

Minutes

Approved by the Governing Body

Meeting of the Full Governing Body (FGB) of Fowlmere Primary School

Wednesday 26th March 2025 - 6.15pm

In School

Present

Kym Rouse (KR), Head of School Phil Butterworth (PB), Co-Chair Hayley Woods (HW), Co-Chair Abi Clarke (AC)

Apologies for Absence

None

In attendance

Lisa White (LW), Clerk Anna Caroe (ACa), Prospective Governor Vanessa Cross (VC), Prospective Governor Wendy Whistler (WW), School Business Manager

No.	Item	Action
1.	Welcome and Apologies for Absence	
	PB welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked them to introduce themselves.	
	There were no apologies for absence.	
	It was noted that Anna Caroe and Vanessa Cross were attending this meeting as observers pending their appointments under Item 4 of the agenda.	
2.	Any Other Business	
	It was noted that there was no other business added to the agenda.	
3.	Declaration of Interests in relation to the Agenda It was noted that there were no declarations of interest in relation to the agenda.	
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Standing Items

4. Membership of the Governing Body / Governor Recruitment

Appointment of Co-opted Governors
Although brief introductions were made under Item 1 of the agenda, PB asked
VC and ACa to provide an overview of their backgrounds, which they did.

Following this, PB explained that one of the current challenges the Governing Body is facing is the ability to carry out governor monitoring during the day. Both ACa and VC confirmed that their work patterns will allow them to undertake this.

ACa then explained that she has 10 years of governance experience (and also of chairing) and although her intention is not to step up as Chair of Governors, given that PB and HW's current terms of office are due to end this academic year, she would be happy to provide support if necessary.

Following their introductions under Item 1 of the agenda, PB asked ACa and VC to temporarily leave the meeting while the Governing Body considered their applications.

It was noted that ACa and VC left the meeting at 6.27pm.

During the discussion that then took place, it was noted that the Governing Body unanimously approved the appointments of Anna Caroe and Vanessa Cross as Co-opted Governors.

It was then noted that ACa and VC re-joined the meeting at 6.29pm.

On their return, PB advised that the Governing Body had unanimously approved their appointments as Co-opted Governors.

The following actions were therefore agreed:

- o School to carry out DBS and Section 128 checks. ACTION
- School to set up school email addresses. ACTION
- Clerk to send relevant forms, documents and welcome email to new governors. ACTION

Vacancies

Following the above appointments, it was noted that 2 further vacancies for Co-opted Governors remain.

A brief discussion then took place regarding PB and HW moving across to this category to facilitate a Parent Governor election.

It was then noted that both PB and HW were happy to be appointed as Coopted Governors should the Governing Body agree, with HW advising that she is willing to stay on until the end of the academic year.

In addition, vacancies remain for a Local Authority (LA) Governor and a Staff Governor.

KR advised that a member of staff is interested in taking on the role, but that paperwork has not yet been finalised.

5. Minutes of last meeting and matters arising from the previous meetings

KR KR

LW

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Draft standard minutes and one set of Confidential minutes from the meeting held on 10th February 2025 were shared with governors for their review prior to the meeting and were approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chair after the meeting.

Matters Arising from previous meetings:

Item	Action	Who?	Status
1 May 2024	•		
11	Link governors to Smartlog once the school joins the Trust.	SW	No longer applicable.
9 July 2024			
4	Governors to contact local businesses, friends and acquaintances to ask for volunteers to take on the role of governor.	All	Action ongoing.
25 th Septembe	r 2024		
12	Arrange a SEND visit for Autumn 1.	HW	Action c/f
15	Ask SW to provide Prevent training for staff and governors.	KR	No longer applicable.
4 th December 2	2024		
13	Update the 2024/2025 governor monitoring schedule to reflect weekly, virtual visits and areas of focus.	РВ	Action c/f
10 th February 2	2025	•	
5	Check with the School Business Manager where the maternity cover position was advertised.	KR	Action complete.
7	Check with the School Business Manager whether the Pupil Premium funding allocation per pupil has changed.	KR	Action complete.
9	Complete relevant Capital Expenditure paperwork and share with governors for final approval	KR	Action n/a

In addition, more detailed discussion took place on the following: <u>Governor Recruitment</u>

It was noted that ACa offered to support the school with the upcoming Parent Governor election, with an agreed deadline of 4th April for seeking nominations.

Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)

KR advised that following the Cam Academy Trust's decision to pull academisation and the school's Special Educational Needs and Disability Co-ordinator (SENDCo) now on maternity leave, the LA will be providing SEND support to the school.

A governor asked:

Question:

Is that support part of the school improvement package or is there a charge?

Answer:

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There is an additional charge of £200 per day.

Governor Monitoring

It was noted that with the appointment of 2 new governors and therefore additional capacity, an updated Governing Monitoring schedule will be shared before the end of term.

In addition, it was noted that HW will undertake a wellbeing walkaround.

Pupil Premium funding

WW advised that the school will receive £1.5k per pupil eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) and £2.6k for Post Looked After Children, with funding for 7 FSM pupils at £10.6k next year.

Capital Expenditure

WW advised that the school has £8k from the previous year and £5k Capital income this year, adding that following the purchase of new furniture, £6k will therefore be carried forward to the 2025/2026 Budget to make a total of £11k.

WW then explained that a Condition Survey needs to be prioritised and shared with the LA to ask for any necessary works to be undertaken now the school is no longer joining the Trust.

KR advised however that she has already spoken to the LA and has been advised that the any works required will not be undertaken until September 2026 at the earliest because of the date Fowlmere re-joined the LA, however the Senior Advisor for the School Improvement Service has agreed to look at ways to bring this forward.

PB explained however that the action was related to ensure best value for money with the Governing Body having oversight of 3 quotes depending on the purchase value.

WW advised that the authorised value for a Head Teacher is usually £5k and at £4.8k this purchase was below that threshold, adding that as the school has used ESPO, the requirement to ensure best value for money has already been done.

Main Discussion Items

6. Head Teacher's Report

A Head Teacher's report was shared with governors for their review prior to the meeting and covered the following areas:

- Executive Summary
- > Admissions and Number on Roll
- Attendance
- Safeguarding
- Health and Safety
- Property, Compliance, Finance, and ICT
- Staffing
- Vulnerable Pupils
- Leadership and Governance
- Curriculum Promise
- Progress and Assessment
- Parents / Carers / Community

During the meeting, KR explained that since academisation was no longer on the table a lot has been put in place to help give clarity, alongside a lot of support from the Local Authority (LA).

A governor asked:

Question:

What visits have you had?

Answer:

I reached out to the LA and have had contact with our School Improvement Adviser, the Rapid Improvement Group (RIG) has been re-instated, and we will be having visits on Phonics and Early Reading and Maths.

I have also reached out to the Head Teacher at another local school regarding the Curriculum who has offered fortnightly meetings / support.

KR then explained that work is in progress to update the school website following receipt of the recent audit, with staff looking at the Curriculum pages.

ACa advised that the Governor page is still not compliant and offered to help as did WW, if necessary.

KR to ask school secretary to provide logins to ACa and WW. ACTION

KR then referred governors to the current Attendance rate of 96.6% which has increased slightly since the last meeting.

A governor asked:

Question:

Is our Number on Roll stable?

Answer:

Yes. There has been no change on admissions although we may have a child joining Year 2.

For next year, we have 13 first choice places for Reception.

Another governor asked:

Question:

Do you expect that we can replicate the same class structure next year?

Hopefully yes, but it will depend on our finances, so we can look at this then.

Going back to attendance, our Year 5 pupil absence is the most concerning at 93.8%. We have children with less than 90% attendance although not 10 sessions in a row, for various reasons including an operation and general illness.

Governors also asked:

Question:

Are you having to apply the school's Attendance Policy?

Answer

The policy applies when there are 10 missed sessions in a row, but I will start sending letters highlighting pupil's attendance.

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KR

Question:

Could there be an issue with data not pulling through as when I checked on My Child at School, there were some empty sessions?

Answer

That may be the case, so I will need to follow this up. It may also be because there are some paper registers.

Question:

Why are you using paper registers?

Answer:

This is because we have Supply teachers.

WW explained however that if the school uses regular Supply teachers, it is possible to give them access to Bromcom to take registers.

A brief discussion then took place during which governors challenged that if registers are not being kept up to date, this poses a safeguarding risk as a child could be missing.

KR then provided the following Safeguarding summary:

- > One open concern.
- > No child protection plans in place.
- > No child in need plans in place.
- > No fixed-term exclusions.
- No exclusions.
- No prejudiced-related incidents.

Governors asked:

Question:

There were previously concerns assigned to the Executive Head Teacher from the Trust, what has happened with them?

Answer:

They are now all closed.

Question:

Is there no social care involved with the child educated off site? They are still on roll so we should be monitoring this on MyConcern.

Answer:

I have not received anything on this, but I need to follow up as I found out from their Mum today that they absconded.

Question:

How confident are you in our Supply teachers' ability to report concerns? Do they have access to MyConcern?

Answer:

Yes, and they are both confident in using MyConcern.

I will also ensure that our new teacher will have the necessary training and access.

Question:

If a member of staff does not have access, are they aware of the process to report any concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and not the school office?

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Answer:

Yes.

Any Supply staff who we use have been in school before and know and understand the requirements. We also issue safeguarding leaflets even if they have taught in school before.

KR then advised that a LA Health and Safety visit has taken place with an audit scheduled for 3rd April.

Governors asked:

Question:

Were there any issues raised during the visit?

Answer

The Adviser was pleased with the changes we have made since the last visit and recognised the huge improvement with regards to tidiness. There were however a couple of items raised in the outside area, and these were addressed the day after the visit.

Question:

Is there a visit report and if so, can it be circulated to governors, along with other LA visit reports?

Answer

I have not received a visit report yet but yes, I can share this and other reports with governors.

Question:

Did the visit include a review of the work that is needed (valued at £100k)? Answer:

No.

At this point, WW explained that the full audit will cover any Health and Safety issues and dilapidations.

Question:

Do you need to do any work before the audit?

Answer:

Not so far.

Question:

What is the latest update with regards to the damage to the fence?

Answer

I am still waiting for the police.

Question:

Have you reported it to the insurance company? If you have a crime number, they can follow it up on the school's behalf.

Answer:

No.

It was noted that the discussion then moved to Finance.

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8. Budget Review

It was noted that this item was taken out of order.

WW shared a year-end report with governors during the meeting and explained that although there is a revenue balance of £29.5k, a proportion of that is Sports Premium funding and as such is ring-fenced income.

A governor asked:

Question:

Can that be clawed back?

Answer:

No, but we do need to look at using the funding next year.

There is also £6k of Capital funding to take forward into next financial year and we can use this to group spend as opposed to using the school's revenue.

Where there are large projects these should be supported by the LA, which is why the funding schools get is low.

The year-end report has been submitted to the LA, and they have accepted it.

Governors thanked WW for her hard work in ensuring the school has been able to set a balanced Budget this year.

WW explained however that with a falling roll, it is a challenge to balance the Budget, adding that if all 4 classes were full, this would equate to an additional £500k of funding. WW also explained that although there is a small surplus this year, this does not set the school up well for the coming year.

A governor asked:

Question:

What is our Published Admissions Number (PAN)?

Answer

17, so we need about 100 pupils on roll to break even and our maximum is 117.

KR then explained that her aim is to increase the numbers on roll to 100, adding that she is working hard to further develop links with local playgroups and nurseries.

A governor asked:

Question:

Do you invite local playgroups and nurseries to visit the school?

Answer:

Yes. They have been invited to our nativity performance and will also be invited to our end of year production.

A discussion then followed regarding how to increase pupil intake during which governors noted that there are however some negative comments on social media about the school and considered how to combat this. Governors recognised that creating links with the local community is important, with VC offering to hold a teddy bears picnic at the school for local playgroups and nurseries in order to promote the school.

It was noted that if this were to happen, VC declared an interest as she would be providing this via her business.

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Governors then noted that the wrapround care provision at the school is appealing to families but were also concerned that the lack of sports provision is an issue.

KR explained that the school has previously employed a sports coach, but they stopped because the number of attendees was too low. WW advised that it is possible to use the Sports Premium funding to cover the cost of extra-curricular sports clubs. KR then explained that she would also like to provide sports clubs during lunchtimes and WW advised the School Sports Partnership can support with this.

Governors asked:

Question:

Why did we not budget for Breakfast Club or Pupil Paid Meals?

Answer:

This is where we are using the Pupil Premium funding to cover the cost of children attending Breakfast and After School Club.

Traditionally we do not forecast income and expenditure against school meals as they should offset each other. However, this year the school has received less income than it has spent.

KR explained that this is because there are some outstanding payments where one half of a separated family has agreed to pay but has not.

WW added however that it would still be worth checking that the school is not paying more for school meals than what parents are being charged.

Question:

What is the additional £6.8k under E07?

Answer:

That is the LA changing the budget code. The overall budget was £17k and expenditure is £14k across two lines.

WW then provided the following overview of the draft 2025/2026 Budget Plan:

- A flat 3% increase for teachers and support staff across the board has been factored in, although it is not yet known whether additional funding will be received if the agreed pay award is higher.
- ➤ Support staff have however requested a flat rate of £3k but it is unlikely this will be agreed. There have been 2 consecutive years of flat rate increases which has meant support staff pay awards are becoming increasingly more difficult to fund.
- The Autumn Budget has meant an increase in National Insurance Contributions (NIC), and although the Government has promised additional funding, it is not yet known whether this will cover the full amount.
- A carry forward of £29.5k from 2024/2025.
- Staffing costs based on existing structure.
- Revenue forecast of -£87k by the end of the year.

WW explained that all other lines have been brought through from 2024/2025 and as such a detailed analysis of spend against each line is needing to identify any potential savings.

Due to the nature of the content of the discussion that then took place, the rest of this matter is covered by a separate Confidential minute.

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A governor asked:

Question:

What is the timeline with regards to next steps?

Answer.

Submission date for the approved Budget is 23rd May

Another governor asked:

Question:

How is Planning, Preparation and Assessment (PPA) time covered?

Answer

Our Higher-Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA) covers this for 2 teachers. As the other teachers are part-time, this is covered outside of their contract time.

Question:

Is it possible to employ an outside sports provider for example to provide PPA cover and therefore use the Sports Premium funding? Can we be creative and teach the core subjects in the morning and mix classes in the afternoons?

Answer:

That is something to explore.

KR then did a quick calculation of pupil numbers across the classes and explained that based on these, the only possible option would be to mix the Year 1, Year 2 and 3 Year classes as follows:

- > Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 = 31
- Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3 = 30
- Year 3, Year 4 and Year 5 = 34

Governors also asked:

Question:

Where we have a long-term supply teacher, is it possible to buy them out of the contract as that can often be more economical than paying Supply costs?

Yes, it is possible, and we have done this before.

Question:

What is happening with regards to the SENDCo training?

Answer

This has been paused whilst they are on maternity leave.

Question:

Do we need to recruit someone else to this role?

Answer:

The training did not cost us anything other than release time, but this is why we have contacted the LA for support, as there is no-one in school who could cover the role.

A further discussion then took place regarding informing staff of the current financial issue in case some are already considering resigning particularly in relation to the number of TAs employed.

A governor therefore asked if a breakdown of where TAs are being deployed and whether this is cost-effective could be provided and WW agreed to provide this for the next meeting.

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	Share a breakdown of where TAs are being deployed and whether this is cost-effective. ACTION.	ww
	There being no further comments or questions, PB thanked WW for her comprehensive Budget overview.	
6.	Head Teacher's Report (continued) It was noted that this item was taken out of order.	
	PB asked KR if there was any further update on her Head Teacher's report, who explained that her main concern is the current attainment and progress data, with Combined data dropping for the second year in a row.	
	KR added that she has raised this with the School Improvement Adviser, with this being an area of focus with staff to raise standards.	
	Governors asked: Question:	
	Is the number of pupils achieving a Good Level of Development (GLD) in Reception higher than previous years? Was their starting point higher? Answer:	
	Yes. This is an improvement of last year. Question:	
	Why is our Writing data much lower in general than Reading and Maths? Answer:	
	In response, KR explained some of the challenges currently being faced, the content of which is covered by a separate Confidential minute.	
7.	Academisation Update and Federation It was noted that this item was taken out of order.	
	It was noted that there was nothing further to add on this matter.	
9.	Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS) A draft 2024/2025 Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS) checklist was shared with governors for their review prior to the meeting.	
	It was noted that as there were still some references to the Trust, an amended version will be shared with governors for their review.	
	However, with a submission date of 31 st March, it was proposed and agreed that a 'Chair's Action' to approve the 2024/2025 Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS) will be taken on behalf of the Governing Body.	
	Governors then moved to Item 11 of the agenda.	
11.	Governance Action Plan It was noted that this item was taken out of order.	
	ACa referred governors to the draft Governance Action Plan that had been uploaded to Governor Hub and provided an overview of the priority areas of improvement, suggesting that governors could focus on these over the next 2 to 3 terms.	

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ACa added that it is important that the Action Plan is co-owned with all governors having an input, and asked governors to consider how to monitor what is going on in school and how the Governing Body can ensure the areas of improvement are worked on.

ACa explained however that in a small school, it is not necessarily effective to link governors to subjects with the need to ensure there is focus on the strategic objectives with a predictable pattern of monitoring.

Next ACa explained that with the Curriculum development work taking place in school, governors will need to monitor this once a decision has been made as to whether this is now or in a couple of terms' time.

KR stated that for her the work on the Curriculum has to take place now as previously elements of it were being brought in by the Trust on an ad-hoc basis.

ACa then advised that as Co-Chairs, PB and HW will need to report back on the progress made against the Action Plan at the Rapid Improvement Group (RIG) meetings and share evidence of bringing the school forward on its improvement journey.

ACa added however that governors do not have to follow the exact plan but that it would be good to have a core plan to work on.

Governors asked:

Question:

If the school buys into a Curriculum package like Kapow, do you think that might help staff morale as it provides a pathway?

Answer:

Yes, I think so. I have visited a school who is using it and seen the progress.

We are currently looking at Science, History and Geography as they are the most adhoc, and having looked at Kapow, I think it matches the topics we are following for the rest of the year and our 2-year Curriculum cycle.

Kapow schemes come with planning resources, slides, learning tasks, knowledge organisers, key vocabulary etc., and I think that is what staff need.

Question

Is that something that you have consulted staff on?

Answer

I have told them that I was considering the use of Kapow and that they can log in for a 14-day trial but unfortunately, most teachers did not do this.

I want them to come on this journey with me.

Question:

What is the plan for the next staff training day?

Answer

We will be looking at English (Reading and Writing planning), also working on Maths and Kapow.

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Question:

Are you able to invite someone from the school you have visited to the training day to help enthuse staff?

Answer:

I am trying to do this, but the dates do not align unfortunately.

Question:

Does the LA support teacher training?

Answer:

ACa explained that support would come from English and Maths Advisers as part of the School Improvement Package from the LA.

Question:

Are there any opportunities for staff to visit other schools to see good practice?

That is an initiative that I have set up with another local primary school as they are using Kapow, with an option for our staff to join their training.

It was noted that governors were happy with the Action Plan as a working document with ACa continuing to populate it.

A governor then asked whether it is possible to plan monitoring visits more flexibly than the agreed 7 days outlined in the policy and KR confirmed this is possible within reason.

A discussion then took place regarding ensuring statutory monitoring visits on Safeguarding and SEND are taking place, during which ACa explained that if the nominated Link Governor is not able to, other governors can undertake the visit.

The following visits were then arranged:

- ➤ Thursday 3rd April SEND (HW)
- Week commencing 31st March Safeguarding (AC)

In addition, it was noted that a Leadership Adviser Note of Visit on Safeguarding had been shared for the December FGB meeting, with ACa agreeing to check whether this can be used as part of the statutory Safeguarding monitoring.

Check whether the Leadership Adviser Note of Visit on Safeguarding can be used as part of the statutory Safeguarding monitoring. ACTION

ACa

10. Website Update

It was noted that this item was taken out of order.

It was also noted that a discussion regarding the school website took place under Item 6 of the agenda.

13. Update from Rapid Improvement Group (RIG) It was noted that this item was taken out of order.

PB shared the following feedback from the last RIG meeting with governors:

Thank you to KR, PB and HW for their honesty and transparency about where the school is and for their engagement which is much appreciated. A key focus now is to ensure that everyone is clear about their roles and responsibilities and that they are carrying these out effectively. All LA support will be

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considered to ensure that it is appropriate and will enable the school to address the current issues as rapidly as possible. It was noted that the next RIG meeting will take place on Tuesday 29th April at 10am. **Governor Monitoring and Evaluation** As noted under Matters arising, governor monitoring visits will be allocated according to the School Development Plan (SDP) objectives. ACa added however that with the planned focus on updating the Curriculum and purchase of new schemes, progress on this should also be monitored. ACa therefore suggested that presentations on the Curriculum could take place at FGB meetings as part of governor monitoring. PB advised that the Governing Body has already received a Maths report from the school's Maths Lead and a presentation from the SENDCo. ACa explained that as part of the monitoring of the Curriculum, governors need to look at how the school is choosing the Curriculum and how it is being adapted to meet the needs of the children, adding that presentations to the Governing Body would be an effective way of doing this. Governors therefore considered this and how to follow up on attainment data and it was proposed and agreed that PB and ACa would further discuss this and feedback to the Governing Body. PB and ACa to consider how to follow up on attainment data and how best to monitor the updated Curriculum and feedback to the Governing Body. ACTION PB/ACa 15. Governor Training It was noted that as a new governor, VC will be given access to the National Governance Association (NGA) and Governor Hub in order to undertake Induction and Safeguarding training. **Undertake Induction and Safeguarding training. ACTION** VC In addition, ACa recommended the NGA's webinar on Safeguarding for all governors. 16. Policies The following policies were shared with governors for their review prior to the meeting: Disciplinary Rules for All Employees Spring 2025 Early Career Teacher (ECT) Induction Policy Spring 2025 Fire Safety Policy Spring 2025 Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Model Publication Scheme Freedom of Information Policy Spring 2025 Grievance Procedure Spring 2025 Intimate Care Policy Spring 2025 Lettings Policy Spring 2025 Lone Worker Policy Spring 2025 New Staff Induction Policy Spring 2025 Online Safety Policy Spring 2025 Physical Intervention Policy Spring 2025 Relationships Education Policy Spring 2025 Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy – Cambridgeshire September 2023 School Uniform Policy Spring 2025

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Social, Emotional and Mental Health Policy Spring 2025

WW asked whether policies such as the Disciplinary Rules for All Employees Spring 2025 and Grievance Procedure Spring 2025 are based on model EPM policies and KR advised that all policies have been based on models from The School Bus.

WW therefore recommended that as EPM is the school's HR provider, all HR policies should be aligned with their model policies and personalised to the school.

A governor asked whether there are any key changes to the policies and KR explained that any changes are noted on the final page.

A discussion then took place regarding utilising the LA's Policy tracker, a copy of which was shared with WW during the meeting.

It was noted that as approval of the above policies is necessary to ensure the school remains compliant, a further review will take place for the April FGB meeting.

Add March FGB meeting policies to the April FGB meeting for further review. ACTION

LW

17. Dates and Times of Future Meetings

Meeting dates and times were confirmed as follows:

- Wednesday 30 April 2025 (Budget approval) at 6.15pm in person.
- Wednesday 9 July 2025

A brief discussion however took place regarding the time between the April meeting and the July meeting and whether it would be sensible to schedule an additional meeting between them.

A governor asked whether the Budget approval meeting can be held virtually, and WW explained that ultimately it depends on what the final Budget Plan is for next financial year, as if the school needs to apply for a deficit licence, this is more complex and as such, the meeting will need to take place in person.

It was noted however that a final decision regarding an additional meeting was not made.

Lastly, as noted under Item 4 of the agenda, HW and PB's current terms of office end this academic year.

HW therefore resigned from her current role as Parent Governor.

A governor then proposed, and it was agreed that HW be appointed as Co-opted Governor.

PB also resigned from his current role as Parent Governor.

A governor then proposed, and it was agreed that PB be appointed as Co-opted Governor.

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12.	Head Teacher Recruitment It was noted that this item was taken out of order	
	It was also noted that KR left the meeting at 8.50pm.	
	Due to the nature of the content of the discussion that then took place, this item is covered by a separate Confidential minute.	
	Routine Business	
18.	Any Other Business It was noted that this item was taken out of order.	
	There was no other business added to the agenda.	
	Close of Meeting There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.00pm.	

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