



EGM Minutes of the Full Board of Governors – Autumn 2017  
 Meeting held at Somersham Primary School  
 Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2017 – 1830hrs

**Governors Present:**

- |   |                      |
|---|----------------------|
| Becky Ford (Executive Headteacher) [BF] | Val Ford [VF]        |
| Barry Smethurst [BS] (Chair)            | Tony Ixer [TI]       |
| Lucy Beadles [LB]                       | Deborah Moss [DM]    |
| Deborah English [BE]                    | Sarah Reeson [SR]    |
| Barbara English                         | Matthew Sampson [MS] |

**In Attendance:**

- Emma Smith [ES] Associate Member  
 Alison Jackson [AJ] Clerk

The meeting was quorate, 10 governors were present out of 14 in post.

**Apologies for absence**

Dan Aldridge [DA], Sheila Anthony [SA], Eric Fidler [EF], Claire Macdonald [CM] and Rebecca Berton [RB]. The apologies were accepted by the Committee.  
 Nicola Bodnar [NB] was absent

**Declaration of interests**

ES declared a personal interest in Item: AOB.

**Minutes of last meeting: 12<sup>th</sup> September 2017**

The FGB Minutes 12<sup>th</sup> September 2017 were agreed and signed as a true record of the meeting with no amendments.

**Matters arising from the minutes**

Action Points	BY WHOM	ACTION
Review list of Personnel policies	BF/EF	Ongoing
Research support package from NGA for next year	BS	Ongoing
Review HW Pre school rent	New Business Manager	Ongoing
New NGA Skills Audit to be completed by governors	Govs	Ongoing
Edubase passwords & update governor information	BF/AJ	Actioned
Add Ofsted Expectations training session to Standards agenda	AJ	Actioned
Contact Ray Byford to arrange a Finance training session	BF	Advised to wait until Arovia is rolled out.
Complete GB Standing Orders and circulate to FGB	AJ	Actioned
Children’s Centre consultation (building at Somersham) to add to F&P agenda	AJ	F & P agenda 21/11/17
Notify governors of switch over date for portal	AJ	Ongoing

### **Response to warning letter re Somersham**

Somersham warning letter was circulated to governors.

Governors discussed the letter. The EHT informed governors that the school had received notification that the warning letter was being issued however following the LAIG meeting the letter was adapted due the LA being impressed with the current improvements.

Action required within 14 working days of receipt of the letter (by 14<sup>th</sup> November):

- Accept warning letter
- Send a copy of the School Improvement Plan by 10<sup>th</sup> November
- Inform parents and show evidence of this

**ACTION: EHT to draft a letter to parents to include details of why the warning letter was received, new priorities and how parents can support. Letter to be agreed at Standards meeting on Tues 7<sup>th</sup> November. ACTION BF**

**ACTION: The Chair to respond to Keith Grimwade by email. ACTION BS**

At the LAIG meeting it was suggested that Somersham would be expected to go on the forced academy route. Jon Lewis visited to give advice.

Initially the options given were: Federation to separate and Somersham to join a MAT or the Federation to join DMAT.

Alternative option available:

- Federation to apply to academise – Somersham would be sponsored by the MAT  
Holywell would retain it's identity as a Church school and would still work closely with Ely Diocese.  
Funds available: £45,000 for Somersham to support school improvement  
£25,000 for Holywell to support with academisation  
£25,000 for St Helen's to support with academisation  
Grants of £50k - £100k are available up to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018  
Advantage: Would reset the Ofsted clock for Somersham to 3 years to along time to embed practices  
Potential timeline: Application to academise ready for December to academise in September 2018.

In the current climate DMAT would not take 3 schools but the Federation would need to seek permission from the diocese to set up as a MAT. Jon Lewis has approached the diocese and they are considering the request.

**Challenge:** A governor asked if the Federation could be forced to de-federate or academise.

The EHT replied if a school was in Special Measures it could be forced to however all of the evidence for Somersham is showing improvements and this is unlikely to be forced upon us.

The Chair stated that academisation is still the direction of travel for schools and this is an opportunity to form an independent MAT and still be able to retain the school's individual identities, the three schools are geographically close allowing for joint staff meetings, moderation of work, etc. For future: Holywell to become a teaching school.

**Challenge:** A governor asked what the advantages of becoming an academy are.

The Chair stated that academies receive their funding direct from the EFA and would not be top sliced by the LA. He also suggested that Jon Lewis attend a meeting to present on Academisation for governors.

The Chair proposed to progress the research to become a MAT and arrange Jon Lewis to give a presentation on academisation to the governors. **ALL AGREED.**

**ACTION: EHT to contact Jon Lewis to arrange a meeting for a Presentation on Academisation.**

**ACTION BF**

**ACTION: EHT to send Somersham Improvement Plan to the Clerk to be circulated to governors.**

**ACTION BF/AJ**

### **Safeguarding update re Somersham**

The safeguarding incident at Somersham was discussed. The EHT detailed actions taken following the incident:

- Notified the LA
- EHT and HoS met with parents and agreed to review Safeguarding procedures
- The child was intent on leaving the premises, considered mitigating circumstances
- Full risk assessment inside and outside was carried out
- Appointed another lunchtime supervisor
- Changed the play areas, Reception children now have a designated area
- New 1.8m locked gate installed at side of school

The main electronic gates at the entrance are not owned by the school, these belong to the Children's Centre. The school are encouraging parents to teach their children these are for adult use and children should not be pressing the release button.

The EHT commented that she felt the meeting with the parents was very positive and they left happy that the school had taken the incident seriously and done everything reasonably possible. The parents then lodged a formal complaint to Ofsted.

The LA and Ofsted are satisfied with the actions taken by the school.

### **AOB (previously raised with the clerk)**

The EHT informed governors that the Head of School at St Helen's has resigned and given half a terms notice (in line with her contract) and will leave at Christmas.

The EHT thanked St H's HoS for all of her hard work and expressed her sadness at her leaving and that it will be a great loss to St Helen's and the Federation.

The Chair echoed the EHT's sentiments to St H's HoS.

St H's HoS stated that with St H's being short staffed it was compromising her family life but wishes all the best to the Horizons Federation.

The EHT stated:

- Well being of staff at St H's is an issue and will need to look closely at support available before appointment of new HoS
- There are not as many TA's – not replacing TA's that are leaving
- Lack of money – considered to be due to a long time without enough funds and operating 7 classes instead of reducing to 6.
- Lack of resources at St H
- Building is in disrepair – the displays are stunning but the fabric of the building needs work. The building survey suggests that the building needs £100k /yr for 5 years to improve.
- This all affects morale.

**SR left the meeting at 8pm**

The EHT reminded everyone that this news is confidential (can not be indefinite) so that staff and parents can be informed at the same time.

**ES left the meeting at 8.10pm**

Options:

- Relocate existing HoS – (not practical).
- Advertise for a Head of School
- Interim solution: appoint Acting HoS until the end of the academic year and advertise for appointment of permanent HoS for September.

Governors discussed options for St Helen’s staffing and St H is forecast to be fully staffed for January. **Challenge:** A governor asked why staff are leaving St H’s and that it is happening repeatedly at all levels.

The EHT replied that new opportunities are being opened up with the restructure of HDC and other organisations.

Following discussion governors agreed that the advantages of the interim solution are: less turbulent and disruptive, able to inform staff and parents and allow time for existing staff to grow into the job. **Governors agreed with the interim solution of appointment of Acting HoS until end of academic year with support from Holywell HoS for 1-2 days per week and to advertise in the Spring for a permanent HoS. ALL AGREED**

**Date and time of next meeting**

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.55pm.

**Accepted as a true record**

**Signature**

**Date**

<b>Action Points</b>	<b>BY WHOM</b>
Draft letter to Somersham parents re Warning Letter & agree it at Standards meeting	BF
Email Keith Grimwade	BS
Contact Jon Lewis for a presentation on academisation to the governors	BF
Send Somersham Improvement Plan to Clerk to circulate to governors	BF/AJ