



## **The Moorland Federation Full Governing Board**

### **Minutes of the meeting held at 7pm on Thursday 18 September 2025**

### **on Teams**

<b>Governors Present</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Also Present</b>	<b>Role</b>
Frances Nicholson (Chair)	Foundation	Kathryn Lanning	Clerk
Clive Franklin	Foundation		
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 (part)	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).

#### **Item 2 – Appointments**

- 2.1 The Board unanimously re-elected Frances Nicholson to serve as chair for three years until the end of her current term (4 September 2028).
- 2.2 The Board unanimously elected Daniel Moncrieff to serve as Vice-Chair for one year.
- 2.3 The Board agreed that the following governors should serve on the Finance and Pay Committee for 2025-26:
  - Kim Garner – chair\*
  - Frances Nicholson
  - Daniel Moncrieff
  - Clive Franklin
  - Naomi Philp

2.4 The Board agreed that the following governors should serve on the EHT Performance Management Committee for 2025-26:

- Frances Nicholson
- Kim Garner\*
- Ann Gibbs

\*Post-meeting note: KG confirmed to the Chair after the meeting that she was happy with her appointments above.

2.5 The Board agreed governor responsibilities for 2025-26 as follows:

- Safeguarding – Ann Gibbs
- SEND, Children Looked After, Attendance – Frances Nicholson
- IT/Data Protection, Health and Safety – Clive Franklin
- Flexi-schooling, Sustainability – Helen Jenkinson
- EYFS – Hazel Mutter
- Sport Premium – Paul James
- Pupil Premium – Helene Stainer

### **Item 3 – Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest**

3.1 Apologies for absence were accepted from Rev Dowell Conning. Kim Garner was not present but submitted apologies for absence after the meeting due to a work emergency.

3.2 Hazel Mutter declared an interest in item 10 on the agenda as her husband is employed by the DfE and one of his colleagues is involved with the RISE programme. It was not considered necessary for her to be absent for any discussion on this item but the EHT would let the Federation's RISE contact know about the connection.

#### **ACTION: EHT**

3.3 There were no other declarations of interest relating to items on the agenda.

### **Item 4 – Minutes of previous meetings (papers)**

4.1 The Board approved the minutes of the FGB meeting held on 9 July 2025 and the EGM held on 9 September 2025.

### **Item 5 – Matters Arising / Action Tracker (paper)**

5.1 The Board noted updates to the Action Tracker, including the following:

#### Year 5/6 Consultation

5.2 The EHT reminded governors that the LA had been due to launch a consultation at the end of August on the proposal to introduce year 5/6 provision at the Federation's first schools. However, in light of the tragic coach crash on Cutcombe Hill in July, the LA and Federation leaders felt that it would not be an appropriate time to do this. The EHT advised that instead there was now a focus on developing stronger relationships across West Somerset, particularly with The Beacon Trust and West Somerset College, to develop proposals that would benefit children across the whole area.

### Cutcombe Pool

5.3 The EHT confirmed that the H&S snagging checklist had been completed and signed off prior to Cutcombe Pool opening for community use during the school summer holiday. PW-M advised that the opening the pool over the holiday period had raised £300.

### **Item 6 – Chair's Report (oral)**

6.1 The Chair advised that she had recently taken part in a GovernorHub webinar on attendance which had highlighted the need to interrogate data and identify trends. She commented that, whilst there may be some strategies the Federation could explore, these were perhaps less useful in very small schools where staff know all the children individually.

6.2 The EHT reported that Somerset Education Engagement Services (EES), who work with schools to ensure all children have access to education, were planning to visit the Federation's schools and she had asked them for one meeting to consider the Federation as a whole to save capacity for the LA and MF rather than the separate meetings at each school that they had proposed.

Post-meeting note: EES had subsequently confirmed they wanted to undertake a separate school visit initially. The EHT would follow up with Nikki Difford the relationships manager to see if there was a smarter way to work after the initial meetings had occurred, especially given the small pupil numbers at Moorland schools.

### **Item 7 – Clerk's Update (paper)**

#### Governor Services Briefing

7.1 The Clerk drew governors' attention to key items in the latest Governor Services briefing paper, including:

- The new Ofsted inspection framework comes into effect on 10 November 2025.
- *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025* includes a new emphasis on digital risks. CF offered to draft a user-friendly summary for governors on the recently published [Using AI in Education](#) to be uploaded to GovernorHub and for discussion at the next FGB meeting.

#### **ACTION: CF**

- Pupil Premium strategy statements need to be published on school websites by 31 December 2025.
- Consultation is currently underway on the Somerset Fair Access Protocol, a mechanism to ensure the most vulnerable children secure school places. This relates mainly to secondary schools but the EHT confirmed that she would respond appropriately.

#### Compliance

7.2 The Clerk advised that she would email governors about training and compliance requirements after the meeting, noting that a number of governors had requested to do their Safeguarding refresher training online.

#### **ACTION: Clerk**

7.3 The Chair queried whether the Federation still purchases the Governor Services training package.

Post-Meeting Note: the Federation has not bought the Governor Services training package this year. Governor Services training can still be undertaken on an ad hoc basis at a cost to the Federation of £38 per session. (New governors' induction, safeguarding, clerks' briefings and chairs' meetings are free of charge).

Options for free governor training include GovernorHub Knowledge which has a number of training courses and a wide range of useful resources. The Clerk is also happy to help governors source free online training.

### **Item 8 – Executive Headteacher's Report (oral)**

#### Safeguarding

8.1 The EHT reported that earlier in the day she had completed [Operation EnCompass](#) training – a police and education safeguarding initiative to provide schools with early information about children experiencing domestic violence. The training is also available to governors at no cost.

8.2 Safeguarding and First Aid refresher training had taken place at the start of term for all staff. The EHT commented that staff had been very focused and very strongly engaged with the training, perhaps due in part to the relevance of the tragic coach accident in July. PJ agreed that this had also been the case at Dunster and reported that a school evacuation exercise due to an electrical incident earlier in the week had gone smoothly and completely in line with protocols. A review of this incident had occurred with any actions to improve underway including work with the compliance leader on 'Grab Bag' contents.

8.3 The First Aid training had not included the use of bleed kits (which are in all the Federation's schools) so the EHT was exploring the possibility of some community training on their use linked to the work with the Operational Group responding to the tragic coach crash in July. From next year this would be included in the annual First Aid training package from the provider but MF would not be in cycle for an update for another 2 years. CF commented that there might be children in school with bleeding disorders and stressed the importance of staff undertaking appropriate training. He offered to provide some information/links to websites.

#### **ACTION: CF**

8.4 Work was underway to align all CPOMS categories (Child Protection Online Monitoring System) across the Federation's schools and the new system was currently being trialed at Langford Budville. It was hoped that the work would be completed by the end of the Autumn term, at which point staff would receive training on the new system. Each system needed to be altered individually which is time-consuming for administrative leadership.

#### SEND

8.5 HJ reported on a very positive start to the term at the new SEND unit in Dulverton. She had been delighted that progress markers such as eye contact, biddability and involvement – which she thought might have taken half a term to develop – had been reached within ten days. The children's day had a clear structure and rhythm, including breakfast, chat, a daily baking session and other enjoyable

activities through which formal teaching could be delivered. She felt that some training needed to be delivered to staff overall to explain the importance of inclusion and the function of the SEND unit.

8.6 The EHT advised that meetings had taken place with representatives from [Finding the Flex](#) to explore ways of incorporating flexi-schooling into a single package with SEND/Alternative Provision which could then be sold on, for example to Pupil Referral Units. The proposal was almost ready to be presented to the LA and she hoped that they would commission Finding the Flex to carry out a discrete piece of work on the proposal, using the Moorland Federation as a pilot. DM agreed to review the proposal prior to submission and it would be put on GovernorHub for comments from all governors.

**ACTION: EHT/Clerk/ DM once draft shared**

8.7 It was suggested that the proposals should include information about how learning in the Dulverton SEND unit will be evidenced and how children will be prepared to move into mainstream education. It was also suggested that it should be made clear how the proposal links in with virtual schooling. HJ advised that she had met earlier in the day with representatives from six other local SEND units. Discussions had focused on the need to develop a curriculum structure incorporating performance measures for SEND units and discussions were taking place with Jeremy Handscomb (Curriculum and Topic Lead, Somerset Council) on how to achieve this. The group had also discussed how best to meet transition points into mainstream education.

8.8 It was suggested that when modelling costs for the proposal it would be sensible to show costs for purchasing places on an ad hoc basis and costs for guaranteeing to purchase say ten places which would keep costs down as it would remove the risk of not being able to sell places.

8.9 The EHT advised that the staff restructuring discussed last year was still being refined and costings reviewed with the aim of ensuring financial security for the Federation whilst continuing to provide the best educational experience for the children. Proposals would be reviewed at the next Finance Committee and it was anticipated that they would be finalised in time for implementation in January 2026 or sooner.

**Item 9 – SWAP Internal Audit review of Finance and Governance at Moorland Schools (papers)**

9.1 The EHT advised that an internal audit of finance and governance would be taking place at Moorland schools next month. It had not initially been made clear why the audit was taking place or why only some of the Federation's schools had been selected but advice from the LA was that the audit programme, which had stalled during Covid, was now being rolled out to all schools in Somerset.

9.2 Governors commented that the audit would place additional demands on already stretched staff resources and for the leadership to monitor impact.

### **Item 10 – Ofsted and RISE information (paper)**

10.1 The EHT reported that Dulverton Juniors had been selected for targeted intervention through the DfE [Rise Programme](#). This was because the school had been graded 'requires improvement' for quality of education in the latest Ofsted report (although the other three categories were graded 'good') and for the outcomes at KS2 in 2024. Governors noted that the RISE team would be in touch shortly to outline next steps and explain how the programme would work.

### **Item 11 – Federation Minibuses (paper)**

11.1 Governors noted that an exercise was currently underway to review:

- o The condition and use of the Federation-owned minibuses
- o The maintenance arrangements and contractual position
- o Associated documentation, schedules and audit trail
- o Defined staff responsibilities and roles

Question: when will the minibuses be back in service?

Response (EHT): this depends on the outcome of the A.

11.2 PW-M agreed to liaise with the briefing paper author (LP, Business Manager) to produce an update for the Board in December.

**ACTION: PW-M**

11.3 The importance of this item and context was noted by the board.

### **Item 12 – Board Governance Documents (papers)**

12.1 The Board approved the following documents:

- a) **Instrument of Government (unchanged)**
- b) **Standing Orders (unchanged)**
- c) **Scheme of Delegations (minor amendments)**
- d) **Governor Code of Conduct (unchanged)**
- e) **Finance and Pay Committee Terms of Reference (revised)**
- f) **EHT Performance Management Committee Terms of Reference (new)**
- g) **Board Register of Interests (updated)**

### **Item 13 – Policies (paper)**

13.1 The Board:

- a) **noted the current statutory policy schedule for the Federation**
- b) **agreed that, because statutory policies are mostly based on LA/DfE templates, where necessary, policies in Section 1 of the schedule (those requiring Board approval) could be considered 'pre-approved' by the Board to enable the most current policies to be used, but that these should come to their next FGB for formal approval**
- c) **approved the delegation levels in Section 2 of the schedule.**

#### **Item 14 – Meeting Dates 2025/26**

14.1 The Board agreed FGB meeting dates for the remainder of the year as follows (all 7-9pm):

Tuesday 2 December 2025 (online)  
Tuesday 3 February 2026 (online)  
Thursday 30 April 2026 (in person – tbc)  
Tuesday 7 July 2026 (online)

#### **Item 15 – Any other business**

##### Planning for Progress

15.1 The EHT said that the first planning for progress sessions this half term would focus on the school development plans and self-evaluation forms, and School Improvement Partners had been booked to do reviews. It was also suggested that the Safeguarding governor should touch base with Heads of School (either in person or online). The EHT said it would be very useful if all governors could choose a school to visit this term and talk to the Head of School, staff and some children about safeguarding. This could be done at a time that works for each governor rather than on set days. The EHT would circulate a note setting this out in more detail with dates and plans for visits. The Chair of Governors would be invited to all SIP summary meetings.

15.2 There was no other business and Rev Ann Gibbs closed the meeting with a prayer at 8.45pm

Date of next meeting: Tuesday 2 December 2025, 7-9pm online

Kathryn Lanning  
Clerk to Governors