



COUNTY CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE (GOVERNORS)

WEDNESDAY, 19 NOVEMBER 2025 AT 11.00 AM, ONLINE VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

MEMBERSHIP - Councillors Chris Collier, Alan Shuttleworth, Bob Standley and Georgia Taylor

ALSO INVITED - Denise Kong, Monica Pell, Jenny Barnard-Langston, John Murray, Clare Cornford.

Minutes - Rosie O'Brien

A G E N D A

1. Minutes of the previous meeting *(Pages 3 - 8)*
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.
5. Academies Update
John Murray, Senior Manager: Leadership and Governance, Governor and Clerking Services.
6. Local Authority Governor Appointments and Governor Services Update *(Pages 9 - 12)*
John Murray Senior Manager: Leadership and Governance, Governor and Clerking Services (on behalf of Charlotte Johnstone, Project Officer, Governor and Clerking Service).
7. ESGF Report/Verbal Update for Councillors *(Pages 13 - 14)*
To include:
 - Feedback from Chairs Networking re Safeguarding.
 - Feedback on Good Governor Induction Networking.
 - CPD re new RSE policy
 - SEND
 - Supporting schools with mobile phone use
 - Issues and advice around gender questioning students
 - Minimising EHEs as part of the safeguarding agenda.
8. Any other items previously notified under agenda item 4

PHILIP BAKER
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11 November 2025

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County Consultative Committee - Minutes

Date: Wednesday 9th July 2025 15:00

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

Present: Councillors Bob Standley (Chair), Alan Shuttleworth, Georgia Taylor,

Members of the ESGF: Margaret Rooms

ESCC Officers: Clare Cornford, Charlotte Johnstone, Rosie O'Brien (Minutes)

1	<p><u>Minutes of the previous meeting</u> Cllr Standley welcomed everyone to the meeting. This meeting was Cllr Taylor's first County Consultative Committee meeting.</p> <p>The minutes of the previous meeting were approved with no further comments.</p>
2	<p><u>Apologies for absence</u> Apologies received from John Murray.</p> <p>Apologies received from DK during the meeting.</p>
3	<p><u>Disclosure of interests</u> No interests declared.</p>
4	<p><u>Urgent items</u> No items raised.</p>
5	<p><u>Academy Update</u> Verbal update from CC.</p> <p>Grove Park school converted on 1st July to London South East Academies Trust (LSEAT). The new name is Acre Wood Academy.</p> <p>Burfield Academy and Phoenix Academy will both officially close on 31st August and will be replaced by Thornton Grove Academy. They will be located on the Phoenix Academy Site from 1st September. The newly formed school will be part of STEP Academy Trust.</p> <p>Hailsham Community College Academy Trust will transfer to MARK Education Trust on 1st September. Its new name will be Hailsham Academy.</p> <p>College Central and Flexible Learning Provision will be transferred from SABDEN to LSEAT on 1st September. The alternative provision will be known as East Sussex Academy and will be located across three sites in Hailsham, Newhaven, and Hastings.</p> <p>The Rampion Federation, comprising of Grovelands Community Primary School and Hellingly Community Primary School, has a proposed conversion date of 1st September 2025. The schools will be joining Wandle Learning Trust.</p> <p>St Richards Catholic College has a proposed conversion date of 1st October 2025 to join BOSCO Catholic Education Trust.</p> <p>Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School has a proposed conversion date of 1st October 2025 to join BOSCO Catholic Education Trust.</p>

	<p>Cllr Standley confirmed that East Sussex Academy will be moving into Burfield Academy's old school site.</p> <p>MR asked whether the creation of East Sussex Academy would mean extra provision for pupils. CC to find out.</p>
6	<p><u>LA Gov appointments and governor services update</u> Verbal update from CJ.</p> <p>Since the last meeting in March, there have been 9 Local Authority Governors nominated for appointment. All were approved for a 4-year term of office. 7 of these were reapplications, and 2 were new applications.</p> <p>When the County Consultative Committee last met, the Governor and Clerking Service discussed developing full complaints training for Headteachers, which would take them through the full complaints process. The intention of this was to be more in depth and focus on the finer details of the complaints policy and procedure. The session has been delivered 3 times and positive feedback has been received. Some feedback included that delegates found the session "extremely valuable" and governors picked up on the importance of using the Clerk during the process.</p> <p>These sessions will be continued in the upcoming academic year, and Headteachers are already engaging and booking places on future sessions.</p> <p>The team has developed training on Governor Disciplinary Committees (GDC's) that take place after a permanent exclusion. This was not provided in the previous academic year, but the team saw it was a growing area and identified it as a training need. One session was provided each for Clerks, Headteachers, and Governors. The Inclusion and Alternative Provision team supported the Governor and Clerking Service to build the training. In providing the training, the team has become more knowledgeable and have been able to continue to support and advice to schools, especially for complex cases which helps give schools more confidence when dealing with issues in this area.</p> <p>The Governor and Clerking Service team members were invited to attend the Headteacher Induction and Inspiring Leaders Programme in May. The team had the opportunity to highlight the importance of school governance. The team provided a presentation to highlight the training offered to school governors, particularly on complaints and exclusions. The team also spoke about the benefits of middle leaders becoming school governors to gain valuable CPD and experience.</p> <p>The Governor and Clerking Service are finalising the training programme for the upcoming academic year. Various new sessions include looking at Transition, Relationships on the Governing Board, how to have courageous conversations, and succession planning for Headteachers to allow boards to be prepared. The topics all support the Excellence for All vision.</p> <p>The team is working closely alongside Education Division Colleagues and Governor Consultants to develop this training.</p> <p>Since the last meeting, there have been 57 new governor appointments in maintained schools in East Sussex. This is an increase in numbers from the 52 new</p>

	<p>governor appointments reported in the last County Consultative Committee. It is not currently possible to determine how many governors have left their role. However, the team offers support with recruitment to boards and there is a steady trickle of Expressions of Interest.</p> <p>Since the last County Consultative Committee took place, there has been one new Clerk induction for a maintained school. This is a lower number than usual, but the Governor and Clerking Service are working closely with boards and their clerks on clerk recruitment and development. This means that current clerks are more open to taking on new boards, including those who have undertaken the Excellence in Clerking Programme.</p> <p>The Excellence in Clerking Programme will continue to run in the next academic year.</p> <p>Cllr Standley asked if schools who are not attending training are being monitored. CC confirmed that it is monitored, and that the team shares training and draw governors into specific sessions, and boards usually decide to attend training when a situation arises that they need support with. The team also provides bespoke advice when needed.</p> <p>CC also confirmed that courses are well attended, and governors are engaging. Cllr Standley asked if academies attend these sessions.</p> <p>CC confirmed that there are academies who buy into the service who attend, and there are academies who access the service on a pay as you use basis and attend sessions.</p> <p>Cllr Taylor asked whether Clerks only cover one board each or multiple boards, and whether they are employed by the County Council or locally.</p> <p>CJ confirmed that the Clerks are employed by the school and can choose the number of boards they support.</p> <p>Cllr Taylor asked if Clerks only have the Clerking role or if they have further responsibilities.</p> <p>CJ highlighted that some Clerks only take up the role of the Clerk, but others work in other roles within their schools such as school office staff, as they believe it is a good fit to combine the roles, but it can also cause issues where boundaries cross between roles.</p> <p>MR added that the school they are governor in, is part of a small trust with one secondary and one primary school. This trust uses East Sussex Governor Services and value it highly. Larger trusts can cross Local Authority boundaries and therefore don't buy in to Local Authority Governor Services. This becomes more common when trusts get bigger.</p> <p>Cllr Standley agreed that this can happen when trusts lie on the border between counties.</p> <p>CC confirmed that there are multiple schools within the county who buy in directly because they are standalone in the county as part of a wider trust.</p>
7	<p><u>ESGF Verbal update for councillors.</u></p> <p>Verbal update provided by MR.</p> <p>In the last Chairs Networking supported by ESGF, it was reported back that Mental Health was raised within the networking. A range of issues were mentioned including support for Headteachers, and support for governors, who can be left out</p>

	<p>but who are close to issues, and don't have the level of support services that staff members do.</p> <p>The send improvement plan was recently presented to the ESGF. Governors wonder how much will need to change because of what is in the pipeline currently. They also wonder what Councillor's visibility of the plan is.</p> <p>Cllr Standley confirmed that the improvement plan has been discussed at cabinet and full council. Cllr Standley said that the DfE SEND White Paper was due to be released in the Summer, but it will now be in the Autumn. This may mean there are further changes to the SEND Improvement Plan.</p> <p>Infant FSM Update: DK wrote to her MP, the letter has been included in the report provided ahead of the meeting. This is increasingly an issue in schools, the money provided by the Government does not cover the cost of meals. If the offer is expanded this means that there is more cost on schools. While the figures seem small, it's accumulative and adds up on school budgets.</p> <p>Cllr Standley highlighted that Full Council discussed this and can lobby to the Government. There is no guarantee it will be funded to the full extent, but they can continue to push this.</p> <p>MR added that it would be a mandatory cost on schools, so they have no control over the issue, therefore other non-mandatory areas miss out on funding.</p> <p>Food partnership works: School meals are supposed to be hot food. In a school in MR's trust, out of approximately 1500 students only 15-30 access these hot meals. Snacks are more prominent in schools, and pupils are having larger meals at break times rather than lunch which promotes bad eating habits.</p> <p>Ofsted consultation: The ESGF ran a session where a facilitator with an Ofsted background took the lead. This allowed governors to discuss issues and ask questions. The session proved to be very valuable and was appreciated by everyone. This allowed governors to feel like they had contributed to the process.</p> <p>MR informed the group that recently, all schools in Seaford took part in phone free week. There is no feedback yet, but this is something the schools want to follow up with at the start of the next academic year. They would like to drive this as a project going forward as the impact of mobile phones on school children needs to be actioned.</p> <p>Members agreed that it would be positive for schools to make parents aware of the ways they can restrict screen time for their children, as collective action is important to promote the issue.</p>
8	<p><u>AOI under item 4</u></p> <p>No items raised.</p> <p>Cllr Standley thanked everyone for attending.</p>

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Report to: County Consultative Committee

Date of meeting: 19th November 2025

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 9th July 2025, 10 local authority governors were nominated for appointment, all were approved for a 4 year term of office. These were formed of 6 reapplications and 4 new applications.

Susan Halliwell	Wivelsfield Primary School	Reapplication
Alan Brundle	Pioneer Federation	Reapplication
Carol Powell	Maynards Green Community Primary School	New Application
Gabriella Paterson-Griggs	High Hurstwood CE Primary School	New Application
Emma Robinson	St Marks CEP School	New Application
Noah Curthoys	Priory School	Reapplication
Miquela Walsh	Bewl Federation	Reapplication
Sarah White	Willington Community School	Reapplication
Yvette Aeberhard	Alfriston Primary School	Reapplication
Alison Flynn	Oak Tree Federation	New application

2.2 The Governor and Clerking Service have started the new academic year needing to support a number of schools with complaints. The complexity of the complaints varies, though from our experience and in discussion with governors across East Sussex, complaints are increasingly related to SEND provision and safeguarding concerns. The Governor and Clerking Service have worked closely with colleagues across the departments within Children's Services to provide timely and appropriate support to schools who are managing the complaints process.

The Governor and Clerking Service are repeatedly urging governors, clerks and headteachers to engage with complaints training so that all boards are prepared to manage a complaint and understand the crucial point that they need to follow their complaints policy and procedure. We are

anticipating new guidance from the government in relation to management of school complaints and will respond to this by updating our training programme when the new guidance has been issued.

The Governor and Clerking Service also frequently receive requests for an 'independent governor' to support a governing board with a complaint. This may be a governor who will undertake the Stage 2 investigation, or a governor to sit on or chair a Stage 3 panel. When we receive a request for an independent governor, we put this request out to governors across East Sussex, and we find that we consistently receive a large response from many governors who say they can help. We would like to recognise and thank those governors who take on this additional responsibility and who give up their own time to support schools beyond their own. We know the complaints process is often complex, emotionally draining and time-consuming work, and want to convey our sincere thanks and appreciation of the hard but often overlooked work of governors, clerks and headteachers.

2.3 In the first term of this new academic year, the Governor and Clerking Service were pleased to attend the ESGF-led governor forum on the topic of 'Good Governor Inductions'. The ESGF spoke about practical advice around how to properly induct new governors to boards, and the reasons why the induction process is so important. Positively, this session had 18 governors and clerks from 16 different governing boards in attendance and there was a great amount of discussion.

The Governor and Clerking Service would like to thank the ESGF for facilitating numerous networking sessions that allow governors to informally share their questions, concerns or best practice and new ideas. This in turn allows governing boards to discover, develop and grow and allows the Governor and Clerking Service to hear examples of great governance and areas where support for governors could be developed.

2.4 The Governor and Clerking Service training programme has begun for this new academic year. New sessions include looking at transition, relationships on the governing board, how to have courageous conversations, and succession planning for headteacher's. These topics all support our overarching Excellence for All Vision. The Governor and Clerking Service work closely with Education Division colleagues and our governor consultants to respond to changes within the education landscape, and we await further information and updates from the DfE, especially on developments around SEND policy (now expected in the new year) and the curriculum review. We have now received the governments new plans for Ofsted inspections, and we plan to update and develop new training around Ofsted inspections for governors in the new year to coincide with overall feedback once schools receive the first Ofsted grades in January.

2.5 Since the County Consultative Committee last met in July 2025, there have been 55 new governor appointments in maintained schools. This figure is roughly the same as reported in the previous 3-month gap between the meetings of the County Consultative Committee. 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 issues with retention our service can support with bespoke recruitment. The Governor and Clerking Service are acutely aware of the sometimes-challenging task of recruiting governors and the difficulties that boards can face when they hold many vacancies. In response to this, the Governor and Clerking Service are undertaking work to utilise social media where possible, to allow us to promote the role of the governor and reach wider audiences to hopefully increase engagement. Positively, in term 1 of this academic year, we have received a handful of expressions of interest from prospective governors that have been shared with the appropriate governing board holding vacancies. Our aim is to build on this process and offer further support to boards with governor recruitment.

2.6 Clerking: Since the County Consultative Committee last met in July 2025, there have been no new clerk inductions provided to maintained schools, though two are booked to take place over the next few weeks. Clerk inductions offer the welcome to new clerks and also ensure 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. This is a lower

number than our average, however the Governor and Clerking Service has been working closely with boards holding vacancies for Clerk to Governors to recruit quickly. We have found that some current ESCC Clerks are interested in expanding the number of boards they clerk for. We therefore have put these interested clerks in touch with Chairs and Headteachers who have vacancies to see if they are the right fit. We have supported several schools with recruiting clerks in this manner over the past few months, which reduced the length of time that governing boards were without substantive clerks, and also has meant that governing boards are recruiting clerks with a great deal of experience and knowledge of clerking in East Sussex schools.

The Locum Clerk Service has also been a beneficial service this term, with our locum clerks supporting 4 meetings across 4 schools since the County Consultative Committee last met in July 2025.

Our ESCC certified course for Clerks, the Excellence in Clerking Programme will run its fourth cohort in the new year and we are looking forward to meeting with our new cohort. We are also especially pleased with the encouragement from Chairs of Governors who have supported their Clerks to engage with accessing CPD to help them develop in their role.

Charlotte Johnstone
Project Officer

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Title: ESGF Update for councillors

Date: 27th October 2025

Author: Denise Kong, Chair of the East Sussex Governor Forum

Networking this term

The Chairs' network was pleased to host one of the ESCC safeguarding team as a speaker. She gave a presentation on the safeguarding updates for the year, which had been given on two occasions earlier in the term specifically to safeguarding link governors. There was a lot of information to assimilate, such as updates to national guidance, which governors were asked to ensure that their schools were aware of. Being able to present to three different groups was a great opportunity, in light of the amount of information available.

Revised guidance, eg around paediatric first aid, seemed to be generally well covered by schools. However, there was further work to be done on other areas, such as ensuring that schools were supported in implementing anti-bullying policies, and this might be an area of work for the ESGF in the future.

Bringing together good practice - induction

ESGF led governor networking identified that there was work to be done around new governor induction. Members had talked with new governors who felt they were not receiving sufficient support from their boards.

ESGF governors wrote a set of slides to present at a discussion session aimed at clerks, chairs and governors. From the tips and questions shared at this session, a resource pack for governor induction has been produced, based on a standard checklist, but enhanced to include further good practice tips.

The session on induction followed on from the series of sessions on Belonging that were facilitated by the ESGF last year, in bringing governors together to share and record good practice.

Topics for discussion

These were suggested by governors: Continuing Professional Development on the new Relationships and Sex Education policy; Special Educational Needs and Disabilities; supporting schools with phone use and mental health issues related to digital life; issues and advice around gender questioning students; minimising EHEs as part of the safeguarding agenda

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