



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

**Diocese of St Edmundsbury
and Ipswich**

DBE (20)M2

DIOCESAN BOARD OF EDUCATION

Minutes of a meeting of the Diocesan Board of Education held on Tuesday 5 May 2020 at 10.00am via Zoom.

Prayers: The Rt Revd Dr Mike Harrison led the opening prayers.

Present:

Mrs Jane Addis	Mr Guy McGregor
The Revd Dr Stephen Brian	The Revd Carl Melville
The Revd Penny Brinkley	Mrs Gillian Mitchell
Mr Tom Brooke	Mr Pete Mumford
Mrs Elaine Burdiss	Mr Hugo Parker
Mr John Dixon	Mrs Frances Parr
Mrs Jane Eccleston	The Revd Sharon Potter
Mr Tim Fairbairn	Mr Paul Ryle
The Rt Revd Dr Mike Harrison (Chair)	The Revd Toby Tate
Mrs Mary Lewis	

Apologies:

The Ven Jeanette Gosney	Mr Nicholas Jardine
The Revd Christopher Griffiths	Mr Drew Quayle

In Attendance:

Mrs Karen Harman	Deputy Diocesan Director of Education (DDDE)
Mr Daniel Jones	Diocesan Buildings Officer
Mrs Jane Sheat	Diocesan Director of Education (DDE)
Miss Jacqui Studd	Administrator (Education)

WELCOME

The Chair advised that the Revd Dr Stephen Brian would be retiring in August and the Chair and DDE both expressed their gratitude to Stephen for his service over the last 13 years.

20.20 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 February 2020 were approved and signed.

20.21 MATTERS ARISING

None.

20.22 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

None.

20.23 DIOCESAN DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION'S REPORT

The DDE referred to Paper A, which provided an update to DBE members on issues arising since the last meeting. The DDE expressed her gratitude to church school

Headteachers, who have risen to the challenge during this difficult time. The DDE reported that support is being provided by the education team through:

- telephone contact with Headteachers;
- the Schools Co-ordination Task Group, chaired by Adrian Orr, Assistant Director, Education and Learning at Suffolk County Council (SCC). The DDE and DDDE are both involved. Various protocols have resulted from this close collaboration and issues have been escalated to the DfE. The group agrees key messages to go to all schools daily on Suffolk Headlines;
- a Covid-19 appendix to the bereavement guidelines has been written by the DDDE and the church school bereavement guidelines have been adapted for community schools; and
- a webpage created specifically on coronavirus support and resources <https://www.cofesuffolk.org/schools/school-leaders/coronavirus-support/>

The DDE advised that the diocese has taken the decision to apply for the government's Job Retention Scheme, in common with many employers and dioceses. This means that the diocese is able to access government funding during a difficult period of financial uncertainty. 14 diocesan staff are currently on furlough, including two of the Education team: Phil Knowles and Gemma Kingston. The rest of the education team are working from home.

The DDE invited comments, particularly from those Headteachers present.

Gillian Mitchell talked about the challenges of lockdown for East Bergholt CEVCP School. It had been an emotional time leading up to lockdown, as well as providing education, the school had also looked after the health and wellbeing of children, staff and parents. Childcare provision for staff had to be organised very quickly as well as online learning. Gillian highlighted that free school meal vouchers are an issue as is the challenge of keeping up to date with information from both the local authority and Government.

Elaine Burdiss advised that Elmsett CEVCP School had joined with two nearby schools to provide provision for children. They are now thinking about future plans and have concerns for pupils' and staff wellbeing and safety.

Paul Ryle advised that Mellis CofE Primary School now has a learning platform in place for pastoral provision as well as education. The school is in regular contact with families.

John Dixon highlighted the importance of governance in schools, ensuring that governing bodies have a virtual governance policy in place and are meeting regularly. It is important that school heads are supported.

John advised against speculating when schools might open to more pupils and felt that we should await Government guidance before any planning takes place. The DDE advised that a return to school is anticipated for later in the year and that the plans to bring heads together to discuss the opening of schools to more pupils are to facilitate discussion, share concerns and ideas around staffing, parental anxiety and the practical issues of social distancing with children.

The DDE expressed her thanks to the DDDE and two church Headteachers who have agreed to stay on for a further term until 31 December 2020.

The DDE asked for the DBE's consent for Bedfield CEVCP School to join the Diocesan MAT, which was given.

The Chair thanked the DDDE for offering to stay on for a further term and asked that thanks also be sent to Headteachers.

20.24 DBE BUDGET

The Chair referred to Paper B, an update on the current financial position of the DBE budget as at 31 March 2020 provided by Gary Peverley, Diocesan Finance Director. The Chair noted that the investment fund has been affected considerably because of COVID-19, as reflected in the balance sheet. As mentioned earlier, the Diocese has furloughed 14 staff in the short term to reduce costs, two of whom are members of the DBE team. The Chair expressed thanks to the DDE and her team for taking on extra work during this time. The Chair asked for comments concerning the DBE budget.

Jane Eccleston asked about the "other" costs of £60k in the full year forecast for 2020. The DDE agreed to check and subsequently advised that this related to the security costs for the St James site in Bury St Edmunds.

20.25 SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS: OFSTED / STATUTORY INSPECTION OF ANGLICAN AND METHODIST SCHOOLS (SIAMS) RESULTS

The DDE introduced Paper C, providing Ofsted and SIAMS outcomes for church schools published since the previous meeting.

The DDE apologised that one Ofsted report had been omitted for Cockfield CEVCP School which had received a good report in February 2020. In the absence of the SEO, the report provided a summary of recent results.

20.26 MONITORING REPORT

Mary Lewis referred to Paper D, which highlighted Mary's monitoring and support of the Schools' Adviser and her work under the DBE Strategy Action Plan. Mary noted the following points:

- more provision of website resources is needed to support the Schools' Adviser's work;
- more parishes need to be encouraged to support schools, for example through funding Kagera Days and school visits such as to the Discovery Centre; and
- the low numbers of attendees on training courses.

The Chair thanked Mary for her report. He advised that incumbents are encouraged during ministerial training and at interview to support schools but noted that he together with the DDE will need to look at ways of improving this.

The DDE thanked Mary for her support of the Schools' Adviser and advised that resources are on the website but that more could be made available to help schools. The DDE acknowledged that numbers attending courses are small although evaluations of courses show that the quality of the training provided is good. It is proving difficult for other organisations, too, to get schools to attend training. Online training may prove to be more beneficial because it reduces the need for travel, although there are many benefits to face to face training. The team has encouraged schools to work together when organising training but the DDE welcomed any other ideas.

The Revd Sharon Potter advised that her parish allocates funding to the local church school and has responded to the needs of the school but that this might be more difficult this year.

Jane Eccleston advised that the current situation will make us look at different ways of working and communicating which could impact on training. John Dixon felt that there are a number of positives in the way meetings are being conducted currently and that it would be useful to explore different methods of training.

20.27 LOCAL AUTHORITY UPDATE

Pete Mumford referred to Paper E, which provided an update on local authority issues arising since the last meeting. Pete thanked and acknowledged the hard work and innovation of schools during these challenging times and also thanked DBE officers for their contribution towards the strategic planning of the local authority.

Tim Fairbairn asked about numbers for reception across Suffolk. Pete replied that there has been a slight drop in numbers but this is similar to previous years.

Gillian Mitchell highlighted an issue with obtaining free school meal vouchers. Pete acknowledged that there have been issues and the local authority is liaising with the Department for Education on this issue. Feedback has also been provided by the DDE and DDDE on this.

Tim Fairbairn asked for an update on the Reception Baseline Assessment due in September. Gillian Mitchell advised that she had received a communication about this, but Pete will check with colleagues and confirm.

The Chair thanked Pete Mumford for the local authority update.

20.28 CONFIRMATION OF FOUNDATION GOVERNORS

The DBE ratified the appointment of Foundation Governors listed in Paper F.

20.29 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Tim Fairbairn asked whether a school survey could be undertaken to look at areas for improvement in the support to schools offered by the DBE and churches. The DDE advised that a survey of Headteachers had taken place at last year's Annual Church School Leaders' Conference in November. The results had been positive although use of the diocesan website could be improved. The DDE was conscious of survey overload but was happy to consider a survey using Survey Monkey. The DDE would bring a set of questions to the DBE in September for the conference in November. Tim Fairbairn felt that it would be good to include all church schools in the survey rather than just those attending the annual conference.

The DDDE advised that officers meet half-termly to discuss our church schools, particularly any schools which are less engaged with the Diocese. The DDDE felt that officers know our schools well and a record of school engagement is maintained.

20.30 FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Schools opening, how things are going and what needs doing

20.31 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The Board noted that future meetings would take place on:

Wednesday 16 September 2020 at 5.30pm for 6pm
Tuesday 24 November 2020 at 1pm for 1.30pm

The Chair thanked members for their contribution to the meeting.

The meeting closed at 10.55am with the Grace.

Signed: _____
[Chairman]

Date: _____