



**ST ALBAN'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL  
GOVERNING BOARD**  
*Love one another as I have loved you – John 15:12*

**MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL MEETING  
OF THE GOVERNING BOARD  
28 NOVEMBER 2022 at 1900 hours**

**ATTENDANCE**

Name	Category	Term ends	Present	Absent
John McDonald	Headteacher	Ex-officio	P	
Charles Donnelly	Foundation	31/08/2026	P	
Kevin Doogan	Foundation	31/08/2026	P	
Jill Formston	Foundation	31/08/2026	P	
Brigid Gribbin-Bartlett	Foundation	31/08/2025	P	
Peter Matthews	Foundation	31/08/2025		A
Catherine Moor	Foundation	31/08/2025	P	
Father Ramesh	Foundation	31/08/2026	P	
Vacancy	Foundation			
Colette Haig	Staff	31/08/2024	P	
Carmen Davies	Parent	31/08/2026	P	
Bridget Pullen	Parent	31/08/2026		A
Teresa Philpott	Co-opted	31/08/2023	P	
Lorraine Adamson	LA	31/08/2026	P	

*The Headteacher invited the Governors to join in an opening prayer to St Alban.*

## KEVIN DOOGAN in the CHAIR

### 1 PRELIMINARIES

**1.1 WELCOME:** The Chair welcomed everyone to the virtual meeting of the Governing Board.

**1.2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** were received from Peter Matthews and Bridget Pullen.

**RESOLVED:** To consent to the absences of Peter Matthews and Bridget Pullen for the valid reasons given.

**1.3 CONFIDENTIALITY.** The Chair reminded the Governors of the need to maintain confidentiality on all matters discussed this evening.

**1.4 MEMBERSHIP:** The Chair advised that the membership of the Board is complete, except for a vacancy for a Foundation Governor.

Father Ramesh advised that the person who had expressed interest in becoming a Foundation Governor had not proceeded with an application. He gave an undertaking to continue to approach suitable parishioners and assess their interest in becoming a Foundation governor.

**1.5 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS/RELATIONSHIPS:** The Headteacher advised that he is a Governor at St Mary's College.

Charles Donnelly declared that he is Chair of Governors at St Mary's College.

Catherine Moor declared that she is employed at St Mary's College and her spouse is CEO of the Holy Family Trust.

No further declarations of Interests/Relationships were received.

### 2 MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF THE GOVERNING BOARD ON 28 JUNE 2022.

**RESOLVED:** To confirm that the minutes of the meeting of the Governing Board on 28 June 2022 are a true and accurate record of the meeting.

### 3 MATTERS ARISING

The Headteacher reported -

**PARENT GOVERNORS [MIN. 1]:** There is now has a full complement of parent governors.

**HOMEWORK POLICY [MIN.2]:** The review is outstanding. The policy will be taken to the next meeting of the Governing Board.

**PLANNED ADMISSION NUMBER [MIN. 4]:** The number on roll has declined over recent years. The school is working with the LA to look at how the PAN can be reduced from 56 to 45. A period of consultation for six weeks from January would be required.

**SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN [MIN.4]:** The SDP has been shared with the Governors, and is on the agenda for this meeting.

**GOVERNING BOARD'S GOALS/STRATEGIC PLANNING [MIN. 5].** The Governors' goals include children's health and wellbeing. The school has introduced Rest Easy, a whole school health and wellbeing programme, and has purchased Play Therapy, predominantly for children looked after, and post children looked after. The programme starts on Friday, 9 December when a facilitator and a person from Gilbrook will come in to work with children on the impact of lockdown.

**UPDATE ON THE SEF.** The Headteacher reminded the Governors that they had access to the full version of the SEF. In presenting a summary, the Headteacher pointed out that not all aspects are good, some require improvement, particularly the foundation subjects. He gave an update on the curriculum. Under Leadership and Management, for example, the subject leaders had been assessed as 'Requires Improvement'.

**ST ALBAN'S SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN** has a section for children, written in child speak, which is a simple way of putting things that the children can understand. It has not yet been shared with the children, but it will be. It gives the staff a good idea of what the schools' priorities are.

The Chair stated that the SEF gives good reflection of where the school is at, and he recommended that the Board supports the document.

The Headteacher invited further comments or questions on the SEF.

## **GOVERNORS' QUESTIONS/COMMENTS**

**How do the staff feel about the SEF? Are they part of building and responding to it, and agree with what is in it to meet their own plans to work to the next stage of it?**

Headteacher's response: There's been some lack of awareness on where the school sits, because the staff had not been involved in the past. The new framework gives the staff ownership, and that is really important as they have to know where they are. There's a mixture of understanding within the staff; which is to do with

support for some staff they have never had before, and they are a little unsure. Some staff are unaware or are confused about accountability. It's about trying to get the right people to help and support them. The staff '*get it*', they do understand, and they want to do much better. I would say that the majority of staff are fully on board, and are quite happy, but there are always some in every organisation who are not, and it's about supporting everyone.

The two main areas for improvement are the Curriculum and the Development of Subject Leaders.

A Governor commented: 'I think it's a really honest document, and difficult to realise it's about everyone on the school. I think it's a really nice document.'

## **5 MINUTES OF THE BUSINESS MEETING ON 4 OCTOBER 2022:**

**RESOLVED:** To confirm that the minutes of the business meeting on 4 October 2022 are a true and accurate record of the meeting.

The Headteacher commented that the main discussions had been around matching link governors to subject areas and assigning Governors to Governors' Committees had been agreed.

The school business manager has mentioned that, despite her best efforts, she had not received everyone's documents back, for example the signed Code of Conduct, and the statement on Keeping Children Safe In Education etc .

The Headteacher urged those Governors who had not already done so, to return the documents to himself or to the business manager.

## **6 MINUTES OF GOVERNORS' COMMITTEES**

### **6.1 STANDARDS COMMITTEE: 17 OCTOBER 2022.**

**RESOLVED:** To note the minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee on 17 October 2022.

**6.2 ASSETS COMMITTEE: 14 NOVEMBER 2022:** Referring to an aide memoire, the Headteacher commented that the minutes referred to Reading. The school has not invested in books for a few years, and to address this, £10,000 has been allocated in the budget to spend on accelerated reading books. The matter had been discussed at the meeting of the Assets Committee, but large spends of this nature require the approval of the Governing Board.

DFC. 90% is £14,000. The school can spend £15,500 on teaching iPads, including training, for teachers to develop Maths teaching. One of the aspects of training is the ability to be 'at the moment', the overall price is around £600, per iPad.

The Headteacher asked the Governors if they were happy with the plans, with the proviso that the staff must use them.

**The Governors approved, without dissent, the expenditure quoted on the accelerated reading books and on the teaching iPads.**

The Headteacher continued that he needed to make the Governors aware that the school needs a new server. The approximate cost would be £7,500, plus installation costs. The plan was to meet the costs from next year's budget allocation, for installation at the end of July 2023.

The Chair stated that there is a concern about an overspend for the year, but it is not an immediate concern because there is a carry forward, however, moving forward, the spend on Supply is not sustainable. It is probably too early to make decisions just now, but at the period 9 budget review in January when it might be necessary to call an additional meeting to look at any adjustments that need to be made, moving forward.

The Headteacher commented that with a projected carry forward of £184,000 at the end of this year there is some 'breathing space', but there is a need to be sensible. There will be some natural wastage - some staff have secured other jobs and will not be replaced, and short-term contracts will not be renewed.

The budget is healthy, and although there is a deficit going forward, it is manageable for the next three/four years. The school has far fewer children than in the past and that is the reason the Planned Admission Number [PAN] has to be reduced.

In his Autumn Statement, the Chancellor announced that there will be more money for schools, but so far there has been no indication of how it will be allocated.

The Government is clawing back £4,000 from the school's allocation of £21,000 for recovery. The business manager has been asked to look in detail to help understand how they are calculating the recovery money.

There is a need to confirm the Admissions Policy, and to look at the PAN in 2023/24.

GDPR is an issue. Staff do not understand the implications of having conversations with parents at the door, whilst some parents see it as '*keeping us out*'. The Headteacher gave examples of the things that the school needs to make sure are in place. A person has been invited to undertake a GDPR audit.

**RESOLVED: To note the minutes of the Assets Committee on 14 November 2022.**

## **7 GOVERNORS' QUESTIONS/COMMENTS**

**On the question of standards, there was some concern about KS1 results last year.**

The Headteacher reported attending a support and challenge meeting with the LA, and the minutes from that meeting have been received.

The school knew what would come out on the KS1 results and had queried a number of things at the meeting. Long term sickness by two members of staff had caused some staff turbulence, despite the efforts made to 'plug the gaps'.

The Headteacher stated that he was confident that it would not happen again.

The school's negative Maths data [-0.8] led to understanding how Maths works throughout the school. There was some confusion around how Mastery was delivered. The school has worked with the Maths Hub.

After giving examples and feedback, the Headteacher advised that the Schools Assurance team will be visiting the school this week to look at Maths, History and Geography. A report will be produced for the LA, which will be shared with the Governors.

The school is also part of the Maths Mastery Programme run by the Wirral Hub. The programme explains ways in which the school should be working on strategies, and the strategies the children need, rather than learning by rote.

**GOVERNOR'S QUESTION/COMMENT**

**Maths has changed. There was one for each year group, and the parents were invited in to talk about supporting parents in supporting children at home. Is there an opportunity to encourage more home learning for the parents to do with their children, and not actually do the work for them? It worked really well, is there another opportunity?**

**Headteacher's response:** Basically, it is in the plan, but we want to make sure the right message is given, and they are not overly guiding the children. Maths Mastery is about children developing their thinking. We'll do some parental workshops and build together as partners. One of the things we need to do better is making sure we develop the parents and they are part of the children's learning.

We had a parents' forum called Chatterbox, and we'll bring it in again, not just for Maths, but for other subjects as well. We need a timetable for parents, and will enquire if there is a good time for parents.

**ACTION: Arrange Parental Workshops; re-introduce Chatterbox, after finding out the time that would suit the parents.**

The Headteacher continued that he wanted the teachers to be confident about what they are doing, and gave examples. Maths Mastery is on the website to introduce

parents, and then start workshops, giving information for each year. He said he was conscious about workload, but the website is the best place to help, for example, there are videos to watch, or teachers share part of the lesson. Mastery is a different way of learning – a fun way when done well. He would take all these points forward.

Year 2 did not do so well, despite working really hard. Each class had two teachers in the mornings [four teachers in total], and whilst it has been expensive in some ways, some has been recouped through staff absence insurance and school mentoring, and there are signs that the children are making progress.

## 8 REPORTS

**HEADTEACHER'S REPORT:** The Headteacher commented that his report does not contain anything that the Governors do not already know.

He highlighted the following:

- The banding letter from the LA has placed this school in Band 3, requires improvement. Accompanied by the Chair of Governors, he had attended a support and challenge meeting with LA officers.
- The SEF also requires improvement.
- The budget has dropped by a significant amount over the last three years, but there will be a carry forward at the end of this year.
- Compared to national and LA averages, the SEND statistics for this school are quite high. A person will be carrying out an SEND audit, in a supportive way.
- Free school meals have increased from 19% in 2019, to 36.5%, and the context has changed.
- The school is following up a roof bid, and works around the school.
- Staff absences – the school has been 'hit' again. Some overspend in Supply is offset by insurance [although income has not yet been received]. A member of staff was absent through sickness from January to July.
- An extra TA has been employed to support a child with a high degree of SEND.
- There are some barriers in this school, which mean that this school is not necessarily the right placement for children with high levels of need.
- Attendance is 94.7%. Unauthorised absences for holidays in term time is a big problem – attendance would be 95.9 if unauthorised absences were discounted. The measures taken to address this problem including targeted family meetings and working with other Catholic schools. A number of families have received fines.

- Staff absences are high, and anything less than 90% is being challenged and recorded.

The Chair commented that year 5 seems to be a particular problem, but it's '*on the radar*' and we're trying to do something about it working with a consultant and other schools in the Holy Family MAT. Perhaps the school needs to be tougher, especially on the first day when children are reported to have colds.

#### **GOVERNOR'S QUESTION:**

**You talked about developing a role for attendance. Has that happened?**

**Headteacher's response:** Yes. The job has only just been evaluated and has to be advertised. Meanwhile, a member of the support staff is carrying out the role. Having someone to support families takes the pressure of other staff, and is having an impact. There has been an improvement in attendance.

The full approval of the Governors is needed for the new post of pastoral/family support.

#### **ACTION POINT:**

**The Governing Board to approve the new post of pastoral/family support.**

The Headteacher referred to his attendance, accompanied by the Chair of Governors, at a Support and Challenge meeting with the LA. He directed the Governors to the comments at the bottom of his report which referred to the level of change needed in the school, the priorities that need to change first, and acknowledgement that it was not possible to do everything at once. St Alban's is still very much a Good school, with lots of good staff. The comments that the new framework has 'upped' the expectations for staff. It's about bringing everyone with you, and no-one is overwhelmed, and that things are being done at the right time.

## **9 LA HEALTH & SAFETY AUDIT**

Lorraine Adamson had carried out the LA's Health and Safety Audit. She reported the following areas of concern -

**Risk assessments** Gaps in the risk assessments, and failure to record staff changes on the system

**Asbestos management:** Contractors not signing in on site visits and confirming sight of the asbestos management plan;

**Unlocked doors** on cupboards containing hazardous cleaning materials. [This item was picked up on a previous inspection].

**Unlocked door** to the caretaking room, tool room and the chemical storage area. This room is used as a collection area for the children.

A follow-up visit would be made in January.

The Headteacher confirmed that the cupboard doors were now locked, and contractors are required to sign the asbestos register when they visit. He suggested the need for some in-house training. He referred to the curriculum and access to CLEAPSS for support with risk assessments for the curriculum, ensuring that the curriculum is not only safe, but better.

**ACTION POINT: All staff to be trained on CLEAPSS.**

## **10 POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

The school business manager had forwarded the policies and procedures to all the Governors, with an invitation to raise questions/queries.

The Headteacher stated that he hoped that everyone had had the opportunity to read the policies, adding that most are bespoke to this school; some are from the LA, and others have been taken from The Key.

**RESOLVED: To adopt the policies and procedures -**

- **Staff handbook 2022/23**
- **Staff Handbook - Changes in KCSIE**
- **St Alban's Staff Code of Conduct**
- **Health & Safety policy 2022**
- **Whistle blowing policy 2020**
- **Scheme of delegation 2022**
- **Safeguarding Policy**
- **Keeping children safe in education**
- **Digital safety**
- **Mobile Phone policy: Staff**

## **11 PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS IN 2023**

The Headteacher assumed that all the Governors had seen the published programme of meetings in 2023.

## **12 OTHER BUSINESS**

**12.1 KS1.** The Chair commented that key stage 1 is reported as being an issue for the school, and the Headteacher has been very open and honest about that. He had been to a meeting and reported on what had been done. These children are now in year 3 and are doing well, but the report that came out still focussed on the KS1 issue. The LA had already made up their minds that KS1 is a problem in this school.

The Headteacher replied that all the staff have now had Phonics training, and the school had 86% in phonics, which he hoped would translate to good outcomes across the school.

**No other business had been notified in advance.**

The Chair closed the part one meeting.

The part two meeting continued in closed session.

**I hereby CERTIFY that the minutes of the part one meeting  
of the Governing Board on 28 November 2022 are a true  
and accurate account of the meeting.**

\_\_\_\_\_ **CHAIR**

\_\_\_\_\_ **DATE**

