



COUNTY CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE (GOVERNORS)

WEDNESDAY, 13 NOVEMBER 2024

3.00 PM REMOTE MEETING VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

MEMBERSHIP - Councillors Bob Standley (Chair), Colin Belsey, Peter Pragnell, Alan Shuttleworth, Chris Collier

ALSO INVITED - Denise Kong, Jenny Barnard-Langston, Katharine Rabson-Stark, Monica Pell John Murray, Claire Cornford, Charlotte Johnstone

Minutes Rosie O'Brien

AGENDA

1. Minutes of the previous meeting (*Pages 3 - 6*)
2. Apologies for absence
3. Disclosure of Interests
Disclosure by all Members present of personal interests in matters on the agenda, the nature of any interest and whether the Members regard the interest as prejudicial under the terms of the Code of Conduct.
4. Urgent items
Notification of any items which the Chair considers urgent and proposes to take at the appropriate part of the agenda. Any members who wish to raise urgent items are asked, wherever possible, to notify the Chair before the start of the meeting. In so doing, they must state the special circumstances which they consider justify the matter being considered urgent.
5. Academy Update - John Murray, Senior Manager: Leadership and Governance, Governor and Clerking Services.
6. Local Authority Governor Appointments and Governor Services Update - Charlotte Johnstone, Project Officer, Governor and Clerking Service. (*Pages 7 - 10*)
7. ESGF Verbal Update for Councillors to include:
 - How will schools be protected following the announcement of The Chancellor's Budget and the East Sussex County Council cost cutting plans?
 - The value and importance of Governors as Volunteers and the support required.
8. Any other items previously notified under agenda item 4

5 November 2024

Contact Clare Cornford (Governor and Clerking Officer – Governor and Clerking Service), 01323 466887

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County Consultative Committee - Minutes

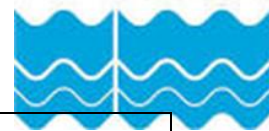
Date: Thursday 11th July 2024 10:00

Meeting: County Consultative Committee comprising of Councillors' and East Sussex Governors' Forum (ESGF).

Present: Councillor's Bob Standley, Colin Belsey, Alan Shuttleworth.

ESCC Officers: Clare Cornford, John Murray, Charlotte Johnstone, Rosie O'Brien (Minutes) Members of the ESGF: Jenny Barnard-Langston, Katharine Rabson Stark, Margaret Rooms.

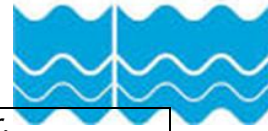
1	<p><u>Minutes of the previous meeting</u></p> <p>Cllr standley welcomed everyone to the meeting.</p> <p>No further comments on the previous minutes.</p>
2	<p><u>Apologies for absence</u></p> <p>No apologies received.</p>
3	<p><u>Disclosure of interests</u></p> <p>No interests declared.</p>
4	<p><u>Urgent items</u></p> <p>No items raised.</p>
5	<p><u>Academy Update</u></p> <p>Verbal update from JM.</p> <p>Since the last county consultative committee meeting in March, 4 schools have received academy orders.</p> <p>This included St Mary Star of the Sea Catholic Primary School and St Thomas A Becket Catholic Primary School. They will be joining Bosco Catholic Education Trust. The conversion dates have not yet been confirmed.</p> <p>Robertsbridge received an academy order after an Ofsted inspection.</p> <p>Ringmer Primary School also received an academy order, there is no confirmation of a trust at this time.</p> <p>JM confirmed that the DfE have decided that schools must convert in groups of three or more to claim the academy support grant.</p> <p>The Councillors asked if schools receive the money after they decide to become an academy. JM confirmed this was correct, the grant can be applied for, and then will be received after the conversion.</p> <p>Councillor Belsey asked whether there was an updated on the staff strikes within schools in the Brighton University Academy Trust.</p> <p>JM confirmed that all the LA is aware of is that staff are on strike.</p> <p>Councillors asked if children are being sent home? JM confirmed that no children have been sent home at this time and the action has now ended. There are no definite numbers on children that didn't access education.</p> <p>Cllr Standley confirmed that he will look into this further.</p>



6	<p><u>LA Gov appointments and governor services update</u></p> <p>Verbal update from CJ.</p> <p>Since the last County Consultative meeting, 3 Local Authority Governors were nominated for appointment, all were approved. This included 1 new appointment 2 reappointments. There have also been some additional applications recently.</p> <p>Governor Services have recently been reviewing their training offer to identify gaps and respond to legislative changes. A new exclusion briefing sessions has been introduced and was well received.</p> <p>A Survey was sent to all East Sussex Governors in May. It included a question on which sessions the governors found most useful. The new exclusions briefing was included as most valuable to some governors.</p> <p>Governor Services is aware of the upcoming statutory guidance on attendance and how it is becoming a priority focus. There has been a Local Area Forum on attendance for school governors. 58 governors across 50 East Sussex Schools attended, the session received lots of positive comments. There was an ESGF facilitated networking following this forum. The attendance sessions are going to run again with the new legislation.</p> <p>CJ provided an update on governor recruitment. Since the last County Consultative Committee meeting 58 new governors were appointed. Since September 2023 178 governors were appointed in maintained schools in East Sussex. Gov inductions to be improved to increase retention.</p> <p>CJ provided an update on clerking. The first cohort of the new clerking programme (East Sussex Excellence in Clerking) finished recently. Candidates are currently undertaking the knowledge test to finish the programme. The programme covered essential elements of clerking and governance, and complex procedures. Governor Services feel that it has gone well and was taken positively by the cohort. The second cohort begins in September.</p> <p>Governor Services believe that clerks should be considered across the board. A new session has been created which is aimed at chairs working effectively with clerk. Chairs will have the opportunity to discuss how to improve their working relationship with the clerk. It will also be a reminder of the chair's line management responsibilities.</p> <p>CLlr questions - Councillors noted that approximately 130 schools did not attend the attendance forum. Councillors asked Governor Services if the list of non-attending schools is retained to encourage those schools to attend in the next academic year. CJ confirmed that Governor Services can send targeted communications to these schools to encourage attendance at future sessions.</p> <p>Councillors noted that newly appointed governor figures were excellent. The Councillors then queried the number of governors who have left East Sussex schools. CJ will find data on this and follow up with numbers after the meeting has ended.</p> <p>Councillors asked if Governor Services is continuing with the search for new governors. CC confirmed that the recruitment and expression of interest process is ongoing.</p>
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	<p>KRS asked if 178 new appointments is a good amount and asked how it compares to previous years. CJ confirmed it was slightly less with the number being 199 in the last academic year.</p> <p>Cllr Standley expressed that in future meetings it would be helpful to have past statistics available.</p> <p>KRS asked if exclusion sessions can become mandatory or statutory for governors. JM confirmed that governor services are doing a training analysis over the summer break, this will include checking how many governors per board have attended exclusions briefings. This will result in Governor Services strongly recommending that boards have at least 2 people attending.</p> <p>Councillors asked if the briefings can be made mandatory JBL confirmed that there is no legal obligation so therefore it cannot become mandatory. It can only be encouraged. JBL suggested that in future governors can be recruited with the expectation that they attend exclusions training as a core session. JBL added that the Governor Services training plan document is very useful. The induction training is well attended and not mandatory, so it would be useful to raise expectations on exclusions training to encourage attendance levels.</p>
7	<p><u>ESGF Verbal update for councillors.</u> The Chair of the ESGF sent an update separate to the agenda as they were unable to attend. CJ read this on behalf of the Chair.</p> <p>ESGF members highlighted the importance of the Local Authority supporting the ESGF to allow them to do their work to support East Sussex school governors.</p> <p>Councillor Standley expressed that that the Councillors are extremely thankful for all East Sussex governors giving up their time to support schools.</p> <p>JBL confirmed that governors are appreciative of the support councillors give the Governor and Clerking Service and Governors in East Sussex. Many Local Authority's do not offer the level of support ESCC does. Governors value this which results in high quality governance. The ESGF likes to match the support given to them by all Councillors and Governor Services.</p> <p>MR reiterated that the support from ESCC is positive. There is always support available within governing boards and the Local Authority.</p> <p>ESGF members confirmed that they support the idea of direct communication to governing boards missing training.</p> <p>KRS highlighted that governor volunteers want to give back to the community but do not expect that they will be required for extra support such as complaints and exclusions panels. KRS feels that the community feeling from networking sessions help governors' wellbeing and allows governors to share concerns outside of their board. This allows other governors to provide support. KRS stated that becoming a governor can be positive for CPD reasons for people who wish to develop their career. It can provide career opportunities for people currently working.</p>
8	<p><u>AOI under item 4</u></p> <p>Nothing raised.</p>
9	<p><u>Next meeting:</u></p>



	The date of the next meeting is not in the calendar yet. Approximately November.
10	

Report to: County Consultative Committee

Date of meeting: 13 November 2024

By: Charlotte Johnstone

Title: Local Authority Governor appointments and Governor and Clerking Service Update for Councillors

Purpose: To update Councillors on the nomination for appointment of local authority governors and governor training

RECOMMENDATIONS

1) For information

1 Background

1.1 The local authority has a statutory duty to approve nominations for local authority governors. Once nominated, schools then appoint local authority governors onto their governing board.

1.2 This report provides a summary of local authority governor applications approved for nomination, and information about the level of governor vacancies across the county.

2 Supporting information

2.1 Since the report sent to Councillors on the 11th July 2024, 13 local authority governors were nominated for appointment, all were approved for a 4 year term of office. These were all reapplications.

Lisa Mahony	St John's CE Primary School Crowborough	Reapplication
William Lovett	Nutley Primary School	Reapplication
Karen Bye	Groombridge St Thomas	Reapplication
Wendy Collier	Pevensey and Westham CE Primary	Reapplication
Jenny Barnard-Langston	St Mark's CEP School	Reapplication
Christine Johnston	The Genesis Federation	Reapplication
Diana Harvey	Brede Primary School	Reapplication
Mark Atkinson	Cross In Hand CE Primary School	Reapplication
Mark Evans	Chailey School	Reapplication
Emma Collins	Polegate Primary School	Reapplication
Jennifer Sutherland	St Thomas CE Aided Primary School (Winchelsea)	Reapplication
Jenny Barnard-Langston	The Bluebell Federation	Reapplication
Hannah Wood	Meridian CP School	Reapplication

2.2 The Governor and Clerking Service has observed the increasing number of complaints that schools are needing to manage, and this has been shared and discussed previously with the councillors in March 2024. The Governor and Clerking Service has been offering ongoing support to schools who have received complaints. In Term 1 of this academic year, we have supported 7 schools and across the past 6 months we have supported 20 schools with complaints. The forms of support put in place has varied from simply having an initial phone call which can clarify the complaint and the next steps the school needs to take, to more detailed conversations with the Headteacher, the Chair of Governors or the Clerk to Governors to dissect different aspects of complex complaints. On occasion we have arranged for independent governors to sit on Stage 3 Complaint panels to support schools who either do not have enough unbiased governors available, or to support boards who do not have experienced governors to chair a panel. We have reiterated the training offer in place to governors, with multiple sessions running that provide an overview and deep-dives into school complaints. These sessions include:

- Complaints: The Clerk’s Role (Training)
- Handling School Complaints (Training)
- Undertaking a Thorough Stage 2 Complaint Investigation (Briefing)
- Managing an Effective Stage 3 Complaint Panel (Briefing)
- Handling Complaints for Headteachers and Senior Leaders (Training)
- Managing Complex School Issues (Training)

Whilst we are not always privy to the final outcomes of the complaints that we support with, we focus on ensuring boards are following the correct processes and following the school’s complaints policy at every step.

2.3 The Governor and Clerking Service are happy to be running SEND training for governors again this year with the support of Nicola Angus, Senior Manager of SEND Quality of Education. We have run two separate networking sessions, one for primary governors and one for secondary governors. The networking sessions provided a great base for the training programme to be constructed upon, and demonstrated the passion and dedication that our governors have towards strategically monitoring the SEN provision in their schools. The sessions did highlight the work needed to increase the visibility of SEND governance in secondary settings, and the Governor and Clerking Service is working with the support of Nicola Angus to increase this. Work around this includes governor engagement and running surveys to understand what secondary SEND governors want to learn in the training sessions. We are also going to run an additional ‘New to SEND Governance’ session which aims to provide an overview of the responsibilities of SEND governance and to build the confidence in governors to monitor SEND in their schools, as well as ensuring compliance. We will also be following this all up within our Term 2 governor and clerk bulletin with advice, guidance and quick tips for SEND monitoring.

The Governor and Clerking Service has planned termly topics for the year ahead which will be key focuses throughout the team’s communications and the training and networking sessions in each term. The topics are:

- Term 1: Inclusion.
- Term 2: SEND.
- Term 3: Finance.
- Term 4: Transition.

- Term 5: Relationships on the Board.
- Term 6: Preparing for Results.

These topics have been chosen to align with and respond to the Excellence for All vision 2024-2030. In Term 2 the Governor and Clerking Service are looking forward to running a Governor Forum on the topic of Belonging, which will be delivered by Barry Blakelock, Education Director at the Aquinas Trust. The theme of 'Belonging' touches on the topics of Inclusion and SEND, so the forum will compliment the topics already embedded across our training and networking programme for Term 1 and 2.

The Governor and Clerking Service has run the new '*Attendance and Inclusion*' training session in Term 1. This governor training looks at the relationship between attendance figures at school and the topics of inclusion, considering how building on and improving inclusivity can impact attendance figures. The Governor and Clerking Service will review feedback following this new session to see how governors intend to embed their learning within their board.

2.4 Since the County Consultative Committee last met in July 2024, there have been 40 new governor appointments in maintained schools and in total there were 190 new governors appointed across the 2023-2024 academic year in maintained East Sussex schools. Due to the way that tenure dates work on governing boards, and the rapid change that can sometimes occur in board membership it is not possible for us to determine how many governors have left their role. However where schools have particular issues with retention our service is able to support with bespoke recruitment.

2.5 Clerking: Since September 2024, there have been 3 new clerk inductions provided to maintained schools. This ensures that new clerks are aware of the basic expectations of their role, the key tasks they need to complete and the training available to support their knowledge and development. The Governor and Clerking Service also offers support to schools who are recruiting for a Clerk to Governors.

The Locum Clerk Service has also been a beneficial service this term, with our locum clerks supporting 7 meetings across 5 schools since September 2024.

Policy management is a large and at times complex task for clerks to ensure that the board is compliant with their statutory obligations. To support clerks with this task, we provided all boards with a policy compliance tracker that they could adapt to suit the needs of the school. The Governor and Clerking Service have received a lot of positive feedback on this resource and we are glad that this is of benefit to clerks and we hope it will reduce the amount of time and energy that clerks may have to put into this aspect of their role.

The second cohort of the ESCC certified course for clerks, the Excellence in Clerking Programme, began in September 2024 with a full cohort. This cohort is predominantly newer clerks who are at the beginning of their clerking career, and we have received positive feedback, one clerk on the cohort said: "*Coming in as a total novice I found it extremely helpful - I can see there is a huge amount to absorb and learn, but I'm excited to get going!*" We will be checking in with our clerks on the cohort in the next week ahead of our second session in December.

Charlotte Johnstone
Project Officer

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