



Meeting 2 – Part 1 Minutes – Finance & Resources

Date/Time	Thursday 18th March 2021 6.30pm	Location		ONLINE (Google Meet)			
Attendees	Initials	Category	Committee	Attendees	Initials	Category	Committee
Helena Hastie	HH	Co-opted	F&R - Chair	Caroline Ward-Reece	CWR	Co-opted	F&R
Carianne Bright	CB	Parent - Governor	F&R	Digory Smith	DS	Co-opted	F&R
Linden Best	LB	Parent - Chair	F&R/T&L				

Apologies	Initials	Category - Reason
Carole Shilston	CS	Other

Absent without Apology	Initials

In Attendance	Initials	
Helen Mitchell	HM	Clerk

Minutes to	Papers
Attendees	
Apologies	
School Noticeboard	
School Website	

1	Apologies
2	Business Interests
3	Minutes of the last meeting – 19th November 2020
4	Matters Arising
5	Finance
6	School Improvement
7	Personnel
8	Buildings
9	School Strategic Plan
10	Community
11	Policies
12	AOB

Ref	Action or Decision	Owner/ Decision	Date Due
1.1	<u>Apologies</u> CS was delayed. (joined the meeting late).		
2.1	<u>Business Interests</u>		



	None to report.		
3.1	<p><u>Minutes of the Meeting on 19th November 2020</u></p> <p>The minutes from the last meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record and were signed by the chair.</p>		
4.1	<p><u>Matters Arising</u></p> <p>Page 5 - SFVS deadline has been extended to 28th May 2021 from the end of March due to COVID situation in schools.</p>		
5.1	<p><u>Finance</u></p> <p><u>5 year budget plan/budget projections 21/22</u></p> <p>LB Challenge in regard to the deficit position in future years. In year 2 onwards it is anticipated that there will be an in year deficit. When questioned, it is always explained that it won't end up being that, but why is this? HH highlighted the changes and impact on the future years position by the fall in pupil numbers. LB would like further clarification on this from the HH and CS to assist understanding.</p> <p>Further questions from LB to be answered by HH and CS:</p> <p>LB 23/24 there was a small increase in deficit, compared to the deficit between 22/23 and 23/24 - why is that?</p> <p>What is being done about the projected deficit, are there any plans in place to ensure we don't have in year deficits, or to ensure school is able to sustain the future anticipated cost base and income based on pupil numbers?</p> <p>Are there any decisions to be made by governors now to help with that?</p> <p>LB stated that on discussions with CS the school requires an average of 130-135 pupils per year to sustain the cost base.</p> <p>LB and CWR challenged that the deficit position can't just be explained by a fall in pupil numbers? HH stated that it is also due to the year on year increase in teacher/teaching assistant salaries that account for the majority of the cost base. Further discussion would be useful on this with HH and CS to understand what if anything can be done to influence these costs.</p> <p>CWR challenged whether the pupil premium funding will correspond with the fall in pupil numbers? Further discussion required on this to understand the correlation and future of pupil premium income - action HH and CS.</p> <p>CWR asked what the impact is on the school long term if the deficit cannot be cleared, as pupil numbers for 21/22 are 135 and reduce by 11 in 24/25.</p>	<p>LB Challenge</p> <p>LB Challenge</p> <p>LB and CWR challenge</p> <p>CWR Challenge</p> <p>CWR challenge</p>	<p>HH and CS to give further explanation</p> <p>HH and CS to give further explanation on questions and challenges.</p> <p>see above</p> <p>see above</p> <p>see above</p> <p>see above</p> <p>see above</p>



	<p>The governors then had a discussion on how the school could positively influence pupil numbers:</p> <p>DS asked if there was any scope to recruit students from Cranbrook. LB responded that on that point CS had had a call from the Head teacher at Cranbrook to try and recruit from whimple (year 6 to year 7), question whether we can do the same?</p> <p>HH challenged that as a school we need to seriously consider advertising and promoting the school. HH offered suggestions such as leaflet drops to other nearby areas (outside of Whimple). CB also suggested childminders, nurseries and pre schools. HH thinks that the governors should consider a proposal for the future, and this should be taken to FGB for suggestions.</p> <p>LB stressed the importance to ensure that the school has priority to the village as we are a village school. CWR backed this that we need to keep places for people in our village first. The Devon County Council scheme does offer places to the village community as a priority. The need to expand to other areas is only relevant if numbers are below pan (20).</p> <p>LB stated that although in recent years the school has had pupil numbers in excess of 140, on discussion with CS, the ideal number is nearer 130-135. The layout of the school, school building, class structure means that 140 is too much for the school to handle.</p> <p>CWR seconded this need to keep 130 - 135 where the school is viable and can offer education to the best capability, if over this the situation would not be sustainable. There is no room on site for expansion, and the school also needs to be able to offer places to pupils that may move to the village mid way through a year.</p> <p>LB stated that in her role as governor and a parent she always actively promotes the school on facebook when asked.</p> <p>HH challenged that if the school does lose 15 pupils this could mean losing a teaching assistant.</p> <p>HH stated that in her opinion the school should keep numbers well above 135 to keep the school profitable.</p> <p>From the above, it seems there is further need for discussion with CS in relation to school deficit position, teaching/teaching assistant costs and pupil numbers. Questions to be put to CS, HH to follow up with CS and then can be put to FGB.</p> <p>CS joined the meeting. I joined a lot later than this!! Was as personnel was being discussed</p>	<p>DS question</p> <p>HH Challenge</p> <p>LB response to challenge</p> <p>CWR opinion</p> <p>HH Challenge</p> <p>HH opinion</p> <p>Further discussion between CS and HH and then put to FGB.</p>	<p>Put on FGB Meeting Agenda</p>
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	<p>After a quick summary CS advised the governors that if you speak with David Dominey (Babcock LDP Finance Consultant), our school is in a very strong financial position, better than about 90% of the other schools he looks at. He always says that we shouldn't worry about balancing in the third year. The school has a large surplus balance to take forward into 21/22 to help protect against the fall in pupil numbers and increasing staff costs. The school has purposely managed its budgets with a cautious approach as it was anticipated that we would have a fall in numbers, and we have protected ourselves against the impact of this. The surplus position will protect us beyond the next 3 years.</p> <p>Furthermore CS stated that it is hard to push pupil numbers when it does depend on a number of factors beyond the schools control, for example low birth rates, and families moving in and out of the local area.</p> <p>CS stated that the school would have to cut budget lines further in the future if required and consider staffing replacement more carefully. This is already something that is taken into account each time the need to recruit staff arises. CS -this year we have been fortunate with COVID in so much as some budgeted costs did not arise due to the limitations placed upon us, and has actually enabled the school to invest now in IT and building/grounds improvement, when we may not be able to do so in the next few years.</p> <p>HH stated that the governors are not actually challenging the figures themselves, they are happy with the detail. They would just like to have further discussion in a wider sense surrounding the items noted above and the strategies that will be adopted.</p> <p>The governors agreed to the submission of the budget.</p>	CS initial response to above	CS and HH to ensure all governors questions are responded to
5.2	<p><u>Finance</u> <u>Budget Monitoring Report</u></p> <p>HH took governors through the projected year end position for 19/20 compared with the original budget for that period and offered explanations for any large variances or substantial spend items.</p> <p>LB challenged whether the underspend of £30k was large in comparison with the original budget amount of £14k underspend. HH stated that it was quite usual for the underspend to be significant as it helped our carried forward position to help with future years.</p> <p>LB stated that on discussion with CS before the meeting, it was acknowledged that the underspend was significant and wouldn't all be required to carry forward to future years. Therefore in the spring term the school has been investing in the school building, grounds and IT equipment and services whilst the school had the opportunity to do so.</p>	<p>LB challenge/HH response</p> <p>LB question</p>	



	<p>LB questioned whether the COVID Grant was included in the figures and whether the school had received it. HH stated that it was included in the school budget share income. The school has received amounts for the autumn and spring term.</p> <p>There were no further questions. Governors were happy with figures.</p>		
5.3	<p><u>Finance</u> <u>D78 - Capital Budget 2020/2021</u></p> <p>HH asked whether any governors had any questions on this document.</p> <p>DS asked for explanation of what the document showed.</p> <p>HH responded that it is income from DCC that is specified for spending on capital expenditure, e.g assets including IT equipment. This document shows how much has been received in income in the year, brought forward from 18/19 and what the school has spent the funds on.</p> <p>HH questioned whether the items included here were items that the PTFA were going to fund. HH would need to discuss this with CS regarding PTFA income - outside the scope of this document.</p>	<p>DS question</p> <p>HH response</p> <p>HH question</p>	<p>HH to clarify with CS</p>
5.4	<p><u>Finance</u> <u>PE Grant</u></p> <p>HH asked what the school was spending the grant on. LB answered that the school wanted to invest in some new playground markings as part of this. There were 2 quotes that were very similar in value - £6k. This spend will come out of the PE Grant. It was felt that this expense would be a long term benefit to the children and the school in promoting increased activity by the children at the break times. The governors were happy to support this spend, and would be happy for the school to adopt the quote they felt best as both similar in value.</p> <p>LB stated that the PE grant is £17k, HH also informed of an increased spending with sporty stars to help with PE and active teaching, also assisting the school with class cover and to support the children's mental health.</p>	<p>HH question. LB response</p>	
5.5	<p><u>Finance</u> <u>Pupil Premium</u></p> <p>HH stated that only £330 spent - when looking at F11 spend. This is for some materials only and not an analysis of the total of how pupil premium money is spent.</p>		



	HH would like some further analysis - LB pointed in the direction of the website where analysis of this is published by CS.		
5.6	<p><u>School Financial Values Standard (SFVS)</u></p> <p>HH and LB completed the governors section and sent it back.</p> <p>HH stated that the questions covered such areas of how the governors are checking things? providing evidence? ensuring the governors are kept informed and are active in the operations of the school.</p> <p>There were no further questions from the governors.</p> <p>HH confirmed that the SFVS can be approved and submitted to DCC by the 28th May.</p>		
5.7	<p><u>Other Income Streams</u></p> <p>HH was unsure if the school had any of these.</p> <p>LB answered that the school does have other income including, -service children, catering income, other income including donations and monies contributed towards having student teachers.</p>		
6.1	<p><u>School Improvement</u></p> <p>HH gave update from discussion with CS:</p> <p>“We have a visit from our education advisor, Helen Eversett in May.</p> <p>As a school we have now been allocated 4 computer devices from the government instead of 1 so I have ordered them.</p> <p>From a financial aspect and linked to Action 7 – the builders have installed a false wall with reinforced frameworks in Ash, Elm and Oak Class and new interactive screens have been installed. The Clevertouch boards that were in Oak and the library have been moved and installed in Willow and Beech Class.”</p> <p>No further questions.</p>		
7.1	<p><u>Personnel</u></p> <p>Another child has received an EHCP with funding for the school of £4,500. The school has subsequently advertised for a TA/MTA for 17.5 hours per week to work with this child.</p>		



	<p>CWR asked if the income would cover the costs of staffing and materials. HH answered that no, the funding does not cover all the costs at all. The school is recruiting for 1:1 time in the afternoon sessions, however there is already a member of staff helping within the classroom in the mornings.</p> <p><u>Staff Insurance Quotes and EAP programme of £10 per adult.</u></p> <p>Harrington Bates quote only £1k compared to the SAS quote of £5k. The Harrington Bates was a summary and not detailed quote. The SAS policy is an existing provider who specialises in other physical and mental health benefits for staff and pupils. To draw a proper comparison, would need a more detailed quote based on specific circumstances from Harrington Bates.</p> <p>In addition Harrington Bates would not be chosen given a historical situation.</p> <p>However for this year the school would need to stay with our existing policy as there is a staff member with existing medical conditions, who would not be covered if we changed. School will revisit annually, and next year ensure 3 quotes are obtained.</p> <p>HH asked if it has any implications for the budget or is it already in there?</p> <p>CS confirmed the SAS quote is included in the budget.</p> <p>Governors agreed to go with the SAS quote.</p>	<p>CWR challenge</p> <p>HH question</p>	
8.1	<p><u>Buildings</u></p> <p>CS gave an update.</p> <p>Building works have been finished, waiting for sign off. The ramp has been replaced - they have done a good job, and we have got the ramp and the walls/fixings for the screens for free as compensation for troubles earlier on.</p> <p>CS playground markings. Please refer to point 5.4 above.</p> <p>Quotes are from Rhino Play and Uniplay. CS stated that quotes are very similar, about £100 difference, one talked about blasting the playground which school was worried about as would damage the playground so wanted to go with the company that didn't say blasting.</p> <p>Governors are happy with whichever school they prefer.</p> <p>All approved by the governors.</p>		



9.1	<u>School Strategic Plan</u> <p>CS stated that the current strategic plan is now out of date. CS proposed that the Chair of Governors (LB) and the Chairs of Finance and Teaching and Learning Committee's (HH & JG) should meet first to put a plan together and then meet with CS.</p> <p>This was agreed, and LB stated that it would be useful to see what other schools are doing for their strategic plans.</p>	CS suggestion	LB, HH and JG to meet to start process for 5 year plan.
10.1	<u>Community and Website</u> <u>No updates.</u>		
11.1	<u>Policies for Review</u> <p>Finance policy - No comments. LB thought this was fine - but should get rid of the Budget & Monitoring one below.</p> <p>HH all happy to approve this.</p> <p>Charging & Remissions Policy - CB questioned whether it happened, being charged for disruption for property? Does it happen regularly?</p> <p>CS responded that the school had in the past asked for money for books, and did charge for a damaged chromebook that had been lent to a pupil.</p> <p>LB stated that was good as following policy.</p> <p>CS stated you would judge whether it was a lower income family and how appropriate -case by case basis.</p> <p>HH all happy to approve.</p> <p>Budget & Monitoring - LB questioned whether this is needed any more as covered by Finance policy. Governors are happy for this to be removed from the policy cycle and just adopt the Finance policy.</p>	<p>CB challenge</p> <p>LB challenge</p>	<p>Policy to be removed</p>
12.1	<u>Any other business</u> <p>No other business so meeting closed</p>		
The meeting closed at 7.25pm			
Date/Time	Thursday 1st July 2021	Location	Whimble Primary School