MINUTES OF THE FULL GOVERNING BOARD
AT HAVANNAH PRIMARY SCHOOL ON 27th JANUARY 2026 at 4pm

Governors Present:	John Sherwood (JS)	Chair of Governors
	Stef Williams (SW)	Head Teacher
	Kath Bennett (KB)	
	Ann Holland (AH)	Meeting Chair
	Matt Bradley (MB)	
	Melissa Santos (MS)	
Also in attendance:	Emma Fearn (EF)	
	Sophie Slater-Baynes (SSB)	
	Ashton Yates (CLERK)	Clerk to Governors

PART ONE: NON-CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

The meeting commenced at 4:11pm

		Actions
1	**APOLOGIES AND ANY OTHER BUSINESS** Governors were welcomed to the meeting by AH. Apologies had been **received and accepted** from: Rachael Melville (RM), Maria Wilson (MW), Bryony Milbourne (BM), and Olivia Page-Barry (OPB) There were two items of additional business raised for discussion: (i) SSB Feedback on the Joint Cheshire Emergency Planning Briefing. (ii) SW raised an AOB relating to a vulnerable pupil. It has been recorded under the Part Two minutes for reasons of confidentiality.	
2	**CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**	

	No conflict of interest with the business of the meeting was noted.	
3	**MEMBERSHIP** a) The following changes were received to the membership of the board of governors: • The resignation of Andrina Jackson as Parent Governor on 13.11.25 **ACTION**: The School Business Manager (SBM) to arrange a parent governor election. b) Governors noted there is one current vacancy for a co-opted governor and one parent governor vacancy. The board discussed co-opting a parent governor subject to the skills a parent governor could bring to the board. Governors also discussed other forms of recruitment, such as advertising the vacancy on the school website or Governors for Schools via Governorhub **ACTION:** SW/SBM to register for Governors For Schools via the GovernorHub platform. c) There were no terms of office due to expire before the next meeting. d) SW confirmed that updates to GIAS are ongoing. Furthermore, staff are in the process of updating sections of the school website.	**SBM (DB)** **SW/SBM**
4	**TERMS OF REFERENCE** A copy of the updated Terms of Reference (ToR) had been uploaded to Governor Hub in advance of the meeting. Governors **approved** the Terms of Reference for the circular model of governance.	
5	**PART ONE MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING** a) The Part One Minutes of the FGB T&L focus meeting on 7th October 2025 were **confirmed** as a true and accurate record. The Chair signed a copy of the minutes, which were retained by the school. b) Governors reviewed the action log, and the following actions were discussed: • 6.1. SW is due to meet with LA Health and Safety officer, Kim Broomhill in May 2026 to conduct a Health and Safety visit. An update will be provided to governors at the Summer L&M FGB.	**SW**

	• 5.2. SW agreed to share with governors the date Police officer, Andrew Cornell will be conducting online training for cyber security and online safeguarding. • 5.2. MB to complete a pen portrait for the school website and send it to SBM. • 7.7. MW to send SW questions on the Sports Grant, which can be forwarded on to Rebekah Kitson has been carried forward. • 11. SW to add pupil numbers to the attendance data report would be carried forward to the Spring FGB4. • 14. The creation of a policy review schedule is ongoing. It was confirmed that all other actions, which would not be addressed elsewhere in the meeting, had been met and closed as appropriate.	**SW** **MB** **MW** **SW**
6	**CHAIR'S ACTION** The Chair, under delegated power to act, notified the Board of the Headteacher's decision to close the school on Monday 5th January 2026 and Tuesday 6th January 2026 due to adverse weather (snow). No other actions under the Chair's Power to Act were taken since the previous Full Governing Board meeting.	
7	**PART ONE REPORTS FROM GOVERNORS WITH SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITIES** a) Governors discussed the appointment of a Sustainability Link Governor. SW nominated JS and JS agreed to become the Link Governor for Sustainability. SW informed governors that the school's External Advisor, Helen Gorst, has shared a Climate Action Plan that the school can begin to develop and implement. **ACTION:** SW and JS to arrange a H&S and Sustainability Link Governor Visit Governors discussed future link governor visits, including AH to visit Mrs Birdsall to review spelling, KB to review the SCiES Safeguarding Monitoring Guide, and BM to conduct a SEND Link Governor visit. b) Due to the absence of MW, it was agreed that the PP attainment and progress update would be reviewed at a future FGB. Governors discussed the concern raised in the previous FGB meeting on 13th November 2025 regarding insufficient toilets for pupils. An action at the meeting was for the SBM to contact Peter Shallcross at the Local Authority to conduct a survey of the toilets, and to secure a Cheshire East Conditions Grant to upgrade and install more toilets. SW confirmed that the SBM has contacted Peter	**SW/JS**

	Shallcross and an update will be provided to governors at the Leadership and Management FGB on 12th March 2026. Governors noted it can be difficult for governors themselves to secure sufficient sponsorship and resources for the improvement of the school.	
8	**FINANCE MATTERS** a) SW informed governors that a preliminary budget review has taken place and that SW and the SBM met with the Local Authority Finance Officer, Julie … SW has also attended a feedback meeting with the School Resource Management Advisor, Dave Riddick. SW informed governors that a final report with recommendations will be produced by Dave Riddick and shared with governors. SW suggested that the report be shared at an Extraordinary Full Governing Board meeting and recommendations, questions and comments be shared during Part Two of the following FGB meeting. **ACTION:** SW to arrange an EFGB to share the final report from Dave Riddick with governors. Recommendations to be presented at the following FGB Part Two. b) It was noted that the Manual of Internal Financial Procedures is due for approval at the Leadership and Management FGB on 12th March 2026. c) A copy of MW's Pupil Premium Link Governor report was shared on GovernorHub prior to the meeting. Governors confirmed that the use of the Pupil Premium and Recovery Premium was reviewed in MW's Link Governor report. There were no questions about the report. d) SW confirmed that the Pupil Premium Strategy statements had been uploaded to the school website prior to the deadline date of 31st December 2025. e) SW confirmed that the Sports Grant and impact on pupils was shared with governors at the Leadership and Management FGB on 13th November 2025 and was approved and submitted. MW has agreed to send Rebekah Kitson questions on the Sports Grant.	**SW**

9	**PART ONE HEADTEACHER'S REPORT** SW queried the completion of a Headteacher's report for both the Teaching and Learning focus meetings and the Leadership and Management focus meetings, under the recently adopted circle model of governance. The Clerk advised that a Headteacher's report be produced at each meeting to keep governors informed of key statutory items, to demonstrate the impact of actions, and to evidence effective governance. If a report was not produced for the Teaching and Learning meetings, then it was recommended that a clearly defined and structured Annual Governance Planner be adopted to ensure statutory items are covered. SW requested examples of Headteacher reports for each meeting focus and agreed to produce a report in retrospect of this meeting and to share the report with governors via GovernorHub. **ACTION:** Clerk to send example circle model HT reports to SW The Clerk explained to governors the usefulness of an Annual Governance Planner to reduce duplication of information in meetings and to provide a clear overview and structure of governance. Governors agreed this would be useful. **ACTION:** Clerk to share example Annual Governance Planner with the board. OPAL Playground The Outdoor Play and Learning (OPAL) playground had been included as a suggested agenda item in the Headteacher's report. SW provided the following verbal update on OPAL: • Following the involvement and experience of a member of staff with the OPAL Play Programme, the school would like to proceed with adopting OPAL. • A working group will be formed to lead the project, and MS has agreed to be a governor representative in this group. The programme has been implemented at the school MS works for. ***Q: Governors asked MS for her experience on the impact of the programme.*** ***A:*** *The programme began two years prior to October 2025 and was initially challenging due to the colder, darker evenings. As the seasons progressed into summer, the school developed a large orchard area and introduced swings and scooters, which significantly enhanced the children's play experience.*	**CLERK** **CLERK**

	• MB is championing the project and is working closely with Havannah on the implementation of OPAL. • The cost of the programme is £5,000 and the PTA has agreed to fund this. Sports Grant funding can also be used to fund the programme. • Storage remains a challenge, as large, accessible storage is required with doors pupils can open independently. Havannah has adequate outdoor space; however, a container may be needed. The improvements are expected to have a noticeable impact on the quality of playtime. • In the second stage of implementation, the Curricular Lead will be Rachael Holmes, and the Play Coordinator will be Olly Downy. • Pupils are encouraged to take ownership of OPAL, embedding a culture of independent, creative, and active play across the school. • Small-world items can be requested from parents for donation. Larger items may be created in-house or sourced from local contacts. • The programme is expected to benefit the whole school, promoting improvements in behaviour, engagement, and wellbeing. ***Q: Is the programme developed for pupils during playtime?*** ***A:*** *Yes. The programme ensures that the school focuses spending on purposeful playtime equipment. The Forest School area can be integrated into OPAL to support independent play. Pupils will also take responsibility for maintaining and leading elements of the play environment.* Governors noted that the OPAL programme has been implemented in many schools and has a strong record of accomplishment of success. Governors **approved** the decision to proceed with the OPAL Playground Project.	
10	**SAFEGUARDING** SW informed governors that a meeting with KB is to be arranged to review and update the SCiES Governor Safeguarding Monitoring document. SW informed governors of the school's current safeguarding data as follows: • There are currently two families subject to Child Protection plans. • Three families are receiving support through Child in Need Social Care.	

	• Five families are open to Early Help. ***Q: Does the school receive any support from Cheshire East when supporting vulnerable families?*** *A: No. Often the necessity of filling out paperwork is a barrier to supporting vulnerable families. Informal support is provided via Early Help, but the completion of paperwork can be challenging.* *EF left the meeting at 5:07pm*	
11	**SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (SDP)** SW provided the following verbal update on the SDP: • The school is engaging more with English Hub training, which is free. Reading Ambition For All, a professional development programme delivered via English Hubs, has completed a reading course for staff and staff have also engaged in fluency reading training. SW commended the support of the English Hub in the professional development of staff. • Writing is a priority. The school has used the Ready Steady Write materials, reviewed handwriting, and considered a new handwriting scheme used by another school. Mrs Fearne is monitoring this work. A new writing focus and framework have been introduced. • Handwriting had previously been holding pupils back and causing them to forget content, grammar, and other elements of writing. Pupils are now making excellent progress in handwriting, and coaching will take place to support this further. The Read Write Inc portal is being used to support staff, and the school has returned to the basics of handwriting. • Spelling has also been identified as a key area of priority. Spelling has been reviewed by the External Advisor, Helen Gorst. It was agreed that the Read Write Inc spelling programme was not having the desired impact, and feedback suggested that pupils were completing tasks without engagement. As a result, Mrs Birdsall has taken the responsibility for the improvement of spelling in Years 2 to 6, and the school has trialled two units from Ready Steady Spell alongside staff training. • Feedback indicates that Ready Steady Spell is having a greater impact. It teaches all pupils, aligns with the inclusion model, and returns to the basics of spelling. • Mrs Birdsall will hold a staff meeting to gather feedback on the potential change in schemes. There were no questions about the SDP.	
12	**SCHOOL EXTERNAL ADVISOR** SW informed governors that the School External Advisor, Helen Gorst, will visit the school on 9th February 2026.	

	The monitoring visit will include an inclusion learning walk, which will look at the experiences of pupils with SEND, disadvantaged pupils, and other vulnerable groups. The focus will be on what inclusion looks like in everyday practice. MW has requested to join the visit and feedback to the Full Governing Board. **<u>ACTION:</u>** Provide an update on HG's inclusion visit and include this on the agenda for the L&M FGB.	**SW**
13	**CLERK'S UPDATE** The Clerk provided a verbal update on the following points: • To consider having a confidentiality statement at the start of all meetings on the agenda. • The introduction of the visits tab and Effectiveness Tool on GovernorHub. • New statutory guidance for schools on restrictive interventions and reasonable force. • The announcement of a £200 million national training programme to strengthen SEND. • The SEND Link Governor is required to ensure that there is alignment between the Equality Act Duties and SEND responsibilities. • Schools must develop a holistic Climate Action Plan. • Governors are required to review updated school policies on Reasonable Force, Climate Action, Digital Technology Standards, and an Allergy policy. • Maintained schools are to consider Risk Registers, noting that they are not mandatory. • Governors are to review current policies regarding mobile phone use in school. *SW left the meeting at 17:16pm to speak to a parent.* A discussion followed regarding mobile phones in school. SSB informed governors that only four out of 36 pupils in Year 6 have a mobile phone at school. ***Q: Does the school ask for mobile phones to be handed in at the start of the day?*** *A: SSB confirmed that mobile phones are handed in at the start of the school day and returned to pupils at the end of the day. On average 20 phones or less are handed in.* ***Q: Does the school intervene with incidents related to pupil mobile phone use at home, or only school-related incidents?***	

	A: Incidents involving bullying, online gaming, and in extreme cases, potential grooming, have escalated to school involvement. ***Q: What process does the school follow to deal with mobile phone incidents?*** *A: In most cases a parent approaches the school. The school runs workshops to raise the awareness of mobile phone use to parents and to keep them informed. In some cases, incidents can warrant the involvement of the police, too.* *SW returned to the meeting at 17:21pm*	
14	**GOVERNOR TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT** a) The skills audit and governor development was not reviewed or discussed. b) SW informed governors that she will be attending an East Cheshire Association of Primary Headteachers conference with a focus on Inclusion. MW shared an LA Update Report and report on The Graduated Approach and OAIP from the Governor's Forum on 22nd January 2026 via GovernorHub prior to the meeting.	
15	**SCHOOL POLICIES** The following policies were shared via GovernorHub prior to the meeting: • Accessibility Policy • Charging and Remissions Policy • Complaints Procedure • GDPR Policy • Safeguarding and Child Protection • Lockdown and Inward Evacuation Policy • Parental Conduct Policy • Attendance and Absence Policy • Social Media Policy • Pay Policy Governors approved all policies subject to minor amendments relating to dates. ***Q: Why are some policies in a different font compared to others?*** *A: SW confirmed that some policies are amended from CE model policies.* A question had been raised prior to the meeting about the Support Staff Pay policy:	

	Q: An hourly rate is calculated by dividing the annual salary by 365, multiplying by 7 and dividing by 37. The salary for employees contracted to work in term time only (e.g. 38 weeks per year). Why is it 37 in the calculation and 38 in the contract? *A: The clerk had explained that the 37 in the calculation is the number of hours in a full-time working week, which is used to convert the annual salary into an hourly rate. The 38 weeks in the contract refer to how many weeks per year the employee actually works when they are term-time only. They measure two different things, so both numbers are correct.* SW confirmed that the Support Staff Pay Policy is a CE HR policy and cannot be amended.	
16	**MEETINGS** Governors confirmed the dates and times of the next FGB meetings as follows: • Thursday 12th March 2026 at 4pm (L&M) • Tuesday 5th May 2026 at 4pm (T&L)	
17	**ANY OTHER BUSINESS** SSB shared two reports titled, 'How Martyn's Law will affect Educational Settings', and 'Joint Cheshire East Emergency Planning Briefing' via GovernorHub prior to the meeting. SSB had attended the Emergency Planning Briefing on 6th November 2025. SSB explained that there are two stages in the rollout of Martyn's Law: the implementation/preparation phases, and the operational/compliance phases. ***Q: How does Martyn's Law fit in with school?*** *A: SSB informed governors that capacity thresholds will determine the category the school falls into, with premises expecting 800 or more individuals included in the enhanced duty category. The report explains the measures required, including ensuring that security checks are fully completed. In considering preparedness for the implementation of lockdown procedures, the school must reflect on how far it should go without causing unnecessary fear among pupils.* ***Q: Does the school have different ringtones or bells for fire emergency and lockdown? Are children aware of them?*** *A: The SBM has contacted Encompass regarding this matter. The fire alarm currently operates on a single loop, meaning it may sound in one area but not another. The system will need to be changed to two loops to ensure more efficient coverage. The SBM has requested quotes from Andy Rushton. This change will require an upgraded panel and new cabling, and the loops must be separated, which will involve additional cost.*	

	It was noted that the type of incident or threat to the school cannot be predicted, making it difficult to create a comprehensive policy. ***Q: How many rooms have blackout facilities available for the windows?*** *A: It is challenging to provide blackout facilities for all rooms. Pupils could be moved into the hall if required.* ***Q: Has the school completed a practice lockdown procedure?*** *A: No. The school has yet to complete a lockdown rehearsal.* SSB confirmed that further information for educational settings is expected by April 2026. Once statutory guidance is issued, the school will develop a policy in consultation with staff. This will be brought to governors in Summer 2026 at the Teaching and Learning FGB, with a pupil practice drill to follow before the end of term. Governors discussed how children would be kept safe, including where they would gather, how windows would be covered, and whether pupils should hide under tables. It was agreed that undue anxiety and fear amongst pupils is managed appropriately. Governors discussed collating pupils in the hall as the safest option, keeping everyone in one area, although it was acknowledged that no scenario can be predicted. SW highlighted that the new security arrangements at the front of the school and a fob-entry system have reduced vulnerability. The possibility of making the hall windows opaque was discussed. Governors also considered the scenario of an intruder accessing the flat roof, whereby blinds or curtains could be closed in this situation. **<u>ACTION</u> –** SW to investigate making the windows on the doors of the hall opaque.	**SW**
18	**IMPACT STATEMENT** Governors helped to move the school forward in this meeting: • Approved strategic initiatives such as the OPAL Play Programme. • Scrutinised how Martyn's Law requirements will shape school preparedness and policy. • Reviewed curriculum priorities, such as handwriting and spelling interventions, and the involvement of the English Hub. • Overseen financial performance and value for money by examining the costed proposals for the OPAL Programme.	

The Part One meeting moved to Part Two.

…….. Chair

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