

# MINUTES OF THE ESSEX PRIMARY HEADTEACHERS' ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 7 OCTOBER 2020 COMMENCING AT 9.00 am

The meeting was held online as a result of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

# **Headteachers** present

Lois Ashforth **Cold Norton Primary** George Athanasiou **Great Sampford Primary** Dawn Baker Lawford Mead Primary Sue Bardetti Holland Haven Primary Nicky Barrand **Cherry Tree Primary** Isobel Barron **Roseacres Primary** Liz Bartholomew The Mayflower Primary Liz Benjeddi South Green Junior School Phil Brown All Saints CE Primary, Maldon

Amanda Buckland-Garnett Collingwood Primary

Anna Conley The Howbridge Infant School

Ceri Daniels Holy Trinity Primary, Eight Ash Green

Dawn Dack Wentworth Primary
Emma Dawson Thundersley Primary
Paula Derwin Hazelmere Junior School
Richard Green Grove Wood Primary

Mary Jo Hall St Thomas More's Catholic Primary

Nick Hutchings Hamilton Primary

Pam Langmead EPHA Professional Officer

Ian MacDonald Elmstead Primary

Amanda McAuliffe St Helen's Catholic Infant School

Kate Mills John Ray Infant School Nicola Morgan-Soane Trinity Road Primary

Jinnie Nicholls St Giles and St Luke's CE Primaries

Matt O'Grady West Horndon Primary
Donna Parker Ardleigh St Mary's Primary

Harriet Phelps-Knights Janet Duke Primary
Richard Potter Home Farm Primary
Amanda Reid Perryfields Infants

Angela Russell St Anne Line Catholic Infant School
Neil Taggart Ingatestone and Fryerning Junior School

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Sally Taggart St Mary's CE Primary, Shenfield

Karen Tucker Canvey Junior School Jonathan Tye Churchgate Primary



Helen Shaw
Kelly Stock
Joanne Willcox
+ other headteachers

Elmwood Primary Burnham-on-Crouch Primary Hillhouse CE Primary

Michelle Winter Ofsted

If your attendance has not been recorded please contact the EPHA Professional Officer at <a href="mailto:pam@langmead.me.uk">pam@langmead.me.uk</a> to have the minutes amended.

Action

## 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from:

Heidi Blakeley Abacus Primary

John Clements Hatfield Heath Primary

Mary Jo Hall St Thomas More Catholic Primary
Julie Lorkins St Andrew's CE Primary, North Weald

Hayley O'Dea Great Wakering Primary
Gary Soars Edward Francis Primary

# 2. WELCOME

Harriet Phelps-Knight, Chair of EPHA, welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced herself to colleagues. She welcomed new members of the Executive and other headteachers who were attending the AGM. The meeting was held online this year, as a result of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

# 3. REPORTS ON THE 2019/2020 YEAR

# A. EPHA CHAIR'S REPORT

Harriet Phelps-Knights gave the following report about the previous year as Chair of the Essex Primary Heads' Association.

"I tried really hard to think of a brilliant way to open my report this year but all that came to mind was WOW! Just wow! None of us could have imagined exactly what was ahead of us when we held last year's AGM. None of us could have known exactly how life in schools would change over a year; the lockdown which clearly wasn't for most schools, the online learning, the food parcels, the frustration that was Edenred, keeping staff and parents informed and keeping children of key workers occupied and happy, checking in with families over the phone and on home visits. Then we moved into the next phase of partial reopening, although we never closed, hand washing, social distancing, no sharing of resources and risk assessments. Staggered start and end times, frustrated parents, anxious staff and the pupils who mainly settled, got on with learning and seemed to be genuinely excited to be back at school was what met us at the start of September.



The ridiculous amount of guidance, changes to guidance and general inconsistency, inaccuracy and what at times felt utterly farcical! Limited tests available, covering staff, managing positive and negative tests within the school community, finding the answers to an abundance of questions that we have no answers to but try to navigate our way round the guidance to try and find the answers that other want.

In all this turmoil you have all been amazing, you have continued to lead and manage your schools despite very difficult and trying times. You have found solutions, supported your staff, encouraged your parents to return their children to school and above all kept everyone safe and made sure our young people are back in school learning.

On behalf of the Essex Primary Heads Associations, all the families in Essex and the children we serve, a heartfelt thank you and well done for everything that you have done and everything that you continue to do. We know it is not an easy job but, we make it look easy and carry on matter what!

A massive thank you to Pam who has attended all the frustrating meetings with various agencies and their representatives, as you can see from her report even working from home she continues to argue on our behalf, challenge the decisions that are made, made sense of all the guidance as well as supported and directed us to the correct places to find the answers that we have needed. Her briefings continue to be a welcome source of knowledge and humour and, again, thank you Pam, we couldn't do this without you.

Thank you to Nick as Vice Chair again this year for all his support and words of wisdom. Thank you to the area chairs for your support and challenge in LA meetings and for supporting your area schools and headteachers so effectively.

None of us know what this next year will bring as we move forward and navigate our way back to some sense of a new normal but keep doing what you do well and we will get through this.

# B. EPHA PROFESSIONAL OFFICER'S REPORT

Pam Langmead gave the following report, reflecting on her work on behalf of EPHA over the last year.

In common with everyone, 2019/20 was a year of two halves for the Association, life until March being relatively normal. When the Covid-19 pandemic hit everything changed for schools, and primary-phase headteachers were faced with new and unprecedented challenges. It was not surprising that they managed to keep their schools running and continued to offer education and welfare to their families and support for their staff, as they rose to the challenge with their usual courage and ingenuity, but it has certainly taken a toll on headteachers. My role as Professional Officer was able to continue, and EPHA has continued to offer support, advice and resources to headteachers across the county. I do miss being able to see heads in person, but our use of virtual platforms for meetings and webinars has been revelatory. While I have continued to attend a variety of meetings on behalf of primary headteachers, an essential addition to my calendar has

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been the regular meetings with Clare Kershaw, LA officers and colleagues from ASHE (the secondary heads association). These have provided a direct and very effective way of communicating with the LA and ensuring that primary headteachers have continued to be heard during the pandemic. These conference calls are now held weekly (rather than daily at the outset of lockdown), but continue to be an important direct line to Clare, and through her to the DfE and Ofsted.

The EPHA Colleague Supporter programme continues to support headteachers across the county. We have 34 Colleague Supporters on our books and in 2019/20 they supported 14 new and acting headteachers. At the time of writing I am arranging Colleague Support for around 20 new headteachers and heads of schools who have taken up posts this term. Thank you to those serving headteachers who have generously given their time and expertise to the programme.

Sadly, last year's headteacher conference had to be cancelled at the very last minute and the deputy/assistant heads conference is being held online this term. We were determined to make sure that we offered an event for deputies and decided that this should be free for schools. By the time of the AGM the deputy conference will have taken place, and we shall be able to assess how well it worked for the delegates.

The headteacher briefings continue to be a key part of my role, particularly in the first few weeks of each term. I am now delivering these briefings to 29 clusters across the county. In the autumn and spring terms these carried on as normal with groups meeting in local schools or venues. Everything ground to a halt in the summer term during partial lockdown, although headteachers still received the "do-list" as a set of briefing notes. The key difference was the addition of a new section, titled Covid-19. The briefings have resumed this term, but are currently delivered online, which seems to be working well for heads – the chocolate distribution is rubbish, though!

The "Seven minute staff meetings" remain popular with headteachers and school leaders. Whilst they mainly focus on safeguarding issues, they also include subjects such as data protection, Ofsted and now Covid-19.

EPHA continues to provide free (or heavily subsidised) training for headteachers. The all-day exclusions training delivered by barrister, Tanya Callman was particularly well received and was followed by training on the equalities act. Since lockdown we have been running webcasts with Dr Matt Butler, Mike Gogarty (Public Health Director) and Michelle Winter. These are well attended and give our heads a chance to hear from and question key figures in education.

I continue to attend numerous meetings on behalf of EPHA, as detailed in my termly report to the Executive. In addition to attendance at those meetings (and writing follow-up reports), my work for the Association has included:

- Information, emails and communications with all headteachers, including in response to the Covid-19 pandemic;
- Responding to queries and actions from the Executive, ECC, other association officers, interested companies;



- Individual support for headteachers when issues arise;
- Identifying and supporting new headteachers;
- Managing the Colleague Supporter programme;
- Briefings to headteacher groups 29 partnerships/clusters are now holding termly briefings – researching and writing briefing notes and presentations –and keeping them up to date as new directives, guidance and documents are introduced;
- Writing and delivering governor training on the new Ofsted framework, pupil exclusions and governor monitoring;
- Writing 7 minute staff meetings, including KCSiE 2020 changes, KCSiE quiz, Covid-19 Staying Safe in School, Covid-19 Pupil Wellbeing, and updating all existing resources;
- Updating support materials for schools, including statutory policy lists, website checklists, and the Support Directory;
- Organisation and management of the area meetings in the autumn term;
- Organisation and management of the WEPHA conferences;
- Organising and running Coronavirus webcast with Dr Matt Butler, and webcast with Mike Gogarty (Public Health director) and Clare Kershaw;
- Managing the EPHA finances: paying claims and invoices (including from Colleague Supporters), supporting area treasurers, producing reports, paying in cheques;
- Managing the bookings, organising and running the Deputy Headteacher conference, future planning for Heads' conference;
- Updating EPHA records and website;
- Other tasks as required.

As ever, it is a great privilege to work for and support primary headteachers in Essex and I look forward to another busy year in 2020/21. However, I also hope that 2021 proves less dramatic and traumatic for us all, and that life, both in schools and out, can return to something approaching normal.

### 4. **CONSTITUTION**

It was noted that the Constitution for the Essex Primary Headteachers' Association was available on the website in advance of the AGM, and was reviewed by headteachers at the meeting. There was one proposed change to the Constitution: to include the fact that meetings may be held online or face to face.

It was AGREED that the Constitution would be ADOPTED for the coming year. The document would be updated by the EPHA Professional Officer and would be circulated with the minutes of the meeting and posted on the EPHA website.

### 5. TREASURER'S REPORT

Pam Langmead, Professional Officer and treasurer, circulated reports relating to the EPHA accounts:

a Current Account income and expenditure statement from 1 August 2019 –31 July 2020;

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• a statement of the conference account from 1 August 2018 – 31 July 2020.

Both statements have been checked and agreed as a fair and accurate record of the accounts, by Ann Cutting, School Business Manager at Burnham-on-Crouch Primary School.

# a) The Current Account Income and Expenditure statement for the period 01 08 19 to 31 07 20.

	Expenditure	Income	Balance
Opening balance			£256,302.24
Miscellaneous	£20,129.68	£15,698.00	
DSG		£145,920.00	
Subscriptions		£00.00	
Supply	£9,078.00		
Travel & mileage	£6,289.25		
Colleague Support	£1,315.32		
<b>Professional Officer</b>	£64,647.05		
Meetings	£21,668.32		
Totals	£123,127.62	£161,618.00	

# Closing balance for account 00795978

£294,407.64

# Notes

The DSG top-slice equates to 456 schools each paying £320.

The Professional Officer expenditure for 2019/20 is broken down into

•	professional fees	£57,970.00
•	mileage	£2,713.95
•	expenses paid on behalf of EPHA	£3,963.10
		£66,607.05

# b) The Conference account Income and Expenditure statement for the period 01 08 19 to 31 07 20.

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	Expenditure	Income	Balance
Opening balance			£70,463.09
Headteacher conference	£12,514.95	£20,140.00	
Deputy conference	£38,289.66	£10,580.00	
WEPHA conferences	£7,289.00	£6,320.00	
Training income	£30,222.28	£3,250.00	
Totals	£88,315.89	£45,145.89	
Closing balance for conference account			£27.317.20

# Total of Current account and conference account statements end of July 2020:

Bank balance account 00795978 £257,157.66



# Conference account

**Total assets** 

£70,463.09

£321,724.84

The School Business Manager who checks the accounts on an annual basis had noted that there was a significant reduction in bank balance this year. The EPHA Treasurer explained that this was due to two main changes: the expenditure and income of the conference has been impacted by the coronavirus pandemic and the fact that we only received partial income alongside the normal expenses. Having said that, Stock Brook Country Club did not charge a cancellation fee, despite the need to cancel the conference at the very last minute.

In addition, EPHA took the decision a year ago to continue and expand its offer of free or subsidised training to headteachers wherever possible. In the last financial year these included training on exclusions and the equality act. Both events were well attended and appreciated, but were heavily subsidised by EPHA funds.

# c) EPHA funding

The EPHA Chair proposed that the DSG top-slice in the 2020/21 financial year should, once again, be £320 per school. If this is agreed at the AGM, there will be no requirement for the Schools Forum to revisit this decision. Taking into account the continuing costs for the Association, the scope of its activities and, in particular, the uncertainty of future funding, it was unanimously **AGREED** that the top-sliced contribution from the DSG should be £320 in the 2020/21 financial year. It was hoped and anticipated that the Association continues to offer good value for money to schools, including meetings, training, the website, headteacher briefings, resources and ongoing support and advice from the Professional Officer, as well as effective communication with the Local Authority and DfE.

# d) Financial Regulations

It was noted that the Financial Regulations for the Essex Primary Headteachers' Association were circulate and were available on the website in advance of the AGM, and were reviewed by headteachers at the meeting. There were no proposed changes to the Financial Regulations.

It was **AGREED** that the Financial Regulations would be **ADOPTED** for the coming year. The document would be updated by the EPHA Professional Officer and would be circulated with the minutes of the meeting and posted on the EPHA website.

# 6. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

# a) Election of Chair

It was noted that one nomination had been received prior to the meeting for the position of Chair for the Essex Primary Headteachers' Association, from Harriet Phelps-Knights (Janet Duke Primary).

There were no further nominations received at the meeting and Harriet Phelps-Knights was duly elected as Chair. She was thanked for the work she has done on behalf of Essex Headteachers during the year and for agreeing to continue as Chair of the Association.



# b) Election of Vice-Chair

It was noted that one nomination had been received prior to the meeting for the position of Vice-Chair for the Essex Primary Headteachers' Association, from Nick Hutchings, (Hamilton Primary, Colchester).

There were no further nominations received and **Nick Hutchings was duly elected as Vice-Chair.** He was thanked for the work he has done on behalf of Essex Headteachers during the year and for agreeing to continue as Vice-Chair of the Association.

# c) Election of Executive Treasurer

It was proposed that the Association should continue to elect a headteacher to act as Executive Treasurer, to help oversee the work of the county treasurer/Professional Officer. **Nicky Barrand** (Cherry Tree Primary) nominated herself for this role and was duly elected.

It was noted that Pam Langmead, Professional Officer, will continue to undertake the day to day work and financial administration as County Treasurer.

# d) Area and Local Delivery Group Representatives

Following the Area AGMs that took place online during the summer term, it was confirmed that the following headteachers will represent the South, Central (Mid), North-East and West Areas and Local Delivery Groups (or locality equivalents) on the Executive Committee:

### **SOUTH Area**

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Chair	Nicky Barrand	Cherry Tree Primary
Vice-Chair	Richard Green	<b>Grove Wood Primary</b>
Wickford	Heidi Blakeley	Abacus Primary
Billericay	Liz Benjeddi	South Green Juniors
Rochford	Hayley O'Dea	Great Wakering Primary
Rayleigh	Gary Soars	Edward Francis Primary
Canvey Island	Karen Tucker	Canvey Junior School
Basildon East/Pitsea	Nicky Barrand	Cherry Tree Primary
Basildon West	Angela Russell	St Anne Line Catholic Infants
Castle Point/Benfleet	Emma Dawson	Thundersley Primary
Brentwood	Matt O'Grady	West Horndon Primary
Treasurer	vacancy	

# **MID Area**

Chair	Dawn Dack	Wentworth Primary
Vice-Chair	Nicola Morgan-Soan	e Trinity Road Primary
Braintree	Kate Mills	John Ray Infant School
Chelmsford North	Amanda Reid	Perryfields Infant School
Chelmsford West	Dawn Baker	Lawford Mead Primary
Chelmsford South	Nicola Morgan-Soane	e Trinity Road Primary
Maldon	Dawn Dack	Wentworth Primary
Dengie	Lois Ashforth	Cold Norton Primary
Witham	Anna Conley	The Howbridge Infants

South Woodham Ferrers Amanda Buckland-Garnett Collingwood Primary

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Halstead Jinnie Nichols St Giles and St Luke's Primaries

Treasurer Dawn Baker Lawford Mead Juniors

# **NORTH EAST Area**

Chair	Nick Hutchings	Hamilton Primary
Vice-Chair	Richard Potter	Home Farm Primary
Tendring Mid	Ian MacDonald	Elmstead Primary
Tendring South	Sue Bardetti	Holland Haven Primary
Tendring North	Donna Parker	Ardleigh St Mary's Primary
Harwich & Dovercourt Liz Bartholomew		The Mayflower Primary
Colchester East	Paula Derwin	Hazelmere Juniors
Colchester West	Nick Hutchings	Hamilton Primary
Colchester South	Ceri Daniels	Holy Trinity CE Primary, Eight Ash Green
Treasurer	Bridget Harris	St Thomas More's Catholic Primary

# **WEST Area**

Chair	Isobel Barron	Roseacres Primary
Vice-Chair	<b>George Athanasiou</b>	<b>Great Sampford Primary</b>
<b>Epping Forest South</b>	Joanne Willcox	Hillhouse CE Primary
<b>Epping Forest Rural</b>	Julie Lorkins	St Andrew's CE Primary, North Weald
Harlow	Jonathan Tye	Churchgate CE Primary
Uttlesford North	Mary Jo Hall	St Thomas More Catholic Primary
Uttlesford South	John Clements	Hatfield Heath Primary
Treasurer	Mary Jo Hall	St Thomas More Catholic Primary

It was noted that there is no treasurer for South, but that this is a notional post as all finances are managed centrally.

It was confirmed that the Executive Membership list will be updated to reflect these changes, and will made available on the EPHA website. All of the Executive members were thanked for their contribution and commitment to EPHA and for representing their local colleagues.

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# 7. OFSTED UPDATE ON THE PHASED RETURN TO INSPECTIONS

Michelle Winter, Senior HMI, was welcomed to the meeting. She reminded headteachers that on March 17<sup>th</sup>, Ofsted temporarily suspended routine inspection. The inspectorate continues to have the designated power to inspect a school where there are serious concerns (under no formal designation), but there was only one such inspection during the lockdown. Ofsted is talking about reinstating routine inspection in January, but is keeping an eye on the situation.

In the meantime, Ofsted is undertaking visits to schools during the autumn term. The plan is to visit around 1,200 schools, including all Grade 4 (inadequate) schools, and a sample of other schools across Ofsted judgements, locations and phases. Michelle stressed that the choice of schools will be completely random and not determined by the length of time from the last inspection; these visits are outside the normal process and are NOT inspections.

The purpose of the visits is to gather information to give a "state of the nation" report.

The first report was published the following day and can be found at

https://essexprimaryheads.co.uk/files/ofsted-schools-briefing-covid19-series-sept-2020.pdf

There will be a full report early in the spring term.

Michelle explained that interim visits will usually last one day. Two HMI will attend, one will ask questions and the other will take notes on a laptop. A further operational note was published on the 6<sup>th</sup> October. The visits will not be based on the Education Inspection Framework, though a Section 8 inspection could be carried out if required. Schools will be given one day's notice, with a phone call at 10.00 am the day before the visit. Headteachers noted that one day's notice does imply an inspection, and the NAHT has challenged this.

Visits will focus on a number of areas:

- The barriers in managing the return to full education for all pupils.
- How pupils are settling back into expected routines and behaviour.
- How learning is resumed following an extended period of disruption in pupils' learning.
- How specific issues relating to SEND, health and well-being are being addressed.

The visits will also include a discussion on safeguarding, including whether new staff have been appointed and if appropriate checks have been carried out.

The interim visits will not

- Require any pre-written planning or documentation.
- Ask schools for documents or records in a specific format.
- Ask teachers to prepare any lesson plans etc
- Use lesson visits as a method of collecting evidence.
- Involve a general review of school policies.
- Routinely include meetings with a range of stakeholders.



Michelle confirmed that schools are not being judged on their response to Covid. Inspectors will not meet with stakeholders (including pupils, parents and governors) and they won't visit lessons or do a tour of the school. There will be a range of discussions focusing on:

- Context: the impact of Covid-19 on pupils/staff and the priorities for the year:
- Attendance;
- Safeguarding
- Behaviour: how children are settling in, any differences, have procedures had to change?
- Curriculum breadth, assessing how children are now, priorities, identifying and closing gaps, remote learning, returning to the normal curriculum (DfE expecting summer 2021).

Michelle stressed that Ofsted is not making judgements on any of these issues, they simply want to hear from schools how things are going. George Athanasiou (who had a visit earlier in the week) expressed frustration that he was unable to show off what was going well in his school; the inspectors were non-judgemental and stuck to their script.

The headteachers pressed Michelle further on the purpose of the visits. She noted that it is a chance for schools to take stock and engage in a professional discussion, and some of the questions may prompt a school to do things differently, or consider other things they might do. A headteacher asked why this couldn't be done on the phone or virtually. Michelle felt that it is important that HMIs continue to go into schools. George felt that it was a useful discussion but a long (two) days that could have been used in a different way, particularly given the pressures on headteachers at the current time.

Following the visit a letter will be published on the Ofsted website. Visits are conducted under Section 8 and so there is no requirement to send the letter out to parents, but Michelle hopes that schools will do so as she argued that this will let parents know what schools have been doing since reopening and should reassure parents.

The group raised the issue of headteacher wellbeing, noting that Ofsted visits may raise anxiety levels and create stress for heads who are already anxious and under extreme pressure at the moment. Michelle confirmed that Ofsted will want to hear, during the visit, about the impact on staff, including the impact on headteachers. She recognised that everyone is managing a tricky and unprecedented situation, and that headteachers are often having to be the "brave face" in their school.

The Professional Officer asked if the information from the visits will be used to inform a return to routine inspection, and asked if Ofsted is considering or planning an interim framework to ease the transition to routine inspection. Michelle stated that she did not have that information; while Ofsted, as an inspectorate, wants to return to inspection, they have not made a decision on timing. Nick Hutchings noted that, from a headteacher's perspective, given the current need to social distance, Ofsted must understand that on some occasions staffing in schools may not be as it usually is and there may be a need to have temporary staff. Michelle accepted that safety must come first and Ofsted recognises this. Nick stressed that January is coming up very quickly and that a decision should be made soon; a sensible lead in time will help headteacher stress levels. Michelle did note that a small number of schools would welcome inspection sooner rather than

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later, so that the inspectorate can recognise their development and improvement.

The Professional Officer asked if consideration had been given to conducting the visits on a voluntary basis. Michelle said that this had been considered, but the priority was to include a range of schools, and this approach was considered most useful. Michelle confirmed that the headteacher and lead inspector will have a discussion the day before the visit, and if there are reasons for deferral (including being in the middle of a crisis around Covid) they will be considered.

The EPHA Chair thanked Michelle for her input and for answering questions openly and honestly. She agreed to return to a future meeting to continue the dialogue with Essex heads. *Michelle left the meeting at 10.00 am* 

Ian Kendal (Chief Executive of St Alban's and St Luke's Catholic Primaries in Harlow) gave feedback about the pilot visit that he had been involved in during September. He confirmed the arrangements for the visit and noted that the inspectors only wanted to see the school's risk assessment in advance. However, feedback from recent visits has suggested that inspectors may not ask for this information. He noted that governors weren't involved at all, and the only staff who took part in the visit were himself, and the two Heads of School. He noted that inspectors have the authority to look at the single central record, but didn't do so in his case.

Ian was asked about remote learning, during the pilot visit. He confirmed that there was no expectation about how remote learning was delivered, the inspectors simply asked about what was in place and what the impact of the decisions had been. He confirmed that no judgments were made.

George Athanasiou had made a short video about his visit experience, and this was shared at the meeting. This can be accessed at <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pue28QB5YYs">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pue28QB5YYs</a>

# 8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no additional business to discuss.

The meeting ended at 10.25 am	
Pam Langmead	Harriet Phelps-Knights
FPHΔ Professional Officer	Chair of FPHA

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