



MILVERTON COMMUNITY PRIMARY AND PRE-SCHOOL

FGB MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday 16 July 2025, 18.00

Governors Present		In Attendance	
Linda Burton (Chair)	LA Governor	Gloria Hamlet (items 1-4)	Finance Officer
Clare Adams	Parent Governor	Kathryn Lanning	Clerk
Rachel Ford	Co-opted Governor		
Martin James (Vice-Chair)	Co-opted Governor		
Stephen Jones	Co-opted Governor		
Kieran Neale (from item 4)	Parent Governor		
Stephen Penny	Staff Governor		
Nicola Stoddart	Headteacher		
Emily Weiss (from item 4)	Co-opted Governor		

Item 1 – Apologies and Declarations of Interest

- 1.1 Apologies for absence were accepted from Chris Mann and Fiona Taylor. Governors noted with sadness that Gwil Wren had decided to stand down from the Board due to the demands of his role as a Somerset County Councillor. They expressed their gratitude for everything Gwil had done to support the school.
- 1.2 There were no new declarations of interest relating to items on the agenda.

Item 2 – Minutes of the last meeting

- 2.1 The Board approved the minutes of the FGB meeting held on 21 May 2025.

Item 3 – Matters Arising / Action Tracker (paper)

- 3.1 The Board noted updates to the Action Tracker as follows:

REF	ACTION	OWNER	UPDATE
FGB Meeting held on 26 March 2025			
Para 5.1	Follow up potential funding from Parochial Church Council (not Parish Council). Approach Milverton Trust for funding.	HT	The HT has asked the Office Manager to follow this up

Para 9.1	Upload school policies to GovernorHub	Clerk	School office to supply policies not on website
FGB Meeting held on 21 May 2025			
Para 6.1	Review emergency response plans in light of new Terrorism Act	HT/ SJ	See para 6.1
Para 6.2	Governors to attend Safeguarding training at school on Weds 3 September, 9am-noon	All	
Para 10.1	Governors to complete their monitoring visits/reports	All	Some still outstanding

Item 4 – Month 3 Finance Report (oral)

- 4.1 GH explained that the Finance Report had not been available in advance of the meeting as County had introduced a new report format and training on this had only been delivered 2 days earlier. Total estimated funding for 2025/26 was £1,084,642 which included an additional estimated sum of £8,774 towards the teachers' 4% pay award from September (the budget had assumed 2.8% for this). There had been no announcement yet regarding pay increase for support staff. HR would now automatically move all teachers to the next incremental point on the main pay scale and Upper Pay Scales but the school would still need to instruct HR when staff should receive an incremental pay rise from Main pay scale to the upper scale.

Question: is this for the calendar year or financial year?

Response (GH): teachers' pay awards take effect from 1 September each year.

Kieran Neale arrived at this point.

- 4.2 GH advised that the Expenditure and Income table in the report reflected all the cost-saving measures put in place over recent months, such as redundancies, not renewing fixed-term contracts, reduced staff hours and a number of other changes that had been made since the budget was set. The budget now showed an estimated year end deficit of £822 with BO1 (ring-fenced funds) showing an estimated outturn of £4,056 and BO2 (uncommitted funds) an estimated deficit of -£4,878.

Question: is this a much-improved picture since we last looked at the budget which showed a deficit of approximately £53k?

Response (HT): very much so. Staffing is now really tight from September but the financial situation is looking much more positive. It is important to get the school's finances back on track as soon as possible to avoid the year-on-year cumulative effect of a deficit budget.

Response (GH): in addition to the staffing changes we have had confirmation that we will receive £16k High Needs Funding. At the moment SEND alternative provision costs are not as high as previously anticipated, but this could change dependent on September's intake. Month 6 will give us a more stable financial picture.

- 4.3 School funding was currently based on 187 pupils, but it was expected that this would be 193 at the October 2025 census which would increase funding for the following year. 2026/27 would also realise the full benefit of the staffing changes which only take effect from September-April of the current financial year.

Emily Weiss arrived at this point.

- 4.4 GH outlined the key variances set out in part 2 of the report, including the following:

- teaching supply (A002) was overspent by -£1,989 due to an additional member of staff going on long term sick leave after the budget had been written which had increased teaching supply costs
- education support staff (A004) was overspent by -£2,786 as some HLTAs had been stepping up to provide additional teaching cover
- admin and clerical (A006) was overspent by -£751 reflecting the amount of additional admin involved in running school clubs, preparing reports etc
- difficulties in recruiting midday supervisors (A008) meant the report currently showed a saving against this cost centre
- it was too early in the year to say what demands would be made on building maintenance (D101)

Question: is the main building maintenance concern still the leaking toilet roof?

Response (HT): at the moment – that work will be carried out during October half-term

- after-school club income (E750) was higher than anticipated and was now estimated to bring in £8,593 above the £15,342 anticipated in the budget
- income from swimming was higher than in the budget as more parents had paid the voluntary cost than anticipated
- pre-school was anticipated in the budget to cost the school £9,428 but was now expected to almost break even.

- 4.5 In summary GH commented that the budget deficit of -£53,917 was expected to largely be eliminated by March 2026. Governors expressed their huge thanks to GH for her considerable commitment and hard work to improve the school's financial position.

Item 5 – Chair's Update (oral)

Board vacancy

- 5.1 The Chair asked governors to consider whether they might know of anyone who could fill the co-opted governor vacancy on the Board created by GW's resignation.

EYFS

- 5.2 The Chair drew governors' attention to previous Early Years issues within the school, which she had been monitoring. On joining the school the HT had identified and addressed these issues in consultation with an experienced EYFS adviser. A three-year development plan was now in place which would ensure a consistent response to behaviour, a more positive learning environment (with a curriculum in place for ages 2-5 from September 2025), robust admin processes (including billing) and improved planning structures. Previous staff had left the school and been replaced with a motivated and enthusiastic team who would continue to embed the planned improvements. Furthermore, a Foundation Unit would be created which would facilitate a seamless transition from pre-school to reception. Having visited the day before, the Chair confirmed that children were now experiencing a calmer atmosphere with phonics and maths being delivered through engaging and varied play activities. Monthly planning meetings, overseen by the HT and – from September – Katy Smith, Assistant HT – had led to shared resources and a rolling two-year programme. Much remained to be done, particularly in relation to improving the classroom environment and outside spaces and, whilst EYFS would be in a much stronger place next term, envisaged outcomes (through the creation of a foundation unit) would not be fully realised until September 2026. The Chair expressed her thanks to the HT, KT and GH for their hard work and to the preschool staff who had embraced the changes.

Item 6 – Governor Services Update (paper)

- 6.1 The Clerk reminded governors that they needed to ensure the school has up-to-date and effective plans in place to cover evacuation, invacuation and lockdown procedures as required under the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025.

ACTION: HT to review existing plans over the summer

- 6.2 Governors noted that government funding would cover 3% of the 4% teachers' pay rise, with schools expected to cover the remaining 1% through efficiencies, but commented that the school had only just explored every means possible to increase efficiencies and reduce costs.

Question: would it be useful for it to be made clear to parents what pressures the school's finances are under?

Response (HT): Milverton Primary is not facing any unique financial pressures but it might be helpful to explain the national financial picture for schools to provide context for and help parents understand the rationale for some of the tough decisions the school has had to make. For example, an article in Schools Week at this time last year stated that 75% of state schools were having to make redundancies at the moment. We will ask parents to keep demands on office staff to a minimum as they have reduced their working hours, whilst retaining their current workloads. The Friday Flyer will also only appear in magazine format fortnightly, alternating with a simple Word version. One governor commented that larger class sizes are often viewed negatively by parents so it would be helpful to stress that more pupils equates to more funding which can be ploughed back into the school.

- 6.3 The Clerk also drew governors' attention to recent minor changes to the DfE's Governance Guide for Maintained schools, in particular:
- chairs must sign off the PE and Sport Premium Digital Report (there is no statutory requirement for Boards to sign this off). A link to the report was included for governors in the Headteacher's Report
 - mental health and wellbeing responsibilities are outlined more clearly for boards
 - governors must ensure that school food standards are being met and that schools encourage a whole-school approach to healthy eating
 - boards must make sure that their school has an accessible policy to support pupils in school with medical conditions and that this is implemented effectively by properly trained staff

Item 7 – Headteacher's Report (paper)

- 7.1 The HT introduced a written report to governors and drew their attention to the following:

Attendance

- 7.2 A comparative attendance data report from the DfE (Appendix A) showed that attendance at Milverton Primary was significantly lower than similar schools nationally. 59 children at Milverton had attendance below the national target of 95%. Of these, 40 children had attendance between 90-95% (19 of whom had gone on holiday during term time) and 19 children had attendance below 90% (4 of whom had gone on holiday during term time). The HT and staff met and communicated regularly with parents to emphasise the importance of attending school and the potential for incurring fines. Fines for unauthorised absence (paid to the LA not the school) ranged from £80-£160 per parent, rising to £2,500 and potential imprisonment for persistent absences. Attendance for SEND children was improving.

Data

- 7.3 KS1 and KS2 attainment data was included in the report, but governors noted that comparative national and Somerset data was not yet available. As expected, KS2 results were not as good as last year, this cohort having missed a lot of schooling in years 1 and 2 due to Covid lockdowns and including a high level of SEND.

School Budget

- 7.4 A three-year financial recovery plan had been submitted to the local authority. In order to achieve required savings it was proposed to establish a Foundation Unit, integrating pre-school and reception, which would have a coherent curriculum delivered under an EYFS lead. This was an approach taken by a number of other schools and work was underway to review structures, ratios, qualification requirements and how best to use available spaces.

Question: where is the saving to be made in creating a Foundation Unit?

Response (HT): through reduced staff costs.

Question: is your new EYFS teacher part-time?

Response (HT): no, full-time.

Question: will the Foundation Unit require any separate legal status?

Response (HT): no

Question: this sounds like a logical approach. Are there any issues?

Response (HT): the key factor will be getting the right staff, trained to the right level and ensuring staff well-being.

Wider opportunities, class educational visits and workshops

- 7.5 Governors welcomed the enormous range of activities and opportunities open to the children.

SEND

- 7.6 35 children were on the SEND Register (slightly above national average) and one child was currently undergoing assessment for and EHCP.

Safeguarding

- 7.7 The Safeguarding Link Governor (EW) advised that she would be meeting with the HT the following day to discuss Safeguarding and Pupil Premium. Governors noted that two racist incidents had occurred in school since the last FGB meeting, both of which had been handled sensitively and appropriately. [No Outsiders](#) would be introduced to the school next term – a project designed to promote equality, diversity and inclusion in schools, fostering a school environment where everyone feels welcome and valued. The project uses picture books, lesson plans and other resources to encourage tolerance, respect and an understanding of differences. A number of other schools were keen to join Milverton in launching the project. The HT commented that recent updates to guidance on [Relationships, Sex Education and Health Education](#) supported the teaching of sensitive subjects.

Question: is there scope to include parents in the project?

Response: yes, we will establish a parent working group to support the project and will also circulate information to parents.

Question: does the project cover, in an age-appropriate way, EYFS to year 6?

Response (HT): yes it does

School Development Plan (Appendix E)

- 7.8 The HT updated governors on the School Development Plan Key Priorities, as follows:

KP1 – Quality of Education

There had been a big focus on assessment this year and lots of improvements were being implemented across the curriculum. A further audit had been carried out on what assessment looks like in every subject. Work was ongoing to refine and implement assessment changes in the Foundation stage.

KP2 – Behaviour and Attitudes; Personal Development

Attendance would continue to be a key focus area here. A relational approach to behaviour had been implemented and was subject to monitoring and review. Next year would include work to further support SEND. The wellbeing and sensory hub set up earlier in the year was working well.

KP3 – Leadership and Management

Staff wellbeing had suffered as a result of the restructuring and redundancy process but the HT was confident that this would improve from September. The planned CPD programme, 'Walk Thrus' would be paused temporarily pending delivery of staff training on neurodiversity through the PINS programme.

KP4 – EYFS

Many improvements had been delivered this year and these would continue with the development of the Foundation Unit.

Item 8 – Fees and Finance Policy (paper)

- 8.1 The Board approved the Fees and Finance Policy.**

Item 9 – Governor Monitoring (papers)

- 9.1 The Chair commented that there were still a number of gaps in the governor monitoring schedule. EW advised that she would be visiting the school the following day to discuss safeguarding, pupil premium and English. [Post-meeting note: Pupil Premium was subsequently deferred pending completion of a review and the SCR check was also deferred to the start of next term]. KN said he had a visit arranged to discuss IT. SJ said he had met with the Geography lead but needed to write up the visit report.
- 9.2 The Chair asked governors whether they thought it was useful for them to meet with subject leads or whether they should monitor academic subjects through pupil voice – ie meet with children, review their books and ask them questions about what they have learnt. Alternatively governors could stop monitoring academic subjects and focus on monitoring the School Development Plan and other key link governor areas (Safeguarding, Pupil Premium, SEND and Health and Safety). The HT suggested a decision on this be deferred until the new Ofsted framework is released in November.
- 9.3 Governors noted monitoring reports on Science, RE, PE, Maths, Sustainability and the SDP KP1 (Quality of Education).

Item 10 – Board Meeting Dates 2025-26 (oral)

10.1 FGB meeting dates for the next academic year were agreed as follows (all 6-8pm):

- **Thursday 18 September [date finalised after the meeting]**
- **Wednesday 26 November**
- **Wednesday 28 January**
- **Wednesday 25 March**
- **Wednesday 6 May**
- **Wednesday 15 July**

Item 11– Any Other Business

11.1 The Chair expressed the Board’s thanks to all staff for their hard work and commitment to the school over the past year, in particular the HT, the Finance Officer and the SENCO. She also thanked governors for their ongoing support.

11.3 There was no other business and the meeting finished at 8pm.

Date of Next Meeting: Thursday 18 September 2025 at 6pm

Kathryn Lanning
Clerk to Governors