



GOVERNING BODY TO VERNHAM DEAN GILLUMS CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

Minutes of the Full Governing Body Meeting held on 23rd February 2026 at 4:30pm

Present

Mr Paul Nicoll (Chair) Ms Anna Hall (AH)
Mrs Holly Bulpitt (HB) Rev Carol Dunk (CD)
Miss Siobhan McCullagh (SM)

In Attendance

Mr Ian Hickman (IH) - Executive Headteacher
Miss Nikki Pauk (NP) - Clerk

Apologies

Mrs Kate Taylor (KT) Mr Steve Bocock (SB)
Mrs Rachel Miller (RM)

Absent with no apologies

Red font denotes - Ensuring the clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction

Green font denotes - Holding the Headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils

Blue font denotes - overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent

Ref	Agenda Item
1.	Welcome, Apologies and Prayer
2.	Declaration of Pecuniary Interest Bulpitt Printing
3.	Review and sign off the minutes from the meeting 20th November 2025 The minutes of the previous meeting were reviewed and approved as an accurate record.
4.	Budget Report The school's financial position remains strong. There are no significant anticipated changes before the end of March. The school is forecasting a healthy carry forward and a positive budget outlook over the next five years. Admissions Update: One new Year 1 pupil joining tomorrow. Ten first-choice applications received for Reception (September intake). Governor Question: Given the improving financial position, is there a long-term plan for the use of reserves? What are the trigger points for appointing an additional teacher? What is the overall vision in relation to building reserves versus investing in staffing?

	Headteacher's Response: The priority is to invest in current pupils. The main cost pressure for schools remains staffing. Appointing an additional teacher would have significant financial implications and would substantially alter projected figures. Infant class numbers are increasing and discussions are underway regarding provision for September. If pupil numbers continue to rise, particularly in Key Stage 2 (potentially exceeding 40 pupils), a move back to three classes may be necessary. However, this will depend entirely on sustained numbers. The school's current strong financial position is largely due to operating with two classes and a part-time Headteacher model. If pupil numbers remain consistent, this position is sustainable. Short-term focus is ensuring appropriate provision for Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 in September. Key Stage 2 staffing remains under review but is not urgent at present. The majority of the budget is allocated to staffing, and future financial commitments must be carefully considered. The school is exploring the possibility of supporting a member of staff through a teaching apprenticeship programme. Governor Question: <i>Is SEND provision sufficient given rising pupil numbers?</i> Headteacher's Response: The school is currently well-resourced for SEND, with a SENDCO in place and strong support staffing levels relative to pupil numbers.
5.	HT Report (Verbal) Professional Development: • Joint INSET day held with colleagues from the Skylark Federation. • Outdoor Leader training undertaken (Hampshire Outdoor Education recommended qualification for educational visits). • LSAs attended Autism Spectrum Disorder and ADHD training at Kimpton Headteacher addressed the parent feedback sent to him by a Governor: Overwhelming feedback they are thrilled with school (YR, 1 & 2 parents) Wraparound Care Update: Progress has been made in procuring wraparound care. Ofsted registration is in place; staffing remains the main barrier. Registration took longer than anticipated. The school has approached an alternative provider to explore options, as establishing provision remains a priority. The main challenge is financial viability due to small projected numbers. Governors suggested contacting Little Fingers to explore staffing interest for additional hours. Clubs & Enrichment Sports, dance, languages and music do not receive additional funding. Clubs currently run Monday to Thursday and are delivered by staff on a goodwill basis. Stow Sports Sports Teacher has been a positive male role model Safeguarding – Data Permissions:

	A parental concern was raised regarding photo permissions. Following discussion, consent is now sought before linking images to external sites. Leadership Visibility: Mr Hickman's visibility was discussed. As Executive Head across three schools, time is divided. Mr Hickman continues to attend when possible; daily leadership presence is maintained by the Head of School. PTA Update: PTA engagement continues to be challenging due to limited volunteer capacity. A new parent meeting planned for the summer term will be used to encourage greater involvement. The School Council will also provide input to support the PTA's work. It was noted that the PTA Chair had been under the impression that she had been asked to raise £30,000 towards the purchase of a minibus. A Governor clarified that this stemmed from an informal conversation following the Christmas lunch, during which fundraising ideas for a minibus were discussed. The Governor suggested hosting a fundraising event at the Village Hall, including a meal and a tribute band, drawing on previous experience of similar successful events that generated significant funds for another school. Reference was also made to past involvement in fundraising events and auctions. Governors agreed that in order to deliver large-scale fundraising initiatives of this nature, it will be important to further develop and strengthen the school's parent community and increase active participation.
6.	Safeguarding Update A Governor raised a concern regarding safeguarding record-keeping. A safeguarding audit is scheduled for Wednesday the 25th of February 2026. The audit will include documentation scrutiny, staff interviews and pupil discussions. The Safeguarding Governor will attend part of the review. A full report will follow. Training: • DSL refresher training completed in November. • Governors' safeguarding training requirements under review. • Kate to contact NGA for available courses. • Prevent training refreshed for existing staff; new staff completed full training. • Safer recruitment training completed where required. • Volunteer Code of Conduct to be finalised. Governors requested a clear list of essential training requirements. This is being prepared. Policies requiring updates include the Complaints Policy. The Code of Conduct was updated earlier in the year. Code of conduct for volunteers to be completed - IH to speak to PN at a separate date.
7.	Staffing / Personnel • New caretaker appointed; positive start noted.

	• One member of staff undertaking TARLA (Therapeutic Active Listening Assistant) training to complement ELSA provision. • Ongoing Forest School training for another member of staff. • Exploring apprenticeship teacher training for September intake.
8.	Health & Safety • Replacement fencing completed to a good standard. • Water leaks identified; scaffolding scheduled. • Staff kitchen ceiling damage logged. • Fire evacuation procedures under review. • Two staff members to receive Fire Warden training. • Signage across school being clarified. • Compliance checks transferred from Janet to Dave.
9.	School Improvement Plan Spelling Focus: Interventions implemented; early positive impact evident. English progress across the school is generally strong. Mathematics: Progress is mixed. Some pupils have made significant gains; others requiring intervention are still struggling. Handwriting Scheme: Investment in a new scheme to support spelling improvements. Curriculum Development: • Reviewing foundational knowledge progression between year groups. • Science and Computing curriculum plans under review. • Steady progress against annual improvement priorities.
10.	Governor Visits Governors have undertaken visits to review spelling and phonics provision, attend the Christmas Crafts event and support the Reception Open Days. The purpose of governor visits is to strengthen understanding of school priorities and to support accountability through informed questioning at governing body meetings. Governors are encouraged to increase school presence. CD would like to come into school to have a school dinner with the children, observing learning and monitor prayer spaces as this is something she has undertaken at another school. There are currently vacancies for two Parent Governors. If insufficient parent interest arises, consideration will be given to appointing one Parent Governor and one Co-opted Governor. Governors discussed the importance of curiosity, relationship-building and maintaining a strategic (not operational) role.
11.	AOB Tilly

	A Governor, who works in pet insurance, queried whether appropriate insurance cover is in place for Tilly's attendance in school. HB said that she was told that as she was with the Pets Trust she was covered. Governor confirmed that this would not cover her and the correct insurance needs to be in place for her to come into school. She suggested contacting Brookes Brathwaite or Petplan Sanctuary. Action: NP / HB School dinners Concerns were raised regarding the temperature of meals on delivery. Discussions with ABM are ongoing. While potential equipment improvements (e.g. hot cupboard or microwave) were considered, it was noted that responsibility for providing meals at the correct temperature rests with the catering provider. Portion sizes were also discussed, following feedback that some children remain hungry at the end of the school day. A recent decline in the number of pupils taking school dinners was noted. The Headteacher advised that alternative catering options are being explored, including provision from Appleshaw. It was noted that although the current service is delivered-in, there were no similar issues when meals were previously provided by HC3S. One Governor said that her daughter goes to Busy Bees Nursery who have food delivered in. She said that the quality and standard is exceptional.
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The meeting closed at 17:53

Date of next meeting: Thursday 19th March 2026 at 16:30

Signed (confirmed):



Chair of Governors

Date: 26/03/2026

	Action	Who by	Deadline
1.	Safer Recruitment training to be completed	IH, HB, NP, PN, KT, RM and SB	
2.	Obtain correct Pet Insurance for Tilly to come into school	NP / HB	
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	Action	Who by	Date
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