



## Extra Full Governing Body Meeting Minutes The Federation of Church Schools of Shalfleet and Yarmouth

<b>Date and time</b>	Monday, 13 January 2020, 16.30hrs to 20.30hrs
<b>Venue</b>	Private residence
<b>Governors</b>	<b>Mrs Carla Bradshaw (LA Governor)</b> <b>Mrs Lizzie Grainger (Headteacher)</b> <b>Mrs Debs Downer (Co-opted Governor)</b> <b>Mr Stephen Holland (Co-opted Governor)</b> <b>Mrs Laura Homes (Parent Governor)</b> <b>Mrs Tina Griffiths (Foundation Governor)</b> <b>Mrs Caroline Weeks (Foundation Governor)</b> <b>Mrs Sarah Woodburn (Co-opted Governor)</b> <b>Mrs Sylvia Smith (Staff Governor)</b>
<b>Quorum</b>	The meeting is quorate, attended by 9 Governors. A quorum is 6 Governors.
<b>Attendees</b>	Mrs Krista Bratton (invited on behalf of Yarmouth parent community) Mrs Sheila Caws (Clerk)
<b>Vacancies</b>	2 Foundation Governors, 1 parent governor
<b>Key</b>	<u>Challenge</u> Action, Decision, Support, Ring-fenced, FDP link

**Distribution:** All  
The meeting commenced at 4.30pm with a prayer led by Mrs Grainger.

### 1.18 Apologies

- Apologies are received and approved for Mrs Leisa Potter and Mr Clive Todd

### 1.19 Declarations of interests on items forming the agenda

- None.

### 1.20 Relocation of Yarmouth CE Primary School

The meeting was convened to make a final decision with regard to the relocation of Yarmouth CE Primary School to Freshwater as a result of the Local Authority's decision to close All Saints CE Primary School from 1 September 2020.

The Governing Body's consultation which had been due to close on 16 December 2019 had been extended to Friday, 10 January 2020 to offer the community extended time to give their views and allow the governing body to carefully consider all options. In particular in Mid-December the question why Shalfleet CE Primary School was not considered for the move became more prominent and the option of Federation between Shalfleet, Yarmouth and All Saints was re-tabled. The Governors also took the opportunity to clarify the position of the Local Authority and Diocese on these and other matters to ensure a full picture was available for this meeting.

It was discussed that during the latter stages of the consultation it was brought to the Governors' attention that Cllr Brading had apparently written a letter to say that 'Governors approached the LA to move the school; they were not directed....'. Governors discussed this and confirmed they had

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not seen any physical evidence of this alleged letter and even if it does exist, the governors are clear that they did not make the approach to the LA. The LA approached the Governors in the first instance in April 2019 which resulted in the LA's second informal consultation. However the LA did not (and cannot) "direct" the governors to move the school.

Prior to going into the detailed discussion, the Chair reminded the Governing Body of their strategic role and duty to the school, the children and the staff. In this process all stakeholders need to be considered: The LA and Diocesan strategic positions, the children and staff, parents and wider community. The informal consultation with parents and wider community was one aspect of the process and while there was no statutory duty on the Governors to carry out such a consultation the governors had decided to undertake a consultation and were mindful of the guidance 'Making Significant Changes (Prescribed Alterations) to Maintained Schools (hereafter 'the guidance'), in particular page 24 and 25, and the consultation principles referred to therein.

A summary of the discussion and decisions follows:

1. Liaise with the Diocese of Portsmouth to ensure that the proposal is aligned with its wider place planning strategy:
  - The Governors reviewed the interaction with the Diocesan Board of Education and the various correspondence. In their letter to the LA of 24 September 2019 the Diocese confirmed that they are supportive of the Governing Body's proposal and are aligned with the Local Authority's strategic plan and organisational arrangements for West Wight schools.
2. Consider the quality of education provided and financial viability of other schools in the area.
  - The LA have decided to close All Saint's School.
  - Governors considered the position of the other schools in the area, their pupil numbers and Ofsted rating. They reviewed the information available from the Local Authority on forecast pupil numbers for West Wight. Governors could see the rationale for the reduction in school places through the closure of one school and thereby making all the other schools in the area more viable.
  - Governors discussed the potential impact if the proposal to move their school were to be implemented and the detrimental effect it could have on other schools in the area. The prospect of the school moving into a new building could potentially have a harmful effect on pupil numbers in other schools and thereby affect their educational offer.
  - Governors were therefore very mindful of the limited numbers of children in the area in the immediate future and wished to ensure the Planned Admission Number for Yarmouth CE Primary School would not add to any financial pressure for other schools in the area in the current climate. At this moment in time therefore the PAN at Yarmouth will stay at 15. Governors were clear that the Planned Admission Number applies to the year of entry only (i.e. Year R) and that in other year groups the school's Admissions process would be supported by the LA Admissions Team during the transition period.
  - The proposal as it stands is not expected to create staffing difficulties in any of the other local schools. Whether TUPE applies to All Saints staff is expected to depend on the final arrangements for the interim year. Isle of Wight HR is currently advising All Saints staff. If TUPE does apply it would mean Yarmouth will have additional teaching and support staff through that process and no further recruitment is expected to be required at this stage.
3. Number of school places in the local planning area:
  - The forecasted pupil numbers were revisited as well as the current number on roll in Yarmouth and All Saints Schools. Governors considered how they would manage

additional places for pupils should All Saints close and Yarmouth move to the site. The Local Authority Admissions Team would support the in-year admissions process to ensure all children are accommodated. Governors will need to carry out this process carefully as we are the Admissions Authority for the School and will need to retain control over this process for future admissions.

- Again it was felt that should Governors decide to move Yarmouth School, they would not change the PAN as they have no intention of creating additional places in West Wight, however what would happen beyond Year R in the transition period is difficult to predict. Depending on the choice of current parents at All Saints School on where to move their child(ren), year groups further up Yarmouth School may have more than 15 children and may require single form entry. However this would be managed in close cooperation with the LA Admissions team through a temporary increase to support these cohorts through the school.

4. Review informal consultation with parents, schools and other interested parties:

- Governors reviewed the various processes and their outcomes over the past year.
  - Governors distributed a questionnaire to the community in May 2019 after the Local Authority made their second proposal for place planning in West Wight.
  - Governors recounted how disappointed they were that the LA had not given more thought to the needs of children at All Saints and felt it appropriate for them to be sent to Yarmouth for a year prior to returning to the All Saints site, should their proposal go ahead. We also felt the Diocese did not provide sufficient clarity on their position.
  - Having reviewed the responses to the questionnaire, we also felt it was clear that there were people in the community who were not fully aware of the wider implications of and processes involved with school place planning.
  - The questionnaire outcomes were concentrated and mixed. Whilst a majority of respondents was against the proposal, there were also indications of agreement with moving Yarmouth School to Freshwater. Governors also received a significant amount of oral feedback.
  - At that point Governors responded to the LA, disagreeing with the proposal. The governors acknowledged that many parents/carers of All Saints children were upset by this communication. This had not been the intention, on the contrary, Governors had written the letter with the children's best interest at heart.
  - The LA requested a meeting in August which took place at the end of August. Following this meeting, the Chair and Vice Chair visited the Diocese in Portsmouth in September to fully understand their position on the proposals. The Diocese suggested a meeting with the LA to discuss the proposals and ensuring all the children were at the heart of the decision making processes.
  - A visit was made to the LA in Winchester, supported by the Diocese who were clearly focused on what would be right for all of the children.
  - Following these visits and obtaining legal advice, Governors were clear that it would be their decision whether to move Yarmouth School or not. They decided to hold a non-statutory informal consultation in November in order to give a voice to parents/carers and other interested parties. The consultation was sent after the LA's publication of its Statutory Notice to close All Saints Primary School. It was undertaken at that time as Governors could only consult on a potential move if the All Saints site were to become vacant and because they considered it would be better not to prolong any uncertainty over school places in West Wight, thereby being supportive of parents and carers.
  - This consultation asked for views on the Governors' proposal to move Yarmouth CE Primary School to Freshwater in September 2021. It was



circulated widely to parents/carers and other interested parties as well as being publicly displayed in various places locally.

- Governors reviewed the responses from this consultation and felt there was a balanced representation of views from staff, parents/carers and other interested parties. Governors once again received a significant amount of oral feedback.
- Governors met separately with Yarmouth Town Council to hear their views and answer their questions.
- Governors considered that the consultation principles guidance as referred to in the 'Making Significant Changes' Statutory Guidance had been adhered to, as far as applicable.
- Governors decided that they would publish the reasons for their decision strictly as required by the Guidance.

5. Consultation with the Local Authority regarding place planning:

- It was recounted that the information regarding West Wight Place planning had been made available to the HT and Chair in November 2018 following which the Chair emailed both the LA and the Diocese inviting them to meet and discuss a constructive way forward, keeping in mind the changes already suffered by the area in the last few years (WW Middle School/Weston Academy). No response was received to this invitation at the time.
- The information provided by the LA however was clear that the number of children expected to enter the school system from September 2020 was significantly reduced and there would be even greater over capacity than had already been the case for a number of years.
- During the last 10 months, from February 2019 until January 2020, Governors contributed to the LA consultation processes and were mindful of the overall place planning strategy whilst retaining their independence in decision making.
- Clarity was established on the position of the Diocese and the LA following the meetings in September 2019. The LA wishes to reduce the number of schools in the area from 5 to 4, maintain provision nearest to where the vast majority of children live and take advantage of the DfE funded PBSP2 for the Freshwater site. The Diocese are supportive of this strategy.
- Governors ensured they had written confirmation from the LA regarding their position on a number of aspects. The letters from 19 September 2019, 31 December 2019 and 10 January 2020 give full clarity amongst other things on the support the LA will provide should Governors decide to move Yarmouth school; on why they would not support a proposal to move Shalfleet School; on why they would not support a proposal to include All Saints into the Shalfleet and Yarmouth Federation; on the availability of the entire All Saints site for Yarmouth School.


6. Ensure the necessary funding has been secured:

- The LA have given assurances that the PSPB2 funding would be forthcoming for an Autumn 2020 build start.
- The LA have assured the Governors that they would fund costs arising from the implementation to ensure that children continued to receive the right support for their education. In addition the school would receive support with HR, Legal, transport and suitable interim accommodation.
- Governors expect and would oversee that the school becomes financially secure within the Federation following a suitable period of transition.



7. Ensure suitable accommodation and sites have been identified:
- Governors had received written confirmation on 11 December 2019 from the Diocese of Portsmouth, giving their consent to Yarmouth CE Primary School moving to the Freshwater site, should Governors decide to do so.
  - Written confirmation had been received on 10 January 2010 from the Local Authority that the Freshwater site in its entirety would be available for Yarmouth CE Primary School although the footprint of buildings and playing fields may be different pending final building plans.
  - The Governors discussed the purpose of proposed transition meetings with specific relevance to suitable accommodation through the transition process and the likely hood of securing a new build for the school through PSPB2 should they decide to move the school. Governors expressed concern over the fact that PSPB2 had not been signed off yet even though the Local Authority were confident. Governors felt that the LA should have a Plan B investment in place from their Capital Grant equivalent to PSPB2 to ensure a high quality refurbishment. The Governors wanted to be kept fully informed regarding how these aspects would develop should they decide to move the school.
  - Governors also considered the current Yarmouth School site and acknowledged the significant investment it had received over the last 4 years (500K+) with the new classroom for Y5/6, the incorporation of Little Stars into the school and their external provision and the expansion/remodelling of Y1/2 and the office as well as improvements to the carpark. However there were still aspects which are difficult to manage; the lack of sufficient teaching spaces in the school in particular for small group and individual work; the playground waterlogged and the field unusable in winter therefore not enough play space available for the children; welfare facilities for the staff are too small and some areas of the building requiring further substantial work. A new or significantly refurbished school building would be positive for the whole school community.
  - They also considered the availability of local facilities for the children in Yarmouth and Freshwater. They acknowledged the many positive aspects for children's education in Yarmouth as well as the amenities available in Freshwater. Governors expressed the wish that should the school move, amenities in Yarmouth should still be incorporated in the curriculum for the children.

8. Diocesan position:
- The Governors have been in close contact with the Diocesan representatives throughout this process with the aim of seeking clarity of their position but also support for the school.
  - Several meetings have been held as well as on-going informal and more formal contacts and visits between Governors and Diocesan representatives.
  - Following the LA's visit in August 2019, the Diocese progressively clarified their position and role in this process. The on-going support from the Deputy Director in particular was appreciated by the Governors.
  - The Diocese, in their letter of 24 September 2019, stated that they were supportive of the Governors' proposal to move Yarmouth school. They also made it clear they were supportive of the LA strategy for West Wight.
  - The Diocese confirmed in their letter of 11 December 2019 that the Trustees had agreed at their meeting of 4 December 2019 that Yarmouth CE Primary could move to the All Saints site, should they decide to do so. The Diocese would therefore deal with all land and trust issues involved should the proposed move take place.
  - In their letter of 9 January 2020, the Diocese acknowledged the support the LA will provide; on why they believe the LA would not support a proposal to move Shalfleet School; on why they would not support a proposal to include All Saints into the Shalfleet and Yarmouth Federation; and confirmed that they would not refer a

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decision by the LA to close Yarmouth School to the Adjudicator, should the governors decide not to move Yarmouth School as the Diocese are strategically aligned with the LA in respect of the need for one school to close.

- Therefore the Governors are clear that the Diocese is in favour of Yarmouth CE Primary School moving to Freshwater should they decide to do so.
- The Governors independently reviewed the possibility of not moving Yarmouth School and making a referral to the Adjudicator should the LA decide to close Yarmouth School. This was considered a realistic scenario as the LA have stated this as two of their alternative options in the Cabinet papers. They assessed the wider picture of the current over supply of school places, the forecast reduction in the number of children in the area starting school, the LA and Diocesan positions as well as legal advice received. They also contemplated the impact on current pupils and the parent community of prolonged uncertainty over the school. Some governors remembered the impact the previous school reorganisation had and that it took the school years to achieve reasonable Admission numbers as parents continued to think the school was closing. They were concerned this could be repeated if the school did not now move site with more devastating impact as the financial landscape for schools is now much more challenging than it was 10-12 years ago and the requirements on schools through revised Ofsted frameworks have increased, meaning it would be very unlikely for the school to survive in its current form. This would have an impact on the quality of education and staffing and could become a vicious circle. Governors felt to allow this to happen would be irresponsible whilst acknowledging at the same time that the potential change could also bring distraction and everything should be done to mitigate this for the children and staff should the proposal go ahead.

9. Admissions Authority considerations:

- Governors discussed the responsibility as an Admissions Authority to manage the School's Planned Admission Number.
- They are aware this brings a particular responsibility within this process to ensure that no undue pressure is place on other schools by changing PAN, even though there may be a short term increase of pupil numbers beyond Year R.
- Governors acknowledged that Admissions could be difficult over the coming year and will work closely with the LA Admissions Team to try and manage the process as best as possible for all children and parents/carers.
- Should the Governors decide to move the school or not, at this stage as an Admissions Authority, they have no intention to increase the Planned Admission Number of the school which currently stands at 15.

Governors reviewed the meeting and the areas discussed and were aware of the requirements of the Statutory Guidance in relation to 'Making Significant Changes to Maintained Schools', they concluded they had acted rationally, taking into account all relevant and no irrelevant considerations and had followed a fair procedure.

Following a full and frank discussion, and cognisant of the LA decision of 9 January 2020 to close All Saints CE Primary School in Freshwater, Governors voted unanimously in favour of taking the opportunity to move Yarmouth CE Primary school to Freshwater in September 2021 with one proviso: That PSBP2 funding is approved or an equivalent substantial LA Capital Grant is invested in the site to ensure the premises are fully fit for purpose prior to Yarmouth CE Primary School moving to that location.

Governors agreed that, as there had been some press interest, a press release would be drafted up that evening to be approved by the Diocesan legal advisors. The press release would be read to staff first at both schools and sent to parents simultaneously at 11am followed by the Chair reading

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out the statement outside the school at 11.15am. The press release would also be distributed to other West Wight HT, Chairs of Governors and other interested parties that morning.

Governors were thanked for their unstinting support and commitment to the schools by the Chair.

**1.21 Any other business** – none

**1.22 Date of next meeting**

- Full Governors' Meeting Wednesday 5 February 2020 at 5pm at Shalfleet.

The meeting closed at 8.30pm

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