



**ST ALBAN'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL  
GOVERNING BOARD**

*Love one another as I have loved you – John 15:12*

**MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL MEETING  
OF THE GOVERNING BOARD**

**26 JUNE 2023 at 1900 hours**

**PART ONE**

**ATTENDANCE**

Name	Category	Term ends	Present	Absent
John McDonald	Headteacher	Ex-officio	P	
Charles Donnelly	Foundation	31/08/2026	P	
Kevin Doogan	Foundation	31/08/2026	P	
Jill Formston	Foundation	31/08/2026	P	
Brigid Gribbin-Bartlett	Foundation	31/08/2025		A
Peter Matthews	Foundation	31/08/2025		A
Catherine Moor	Foundation	31/08/2025	P	
Father Ramesh	Foundation	31/08/2026	P	
Vacancy	Foundation			
Colette Haig	Staff	31/08/2024	P	
Carmen Davies	Parent	31/08/2026	P	
Bridget Pullen	Parent	31/08/2026	P	
Teresa Marnell	Co-opted	31/08/2023	P	
Lorraine Adamson	LA	31/08/2026	P	
<b><u>In attendance:</u> Eileen Coyle, Clerk to Governors</b>				

## KEVIN DOOGAN in the CHAIR

*The Chair invited the Governors to join in a prayer to St Alban.*

### 1 PRELIMINARIES

**1.1 WELCOME:** The Chair welcomed everyone to the virtual meeting of the Governing Board for the Summer term 2023.

**1.2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/ABSENTEES:** Peter Matthews had apologised for absence to enable him to fulfil a pre-arranged commitment to the Diocese.

The absence of Brigid Gribbin-Bartlett was noted.

**1.3 THE QUORUM:** The quorum requirement of seven governors had been met.

**1.4 CONFIDENTIALITY.** The Chair reminded the Governors of the need to maintain confidentiality on all matters discussed this evening.

**1.5 MEMBERSHIP:** The long standing vacancy of Foundation Governor remained unfilled.

The term of office of the Co-opted Governor was due to expire on 31 August 2023.

#### **RESOLVED:**

- i. **with the agreement of Father Ramesh, an approach to be made to parishioners with a view to filling the vacancy for Foundation Governor;**
- ii. **the situation concerning the vacancy for Foundation Governor to be kept under review;**
- iii. **to co-opt Teresa Marnell to the Governing Board for a further period.**

**1.6 GOVERNORS' SKILLS AUDIT:** The Headteacher had issued the Governors with a skills audit proforma for completion and return.

He thanked those Governors who had returned the completed proforma, and invited anyone with a query to contact him.

**1.7 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS/RELATIONSHIPS:** No changes were notified to the declarations of interest completed in Autumn 2022.

The Chair invited the Governors to declare any personal interests on the agenda as the meeting proceeded.

### 2 MINUTES

**2.1 MINUTES OF THE GOVERNORS' MEETING ON 27 MARCH 2023:** The Headteacher displayed the minutes on screen.

The Chair invited the Governors to look at the minutes and advise him if there was any disagreement or matters arising.

**PROPOSED by the Chair, SECONDED by Cath Moor, and**

**RESOLVED: To confirm that the minutes of the Governors' meeting on 27 March 2023 are a true and accurate account of the meeting.**

### **3 MATTERS ARISING:**

The Headteacher reported -

**3.1 PASTORAL/SUPPORT WORKER:** Colette Haig had been appointed to the post – she is trusted by the parents and is doing an excellent job.

**3.2 HEALTH & SAFETY.** CLEAPPS training had been booked for next year.

**3.3 PHONICS:** At 77%, Phonics is down from last year, but is still a very good outcome, cohort-wise. The problems with behaviour had been resolved.

**3.4 HALL FLOOR:** A new floor had been laid, but there were some snagging issues which included gaps in the floor, and a sealant had not been applied; thus allowing water to sink in, potentially causing warping. Part-payment of the invoice had been withheld pending attention to the floor.

**3.5 GOVERNORS' DAY:** There was no discussion on this agenda item.

**3.6 LINK GOVERNOR VISITS:** The nominated Link Governors had visited the three priority subjects for 2023, viz, History, Mathematics [including a learning walk], and Geography.

The Chair confirmed that he was satisfied that all the actions identified in the minutes had been addressed.

### **4 MINUTES – GOVERNORS' COMMITTEES**

**4.1 STANDARDS COMMITTEE: 6 MAY 2023:** The Headteacher showed the minutes on the screen.

He referred to pre-meeting presentations on Geography and SEND, adding that since then Lorraine Adamson, the nominated Governor for Geography had met with the lead teacher. Lorraine had submitted a comprehensive report on her visit which included a series of questions for response by senior leaders.

Responding to Lorraine Adamson's further comments at the meeting, the Headteacher replied, '*We might revise it to improve it. What we have noticed in*

*terms of planning is that we have been over-ambitious at times – we expected too much from the children and the teachers. In terms of the questions, they were good questions. We are looking at the question about an exchange group, autonomy and trust, parents' views and pupil feedback'.*

The Headteacher continued that he appreciated the questions which were very good. He thanked Lorraine Adamson for her report and the thoroughness of her approach, which was very helpful.

Jill Formston stated that she had been really impressed by what she had seen during her visit. The Deputy Headteacher had done a lot of work. If she pays a further visit she would like to speak to the children. She could see where the school wants to get to and it is clear that everything is moving forward. She added, *'I very much enjoyed my visit'.*

Dialogue between the Headteacher and Jill Formston continued.

No further questions were raised on the minutes of the Standards Committee.

**4.2 ASSETS COMMITTEE: 19 JUNE 2023:** The Headteacher displayed the minutes on the screen.

The Chair invited the Headteacher to highlight areas of note.

The Headteacher replied that the main issue was the budgetary demands on the school caused by falling rolls.

Thirty-two children would be joining Reception in September. This reduced number reflects the falling roll situation being experienced in primary schools across Wirral and beyond.

He quoted from the calculations under 'Budget Outturn' in the Assets minutes, viz –

The financial data showed that in 2022/23, the school held £290,150 in reserve. This amount had reduced to £145,351 in order to set a balanced budget for 2023/24; thus creating a predicted CREDIT of £48,248 in 2025/26, an amount that would enable a balanced budget to be created in 2024/25. The calculations showed that an estimated DEFICIT of £127,529 would be created in 2025/26, increasing to a DEFICIT of £390,954 in 2026/27. The predictions indicated the need to manage the budget really carefully.

The main factor was in terms of looking forward, being really 'tight' with the budget and looking at reductions to save money and avoiding compulsory redundancies. Some teachers are employed on fixed term contracts, thus giving some flexibility.

There was consternation amongst the parents, some of whom would prefer a two-form entry. Two meetings with the parents have been arranged this week to allay those concerns, and to support the parents. The parents who attended the first meeting this morning had gone away quite happy and reassured. A lot has to do with trust and being open and transparent about the reasons and showing that the school is skilled and professional in the way it handles these matters.

The Chair stated that being open and upfront gives confidence that it will be managed professionally.

The Headteacher continued that the reason some parents had chosen this school for their child because it has a two-form entry. The staff have worked incredibly hard in getting the right children into the right class; it has nothing to do with lower ability.

The Chair advised that it's about being open and honest. The Headteacher has to manage the budget and he has plans in place that will achieve that. He congratulated the Headteacher on his efforts.

**4.3 BUILDING MAINTENANCE: PLANNED WORKS:** The Headteacher confirmed that the contractor would be returning the summer break to address the issues with the hall floor. He suggested that it would be useful if Lorraine Adamson attended to look at the work on the floor when completed, and confirm she is happy with it.

Lorraine gave a commitment to contact the site manager directly to arrange a visit.

Stage 2 of work on the roof was due to take place during the summer break.

The Chair thanked the Headteacher for the update.

## 5 REPORTS

**5.1 HEADTEACHER'S REPORT: SUMMER TERM 2023:** The Chair thanked the Headteacher for sending out his report. He hoped that the Governors had had a chance to look at it, and invited questions.

No questions were forthcoming.

**5.2 DIOCESAN BRIEFING:** The Chair reported that, together with the Headteacher, he had been due to attend an Academy strategy meeting for schools who are looking to join the Holy Family Mat, but the meeting has been postponed to 5 October.

**5.3 DBS:** The Headteacher informed the Governors of a proposal to engage with a 'live' update service for DBS checks, which would mean that DBS checks would be consistently 'live'.

**5.4 GOVERNOR TRAINING ATTENDED:** Lorraine Adamson reported on attendance at a meeting of Wirral Governors' Forum when she had delivered a session on Health & Safety. The session included updates on Safeguarding and on the appointment of Headteachers. She offered to share the handouts received with the Governors.

No further reports on governor training were received.

The Chair advised that a training session on '*Shaping Governors*' had been postponed until September. Charles Donnelly explained that it had to be linked with the business meeting.

**5.5 ATTENDANCE 360 CHECKLIST.** A comprehensive checklist had been provided on a visit by Wirral Attendance Service Officers on Tuesday, 22 November 2022.

The Headteacher stated that the contents were a credit to Colette Haig and to those who work with her.

He continued that Attendance had 'dipped' in this school. He offered to share the DfE dashboard which gives 'live' data on attendance for the previous two weeks. Although this school is out performing other local schools, his ambition is for attendance to be better than it currently is.

He drew attention to 'live' information on the DfE website which shows in 'real' time where this school sits compared to other schools and quoted extracts from the statistics as they related to this school.

Colette Haig described the strategies and practices in place to improve attendance. These included home visits, detailed checking when parents report a child is ill when the indications suggest that the family is out of the country on holiday, talking to other attendance officers and liaising in with senior schools. She added that the next regular safeguarding/attendance meeting had been scheduled for Friday afternoon.

The Headteacher continued that this school works with the Holy Family MAT. The staff at St Mary's College work extremely hard to ensure that children are in school when they should be. They are building up a team, which includes Colette Haig, because they believe that attendance is everyone's responsibility, not just one or two people's responsibility. Colette needs to be supported by a few TAs in taking a targeted approach to attendance.

The Chair stated: **Well done on that!**

## **6 CHAIR'S ACTION/Correspondence received by the Chair**

The Chair reported that a matter had been dealt with according to the policy. No other correspondence had been received.

He reported his involvement in the appointment process from shortlisting to appointment. He had been pleased with the quality of the applicants and the appointments made, which he was confident would be beneficial to the school.

**CLERKING GOING FORWARD, PARTICULARLY WITH THE HOLY FAMILY MAT.** The Headteacher reported that the current clerk wished to reduce her workload and accordingly he was in the process of identifying another clerk.

At her last meeting, the Headteacher took the opportunity to thank the clerk for doing a sterling job. The Chair endorsed the sentiments.

## **7 DATE OF NEXT MEETING.**

The Chair confirmed that the next meeting would be the Business meeting, which would take place on Monday. 18 September 2023.

## **8 ANY OTHER BUSINESS.** There was no further business in part one of the meeting.

*The members of staff withdrew.*

*The meeting continued in closed session.*