions in school given that there was now a single year group Reception class. Pre-school children could also join Forest school.

#### **Gov 18 Sports Premium Annual Report 2020-21**

The Chair thanked the Headteacher for a useful report and noted that it should be on the school website. There were no questions.

#### **Gov 19 Pupil Premium Annual Report 2020-21**

The Headteacher requested this be deferred until the next meeting when she would have had input from the Bursar. Governors agreed.

#### **Gov 20 Budget update**

The Headteacher and Mrs Fineran would be meeting the new Bursar to discuss several queries on the latest budget update. It was agreed that this item should therefore be deferred to the October meeting.

#### **Gov 21 School PAN**

It was agreed that the school PAN would be held at 15 again in 22/23.

#### **Gov 22 Veritau GDPR compliance questionnaire and annual review**

The Headteacher confirmed that this was on her action list. There were several areas to address, however time pressures were such that it had not been possible to take all the latest recommendations forward.

#### **Gov 23 Supporting mental health and wellbeing**

The Headteacher and Staff Governor reported a positive return to school in terms of staff wellbeing. Governors expressed support for the staff and noted the considerable impact physically and emotionally of the challenges of the last year and summer term particularly. The Chair emphasised that it would take time to recover from the impact of recent events and that colleagues'



support for each other would be important. The Chair praised the great team in the school and expressed everyone's hope for a steady year ahead.

#### **Gov 24 Approval of policies**

**a) Self Harm.** The policy was approved.

**b) Child Protection.** The policy was approved.

The Chair noted that the October meeting agenda would include annual policy reviews.

**A Governor questioned** whether there was a policy file for Governors to read. The Chair advised that all policies come to the Governing Body meetings for approval, and all policies were available on the Google drive.

#### **Gov 25 Governor safeguarding training**

Mrs Craig had attended NYCC Governor Safeguarding Training in July 2021.

All Governors committed to read Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2021 and sign on the Google Drive (see Gov 13).

#### **Gov 26 Governor training**

No further updates.

#### **Gov 27 Correspondence**

The Chair had received no correspondence.

#### **Gov 28 Any Other Business previously notified to the Clerk** None

#### **Gov 29 Date of next meeting: Wednesday October 20<sup>th</sup> 2021**

The Chair thanked those present for their attendance.

The meeting closed at 8:55 pm.

Signed:  
Chair of Governors

Date: