

**Norfolk Governance Network  
County Committee (Virtual Meeting)  
25<sup>th</sup> June 2020, 18.30**

**MINUTES**

**Attendees:**

Mike Grimble (MG), Judy Leggett (JL), Rosemary Kett (RK), Anne Gibson (AG) – Chair, Jill Wilson (W), Alison Woodward (AW), Angie Johnson (AJ), Peter Harwood (PH), Justine Petersen (JP) – Clerk.

<p><b>1. Welcome</b> AG welcomed all present and thanked them for attending.</p>
<p><b>2. Apologies for Absence</b> Apologies were received and accepted from Hilary Bradshaw, Martin White, Claire Blamey and Susanne Mason.</p>
<p><b>3. Declarations of interest</b> PH is married to a member of the Clerking Service.</p>
<p><b>4. Minutes of last meeting – 18<sup>th</sup> March 2020.</b> Unanimously approved without amendment.</p>
<p><b>5. Minutes of Sub Committees</b> <b>a. Communications – 13<sup>th</sup> May 2020</b> AJ provided an update. AG has not been able to get the Twitter password. Paul Brooker has not yet been invited to speak at the 2020 conference. AG will contact him so he has it in his diary. <b>Action – AG to contact Paul Brooker re 2020 conference.</b> It is not yet known whether the conference will go ahead. The John Innes Centre is currently closed. The conference could potentially be held online. There is unlikely to be a significant crossover of delegates wishing to attend the NGN conference and also the TEDx event, therefore the NGN’s date will not change. Overall communication during the pandemic has improved. The NGN now receives Chris Snudden’s emails. The most recent have centred on collecting school data, so AG has not shared them. The NGN would like a better understanding of attendance levels and what issues schools are facing. The NGN could hold online briefings sessions in the near future. These could increase membership, with the first session focused on the SEND transformation plan. Short videos could be uploaded to social media, and the NGN could bring focus groups together. AW and AG will arrange an online meeting with Paul Dunning when appropriate. AJ has spoken with AVIVA. She is unsure whether their governor group is meeting remotely. AG is in touch with the UEA governors group. AW will also contact them before the summer break. JL requested a contact from the UEA governor group. JW will provide. <b>Action – JW to forward contact details for UEA governor group to JL.</b> AW has not yet written an article for Footprints. This is on hold until the autumn.</p>

**b. NGN/ESGLS Liaison – 12<sup>th</sup> June 2020**

MG provided an update. The meeting was very useful.

GLS is moving from a traded service towards governance support. The Toolkit and training will still be traded.

There are plans to send a survey to all governing boards in order to find out their needs. It is an inquiry into the state of governance in Norfolk. AG has not yet seen it. Helen Wardale has been delayed by Covid-19 but she will send the questions in the next few days. The NGN will receive composite statistics.

Some headteachers are using the pandemic as a way of disconnecting from their governing board. This is a small minority but HW is working to address.

Governorhub has been taken over by The Key. This creates issues for Educator Solutions in terms of the package they provide.

Alex Robinson is no longer with Ortoo Technologies Ltd.

The online RSE training was particularly useful.

Educator Solutions are looking at what they can provide in terms of training. Much will be online. Some NGN members have completed bitesize sessions. Online training is inclusive, and not all governors can easily attend face-to-face sessions.

Clerking in Norfolk was discussed. The NGN feels strong about improving the quality of clerking. It is very poor in some schools. Helen Wardale is on board.

The possibility of the NGN using Governorhub as a communication medium was discussed, including a members page to which all governors in Norfolk could opt in. This would be separate from the main NGN page.

The Clerk contacted the John Innes Centre regarding the conference. The Centre is not open at this time and they will be flexible should they open before the conference.

**6. Matters Arising**

Not all members have completed their pen portraits for the website.

Carolyn Watts was unable to attend the meeting to discuss digital health profiles. She is still keen to do so, and the item will be added to the next agenda.

**Action – Digital Health Profiles to be added to next agenda.**

**7. Digital Health Profiles**

Deferred until next meeting.

**8. Covid-19**

AG advised that school attendance for the Years R, 1 and 6 during the first week back was 19%. This has been increasing gradually since. There is significant variation between schools.

Attendance of key worker children has also increased.

The issue of outbreak control is significant. NCC aims to have a plan for this by the end of June.

Recent Government announcements have caused stress and confusion. AG has been involved in discussions with colleagues in public health. There is confusion around testing and what qualifies as 'close contact'. It is not known whether the LA is publishing information about this.

The LA is in a difficult position. It does not receive information before it is circulated to the media.

AG will suggest to Chris Snudden that governing boards receive an LA briefing note about what processes would be followed in an infection occurs in a school. Governors should see this in advance rather than trying to deal with it when it happens.

**Action – AG to suggest briefing note to Chris Snudden re procedure for infection in school.**

The current rules can be liberally interpreted. Governors are not operationally in control with how schools deal with this. They need to ensure risk assessments cover all variables and that health and safety recommendations are acted upon. Governors should support headteachers in dealing with parental pressure.

Joint Chairs discussions have become very operational. Headteachers are disheartened with the way the Government has handled the outbreak.

Chris Snudden and Seb Gasse recently met with the Regional Schools Commissioner. There is no pressure on schools to open over the summer break as there was over Easter. NCC will not be running holiday clubs. The Norwich Opportunity Area is doing this but it is not being done outside of Norwich. Some academies are offering to pay staff to provide education over the summer break.

#### **9. Membership Engagement Strategy**

This was discussed at the last meeting of the Communications Committee.

AW suggested the NGN consider its aims and themes. There needs to be clarity around what it is trying to deliver.

The governor survey could be useful in ascertaining what governing boards would like. Some have already highlighted problems of governor recruitment.

The NGN should be an umbrella organisation for all schools and governors in Norfolk.

Communication must be much wider in order for the NGN to effectively represent all governors.

Covid-19 is a major issue for governors and it is likely to continue into the winter in some form. The NGN needs to get the right messages out regarding getting governance back on its feet. It needs feedback on how many governing boards are able to operate electronically, and how many have 'fizzled out'.

The NGN has discussed hosting small group discussions on Zoom instead of briefings. The first topic could be taking back control. It was agreed that AW would convene 2 sessions initially on the topic 'Resetting Governance – Managing the Covid-19 Environment'. The sessions would last for 40 minutes with a maximum of 20 participants.

#### **Action – AW to convene 2 online discussions.**

Many virtual meetings have been well attended. Some schools were initially very wary but then had real success.

AJ will design an NGN backdrop.

#### **Action – AJ to design NGN backdrop for online sessions.**

#### **10. Website Update**

Members were unsure when the agreement with Ortoo Technologies regarding the website expires. A contingency may be needed. Clerk to contact Susanne Mason.

#### **Action – Clerk to contact Susanne Mason re expiry date of website contract.**

#### **11. 2020 Conference**

It is not yet known whether the conference will go ahead, but if so, it needs to be publicised by July at the latest. September would be too late.

A virtual conference could be an option.

The decision will be taken at the next meeting of the Communications Committee on 8<sup>th</sup> July.

Louise Smith could be invited to speak about the impact of Covid-19 on learning outcomes.

There could be an update on the SEND transformation plan.

Josie Raynor-Wells could be invited to talk about RSE.

Schools must consider how best to use the recovery funds. IT spending could be an option, as many vulnerable children already miss out.

#### **12. Governor Briefings**

Covered above.

#### **13. Chair's Update Report**

The Joint Chairs continue to meet regularly. Regular updates have been posted to Governorhub.

#### 14. Finance

The statement of accounts and budget report were circulated in advance of the meeting. The accounts have not yet been audited.

There were no comments or concerns regarding either document.

The Treasurer has submitted an invoice via Chris Snudden and the funding will be received in due course.

Conference costs are unknown at this stage.

Travelling expenses have decreased.

£1k has been allocated for website and communications development, including Governorhub.

Members felt it would be useful to separate the website from general communications. A new budget line could be created.

#### 15. Guest Speakers for Future Meetings

Discussion deferred.

#### 16. Any other urgent business

It was agreed that AJ would be the SEND member representative at the virtual workshop on 1<sup>st</sup> July. AG will pass on her details.

**Action – AG to pass on AJ’s details as SEND representative for virtual workshop.**

JW and AW are NASMA representatives.

The recommendations of the County SEND inspection were accurate. There must be a focus on whether SEND support children are progressing and not just those with EHCPs.

SEND governor training is not strong and does not equip link governors to carry out their role effectively.

Individual governor roles could feed into the online NGN sessions.

#### 17. Date and time of next meetings

Communications – Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> July 2020, 18.30

NGN/ESGLS Liaison – Friday 16<sup>th</sup> October 2020, 10.00

County Com – TBC

**Action – Clerk to draft schedule of meetings for next academic year.**

The meeting closed at 19.53

#### Summary of agreed actions:

Agenda Item	Agreed Action	Action Owner	Target Date
5	JW to forward contact details for UEA governor group to JL	JW	ASAP
5	AG to contact Paul Brooker re 2020 conference	AG	ASAP
6	Digital Health Profiles to be added to next agenda	Clerk	Next meeting
8	AG to suggest briefing note to Chris Snudden re procedure for infection in school	AG	Urgent
9	AW to convene 2 online discussions	AW	ASAP
9	AJ to design NGN backdrop for online sessions	AJ	ASAP
10	Clerk to contact Susanne Mason re expiry date of website contract	Clerk	ASAP
16	AG to pass on AJ’s name as SEND representative for virtual workshop	AG	Urgent
17	Clerk to draft schedule of meetings for next academic year	Clerk	ASAP

