

ST CUTHBERT WITH ST MATTHIAS CE PRIMARY SCHOOL
Meeting of the Full Governing Board
held at the school on Tuesday 23 January 2018

MINUTES

GOVERNORS		Present	
FOUNDATION	Incumbent <i>Ex officio</i>	Fr Paul Bagott	✓
	Deanery	Mrs Carla Muñoz Slaughter Chair	✓
		Mr Edward Lethbridge	✓
	LDBS	Mr Hamish Adourian Vice chair	✓
		Lady Smith-Gordon	✓
	PCC	Miss Charlotte Close-Smith	x
		Ms Estella Gomez	x
		Mrs Stephanie Barbir	✓
	Parent	Mrs Sandra McGregor	✓
		VACANCY	N/A
Local authority	Mrs Jennie Dalton	✓	
Headteacher <i>Ex officio</i>	Miss Gill Putterill	✓	
Staff	Miss Holly Williamson	x	
Co-opted	VACANCY	N/A	
ATTENDING			
Clerk	Mr Mike Hutchinson		

1. WELCOME, OPENING PRAYER, APOLOGIES AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, which began at 5pm precisely. Fr Paul Bagott led the meeting in a prayer. Apologies were accepted, and permission for absence given to, Charlotte Close-Smith, Estella Gomez and Holly Williamson. Fr Paul Bagott, Sandra McGregor and Sandra Smith-Gordon apologised for an early departure. A quorum was present throughout the meeting. There were no declarations of interest, pecuniary or otherwise, in respect of any items on this agenda. Unless otherwise indicated, all papers had been distributed in advance.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS FGB MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

2.1 The minutes of the FGB meeting of 16 November 2017 were **AGREED** as a full and accurate record. Chair to sign them after the meeting. There were a number of matters arising.

2.2 Item 2.4 Given the absence of Holly Williamson, this item was deferred.

2.3 Item 2.5 The headteacher reported that, in the absence of an RBKC health and safety officer, a Hammersmith and Fulham health and safety auditor had agreed to attend the school to advise on the premises' capacity with regard to fire hazard.

2.4 Item 2.7 Stephanie Barbir, who is governor with responsibility for safeguarding, apologised that she had not yet written up her annual safeguarding report but would do so.

2.5 Item 3.5.3 The vice chair reported that he and the headteacher would be meeting to discuss fundraising approaches to livery companies and local airlines.

2.6 Item 4.4.3 The headteacher reported that the lift would cost £2k rather than the previously-advised £10k to remedy.

2.7 Item 4.7 Fr Paul Bagott apologised that he had not yet been able to enquire about booking a 2018 Remembrance service at the Royal Hospital, Chelsea, but would do so.

2.8 Item 13 The chair thanked those governors who had generously helped her to set up for the Staff Christmas Party on 15 December 2017.

2.9 All other actions had been, or were in the process of being, fulfilled.

3. CHAIR'S REPORT

3.1 Chelsea Deanery Partnership meeting The chair reported that she and her fellow chairs had met to discuss closer partnership working. Of interest were Christ Church Primary School's Community Partnerships Committee, and the fact that the school's Governing Board had link governors for subjects. The partnerships' other chairs of committees met in non-executive session

once every half term to discuss concerns. This was an option for St Cuthbert's.

3.2 Emergency Planning for Governors The chair and vice chair had attended this Westminster training session, which had unveiled a new model emergency plan. This included a list of contact phone numbers, among which was one for the borough's duty contingency planning officer.

3.2.1 The advice was that the schools' chairs, vice chairs and headteachers should retain the number on speed-dial for emergencies.

3.2.2 However, the session was disappointing in that specific questions such as whether schools should adopt lockdown procedures were ducked as "the responsibility of governors". Advice was that teachers should have a "safe space" in every classroom with a phone link; sometimes it was appropriate to lock pupils in the classroom, sometimes it was not. This was not particularly helpful.

3.2.3 Other suggestions included:

- There should be a designated incident room within the school
- Receptionists who were relatively isolated – as St Cuthbert's was – should have an escape route
- Set up a texting group for governors
- Use interactive whiteboards to alert class teachers to an incident: the headteacher thought this was impractical but would research the prospect of networking the school's whiteboards.

3.2.4 Finally, the advice was that governors should sign off school trips, including all risk assessments, health and safety plans, etc. The headteacher said that RBKC currently signed off the school's residential trips; she herself signed off day trips. Clerk to schedule a standing item on FGB agendas for the headteacher to report on forthcoming trips.

3.2.5 The headteacher reminded governors that there had previously been a security audit of the school which had made various, rather costly, recommendations. Headteacher to source previous report; chair then to raise its recommendations with RBKC.

3.2.6 Edward Lethbridge thought any recommendations would be costly compared to the (slight) risks involved. The chair argued that the school was more at risk than neighbouring schools which did have lockdown procedures: the most likely risk was a parent with a vengeance turning up at the school with a weapon.

3.3 Operating guidelines The chair reported that RBKC advice was to consider supplementing this document with a statement about reciprocal agreements with partnership schools regarding panels. Governors had agreed that they would make themselves available: she would draft a clause for further consideration.

3.4 Chair's actions The chair had taken none.

4. HEADTEACHER'S REPORT

4.1 The chair invited the headteacher to introduce her report, which she did – selectively – as follows, answering questions as she did so.

4.2 Attendance This had been a disappointing 88 per cent in the previous week; at this time of year it was badly affected by illness.

4.3 Safeguarding/health and safety A Hammersmith and Fulham health and safety auditor – the same one who had promised to audit safe levels of occupancy with regard to fire hazard – had visited the school and offered preliminary advice.

- **Asbestos** The 2010 asbestos survey should be revisited as it was doubtful that a school of this age was free of the substance
- **Back wall** Before a replacement fence was erected on the back wall, the wall itself should be surveyed to ensure it was sufficiently sturdy
- **Mud** A risk assessment of children playing with mud, and possibly also sand, should be carried out
- **Kitchen** A risk assessment of the kitchen – independent of the school's outsourced meals supplier Caterlink's own in-house risk assessment – should be carried out
- **Playground and PE equipment** Risk assessments for these should also be undertaken.

4.3.1 Of this extensive list, an asbestos survey and on-site risk assessments were most pressing. The headteacher added that the auditor had approved of the school's paperwork, the spraying of children's displays with fire retardant, and evidence of the pollarding of on-site trees. However, he could give no guidance on who could give appropriate staff health and safety

training, which was disappointing.

4.3.2 The chair suggested asking LDBS to commission an asbestos survey, given that the diocese owned the school buildings. Headteacher to enquire.

4.4 Chelsea Deanery Partnership learning walk The headteacher reported that an Ofsted inspector who was a headteacher at another school had performed a learning walk focused on reading at St Cuthbert's and its fellow Chelsea Deanery Partnership school, Holy Trinity. He had deemed the teaching of reading at St Cuthbert's to be purposeful and the data to be strong.

4.5 KS1 and KS2 attainment data The headteacher circulated a single A4 summary of assessment data for Autumn 2, which she introduced. She asked for questions, which she answered as follows.

4.5.1 How much of a concern was Y3 writing [chair]? Y3 pupils were writing a lot but not covering all the rubric points in the set text, which meant they were below expected attainment.

4.5.2 And Y6 maths [chair]? There was concern here because the class did well last year. A change of teacher may have disrupted their progress.

4.5.3 How much of a concern was Y2 generally [chair]? They were a concern. However, the teaching team was strong. Children on the cusp were being targeted. The headteacher was considering training teachers to challenge more able pupils.

4.5.4 Why was the roll so much lower than last year [chair]? The Y6 cohort was now down to 22, after a series of pupil defections. Reception was down to 15 or 16 – numbers fluctuated almost daily – and three children were about to leave from other years. In-year admissions tended have little English, which was a challenge.

4.5.5 The chair noted that this could seriously jeopardise the school's continued viability.

4.5.6 Was the school's reputation not set to rise following its announcement as Good by Ofsted [Jennie Dalton]? The problem was that St Cuthbert's was surrounded by outstanding schools. Many children at St Cuthbert's were on the waiting list for these. Churn in embassy families and families in social housing also hit the school.

4.5.7 The chair noted that families whose children had successfully applied for community places at Christ Church Primary School had turned them down, yet didn't turn to St Cuthbert's as an alternative.

4.5.8 Sandra Smith-Gordon thought that perhaps a school in St Cuthbert's location was simply not needed, particularly with the growth of local free schools. **Fr Paul Bagott** suggested that Christ Church School could promote St Cuthbert's: the headteacher thought they already did. Holy Trinity also suffered from a low roll.

4.6 Barcelona trip The headteacher reported that she had canvassed interest among families at an increased cost of £200 rather than the previous £150. Even with that rise, the school would be subsidising the trip by several thousand pounds.

4.6.1 Could the school consider a closer, more economic destination [Sandra Smith-Gordon]? The headteacher argued that the Barcelona trip differentiated the school from competitors: for that reason it should not be lost. Children marketed the school through their enthusiasm. A trip to children's author Michael Morpurgo's Welsh farm was planned for Y5.

4.6.2 Given the school's dire financial straits, was the Barcelona trip a luxury it could not afford [chair]? The headteacher replied that she would attempt to source grant funding.

4.7 There being no further questions, the chair thanked the headteacher for her report and for answering questions, and moved on.

5. SAFEGUARDING REPORT

There were no safeguarding issues to report.

6. CONSIDER DRAFT BUDGET AND DELEGATE APPROVAL

6.1 The chair asked Edward Lethbridge, as link governor for finance, to rehearse the timetable for preparation and submission of the budget, which he did as follows.

6.2 RBKC funding allocations should be received by the end of February. The headteacher would be in a position to present a draft budget to the Finance and Premises Committee at its meeting of 27 March 2018. The FGB of 22 May 2018 could then approve a finalised budget, which would have to be submitted to RBKC by the end of May.

6.3 The chair thanked Edward Lethbridge for his summary. Governors **AGREED** the timetable, and that, given the timetable, it was not necessary to delegate approval of the budget to the Finance and Premises Committee.

7. RECEIVE COMMITTEE AND OTHER REPORTS (1)

7.1 Personnel The FGB chair, who also chairs this committee, reported that it had met on Tuesday 6 January 2018, two weeks earlier. Given that most of the issues it had discussed were confidential, she would report to governors at the end of this meeting.

7.2 Teaching and Learning Sandra Smith-Gordon, who chairs this committee, reported that it had not met since the last FGB meeting. The minutes of the previous meeting had been circulated. The next meeting was not scheduled until Tuesday 6 March 2018, as it now met once a term.

7.3 Finance and Premises Edward Lethbridge, the chair of this committee, reported that it had not met since the last FGB meeting. The next meeting was scheduled for Tuesday 6 February 2018. He rehearsed a series of financial issues.

7.3.1 SBS He, the headteacher and Cathy Cryer, the school's administration manager, had met with the school's financial consultancy, SBS, to clarify who was responsible for which aspects of the budget. Previously, SBS had provided monthly updates on financial performance, which he wanted to revive.

7.3.2 Carry-forward Last time the committee had met, he had reported a potential carry-forward of £160k: he continued to monitor the figures carefully.

7.3.3 Children's Centre The lease on the Children's Centre, currently £60k a year, was up for renewal. Previously, this had been paid in arrears; the school should push to termly payment at least and press for an increased fee.

7.3.4 Fundraising Before Christmas, Edward Lethbridge had successfully applied to the City bank, Hoare and Co., with which he had connections, for a £10k grant from its Golden Bottle Trust, for electronic whiteboards and iPads. The £30m charitable trust of a client could be another source of funds. Generally, such bodies preferred factual applications. As they also preferred match funding from parents and the school, all non-pupil-related funding, for instance from the Children's Centre and Farmers' Market, should be diverted through the Governors' Fund. This also usefully removed monies from the balance sheet. The chair thanked him for his efforts.

7.3.5 Overdraft The headteacher reported that the school had been granted an unauthorised overdraft by its bank, Lloyds, four times in the last year. The school's credit rating with the bank was now poor. Difficulties with the departure of a member of the financial staff could be to blame, but there had been no warning from SBS, and no clarity on the current state of the school's account. This hopefully would be rectified this week. Clear figures would be necessary if the school wished to apply for an early payment of funds from RBKC in advance of expected Pupil Premium and SEN funding.

7.3.6 Benchmarking Edward Lethbridge noted that he hoped to be able to benchmark St Cuthbert's financial situation against other, similar schools. He was currently reviewing the accounts of other schools.

7.4 Pupil Welfare and Christian Ethos Fr Paul Bagott, who chairs this committee, reported that it had not met since the last FGB meeting. The next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday 14 March 2018. He was pleased that the committee now had the benefit of a volunteer clerk.

[Fr Paul Bagott left the meeting at 6.22pm.]

7.5 Fundraising Working Party The vice chair reported that there was an LDBS fund for school trips, although the school had to demonstrate why each relevant pupil – individually – would benefit, which could be problematic. The headteacher suggested requesting targeted funding for pupils on the school trip to the children's author Michael Morpurgo's educational farm in Wales. To be discussed at the Governors' Awayday.

8. RECEIVE REPORT ON PTA ACTIVITY

Given that Sandra McGregor had apologised for an early departure, the chair brought this item forward. Sandra McGregor reported that the PTA had consulted teachers on classroom needs, and disbursed appropriate sums to them. She was researching the potential for up to £2k worth of funding from a £1bn pot for street parties to celebrate the forthcoming marriage of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle, possibly for a "street party" open to all, but within the school gates. Waitrose and Tesco had pledged to sponsor a (separate) barbecue. She would also approach a local estate agent. Parents had attended a PTA coffee morning.

Given that both Sandra McGregor and Sandra Smith-Gordon had apologised for early departures, a sensitive item was reported at this point which is confidentially minuted elsewhere as item 18.

[Sandra McGregor and Sandra Smith-Gordon left the meeting at 6.37pm.]

9. RECEIVE COMMITTEE AND OTHER REPORTS (2)

9.1 Rapid Improvement Group The chair reported that this group continued to meet on a regular basis to discuss governance, staff, data, finance and other issues. The input was helpful.

9.1 Chelsea Deanery Partnership The chair reported that this had not met since the last meeting of the FGB; the next meeting would take place shortly.

10. NOTE AVAILABLE TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE ABOVE COMMITTEES

10.1 Governors **NOTED** terms of reference for the Teaching and Learning Committee. Those for the Finance and Premises Committees had not yet been agreed.

10.2 The Fundraising Working Party, as an informal group, has no terms of reference.

11. RECEIVE REPORTS ON GOVERNOR ACTIVITY

11.1 Governors' Awayday The chair noted that this would take place from 2pm on Thursday 22 February at Clergy House. Agenda to include fundraising, lettings, parental engagement and roll. The headteacher suggested also reviewing the viability of the Nursery, following suspension of DfE subsidies, although there was a chance that changes in the funding formula could benefit the school.

11.2 Training The chair urged governors to sign up for training and alert Sandra Smith-Gordon, who is the link governor responsible for training, to any training undertaken.

12. RECEIVE REPORT ON PTA ACTIVITY

This had already been covered.

13. PLAN GOVERNORS' ANNUAL REPORT TO PARENTS

The chair reminded the vice chair that he had volunteered to write this. He agreed to bring a draft to the next meeting, to include a group photograph of governors.

14. REVIEW POLICIES AND OTHER DOCUMENTS

Governors **AGREED** the following policies and other documents:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Single Equality Policy
- Redundancy Procedures
- Managing Staff Sickness Absence Policy
- Health and Safety Policy.

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

General Data Protection Regulation The headteacher reported that she had attended training on the EU's GDPR, which would mean changes in data protection protocols for schools and the individuals who worked in them. LDBS would be happy to arrange training for governors and staff: to be discussed further at the forthcoming Finance and Premises Committee. Clerk to schedule on agenda.

Next scheduled meeting: Tuesday 27 March 2018 at 5pm

There being no further business in this part of the meeting, the chair thanked everyone for attending and closed this part of the meeting at 6.54pm. Confidential items followed.

Signed.....

27 March 2018

Carla Muñoz Slaughter

Chair, Governing Board of St Cuthbert with St Matthias CE Primary School

ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE ABOVE MINUTES

- Item 2.2** **Holly Williamson** to report on success or otherwise of approach to potential parent governor candidate.
- Item 2.3** **Headteacher** to report on results of health and safety audit of school's capacity with regard to fire hazard.
- Item 2.4** **Stephanie Barbir** to write up annual safeguarding report.
- Item 2.5** **Vice chair** and **headteacher** to discuss fundraising approaches to livery companies and local airlines.
- Item 2.7** **Fr Paul Bagott** to enquire about booking a 2018 Remembrance service at the Royal Hospital, Chelsea.
- Item 3.2.3** **Headteacher** to research the prospect of networking the school's whiteboards so they could be used to alert teachers to an incident.
- Item 3.2.4** **Clerk** to schedule a standing item on FGB agendas for the headteacher to report on forthcoming trips.
- Item 3.2.5** **Headteacher** to source historic security audit of the school; **chair** to raise its recommendations with RBKC.
- Item 3.3** **Chair** to draft clause for the school's operating guidelines on reciprocal arrangements with other members of the Chelsea Deanery Partnership regarding panels.
- Item 4.3.2** **Headteacher** to enquire about asbestos survey with LDBS.
- Item 10.1** **Clerk** to ensure terms of reference of the Finance and Premises Committees are agreed at its next meeting.
- Item 13** **Hamish Adourian** to bring draft of governors' annual report to parents to next FGB meeting; **clerk** to schedule.