

The impact of Governors' Virtual Office at Broadwater School, West Sussex



Broadwater C of E First and Middle School, Worthing, began using Governors' Virtual Office at the start of the Summer Term 2012. They wanted a better way for governors to communicate and share information than the system of emails and hard copies that they had been using. In addition to being a great aid between meetings, GVO is used at the meetings to project papers onto a white board. At the end of term governors were asked by their Chair to give their first impressions. They did so in the form of an online discussion, using the Governors Virtual Office, of course. Here is an unedited record of their thoughts:



[Andy](#)

26/06/2012 15:57

Brilliant! Easy to use and really convenient. Cuts down on paper too.



[Julie](#)

26/06/2012 16:03

It's great, pretty easy to use. Sometimes I find myself exiting the site by mistake but that's just because I'm not used to it. It's marvellous not having to remember to save and print documents. I find it more stressful on the eyes to look at a screen for a whole meeting so we need to look carefully at lighting near the screen and also position of chairs and tables so

that we are facing straight on to the screen and not sideways.



[Simon](#)

26/06/2012 16:09

I have found the GVO easy to navigate, and as a new Governor found it a huge asset. Paperwork is reduced, and all the filing is done for you.



[Andy](#)

26/06/2012 21:26

Overall, I have found the GVO a really good tool. It's been fantastic not having to come to meetings armed with lots of paperwork. It's



saved me a huge amount of time not needing to print and file everything. It seems quick and easy to navigate once you're used to it.



[John](#)

I'm looking forward to an update which will make it compatible with more browsers and devices. The only glitch I have discovered is previewing PDFs, however I understand this is being resolved. Other than that, meetings seem quicker since the GVO was implemented.

I think it's been a very valuable investment.



[Jenny](#)

27/06/2012 11:27

I have found GVO easy to access and very useful having all Governor paperwork in one place. It is important to prepare for meetings by reading through the necessary paperwork before the meeting. This means that you can go to the meeting without all the files etc. At the meeting it is helpful if all Governors can see the screen easily and the set-up of the room is something that is crucial to the smooth running of the meeting. It is a great advantage having documents to hand when we are discussing something. As a Chair I would still have a paper copy of the Agenda to refer to for my own use.

I think GVO has been a good investment and one that will continue to serve the Governing Body well, insofar as it's 'fit for purpose.'

11/07/2012 10:20

I have found the GVO an excellent tool in meetings as we can look at a screen with the relevant documents rather than the usual (in my case) head down scrabbling around for the right piece of paper. I have also found it ideal to be able to access from the office and read reports on line rather than printing at home. I do feel that the calendar keeps us all regularly informed of what is going on in the whole school and the discussion zone will aid speedier decision making at meetings and perhaps allow views of non members of sub-committees to be heard.

This saves a great deal of time at meetings as all will have had the opportunity to read the reports well in advance.

The system does assist in bringing a level of discipline as all reports can be posted on line without the need (except in extreme circumstances) for paper to be passed around at a meeting. To me this saves a great deal of time at meetings as all will have had the opportunity to read the reports well in advance.

I feel that this has already proved very good value for money in terms of both making effective use



of meeting times and the saving on printing both for the school and the individual. One other aspect is that this method of report delivery is far more secure than paper, email or snail mail and it does away with the problem of either not receiving paper or having to burrow through the nether regions of school bags.

I think we have made excellent progress with GVO and the free space created in my study is wonderful!

For the future I think we must, wherever possible, have all papers available on line at least a week in advance and possibly develop a procedure by which questions could be discussion zoned back to report compilers and either answered directly or form the basis for questions at the meeting. This again would save time as the compilers would be in a better position to answer. I think now we have settled on the yr 7 room as the ideal venue there should be even fewer problems with set up. On a lighter note a spell checker on the discussion zone would be a great help for people like me. E&OE



[John](#)

11/07/2012 10:27

One other thing that has come to mind. With all documents being posted on line. If they are all in the relevant meeting pack then it means that we are able to view papers of committees we do not serve on and assists greatly in getting a good overview. In the past, only having access to the minutes has meant long explanatory minutes have been required to get the sense behind a decision or more paper has had to be provided to the FGB. This is also useful when between GB meetings items cross boundaries of committees. Again, time and printing savings.



[Liz](#)

29/08/2012 19:10

Thank you for all your considered comments - I think we have made excellent progress with GVO and the free space created in my study is wonderful!

I suggest that it would be really good if we could attend/ review the "Best Practice" training opportunity.

For more information about Governors' Virtual Office please contact:

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