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Little Paxton Primary School Governing Body

Minutes of the Meeting of the Full Governing Body held on Monday 3rd October 2016 at 6.30pm

Ellen Barrett	Co-opted Governor	Rebekah Jenkins	Associate Member / Staff
Maria Button	Associate Member		(left 7:50pm)
Penny Conway	Authority Governor	Mike Kendall	Co-opted Governor
Neil Donoghue	Co-opted Governor	Gemma Manning	Parent Governor
Richard Fairbairn	Parent Governor	Oliver Poulain	Parent Governor
Diane Hawkes	Head Teacher	In attendance	
Graham Hiom	Co-opted Governor (arrived 8.25pm)	Alison Gatward	Clerk to the Governors

1. **Apologies for absence**

Received and accepted from:

Jordana Watts	Staff Governor
Barbara Hughes	Parent Governor
David Jones	Parent Governor

No apologies received:

2. **Declaration of interests**

Governors have submitted declaration of interest forms. Outstanding forms to be sent to clerk as soon as possible.

3. **Election of Chair**

Those willing to stand: P Conway Nominated by ND Seconded by OP

4. **Election of Vice Chair**

Those willing to stand: O Poulain Nominated by ND Seconded by EB

5. **Minutes of the last meeting (11th July 2016) and matters arising**

Item 6. Pupil Premium – This is now on website. Following distribution to governors a couple of amendments were highlighted once these are made it will be reloaded to the website. Child protection training course will be run on staff training day, Friday October 21st from 9am. Governors would be more than welcome to join this course. Please advise DH if you would like to join this session. The minutes were agreed. No further matters were arising as all other items are included on the agenda.

6. **Review of the Instrument of Government, Governors’ Code of Practice, the Governing Body’s & Committees’ Terms of Reference and the Standing Orders**

No proposed change to Instrument of Government. There are still 2 co-opted vacancies on the governing body. The Instrument of Government, Governors’ Code of Practice, the Governing Body’s & Committees’ Terms of Reference and the Standing Orders were all approved by Governors.

QU: What about the balance of staff governors on our governing body? If there were less governors we would need less members of staff? Need to ensure that all levels of staff are represented. The regulations

require there to be 2 staff governors: the HT and an elected staff governor. There have been 3 members of Senior Leadership Team (SLT) on our Governing Body: the HT (who has an automatic right to be a governor) and the 2 DHTs. JW was the elected staff governor and RJ was appointed as an associate member. AG to confirm when their terms of office would be up. It would be good to have a teaching staff member who is not on the SLT. It is important to hear from other members of staff and get their input. **QU:** What is our approach to succession planning? How do we ensure we have who we need? To be reviewed on the next Personnel agenda.

ACTION: AG to update terms of office and advise action required.

Succession planning to be on the agenda for the next personnel meeting.

Post Meeting Update: JW term of office finished 1st October 2016, therefore a staff election is required. Also note that RJ term as associate member also terminates on the same date.

7. Review Governing Body's performance, structures and procedures, including Delegation of Decisions Planner

Governor visits need to be completed and reported back to the rest of the FGB in a timely manner.

It was agreed to combine committee meetings where agenda items overlap.

Delegation of Decisions Planner - QU: DH do you find the limits on the financial restrictive? There have been no issues due to financial constraints in the last year. Should there need to be unforeseen spend outside of the limits governors will be informed via email and their approval will be sought.

8. To ratify the Constitution of the Committees of the Governing Body

Governors agreed to sit on the following committees:

<u>Site and Buildings</u>	<u>Curriculum Committee</u>	<u>Personnel Committee</u>	<u>Finance Committee</u>
6 Members	11 Members	8 Members	6 Members
Maria Button	Ellen Barratt	Ellen Barratt	Ellen Barratt
Penny Conway	Penny Conway	Penny Conway	Penny Conway
Neil Donoghue	Neil Donoghue	Neil Donoghue	Richard Fairbairn
Richard Fairbairn	Graham Hiom	Diane Hawkes	Diane Hawkes
Diane Hawkes	Barbara Hughes	Barbara Hughes	Graham Hiom
Oliver Poulain	Rebekah Jenkins	David Jones	David Jones
	David Jones	Mike Kendall	
	Mike Kendall	Gemma Manning	
	Gemma Manning		
	Oliver Poulain		
	Jordana Watts		

9. Election of Chairs of the Committees

All committee chairs were happy to continue and were approved by the FGB.

Chairs of committees:

Curriculum	Oliver Poulain
Finance	Graham Hiom
Personnel	Mike Kendall
Site and Buildings	Neil Donoghue

10. Head-teacher's report including

- Review of results and data 2015/2016
- TOP/SEF
- pupil numbers
- staff update
- premises update
- curriculum update
- finance update
- PPP Partnership

QU: Have pupil numbers stabilised and what was the outcome of the admissions appeal?? Pupil numbers are down one child since the report was written. The child on appeal did not come to the school. The child who was previously discussed regarding possible deferral has deferred for a full year but it is not yet clear if he will later attend the school or which year he will commence in. **QU:** Have the SEN issues mentioned in the report been resolved? The SEN children are settling in well. It was observed that the number of children with hearing problems have increased, but appropriate support is being given. Social Capital groups have begun and are going well. The first activity is a recorder group which has had an encouraging start. Options for the next activity are being reviewed – possibly another musical focus, sports or trips to St Neots library are being considered. **QU:** Are the children practicing their recorders at home? How is this being encouraged? Yes they should be and this is encouraged purely through the enthusiasm of the children. **QU:** What do the parents know of the rationale behind the activity? They have been advised that their children have been selected to join the group. Propose to have a presentation at the end of the year to governors to share details. In the meantime this may be a great idea for a Governor visit on a Wednesday morning when the group takes place. **QU:** Would the children then join the recorder club? This would be encouraged and we are looking to see how they could be incorporated into the club.

QU: Have the new members of staff settled into their roles quickly? Staff governors confirmed that new members of staff are very enthusiastic and are keen to get involved. They seem to fit in well and have settled in quickly. Governors congratulated the member of staff who has announced her pregnancy. As she is the senior First Aider in school governors asked what steps were being taken to cover this part of her role when she takes maternity leave. The HT said volunteers were being sought among the other staff.

It was noted that the member of staff who has had significant time on sick leave because of a serious health issue has returned to work on reduced hours and with adjusted duties. It was reported that the member of staff has found this very supportive and also that other school staff were benefiting from the work she is now doing.

DH had requested for RJ & JW to be trained as designated persons for child protection. This caused something of a battle with the CP service as there are limits to the number of designated persons a school can have. Our situation is unique with DH often out of school due to other responsibilities and SE not being full time. It has eventually been agreed that RJ can be trained. DH is still first contact, SE is second and the duties would be only picked up by RJ if DH and SE are out. RJ will be trained in March (the next available training session).

QU: Has the EWO followed up with the persistent absentees? She had to cancel her recent meeting and is not coming until nearly half term. She has the details of the family about whom school is concerned. **QU:** With regards to the safeguarding issues and also to racist incidents to be reported, please clarify what is reported? Racist incidents used to have to be reported to county "RAID" (racist incident database) but is no longer reported. This is shared with governors to keep them informed. Safeguarding reporting to social care is completely different and is carried out according to the required procedures. **QU:** Why do County not need to know about racist incidents anymore? This is possibly a cost saving issue. Also it would not be accurate if academies are not reporting.

QU: Attendance - is it good compared with other schools? National average about 96%. There have been quite a few holidays this term with many children not in on the first day of term, which was a Friday. This start day worked well enabling set up to happen on Friday and then hit the ground running on the Monday. There is currently a sickness bug which may affect next set of figures.

DH, ND and PC attended a meeting with the developers on 27/9/16 to discuss the building works to extend the school. Building will start on 24th October with a lot of internal work planned for during 1/2 term week e.g. removing floor tiles, knocking down some walls and changes to some ceilings. Outside the first action is to lay down the building site and put the temporary car parking. The contractors have very understanding as to the issues that may arise for the school. For example they are taking away some cloakroom walls and so have agreed to re-site the pegs and re-instate some power sockets. The contractors will not take delivery of anything before 9:30am and between 3-4pm. Outside that time the car park will be part of their site. The gate will be closed after 8:30. They have offered to attend assemblies to give information and safety presentations and are happy to have groups visit the site. Teachers to be encouraged seek opportunities for learning during the building work.

QU: Will the temporary parking spaces on the field be returned to grass at the end? This will later be tarmac car parking space. Bin store will move down to the gate. There will be a further 10 parking spaces.

TOP: English - RJ and DN went on a course last week. This was a very good course with lots of great ideas which could be applied in school. It has resulted in a shift in some priorities and has given the teachers more ownership of the focus for English. It has also looked at how to improve marking, what is the purpose of the marking and how is it making an impact on the children's learning. Planning to have each child produce a "Golden Standard" piece of writing which will be in their book to show how their writing has progressed. An idea of zero tolerance was discussed which were to things like the correct spelling of the month with a clear list for the children to be able to check their own work. **QU:** Governors questioned the terminology and possible negative connotation of "Zero Tolerance" which is more often used with regards to bullying and expressed that caution should be taken as to how this was positioned. RJ took this as constructive feedback and would consider alternative ideas such as "Hazard Zone" to fulfill the same function. This may also have a link to the building work on site and is planned to be highlighted in the classroom and books with yellow and black tape.

The hand writing scheme has been modified to ensure that it reflects the new curriculum and is consistent throughout the school. Staff are encouraged to model good handwriting. **QU:** Handwriting has been weak: are you happy with what you have put in place? Great improvements in the last year have been seen and now teachers are insisting on consistency. The last book scrutiny had already identified this to be a focus. OFSTED look for progress across the books, the presentation of the books goes towards the children's grading. 7:50 RJ left the meeting.

Mastery Specialist Teachers feedback from most of the courses have been very good. One in particular was not great, DH has encouraged them to give it a second try and then re-assess.

Staff have been identified by SLT for leadership responsibilities but the discussions with the staff have yet to take place. Looking to change some subject leaders and for some subjects to be split into KS1 and KS2. **QU:** On the TOP there are lots of names in the "who" column, does this reflect bringing people on into middle leadership? To measure effectiveness it would be good to see how many names are on the list in following years. SLT keen to get others in the school involved.

QU: Priority 4 should there be any actions? At the time of writing the meeting with the building contractors had not happened. It is likely this will evolve as the building project progresses.

Schools Progress Scores - year 6 SATS had levels at the end of KS1 so it was necessary to find a way to measure progress so to assess what average progress should be expected for each level. These figures show a difference against national average progress. For example a reading average 4.21 is well above average.

KS1 prior attainment - the line in blue is the child who we dis-applied from the tests but counts in all the statistics.

Middle attaining children did better in maths than the high level children. SLT are looking into the higher achieving children to see if they are making as much progress as they can. **QU:** can this be done for other years? No, as the national averages are not available. There are two children who have joined during KS2 for whom there was no KS1 data. **QU:** learning outcomes are great? This highlights things to look at for the teaching teams and allows for diagnostics to see why progress is or isn't made: What are the influences on these children? Why are the results variable?

Some children who moved into the school have made less progress often depending on when they moved into the school. It is important to look at the various groups. This data will be further developed in RAISE online.

QU: What other means of measuring progress are there? This will only be in place for this year and next year, following that it will change. Need to look at our own in-house version of how the tracking is done. **QU:** How much of your time is absorbed by these reports? When SATS results come out it is all absorbing. Some data presentations are done specifically for governors. It has been better focusing initially on years 2 and 6 only in summer term and then reviewing the other year groups in the autumn. It would be beneficial to work on data so that largely the same information can be shared with governors and staff.

Governors noted that Y6 progress measures were high in comparison with national averages in reading, writing and maths and congratulated school on these excellent outcomes.

11. **Finance meeting with the School's Finance Adviser**

The next meeting is scheduled for 8.11.16 at 1.30pm. PC may not be able to attend

ACTION: EB to confirm if she can attend.

12. **Review of School Structure**

Currently Little Paxton is a LA maintained community primary school. Governing Bodies have a legal duty to regularly consider the type of school that would offer the best opportunities both for our pupils and for overall school development. Currently the Government has an expectation that all schools will become academies within Multi Academy Trusts (MATs), although schools such as ours are not under any immediate pressure to convert to an academy.

There are several possibilities to consider:

- to convert to a standalone academy (however, it is unlikely that the Regional Schools Commissioner will grant permission for conversion to a standalone academy)
- to convert to an academy and to form an "empty" MAT with the intention to invite/encourage other schools to join us (in this case it would be expected that we would offer to sponsor a school or schools in difficulty)
- to convert to an academy and to form a MAT with other schools (our PPP partners are the most obvious choice for this)

- to join an existing MAT (we have already received 2 invitations from other local MATs and are free to approach others to ask to join them).

Little Paxton already works in partnership with the Priory Schools. This is working well to the benefit of our (and their) pupils and staff and is contributing to school development. This partnership will be kept under review throughout the year. We will consider whether, longer term, a different school structure could be more beneficial and how we wish to proceed with this decision making process. GH volunteered to create a matrix as a means to rate and weight factors we want to consider so we can score the various options (this is intended to support, but not constrain, the decision making process). All governors have been asked to think about what it is they value most about Little Paxton School and would want to see preserved in any future school structure.

GH and OP are in the process of formulating a tick sheet to set a standard for reviewing the options to ensure that Little Paxton School gets the best out of a new structure.

Another letter has been received from the SNLP although there was some confusion in how the letter was addressed. It was proposed that our response should be that we are in the process of considering all opportunities available to the school and are not in a position to make a decision at this time.

There has also been the letter from Chesterton who appear to have a strong offering, but they are located further away. Also they are gaining interest from a number of schools within an area. Again further information would be required before a decision can be made.

Bedford Free School have put in a bid to open a free school in St Neots in 2018. They are not currently a MAT but will be shortly. They are not adverse to other schools joining them. This will not be a selective school and the admissions criteria will give priority to those living nearest the school. No site has yet been formally identified for any new school. They will start with a year 7 launch and will grow over time taking in a new year 7 group each year. With an intake of 100-120 children each year, it is very likely to be oversubscribed. It will be a Grammar school type education but without selection. They can set out to run the school how they wish and their own policies and procedures will be in place from the start. DfE prefer bids which do not include specific site details. This will give the parents the choice of secondary schools.

GH joined the meeting 8:25pm.

GH shared the proposed grid where each criterion would have a weighting to show the importance to us. Agree the weighting and then outline the score definitions. Governors will need to agree the criteria, scores and collect enough information from the source of the options. It would show due diligence and a proper process involved in the decision making. **QU:** is this something the head would find useful? There are other things which would need to be considered. There are other things that go alongside this. There is more than just a number - something of a gut feel. Need to look at the longer list and then discuss with governors.

ACTION: GH & OP to develop further and share with governors

ACTION: PC to draft letters to SNLP and Chesterton explaining that GB is still considering all options. Letters will be shared with governors by email.

13. End of Year Review meeting with the School's Improvement Adviser

No comments or questions. Priorities identified at this meeting are all included in the TOP apart from priority 3 (Continue researching into partnership development, including academisation and MATs) which is for the governing body to work on.

14. **HTPM** A review meeting took place with the External Adviser (Nigel Battey) on 22nd September. As previously agreed MK has stepped down from the HTPM Panel and the Panel now consists of EB, PC and DJ. A new chair is required EB volunteered to chair and all governors have agreed. MK was thanked for his time on this panel.

15. **Review of Policies**

- Pay Policy- Governors agreed to adopt the new model policy from EPM.
10.4 Is optional but would be relevant to us, now also covers support staff.
- Attendance Policy - **QU**: does it work in practice? It was changed when reviewed last year and has been effective. Policy approved and adopted
- Admissions Arrangements
Currently this is on the school website waiting for information which is supplied by County. Once this is received it will be updated.
- Child Protection & Safe-guarding Policy
Previous action was to look to see if there was a new policy with Prevent in it and this is the new September 16.
6.0 - change to preventing “unsuitable”
Policy approved and adopted by governors.
- Equality Policy – deferred to next meeting

ACTION: AG to update as required

16. **Governor’s Visits**

There have been some challenges in arranging the visits with school. It was agreed that where possible the report should be available as soon as possible, preferably for the next governors meeting. Governors were gratified by the almost wholly positive responses parents had given last term about the new style of school reports and also about the GB’s report to parents.

PC requested volunteers for parents evening later this term.

Tuesday 18th October 3.30 - 5.30pm Thursday 20th October 3.30 - 5.30pm and 6.30 - 8.30pm

It was agreed that the parents would be asked about the Forum and LSPA, PC will circulate proposed questions for feedback.

Forthcoming visits:

Reason for Visit

When

Who

Hand writing focus in school– Follow up from first visit

October

BH

Social Capital Group

Autumn Term

MB & tba

Outdoor Learning

Summer Term

MK & GH

Re-visit marking

Summer Term

DJ & MK

Maths

Spring Term

Middle Leadership Opportunities

Spring Term

Personnel Committee

Impact of the building project on school life

Each Term

Sports Provisions

OP & GH

Governors should consult with JW regarding timing and, where visits have been held over, the continued relevance of these visits.

17. **Curriculum Presentations**

Presentation

When

RAISE online

Autumn Term

Curricular area taken from the SDP

Spring Term

Social Capital Groups

Summer Term

18. Governor Training.

PC gave some headlines from CGS Termly Briefing for Governors held on 20th Sept at Wood Green Animal Shelter in Godmanchester.

- KS1 to be a focus for the County
- KS2 results in Cambs have improved from last year but are still generally slightly below national, although KS4 indicators are almost all better than national
- Most vulnerable group is children who have both SEN and free school meals.

19. Governor Vacancies

As mentioned earlier we have 2 vacancies for co-opted governors. Debbie Gray has stood down as governor for personal reasons. Maria Button is an associate governor but she would be willing to take on the role. Governors agreed and welcomed Maria as a co-opted governor.

SE has suggested it may be helpful to have a SEN parent on the governing body as they would give very valuable insight. It may be the parent of a SEN child currently in the school or someone having previously had a SEN child in the school. This person would meet regularly with SE to challenge and monitor what is being done for the SEN children in the school. **QU:** Whilst the idea seems positive on the surface there are concerns that this may not be a wise approach and may cause tension. Are there also not other specific areas such as EAL (English as a foreign language) where we might choose to target to recruit a governor. It is recognized that it is good practice to have a SEN governor but would want to ensure that the critical friend role is fulfilled in a supportive manner. It may then mean that two governors are required to meet with SE. **QU:** Does a current parent of an SEN give a broad view? Some parents may be able to but it may be better that the child is no longer in the school. Perhaps SE could make suggestions of parents who may be able to do this. **QU:** Would a better option be to find a SEN coordinator in another school who could work with SE in the role of challenging each other. To explored further in the next personnel meeting.

ACTION: Add SEN governor/SEN support to Personnel Agenda

20. Correspondence Received

PC will distribute a copy of the letter from SLPT and information regarding Bedford Free School.

QU: Do governors feel we should be holding a meeting for parents to learn about the plans for the proposed new school. There have been many meetings in the area and it was felt that this was sufficient and that interested parents can access these.

DH received a letter from the Tim Coulson, Regional Schools Commissioner, Department of Education congratulating the school on the KS2 results.

There are 12 light tubes in the hall and 6 or 7 elsewhere which are not working. DH has received a quote for 11 LED lights and 4 LED emergency panels for the hall for £1,950. These are our normal electrical contractor and the amount falls within the threshold set. When the additional lights are added in it may exceed that threshold. Governors were in agreement that DH should advise the final cost and then proceed.

21. Any other urgent business

Governors were reminded that they must complete their DBS check as soon as possible.

22. Date of next meetings of the Governing Body

Date of next Committees Evening:	Monday 17th October 2016 from 6.30pm
Date of next Curriculum Evening with a presentation on RAISEonline.	Monday 21st November 2016 starting at 6.30pm All governors are invited to attend.
Date of next Full Governors' Meeting:	Monday 12th December 2016 at 6.30pm

Meeting closed 9:30pm

ACTION PLAN:

Mtg	Item	Agreed Action	Who is responsible	Completion date
FGB 7/16	4.	Forward Financial planning – add to Fin. agenda	Chair Fin- GH	Next Finance Mtg
	4.	PP – add to C&S agenda	Chair C&S – OP	Next C&S Mtg
	10.	Equality Policy – add to Dec FGB agenda	Chair – PC	Dec FGB
	17.	All governors to be DBS checked	All Governors	September
	18.	Recruitment of governors – add to next Pers. Mtg	Chair – MK	Next Personnel Mtg
	19.	Review planned governor visits	JW	ASAP
	19.	Discuss need for skills audit – add to next Pers. Mtg	Chair – MK	Next Personnel Mtg
FGB 6/16	6.	Confirm governor terms	AG	ASAP
	6.	Succession Planning –add to next Pers. Mtg	Chair – MK	Next Personnel Mtg
	11.	EB to confirm attendance at Financial Advisor Mtg	EB	ASAP
	12.	Develop criteria grid further	GH & OP	Next Mtg
	15.	Update policies and load to shared drive	AG	Next Mtg
	19.	SEN Governor - add to next Pers. Mtg	Chair – MK	Next Personnel Mtg