MINUTES OF MEETING

Nottinghamshire County Council

School:	**Sparken Hill Academy**
Meeting title:	**Summer term meeting of the governing body**
Date and time:	**Thursday, 25 June 2020 at 4.00pm**
Location:	**Virtual by Teams**

Membership
'A' denotes absence

Mrs M Cutts (chair)
Mrs C Middleton
Ms D Carter
Mrs L Holmes
Mrs L Hazelhurst
Mrs S Sparks
Mr P Gawthorpe (vice-chair)
Councillor J Shephard
Mrs A Phillipson
Mrs U Flower
Mrs E Rodgers
Mr R Lilley (Principal)

In attendance

Mr CA Richardson (clerk to the governors)
Mrs V Dashper (Chief Financial Officer)

GB/18/20 Apologies for absence **Action**

There were no apologies for absence as all governors were in attendance.

GB/19/20 Declaration of interest

There were no declarations of interest, either direct or indirect, for items of business on the agenda, except for Mrs Dashper in item GB/23/20, Review & Approval of Services to Academy- External Contracts – Grounds Maintenance

GB/20/20 Review of membership

Mr Lilley welcomed Ms Donna Carter to the Governing Body as a Community Governor.

The clerk highlighted the following vacancies on the governing body:

There are no vacancies at present.

It was reported that Mrs Phillipson had resigned as a co-opted governor with effect form 31/08/2020. The clerk was requested to write to her on behalf of the governors. **Clerk**

Appointment of chair of Finance

Mr Lilley had emailed all governors requesting expressions of interest in the position of chair of the finance committee. Mrs Holmes had expressed an interest.

Action

Mrs Rodgers proposed, and Mrs Cutts seconded the nomination of Mrs L Holmes as chair of the finance committee.

All governors unanimously supported the motion.

Mr Lilley would email governors 2 weeks before the autumn term full governors meeting requesting expressions of interest in the position of vice-chair of the Finance Committee.

GB/21/20 Term of office of vice chair/ Election of Vice chair

Mr Lilley had emailed all governors requesting expressions of interest in the position of vice-chair. Mr Gawthorpe had expressed an interest.

Mrs Middleton proposed, and Mrs Phillipson seconded the nomination of Mr P Gawthorpe as vice-chair **until the autumn term meeting 2020.**

All governors unanimously supported the motion.

Mr Gawthorpe is also chair of the Audit Committee.

GB/21/20 Approval of minutes of spring term meeting

The minutes of the spring term meeting held on Thursday, 5 March 2020 having been previously circulated***)*** were confirmed. As a result of school closures due to Covid-19 the governors' meeting was held virtually and therefore these minutes will be signed by the chair at a later date.

Review of actions

GB/13/15/20

This has not been actioned due to the Covid crisis.

GB/16/20

Following an accident involving a Rec child running into the ventilation pipe installation on the KS1 playground, Mr. Lilley reported that the Academy had commissioned a site survey from Wm Saunders Ltd relating to practical methods for either removal of or making safe, this installation. It was confirmed that the piece of equipment was integral fabric of the school and could not be removed. Therefore, the focus would have to be on mitigating further accidents. The Academy has decided to cut into the tarmac and install a planting bed with a knee rail around the pipe (similar to the front of school where there is a further structure). This will reduce the risk significantly of the accident recurring in the future. Quotes will be obtained.

GB/22/20 Receipt of minutes and approval of policies from committees and working parties

The minutes of the Finance meeting held on Thursday, February 27, 2020 having been previously circulated were confirmed.

Mrs Cutts proposed, and Mrs Phillipson seconded that they were a true record. The motion was passed unanimously.

As a result of school closures due to Covid-19 the governors' meeting was held virtually and therefore these minutes will be signed by the chair at a later date.

Action

Review of actions

There were no matters arising.

The minutes of the audit meeting held on Thursday, February 27, 2020 having been previously circulated were confirmed.

Mrs Phillipson proposed, and Mrs Sparks seconded that they were a true record. The motion was passed unanimously.

As a result of school closures due to Covid-19 the governors' meeting was held virtually and therefore these minutes will be signed by the chair at a later date.

Review of actions

Mrs Dashper reported that the mobile contracts had been sorted. Monies had been recovered as a result of the cap not being put on previously so no recoupment or charges to staff had needed to be actioned. There was now a spend manager cap on all the new contracts.

GB/23/20 Financial reporting

- **Budget Review – Year End Forecast 2019/2020**

- The budget review had been undertaken in April and cross-referenced on 4 June regarding budget setting.
- The review was approached with caution as very little was known in April as a result of the unprecedented times linked to Covid 19 and financial impact, this was likely to have, so little variance was reported, however this is likely to change at the year-end.
- There has been further Covid-19 expenditure since the review, totalling £58,115.69. The DFE have informed the academy of how to claim back expenses and a deadline of 21/07/2020 has been set. There may be an opportunity for further claims.
- Governors were referred to the budget movement report, which highlighted where extra monies had been allocated.
- Some of the carpets in the administrative wing need replacing as a result of some damage form cleaning products during Covid-19. A commitment had been given that this would be done.
- SALIX – this has been accepted. Due to the unprecedented times, the costs have still not been received from RAM consultancy, this is as a result of the length of time between the initial application and the original site survey. The works need to be completed by December 2020 but during Covid-19 no one has been able to access the site. Mrs Dashper has contacted SALIX and asked for an extension due to the pandemic. The academy must inform the company of any delays and the progress that is being made and there should be no problem.
- **The projected c/f is £335,201 an increase of £4623.**

- **Staffing Update**

Mr Lilley reported that a member of staff previously discussed had undergone a scan and the tumour was in retreat.
The cleaner who had received a negative prognosis was having treatment and was now in hospital to undergo an operation.

Action

Mr Lilley reported that 2 members of staff had safely delivered babies and the school had sent congratulations.
Mr Lilley had received a letter of resignation from a member of staff, who was on a 1 day per week contract for the 31/08/202. The resignation was accepted, and the Principal reported that at this time, a replacement was not required.
Mr Lilley reported that 2 vacancies had arisen for teaching staff and it had been decided to make them both permanent. Mr Phillips and Mrs Shaw were the successful candidates. These appointments could result in flexible working hours being reconsidered for staff who had previously requested it.

Governors' question: Are we paying the new staff at present?
The meeting was informed that Mr Phillips was being paid as his contract commenced at the beginning of the summer term, Mrs Shaw would not be paid until September when her contract begins.

- **Condition Survey – Consider Quotes**

Mrs Dashper informed the meeting that NCC were not offering this service at present, so it had been put out to tender.
Quotes had been received from Oakleaf (£3995) and Eddisons (£3,000 or £1750 see below) NCC had originally been approached however this is not a service they can currently offer, due to the retirement of a member of key personnel. It was advised that Edison's had a sensible approach with regards to undertaking the survey, initially as building and if identified at that survey a M & E survey was required this could be carried out separately. This would bring the cost to £1750 if the M & E was not required as opposed to £3,000. For the purpose of comparison to previous costs, it was shared that NCC cost for the service was £1300. It was agreed that Eddisons would undertake the condition survey and this will be presented to Governors once complete.

- **Foundation Stage Works – Tender Outcome**

Mr Lilley reported that the work had gone out to tender and the reasons that the work was required. Essentially this was to extend an accessible toilet area in order that it would be large enough to accommodate a changing trolley for a child with profound physical disabilities.
William Saunders Ltd who have done building consultancy and project management work for the academy in the past, have been appointed and are managing the tender process. Two quotes have been received and no response from a third.

Governors' question: Have references been obtained for work that they have done in the past?
Mr Lilley explained fully the process Wm Saunders Ltd had done on behalf of the academy and they had undertaken work previously for Sparken Hill after the significant flood repair works in FS.

Mr Lilley explained what work was to be done and that it was hoped to schedule for the first two weeks of the summer holidays. The cost of this has been built in to the budget for 2020/21.

- **Budget Approval – 2020/2021**

There were no questions on the budget plan that had been previously circulated.
Mrs Dashper explained about the three-year plan. She explained that following on from the work Mrs Flower did regarding FSM, the numbers had risen as a result of Covid-19 FSM vouchers, and more parents applying for this, the impact on the budget was a positive one re pupil premium however this wouldn't be confirmed until January Census.

Action

The carry forward at the end of 2020/21 was £280,472, and that includes all the capital funds. The budget also projects an in year deficit of £54,725.

Mrs Cutts proposed, and Mrs Middleton seconded that the budget plan for 2020/21 be accepted and approved.

It was unanimously approved.

- **Review & Approval of Services to Academy- External Contracts**

The following contracts had been approved 12 months ago for a three to five-year period on the understanding that annually, the service is appraised to ensure that the Academy is still satisfied. Mr Lilley updated the meeting on the services the academy receives from the providers.

IT Support
The academy is happy with Jasmine IT Services and so there is no need to consider another provider. Previous years costs are fixed for the coming year.

Grounds Maintenance
The academy is extremely happy with ND Services, and the service provided, so there is no need to consider another provider. Previous years costs are fixed for the coming year.

Staff Absence Insurance
The academy is happy with Educational Mutual and no need to consider another provider. Pending receipt of a quote, there is an increase of 1 FTE teacher on this years cover however the cost is expected to be similar.
Governors' question: Who covers maternity cover?
It was explained that the company pay form day 1 and this was irrespective of having to buy back supply cover externally. This means that from day 1, we would attract insurance income even if we covered internally with a cover supervisor, It was further confirmed that the cover is for teaching staff only.

Governors' question: Could consideration be given to a supernumerary teacher to do all the cover as it would save on the budget?
Mr Lilley explained that this had been considered previously but with 20+ teachers this was not really a viable situation.

Catering
Changes requested by governors have been implemented. Mrs Dashper explained that monthly meetings are held with the on-site chef and qtrly meetings with Aspens management, members of SLT, staff governors and catering advisor from Spire Catering. The budget proposal received from Aspens for the coming year had been queried and the Academy is awaiting responses, a meeting is planned shortly where this will be discussed.
There is no need to consider another provider.

Governors' question: Has the new caterers increased numbers?
The meeting was informed that it had but obviously this was prior to the Covid closure, breaching 300 daily from 264. It would be very important to get the service provision right if we are to return to the high numbers of meals being served previously.

GDPR – DPO Outsourced Service
The academy is happy with Sapphire Consultancy and there is no need to consider another provider.
Sapphire have not really had to be used but it is reassurance for the academy to have them at the end of the telephone and acting as an independent DPO.

Governors' question: have there been any breaches?
The governors were informed that there had been none since the register had been previously presented to governors.

Review of Gifts & Hospitality Register
This item is for information. No gifts had been received and 5 had been presented since March 2019, all within the guidance of the Gifts & Hospitality policy.

Related Party Transactions

All related party transactions come through the Principal/ Accounting Officer and not the Chief Finance Officer.
It was reported that there had been 11 related party transactions this year, the related party is N D Services Grounds Maintenance LTD.
The academies financial handbook dictates that any related party transactions above £20,000 are reported to the ESFA for consideration and approval. The related party transactions for N D Services Grounds Maintenance LTD including the annual grounds maintenance that underwent a tender process is at £19,117.00 Because this is a declared related party, ALL transactions are reported to the ESFA. Should the sum total of the transactions within a financial year be lower than £20,000, the Accounting Officer/Principal can authorise (whilst still informing the ESFA). Anything over £20,000 needs prior authorisation from the ESFA.

Governors' question: Did you think about getting quotes form any other company regarding the concrete base?
It was explained that at the time the concrete base was needed another quote could not be obtained due to Covid-19 and the work needed doing quickly. This was because it related to the food storage facility for the animals which needed replacement.
It was explained that all grounds maintenance work is delegated to the site manager and for clarity's sake, Mrs Dashper has no influence over the awarding of work. The Accounting Officer / Principal decides this after review and discussions with any other appropriate bodies and where policy dictates, a proposal is brought for GB decision.

Lettings Policy
This policy had been previously circulated and there were no changes.
Mrs Phillipson proposed, and Mrs Cutts seconded that the policy was adopted and approved.
All governors unanimously supported the proposal.

Capital Proposals
Mr Lilley presented 4 capital proposals.

PE Uniform for Pupils
The Sunday Times had contacted the academy regarding how children were keeping fit during the pandemic. They had monitored our Twitter feed and were amazed by our commitment to physical exercise.
The academy has signed up to 2 hours of PE per week. He explained about the children getting changed and the time it can take. He went on to say that if the academy had a PE uniform then the pupils could come to school in it and stay in it all day.
He was proposing to purchase a T-shirt and zip up top for each pupil which the children could wear all day on their PE day. They had contacted 3 or 4 companies to ascertain the cost. The cost was in the region of £13,500.

Governors' question: Will this reduce the carry forward?

It was explained it would however the budget presented does reflect this. Governors commented that they needed to be mindful of this but were fully supportive of this proposal.

Governors' question: What happens if PE is cancelled?
It was explained that they would still stay in their PE kit.

Governors' question: Is it just for children?
Mr Lilley explained that it was initially. However, as a result of Covid-19 all staff were washing their PE kits daily, so it could be looked at for staff, so they had two sets.

Governors' question: Could the academy provide shorts and the parents the long trousers?
This was something to consider.

Mr Lilley would look at the cost of jogging bottoms.

Governors' question: Is the proposal time limited?
Mr Lilley explained it would be year on year but not at the same overall cost as there would not need to be a full replacement kit for every child each year.

Mrs Cutts proposed, and Mrs Sparks seconded that the academy provide a PE kit for all pupils.
Governors unanimously supported the proposal.

Foundation Stage Play

The initial cost of this proposal is £12,500 which is budgeted for. William Saunders Ltd have been approached to provide details of a play area design company to provide a design of the Foundation Stage area before any more money is spent on in it so we can strategically invest capital on different phased elements over the next 4-5 years.
Governors had already approved this scheme. This was an update and governors were advised this had been carried forward in the coming year budget.

Mrs Phillipson left the meeting.

ICT Infrastructure

The cost of upgrading the infrastructure is £58,000 and DFC funding has been allocated to part fund this project. This budget allocation represents a series of capital expenditure items including:
Replacement Interactive Boards
Replacement IPAD / Chromebook purchases for KS2
Upgrading network switchgear and a scheduled replacement of the internet router as part of the ICT action plan. Because this overall cost centre allocation is significant, it was felt that the GB should be aware of the intent behind the commitment.
Any potential expenditure that would require approval (as it may be over delegated responsibilities) would be brought to the attention of FP committee for consideration and approval.

Privacy for classrooms / demarcation of areas

Mr Lilley explained that classroom identification from the outside is not always easy or obvious. In addition, we have fielded a number of concerns regarding the 'open aspect' of classrooms (in respect to safeguarding concerns e.g. when

Action

children may be changing, for instance). He therefore proposed that etching was installed on the outside of the windows to provide privacy.

Mrs Phillipson returned to the meeting.

The cost of this would be in the region of £5900 which has been allocated from the 2019/20 budget. Furthermore, the Academy would also look to obtaining 5 or 6 finger post signage to ensure new parents / children can find their way around easily. This need had been made more acute when 'reopening' to further families during the Covid closure.

GB/24/20 **Principal's report**

The Principal had previously circulated his report and invited governors to submit questions prior to the meeting.

Governors' question: Will the governor training schedule for the next academic be published?
Governors requested that appraisal, admissions and appeals training were priorities.
Mr Lilley responded that it would be sorted and published.

Governors' question: What is the procedure for visitors to school: i.e. outside agencies, social workers?
Mr Lilley informed the meeting that at present he did not have an answer as we are awaiting government regulations.

Governors' question: Are SEND accessing home learning?
Mr Lilley explained what had been taken up and that he felt the staff could not do anymore than they were already doing. They had moved from online learning, as some pupils did not have access to IT equipment to access the online learning. to work packs and over 50% of each cohort were collecting them.

Governors commented how pleased they were with this parental response. governors commented that Mr Lilley had led a fantastic team.

Governors' question: Mr Lilley was **challenged** by a governor who asked if he had had a break during the time of school closure?
He replied that he had. A governor commented that governors needed to be mindful of his health and wellbeing.
Mr Lilley responded that he was very proud of the staff and how they had coped. Mrs Cutts would write a letter that would be emailed to every member of staff. Mrs Cutts would email the draft letter to all governors for approval within 7 days. **Mrs Cutts**

GB/25/20 **Confirmation of Admissions Arrangements Amendments 2021-22**

The admissions policy had been submitted to the LA and following it being scrutinised by the adjudicator was returned to the academy for some amendments. Mr Lilley fully explained what the issues were and what needed to be amended.
Governors approved the amended policy with the following amendments:

- Applications for intake (reception) should be made to the local authority where the child lives not necessarily where the parent resides.
- Waiting list (for in-year applications) closes at the end of the Academic Year.
- How the academy processes repeat applications for admission to reception after the waiting list closes at the end of the autumn term.
- Parents who are requesting admission outside the normal age group for reception now complies with 2.17A of the Code.

Action

- The arrangements now give very clear information on what the catchment area is and how to find this information.
- There is now a definition for parent in the arrangements.

These had all been completed, the policy returned to the LA and it had been approved. The policy is on the academy's website.

GB/26/20 Update on appraisal for principal and staff

Mr Lilley explained that in these unprecedented times staff targets set in the autumn term 2019 were not applicable now, especially the data one. He proposed that unless there were concerns about capability which would have already been reported to governors that incremental pay awards were granted where appropriate and start again in September with new targets.

Governors commented that this was a good proposal and a full discussion took place, commenting that the staff had performed excellently during the unprecedented times.

Mrs Phillipson proposed, and Mrs Cutts second that the governors accept Mr Lilley's proposal.
Governors unanimously accepted the proposal. The academy would action the required pay awards.

Mr Lilley/Mrs Dashper

The principal's appraisal was then discussed. At present Ms D Litchfield was the external adviser and had been for 2/3 years. Governors indicated that a change was required.

Following a proposal by Mrs Sparks, seconded by Mrs Cutts, Mr CA Richardson was appointed as the external adviser to the governors for the principal's appraisal.

Governors fully supported and approved the proposal.

GB/27/20 Information from the Corporate Director for consideration and action

IMPROVING EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL

The County Council's Strategy for Improving Educational Opportunities for All (IEOfA) sets out the County Council's promises, priorities and expected outcomes in relation to improving educational opportunities for all of Nottinghamshire's children and young people with a focus on the most vulnerable and disadvantaged, particularly those children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disability, those eligible for free school meals, those children and young people who are looked after as well as care leavers.

This is in recognition that disadvantaged children and young people are less likely to fulfil their academic potential, secure employment and gain a sense of future emotional and financial security. The East Midlands was the country's lowest performing area, and, in Nottinghamshire, six of the seven districts were ranked as colds pots (low social mobility outcomes).

Action for Governors:

Questions governors will want to ask:

a) Which groups of pupils are currently most at risk of under-achievement in this school?

b) What are the barriers to learning for our most disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils?

c) What additional provision / opportunities are we providing so that they can succeed and what is the evidence base for these chosen approaches?

d) How are staff engaging with parents to improve outcomes?

e) How can I fulfil an “advocacy” role on behalf of the vulnerable pupils in order to further raise aspirations, ensure good access and improve achievement and progress?

Nottinghamshire’s Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy (2020-2023)

The Council’s inclusive approach ensures that most children and young people with SEND receive their education in local mainstream settings and access resources without the need for an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

The Policy reflects the changing landscape of SEND following the Children and Families Act (2014) and the key changes. The Policy sets out the vision for Nottinghamshire, as well as our values and principles and the essential outcomes required to achieve them.

The Policy has been through an extensive public consultation with an on-line survey and workshops including one specifically for parents and carers. The feedback was very positive, as well as providing some very useful comments regarding the implementation of the Policy.

The Policy is ambitious for Nottinghamshire and will need all partners to work together to deliver its outcomes. An action plan will be developed to ensure the delivery of the Policy, which will be regularly reviewed and monitored by the Nottinghamshire SEND Accountability Board.

Action for governors

Questions Governors will want to ask:

(1) Is your school’s approach to supporting children and young people with SEND consistent with the values and principles of the Nottinghamshire SEND Policy?
(2) Does your school’s own SEND Policy require updating considering the new Nottinghamshire County Council’s SEND Policy?
(3) How inclusive is your school? What could be done to improve inclusive practice across the school?
(4) How does your school implement the graduated response (for further information please follow this link and click on SEN Support) for children and young people with SEND?
(5) Are the reviews undertaken in your school person centred and actively involve parents / carers and children and young people wherever possible?

GB/28/20 Communication

From chair

Mrs Cutts reported on webinars that she had joined and how helpful they had been. She highlighted ‘School recovery and governors’ which is running through the summer and recommended this to the governors.

Action

From headteacher

Mr Lilley reported that he had received 3 emails addressed to Dear Accounting officer, which were as follows:

- **6.03.2020** – The start of the crisis – Gov Coronavirus Action Plan
- **21.04.2020** – ESFA chief executive, Eileen Milner re a reduction in the BFRO expectations
- **05.06.2020** – BFRO3y – 3-year deadline extended by 2 months – deadline is 29.09.2020

Mr Lilley updated the governors on the LA response to the academy having access to Mosaic. He had been informed that the academies access to Mosaic was unlawful and detailed access has been stopped. He has written to L Jones (Notts LA) and has received a response but that the position from the LA/Cadecott Guardian had not changed, which was incredibly disappointing.

He had received a letter of resignation from a member of staff which had been dealt with earlier in the agenda.

From clerk - Governor Newsletter

The clerk highlighted articles from both summer term newsletters relevant to the governing body.

- Key things governors should consider during partial closure
- Message from NAGs, including pupil competition to design certificates for governor and governing body of the year.
- Safeguarding
- HR updates
- RSHE Policy and Consultation with Parents

GB/29/20 **Approval of in-service training days**

The governing body approved the following in – service training days for academic year 20202/21:

- Tuesday, 01 September 2020 (admin)
- Monday, 14 June 2021 (Careers Ambitions / Report Writing)
- Monday, 26 July 2021
- Tuesday, 27 July 2021
- Wednesday, 28 July 2021

Mr Lilley explained that the last three in July were likely to be disaggregated over the year.

Mrs Sparks proposed and Mrs Cutts seconded that governors approve the in-service training days for academic year 2020/21. This was unanimously approved.

Governors approved the moving of the in-service training day scheduled for Monday, 15 June 2020 to Thursday, 23 July 2020.
Mr Lilley spoke about closing school on Friday 17th July and using Monday, 20, Tuesday, 21 and Wednesday 22 July 2020 as transition days where staff can speak to the children regarding September. This would also provide a period of time for Mr Lilley to process and communicate the implications on Full reopening plans for September (The updated Government Guidance had not yet been received).

Action

Governors' question: How will parents react?
A governor responded that some will be fine, and others will not.

Mr Gawthorpe proposed, and Mrs Middleton seconded that the governors agree to closing on Friday, 17 July 2020. All governors approved this course of action.

GB/30/20 Governor monitoring visits

There had been none this term due to Covid-19.

GB/31/20 Evidence of governing body impact on school improvement and review of how the governing body has held the school's leaders to account

Governors held school leaders to account regarding the opening and closing of the school as a result of Covid-19 pandemic, they were also very supportive. They used a balance of support and challenge.

Governors challenged regarding financial decision and what they can see and do.

They challenged regarding staff appraisal as a result of the unprecedented times in school.

Governors questioned and challenged parts of the principal's report.

GB/32/20 Confirmation of dates for 2020 - 2021

The governing body

agreed

<u>Autumn term 2020</u>

Thursday 1 October 2020 at 4.00pm Finance and Personnel followed by audit

Thursday 19 October 2020 at 4.00pm School Improvement

Thursday 26 November 2020 at 9.30am Streets meeting Full Governing Body invited

Tuesday 10 December 2020 at 4.00pm Full governors

<u>Spring term 2021</u>

Thursday 11 February 2020 at 4.00pm School Improvement

Thursday 25 February 2021 at 4.00pm Finance and Personnel followed by audit

Thursday 4 March 2021 at 4.00pm Full Governing Body

<u>Summer term 2021</u>

Thursday 3 June 2021 at 4.00pm Finance and Personnel followed by audit

Thursday 10 June 2021 at 4.00pm School Improvement

Tuesday 24 June 2021 at 4.00pm Full Governing Body

Action

GB/33/20 Determination of confidentiality of business

It was

resolved

that the governing body membership list; confidential sections of the principal's report and confidential sections of minutes and all staffing matters be deemed confidential but that all other papers and reports be made available as required.

The meeting closed at 6.10pm.

Signed .... (chair) Date ....