



# Downland Village Schools Federation

## Minutes of a virtual meeting of the full governing body held on Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> March 2021 at 3:30 pm

**Present:** Rev Trish Bancroft, David Bertwistle, Paul Brown, Jeremy Cogman, Edward Doyle, Steph Garwood, Rita Harrison-Roach, Chris Hawker, Susie McAuley, Kate O’Kelly, Sarah O’Malley, Neil Ryder (chair).

**In attendance:** Pippa Bass (clerk).

1. **Welcome and apologies**

NR welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were accepted from Margaret Farwell.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

None.

3. **Urgent matters not covered on the agenda.**

None.

4. **Minutes of the last meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2021 were approved.

5. **Matters arising from the last meeting**

The actions were all due post-federation.

6. **Confirmation of MOU**

Governors noted the finalised MOU, including the amendment made to para A.1.2.

7. **HT report**

DB provided feedback from his first few days at Compton and Up Marden (CU) – see Annex A. The following questions were raised:

**Q** Is the school-to-school support programme that you worked on with Claire Inskip still appropriate?

**A** Yes, all of the programme is still pertinent and will be the way forward. Having talked with Victoria Ludlow, WSCC, I understand there is a query over the funding now that we are not doing the school-to-school programme as originally planned. However, I am confident that the AIB bid will go through and will provide enough funding to allow flexibility for staff to work together, which is what is needed.

**Q** Are you able to give the CU children the social time that you are doing in Rake and Rogate?

**A** Sadly, CU has gone down the route of testing to find out how much gap there is, but the children do need the time to get back into their social groups and be themselves.

**Q** Are you intending to run 4 classes up to the end of the school year using supply teachers?

**A** Yes, hopefully the funding will allow this.

**Q** Have you spoken to any CU parents yet?

**A** Not in a formal way, I have a Zoom meeting with parents tomorrow but there have been no negative rumblings.

Governors were delighted to hear the positive start that had been made at CU, they congratulated DB and thanked the SLT for taking on the challenge.

8. **Federation proposal document**

NR explained that the proposal document would be converted into a ‘report from the GB’ once the federation decision was made. Governors reviewed the proposal:

- The consultation responses were heavily in favour of federation.

- The survey results were overwhelmingly positive; the main negatives were coming from Rake parents and staff. Governors agreed the simpler graph showing the positive and negative views was the best representation for the report.
- The pupil figures show there will be a number of children leaving the school in coming years, which may not be balanced with increased numbers coming in, so some decline in numbers should be expected at Compton.
- The projected budget figures were tentative and the assumptions needed to be resolved. The financial position was tight but the budget showed an improving trend.

SM felt that reverting to a partnership and not moving forward with federation would only increase staff anxiety. The Rake and Rogate staff concerns were about the SLT being spread more thinly, but time would allow the new arrangements to settle. Governors agreed that the argument to move forward was compelling and that the alternative would mean more difficult decisions for Rake and Rogate. Governors agreed that more work needed to be done to communicate the benefits of federation to parents, in particular, but unanimously approved the federation proposal document.

#### 9. **Federation decision**

Governors considered the overall proposal and voted **unanimously to move ahead with federation**. Governors also agreed to delegate authority to NR and CH to approve these minutes in order that approved minutes, showing the federation decision, could be sent to WSCC for preparing the Instrument of Government.

#### 10. **Closure report**

Governors agreed the draft closure report, which would be formally approved at the next meeting.

#### 11. **Communications**

- a. Press release. Governors reviewed the draft press release. NR explained that comments were awaited from Nigel Jupp and Gillian Keegan. Governors were happy with the draft and confirmed that the final press release should be agreed between the DVSF and CU chairs of governors.
- b. Staff/parent letters. Governors agreed the letters to staff and parents announcing the federation decision, which would be sent out as soon as possible.

#### 12. **Logistics for first meeting of the new DVSF board of governors**

Governors discussed possible structures for the chair/vice-chair arrangements for the new federation board of governors and agreed that one chair and three vice-chairs, one from each school, was the best option. The clerk would send out an email in advance of the first meeting of the new board asking for the prospective governors to nominate their preferred candidates for both roles.

Governors discussed various options for how to handle the voting arrangements during a virtual meeting, but agreed that mobile phone texts/whatsapp would be the backup:

- SM and JC agreed to follow-up on whether Forms could be used easily for voting during the meeting.
- PB agreed to follow-up with Gordon, IT support, about the best option.
- NR agreed to set up the new governors from CU on Teams.

#### 13. **Safeguarding**

RHR asked about the SCR at CU and advised that a safeguarding audit in all three schools was probably due, starting with CU. SG confirmed that the SCR at CU would be reviewed this week.

#### 14. **Future meeting dates/times**

The next (and final) meeting of the FGB would be held on Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 at 3:30pm. The first meeting of the new DVSF board of governors would follow at 4pm.

Future meeting dates, to be agreed by the new DVSF board, are currently scheduled as follows:

- 28th April 2021
- 9th June 2021
- 14th July 2021

The dates for the local school committees/forums should be switched to suit attendees. The revised dates are:

- 18th May 2021 3:30pm - Rake
- 19th May 2021 4:00pm - Rogate

[Post meeting note: NR and CH approved these minutes by email on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2021]

**ACTIONS:**

Reference	Who	Action	By when
2020.09.16-8a	NR	Take over conversations with HP's staff members to follow-up on their well-being.	Post-federation
2020.10.21-5b	NR	Set up a small group of members from both school forums to take forward work on the websites.	Post-federation
2020.10.21-9	Clerk	Add item on safeguarding training courses to future agenda.	Post-federation
2020.10.21-10	JC	Discuss an outline plan for improving the school websites with HP.	Post-federation
2020.12.02-6b	DB	Provide recommendations for SLT pay progression.	Post-federation
2021.17.03-4	Clerk	Christian ethos policy and well-being & collective worship policy to be added to the next meeting agenda.	Post-federation

**Executive Headteacher's Report to Governors**

**24<sup>th</sup> March 2021**

I arrived at school on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> March with a certain amount of trepidation, but I received a warm welcome, which has continued and improved since.

I have inherited a school with a staff, and to some extent children, who are battered and bruised, but already the atmosphere seems more relaxed. The children are a great selling point of the school as they are bright, chatty and happy.

Paul Brown, Steph Garwood and I met with class teachers on Monday and I have held a meeting with support staff today (the first time, they report, they have met with the Headteacher). Although all the staff have a lot to get off their chests, we have all agreed that teaching and learning needs to be the focus to move the school forward.

One of my greatest concerns on Monday was the make-up of classes – 4 in the morning and 3 in the afternoon. The result of this, besides the mixing of bubbles, is a huge disruption to the children's learning and the development of their friendship groups. As the Year 3 teacher has left the school today I have employed a supply teacher for the rest of the term for full days. I would like this four class model to continue in the new financial year if numbers coming into Reception and finances allow. This model was used in both Rake and Rogate to boost numbers successfully.

The support staff very clearly stated that they look forward to the teachers being left alone to teach. Sadly, as the school is in an Ofsted category this cannot happen and Paul, Steph and I have already planned a Learning Walk and I begin classroom observations next week – which I am really looking forward to.

Much of my time has been spent moving offices, talking to children and juggling emails from 3 schools!

I did, inadvertently, switch off the main server yesterday – however when I asked Richard Christmas, as Senior Teacher, for some feedback this morning on the gate he reported that children, staff and parents thought that this week had been 'brilliant'

David Bertwistle