



**The Moorland Federation Full Governing Board**  
**Minutes of the meeting held at 7pm on Wednesday 9 July 2025**  
**on Teams**

<b>Governors Present</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Also Present</b>	<b>Role</b>
Frances Nicholson (Chair)	Foundation	Kathryn Lanning	Clerk
Rev Dowell Conning	Foundation		
Cerys Dehaini	Parent		
Kim Garner	LA		
Rev Ann Gibbs	Foundation		
Paul James	Staff		
Helen Jenkinson	Co-opted		
Daniel Moncrieff	Co-opted		
Hazel Mutter	Parent		
Naomi Philp	EHT, Ex-Officio		
Steven Pugsley (from item 13)	Foundation		
Rev Helene Stainer	Foundation		
Patrick Watts-Mabbott	Foundation		

**Item 1 – Quorum**

- 1.1 The clerk confirmed the meeting was quorate (it remained so throughout).
- 1.2 Rev Ann Gibbs led governors in a short prayer.

**Item 2 – Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest**

- 2.1 There were no apologies for absence. Clive Franklin was not present.
- 2.2 Daniel Moncrieff advised that his entry on the Board Register of Interests needed to be changed to reflect his new role with Devon County Council. There were no other new declarations of interest.

**ACTION: Clerk**

**Item 3 – Minutes of the last meeting**

- 3.1 The Board approved the minutes of the FGB meeting held on 1 May 2025.

#### **Item 4 – Matters Arising / Action Tracker (paper)**

- 4.1 The Board noted that two governors needed to complete their required training. PWB confirmed that he had completed safeguarding training on GovernorHub and would update his training log.

**ACTION: PWB**

- 4.2 Other items on the action tracker were covered elsewhere on the agenda.

#### **Item 5 – Chair's Report (oral)**

- 5.1 The Chair commented on the great community interest in Dulverton on how to open the swimming pool as a community facility. This is being led by the Moorland Food Bank and the Federation is represented on their board. The EHT commented on the potential for working further with community groups on areas such as cooking and gardening.

#### **Item 6 – Clerk's Update (papers)**

- 6.1 The Clerk drew governors' attention to key items in the latest Governor Services briefing paper, in particular:
- Teachers' 4% pay award September 2025: only 3% would be funded by the government, leaving schools to fund the remaining 1% through efficiencies.
  - Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025: governors should ensure that their schools have up-to-date protective security and preparedness plans, processes and training in place.
  - 2024-25 PE and sport premium digital report: this needed to be submitted, and the information posted on the school website, by 31 July. The Vice-Chair confirmed that she had approved the submission in the Chair's absence. [Post-meeting note: there is no statutory requirement for the FGB to approve the submission]
  - Free School Meals: all children from households in receipt of Universal Credit will be entitled to receive free school meals from September 2025.
- 6.2 KG commented that the Finance Committee would discuss how to meet the teacher pay rise shortfall and any cost implications of extending the provision of free school meals at its next meeting. The EHT commented on the financial challenges small rural schools with falling rolls face and stressed the importance of managing such schools as flexibly and creatively as possible in order to meet those challenges.
- 6.3 The Clerk also drew governors' attention to recent updates to the Governance Guide for Maintained Schools, including:
- Mental health and wellbeing responsibilities are outlined more clearly and there is increased emphasis on the need for schools to have clear systems and processes in place. Boards must also make sure that school food standards are being met and ensure that their schools promote a whole-school approach to healthy eating.
  - Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions: boards must make sure that their school has a policy on this which is reviewed regularly and accessible to

parents and staff. The Clerk confirmed that there is an up-to-date policy on the Federation's website.

### **Item 7 – Executive Headteacher's Report (papers)**

- 7.1 The EHT outlined key items in her report, including the following:

#### Staffing

- 7.2 The Federation had minimal staff vacancies at the moment but since the report was written a further vacancy had arisen for a Moorland Federation SENCO and the role would be advertised shortly. HJ would also be undertaking the SEND NPQ.
- 7.3 Internal staffing moves had been confirmed and all positions were now filled by very competent staff, supporting staff and leadership retention which could be very challenging in a rural/coastal areas.
- 7.4 The payment to cover compassionate leave for a member of staff had been covered by the Federation's insurers, so Board approval had not been required.

#### Attendance

- 7.5 Attendance across the Federation stood at 93.6% against a national primary school average of 94.9%. Robust attendance processes were in place and attendance data for different groups and individual children continued to be monitored and analysed. Recent Ofsted reports confirmed that there is not a great deal more that can be done to boost attendance figures, although there was a lot of work being carried out at a local level to address this.

#### Suspensions

- 7.6 The number of suspensions had reduced and the suspension protocol, including the process for returning to school, had been well-tested by Ofsted.

#### Year 5/6 Provision

- 7.7 The LA planned to issue draft proposals for year 5/6 provision at the Federation's first schools on 29 August 2025, with a decision to be made on 12<sup>th</sup> December in time for parents needing to make decisions by 15 January on which school they would like their child to attend. The EHT needed to revisit and clarify with the LA whether the consultation would be restricted to Moorland Federation parents/carers or include other parties.

#### **ACTION: EHT to clarify scope of consultation**

#### Data

- 7.8 The EHT advised that an external review of her EHT report had identified the need to include more hard data on impact and outcomes on interventions such as Mindfulness. She was discussing with the SLT how to achieve this and make data more meaningful for the small numbers of children involved and the nature of the activity.
- 7.9 GLD, Phonics and Year 2 (KS1) performance data had been included in the report; improvement measures would be addressed by individual schools and built into the Federation Development Plan.

- 7.10 Yr6 (KS2) data was shared verbally as results had just been published so required further analysis. However, the EHT was very pleased to report that all eight Langford Budville Yr 6 children (seven of whom have SEN) had sat KS2 tests. One child with SEN had achieved greater depth in all areas. At Dulverton 82% had achieved the expected standard in SPAG, Reading and Maths; greater depth had been achieved by 23% in SPAG, 29% in Reading and by one child in Maths. This was a significant improvement from the previous year.
- 7.11 The EHT advised that the Board needed to consider what should be done differently next year in terms of planning for progress, quality assurance and supporting the schools. The SLT had met earlier in the day to identify data drop points and refine data capture during the year to ensure full utilisation (impact) of those mid-year points. This would allow ongoing data analysis, target revision and more timely reallocation of resources if necessary. Planning for progress governor monitoring dates were being reviewed to ensure they take place when the latest data is available.

#### **Item 8 – Safeguarding Review (paper)**

- 8.1 The EHT introduced a briefing paper on a recent safeguarding review, initially focused on Timberscombe but expanded to reflect emerging themes and the need for consistency across the Federation. The review had resulted in the production of 3 new Federation policies:
- Mobile and Smart Device Use Policy – sets expectations for pupil and adult device use on school sites.
  - Staff as Parents Policy and Guidance – clarifies professional boundaries when staff have children enrolled at their own or another federation school.
  - AI Use in School Policy – outlines appropriate and ethical use of AI tools for staff and pupils.
- 8.2 School posters had also been produced to clarify DSL roles and how staff should raise concerns.

#### **Item 9 – Staffing and Class Structure (paper)**

- 9.1 The EHT introduced a briefing paper on the new staffing and class structures at Dunster and Dulverton schools, previously agreed by governors, to support educational continuity and financial sustainability. Both schools would move from a four-class to a three-class structure from September 2025. At Dunster this would necessitate a year 3/4 class of 38-40 pupils. The class would be supported by a full-time HLTA with potential for further capacity to be added by other staff, including the delivery of targeted support by the Federation's Maths Lead.

#### **Item 10 – SEND (papers)**

- 10.1 The EHT introduced a briefing paper on developments in SEND provision across the Federation's schools. This was supported with an information paper on EHE/ EBSA and Flexi Schooling. Building work was underway at the Dulverton site to develop a SEND base in line with the school's Financial Recovery Plan. This was due to open with one FT teacher and 2 FT LSAs in September. At Dunster agreement had been reached for capital investment to support a new SEND base focused on Social,

Emotional and Mental Health from January 2026. At Langford Budville agreement had been reached with the LA to create a SEND base from September 2026 – or sooner. The bases are recognised and included in the school's Financial Recovery Plans for Dulverton and Langford Budville (included with papers).

- 10.2 These developments would support a more holistic approach to SEND across the schools, rather than treat them as individual entities. They were also integral to the development of an Alternative Provision business proposal. As part of this proposal the Federation was working in partnership with a national provider, Finding the Flex, to establish a flexi-schooling model supporting Elective Home Education, pre-emptive SEND identification and Emotionally-Based School Avoidance.

### **Item 11 – Ofsted Reports (papers)**

- 11.1 Governors congratulated staff on the positive Ofsted Reports for Dulverton and Cutcombe. It was anticipated that there would be some constructive press coverage of the Dulverton Report, which had now been published. The EHT was pleased to report that staff and parents had been very supportive of the Heads of School during the inspection process. The new report card-based Ofsted Framework would come into force in November and the other five Moorland Federation schools could potentially be in the window for inspection next year. No Moorland Federation schools were currently in the window for SIAMS inspections but a number had been contacted for SIAMS training in readiness.

### **Item 12 – Communication and Community**

#### Website and Social Media Update (papers)

- 12.1 Governors noted that a comprehensive review had shown that the Federation's website met statutory requirements for maintained primary schools and demonstrated a commitment to transparency and inclusivity.

#### **12.2 The Board agreed that the Federation should have an Instagram account to help reach younger parents and carers who use this more regularly than Facebook.**

#### Cutcombe Swimming Pool (paper)

- 12.3 The EHT explained that the Wheddon Cross community would like continued access to the Cutcombe School pool during the summer holiday period.

Question: who will ensure safety of children using the pool?

Response (EHT): parents will have to sign a disclaimer to confirm that they will have full supervision.

Question: will those using the pool over the summer contribute to maintenance and running costs?

Response (EHT): the local community already fundraises considerable amounts to keep the pool going.

- 12.4 One governor suggested that the local press might be asked to write an article on local community use of the Cutcombe pool as this could support proposals for community use of the Dulverton pool. Another governor noted that Wessex Water might offer funding for bat boxes around the pool.

- 12.6 The Board agreed that Cutcombe School Pool should be open for community use over the summer holiday on condition that a final health and safety snagging checklist is completed and signed off jointly by the Head of Cutcombe School and a member of the Shared Services team or the EHT prior to opening.**

**ACTION: EHT/Shared Services Team Member**

*Steven Pugsley joined the meeting at this point.*

### **Item 13 – Governor Monitoring (papers)**

- 13.1 Governors noted the latest Planning for Progress Reports. Governor monitoring dates for 2025-26 would be shared soon and the process refined to make it more effective.

### **Item 14 – Link Governor Feedback (oral)**

- 14.1 The EHT said that she would involve HM (EYFS Link Governor) in the future development of a cross-Federation EYFS team.
- 14.2 There was no other feedback from link governors.

### **Item 15 – Meeting dates (oral)**

- 15.1 Governors agreed that FGB meetings should be held on varying weekdays and that the first meeting of next year should be held in person at Dulverton School on 18 September at 7pm. Governors able to arrive at 6.30 were invited to view the new SEND unit. Dates for the rest of the year would be circulated after the meeting.

**ACTION: Clerk**

### **Item 16 – Any other business**

- 16.1 The Board noted with Cerys Dehaini would be stepping down as parent governor with effect from the end of the current academic year due to work pressures. However, she offered her assistance with any future discrete pieces of work if that would be helpful. On behalf of the board the Chair and EHT thanked her for the time and effort she had put into the role over the past year.
- 16.2 The Board noted that when she becomes a Moorland Federation staff member in September 2025 HJ would need to stand down as vice-chair but could continue as a governor.
- 16.3 In response to a question from a governor prior to the meeting, the EHT outlined the constraints on setting term dates for LA maintained schools and the nuanced different for academies. For MF, these were currently set by the LA in consultation with a number of stakeholders and needed to align as far as possible with other educational providers. Schools/ local academies each had individual flexibility over the 5 INSET dates so these did not necessarily align across the local area. The EHT explained the internal decision making process for INSET days within the federation leadership and noted that all the strategic leaders in the area (Beacon,

KT, WSC/BTCT Leaders) consider/ consult about how to work together and whether there is possibility of alignment (normally around Jan/Feb time), and noted a further review meeting had occurred with Beacon recently (last week) as this had been raised. The EHT recognized pressures on parents when these do not align but explained the pathway for decisions locally. The EHT noted the childcare offer from Moorland but that uptake can be a challenge then for the business provider to open it. One governor suggested that communications with parents regarding INSET days could be improved and that local childcare providers might be asked to advertise any availability well in advance.

- 16.4 The EHT asked that if governors had any DfE contacts, they could raise some key non-operational issues, such as the impact of falling rolls in rural areas, funding for SEND reform, and, for example, that phonics CPD/Resource is often funded but not fluency or writing, which is one of the Federation's focus areas for improvement. The EHT noted that given real pressures on schools the board should continue to consider the future with strategic thinking, always focusing on 'what is best for the pupils.'
- 16.5 Governors were extremely saddened to hear of a member of staff's bereavement and expressed their heartfelt condolences. Rev Dowell Conning led governors in a prayer.
- 16.6 There was no other business and the meeting closed at 9.20pm.

Date of next meeting: Thursday 18 September, 7-9pm at Dulverton School

Kathryn Lanning  
Clerk to Governors