

HAVEN NURSERY SCHOOL
Harris Road, Gosport

MINUTES OF THE GOVERNING BODY MEETING
Tuesday 31st March 2015 at 9.30am

Present:	June Smith (Head of Centre – HoC)	Staff Governor
	Karen Hooper (KH)	Staff Governor
	Kerrie Mills (KM) (Chair)	Parent Governor
	Gemma Wright (GW)	LA Governor
	Anna Clodfelter (AC)	Co-opted Governor
	Rachel Lewis (RL)	Co-opted Governor
	Julie Caldwell (JC) (Children's Centre Leader – CCL)	Co-opted Governor
	Jamie Fagan (JF)	Co-opted Governor
In Attendance:	Andy Major	Business Manager (BM)
	Diane Kendall	Clerk
Apologies:	Glenn Ward (GAW) (Vice Chair)	Parent Governor
	Shellie Morris (SM)	Co-opted Governor

		Action
1.	<p>Welcome and Apologies for Absence The meeting opened at 9.35am. The Chair welcomed everybody to the meeting and apologies for absence were accepted. JF was welcomed to the FGB and everybody introduced themselves to him.</p>	
2.	<p>Declarations of Pecuniary Interest Declaration of Pecuniary Interest Forms were signed by AC and JF as they were not present at the last meeting. No changes to declarations of Pecuniary Interest were declared.</p>	
3.	<p>Minutes of Previous Meeting – 27th January 2015 The Minutes were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair of Governors.</p>	
4.	<p>Matters Arising</p>	
4.1	<p>Item 2 – How many members to be present at FGB. Clerk checked with Governor Services that 5 members have to be present otherwise the meeting is not quorate.</p>	
4.2	<p>Item 5.5 – A Governor asked whether the office staff speak to the parents face-to-face when they are in arrears. Could they pay weekly/fortnightly/monthly to fit in with their pay days or when they receive their benefit payments? Is it possible to set up payment schemes for these parents? BM has held meetings with four parents since the last FGB meeting and payment plans are now in place for them. This seems to be successful and parents are adhering to the payment plans agreed.</p> <p>A Governor asked if a standard letter could be raised from Haven to go on the reverse of the invoice to clarify the different payment options available. BM will produce a second page to be circulated with the next run of monthly invoices. BM stated that the payment options are now printed on the reverse of all invoices raised.</p>	

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- 4.3 Item 5.8 - Minutes of Finance Committee, including Approval of Revised Budget – BM stated that texts have been sent out to indicate invoices are ready for collection and then another text is sent out 14 days later to remind parents. A member of the office team is checking this.
BM confirmed that a designated member of staff in the office sends out a text message to parents 14 days after the date of the invoice as a reminder for parents to collect their invoices and make payment.
- 4.4 Item 5.9 - Marketing planning. **BM has added an Appendix to the last Finance Committee Meeting Minutes.**
- 4.5 Item 5.10 - Outstanding work in Maple Room – **BM stated that this is the installation of an adult height sink and refreshments area and work has been carried forward due to current lack of Site team (Premises Committee Meeting Minutes). The new caretaker has proposed that this work is completed over the Easter Holidays.** Removal of Container from Nest Garden – **BM stated that GW, BM and the caretaker are exploring options to arrange the removal of this container.**
- Item 5.13 - Agency Cleaners – **BM will seek quotations for agency cleaning for consideration during budget setting.**
- Item 5.14 – Health and Safety Audit – **BM stated that there is a mock inspection on Thursday 7th May with GAW to test our readiness for the HCC inspection in June.**
- Item 5.15 - Forest School Visit – **RL and Chair to book their visits to the Forest School.**
- Item 6 – Governor Training – **Chair will speak to Governor Services regarding safeguarding training for the FGB. The Chair asked if governors had looked at the governor services website for training opportunities. Governors have not booked training due to work commitments.**
- Item 8 –Update on pupil numbers, occupancy rates and nursery marketing plans – HoC suggested that the Nursery needs a Working Party to investigate numbers and make recommendations – **HoC stated that an allocation meeting had been held. HoC, KH, Finance & Administration Co-ordinator and Lead Practitioner (Quality Improvement) were in attendance. Places and costings have been worked through and it is clear that patterns of attendance are changing. More parents are requesting only a half-day or 1 day place for their baby or young child. The experience of senior staff suggests that this pattern of attendance can make it more difficult to settle a young child into the nursery. It was decided that a minimum of 2 sessions per week provided the best opportunity for a child to settle and become familiar with the setting and practitioners.**
HoC stated that the situation would be monitored closely and a

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working party formed if appropriate.

RL had previously stated the website was too busy. **BM has been reviewing the website and has been removing old pages and updating staff information. This process is on-going.**

RL has also previously suggested that an “Admissions” link should be on the Home page of the website. **BM will check that the relevant information on “how to apply for nursery places” is on the front page.**

5. **HoC Report (verbal)**

HoC provided her verbal report.

Number on roll is good and a number of children are starting after the Easter Holidays. There has been a smooth transition of children from the Nest to the Hive. Numbers of new starters in September are also improving. The Nursery and Children’s Centre Facebook pages have advertised spaces and generated interest from prospective parents. There has been a positive response from parents visiting the Nursery School, often resulting in applications for places.

Staffing is stable at this time. The Site Manager ‘D’ Grade post is currently vacant following a resignation. This post in the staffing structure is currently a full-time (37 hours) position although there is scope for reducing the hours to 20 per week if the decision is taken to recruit.

HoC and KH have completed Child Protection Liaison Officer (CPLO) Refresher Training. Updated information and guidance regarding safeguarding practice will be cascaded to staff on Inset Days. No further requirement to attend CPLO refresher training, HoC and KH will take the responsibility for keeping themselves updated on best practice and the latest guidance.

Curriculum – We have recently had the Living Eggs Project in the Nursery, allowing children to watch chicks hatch in an incubator. It was a unanimous decision of the Standards and Curriculum meeting to include this experience in the curriculum again this year because of the rich and wide learning opportunities provided for children of all stages of development across the centre.

Michael Moore – LLP is visiting the Nursery School tomorrow, Wednesday 1st April 2015. The focus of his visit will be the quality of teaching and learning and how well this is supported by adult interactions and the learning environment. A copy of the LLP report will be shared with governors.

Following a review, there have been improvements made to the Nest environment. The old Small Hall is now named the Willow Room – this area is for babies until they are confidently mobile. The old Large Hall is now named the Catkin Room and will be for toddlers from approx. 15-18 months. The old crèche is now named the Acorn Room and will be a space for rising 3 year olds. Room Leaders will be responsible for each room supported by experienced practitioners and assistants.

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There has been significant development in the use of Tapestry as a management information tool, providing a means of recording and monitoring children's progress, observations of learning, the quality of teaching and assessment, as well as providing data to inform the SEF and Nursery Development Plan.

Setting a budget for 2015/16 is a priority. HoC, met with Justeen White (HCC Finance Advisor) and we are facing a deficit at current spending levels. HoC assured the FGB that a deficit budget will not be set, but in order to achieve this, some difficult decisions will need to be made. Meeting our core purpose of improving outcomes for children will remain our priority, and therefore it is important that the quality of provision is not compromised by spending cuts which affect -

- Nursery Staffing
- Children's learning resources
- Tapestry

HoC has stated that as previously discussed with Governors, she will be submitting a flexible working request to reduce her working hours to three days per week.

The Teaching School application submitted in February 2015 in partnership with the other two HCC maintained Nursery Schools, has successfully passed the first stage of selection and will now progress to the next stage. References were provided by Chichester University and a senior representative of the Director of Children's Services in support of our application. The final decision panel will be held in April and we will be notified of the results before the end of May.

Development Plan – Three year rolling plan from April 2013 to March 2016. HoC tabled an overview of the plan and talked through each of the key objectives.

A Governor asked: Should children be able to write their name before they start school?

HoC replied no this is not currently a requirement. A recent Inset Day examined early reading and writing and staff attended short workshops. As a result, the quality of staff observations and assessment of children's literacy have improved.

HoC left the meeting at 10.00am.

A Governor asked: What are the numbers of children in the Hive like?

KH answered that some Nest children have progressed to the Hive early (initially planned for an after Easter start). September numbers for the Hive have dipped slightly. KH explained that trends do change each year and that an incredible number of parents are visiting the Nest.

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In September, a large cohort of children will leave Haven for school Reception year, which will free up spaces in the Hive. KH stated that some parents settle their child into another setting and are reluctant to move them to Haven in September once space becomes available.

At present we have 18 EYE Funding children.

HoC re-joined the meeting at 10.05am.

A Governor asked: How far in advance do parents look at Haven?

KH answered that for the Hive they normally look a term ahead. Some parents will apply for a place as soon as they have had a baby for the Nest. We are working to fill all available Nest places.

A Governor asked: do we receive any extra funding for SEN two year olds?

KH answered that yes we are eligible for extra funding and have applied for additional funding for four children.

HoC explained that if a child's attendance pattern includes taking odd sessions here and there, it can in effect block a full week that another child could be offered. The organising of timetables of attendance to effectively provide childcare can be time consuming.

A Governor asked: Are children still doing just 5 mornings or 5 afternoons a week?

KH answered no, not many children do this now. Each child has flexible attendance patterns of varying days and session times. She explained that staff expenditure is high due to varying patterns of work to meet staff/child ratios. In addition to meeting ratios, staffs are often required to attend meetings with professionals regarding the children. Staffing does account for the greater part of our expenditure as a setting.

HoC stated that the Finance & Administration Co-ordinator is working on a database to help with nursery places and invoicing.

KH stated that good quality staff are valued. PVI settings can utilise zero-hour contracts and supply staff to provide a cost saving. At Haven we believe that children settle and thrive through ensuring consistency and continuity of familiar practitioners.

6. Minutes of the last GEIP Leadership Meeting

The Minutes of the last GEIP Leadership Meeting were circulated prior to the meeting.

HoC talked through the Minutes.

Item 2 – Martin Shepherd (SDO) – employed by HCC to look at strategy of providing school/nursery places. He studies data including local birth rates, housing developments (such as former Haslar Hospital site – new shops, houses and hotel). Gosport has areas where numbers are growing; however, Bridgemary child numbers are reducing. Local school catchment area numbers are falling also. We need to concentrate on advertising childcare places to working parents

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who pass the centre on journeys to and from their place of work.

The Alverstoke area currently has high development of housing stock. They are having an extension built on the side of their school to accommodate an expected rise in numbers on roll.

A Governor stated that Alverstoke School expanded rapidly and leaving little space for children to do PE, cooking, etc. There are un-filled spaces in our catchment area – more than enough places for children to go to their catchment area school but parents are choosing to enrol them into other settings.

7. Minutes of Premises Meeting

The Minutes of the Premises Meeting were circulated prior to the meeting.

BM updated on the position of the Site Manager. We have now received Kevin Gard's resignation and have appointed Robert Bartlett as Caretaker. He has started an intense HCC training programme for Caretakers (such as Asbestos, Ladder training, etc) and is up to date on all statutory requirements such as fire alarm procedures, legionella and Health and Safety issues.

The Hampshire County Council H&S Audit is scheduled for Thursday 4th June. Planning for this has raised a number of actions for the Premises Committee, including a complete review of the Risk Assessments and the training matrix bring-forward diary.

EMCOR Contractors have been in to audit the TMV mixer taps throughout the premises to ensure that water does not reach a temperature that can scald.

HMS SULTAN recently provided a group of volunteers for two days. They carried out grounds maintenance tasks, in particular the forest school. They would like to provide more support if we can jointly agree a more substantial project. BM will liaise with them once a suitable project has been identified.

The removal of the container in the Nest Garden has been looked at by the caretaker. He suggests 2 options:

- 1) Dismantling it in the Nest Garden
- 2) The container in the Hall Garden to be dismantled and move the one from the Nest into the Hall Garden.

Sue Dowson, HCC Property Services Partner has updated BM on plans for a conservatory-style extension to the Nest's Acorn room. Property Services are unable to recommend companies for this work as this type of structure is generally discouraged on HCC property as they can be too cold in winter and too hot in the summer. HoC replied that it was her understanding that electricity services could be installed for heaters, etc. BM confirmed that we can move ahead ourselves if we decide to pursue this idea, although the project would be subject to building regulations.

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A Governor asked: why do we need this conservatory?

HoC stated that it would be used as a creative studio for art and messy play.

Another Governor asked: could we go out to tender?

BM answered that yes we could, we would have to ask three companies to provide a quotation.

Planned works – BM informed governors that there is a pre-contract meeting today with Colbornes and HCC property services at regarding the decking and ramp in the Nest.

They are hoping to start the installation in the Easter holidays and will be finished a couple of days into the new term. The decking will be level with the concrete steps and there will be a ramp with steps and handrails too. The decking will be covered with non-slip strips for safety.

Break in meeting @ 10.30am.

Meeting resumed at 10.47am.

8. Minutes of Finance Committee (including Budget update from SBM)

The Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting were circulated prior to the meeting. BM has produced a Year End Budget Report for the Nursery School and Children's Centre (attached).

There will be some further movement within the budget up to the Tuesday 14th April as commitments and outstanding invoices are finalised. SAP (the Finance System) is closed from 5pm today until Tuesday 7th April for essential maintenance and upgrades.

CCL joined the meeting at 10.50am.

BM talked through some of the budget lines and explained significant variations to the budget plan. Internal journaling between some budget lines still needs to be completed before closure on the 14th April.

In summary, there has been cautious spending in the months since the tight budget revision was agreed. This has resulted in a carry forward figure of £77,947. The budget setting will be challenging for next year especially managing the cost for staffing.

The Devolved Formula Capital has a carry forward of £30,683.

HoC said that setting the budget will be tight with a current indicated deficit of £42,410 based on current year spending levels.

A Governor asked: what is so different between this year and last year?

HoC replied that the Early Years Single Funding Formula level remains unchanged for the past few years meaning EYSFF income is static. Staffing costs increase every year (increments and pension contributions). Other costs are also rising without funding being increased to compensate. We have historically had healthy carry forward figures and tend to rely on this figure to overcome an in-year

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deficit.

We have a fairly high proportion of support staff and the initial budget planning has allowed for a Grade 'C' Caretaker for 20 hours per week. The current caretaker is Grade 'B' and shouldn't be responsible for H&S paperwork, etc. Role profiles will need to be examined to clarify the roles and responsibilities of each post.

A Governor asked: Are confident of interest in the Grade 'C' Caretaker post?

HoC replied yes as it will be a flexible 20 hour post, in line with the majority of HCC Caretaking jobs. Justeen White (EFS) has recommended that HoC review all support staff posts to attempt to reduce costs. She also suggested considering a restructure of support staff.

A Governor asked: Will there be any financial gains by becoming a Teaching School?

HoC said yes, funding is received and we can help to improve other settings and offer good quality training at a reasonable price. This would boost income for the centre.

BM then talked through the Children's Centre (1001Y) Budget and explained that the staff overtime line was overspent against the revised spending plan. This was offset partially by a reduction in the use of casual staff.

The 'Grant Aid' line will be carried forward to next year's budget. This is used for emergency payments for families in need and not drawn upon in this financial year.

CCL is researching additional sources for funding, and also thanked her colleague, Diane Kendall, for all her hard work in chasing extra income for crèches provided for St Vincent College courses.

BM stated that he is meeting on Friday 1st May with Justeen White to discuss budget setting, followed by a Budget Setting Meeting on Tuesday 5th May with the Finance Committee. The forward budget must be submitted to HCC via the SAP system by 31st May 2015.

A Governor asked: will Governors need to approve the budget before the next FGB Meeting?

BM replied that an extra-ordinary meeting will be called so that the Governors can sign off the Budget before it is entered on the SAP system.

BM

Chair stated that there are not currently enough members on the Governor Finance Sub-Committee and that sometimes they are at risk of not being quorate. The problem was the timing of the meeting. A proposal was made to change the meeting times to later in the day. HoC said that childcare can be provided for the Governors so that they can attend the meetings. KH said that she is happy to join the Finance Committee.

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9. **Correspondence**

Chair distributed Training Programme Booklets 2015/16 to all governors present.

HoC asked if the Whole Governor Training could be Safeguarding and Chair said she will contact Governor Services to book this.

10. **CCL Leader's Report (verbal)**

The Children's Centre had their Annual Conversation on Monday 30th March and it went very well.

It was noted that the team had worked hard since the Ofsted inspection and made good progress since November 2014. Every action point but one has been completed before the April deadline. The grading was good but the Local Authority recognised the work done and felt that with the improvements in data the Centre will soon be Outstanding.

It was noted that the data on eStart and In Greatest Need categories were being inputted more accurately and Haven's data is significantly higher than Gosport and County.

There has been good progress on delivery of Evidence Based programmes that support Breastfeeding and Obesity. The HENRY and Cook and Eat Courses have had 24 families attend in the past year. At the Annual Conversation there was some excellent examples of joint work with health to tackle these issues in the local community.

Leadership & Management – No vacancies on the Partnership Board. We have recruited 7 Parent Champions (parents from Haven) and they will be going out into the local community to recruit new parents to use Haven's services.

A Social Worker attends the Early Help Hub meetings now and they do joint visiting with FSOW to families making the transition for cases stepping down from social care more robust.

Risk Assessments need to be looked at as they are not detailed enough.

There has been good improvement on the Case Files and Action for Children had helped by offering our staff 'free' training and HoC has offered them some PICL training.

There are 3 recommendations:

- 1) Continue Ofsted Action Plan
- 2) No snack bar in Stay & Play groups
- 3) Embed Evaluation processes

Staffing within the Children's Centre is stable, although Michele Geary is leaving us on 24th April to start a new job. Professional Boundary training has been attended by Julie Langridge, Sheila Wooden and Julie Caldwell and there are plans to cascade this to the rest of the team.

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A Governor asked: do you do Exit Interviews to ask staff reasons for leaving, etc?

BM stated that there is a template available on the system for managers to use when talking to staff before they leave which he will share with the CCL so she can complete. He also stated that there are no costs for advertising staff vacancies on the HCC website. The only charges are for completing DBS checks for new staff.

BM/CCL

For the H&S Audit a Stress Management Questionnaire has been completed by staff. BM stated that the recommendations from this Questionnaire would be looked at and implemented.

11. Any Other Business

BM asked if the Outcome of Self-Assessment could be signed off by the FGB.
All FGB agreed and Chair signed the document.

12. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 2nd June 2015 at 9.30am at Haven Nursery School & Children's Centre.

The meeting closed at 11.26pm.

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