



# GOVERNING BODY TO VERNHAM DEAN GILLUMS CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

## Minutes of the Full Governing Body Meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2025 at 4:30pm

### Present

Mr Paul Nicoll (Chair)                      Ms Anna Hall (AH)  
Mrs Holly Bulpitt (HB)                      Rev Carol Dunk (CD)  
Mrs Kate Taylor (KT)                      Mr Steve Bocock (SB)  
Mrs Rachel Miller (RM)

### In Attendance

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

### Apologies

Miss Siobhan McCullagh (SM)

### 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.  | <b>Welcome, Apologies and Prayer</b>   |
| 2.  | <b>Declaration of Pecuniary Interest</b><br>Bulpitt Printing   |
| 3.  | <b>Review and sign off the minutes from the meeting 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2025</b><br>Approved  |
| 4.  | <b>Budget Revision</b><br>NP provided an overview of the budget, confirming that we are projected to remain in surplus for the next five years. The budget is in a strong position, and all Governors agreed it could be signed off.<br><br>IH explained that Peter and PN had met with Julia Roberts to discuss funding for children transferring from Smannell. They were informed that funding only follows pupils if they remain on roll at their current school until the very last day. As Smannell is currently in deficit, any remaining funds will be used to cover the school's debts. IH highlighted that if pupils leave early, there would be no funding available to contribute toward settling the deficit. The NOR figures used are conservative, and options such as the Growing Schools Grant will be explored. Governors asked whether any of the transferring pupils have SEN status that would bring additional funding - none that bring funding with them.<br><br>Overall, the financial outlook is positive, especially considering we are a small school. |

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### **HT Report (Written)**

#### Pupil Numbers / Context

The Headteacher provided contextual information regarding current pupil numbers and projections for the NOR moving into September. There appears to be a positive trend, with stronger numbers coming through in the younger year groups. HB received an enquiry from a parent concerned about teaching arrangements and the possibility of classes being split. As younger cohorts continue to grow, this will need to be considered carefully in future planning.

Governors asked whether any additional pupils are expected. A parent who visited for a showround is waiting to see how things develop and has a child starting in Reception in September.

Governors also asked how many pupils remain on roll at Smannell - currently 15. A new parent whose children came from Smannell is "flying the flag" for the school.

#### Strategic Goals Update

Clear priorities have been identified for development over the next couple of years. By the end of this academic year, senior leaders expect these to have been achieved and will then consider plans for the next 2-3 years. Further development points for the school will be explored.

#### School Improvement

Key areas of focus continue to be spelling, multiplication facts, and arithmetic. The school has invested in Doodle Learning, which provides tailored questions for pupils. There is no assessment data available yet for this term, but assessments will take place over the coming weeks, with outcomes and detailed data to be reported.

Work is ongoing to strengthen foundational knowledge and skills in the Early Years, with accompanying documentation linked in the HT report. The DfE is placing significant emphasis on EYFS, and the school is clear about expectations for pupils by the end of Reception and at key transition points between year groups.

Computing and science will also be reviewed. The DfE has issued new guidance for the school's Relationships and Sex Education policy.

#### LLPR Actions

Lindsey McCarthy will be coming in to work with HS on enhancing the EYFS and KS1 environment.

#### Monitoring Calendar

Monitoring processes operate differently in this school, and limited work has been undertaken so far this term to develop the calendar further.

#### Incident Reporting

Staff continue to submit incident reports regularly, averaging between 30 and 40 each month.

#### Wraparound Care

The school is still awaiting Ofsted's visit for the walkaround. Inkpen had theirs on 13<sup>th</sup> November, having applied 10 days before us. NP will follow up for an update.

Governor raised a question about minimum numbers required and was informed that this will not be an immediate concern as the school has a funding buffer to support the initial implementation.

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| 6.  | <p><b>Safeguarding Update</b><br/>Annual refresher training undertaken in September.</p> <p>DSL refresher training undertaken at beginning of Nov. HS no longer DSL.</p>  |
| 7.  | <p><b>Staffing / Personnel</b><br/>Mr Cox retired at half term. A new caretaker, Dave Christy, has been appointed and is expected to start on Monday.</p> <p>TB (HLTA) will not be returning. AR will continue in the role on a permanent basis and has also begun Forest School training.</p> <p>A meeting took place with Julia Roberts and Peter Christy, which was positive. It was helpful to review the school's current position, and there is confidence about the direction of travel. There are no limits on collaboration opportunities, so the school will consider how best to develop these further.</p>  |
| 8.  | <p><b>Health &amp; Safety</b><br/>The main issue is the accident that occurred before half term. Progress on resolving this has been slow, and the insurers (via Hampshire) have not been very responsive. Photos and information have now been sent to the property management surveyor.</p> <p>A Grounds Day was recently held at the school.</p>   |
| 9.  | <p><b>School Improvement Plan</b><br/>Covered in HT Report</p>  |
| 10. | <p><b>Governor Visits</b><br/>RM is scheduled to visit next Thursday to review spelling provision across the school. Last month, they conducted a 1:1 session with a pupil using the programme, which proved to be very positive.</p> <p>CD continues to visit regularly to support staff and pupil wellbeing, to observe how RE lessons are delivered, and to identify potential spaces for dedicated worship. HB confirmed to CD that each classroom has a designated prayer area.</p> <p><u>Reporting of Visits</u><br/>The key priority is that Governors are actively visiting the school and showing curiosity about what is happening. When Governors report back during meetings and these discussions are minuted, this provides an official record. Ofsted typically asks for minutes of Governor meetings; they do not usually request individual Governor visit reports.</p> <p>Challenge can take different forms - visiting the school, asking questions, and offering support. Queries can often be addressed during a visit, or raised at the next Governing Body meeting. If there are any concerns, Governors should speak with IH. Being curious and inquisitive remains an important part of the role.</p> <p>CD would like to spend a full day in school to gain a deeper understanding of the different year groups, the curriculum, and to explore ways in which Governors may be able to offer further support.</p> |
| 11. | <p><b>AOB</b><br/>Before Covid, the Governors traditionally prepared a Christmas lunch for the children at the Village Hall, and this will be reinstated this year. PN will oversee most of the kitchen arrangements and has requested Governor support with serving on 11<sup>th</sup> December.</p>   |

Safer Recruitment Training

Safer recruitment training will be booked, taking advantage of the Black Friday offer. The training will be completed by IH, HB, NP, PN, KT, RM and SB. NP will book this training and a link will be sent to Governors for them to complete it.

Conholt Funding

AH updated that she was told that our application is currently near the top of the review list. Conholt has decided to allocate funding only two/three times per year due to the high number of applications, and a decision is expected soon. Indications are positive, and AH is hopeful that we will receive the full amount requested.

KT updated that her neighbour works at Conholt and that she handles incoming funding applications and confirmed to KT that she not received our proposal, indicating this suggests our proposal is not being reviewed. AH said she will double check this information with her contact and if necessary, she will print and provide a copy of the proposal so it can be passed to the neighbour/employee directly, also ensuring we do not undermine her contact's involvement in the process, risking our success.

School Dinners

Governors discussed how the new catering provider is performing. HB reported no concerns raised by pupils, though some feedback from parents and children outside the school community has been less positive. The School Council will be invited to share views, and the provider will also be asked to engage with parents.

Governance

A call for two new Parent Governors will be issued after Christmas.

Other Updates

The Activall unit to be unplugged each Friday.

Christingle Service will take place on 11th December at school and the Carol Service on 18th December in Church, both at 2:30pm.

The meeting closed at 17:21

**Date of next meeting: Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> February 2026 at 16:30**

Signed (confirmed):

**Chair of Governors**

Date:

|           | <b>Action</b>                         | <b>Who by</b>                 | <b>Deadline</b> |
|-----------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>1.</b> | Safeguarding training to be completed | IH, HB, NP, PN, KT, RM and SB |                 |
| <b>2.</b> |                                       |                               |                 |
| <b>3.</b> |                                       |                               |                 |
| <b>4.</b> |                                       |                               |                 |

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