



NORTH NIBLEY C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL GOVERNORS' NEWSLETTER

Here is the first governors' newsletter this school year to update you on our activities. Although the current circumstances have limited what can be achieved practically in school, behind the scenes we have continued to support and challenge the school to ensure that it continues to develop and improve. If you would like to talk to a governor either let the school office know or catch one of us at the school gate. We are here for the school community.

*Sue Bradley-Jones (Chair)
Peter Hall (Vice-Chair)
Mary Blogg
Julie Collins
Junior Fowlin
Emma Frith
Tom Merrifield
Jules Miller
Charlotte Parker
Mark Perry
Jude Saunderson
Fiona Yarrow
Becci Surridge (Staff Member)
Paul Batchelor (Head Teacher)*

A belated announcement! Way back during the long lockdown, we set a competition to create a rainbow! Joseph (now in Year 2) was a worthy winner, creating a 3D version in Lego! Congratulations, Joseph. A prize is on its way!

Governors have managed all their scheduled meetings this term, albeit held 'online'. As you know, the minutes of the full governing board meetings are published on the web site, and they follow a set format. The first meeting of this year covered the formal annual business of elections, committees, terms of reference etc. Central to all these meetings is the Head Teacher's report which keeps us up to date with everything from school attendance to parental feedback – one of the governors' key roles is 'holding the head teacher to account' and this is one way we do it. We have also heard about the recovery plan for getting children up to speed again after the long lockdown, and adopted a new school improvement plan. A summary can be found online here –

<http://www.northnibley.gloucs.sch.uk/improvement-plans/>

We have reviewed some key school policies and considered what school visits we can carry out without being able to go into the classrooms. Roll on normality!

It's a year since the opening of 'The Lodge' and there's no doubt that it fulfils its original purpose as an invaluable extra teaching area. It has also had the extra unforeseen advantage of providing extra space when making Covid-safe arrangements in the school. Now we are turning our attention to improving the main school premises.



PREMISES WORK

Governor Fiona Yarrow has, with the aid of Greg Smith, Associate Governor, taken the lead on a project to upgrade the school's heating and lighting. Fiona writes:

The Finance & Resources Committee has been busy over the last few months applying for various grants with a view to helping to overhaul certain items of capital expenditure around the school. Without such schemes, the school would struggle given the ongoing crisis with school funding and the numerous everyday demands on the school budget.

Salix Finance Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme

Salix Finance provides interest-free, government backed loans to the public sector for the installation of energy-saving technologies. The Governors on behalf of North Nibley C of E Primary School have applied for grant of just over £10,000 to upgrade the lighting around the school to LED. This includes supply and installation costs. Interestingly, based on initial calculations, this scheme is likely to provide the following savings:

Energy cost - £1,651/annum

Trees - 3.01/annum

Energy - 72.49%/annum

CO2 emissions - 3,012.17kg/annum

These predicted energy savings will be used to pay back the interest-free loan over a period of 6.27 years.



SCA Capital Project Bids for Church of England Schools.

The heating system in the school is aged and regularly requires TLC from both engineers and Mrs Kirby. This issue was demonstrated to the Strategic Lead for Buildings for the Education Department of the Diocese of Gloucester during a site visit with Mr Batchelor and representatives of the Governors at the end of October.

The Governors have prepared and submitted an application primarily in relation to the overhaul of the heating system at an estimated cost of £100,000 to include boilers, radiators and associated pipework throughout the school. This is a competitive process so a successful application is not guaranteed. If the school is successful, the Governors are required to make a 10% contribution towards the project.

Fingers crossed that both grants are successful and that we can overhaul these systems to the benefit of all the school users; children, staff, volunteers and visitors alike.

Finally, the Governors would like to take this opportunity to thank Hookway for its help with the technical input required for these grant applications.

The other main improvement the school plans to make is to its IT provision and of course this is directly linked to the teaching and learning capacity of the school. Governor Mary Blogg, with the help of parent Anthony Foster, has been researching different options for the provision of new hardware and the relative costs.

Mary writes:



A Review of IT provision within the School

Balancing the school's budget is always going to be tricky as nearly 75% of it is for staffing expenditure leaving a fraction for non-staffing expenditure. As you can imagine, IT is one of the biggest ticket items that schools have to budget for and so I was tasked with forecasting the IT expenditure so that no hidden financial surprises hit the school in future years.

It quickly became evident that expert advice was required and Anthony Foster kindly agreed to assist. (What would the school do without our amazing network of friends, parents and community?)

First question we asked; how long in the world of IT should you plan for? The answer is just 3 years. Past this timeframe the technology has moved on. We then conducted a complete audit of both the software and hardware that currently exists within the school to better understand the school's future requirements. In addition, it was also ascertained that we should review the school's current support providers, replace the server and move the IT server to a more covert location.

Next step: We scanned providers on the market. Not such a simple job as the software, that the school didn't yet know it wanted, needed to be compatible with whatever hardware we chose. Last year Mr Batchelor, Mrs Lewis and Anthony Foster all went to a huge education IT conference and came back with a few ideas that in hindsight contributed to the magnificent response the school was able to give over the lockdown. We contacted IT support companies and got them to give us ideas on how they would support the school if given the contract and we also contacted companies that supplied IT equipment to schools. Quotes were obtained for both leasing equipment and outright buying equipment and it was decided that the school would be better 'future proofed' if we leased equipment rather than outright bought it. Due to the onset of Covid the whole project was put on hold, but we are now in a position to get quotes and new laptops should be on their way in the near future. At this point we should say a huge thank you to FONNs who have agreed to help fund the lease.

The latest information is that BT will provide full high speed Broadband to the village at the end of 2021, but when it does arrive the school will be in a position to make the most of it!

And to end on a positive note, we welcome Mark Perry as a new governor. Mark, as a parent at the school, will be known to many of you, but let him introduce himself in his own words.

Mark writes:

Hi, my name is Mark Perry. I've lived in North Nibley with my wife since 2007. We were married in St Martins Church and are settled in the village with our 3 children, twin boys in year 6 and our daughter in year 2.

I work in the Civil Service, currently working from home, but based out of Bristol. My background is in Engineering and Electrical Control Systems and my role now is in Quality Management. I have skills and experience of process management and assurance activities both with industry and within public sector organisations. I also volunteer as a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) Ambassador, visiting and delivering projects to schools in and around the Bristol area, looking to resume when current restrictions allow.



As well as balancing a busy household I can be found most weekends helping with coaching the Minis at the local Rugby Club.

As a new Governor I'm excited to be working with such a great team of fellow Governors, keeping up the good work they've achieved in helping our school be sustainable and deliver a truly fantastic experience for the pupils now and in the future.

(Did you know? Growing up as a child on the Devon/Somerset Border I lived in a small village with a monument (Wellington Monument) prominently displayed on the hilltop. Who would have thought that some years later I find myself living in a small village 60 miles up the M5 within the shadow of Tyndale Monument!)

And so, from all the Governors to all the school community we wish you a good Christmas holiday, with high hopes for a better 2021.

Sue Bradley-Jones, Chair of Governors.

