



MILVERTON COMMUNITY PRIMARY AND PRE-SCHOOL
FULL GOVERNING BOARD MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday 8 November 2023

Present		Absent	
Linda Burton (Chair)	LA Governor	Stephen Jones	Co-opted Governor
James Pyne (Vice-Chair)	Parent Governor	Chris Mann	Co-opted Governor
Chris Barnes	Parent Governor	Richard Stead	Headteacher
Stephen Penny	Staff Governor	Andy Wooller	Co-opted Governor
Andy Powell	Co-opted Governor		
Fiona Taylor	Co-opted Governor		
Emily Weiss	Co-opted Governor		
Gwil Wren	Co-opted Governor		
Katy Smith	Assistant Headteacher		
Gloria Hamlet	Finance Officer		
Kathryn Lanning	Clerk		

Item 1 – Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Stephen Jones and Chris Mann. Andy Wooller was absent without apologies.
- 1.2 There were no new declarations of interest.

Item 2 – Board Appointments

- 2.1 The Board welcomed Chris Barnes who had recently been appointed as a parent governor.

Item 3 – Minutes of Previous Meetings (papers)

3.1 The Board:

- a) **noted that the recording made of the 1 February 2023 FGB meeting was still not available so agreed that, given the passage of time, this meeting should be discounted;**
- b) **approved the minutes of the last FGB meeting held on 20 September; and**
- c) **approved the minutes of the EGM held on 5 October.**

Item 4 – Matters Arising (oral)

- 4.1 The Chair agreed that it would be sensible to review allocation of governor responsibilities at a future meeting to ensure a more equitable distribution.

ACTION: Chair

4.2 The Board noted completed actions from previous meetings and progress on outstanding items as follows:

FGB Meeting held on 12 July 2023			
Para 5.4	Create Asset Management Plan template	JP	By Autumn term end
Para 6.5	Arrange physical intervention training for staff	AHTs	Training booked
Para 13.2	Provide photograph/biog details for website	All	AW, CB to provide
FGB Meeting held on 20 September 2023			
Para 5.2	Ensure ALL governors undertake safeguarding training	Clerk	Some governors still need to do this.
Para 7.3	Final version of SDP to come to FGB for approval	SP	On 22 Nov agenda
Para 12.1	Safeguarding Gov to check Single Central Record	EW	Done on 4 Oct 2023
EGM – 5 October 2023			
Para 2.2	Confirm proportion of HT salary covered by insurance whilst on sick leave	Chair	See item 7
Para 2.4	Explore options for covering HT’s absence	Chair	See item 7

Item 5 – Introduction to School Finance (tabled paper)

5.1 The Finance Officer (GH) tabled the Schools Financial Planning Calendar which outlines key finance activities and ongoing financial tasks for the school financial year (1 April to 31 March). Key activities are:

- January/February – the school’s budget planning begins when the school receives notification from County of pupil funding. This funding is based on pupil numbers in the October census, minus amounts de-delegation ie redundancies, maternity leave, insurance etc. The school then begins to prepare a three-year budget plan including an estimate figure for grants (which will come in at various points in the year). Throughout the year the school will receive additional funding, as shown on a Budget Update Forum (BUF), three of which are issued each year. BUF1 had been received for the current financial year and BUF2 was expected soon.
- April – the school completes its SFVS (Schools Financial Value Standard) submission to County, which governors will have been considering throughout the year.
- May – the previous financial year is closed and at this point the school will know what its carry forward figure will be to help support the following year’s budget.
- September – the Finance and Pay policies are ready for FGB approval.
- December – benchmarking is carried out and will be reflected in the SFVS.

5.2 Governors should receive 6 financial reports each year – normally months 3, 9 and 12 with other reports in between. GH explained that she had now received reconciliation data up to Month 7 (October) but because of the timing and lack of certainty over the robustness of the school’s finance systems she was doing the reconciliation manually rather than using BromCom. GH advised that the Schools Funding Team had relaxed the requirement to report to them on Month 6 and the school had been told that Education Finance would provide a Month 7 report by 4 December. She suggested that governors would need an additional FGB meeting to review this report since their next scheduled meeting on 4 December was not until 7 February, by which time the Month 9 report would be ready.

ACTION: Chair/Clerk to propose date in January for FGB meeting

Question: do invoices come straight to the school or via County?

Response (GH): they come to the school first for approval and I upload them to Ed Comms which then sends them to Accounts Payable at County.

Question: have problems with the new County finance system caused many issues for you?

Response (GH): yes, for example there was initially a delay of up to 6 weeks in processing invoices which caused extra work as suppliers have understandably been chasing payment. Cashiers, who provide the school's income, are very much behind. There have been some improvements but still a lot of issues still need to be resolved.

Question: what is the process for a deficit budget?

Response (GH): there is now a working group to help those schools in deficit to reduce their deficit and develop a 5-year plan to return to a balanced budget. The school had set an in-year deficit last year but this had been mitigated by the previous year's carry forward.

Item 6 – Month 6 Finance Report (paper)

- 6.1 GH introduced the Month 6 Finance Report, noting that finance reports always refer back to the original Budget Plan agreed in March. The BO1 balance (committed/ring-fenced funds) had reduced by £4,281 from the Month 2 report. The BO2 balance (uncommitted funds), which would help balance the 2024/25 budget, had reduced by £6,892 due largely to additional staff costs. The report included this year's pay rise for teaching staff, and an estimate of 9% for support staff. The report anticipated a Year End balance of £73,214, of which £44,054 was uncommitted.

Question: why has there been a reduction in estimated pre-school income?

Response (GH): income is not always received on time, and sometimes not at all. Work is being undertaken to address this and to ensure that funding applications are submitted on time with all the required information.

Response (KS): a decision was taken to reduce the number of two-year olds admitted to the Nursery; this has left a few vacancies but has enabled a more efficient staffing structure.

Question: could we put some of the £9k Energy Efficiency Grant towards operational costs?

Response (GH): the school is currently considering using some of this grant to cover the cost of cloud migration, but there is also the possibility that we may be directed how to use the grant.

Question: how is the Core Offer working?

Response: there is still some confusion over what the Core Offer covers, for example business manager hours; there is also a lack of granularity over what costs the school will have to cover, for example the school having to pay travel costs for contractors coming to the school had not been anticipated. Previously schools could pick and choose what support services they needed; now all schools were obliged to accept the Core Offer, including those elements that they may not need.

- 6.2 GH confirmed that the predicted deficit for next year had been £47,601k and was now £56,427k. She would continue to monitor the situation closely and report back to governors regularly.

Item 7 – Staffing/Pay Arrangements to cover Headteacher's absence (oral)

The minutes of this discussion are confidential and are attached as Part B minutes.

Item 8 – Scheme of Delegation (paper)

- 8.1 Governors approved the Scheme of Delegation.**

Item 9 – Pay and Appraisal Committee (paper)

9.1 Governors:

- a) approved the Pay and Appraisal Committee terms of reference; and**
- b) agreed that Fiona Taylor should join the Committee.**

Post-meeting note

The next meeting of the Pay and Appraisal Committee will take place on 22 November, prior to the FGB meeting.

Item 10 – Finance Policy 2023 (paper)

- 10.1 GH advised that County had not yet issued a 2023 model Finance Policy so she had updated the last policy on issues such as staffing and local authority changes, and changes arising from Brexit.

Question: the policy states that the threshold for requiring 3 quotes is £50k – should this be lower?

Response (GH): this is what previous versions of the policy have stated but in practice staff obtain 3 quotes, where possible, for much lower amounts.

10.2 The Board:

- a) agreed that the threshold for requiring 3 quotes should be reduced to £5k; and**
- b) approved the school's Finance Policy 2023.**

Item 11 – Any other business

Parents' Evenings – 16 and 21 November

- 11.1 The Board noted that Linda Burton, Emily Weiss, Chris Mann and Stephen Jones had volunteered to attend forthcoming parents' evenings.

Site security

- 11.2 GW reported that a local resident had told him about a gap in the school perimeter fence/hedge and KS said she would investigate.

ACTION: KS

MUGA (Multi-Use Games Area)

GW reported that there was little interest from the Recreation Ground Committee to run the MUGA as a community facility. However, he would talk to Kingsmead School about how they planned to manage community use of their new MUGA and report back.

Item 12 – Date of next meeting

- 12.1 The next FGB meeting would be held on Wednesday 22 November at 7pm.

Kathryn Lanning
Clerk to Governors