

Minutes of St Andrew's C.E. Primary Full Governing Body Meeting

Date: Monday 15th September 2014

Time: 7:00pm – 9:00pm

Present: Christine Bartley (CB) Local Authority Governor & Chair of Governors
Louise Everington(LE) PCC Foundation Governor & Vice Chair
Colleen White (CW) PCC Foundation Governor & Vice Chair
Trevor Cristin (TC) Headteacher
Steve Griffiths (SG) Staff Governor
Julie Newnham (JN) Staff Governor
Rachel Carter (RC) Diocesan Foundation Governor
Matt Rance (MW), PCC Foundation Governor
Richard Dutton (RD) Diocesan Foundation Governor
Ed Lawrence (EL) PCC Foundation Governor
Katy Hiles (KH) Parent Governor

From B&H Council:

Dr Jo Lyons (JL) - Assistant Director, Children's Services

Michael Nix (MN) - Head of Education Planning & Contracts, Children's Services

Tony Foulger (TN) – Architect, Property and Design

Clerk: Diana Dickinson (DD)

Apologies: Coreen Sears (PCC Foundation Governor) & Andrew Wealls (LA Governor)

Absent: Stjohn Rowlands (Parent Governor)

Quorum: 11 out of 14 governors present. The meeting was quorate (at least 50% attending).

Item	Discussion and Decisions	Action
1.	Prayer TC opened the meeting with a prayer.	
2.	Apologies / Declaration of Interest The GB accepted the apologies of CS and AW. SR was absent.	
3.	Update on the expansion plans CB asked the LA to summarise the latest plans and said there would be time to for some discussion and to ask questions. TF explained the plans use 75% of the Haddington Street car park. This is an increase in the initial revised plans following governor feedback. They are high level plans at the moment and based on standards set out by the DfE. The key features are: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• They show the “envelope of area” which maximises this opportunity to provide a bigger hall by moving the kitchen which would be a new	

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	<p>build.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The classrooms will be in clusters of three. There are different preferences as to how the clusters are arranged; some schools choose to mix infant and junior classes. These plans allow this flexibility. • The classroom size is approx. 54 sq m – bigger than the revised original plans and the same size as the current classrooms. In response to a question from governors, TG confirmed this has been achieved by increasing the footprint and not reducing the communal space/group rooms etc. • There are additional toilets. • There are additional shared group rooms which have flexible usage eg staff room, SEN room, 1:1 rooms, music rooms, meeting rooms. • The layout is linear and over two floors. • The existing footprint is increased. • There is additional hard play area taken from Haddington Street car park. <p>Governors asked when the plans would need to be finalised if the decision to proceed were made, and what the timetable for planning approval will be? TF said ideally the plans would be ready to submit for planning approval by the end of this month but now it is likely to be mid-October. The planning approval phase is likely to take 10-12 weeks. He explained there had already been an initial pre-application meeting which established the principles of a two storey extension at the eastern end of the site. This did not result in any obstacles other than a query regarding the exterior design of the extension ie whether it should be more modern to provide a contrast with the existing building.</p> <p>Prior to submitting plans for planning approval TF confirmed that consultation would be very important and should include parents and local residents. He suggested that plans are displayed in the school hall and comments are invited but not at the detailed layout level. Any final changes to the plans will be made following feedback.</p> <p>MN said that the CYP committee meeting is on 22.9.14; a report will be presented by the Council which will show what the Council has done in response to the Committee's recommendations at their July meeting and the outcome of that. It will include a recommendation regarding the progression to Statutory Notice and will include the Governing Body's views once received after this meeting. Statutory Notice is the legal bit of the process to announce intent to expand and includes a proposal and consultation documents. It is a four week period and will finish by about 28.10.14. It will be on the consultation portal and comments are invited.</p>	

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	<p>The final decision as to whether to proceed with the expansion proposal will be made on 17th November by the CYP Committee. The CYP have power to make the decision but want to make it with Governors' agreement. CB noted that as a voluntary aided school the GB has a right to appeal that decision.</p> <p>Governors asked about process of reviewing travel safety issues. TF confirmed there are two aspects to this. The first is the requirement to address traffic safety issues as part of submitting plans for planning approval. There is a proportion of the project budget which is expected to be allocated to Highways to ensure there is a safe method of getting children to school. This will include potential improvements to the surrounding area and also looking at entrances to the school. This will be developed in the weeks prior to submitting the building plans for planning approval and will be included as part of the overall planning submission.</p> <p>In addition, the school will be required to develop a new travel plan. This will be assisted by the Local Authority. It can be started at any time. Governors said that, as parents, traffic and safety is paramount. TF said that the revised plans allow for additional access and exit points which could help congestion. Other options such as a "walking bus" to allow pick up on Church Rd could be considered. Other expansions had attracted money from highways to upgrade bus stops and road signage. Improvements to the location and additional cycle shelter space could be considered to encourage more cycling to school.</p> <p>Governors asked about the potential opposition from local traders to reducing the size of the Haddington Street car park. JL explained the complaint procedure and emphasised that there were only certain grounds for making a complaint. JL said that this planning option was discussed with her colleagues in the Highways Department before putting it forward as a viable option for the school. It is understood that there will also be a loss of revenue to the Council.</p> <p>Governors asked by how much the hard play area has increased as a result of having the additional land for the extension. TF said that he would have to confirm this. Governors acknowledged that once the school is full there will still be proportionately less hard play area per pupil than at present. Governors agreed there was a need to further discuss how to improve the all year usability of the outdoor area and that this would remain an item that would need pursuing with the council throughout this process.</p> <p>Governors asked why the north courtyard, which is a cold and dark area, could not be utilised more for the expansion building. TF said the extension plans are currently in line with the existing building. It is also helpful to have</p>	

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	<p>an outdoor area linked to a classroom for learning purposes. It was suggested that the school (a PTA project) could invest in the space to make it more attractive.</p> <p>Governors asked the Council to confirm that the project budget will cover the essential need to cover improving school access arrangements such as widening gates for the existing entrance and extra cycle shelters. TF confirmed cycle shelters are included as standard in the plans and access requirements will be agreed as part of the pre-planning discussions taking into account budget considerations. JL said these discussions would be in line with other recent builds in the city.</p> <p>A governor asked about the corridor between north and south courtyard which had been suggested by one of the parents at the previous week's meetings. TF said that it is still within the parameters of the plans if necessary. It will make group rooms a little smaller but classrooms will be the same size. There has not yet been any discussion as to whether this is needed, and classroom access would be discussed as part of the planning and travel plan process.</p> <p>Governors asked how the building plans will be phased and what would be provided by September 2015 for the reception intake. TF said that building would start by Feb 2015. The shell of the extension would be complete by 2015 and either would either complete the ground floor first by September 2015 or half of the two storey extension. This would need to be agreed. The hall and kitchen works would be done over the summer. The full extension would be complete by February 2016. By extending at the eastern end of the site, the building works will be separate from the school and therefore minimise disruption.</p> <p>A governor asked how the next 4 weeks of the process look before the planning application goes in. CB said that the GB wanted to ensure that the previous level of communication and transparency from the Council continued. The GB also wanted to include parent representatives on any working groups to contribute to the finalising of plans and looking at traffic safety. TF said that there would be a series of "controlled workshops" to work up the plans, with the right people at the right meetings but emphasised that these needed to be small and collaborative with teachers having a high degree of input as educational professionals.</p> <p>The large version of the proposed final version of the plans would then be displayed for parents and the LA will be available to answer questions e.g. at school finish time. Any final changes could then be made prior to submitting the plans.</p>	<p>TC: arrange to update website.</p>

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	<p>It was agreed by governors that our website should be updated as the letters and previous versions of the plans on there are now very out of date. It was agreed that the current version of the plans should be available for parents to view in the school but not circulated to all parents or put on the website as this could pre-empt the planning process.</p> <p>JL said that timescale would be confirmed by LA. Key dates are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting of CYP committee on 22.9.14 to proceed to Statutory Notice; • Statutory consultation period for 4 weeks in October; • Planning submission late October/early November; • CYP Committee Decision to Proceed with the Expansion 17.11.2014; • Decision from planning in mid-January; • Build start Feb half term; <p>The Partnership with Westridge means that the LA do not have to go to tender for the builders but there will be a process of negotiation with Westridge running parallel with the planning process. There will also be discussions with Highways about other local infrastructure.</p> <p>Governors discussed with the Council some of the points made by parents at the previous week's meetings. This included the perception that Davigdor school was better placed to permanently expand due to the outside space available. The Council pointed out the outdoor area was shared with Sommerhill School so any consideration of permanent expansion would have to include both sites. They agreed to provide information on space per pupil.</p> <p>Governors also noted that there was an increased understanding by parents of the need for more school spaces in the area but the preference was for a new school to be built to meet that need. The governors also support this as a longer term solution.</p> <p>CB thanked the LA representatives. The LA left the meeting at approx. 8pm.</p>	
4.	<p>Governors discussion</p> <p>CB outlined the decision which needed to be made to finalise our views on the proposed expansion of St Andrew's to a 3 form entry, in light of the consultation process. We need to specifically consider whether we support the progression of the consultation process to the next stage of issuing a formal statutory notice.</p> <p>Governors agreed that we have a responsibility to take a strategic view, as</p>	

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	<p>a Church of England school with a Christian ethos, on the role of St Andrew's school in serving both the best interests of the school community as well as the current and future needs of the wider community. They also discussed the active support for expansion received from the Diocese and the PCC.</p> <p>CB summarised our position. Following the strength of opposition from the initial consultation phase, it was agreed that we should ask the Council to communicate more clearly and directly with parents around the following key areas of concern:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proven data showing the need for additional local school places and why St Andrew's was being asked to meet this need • Revised plans incorporating the Haddington Street car park • Assurance about travel and safety concerns. <p>Action since the last meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The LA held a meeting in July for a small number of concerned parents which was also attended by governors • Two open meetings for parents were held last week attended by representatives of the Council and Diocese, governors and senior staff. Around 50 parents attended and 38 feedback forms were received. • A meeting held by the Diocese with a small number of parents and also attended by TC and CB. <p>CB said that the second set of revised Haddington Street plans following governor feedback have addressed our initial concerns. The Council has agreed to provide the majority of the car park for the school extension plans (18 car parks remaining). This has enabled larger classrooms and increased playground space. The Council has also agreed to separately fund the car park reinstatement. The issues of safety and travel now need to be prioritised given that the new plans have been provided.</p> <p>CB circulated a summary of the feedback forms from last week's meetings along with a paper from a concerned parent outlining his concerns.</p> <p>The feedback showed there was an increased understanding amongst parents about the need for additional school places as a result of the meetings. There was also very positive support for the new plans but also a number of suggestions/reservations expressed.</p> <p>Governors acknowledged that the additional time for consultation was limited due to the Council's need to reach a decision regarding the need for additional places in 2015. However there was agreement that it had provided an opportunity for more constructive and transparent discussion</p>	

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	<p>between all key stakeholders which would need to be continued for any future phases of consultation if agreed, given the concerns expressed.</p> <p>Governors discussed their position if the plans including the car park did not receive planning approval. It was agreed the GB would not support the Council proceeding with alternative plans. Further consultation would be required with the school.</p> <p>It was agreed that any working group must include parent representation.</p> <p>Governors considered whether they considered that there had been sufficient evidence that the Council had addressed the key issues and concerns of both parents and governors.</p> <p>One governor stated that there was evidence of a very clear need for additional school places and the Council had positively responded to the key questions. The GB therefore has no grounds to oppose the proposal as all local children deserve a school place and St Andrew's should contribute to providing additional places in the same way as the other local schools have done.</p> <p>The field /outside space issue was considered and it was agreed there are further options for increasing the usable outdoor space which could be discussed in more detail at a later meeting. One governor felt that we should look at benefits to the current children at the school which include making the best use of our outside space. We do get additional play space with the new plans but more needs to be done. However, we have several years to work this out until the school is full for three form entry. We can get the LA to agree to work with us to improve this and consider all our options.</p> <p>Governors then reviewed the original conditions agreed with the Council prior to agreeing to proceed to informal consultation in May. It was agreed that in principle these were still valid and they were adapted to take account of the new revised plans and other recent developments. This included the need for commitment to the acceptable level of kitting out of classrooms and also increased office/administration space.</p> <p>Governors asked staff governors about the staffs' views. Staff reported that there are a range of opinions, both in favour and against expansion and many staff had not expressed an opinion. TC felt that further consultation with staff would be valuable and it would be important to involve staff closely with practical decisions that would need to be made. There was agreement that the proposed ongoing commitment to transparency and involvement with parents/carers also applied to staff. Governors would</p>	<p>CB/TC: inform LA of our vote and include previously stated conditions with appropriate amendments.</p> <p>TC/CB: write to parents and staff and provide information about plans and the process</p>

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	<p>meet with staff to talk through the outcome of our decision tonight. Staff would also be involved in any working groups to liaise with the Council regarding planning details.</p> <p>In making the latest plans available for parents and staff to view, it was agreed the LA should include on the plans details of the size of classrooms, the additional size of land received as a result of the car park and specifically the increased size of the outdoor area. It would also be good to present details of success stories of other school expansions, particularly Aldrington.</p> <p>There was further consideration of the initial strength of opposition from parents to the proposal through the consultation feedback. One governor stated that those parents who attended the recent open parent meetings were positive about the further opportunity to meet with the Council to get clearer information. There was also a very positive response to the new plans and a clearer appreciation of the need for additional school places as a result of the meetings. There was however considerable support for a new school to be built to address this need. Governors agreed this should continue to be explored by the Council but it was not a viable alternative to the immediate request for St Andrew's to agree to permanently expand from 2015.</p> <p>The GB agreed that our communication must state that the LA has met all our conditions.</p> <p>The FGB voted on the decision to support the LA in progressing to Statutory Notice of the intention to expand St Andrew's to three form entry. The vote was unanimous in favour.</p> <p>A letter would be written to the LA immediately outlining this support and including the previously stated conditions with appropriate amendments. Parents would be advised of the decision in the next two days and the latest plans would be made available in the school for parents to view. The decision of the CYP Committee on Monday 22nd September will be notified to parents.</p>	
5.	Close and Grace.	

SignedChristine Bartley..... Chair of Governors

Date...29th September 2014.....