

# North Yorkshire Council

## Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> April 2024 at 2.00 p.m.

**Present:** Councillor Barbara Brodigan (Chair)

Councillors Alyson Baker, Stephanie Duckett, Mark Crane (substitute for Councillor Nathan Hull), George Jabbour, David Jeffels, Tom Jones, Cliff Lunn, John Mann, Yvonne Peacock, Heather Phillips (Vice-Chair) and John Ritchie.

Co-opted Members: Stephen Jennings (Primary Sector Representative) and Ross Strachan (Secondary Teacher Representative).

Officers (Children and Young People's Service, unless stated): Stuart Carlton, Corporate Director, Jon Holden, Head of Service, Strategic Planning Education, Amanda Newbold, Assistant Director, Education and Skills, (Legal and Democratic Services, unless stated): Daniel Harry, Head of Democratic Services, Diane Parsons, Principal Scrutiny Officer, and Alice Fox, Senior Scrutiny Officer.

In attendance: Councillor Andrew Murday and Councillor Annabel Wilkinson (Executive Member for Education and Skills)

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**Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book**

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**67. Welcome by the Chair**

The Chair welcomed people to the meeting.

**68. Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Nathan Hull and Co-opted Member Andrew Smith.

**69. Minutes of the meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2024**

**Resolved –**

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2024 be confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

**70. Any Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest made.

**71. Public Participation**

Two public statements had been received from members of the public and read as follows:

## **Statement 1**

Dear Councillors,

My name is Steven Ledger and I'm a former parent of Fountains Earth CofE Primary School in Lofthouse.

7 years ago I relocated to Lofthouse from Durham for a job opportunity in the area. The main concern of my wife and I about relocating was our children's schooling. Having visited Fountains Earth prior to accepting the job offer we were lost for words. The teaching staff, office staff and the headteacher were all second to none. After seeing the evidence of what this small yet fantastically equipped school was achieving, we relocated. After just three months at Fountains Earth our daughter's academic abilities had improved to a standard much beyond recognition. She excelled, as did her older brother. He was only there for a short time as he moved up to high school shortly afterwards, but the few months he spent at Fountains Earth saw his confidence soar.

At this time there were approximately 15 children in attendance, with 2 full time teachers and 1 part time teacher alongside office staff and a cook/lunchtime assistant. The one to one teaching and attention that each child received had an incredibly positive impact on their schooling as well as their emotional well-being. They were all happy, safe and learning. Our daughter was excited to go to school each day. The school really was second to none and was very much the heart of the community. Communication was excellent and parents were invited into school regularly to see the children's progress and achievements.

A group made up of local residents and parents (FOLS) did a lot of fundraising and this made up any shortage of funding for things such as school trip and swimming lessons. Much of the time, funds were raised above what was needed, so that paid for a party for the children at the end of the school year. I think it's important for me to mention this as it goes to show that Fountains Earth was financially viable.

Towards the end of 2021, new management took over. Shortly afterwards, the cook left and hot meals were stopped. A replacement was employed and was sent to St Cuthberts to pick up sandwiches on a Monday. These were stored and served throughout the week, ultimately being stale by Wednesday. This was also stopped eventually, and the children had to have packed lunches from home. The original, much loved teacher suddenly left, with no warning or explanation to the children or the parents.

Other staff left one by one within 6 months, again with no explanation. The school then relied on temporary agency staff with a different one every week. The children were left confused, unsettled and their learning disrupted. Work was usually generic worksheets rather than structured teaching. All communication with parents was stopped, therefore all confidence and trust we once had in the school evaporated. Any meetings between parents and the school, and also public meetings regarding its future, were attended by Governors rather than management.

Our daughter now attends Summerbridge Primary School. This is a 45 minute round trip twice a day. This school isn't part of the Federation however there are 9 other children in my daughter's class who have moved there from the Federation since the new management took over. 3 of these children are from Fountains Earth which means 6 of them in that age group are from St Cuthbert's and Glasshouses, and that is a huge red flag.

A petition was made and received over 500 signatures from Yorkshire residents calling for an investigation into the management of the Federation. We, amongst many other residents, moved to the area safe in the knowledge that a fantastic school

was here for our children. Without this school, I feel that less families will move to the area, local businesses will lose custom and potential staff and housing will ultimately be turned into holiday homes and Air B&B's. This isn't an economically or socially acceptable way for our beautiful dale to foresee its future.

Pupil numbers at Fountains Earth would have risen year on year according to our parents' survey. The numbers you have received from Governors are not accurate. I believe that parents, both new and old, would be willing to enrol their children at fountains earth providing there was a change of management. We would love our youngest daughter to attend Fountains Earth when she turns school age in 2026.

I finish by pleading with you to investigate the whole management of the Upper Nidderdale Federation and to reconsider the closure of the school and the impact it will have on our whole community.

Respectfully Yours,  
Steven Ledger

### **Statement 2**

Good afternoon, my name is Stephen Ramsden, chairman of Upper Nidderdale Parish Council.

It is very unfortunate that we have got into a situation where our local primary school, Fountains Earth Primary School, Lofthouse is on the brink of closure.

For some time, there were warning signs that there was poor communication, trust, and honesty between the parents and the Upper Nidderdale Federation, and although a North Yorkshire Council officer did visit the school in May 2023, nothing was done to correct these issues. All the parents then left the school, moving their children to other primary schools outside this Federation.

Alarm bells should also be sounding at St Cuthberts, Pateley Bridge [part of the same Federation] where the pupil numbers are approximately 48 today, with a capacity of 119. Both Dacre Brathwaite and Summerbridge primary schools are more or less full, at approximately 90 pupils each.

In the medium to long term, losing our school will have a dramatic effect on our community, with the potential loss of young families and no potential young families moving into our area.

Any rural school closure makes it harder for young farming and gamekeeping families to live and work in remoter areas, where the school daily commute becomes a 40/50 miles a day, rather than 5-10 mile trip in our case. This is at a time when due to higher "council tax" on holiday and second homes, these are either being relet or sold back onto the open market. In the medium to long-term this will increase our rural population with young children, but potentially not if there is no local primary school.

The village school is the heart of any strong rural community, but with the partnership of young families, our community, good school management and North Yorkshire Council this situation can be turned round, and I would urge councillors and council officers to seriously look at keeping the "school open" for a September 2024 start.

The public statements were noted by the Committee and the responses to them were addressed by the Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services:

## **Response to Statement 1**

The Corporate Director explained that Governors in LA schools have three core functions: 1) that the vision, ethos and strategic direction of the school are clearly defined; 2) that the Headteacher performs their responsibilities for the educational performance of the school and 3) that there is sound, proper and effective use of the school's financial resources. The national funding formula for schools sets out the level of funding applied to each school. Over time in North Yorkshire, we have seen many small schools struggle to meet the running costs as stand-alone schools and this has brought groups of schools together to operate as a Federation and share costs.

Fountains Earth moved from being a stand-alone school, to being part of a two-school and then a three-school Federation. This enabled the school to benefit through shared leadership and support staff costs. However, the governing board of a Federation is still obliged to review and make decisions that are in the interests of each school and for the Federation as a whole. We know that the Federation board have had to consider this and take necessary action to reflect each school's budget share without one school having a disproportionate impact on other schools.

We know from the school that they had trouble recruiting and retaining teaching staff due to the single class teaching arrangement and the remote location of the school, and this has led to a series of temporary teaching arrangements at Fountains Earth. Governors have had to rely on the support of staff appointed to other schools in the Federation and at times, agency staff, to ensure the school has been able to operate on a day-to-day basis for some time. This is one of the factors put forward when the consultation was requested.

The comment made about pupil number forecasts being inaccurate was one of the reasons Governors withdrew their initial request to the council for a consultation. Work was undertaken to seek information from the community about the suggested increase in numbers and the forecast was updated to reflect the findings.

It was in fulfilling their functions responsibly that Governors approached the Council to consider the future of the school **but only** after they had exhausted all other avenues to put the school on a sustainable footing. Whilst there were pupils in school, Governors were diligent in their oversight of finances (managing the revenue budget and looking ahead at pupil forecasts) and in their efforts to maintain the best possible education standards for pupils - resulting in the good Ofsted outcome being maintained.

### **With regards to the petition and the request for an investigation into the leadership and governance of the school:**

- A public question was submitted to the Skipton and Ripon Area Constituency Committee meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2023 regarding the leadership of the Upper Nidderdale Federation.
- A response was provided, and both the question and the response were presented in full within the Executive report for the meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2024.
- The response clarified that *the duty to establish procedures for dealing with complaints lies with the governing body and not the Council. Only complaints outside of the scope of the school's policy would be considered elsewhere by either the DfE or Ofsted. About one year ago North Yorkshire Children's Services did receive correspondence about the school and signposted the writer towards the school's complaints policy. The Council also provided information at that time about how to escalate the concerns to other organisations if required. If parents, staff or community members have new concerns about the school, officers would advise them to raise these using the appropriate schools complaints procedure.*

- At the Skipton and Ripon ACC meeting on 7th March 2024, a petition 'seeking the investigation into the leadership' was received. The officer report explained: *The petition states that 'This investigation should carefully assess the leadership and management of the Upper Nidderdale Federation, including their academic performance, financial stability, community engagement and communication with parents.'* All four of these areas (performance, financial stability, community engagement and communication) are the responsibility of governing boards and as such would need to be considered through the governing board's own procedures for managing complaints.

- Draft minutes from the ACC meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> March state:

*Following their statements, Members discussed the petition for a period of fifteen minutes. Members were made aware of the options available to them, as detailed in Paragraph 5.1 of the report. The key points are summarised below:*

- *Amanda Newbold, Assistant Director, Education and Skills, clarified to Members that the school was not an academy, but instead a school maintained by the Council.*
- *There was uncertainty as to whether the Council is responsible for carrying out an investigation. Members felt that further review would be beneficial to establish the situation.*
- *It was proposed and seconded that the petition be referred to the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee. A review by this Committee should not contest the potential closure of the school but be a general investigation into the leadership of the Upper Nidderdale Federation.*

*It was noted that no decision has been made to close the school, and a report will be considered by the Council's Executive on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2024.*

*A vote was taken on the motion and there was unanimous support.*

*Resolved –*

- a) *That, the Skipton and Ripon Area Constituency Committee refers the petition to Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee for further investigation.*

The Corporate Director explained that the item was referred to in the report for the recent Executive meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2024. The referral to Overview and Scrutiny will be discussed at the Mid-Cycle Briefing of the Committee on 26<sup>th</sup> April. The Scrutiny Committee has no role or remit in investigating school leadership or individual schools. Consequently, the petition and the request for an investigation will not form part of today's meeting.

## **Response to Statement 2**

As part of their routine monitoring, North Yorkshire Council officers from various teams including school improvement, schools finance and strategic planning have been working with the governing board of the school/ Federation over several years. This is the role of the Council in maintained schools and has, in this case, often been undertaken alongside education colleagues from Leeds Diocese. The Council does not 'manage' schools: management responsibilities are delegated to the governing body and leadership of the school.

Until the Governors raised the issue of the school's long-term viability and shared their thoughts about a consultation on closure with the wider community (initially in June 2022), the community had not raised any significant issues about the school.

Any concerns that have since been highlighted have been directed to the Governing Board where they relate to matters that are the delegated responsibility of the Board. Other matters e.g. safeguarding have been addressed by relevant Council teams.

Pupil numbers at other schools are not the subject of this meeting, nor relate to the closure of Fountains Earth School. However, it may be useful to clarify that parents are able to apply to any school of their choice and providing there are places available, the admissions authority (often the LA) has a duty to facilitate a fair admissions process. We know that there are more primary school places in the local area than there are children to fill the potential capacity of all schools. We also know that overall numbers of children in the local area have decreased over many years.

We realise the importance of schools in rural communities; despite this, the facts facing us now are that the Council cannot keep open schools where there are no pupils on roll and no pupil-led funding allocation to cover the associated costs of doing so.

The Chair thanked Mr Ledger and Mr Ramsden for their statements and the Corporate Director for his response.

## **72. Chair's Introduction**

The Chair explained the purpose and format of the Call-In meeting, which had been requested after the Executive Meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2024, when Members agreed to cease to maintain Fountains Earth, Lofthouse Church of England Endowed Primary School. The Chair outlined the Call-In process, the report can be found under Item 6 in the agenda reports pack.

<https://edemocracy.northyorks.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1241&MIId=8275&Ver=4>

The Committee noted the summary provided by the Chair.

## **73. Call in of the Executive Decision – Proposal to cease to maintain Fountains Earth, Lofthouse Church of England Endowed Primary School**

### **Considered –**

The Chair informed the Committee of the decision made by the Executive at the meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2024 regarding the Proposal to cease to maintain Fountains Earth, Lofthouse Church of England Endowed Primary School, which was:

- i) To cease to maintain Fountains Earth, Lofthouse CE Endowed Primary School with effect from 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024.
- ii) To extend the catchment area of St Cuthbert's Church of England Primary School, Pateley Bridge with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 to include the area currently served by Fountains Earth, Lofthouse CE Endowed Primary School.

The Chair explained that after the Executive meeting, a notice was made by Councillor Andrew Murday, with support from Councillors Monika Slater, Peter Lacy, Steve Mason, Bryn Griffiths and Dan Sladden. The notice gave three reasons for the Call-In:

- 1) Pupil numbers: at present there are no pupils at the school. However, if the issues that led the parents to withdraw their children from the school were to be resolved, then pupils would return. There is a strong belief amongst the parents and the local community that conditions in the school deteriorated in order to depopulate it. Furthermore, the projected numbers into the future were disputed, and this was not made clear in the reports to the Executive.
- 2) Educational standard: the school received a 'good' rating on inspection in June 2022. It was strange, therefore, that the governing body of the Upper Nidderdale Federation requested a month later that NYCC should consider closing the school. Although that request was withdrawn, it spread the seeds of doubt, so that parents considered thereafter that the school was under threat. This rating is difficult to reconcile with the view that the education standard provided at the school was inadequate, another reason given for the closure. The implication of this request by the Governors in 2022 was not considered by the executive.
- 3) Financial: a further factor leading to the Executive's closure decision, recorded in the minutes, was the financial cost of keeping an empty school open. At the time of closure, the school had no permanent teaching staff. The cost of maintenance of the buildings over a relatively short period of time until it reopens would be minimal. Compared to this, the costs of home-to school transport from Lofthouse to other schools in Nidderdale will be substantial and will outweigh the maintenance cost. The burden for the children, some as young as 4 years old, of travelling many miles each day to attend a distant school will be considerable. The details of the financial costs were not made clear in the documents provided or in the discussion at the Executive meeting.

The Chair stressed that today's meeting was to consider the decision making process taken by the Executive, such as whether they had all the relevant information to hand to sufficiently inform them when making the decision, or whether other options were adequately considered in the report presented to them on 19<sup>th</sup> March. The Committee were to determine what course of action to take. This could include one of the following:

- (a) make no referral in relation to the matter; or
- (b) refer the matter back to the decision taker (Executive) for reconsideration; or
- (c) refer the matter to Full Council.

The Chair invited Councillor Murday to speak. Councillor Murday thanked the Committee and said he appreciated the difficult decisions that have to be made when considering school closures. He took Members through his presentation which can be viewed under Item 7 of the agenda reports pack:

<https://edemocracy.northyorks.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1241&MId=8275&Ver=4v>

Councillor Murday emphasised that small rural schools are very much part of the community, creating social cohesion between the different age groups. He added that prior to 2021, parents were very satisfied with the level of teaching. However, the end of on-site school lunches and the speculation around school closure led many parents to withdraw their children and move to alternative schools. He highlighted that there has been a breakdown in communication between the Upper Nidderdale Federation and parents. He added that a petition was presented to the Skipton & Ripon Area Constituency Committee asking them to halt the closure of the school until a thorough investigation into the leadership and management of the Federation had been carried out.

The Chair of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee made it very clear that the Committee would not look into the closure of a specific school, but rather the process and procedures that are followed.

The Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services was asked to respond to Councillor Murday's comments. He explained that when considering the proposal to cease to maintain Fountains Earth, the service followed the statutory procedures, specifically school admissions, educational standards and administration and finance. In response to Councillor Murday's three points:

### **1) Pupil Numbers**

- The Corporate Director stated that it is correct to say that there are no pupils on roll and there have not been any during this academic year. As a result of this the school's financial position is weakened (but more about this will be said in response to point 3). The most recent inspection of the school reported positive outcomes for the children on roll at the time, the school was well supported through the Federation model in order to achieve this for such a small school. This was a short inspection, lasting only one day. It was the first since it was last inspected five years earlier prior to the pandemic, providing confirmation that the school 'continues to be a good school'.
- However, the main issue facing the school's viability is the low numbers. The data shows a decline in numbers of children attending the school and of children living in the catchment area. The school, which has capacity for 50 children, has operated with less than 35 pupils over the last 15 years, but this has become 15 children or fewer over the last four years, and it includes some children who have attended from outside of the catchment. The decline in pupil numbers has occurred over time.
- NHS data tells us that there are 15 primary age children registered as living in the area but in terms of pupils living in area and attending state funded schools – this number has reduced from 27 to 8 over a seven year period and there are now only 8 children.
- We have heard that the reasons given for parents moving on match those given in many schools: parental house move or job change, parental preference for another size school and in some cases dissatisfaction with the school. The LA, as an admissions authority, must support parental admissions applications. Furthermore, the availability of surplus places in the area facilitates movement from school to school.
- The consultation allowed parents to be aware of the risk to the school's future. It has created high levels of interest in the area but has not resulted in any children applying to join or re-join the school.

### **2) Educational Standard**

- The Corporate Director explained the timeline of events, beginning when the Federation Governing Board approached the Council in March 2022 for discussions about the future viability of the school. On 16<sup>th</sup> June 2022 the Chair of the Federation Board contacted the local authority to confirm the governing board's discussions, which were as follows:



*On 15th June the Upper Nidderdale Federation Governing Board took the difficult and brave decision to ask for consultation to consider closing Fountains Earth CofE Primary School in Lofthouse (FEL). The decision has been reached after several months of discussions with yourselves and at the new Federation governor meetings. We understand that this conversation pre-dates the formation of Upper Nidderdale Federation Governing Body. We have looked at the facts and figures around the school including educational targets, the social and emotional welfare of the children, pupil numbers and sensibly, budget impact. I have visited the school to meet staff and pupils so that I have first-hand experience of the school. The fact that the school is delightful makes this decision even more difficult. The Vice Chair also visits on a regular basis to monitor safeguarding.*

*We feel that we have considered all the facts carefully and diligently. With only 11 pupils (14 potentially next year, 11 thereafter) of mixed age groups, it is impractical to achieve and maintain the right educational standards and meet the emotional and social needs of the children adequately, and certainly not to the outstanding level that we (our headteacher, leadership team and Governors) aim for. In affect we are failing our children.*

*It is also worth noting that we have tried but failed to find another viable alternative to closure. Our headteacher and her staff are giving the children support beyond the provision of one teacher and one teaching assistant, with subject leads monitoring educational progress and supporting on a regular basis. We are aware that due to a lack of pupils there is a disparity, a lack of peers for the children of each age group to have fully enriched and constant age-appropriate learning, and the correct environment for good social and emotional support and development. The Federation Fridays are having a tremendous positive impact but can only work for subjects such as PE and music, not the full curriculum and further illustrates why the school is not viable, when we are having to take Fountains Earth children to St Cuthbert's to help support their needs.*

- The Corporate Director explained to the Committee that the Governors informed parents of this decision and as a result of feedback about the forecast pupil numbers, they withdrew their request and worked with the community to establish whether there were more pupils in the area. The following email was sent to an NYC officer 20<sup>th</sup> July 2022:

*"I thought I would put this officially in writing to you. We are withdrawing our application for Consultation for Fountains Earth Primary School whilst we review new information. Parents and the wider community including the Parish Council and Cllr Andrew Murday will be informed now."*

- The school was inspected on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2022 and the report published by Ofsted on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2022. The LA recognise the challenges faced by leaders of very small schools to ensure that children access age-appropriate curriculum and support and that they have a range of experiences and ample opportunities to develop socially and emotionally alongside peers. This challenge becomes greater as pupil numbers reduce, but it has not been stated that the education is inadequate.
- The added challenge faced by Fountains Earth to recruit and retain a skilled, permanent class teacher to teach across 3 curriculum phase (Early Years, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2) has been difficult and has not been possible over recent years. Over time, this will impact on pupil outcomes.
- During the statutory school organisation process, information has been provided

about pupil numbers, school finances and education performance.

- Any discussions with the school community about potential school closure will create uncertainty and the experience of schools within North Yorkshire shows that the consultation process itself can lead to pupil movement. In this case however, the request to consult was withdrawn, then pupil numbers declined, and this led to Governors returning to the Council again in the autumn of 2023 to request consultation for the second time as a result of there being no pupils on roll.

### 3) **Financial**

- The Corporate Director explained that as stated in the reports to Councillors, the DfE have not allocated any funding for the school in the 24-25 financial year as there were no pupils on roll on the October 2023 school census. Therefore, any 2024/25 formula funding allocation for Fountains Earth, Lofthouse CE Primary would need to be funded from the DSG funding allocations provided for other schools and academies within North Yorkshire. Awarding funding to a school with no pupils, and not awarding funding to other schools in financial difficulty or who are geographically vital, and have pupils on roll, risks setting a precedent that will not gain universal agreement and may result in potential future liabilities in other potential school closures.
- The projected cost of keeping Fountains Earth open with no pupils from April – August 2024 is £37.5k. This would reduce the accumulated surplus of c.£50k to £12.5k. From September 2024, projections show that at 3 pupils, the school would make a further in-year deficit of c.£131k leaving an accumulated deficit of £118k by 31 March 2025. Similar projections for 6 pupils and 15 pupils, show a projected accumulated deficit of £119k and £121k respectively – largely associated with the stepped-fixed costs incurred by staffing the school. The table below illustrates the projected financial position associated with 3 pupil number scenarios (funding is lagged by one year):

	Projected Accumulated Deficit						Recovery Timescale
	Sep-24	Sep-25	Sep-26	31/03/2025	31/03/2026	31/03/2027	
Scenario 1	0	3	4	-118	-147	-172	No recovery
Scenario 2	0	6	12	-119	-137	-133	34.5 years
Scenario 3	0	15	20	-121	-107	-74	5.2 years

Although it has no income for this financial year, the school continues to have shared costs for a number of other staff including leadership and support staff whilst it remains open. There are other costs associated with the school buildings and site, such as rates, insurance, energy, routine safety checks, cleaning and utilities.

- The Council is not expecting to pick up new transport costs in the immediate future as there are no children on roll that require transport. The Council will continue to implement the home to school transport (H2ST) policy applicable at the relevant time. The current policy allows travel assistance to the nearest and catchment schools for primary children travelling over the statutory walking distance of 2 miles (under 8s) and 3 miles (over 8s). The decision to incorporate the Fountains Earth Lofthouse catchment into St Cuthbert's, Pateley Bridge would mean that many children living in the catchment would be eligible for H2ST assistance to St Cuthbert's School. This is a route that is currently used for children to access travel assistance to the secondary

school in the area.

The Chair thanked the Corporate Director and said that she felt that the process has been fair, thorough, and lawful. She asked Councillor Annabel Wilkinson, Executive Member for Education and Skills if she would like to add anything. Councillor Wilkinson thanked everyone from the Upper Nidderdale community for contributing to the consultation and stressed that no one ever wants to close a school. She wanted to offer reassurance that officers will continue to work with the Upper Nidderdale Federation to try and make sure that the other schools within the Federation remain financially sound.

The following comments were made by Members:-

- Unfortunately, it is outside of the Council's remit and not national policy to investigate into the Leadership of the Upper Nidderdale Federation.
- A lot of effort has gone into ensuring that the reports which have been presented are well detailed and compliant with national policy.
- The Council has considered all the significant information which has enabled Members to make an informed decision.
- The Executive made the right decision at their meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2024.

The Chair asked Members to vote, and a show of hands unanimously agreed that no further action would be taken. As a result, the decision made at Executive on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2024 came into immediate effect.

#### **Resolved –**

That the Committee approves

- 1) the decision made at the Executive Meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2024 to cease to maintain Fountains Earth Lofthouse Church of England Endowed Primary School;
- 2) the school to close as from the date of this meeting (17<sup>th</sup> April 2024).

#### **74. Any other Items**

There were no other items.

#### **75. Date of Next meeting**

This would be held on Friday 21<sup>st</sup> June 2024 at County Hall in Northallerton, commencing at 10.00 a.m.

The meeting concluded at 3.05 p.m.

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