



## Swallowtail Federation of Church Schools

Minutes of a Meeting of the  
Governing Board of Swallowtail Federation of Church Schools  
12<sup>th</sup> July 2022, 16.30 at Sutton Infant School

Governing Board	Initials	Role	Present / Apologies / Absent
Rosie Booker	RB	Co-opted Governor	Present
Natalie Butcher	NB	Headteacher/Governor	Present
Angie Johnson	AJ	Foundation Governor	Present
Martin Petersen	MP	Co-opted Governor	Present
Linda Russell	LR	Foundation Governor	Apologies
Jacqui Sinkins	JS	Staff Governor	Present
Josie Upton	JU	Parent Governor	Apologies
Sheila Watts	SW	LA Governor/Chair of Governors	Present
<b>Also Present</b>			
Justine Petersen	JP	Clerk	Present

<b>1. Welcome &amp; opening prayer</b>	SW welcomed all present and thanked them for attending. The meeting opened with a moment of quiet reflection.
<b>2. Apologies &amp; absence</b>	Apologies were received and accepted from Josie Upton and Linda Russell.
<b>3. Declaration of Interests</b>	SW invited governors to declare any business or pecuniary interests specifically relating to items on the agenda or that they had not already declared. NB advised that her husband was no longer working for the Federation.
<b>4. Minutes of previous FGB meeting</b>	The minutes and confidential minutes of the meeting held on 24 <sup>th</sup> May 2022 were unanimously approved without amendment. SW will sign off electronically on Governorhub. The confidential minutes will be forwarded to SW. They will be signed and kept in school. <b>Action – Clerk to forward all confidential minutes since March 2020 to SW. SW to sign and store in school.</b>
<b>5. Matters arising</b>	GDPR walks were due to take place that morning for all three schools, but they were cancelled. They will be completed next week, and NB will attend if possible. SW has not had time to monitor equality and diversity. Action to carry forward. <b>Action – SW to monitor equality and diversity.</b> The Attendance Policy will be deferred until next term because national guidance will be amended in September. <b>Action – Attendance Policy to be added to next agenda.</b> All other actions were complete.
<b>6. Committee updates</b>	<b>Achievement &amp; Standards – 27<sup>th</sup> June 2022</b> Curriculum leads will continue to attend the meetings. This is useful for committee members but also for those governors who do not sit on the A&S Committee. The MFL and Music Lead was very informative and passionate about her subject areas, and she found attending the meeting beneficial.  <b>Resources &amp; Premises – 27<sup>th</sup> June 2022</b> <b>Approval of Minutes of Last Meeting.</b> The minutes of the meeting held on 27 <sup>th</sup> June were unanimously approved without amendment. SW will forward them to County as evidence for the themed audit actions that have been outstanding for some time. <b>Action – SW to forward 27<sup>th</sup> June R&amp;P minutes to County.</b>  SLT will work on the Cyber Security Themed Audit. Some will overlap with GDPR. It was agreed that AG and JW would continue with their GDPR walks next week, and cyber security would be considered in the autumn term.

	<p>The report for the Hickling school fund audit was uploaded to the meeting folder. The Clerk was asked to move this into the folder for the next meeting of the R&amp;P Committee.</p> <p><b>Action – Clerk to move Hickling school fund audit report into next R&amp;P meeting folder.</b></p> <p><b>Networking with Other Schools</b> The circus has been on the field at Catfield this week. Lessingham has been invited to use it for their circus skills, as they do not have suitable grounds.</p>
<p><b>7. Governing Board</b></p>	<p><b>Update on Membership and Recruitment Plan</b> The Governing Board has multiple vacancies. New vicars are in post in both benefices, and SW will make contact.</p> <p><b>Action – SW to contact new vicars re Board vacancies.</b> The parent vacancy will be publicised in the newsletter, including an invitation to talk to a serving parent governor. Targeted recruitment will be discussed with staff in the autumn term.</p> <p><b>Duplication of Business in FGB and A&amp;S Committee</b> NB had highlighted an issue whereby agendas would sometimes duplicate discussion, particularly attendance, data, Pupil Premium and the Federation Development Plan. This increases the workload on NB, particularly when meetings are close together and the data is unchanged.</p> <p>It was agreed that attendance would be removed from A&amp;S Committee agendas. NB would present attendance data at FGB meetings, and any unpicking would be carried through to the next A&amp;S meeting if needed.</p> <p><b>Action – Attendance to be removed as standing item from A&amp;S agendas.</b></p> <p>Statutory data will continue to be presented at FGB meetings. Termly and other data will be presented at A&amp;S meetings, and a member of the A&amp;S Committee would report back to the FGB.</p> <p>The A&amp;S Committee will unpick how PP children are performing in school. The FGB will analyse the overview in terms of what is being done for PP children and how the funding is being used.</p> <p>The FDP was added to the A&amp;S Committee agendas because Jo Nutbeam was supporting with monitoring, but she has been unable to attend meetings this year because of her commitments with Ofsted. It was agreed that the FGB would receive a summary of matters discussed in detail by the committees. It would examine progress made, and any additional actions would be fed back to the A&amp;S Committee.</p> <p>Safeguarding reporting will be each September in line with CPOMS.</p> <p>The Annual Schedule of Business will be amended and added to the September FGB agenda.</p> <p><b>Action – Annual Schedule of Business to be amended and added to next agenda.</b></p> <p><b>Stakeholder Engagement</b> The governor newsletter remains active. Pupil voice was taken in the spring and summer terms. The stakeholder engagement programme will continue next year.</p> <p><b>Governor Monitoring</b> LR’s monitoring reports on Forest Schools at Sutton, the Sutton RE health check and RE monitoring were circulated in advance of the meeting. All governors found them useful.</p> <p><b>Governor Training</b> SW reminded governors to ensure all training is added to their individual training logs. LR attended a webinar on working together to improve school attendance. The slides were shared via Governorhub. NB and JS find it difficult to keep their logs up to date, because they attend so much CPD. They should log any training that is relevant to governance. SW reminded governors of the need to complete 3 pieces of finance training this financial year.</p>
<p><b>8. Finance</b></p>	<p><b>Approval of Budget Revision 1</b> SW informed governors that there is a small deficit in year 3, but the County Finance Officer raised no concerns.</p>

Energy rates are having a significant impact.  
The budget is based on the worst-case scenario. Income is as accurate as possible.  
Numbers have dipped, but they are expected to increase in due course.

**Gov: How are fuel costs impacting on the budget?**

The worst-case scenario has been factored in, but increasing costs are having a significant impact. This is an issue for all schools.

**Gov: Have the expected increases been factored in?**

Yes.

The Federation will receive a small COVID recovery grant.

SW advised that the County audit team is recommending that schools create an order in Star accounts whenever they are aware of an expense, even if they do not yet know the value, and before the invoice is received.

**Gov: Is that to justify the amount allocated for the year?**

Yes, but it would involve a doubling up of work.

The County Finance Officer advised that this should not be shown in BCRs, because the purpose of the BCR is to show what has been spent against expected at that point in the year.

SW therefore queried the purpose of the recommendation, and there was no response given.

**Gov: How would this be viewed in an audit?**

It is a recommendation only, and it is not mandatory. The County Finance Officer stated that many schools have chosen not to do it.

Governors unanimously agreed not to adopt the recommendation noted above. It would create additional work and it could potentially lead to problems.

**Gov: Could it come back as a recommendation on an audit?**

It could, but the Board's decision could be justified. There are issues around workload, and the matter could be revisited and reviewed again in spring 1 before budget setting.

#### **Discussion Around Capital Spend**

NB presented quotations for various projects under consideration.

ICT:

Three quotations were received for three teacher laptops for the new posts, and desktops for the offices. These are needed because the leadership team has widened.

NB recommended the lowest quote be accepted. The specifications were the same.

Governors unanimously agreed to accept the lowest quotation subject to NB having a discussion around support and length of life, and she would accept a different quotation if prudent. Proposed by SW.

Office Space at Catfield:

Catfield has very limited office space. JS will be non-teaching from September, and there will be a non-teaching SENCo who will spend time at Catfield. There is no scope to expand the building, and NB has sought quotations for a log cabin. There is space behind the nest and a concrete base is already in place.

The cost of painting was removed from the quotation because grounds staff could do this for a lower cost.

Governors unanimously approved a maximum spend of £15k. This should also cover any furniture, flooring, painting and redecorating. An itemised invoice will be provided for the next meeting.

**Action – Itemised invoice for log cabin at Catfield to be brought to next meeting. Clerk to add to agenda.**

Door at Catfield:

There is still only one quotation for the door, and two others are being sought. An exit into an enclosed and safe outdoor space is needed, and the window will just be changed to a door. NPS has recommended aluminium as better value for money.

Governors agreed that the quotations would be approved via Governorhub. The existing quotations is acceptable, and it will therefore be the maximum. There will be an additional cost of decorating once the door is installed.

	<p>SW informed governors that there is enough capital available, and £29k is at risk of being clawed back unless spent this academic year. Part has already been allocated to the septic tank at Catfield.</p> <p>JS will consider the specifics of what is needed for the upgrade of pupil ICT at Catfield. She is keen to purchase new iPads and keyboards.</p>
<b>9. Headteacher Report</b>	<p>NB provided an update on pupil numbers. There is a dip, particularly at Hickling and Sutton, and staffing has been adjusted to reflect this.</p> <p>One reading re-mark has been requested at KS2. Many headteachers have reported poor marking and papers being lost.</p> <p>NB has contacted the LA for assistance regarding one matter. There is no clear path moving forward as yet, and SW is also working to address it.</p> <p><i>Confidential discussion.</i></p> <p><b>Update on Staff Wellbeing</b> NB has completed an analysis of staff wellbeing, and she hopes governors feel they now have a more inclusive picture. Any specific issues have been addressed. Discussion also took place at the last meeting of the R&amp;P Committee. It was agreed that governors would be in school early before FGB meetings to be available to staff.</p> <p>SW will write up her visit to the Nature Club. <b>Action – SW to write monitoring report on visit to Nature Club.</b></p> <p>Governors thanked NB for her report.</p>
<b>10. Curriculum Leader Reports</b>	<p>Governors found the reports useful, particularly those who do not sit on the A&amp;S Committee. The format, as recommended by VNET, was very clear. <b>Action – SW to thank curriculum leads for their reports.</b></p>
<b>11. Federation Development Plan</b>	<p>This year's plan will be finalised. The plans for 2021/22 and 2022/23 will be presented at the next FGB meeting.</p>
<b>12. Update/Action Linked to Governor Review</b>	<p>The only specific actions arising from the review for this academic year were around governor training and presence in the school. Governors have been into school when possible, but presence will be stronger next year unless the position with COVID changes.</p>
<b>13. Future of the Federation Moving Forward</b>	<p>The Governing Board will meet with representatives of the St Benet's Multi Academy Trust on 29<sup>th</sup> September.</p>
<b>14. Update from Working Party on Pre-School Provision on Sutton Site</b>	<p>The Pre-School is running and there are no concerns. <b>Gov: Is there any initial feedback?</b> Numbers are comparable to the Hickling and Catfield, and it is likely to become more established. It will have a positive impact on pupil numbers at Sutton moving forward. NB informed governors that the Federation should be receiving a grant from the LA. She is chasing this, but there have been no responses to her emails. This item would be incorporated into the Headteacher's Report going forward. <b>Action – Update on Sutton Pre-School working party to be removed from future agendas.</b></p>
<b>15. Policy Approval</b>	<p>The Attendance Policy was deferred until the next meeting because DfE guidance is changing.</p>
<b>16. Future dates of school events</b>	<p>Dates were listed in the Headteacher's Report.</p>
<b>17. Update on Leadership Restructure</b>	<p>The restructure is now considered complete, and it will be in place from September. The new Yr5/6 teacher has been into school regularly, and she already feels like part of the team. The new Lead Teacher at Hickling had planned to be in school tomorrow for a transition event, but he is unwell. He will try to visit before the end of term.</p> <p><i>Confidential discussion.</i></p>
<b>18. AOB</b>	<p>None.</p>

<b>19. Future Meetings</b>	<p><b>Agree Meeting Calendar for Next Academic Year</b> The calendar was agreed subject to minor amendments to meeting locations. It was agreed that FGB meetings would continue to rotate around the schools.</p> <p><b>Decision on Whether to Continue Remotely or In Person</b> It was agreed that FGB meetings would take place in schools. Committees would take place via Zoom.</p> <p><b>Date and Time of Next Meeting</b> Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> September 2022, 16:30.</p>
<b>20. Summary Statement</b>	<p>Governors are looking forward to September, and they are keen to see the restructure take effect. The Board makes decisions quickly and efficiently, and governors are strategic. Content is covered, and actions are devised and followed up appropriately.</p>
<b>21. Closing Moment with Prayer</b>	<p>The meeting ended with a moment of quiet reflection.</p>

With no further business the meeting finished at 18:02

Signed by the Chair of Governors as a true record of the meeting:

Date:

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