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**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF FULL GOVERNING BODY OF  
ST MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL HELD ON ZOOM  
ON WEDNESDAY, 7<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2021 AT 6.00PM**

**PRESENT:** Canon J Batthula (Chair, Foundation); Mr C Hartley (Vice Chair, Foundation), Miss P Pickering (Head); Mr M Doherty (L.A.); Mrs K O'Flynn (Foundation); Mrs J Hurst (Foundation); Mr A McArdle (Foundation); Mrs E Morgan (Foundation); Mrs N Henderson-Andrade (Elected Parent); Mr P Haley (Elected Parent); Miss L Grant (Staff)

**APOLOGIES:** Mr S Taylor (approved)

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Mrs L Hall (Clerk)

1. Chair opened meeting with a prayer.
2. Chair welcomed all to the meeting. Apologies received and accepted from ST. Meeting was declared quorate.
3. **Register of Interests**  
There were no conflicts of interest declared.
5. **Minutes of the full GB meeting** of 16<sup>th</sup> March 2021 were declared to be a true record and were signed by Chair.  
**Minutes of the Extra-Ordinary full GB meeting** of 29<sup>th</sup> June 2021 were declared to be a true record and were signed by Chair.

**Matters Arising**

EM suggested that flowers be purchased for catechists. She suggested an email be sent by school asking for donations in an envelope from the three classes before a specific date. EM is then happy to purchase the flowers and/or chocolates.

**6. Headteacher's Report (circulated in advance)**

NH-A began by saying how impressed and proud she is to be a Governor at the school. She reiterated her thanks to the teachers and all the staff. In addition, she was so happy that the school is engaging positively in the CAFOD 'Eyes of the World' campaign instead of just paying lip service.

NH-A wondered how the admission numbers compared to last year and if we could see a 'Covid effect'. PP responded that it is near-impossible to say what the impact of the pandemic is but looking at previous years, engagement with parents looking for a primary school is a problem. She was unsure of the reasons for disengagement and stated that the school had done all that they could think of to reach out to parents, including a video on the school website and have discussed the idea of social media. Of the twenty-six new applicants for September, four are Catholic, two of which have siblings already in the school. PP feels a personal sadness that Catholic families are not considering St Mary's. She has written to each new family and invited them to the school to meet with her individually, with an uptake of approximately 25% to date

EM commiserated and discussed the difficulty of engaging with families during the pandemic in the parish community. She suggested that printed information about the school could be given at Children's Liturgy.

PP proposed an email be sent from the parish office to schools advertising Children's Liturgy and stating that if there are any Catholic children we would love to see you back at the Immaculate Conception. This would give an idea of how many Catholic families in Bicester are not at St Mary's.

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Minutes GB Mtg 7<sup>th</sup> July 2021

Signed: ..... Date: .....

AMcA referred to the high number of SEN applications this year and asked how to encourage Catholic families to register an interest in the school. NH-A said she did not think the blame could lie with the school as there is a wide disengagement with faith generally. EM thanked the Finance Committee and said she had found it shocking that full funding is not provided for SEN pupils by the County Council.

CJ stated that there are a lot of Catholic families who are choosing not to send their children to St Mary's. JH pointed out the cultural diversity of the congregation in church. EM wondered if current parents could act as ambassadors in their communities.

PP thought the big issue is that families made a personal choice to send their child to the nearest school and pointed out that there are very faithful Catholic families transitioning from St Mary's and choosing local secondary schools.

There was some discussion of social media. CJ suggested that a working group of at least three Governors should look into the idea of promoting the school. EM said that the school account needs to come from within school. LG said that a letter had been sent to parents approximately two years ago requesting consent for pupils to be included which received a lot of negative responses. KO pointed out the use of artsy shots, close ups of blurred hands and distant blurred faces.

PP reiterated that the aim isn't to market to everyone, but the concern is that Catholic percentages are plummeting.

CJ summarised that the question is – Why are Catholic children choosing to go elsewhere, and how can we promote the school to them?

## 7. Pastoral Care

CJ explained that all three sacraments have been celebrated. A Mass was live streamed and Mass was held in person for the First Holy Communion children in school last week. There will be a Leavers Mass before the end of the academic year. The Sacrament of Confirmation will take place on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2022.

## 8. Link Governor SDP Updates

PP will speak about the SDP in the next meeting. The process needs reviewing.

## 9. Reports from Committees

### Finance/Buildings/H&S (minutes 30/06/21 Governor Drive)

Chair asked if there were any questions. None raised.

### Curriculum (minutes 28/04/21 Governor Drive)

Chair asked if there were any questions. None raised. KO gave thanks to the staff who gave one to one meetings and to PP for her organisation. It was worthwhile and positive.

### Personnel/Appraisal (report June 2021 Governor Drive)

Chair asked if there were any questions. None raised.

## 10. Approval/Adoption of Policies (Governor Drive)

### Admissions

EM raised a question regarding the reference to Birmingham Local Authority within the policy. PP said that it had been due to the fact that the policy comes from the Diocese and has now been corrected to Oxfordshire Local Authority. LH explained this is a revised policy to include children who have been in care overseas as looked after or previously looked after children. Revised policy was approved by FGB.

### Internal Financial Procedures

Policy approved in the Finance Committee meeting of 30<sup>th</sup> June ratified by FGB.

### Property Write Off

Policy approved in the Finance Committee meeting of 30<sup>th</sup> June ratified by FGB.

### Finance/Health & Safety/Buildings Terms of Reference

Policy approved in the Finance Committee meeting of 30<sup>th</sup> June ratified by FGB

**11. Any Other Business**

CH discussed the recent Year 5 residential visit to Manor Adventure. He said the children were brilliant as always. The school had worked hard ensuring that the trip was Covid secure and [REDACTED] was outstanding when she was unhappy with the way the centre was running, and was willing to confront them about it.

EM thanked CH for accompanying the Year 5 class.

PP will revisit the SDP – how it is looked at as a Governing body and reported.

PH gave thanks to PP, LG and all the staff for keeping the school running so well in the current climate. AMcA said we had our first 'bubble burst' last week and he wanted to thank the team the working so flawlessly, sending a text message to parents straight away and moving to online learning seamlessly. The effort, energy and planning put in place has worked well. He is proud we kept pupils safe for so long.

CJ gave his thanks to PP, LG and the rest of the staff. Everything went smoothly and a lot of sacrifice has taken place.

**12. Dates of Next Meetings**

**Extra-Ordinary Full Governing Body – Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> September 2021**  
**Full Governing Body – Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> October 2021**

The meeting closed with a prayer at 19:00.

LH 08/07/21