

*'With God there is no limit to what you can do. There is no obstacle you can't overcome.
Through Him, all things are possible.' Matthew 19.26*

ST NICHOLAS CE VA PRIMARY SCHOOL

FULL GOVERNING BODY MEETING

Monday 11 October 2021 at 7.00pm held at the school

MINUTES

Present: *Parent Governors:* Hannah Draeger
Co-opted governor: Catherine Harvey
Foundation Governors: Delia Bonner, Stuart Burnett, Simon Caunce, Jane Croot, Dennis Stamps (ex-officio), Hilary Doherty, Caroline Fleming (chair), Henry Loweth
Local authority governor: Lucy Parr
Headteacher: Rizelle Crouch
Staff Governor: Kate Birss

Apologies: None

In attendance: Tracey Norris, HfL Clerk

	Item	Action
1.	Prayer and Chair's Welcome Rev'd Stamps led the meeting in prayer. Caroline Fleming welcomed everyone to the first FGB meeting of the new school year which was being held in person with some members of the FGB joining the meeting remotely (Henry Loweth, Rizelle Crouch and Catherine Harvey).	
2.	Procedural items <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Apologies: There were no apologies for absence. To declare any conflict of interests: none relevant for this meeting. Longstanding potential conflict: Dennis Stamps - hire of church hall to the school. Any other business: there were several items of other business - see agenda item 9. To approve the minutes of the previous meeting: the minutes of 12 July 2021 were agreed as an accurate record of the meetings. To consider matters arising from the previous meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> RC to circulate a one-page summary of school's reading provision on Governor Hub plus training slides: completed, see agenda item 5. RC to signpost the Admission Team at HCC for in-year admission enquiry on the school website: completed. CF to create remit/scope of Strategic Action Plan: drafted. Committee chairs to add safeguarding agenda item to future meetings: ongoing. Chair to collate responses from teachers re safeguarding: Completed. KB to anonymise the PP report further before publishing on the school website: completed. DB to benchmark HLTA salaries: completed. Salaries ranged from H3 – H5/H6 depending on the level of skill/expertise required. Pitching the salary at H4 was reasonable. HL to keep governors informed of any further changes to the Admissions Code: ongoing. No changes made since the draft code had been circulated. RC to collate list of FAQs (OFSTED questions for governors): completed. 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Chair to prepare link role allocation. NB: include two link governors for reading: see agenda item 7. ▪ RC to create autumn meeting schedule with link teachers for governors to sign up to: completed. See agenda item 7. ▪ All governors to book PREVENT training: This was an online course on Modern Governor (accessed through Governor Hub) and took approximately 30 minutes to complete. Previously, some member of the FGB had attended an in-house session on this in November 2019. All governors were encouraged to complete this training: Governors who did not have this training were noted as: Stuart Burnett, Simon Counce and Dennis Stamps. ▪ RC to share draft slides with governors for review before presenting to parents in September re RSE policy: completed, see HT’s report. 	SB/SC/DS
3.	<p>Headteacher’s Report</p> <p>The following documents had been circulated in advance of the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Headteacher’s report ▪ SDP 2021/22 ▪ SEF self-evaluation form September 2021 ▪ SEF Summary ▪ Parent questionnaire results: three-year comparison ▪ RSE presentation to parents ▪ Acronyms in education ▪ Deep dive reading: information for governors ▪ OFSTED key questions (updated October 2021) <p>Questions and clarifications were invited:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The current number of pupils on roll was 144. RC confirmed that the number of Year 5 in Diamond class had 15 pupils (not 14 as stated in the HT’s report), the balance of Year 5 being in Sapphire class. ▪ The five in-year admissions since July were noted and welcomed. The committee chairs had met last week and a focus of this meeting had been the need to fill all vacant spaces at school to maximise funds delegated by the LA. ▪ Governors were pleased to note the many positive comments in the parent questionnaire survey results. ▪ 81% of parents thought that leadership and management (L&M) was good, all other responses had been in the 90+% range. Q What was the cause of this lower approval rating, was this a cause of concern? A discussion followed on what had been the parents’ understanding of the question; did L&M mean the senior leadership team (SLT) at school or SLT and governors as well? It was agreed that in future, there should be a space for parents to state what could be done better in terms of L&M and it should be made clear that school leadership included governors. ▪ RC explained how the school had already responded to the “what could be done better” comments; for example, requests from parents for the following week’s lesson plans were now being shared. ▪ Q Had flyers/posters been sent out to local nursery/pre-schools to advertise the forthcoming school open days? RC stated that most of the advertising of the open days was being done through Facebook and social media. Parents were not able to access nursery schools in the same way as pre-covid at drop off/pick up times so the value of a poster/flyer was limited. 	RC

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The first open day had been fully booked and two more had been scheduled for later in the term. ▪ Action: advertise open day in e-bulletin. ▪ Q Pupil attendance data did not add up to 100%? There was an unaccounted 2.7%. ▪ Action: RC to check with school office and recirculate attendance data and update the HT's report. ▪ Q Were peripatetic music teachers now visiting school? The piano teacher was currently on maternity leave, in her absence a parent had volunteered to deliver these lessons – RC/KB needed to follow this up. The school were open to any peripatetic music teacher coming to school to deliver a lesson for a pupil. ▪ Q Should the school make the strategic decision to share the lower recent reception admission numbers across Harpenden with prospective parents? The pros and cons of this approach was discussed. Prospective parents were naturally very keen to understand their chances of falling into the catchment area for the coming year but there were potentially negative connotations surrounding a school with capacity in its school roll. ▪ It was agreed that information on how many first/second preferences had been allocated a space at the school in previous years should be shared with prospective parents on open days by RC. 	<p>RC</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Action: CF to draft some text on allocation statistics/reduced recent roll for the website/prospective parents. ▪ A recent in-year admission had selected the school from a recommendation from an existing parent; word of mouth still remained an excellent way to promote the school. ▪ Ways to promote the school's profile within the town were considered. Already a large poster had been fixed to the external wall and bunting placed near the entrance. The PTA would be invited to participate in some way at the Christmas Lights On event. A projected light/message on the school wall should be explored. 	<p>CF</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Action: Hannah Draeger to attend PTA meeting on 18 October. ▪ RSE policy: the curriculum content had been reviewed and shared with governors in the summer term. HDo had also reviewed some of the units of work. Slides had been prepared to share with parents and these had been circulated in advance to governors. There were no changes to propose. Clarification was sought on when parents would be given the option to withdraw (applicable for Y6). The letter explaining the forthcoming sex education unit would be sent out in advance of the summer term when that unit was delivered. The rest of the RSE content fell under the science curriculum and as such, there was no option for parents to withdraw their child from these lessons. ▪ Q Would Y6 still be split into boys and girls for Q&A session? How would the boy's session be delivered by a female teacher? RC felt that any teacher (male or female) could deliver the content and it was appropriate for the boys and girls to separate for this session. ▪ It was noted that an OFSTED inspection had taken place at Roundwood Primary w/c 4 October. It was thought that their focus for the autumn term was on those schools who had previously been graded outstanding but had not had a visit in a number of years. 	<p>HDr</p>

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3.a	<p>School Development Plan</p> <p>The SDP had been reviewed extensively at the School Effectiveness Committee (SEC). RC summarised the school’s priorities for 2021/22:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Priority 1: Provide excellent quality of teaching and learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1 Assessment for learning/ Metacognition - To provide high quality teaching, including the use of formative assessment strategies, to ensure pupils reach or exceed age-related expectations by closing the potential ‘learning gaps’. 1.2 Wellbeing - Friendship and Social Interaction - To incorporate the curriculum drivers into behaviour systems and wider opportunities to develop pupils’ confidence and resilience. 1.3 Phonics - To research and implement an approved phonics scheme in order to further improve and maximise reading fluency and skills across EYFS and KS1. 1.4 Reading - To provide high quality teaching in reading to ensure pupils reach or exceed age-related expectations by closing the potential ‘learning gaps’. ▪ Priority 2: To further develop subject leaders to enable them to make accurate evaluations of the effectiveness in their subjects. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1 Provide broad balanced curriculum- To implement the milestone approach as a planning and assessment tool to ensure subjects are coherently planned and provide high-quality, inclusive education. 2.2 Metacognition - To develop a metacognitive approach to specific subject teaching and learning opportunities. 2.3 Wellbeing focus for staff -To reflect on feedback and marking procedures and policy to support staff in managing their work load. <p>Questions/comments were invited:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Q How did all the documents align together? RC explained that the SEF document was a snapshot of the school; its context, where the school was and where it needed to go (based on the school’s vision and ethos). The SDP was the action plan which addressed the areas for improvement identified in the SEF as well as achieving the vision. ▪ The short version of the SEF and SDP were excellent reference documents for governors. ▪ A new additional Governors Strategic Action Plan had been drafted to highlight our plans to address wider strategic issues faced by the school not covered in the SDP e.g. admissions ▪ Q Was there enough detail in the SDP to promote “well-balanced citizens” and securing links with Christian communities? ▪ A number of steps had already been put in place to promote pupil friendship and social interactions (which have all been impacted by covid) including developing pupils’ problem-solving skills, the re-instatement of peer mediators. ▪ There were lots of activities throughout the year which developed the school’s links with Christian communities and these would be included in the SDP, for example, pupil support of the Rotary Shoe Box appeal, involvement with Harvest Festival and other celebration services at the Church. ▪ Q Was Early years mentioned enough in the SDP? RC confirmed that there was a separate action plan for the EY provision as this would be shared with governors. A new job share was now in place and there were some changes due this term which were specific to EYFS – new phonics programme, development of the outdoor area. ▪ Action: RC to share EYFS Action Plan on Governor Hub. ▪ Q Did the Covid catch-up funding need to be mentioned in the SDP? It was agreed that the additional funding for PP pupils for covid catchup for 2021/22 should be included in the SDP. 	RC
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4.	Safeguarding & Inclusion The following was noted: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lizzie Jeanes had undertaken a safeguarding audit; the report had not yet been received. ▪ The annual plan of work was in place. ▪ CH and RC would prepare the termly safeguarding report for the next meeting. ▪ The handover of lead DSP from RC to KB was underway. ▪ As previously noted, all committee chairs were asked to include an agenda item on safeguarding specific to their committee’s remit going forward. ▪ There were no safeguarding concerns to report. 	
5.	Subject Focus: Reading RC referred to the reading deep dive report circulated in advance of the meeting which answered the following questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How is reading taught? 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How does the school support parents? ▪ How do you instil a love of reading? ▪ How do you choose good quality books? ▪ What enrichment takes place? ▪ How is reading assessed? <p>Governors were encouraged to look out for the differentiated support provided to pupils (depending on age) during any governor visit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Daily phonics/carousel reading in KS1. ▪ Whole class teaching of reading in Y4-6. ▪ Banded books were available for pupils in Reception – Y5. Free reading books were available to all pupils. ▪ Targeted reading support sessions took place when needed. ▪ The Lexia programme was described by KB. This was an interactive programme which the school subscribed to (annual fee for 25 x licences). This provided structured support for pupils to access at home and in school (21 levels were available). ▪ Q Was there movement of pupils on/off the programme or did they need to stay on and complete all 21 levels? Sometimes licences were reallocated, it depended on parental engagement and pupil ability. ▪ Q Did the school need to purchase extra licences? Not currently; licences were expensive. Another option had been explored during lockdown (Nessy reading programme) as free licences had been made available. KB felt that Lexia was a superior programme in terms of structure, engagement and content. ▪ Governors supported the purchase of additional licences if this was needed and noted that this programme was an investment in pupil progress and support which should be celebrated and shared with prospective parents. It was particular applicable to pupils with additional needs. 	
6.	<p>Committee Reports</p> <p>The minutes of the committee meetings (listed below) had been uploaded to Governor Hub. Committee Chair’s summarised the discussion at the meetings and questions were invited:</p> <p>a. Finance and Premises: 23 September 2021</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The P5 re-forecast had just been received in school and would be reviewed. ▪ The school was advertising its lettings opportunities on Facebook. ▪ Policies had been reviewed (Schedule of Financial Delegation and charging and remissions). <p>b. School Effectiveness: 27 September 2021</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Topics covered included SDP review, pupil progress data, the new website, and various policies (CP, safeguarding and anti-bullying). ▪ Parent questionnaire feedback and school responses had been reviewed. <p>c. Personnel, pay and performance management: 21 September 2021</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Two new members of staff had settled in well. ▪ KB was mentoring the ECT (early career teacher). She had received training on this. ▪ The Headteacher’s performance management meeting had been held and targets met. ▪ CF had sent all staff an email re wellbeing in the summer term and shared the feedback with the committee. Positive comments had been made about the level of support SLT give to staff and how they had developed new skills during the last 18-months. Areas of concern related to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Heavy work load. 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lack of communication to staff relating to PTA forthcoming events (now resolved). ▪ One member of staff had been shaken after recently being verbally attacked by a parent and CF/DB had spoken with that member of staff and a letter had been sent to the parents involved. ▪ A discussion followed on whether or not there was a need to remind parents that rude and aggressive behaviour would not be tolerated. It was felt that this might offend the vast majority of parents who did not behave in this way. ▪ Action: RC to reflect on the home/school agreement to see if this could be better publicised/advertised to promote respectful conversations. ▪ Governors were mindful of the impact rudeness and aggressive behaviour from parents could have on staff particularly those new to teaching. ▪ KB noted the difficulty in differentiating between abruptness and rudeness, this was harder still if English was not the parent’s first language. <p>d. Admissions: 27 August 2021</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The 2023/24 draft admissions policy had been reviewed. There were no changes recommended and this was ratified by the FGB. ▪ In-year admission applications were responded to quickly. ▪ A working party was looking at the long-term impact of in-year admissions (leavers and joiners) and would make recommendations re admissions criteria. <p>e. Communication working party:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ This group had not met since the last FGB meeting. ▪ Action: Arrange communications working party after next open day. ▪ Feedback request had been sent to all open day attendees. 	<p style="text-align: center;">RC</p> <p style="text-align: center;">LP/CF</p>
7.	<p>Governor Business</p> <p>a. Ratification of appointment of chair and vice-chair: Caroline Fleming and Jane Croot had volunteered to stand as chair and vice-chair respectfully for the 2021-22 academic year. There being no other nominations, both were unanimously re-elected. CF noted that this would be her fourth year as chair and urged governors to consider succession planning. A prospective chair could shadow CF and undertake the “effective chairs training” during 2021-22 in preparation. This training is also relevant for those in committee chairs role so is worthwhile training to join.</p> <p>b. Annual plan of work: noted.</p> <p>c. Attendance record for website: noted.</p> <p>d. Committee composition and governor roles: noted. All governors were welcome to attend other committees if interested on an ad-hoc basis in addition to their allocated committee. Existing link roles continue from last year. Subject link roles would be allocated shortly, the following were agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ English: Delia Bonner and Hilary Doherty ▪ EYFS: Lucy Parr ▪ Maths: Jane Croot and Simon Caunce ▪ Science: Hannah Draeger and Stuart Burnett ▪ French: Lucy Parr ▪ History and geography: Caroline Fleming and Natalie Pepper ▪ RE: Dennis Stamps ▪ PSHE: Catherine Harvey ▪ DT/Computing/Art: to be allocated. ▪ Governor visits: Hannah Draeger <p>e. Governor vacancies:</p>	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The appointment of Catherine Harvey as a co-opted governor was approved. CH’s term of office as parent governor had expired. ▪ Parent governor election: As previously communicated on Governor Hub, Natalie Pepper had been elected as parent governor and would join the FGB as soon as the necessary paperwork had been completed. Natalie had a background in marketing and communications and would join the F&P committee and the communication working party. ▪ Delia Bonner’s term of office was due to expire on 9/3/22: CF was pleased to report that DB had agreed to serve for one or two more years and the necessary paperwork would be prepared in due course (Foundation Governor requirements). ▪ Committee chairs: CF noted the depth of experience of all committee chairs which was a strength and benefit of such a stable FGB; she suggested that from a succession planning point of view, vice-chairs should be elected for each committee. ▪ Action: Elect vice-chairs for committees at next round of meetings. ▪ Action: Committee chairs to ensure meeting dates were in the Governor Hub calendar. <p>f. Annual declarations: Governors were reminded to complete the following declarations on Governor Hub:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Pecuniary interest</u>: Reconfirmed in October 2021: Delia Bonner, Kate Birss, Simon Counce, Jane Croot, Caroline Fleming, Catherine Harvey, Henry Loweth, Lucy Parr, Dennis Stamps. Outstanding: Stuart Burnett, Rizelle Crouch, Hannah Draeger, Hilary Doherty ▪ <u>Code of conduct</u>: Reconfirmed in October 2021: Delia Bonner, Kate Birss, Simon Counce, Jane Croot, Caroline Fleming, Catherine Harvey, Henry Loweth, Lucy Parr, Dennis Stamps. Outstanding: Stuart Burnett, Rizelle Crouch, Hannah Draeger, Hilary Doherty ▪ <u>Keeping children safe in education</u>: Reconfirmed in October 2021: Delia Bonner, Kate Birss, Simon Counce, Jane Croot, Caroline Fleming, Catherine Harvey, Henry Loweth, Lucy Parr, Dennis Stamps. Outstanding: Stuart Burnett, Rizelle Crouch, Hannah Draeger, Hilary Doherty <p>g. Governor visits: Governors were encouraged to book a school visit in the autumn term.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Action: RC to circulate the Google Doc. Priority areas included: EYFS (Garnet and Topaz class). ▪ It was noted that any visit to the school constituted a governor visit and if possible, governors should complete a governor visit report as soon as possible thereafter. <p>h. Governor training: The in-house training session was discussed; governors felt that they would benefit from training on the school’s bespoke curriculum provision (this could not be delivered by HfL) and/or assessment data training. Action: HL to follow up.</p> <p>i. Governor correspondence: CF circulated a thank you letter received from Ruth Kieran.</p>	<p>Com chairs</p> <p>SB/RC/H Dr/HDo</p> <p>RC</p> <p>HL</p>
8.	<p>Policy Update</p> <p>The following policies had been circulated in advance of the meeting having been reviewed by committee and were ratified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Charging and remissions: no changes made. b. Child protection: model policy, minor changes related to peer-on-peer abuse. The new DPS was named in the policy. 	

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	<p>c. Safeguarding: updated to reflect changes in other policies.</p> <p>d. Anti-bullying</p> <p>e. Complaints leaflet and policy</p> <p>f. Admissions policy 2023/24.</p> <p>The following policies would be carried forward to the next meeting:</p> <p>g. Schedule of financial delegation: F&P committee</p> <p>h. Governor induction: CF</p> <p>i. Equality policy: KB</p> <p>Action: RC to recirculate Home/school agreement on e-bulletin.</p> <p>Action: RC to share examples of positive comments from parent questionnaire on ebulletin.</p> <p>Action: Committee chairs to read GDPR policy on retaining records.</p>	<p>RC</p> <p>RC</p> <p>Comm Chairs</p>
9.	<p>Any Other Business:</p> <p>a. Breakfast club</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ CF had conducted research into other school’s breakfast and after school club opening hours. ▪ Many other local schools’ clubs started at 7.30am and ran until 6pm. ▪ Staffing availability meant that this was not currently possible for St Nicholas, which is managed by The Club and started at 8am. ▪ RC was trying to recruit extra staff/TA overtime to plug the gap. ▪ The school’s intention (to open at 7.30am by the summer term) had been made clear to parents and on the website. ▪ Action: RC to add breakfast club plans for opening hours to next ebulletin. ▪ It was noted that the after-school club has recently started closing at 5pm on a Monday and Friday due to low demand for club provision on these days. Governors commented on the catch 22 position The Club was in. The school would consider supporting the staffing cost for the last hour of each day. SB reminded governors that the school had waived lettings charges to support the after-school club during the summer term when take up was low. ▪ Suggestions for finding part-time staff were shared: Harpenden Parent’s Network, advert in local sixth forms, Duke of Edinburgh award candidates looking for voluntary work. ▪ Action: RC to share governor expectation re opening hours with after school club manager. ▪ Action: review of breakfast club/after school club at next FGB meeting. <p>b. Governors’ strategic action plan: CF had prepared this document which identified the various risks facing the school. Action: Add governors’ strategic action plan to next agenda.</p> <p>c. Technology fund: consideration had been given to setting up a “Technology Fund” for the school into which parents would be invited to make voluntary donations. This proposal was agreed in principle; details of how much to ask for and how regularly, what budget information should be shared in the literature regarding the fund etc needed to be finalised.</p> <p>d. Christmas Fair: personalised gin. A local gin distillery had reached out to the school re the sale of St Nicholas personalised gin at its Christmas fair. There was no cost to the school and the it would receive a percentage of the taking. This was agreed.</p> <p>Action: Governors to bring luxury item to next meeting for Christmas hamper</p>	<p>RC</p> <p>RC</p> <p>FGB agenda</p> <p>All</p>
10.	Meeting Dates 2021/22	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tuesday 16 November 2021 at 7pm– Strategic topic focus: vision and values, lessons learnt from covid, curriculum, governor strategic action plan Tuesday 1 February 2022 at 6.45pm: school council/school ambassadors to attend Thursday 19 May 2022 at 7pm Monday 11 July 2022 at 6.45pm: school council/school ambassadors to attend. 	
11.	Closing Prayer Rev’d Stamps led the closing prayer.	

Item	Action	By Whom
2.e	Governors to complete Prevent Training	SC/SB/DS
3	Advertise the forthcoming open days in the e-bulletin	RC
3	RC to double check attendance data with school office and recirculate and update the HT’s report.	RC
3	CF to draft some text on allocation statistics/falling roll for the website/prospective parents.	CF
3	Hannah Draeger to attend PTA meeting on 18 October to discuss profile at Harpenden Lights On event	HDr
3.a	Share EYFS action plan on Governor Hub	RC
6	RC to reflect on the home/school agreement to see if this could be better publicised/advertised to promote respectful conversations.	RC
6	Arrange communications working party after the November open day.	LP/CF
7	Elect vice-chairs for committees at next round of meetings. Committee chairs to ensure meeting dates were in the Governor Hub calendar.	Committee chairs
7	RC to circulate the Google Doc for governor visits Governors to book visits; Priority areas included: EYFS, Garnet and Topaz class.	RC All
8	RC to recirculate Home/school agreement on e-bulletin.	RC
8	RC to share examples of positive comments from parent questionnaire on ebulletin.	RC
8	Committee chairs to read GDPR policy on retaining records	Committee chairs
9	RC to share governor expectation re opening hours with after school club manager.	RC
9	Review of breakfast club/after school club at next FGB meeting.	FGB
9	Add governor ‘s strategic action plan to next FGB agenda	FGB
9	Governors to bring luxury item to next meeting to create Christmas hamper	All