



Little Paxton Primary School Governing Body

Minutes of the Full Governing Body Meeting Monday 5th October 2015 at 6.30pm

Ellen Barrett	Co-opted Governor (see minute 4)	Mike Kendall	Co-opted Governor
Sophie Carroll	Parent Governor	Debbie Gray	Co-opted Governor /Staff
Penny Conway	Authority Governor / Chair	Diane Hawkes	Staff Governor / Head Teacher
Neil Donoghue	Co-opted Governor	Graham Hiom	Co-opted Governor
Rebekah Jenkins	Associate Member / Staff	Barbara Hughes	Parent Governor
David Jones	Parent Governor	Gemma Manning	Parent Governor
		Oliver Poulain	Parent Governor

Supporting Papers: issued with agenda

*Minutes of previous meetings
Constitution of the Committees,
Governors' Code of Practice,
Governing Body & Committees Terms of Reference,
Standing Orders,*

*Instrument of Government,
Delegation of Decisions Planner,
Head's Report,
Governor Report Open Evening July 2013,
Pay Policy ,*

*Attendance Policy,
Equality Policy,
SEN Policy*

1. Apologies for absence

Nick Folkard not in attendance no apologies given

2. Declaration of interests

Governors have submitted and signed declaration of interest forms. These will be consolidated into a table for confirmation at the next meeting.

3. Election of Chair

Those willing to stand: P Conway. Nominated by ND Seconded by DJ

4. Election of Vice Chair

Those willing to stand: O Poulain, N Donoghue

ND agreed that as the S&B Committee will be very busy this coming year with the planned building works he would be happy for OP to take on the role of Vice Chair and therefore withdrew his nomination.

The position of Vice Chair: O Poulain Nominated by ND Seconded by GH

5. Co-opted Governor Vacancy

Mrs Ellen Barrett, who is the grandmother of a child in Y3, expressed an interest in joining the Governing Body. She is a financial advisor running a business with her husband. She has lots of experience as a parent with different schools. She want to improve what is already really good about the school and help move things forward for the children. EB left the meeting, PC recommended her to governors present. All governors agreed to co-opt as a governor. EB returned to the meeting and was welcomed onto the Governing Body. The clerk will ensure all the necessary checks and declarations are made.

6. Minutes of the last meeting (13th July 2015) and matters arising

The minutes were agreed. No further matters arising as items are included on the agenda.

7. Review of the Instrument of Government, Governors' Code of Practice (CoP), the Governing Body's (GB) & Committees' Terms of Reference (ToR) and the Standing Orders.

The new Instrument of Government (following changes in the law) came into effect on 1st March 2015. All governors happy to approve.

ACTION: AG to check that governors are now identified as Co-opted and that PC is the only Authority Governor on all published documents going forward.

CGS (Cambridgeshire Governor Services) issued a revised CoP in September 2015. Governors thanked PC for amalgamating this revised code with the existing one. Governors agreed to proceed with the amendments proposed by PC. It is recommended that this be signed by all governors. It was agreed that the governors should reply by email that they have read and agreed to the CoP.

ACTION: PC to share final version of updated code with Governors. All governors to confirm to AG receipt and acceptance of CoP.

The GB's & Committees' ToRs were thoroughly overhauled in the autumn term 2012. The main proposed amendment is to add the committee meeting minutes to the website. The only minutes that will not be on the website are the confidential minutes. All other changes describe what is normal practice and were agreed.

CGS issued revised Model Standing Orders in September 2015 which were shared before the meeting and new areas highlighted. It was agreed that the skills audit be done as the whole governing body rather than by individual governors. The audit process will be reviewed annually.

ACTION: AG to check that names are not included in these documents and replace with title eg. Clerk. AG to send approved minutes to office to be loaded to website.

8. Review Governing Body's performance, structures and procedures, including Delegation of Decisions Planner (DoDP)

QU: DH do you find the limits on the financial restrictive? No they are set at a comfortable level. It has worked in previous years and inflation is not having an impact so happy to continue with them as they are. All governors approved the document.

ACTION: AG to update DoDP and label 2015.

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

The Constitution of the Committees was sent out to all governors prior to the meeting. This was approved without changes. SC volunteered to be on Finance.

ACTION: AG to liaise with new governors re committee membership.

10. Election of Chairs of the Committees

Site and Buildings, Personnel and Finance chairs were happy to continue and were approved by the FGB.

NF is chair of Curriculum Committee and wishes to step down. OP was nominated by PC and seconded by GH for this role.

Chairs of committees:	Curriculum	Oliver Poulain
	Finance	Graham Hiom
	Personnel	Mike Kendall
	Site and Buildings	Neil Donoghue

11. Head-teacher's report

- Results and data 2014/2015
- TOP /SEF
- pupil numbers
- staff update
- premises update
- curriculum update
- finance update
- PPP Partnership

Further to the circulated written report DH advised that a member of staff is on long term sick leave and the absence is being managed according to the absence policy. There were concerns about conflicting advice from EPM (Educational Personnel Management - our HR advisor) which has now been clarified by a senior executive at EPM. It may require a panel of governors to look into this personnel issue and a further panel to make a review. PC asked for volunteers to be on either of these panels. EB and GM volunteered for the first panel, OP, BH, SC, GH and MK also volunteered. Governors were reminded to be on either panel they must not be involved in any upfront discussions regarding the situation ahead of the panel being called together.

Debbie Moulson has retracted her resignation since the Head's report was written and will be staying in her current role.

A safe guarding issue has been raised since the Head's report was issued and this is being dealt with in accordance with the policy, and following advice from the Local Authority.

QU: How are the new teachers Jo Sheppard and Laura Freeman settling in? Are the new monitoring procedures working? Jo is Laura's NQT mentor. DH had two meetings with them already to confirm how they are settling in.

QU: The priorities for improvement include a greater focus on reading at home. What does this mean? Does it mean more homework? It is about ensuring that more children are doing what is expected, the expectation is that they read at home 3 times a week. Fiction Express is one tool that is used and helps give the parents a focus. Staff are aware that the number 1 priority for homework is reading, so if the children don't do anything else they need to do the reading. Class newsletters have communicated this focus to parents. Teachers are also committed to reading with the children. **QU:** What happens when the children do not do the expected reading? The aim is to utilise any available time to do one to one reading with the children who are not doing it at home. A TA has offered to run a home work club in a key stage 2 class for those who don't get the support at home giving a targeted year 3 and 4 focus during a lunch time. In year 2 Robins and Wrens are competing on the home reading tree, this is a great visual to encourage more reading and identify who needs help to progress up the tree. **QU:** It appears then that reading is going well but without Mathletics is there a dip in progress in maths? One of the reasons Mathletics wasn't renewed is that so few children were accessing it that it didn't seem to be viable to continue to use. The focus is moving towards the basic foundations of maths e.g times tables. **QU:** Again whilst the focus is on reading how do we make sure that writing and maths are not neglected? Staff are still investigating alternatives to Mathletics and are reviewing online resources and apps. It is thought that later in the year there may be an information evening to share useful maths resources with parents. There were comments that generally it is easier for parents to encourage their children to do activities that have been specifically set by the teachers rather than to just access resources online.

SEF/TOP - Self Evaluation Form and Termly Operating Plan

The version which has been sent out is a draft. DH explained how she had tried to align it to the new framework being used by Ofsted. Although the SEF is no longer required it is a valuable tool as it is necessary to evaluate where you are at before you can establish how best to move forward. This first version is very lengthy and the plan is to summarise this for future reports. The RAG rating (red, amber, green) has been used - green identifies what has been achieved and gives evidence. The amber can relate to something that the school want to work on and is therefore an area for focus. eg. Leaders' and governors' vision and improving communications with parents. The priorities will not change but how it is presented will be amended to make it easier to assimilate the information.

QU: Has it been helpful to work in this detail? Some bits have been more helpful than others, it has been useful to think through in detail the areas for focus. However it is not as clear what is currently being worked on as it is lost in the detail, **QU:** Who is this document for? It is initially to clarify the thinking for senior management, the dates are then put into diaries and then it is reviewed at the end of the term and presented to governors. **QU:** Do Ofsted ask if you have a form of self evaluation? It is no longer a requirement but they do ask and if one is available they do take a look at it. **QU:** Is there a target date for when a revised version will be available? An evolved version will be presented at the next FGB but this still may not be the final format. Some priorities have not yet been included but these will be added.

12. Finance meeting held with the School's Finance Adviser 10.9.15

GH gave an update following the meeting with Rob Cottle to review expenditure against the agreed budget; this meeting will be discussed in more detail at the next finance committee meeting.

It was noted that policies are kept up to date along with clear declaration of interests from governors. There was a warning regarding potential issues ahead relating to free school meals funding. There is no formal commitment from the Government that they are going to continue to pay for them. Will look at the financial impact of this in the finance committee meeting. It was noted that future pupil funding will be levied according to increasing numbers but other funding lines will be flat. Therefore, where costs are increasing due to larger numbers of children this will have an impact on the budget. The reserves have increased from £80,000 at the end of the previous year, to a reserve of £94,000. This is due to good practice rather than not spending enough. This year we will have £123,000 in reserve. Although this is high, it is prudent due to the planned changes to the site in the coming years. It is imperative to have a healthy reserve to ensure that the current school can be equipped to the same standard as the new build/extension. There will also be a requirement to recruit quality teachers ahead of having the money from an increased number of children.

In terms of benchmarking we are financially strong, we are less well funded but all of our costs lines are kept under control. There are two main drivers - good management and the ability to run at 30 children per class. Once we get to two form entry this will not be the case and there will be some years with smaller classes.

QU: Are there any projected figures for pupils likely to come in? What is the potential impact of the continued new building work in the village? Over time we will be able to easily fill a two form entry school. The housing market has picked up and there have been 12 new children start the year from moving into the village. The PAN (Pupil Admission Number) has increased to 45 for Sept 2016. This will not be raised to 60 for a while so that we can take in additional children moving into the catchment during the year.

13. Update from meeting held with School Improvement Adviser held on 23rd July 2015

As per information sent with the agenda. No further questions at this time.

14. Update from Head following her Ofsted training during the summer

If a school is rated "good" on previous inspection it will only receive a 1 day inspection, however, if there is a change in either direction then this converts into a full 2 day inspection. At that point further inspectors are drafted in for the second day's inspection. From beginning of December DH will be on call to attend inspections. She may be asked to be on standby for the second day of the inspection so that the dates can be provisionally booked in her diary. She will be notified by 4pm if need to go for the 2nd day. Schools which are outstanding are risk assessed and if there is no obvious dip in the data/results or cause for concern then these schools are not inspected.

15. LA Keeping in Touch visit by the SIA (School Improvement Partner)

22/9/15 Pauline Ball LA Associate Adviser, PC and DH. When Pauline's report is available it will be shared with governors.

16. Review of School Structure

The Governments priority is that schools become multi academy trust. However, currently there is no compelling reason why Little Paxton should convert at this stage. Background information has been shared with governors for their consideration. The 'Collaboration' model which gives equal footing for each school would be the only one which may be of interest in the future. **QU:** Do we feel that we will be pushed into a change at some stage? It is for the Governing Body to decide whether to become an academy. It may be that we become the minority not being an academy and at that stage the authority will have less to offer. The Department of Education encourages schools to become academies and/or join Academy Trusts. Governors felt strongly that whatever is done should be on our terms and would want to choose our partners rather than being forced to work with another party. **QU:** Is this discussed at the St Neots Heads' forum? Not directly in the open forum. The DLPT, Diamond Learning Partnership Trust already have 5 local schools and many Church of England schools belong to DeMAT, Diocese Ely Multi Academy Trust. Crosshall Infants and Crosshall Juniors are both single academies. The other local schools remain as Local Authority Community Schools and are not academies. All secondary schools in the county are academies. Locally the St Neots Learning Partnership is the federation of Longsands and Ernulf Academies who may also look for other schools to join them which, in common with other MATs in the area, could include primaries. **QU:** It would appear that the direction of travel is obvious, an initiative introduced by a previous Labour government but taken on by the current government so it is not going to go away. But for us if it isn't broken don't fix it, however there is a concern about being forced to move. **QU:** Should we be prepared in advance, setting up what we would want to do? The main thing on the horizon is the pending building work that we need to get through with local authority support before anything can change.

RJ left the meeting 8:15.

QU: Should we consider a time line from when the building is fully confirmed to converting to an academy? The Local Authority will be contracted to pay before the build is finished, so from that point how long would it then take to become an academy? We need to be aware of the process and what options are available. **QU:** Have we thought about potential partners, do they have expansion plans? We wouldn't want to join up with someone else who needs to build? The LA has to supply the funds to enable the schools to supply places for children and would support any extension work that needed to be done to Academies.

Governors agreed to the recommendation that we don't need to do anything at this point, however, this is something that needs to remain on the agenda and will need serious consideration in the future. At that point either a working party or separate committee would be required to review this fully.

17. School Website

OP and Jackie Turner (a school secretary with responsibility for the website updates) plan to meet on Monday 12th to discuss the website.

QU: Is there a specific benchmark for a great website? No-one was aware of one but it is felt that the website platform is strong and the design should be kept but the information needs to be updated and possibly some of the navigation needs to be made clearer. All governors and new governors in particular were asked to review the site and feedback to OP. **QU:** Is the site mobile friendly? Can it be made to automatically format to mobile devices? This can be looked into with the company who designed it. OP will include this in the audit. The aim is to make it as easy as possible to keep up to date. There are new guidelines as to the information required from the governing body. A table of governors for the last 12 months will be added and including all the minutes will give details of attendance and updated interests etc. Governors agreed to these proposals. **QU:** What about details of training? As this is always on the FGB agenda the information can be picked up from the minutes.

ACTION: Governors to feedback comments to OP. OP to carry out website audit.

18. Review of Policies

- Pay Policy - Governors reviewed the annual rates of pay for the different points on the scale. There was some discussion over the increase on level 6. It was agreed to use the actual salary figures given on the School Teachers' Pay 2015-16: Pay Scale Points. GH confirmed this would be in line with the plans in the budget. Policy approved.

Post meeting update: EPM have clarified that it was intended that the final point (M6) on the mainscale could be subdivided into M6a and M6b – M6a would be a 1% increase and M6b a 2% increase. EPM do not recommend raising all M6 pay by 2%. This will be discussed further at a meeting on 19th October 2015

- Attendance Policy - this was reviewed in fine detail last year.

QU: Please confirm there is staff handbook. Yes there is. **QU:** 3.8 Attendance figures are these sent home? Are they communicated to the parents when attendance is low? Letters are sent to parents. **QU:** Annex 1.8/10 is this as per the local authority's recommendations? Yes, County makes the decision via the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) processes. Policy approved.

- Equality Policy - this is a new draft policy.

Amendments: 'Statement' should now read statement/EHCP. Second paragraph add in governors to those 'our whole school community' Subject to amendments Policy Approved.

ACTION: AG, make minor amends to policies, circulate to governors and put on school website.

- SEND and Inclusion Policy – including one page summary

This policy has been reworked to make it more accessible with some information now included in the appendices. SEN policy statement **QU:** What was the purpose of this? It was to condense the policy to make more accessible to parents. **QU:** As a parent this doesn't tell me the bits I would want to know. Does it give a flavour of what the school does to support the child? Who do I contact if I have a problem, how do I contact them and why would I contact them? What is classed as a special need and what would I expect to happen? **QU:** SE (Sam England, SENCO) was going to give to a focus group of parents, staff and TA's. Governors requested feedback on this.

For a child already in the school it was felt that the parent shouldn't need to find out about SEND from the policy or the website because conversations should have already happened, as soon as there was any indication of concern. So if this document is for parents without children in the school, eg. possibly looking to move to the school does it tell them enough and give a realistic expectation of what the school offers. It was agreed that it should include details of who to contact and also an introduction along the lines of - If you have concerns that your child may have some SEN please approach the class teacher in the first instance or the SENCO. Then also to have a hyperlink to the main policy so that they can look through the full document. It was agreed that the one pager should be called Special Educational needs at Little Paxton Primary School.

ACTION: MK & GM to review with SE to see if she obtained feedback. Make further changes to the document as detailed above.

- Monitoring and Evaluation Policy – deferred till next meeting to allow SLT (Senior Leadership Team) to update

19. Governor's Visits

Completed:

Governors' attendance at the School Open Evening held on 15.7.13 - report issued with agenda.

Forthcoming visits:

Reason for Visit	When	Who
Teachers new to year groups and new to school	Autumn Term	GM & EB
Hand writing focus in school - based on new focus in new curriculum	October	BH & SC
Assessment Grids	Autumn Term	GH & OP
Changes to curriculum in year 2 and year 6	Spring Term	
Outdoor Learning	Summer Term	
Re-visit marking	Summer Term	
Progress in reading	Spring Term	

20. Curriculum Presentations

These take place at the beginning of each curriculum evening, all governors are strongly encouraged to attend.

Presentation	When
RAISE online	Autumn Term
British values and Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Education (SMSC)	Spring Term
Outdoor Learning, a staff perspective on progress and impact and next steps	Summer Term

21. Governor Training

ND & PC went to briefing last week. Key points to note:

- Only 12 schools in Cambridgeshire with 100% progress and 8 schools making 2 levels of progress - we are included in both
- Fisher Family Trust website has been updated. Curriculum and Standards Committee to discuss.
- SEN presentation - 13,000 SEND pupils in Cambridgeshire. SEND has a far greater impact on outcomes than a child being a FSM pupil and the gap in Cambridgeshire is wider than national. The lowest performing group are those pupils with both SEND and FSM. Governors agreed to monitor this group if possible to do without compromising children's and families' rights to confidentiality.
- 3.5% of pupils have statement / EHCP in Cambridgeshire
In house training - to be discussed at next meeting.

22. Governor Vacancies

There is currently one Co-opted Governor Vacancy. Governors agreed there are currently no skills gaps in the Governing Body and agreed to leave this vacancy in case any arose.

23. Governor Section in the School Newsletter

Please send information to PC.

ACTION: PC to send an example of what is required.

24. Correspondence Received

- Email received regarding safeguarding concern as previously mentioned.
- Changes to lunch arrangements - lots of emails have been received. Proposal to make this the discussion topic at the forth coming parents evening. EB and BH volunteered to help at parents evening. Other governors to advise PC of availability to help.
- Correspondence received confirming that the extension plans are now out for tender after which the contractor will be appointed.
- S&B committee were given plans to take away and review.

25. Any other urgent business

None raised

26. Date of next meetings of the Governing Body

Meeting	Time	When
Committees Evening	6.30pm	Monday 19 th October
RAISEonline Presentation	6.30pm	Monday 16 th November
Curriculum Evening	Follows above	Monday 16 th November
Full Governors' Meeting	6.30pm	Monday 30th November 2015

Meeting closed at 9:25pm