

**GREAT CHESTERFORD [C. of E.] PRIMARY ACADEMY
LOCAL GOVERNING BODY**

Minutes of the video-conference meeting held on 23 March 2021

Membership		Office	Term
Andrew Farrimond	Foundation	Vice Chair	01/09/2024
* Alex Jeewan	Foundation	Incumbent	Ex-Officio
Joanna Hancock	Foundation		21/02/2025
Gary Benn	General Member		21/02/2025
Jayne Greenwood	General Member		01/09/2024
Rachel Thackray	General Member		15/06/2023
Adele Peters	General Member	Chair	21/02/2025
Laura Saunders	Parent		15/06/2023
Vacancy	Parent		
Nick Rowe	Co-opted		31/08/2021
Sarah Mitchell	Headteacher		Ex-Officio
Amy Sargeant	Staff		21/02/2025
Natalie Starbuck	Staff		21/02/2025
* <i>Signifies absence</i>			
Others in attendance			
Tom Bennett	Clerk		
Jan Menell [Item 1 only]			

The Headteacher opening the meeting with a prayer.

Action

1/21 Welcome and apologies for absence

The Headteacher welcomed Jan Menell to the meeting. She had been invited so the HT and all the governors could express their sincere thanks for all she has done over the many years as the governor with the responsibility for safeguarding and for fulfilling her duties and responsibilities to both pupils and staff in such a caring and compassionate way.

Jan thanked the HT, Deputy HT and staff for helping her in meeting her responsibilities. She was full of admiration of how the staff and school had overcome the difficulties that had arisen from time to time and felt privileged to have been involved with a very well-run and successful school.

The Chair welcomed Joanna Hancock to her first LGB meeting following her appointment as a Foundation Governor and advised the meeting that she would be taking over as the governor responsible for Safeguarding.

Apologies for absence was received and accepted from the Rev Alex Jeewan.

2/21 Notification of AoB

a) Neighbourhood Plan

b) IT

3/21 Notification of business interests

Gary Benn declared that his wife worked for the Academy and he worked for Eddisons that sometimes provided services to the Academy.

No other governor declared any potential conflicts of interest with any of the items to be discussed at the meeting or that they had received or given any gifts or hospitality that

could be perceived to compromise their impartiality when dealing with matters for the Academy.

MAIN BUSINESS

4/21 Covid

The HT highlighted the main changes to Covid assessment plan, circulated before the meeting, detailing the measures put in place to provide a safe environment for staff and pupils for the full re-opening of the school in March.

- The main changes made were to deal with the start of the building work on the listed building and having contractors on-site.
- The arrangements for lunch had also been updated following the decision to provide KS2 pupils with a hot food option.
- Arrangements had also been included for regular staff Covid testing.
- Paediatric First Aid training would be taking place after Easter. The school had decided to have a larger number of teaching and support staff completing this training.

No questions were raised on the updated Covid assessment plan.

5/21 Risk Register

Gary Benn, the Governor responsible for Health and Safety, reported the risk register had been reviewed and updated at the last Finance and Premises [F&P] Committee meeting.

The committee had reviewed and added a new risk on the provision of ICT support. Currently, the Academy bought in part-time ICT support from the Consortium of Schools that it was member of. However, with growing ICT needs for both staff, pupils and the MAT, there was a potential risk on the ability to provide the necessary ICT support.

The risk register had also been reviewed and updated following discussions on the pressures and wellbeing of staff at the last Teaching and Learning [T&L] Committee meeting.

Governors were reminded of their role in monitoring the specific risks assigned to them and recorded on the risk register.

6/21 Headteacher's Report

The HT introduced her termly report and highlighted the following points:

- **Admissions and roll**

Applications for Reception Class 2021 had now closed. It was noted that the current year was a particularly low birth rate year in Uttlesford that had affected the number applying for places at the school. Other schools, in the area, had also reported lower numbers applying; this would affect the number of families being directed to their second choices. It was likely the school would be below its Published Admission Number (PAN), the maximum number of pupils that the admission authority can admit to each year group.

- **Secondary Admissions**

The secondary school allocations for the current Year 6 had been released on the 1 March 2021 with most pupils going to SWCHS. All families, living within catchment, had been allocated their first-choice school.

- **Attendance**

The attendance for both the Autumn and Spring Terms had been excellent.

All

- **Pupil Premium and PE and Sports Grant**

This was a statutory requirement and Ofsted reviewed how schools used their Pupil Premium and PE and Sports Grants. Details of how the Academy was using and planned to use its Pupil Premium and PE and Sports Grant was set out in the HT's report as well as on the school's website; it is important that all governors are aware of the details and expected impact.

- **Leadership and management**

- **Safeguarding, behaviour and safety**

There had been no permanent or fixed-term exclusions since the last meeting. Fire Marshall training had been booked in June for several designated staff.

- **Staffing**

The Academy was in the process of recruiting two Mid-Day-Assistant staff [MDAs] to fill two forthcoming vacancies. There has been on-going difficulties filling MDA positions. This could be due to the required working hours and cost of travel if living outside of the village.

- **Spring term overview**

Staff had worked incredibly hard coping with a completely new structure, with very little notice, responding to unexpected changes and providing remote learning whilst also schooling approximately 50 critical worker / vulnerable children in school.

Parents had been very positive and supportive during the period of lockdown and on the remote learning provision.

The leadership and management team had been able to reflect on the practices and experience gained during the first lockdown in March 2020 to help identify, plan and improve the remote learning provision during the second lockdown.

7/21 School Development Plan [SDP]

The HT highlighted the following areas of the SDP 2020/21 that had been updated since the last LGB meeting and circulated before the meeting:

- Work on subject leadership and staff development would continue to be a focus in the summer term. The leadership team have also reviewed the curriculum at staff meetings to ensure it continues to offer children a broad and balanced range of subjects and interests.
- The need to provide remote learning during lockdown has had a positive impact on the development of the Academy's ability and staff's ICT skills. The development of IT has enabled an improved remote learning provision during this last lockdown. ICT has also been used in administration tasks for items, including: the collating of staff Covid test data; virtual meetings and data tracking. Microsoft [MS] Teams was being used increasingly by teachers to store and share documents whilst promoting virtual collaboration. MS Teams had also been successfully introduced to Year 6 for the last couple of weeks of the lockdown.
- Governor subject monitoring visits have continued remotely.

8/21 Safeguarding

The meeting noted the safeguarding measures put in place since the last meeting. They were set out in detail in both the Covid Risk Assessment plan and HT's report.

The main concern was ensuring the safety of children and staff following the start of the building work and erection of scaffolding.

It was **agreed** to amend the Safeguarding Policy to reflect the change in the governor responsible for safeguarding.

HT

9/21 Policies

a) Exclusion Policy 2021

The HT reported she had re-written the policy using elements of the existing policy and a template policy provided by The Key, a resource for school leaders. The template provided clear and comprehensive guidance and procedures for dealing with the complex and statutory requirement that all schools need to follow when considering excluding a pupil.

It was **agreed** to approve the Exclusion Policy 2021.

HT

b) Business Continuity Plan 2021

This policy had been updated to ensure that it reflected current personnel, current systems and any updated procedures.

It was noted that, should there be a major catastrophe such the school could not open, Essex CC would support the Academy in providing alternative facilities to allow pupils to continue to be taught.

It was **agreed** to approve the Business Continuity Plan 2021.

HT

c) Covid 19 Catch-up Premium Plan 2021

The HT provided an overview on how the Academy was using the funds provided by the Education and Skills Funding Agency [ESFA] [£80 per pupil] to help children catch up academically due to not being at school and only receiving remote learning.

Some pupils have also had difficulties with the social and emotional aspects of returning to school and rebuilding relationships.

The meeting **noted** the Covid 19 Catch-up Premium Plan 2021 previously **approved** by the Teaching and Learning Committee (11.02.21).

HT

ROUTINE BUSINESS

10/21 LGB Membership

The meeting noted the current membership and terms of office of the LGB. Nick Rowe had been appointed as a Co-opted Governor until the end of the current academic to provide continuity while the Academy carried out an election for the appointment of a new parent governor.

The HT set out the process for holding a parent governor election that would be held in the Summer term.

It was **agreed** to send suggestions to the Chair and HT on where governors felt the skills or experience of the current LGB could be strengthened.

All

Election of Vice-Chair

The meeting noted that on 16 December 2020, all governors were requested to advise of their consent or otherwise for Andrew Farrimond to be elected as the Vice-Chair of the LGB.

No governors objected to the proposal and on the basis that the majority of governors had given their consent, Andrew was duly elected on 23 December 2020 as the Vice-Chair for the 2020-21 Academic Year.

11/21 Minutes of the previous meetings

The minutes of the previous meetings held on 17 November 2020 were approved as an accurate and a true record of the meeting subject to amending a typo.

12/21 Matters arising

Minute 66/20 MAT Development

The HT reported the MAT's Board of Directors planned to publish a paper for all staff and governors setting out all the information and details on the proposal to expand the MAT.

The decision to close schools due to Covid and ask schools to draw up and implement plans to provide remote learning at short notice, had delayed the plans to carry out due diligence on the Federation's finance and on their buildings. It had also delayed the preparation of the plans to show how the MAT would increase its existing capacity to meet the larger needs.

The federation of schools had advised they were still interested in joining the MAT and would resume carrying out the joint work, once the additional work on dealing with the pandemic had receded.

It was **agreed** to have a meeting to consider the paper setting out the details, information, impact and the potential benefits of the proposal to grow the MAT when it is available and to provide the LGB's comments and any recommendations to the Board of Directors.

HT/
Chair

13/21 Committee Reports

a) Finance and Premises Committee

• Minutes of the last meeting

The meeting received and noted the minutes of the F&P Committee meeting held on 1 March 2021.

The committee had considered a maintenance plan for several small maintenance projects totalling £7k.

It was **agreed** to delegate the implementation of the maintenance plan to the Academy's leadership team.

HT

• S106 Funding

The meeting noted the Academy had received significant funding from the Diocese, being capital funding, that had been retained by the Diocese at the time of the school converting to an academy.

The F&P Committee had considered how best to use the funding and had proposed that it could potentially be used to part fund a larger capital project with S106 funding.

The Academy could apply to Essex County Council [ECC] for S106 funding, paid by property developers to the Council for the purpose of benefitting local communities.

The Academy first needed to explore potential capital projects that would benefit the school; scope and cost them up before sharing the most promising projects with ECC, tailoring the projects to any funding agreed.

Some project proposals that had already been considered were:

- Installing toilets at the school sports field
- Building a sports pavilion

- Resurfacing the playgrounds
- Re-roofing some of the school buildings
- Upgrading the gazebo

When scoping and costing up a potential project, it was important to include any ongoing revenue costs such as staff and running costs.

Nick Rowe suggested investing in new equipment and facilities for the new STEM Hub to allow the school to provide a high level of STEM teaching and learning.

It was **agreed**:

- to engage with and ask the staff to identify capital projects that they feel would benefit the school.
- to collate and produce a costed preference list of all capital projects identified by all stakeholders for consideration at a future meeting.

HT

AF

b) Teaching and Learning Committee

Nick Rowe summarised the main items discussed at the T&L Committee meeting held on 11 February 2021 as set out in the minutes.

14/21 Chair's action

The Chair or Vice-Chair had not taken any action on behalf of the governors since the last meeting.

15/21 Correspondence

The HT reported that a parent had recently approached a governor and had addressed them in an inappropriate way. Governors were reminded to advise the HT of any inappropriate behaviour from parents.

16/21 Governor training

It was **agreed** governors should attempt to complete at least one course on the list of on-line training courses recently circulated and all governors should have completed the safeguarding course. Certificates of all courses completed should be forwarded to the HT (Link Governor).

All

17/21 Any other business

a) Neighbourhood Plan

Rachel Thackray advised the meeting that Uttlesford District Council was currently inviting representations on the new version of the Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan as part of its consultation stage and the school had an opportunity to make representations. It was noted Andrew Taylor, the Chair of the MAT's Board of Directors, had knowledge of the plan.

It was **agreed** Andrew Farrimond should also review the new plan and draw up any recommendations for the LGB to consider.

AF

b) ICT

The Chair reported the F&P Committee had discussed the provision of ICT at the school at its last meeting and agreed it needed to be increased to meet the growing information and communication technological requirements of schools in general.

Amy Sargeant reported the school's server was "not fit for purpose" anymore.

The school had looked at a few options for sourcing a new server and had found a company that had supplied servers and ICT equipment to several schools, however there was a concern on the prices quoted.

The long-term plan was to move to a “cloud-based” system however the school was not yet at that point.

As already raised, the Academy needed to change the provision of ICT support, currently provided on a shared part-time bases by the Consortium of Schools that it was member of. Under the Consortium’s terms and conditions, the school needed to give a year’s notice to cancel the contract. This would allow time to investigate other options, carry out due diligence and tender for a new contract to provide ICT support as well as a new server.

It was **agreed:**

- a) To canvass parents to identify anyone with an ICT background who would be willing to assist the school in drawing up and implementing an ICT plan.
- b) To include ICT for discussion at the next F&P meeting.

18/21 Date/time of future meetings

- Tuesday 29/06/2021

All meetings commence at 19:00 hrs.

Committees to organise their meetings to feed into this meeting.

HT
Chair
F&P

Approved by the governors on 29 June 2021