

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FULL GOVERNING BODY (FGB) OF STEEPLE  
MORDEN CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL  
HELD AT THE SCHOOL ON 6 DECEMBER AT 7PM**

**Governors Present:** Mark Arnold (Chair), Gabrielle Edwards, Tracey How (Headteacher), Debbie Littlefair, Ann Lynn, George Lynn, Gill McGuire, Helen Ogilvie, Catherine Seward, Leanne Holt.

**Also in Attendance:** Jacquie Watts (Clerk).

*The meeting was quorate.*

*(NB: Governor Challenge, Questions and Monitoring are highlighted in bold)*

Action By:

1.	<p><b>Apologies for Absence</b></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> apologies for absence had been received from Vicky Hutter, Lucy Nightingale (Associate) and Jan Saunders (Associate).</p> <p><b>AGREED:</b> to accept all apologies tendered.</p>	
2.	<p><b>Declarations of Interest</b></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> there were no declarations in relation to items on the agenda.</p>	
3.	<p><b>Governor Appointments and Resignations</b></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> the vacancy for a Foundation (ex-officio) governor as listed on the agenda. The joint parishes had been unable to appoint to the position of Minister and would be re-advertising the post in due course.</p> <p><b>NOTED: a governor advised that Annie Bowen had resigned as an Associate Governor for personal reasons.</b> The Clerk asked if all apologies for absence and resignations could be notified to her as soon as possible and in advance of a meeting.</p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> Gillian McGuire and Gabrielle Edwards had expected to stand down as governors once a new Headteacher had been appointed. As the post was to be re-advertised, they were willing to continue serving as governors until the summer.</p> <p><b>AGREED:</b> to re-appoint/ continue the terms of office for Gillian McGuire and Gabrielle Edwards from 30/12/23 to 31/8/24.</p>	
4.	<p><b>Minutes of Last Meetings: 4<sup>th</sup> October, 20<sup>th</sup> October and 8<sup>th</sup> November 2023</b></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> the minutes of the full governing body meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> October 2023 and extraordinary governing body meetings held on 20<sup>th</sup> October and 8<sup>th</sup> November 2023 as uploaded to GovernorHub with the agenda.</p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> the following MATTERS ARISING from 4 OCTOBER 2023:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Declarations of Interest (min. 2 refers) – a governor expressed concern that she had been asked to complete her annual declaration when she had already completed it by the start of the meeting.</b> The Clerk pointed out that, as she had no way of checking for declarations that close to a</li> </ul>	

	<p>meeting given poor internet connection at the school, the minute read, “if they had not already done so, the following governors would make their declarations of interest via GovernorHub as soon as possible...” All governor declarations had since been received.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>GB Standing Orders (min. 6 refers)</b> – the clerk had amended and uploaded the Standing Orders. Skills Audit was on the agenda. Ann Lynn had sent the Governor Welcome Letter to all new governors and associates.</li> <li>• <b>GB Code of Conduct (min. 7 refers)</b> – governors had confirmed acceptance of the Code of Conduct and the Clerk had passed a copy of the Code to the Chair for signature.</li> <li>• <b>Committee Structure etc. (min. 8 refers)</b> – the matter was on the agenda. The Curriculum Committee had yet to approve its 23/24 Terms of Reference.</li> <li>• <b>Governor Annual Attendance (min. 9 refers)</b> - the annual record had been amended.</li> <li>• <b>Safeguarding (min. 12 refers)</b> – all governors had made their 23/24 KCSiE declarations. Governor training was on the agenda.</li> <li>• <b>Recruitment of New Headteacher (min.19 refers)</b> – Sarah Conant had not wished to serve on the panel, but to assist it as a Diocesan adviser.</li> </ul> <p><b>NOTED:</b> the following MATTERS ARISING from 20 OCTOBER 2023:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Update of Recruitment for Headteacher (min. 4 refers)</b> – there was a typo: MH should be MA.</li> </ul> <p><b>AGREED:</b> the minutes of the previous meetings held on 4 October, 20 October and 8 November as true and correct records, subject to the amendment of the typo in the minutes of 20 October. The Chair signed the minutes at the meeting. They were passed to the school for safekeeping and publication on the school website.</p>	Curric. Cttee
5.	<p><b>Minutes of Meetings of Resources Committee – 11<sup>th</sup> October and 15<sup>th</sup> November 2023</b></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> the minutes of the two meetings as uploaded to GovernorHub with the agenda. The Committee Chair provided an oral commentary.</p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> at the time of the 11/10/23 meeting the new LA finance system was still not operational. By 15/11/223 figures were available indicating a deficit of £29k. Accruals might, however, be missing, leading to a deficit of over £30k. The school would therefore need to apply for a licence from the LA to continue with a deficit for the remainder of the financial year, meaning the school would have to commit to resolving the deficit within three years. There would be knock-on effects for the following financial years. Ray Byford of the LA would provide assistance. It was expected that most schools in CCC would be in deficit by the following year as all had been advised to budget for a smaller pay award than had been awarded nationally. Salary costs were deemed to be the main reason for the overspend. About 85% of the budget was staff costs. When benchmarking itself against other schools, Steeple Morden was top heavy in terms of leadership salaries. The school had a positive track record of managing its budget and had not had a deficit for seven years. <b>Governors discussed local demographics that indicated it was unlikely the school would be able to grow its way out of its current position in the near future.</b></p>	

	<p><b>NOTED:</b> the issue of academy status was raised. The meeting discussed perceived pros and cons and the school's historic response to academisation. Governors felt they did not have sufficient information to have an informed view of the possibilities either for or against, or any potential benefits for the school.</p> <p><b>AGREED:</b> all governors would research Academy status for further discussion at the March meeting of the governing body on 21/3/24.</p>	<p>All/ Clerk</p>
6.	<p><b>Minutes of Meeting of Curriculum Committee – 23rd November 2023</b></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> the minutes of the meeting as uploaded to GovernorHub the day before the FGB meeting. The previous Committee Chair provided an oral commentary.</p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> Debbie Littlefair was now Chair and Helen Ogilvie was Vice Chair. The meeting had been focussed on SEND. The school had a higher proportion than previously of children with SEND needs. Year 3 had a particularly high level of EHCPs with 54% of children on the SEND register. Many pupils lived in Hertfordshire and cross-county communications were an issue. Hertfordshire referrals took longer than those in Cambridgeshire. With the resignation of Annie Bowen, a second Safeguarding Link Governor was now sought.</p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> governors queried the scale of resource required to support pupils with SEND needs? The school felt more 1:1 TAs would be helpful, but also more paediatric appointments and specialist teachers to visit the school to offer advice. There appeared to be a shortage of both. The LA's South Cambridgeshire manager was looking into issues relating to the HCC/CCC split.</p>	
7.	<p><b>GB Skills Audit</b></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> the Chair would circulate the Skills Audit questionnaire for all governors to complete over the Christmas holidays. Results would be shared at the February FGB meeting. The Clerk highlighted that results would be useful in terms of planning governor training and recruitment.</p>	<p>MA/ Clerk</p>
8	<p><b>Committee Structure and Governor Appointments to Committees and Link Roles.</b></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> the proposed committee and link governor structure uploaded to GovernorHub by the Chair. Annie Bowen would now need to be removed from the list. Vicky Hutter would need to be starred as a governor who was also a parent. Gabrielle Edwards was content to sit on the appeals panel. Leanne Holt felt unready to serve as Vice Chair of a committee. Debbie Littlefair was willing to take on the Care Experienced Link Governor role. The meeting discussed SEND and PP and the link between the two, also the benefits of having a second Safeguarding Link Governor. The Clerk advised the latter was best practice, but not a requirement. The possibility of appointing more Associate Governors to fill key roles was raised.</p> <p><b>AGREED:</b> the Chair would amend the proposals and upload a revised version of the list for approval.</p>	<p>Chair</p>

9.	<p><b>Correspondence</b></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> no correspondence had been received.</p>	
10.	<p><b>Initial OFSTED feedback</b></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> the limited update provided by Ann Lynn to all governors following the recent OFSTED inspection was all that could be discussed at this stage. The Head stressed the confidentiality of the process, with no information to be available in the public domain until after the OFSTED report was published. OFSTED would provide a draft report for the Head to fact-check. Once she had fed back any comments and the report had been finalised, a timescale for publication would be clarified. Any breach of confidentiality before publication could result in the school being re-inspected.</p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> governors commented that some pupils had said the inspectors were pleasant. Some governors had not felt the experience to be as positive.</p>	
11.	<p><b>Headteacher's Report</b></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> the report uploaded to GovernorHub post-OFSTED. <b>A governor queried the colour coding in the report?</b> This was clarified. <b>Governors found the report to be informative and helpful.</b></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> the list of staff vacancies had omitted the post of Finance and HR Manager. Interviews for a cleaner and maternity cover were scheduled to take place the following week. There had been no applicants for the teaching post and the Head was considering other options. Most schools in the County were experiencing recruitment problems.</p> <p><b>NOTED: Governors asked if the level of persistent absence was high?</b> The Head felt it was skewed by seasonal illnesses and the situation would be clearer in the Spring Term. The figures were, however, below national average.</p> <p><b>NOTED: Governors raised the issue of exclusions.</b> Pupils who had recently been excluded tended to have complex needs. <b>The level of support provided to these children was discussed.</b></p>	
12.	<p><b>Safeguarding</b></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> the Safeguarding link governor reported that the safeguarding meeting had had to be postponed. She thanked governors who had undertaken safeguarding and prevent training and strongly recommended all governors should undertake safeguarding training. She would be making a start on the new safeguarding audit document in the new term. Safeguarding lead arrangements at the school for the new term were discussed.</p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> OFSTED had reviewed the SCR as part of the inspection process.</p>	
13.	<p><b>School Development Plan</b></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> staff had discussed and reviewed the document that day. An update would be shared with governors in February.</p>	

14.	<p><b>Rapid Improvement Group</b></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> the Chair reported the school had been invited to join a RIG. It provided co-ordinated support to the school and governors and was attended by the Head, Chair and Vice Chair. The school had obtained a small amount of funding via the RIG to enable staff to be released to share good practice. The group was meeting again in January. The Headteacher was finding it supportive and commented that there was an advantage to having all school advisers meeting together at one time with the school.</p>	
15.	<p><b>Policies</b></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> the list of policies recorded on the agenda and uploaded to GovernorHub for approval.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Behaviour Policy - <b>governors queried the acronym IRMP?</b> Individual Risk Management Plan, known in the school as an RMP, Risk Management Plan.</li> </ul> <p><b>AGREED:</b> the Behaviour Policy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disciplinary Procedure Relating to Staff Misconduct – based on the EPM model policy.</li> </ul> <p><b>AGREED:</b> the Disciplinary Procedure Relating to Staff Misconduct.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grievance Procedure – based on the EPM model policy.</li> </ul> <p><b>AGREED:</b> the Grievance Procedure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online Safety Policy – changes to the policy had been discussed and agreed at the Curriculum Committee. <b>Appendix 2 to the policy, Staff and Governors ICT agreement, was queried.</b></li> </ul> <p><b>AGREED:</b> all governors would email the Head to indicate they had read, accepted and would adhere to the Staff and Governors ICT agreement.</p> <p><b>AGREED:</b> the Online Safety Policy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SEND Policy – discussed at Curriculum Committee.</li> </ul> <p><b>AGREED:</b> the SEND Policy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internal Financial Measures – discussed at Resources Committee.</li> </ul> <p><b>AGREED:</b> the Internal Financial Measures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scheme of Financial Delegation – discussed at Resources Committee.</li> </ul> <p><b>AGREED:</b> the Scheme of Financial Delegation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pay Policy - Appendix G related to the Headteacher’s salary.</li> </ul> <p><b>AGREED:</b> the Pay Policy excluding Appendix G. Appendix G would be</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>All</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>HT Recruit ment</b></p>

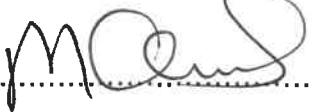
	considered at the next meeting following consideration by the Recruitment Panel and a recommendation being made to the Pay Panel for referral and final approval by the FGB.	Panel/ Pay Panel/ Clerk
16.	<p><b>Health and Safety</b></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> Lucy Nightingale was planning to undertake a Health and Safety visit soon. The school reported there had been no significant health and safety incidents.</p>	
17.	<p><b>Governor Training and Briefings</b></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> a number of safeguarding training certificates had been received. Following a query from governors, it was noted that Ann Lynn was scheduled to attend the Spring Term briefing. GovernorHub could be interrogated to identify training undertaken by individual governors, but it was helpful if governors could advise Ann Lynn of planned training and also training undertaken. Guidance for downloading training certificates was in the GovernorHub folder.</p> <p><i>Catherine Seward left the meeting at this point.</i></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> Safer Recruitment Training was recommended for all governors.</p>	AL  All
18.	<p><b>Governor Monitoring and Visits.</b></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> monitoring visits planned by individual governors including PSHE, History, Music, Reading, IT and Online Safety. The meeting discussed the role of the Smarties link governors. As Smarties Vice Chair, Vicky Hutter would be more immersed in the link than the second link governor, who had a role in the event of potential conflicts of interest.</p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> the seasonal opportunity to attend school events over the next couple of weeks. Governors should liaise with Ann Lynn, who would send the school a list of visitors</p>	AL
19.	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> the following matters were raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Father Christmas</b> – the school was hoping for a visit by Father Christmas this year.</li> </ul> <p><b>AGREED:</b> the Chair would facilitate a visit. George Lynn would be reserve. A visit around 18/19 December was anticipated, but the Chair would confirm arrangements with the Headteacher.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The Pupil Premium Statement</b> – was available on the school website. A governor asked how frequently it was updated? Annually by the Curriculum Committee</li> <li>• <b>Interim Diocesan Director of Education</b> – as previously noted, Sarah Conant was now Interim Diocesan Director of Education following the</li> </ul>	MA/ TH

	departure of Andrew Read.	
20.	<p><b>Headteacher Appointment Update</b></p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> the post would be re-advertised. The Recruitment panel had received conflicting advice regarding the timing of the advertisement in terms of pre or post Christmas. Previous applicant responses were briefly discussed. The advertised salary was considered to be low. Advertisement media were discussed, including the high cost of advertising in the TES. The benefit of highlighting that the school had undergone an OFSTED inspection in November 2023 was raised. The panel was hoping to hold interviews in early February as a panel member was on holiday after that time.</p>	
21.	<p><b>Date and Time of Next Meeting and Meeting Venue</b></p> <p><b>AGREED:</b> the date and time of the next meeting as Wednesday, 7<sup>th</sup> February 2024 at 7pm at the school.</p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> further possibilities for a formal farewell to the two previous Co-Chairs, as it had not taken place prior to the start of the meeting as planned.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>The meeting finished at approximately 21:20</b></p>	

Drafted by: Jacquie Watts  
Clerk To The Governors  
8<sup>th</sup> December 2023

Approved by the Full Governing Body on:

Date: ..... 7/02/2024 .....

Signature (Chair): .....  .....