HOLY TRINITY CE PRIMARY SCHOOL SUNNINGDALE

FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes from meeting held on 14 March 2024 at 9.30 am

Present:	Mr B Aherne (Chair), Mrs C Barnes, Mr T Fettes, Revd J Hutchinson, Mrs J Steel,
Via Teams:	Mrs J Griffith, Mrs A Williamson
In Attendance:	Mrs W Poulter (Bursar), Mrs C Elsasser (Clerk)

Key		
(yellow)	**Support**	To support decisions and enquiries, staff welfare, sharing and clarification of key information, training
(red)	**Operational**	Action towards improvement, impact and success, monitoring
(green)	**Strategic**	Long and short term school development, staff welfare, improving pupil outcomes and welfare requirements,
(purple)	**Challenge**	To hold the Head to account for SDIP progress, financial decisions, learning and teaching, pupil outcomes

	905/24f Welcome Mr Aherne welcomed Governors to the meeting.
	906/24f Apologies for Absence All were present.
	907/24f Declaration of Business Interests None declared.
(green)	**908/24f Minutes of the Last Meeting** ***The minutes of the last meeting*** held on 14 December 2023 had been distributed with the agenda. It was noted that the end time of the meeting should have been recorded as 9.38. An amendment was made and these were agreed as a true record of the meeting and would be signed.
(green)	**909/24f Matters Arising** No action points had been identified in the last set of minutes.
(green)	**910/24f Budget Update** **i) 11 month review** ***The budget comparison (11 month) document*** had been distributed with the agenda.
(red)	Mr Aherne drew attention to a large reduction in Other Income which was down £13K on predicted. Mrs Poulter confirmed that this line included income from PTA for school trips etc.

'I know there is nothing better for people than to be happy and to do good while they live.'
Ecclesiastes 3:12

	ii) 2024-5 Budget ***2024-25 budget paper*** was circulated at the meeting.
	Mr Aherne drew attention to the bottom line showing a £96K deficit.
	Mrs Poulter had advised the Borough that they were not able to provide a balanced budget for 2024/25 and the Borough were unsurprised and were receiving a similar message from other schools. An option available included applying for an interest free loan from the Borough but this would then need to be paid back.
	It was noted that the deficit arose from the loss of the bulge class, year on year incremental increases and that the current Reception class had 5 vacant spaces (the latter accounting for £18.830K).
	Mr Aherne noted that it was too early to know precisely the September intake numbers but as an indication 88 had applied as opposed to 66 who had applied for the current year, so it was hopeful that there would be a full Reception class for September 2024.
	Mrs Griffith noted that 5 TAs had left and not all hours had been replaced. Mrs Poulter noted that due to recent staff changes 28 Higher Level TA hours and 56 hours TA hours had been lost.
	She flagged up an additional concern that they would be losing 2 EHCP children next year along with their associated funding.
	Mrs Poulter noted that there would continue to be year on year increases and that these were not currently sustainable.
	Mrs Griffith reported that in addition the Tutoring recovery premium fund would also be ceasing.
	Mr Aherne noted that if things were left until September then the school would be 6 months into the financial year. He noted that decisions needed to be made now and staff and parents should be made aware of the situation.
	Mr Fettes asked what was expendable and what could be cut. Mrs Poulter noted that the Borough would focus on the school's staffing costs and hone in on these.
	Mr Fettes suggested that the worse case and best case scenarios needed to be worked out but feared it would ultimately mean redundancies as borrowing would just push the problem further down the line.
	Mr Aherne noted that it would mean losing 3 TAs not just one. Mrs Poulter noted that any redundancies would receive a settlement package so there would still not be any savings this year. She noted that the Borough would be able to come in, discuss the situation and offer advice on how the redundancy process would work.
	Mr Fettes agreed that the Borough should be consulted, and they should advise on the timetable and the process.
	Mr Fettes noted that all areas of the budget should be examined to see what savings could be made, noting that energy costs should go down once the new gas boiler was installed and the school no longer needed oil.
	It was suggested that the grounds maintenance frequency could be reduced.
	Mrs Poulter noted that the figures currently circulated had not included any reductions.

	Mrs Steel enquired if the PTA could assist in any way for example could parents provide a monthly donation or contribution. It was noted that the PTA funds could only be used for "nice to have" extra items and not mainstream areas. It was noted that the PTA currently already provided each class with £200 for art resources and software.
	Mrs Steel noted the importance of how this information was presented to parents, noting that there was an expectation that each class would have a teacher and a TA even though this was not a Government requirement. Mrs Williamson agreed that parent expectations needed to be handled carefully.
	It was agreed that Mrs Poulter should invite the Borough's HR team to come in to discuss options and processes as soon as possible. **Action: WP invite Borough HR team to advise school**
	Mrs Barnes noted that the Unions might have to be involved too.
	Mr Fettes stressed that this whole issue needed to remain confidential at this time. The FGB would be updated at their meeting on 19 March.
	Mrs Griffith recommended that staff should be made aware as soon as possible and this should be before they broke for Easter, even if the precise details were not confirmed by then. But she stressed that this should not yet go out to the parent body and should remain confidential to staff only.
	It was suggested that Wednesday 27 March would be the best day to call a staff meeting after school, when most staff would already be on site and others would be requested to attend. The aim would be to provide information about the situation with members of the F&R Committee and the Borough representative also present.
	Mr Fettes suggested that following FGB and information gleaned from the Borough a pre-meeting would be set up to draw up the agenda for the staff meeting.
	Mr Fettes noted that Mr Holt would be able to provide valuable input into this discussion, due to relevant past experience, it was agreed he should be invited to be involved. **Action: TF to invite NH to input into discussions**
	Governors expressed concern that reduction in TAs would impact on the already busy teaching staff. Mrs Steel enquired if there was any scope for volunteers to provide some support. It was noted that the supervision required for volunteers would likely add to teacher workload.
	Mrs Griffith noted that teacher well being should be monitored during this whole process.
	911/24f Decarbonisation Working Party It was noted that the new boiler, funded by the Diocese, would be installed in May.
	Nothing further to report.
	912/24f Renewal of 99 year lease Mrs Poulter noted that St John's had referred school to Savills, their estate agents. Savills would put a plan together and be in touch. It was noted that this lease applied to a small strip of land running through the middle of the school grounds and on which a classroom had now been built.
	913/24f Other Financial Matters **i) Staffing going forward**

	Discussed earlier in the meeting.
	ii) Boiler repair Discussed under Decarbonisation Working Party.
	iii) Car Park Extension Updates Mr Fettes noted that the PTA needed to go back to the Parish Council to make a presentation following a consultation with parents.
	Mrs Griffith noted that this would be a tricky message to pursue in light of the discussions earlier in the meeting.
	Mr Fettes also noted that if staff numbers were reducing there might be a less pressing need for this work to be carried out.
	Mrs Steel suggested that these discussions should be halted at the present time. Mr Fettes and the rest of the Committee agreed.
	Mr Fettes would have a conversation with the Chair of the Parish Council's Committee at the appropriate time. **Action: TF update Parish Council on pausing this project**
	iv) Purchase Card It was noted that Mrs Griffith and Mrs Poulter now had these cards.
	v) Disposal of Assets Mrs Poulter reported that an old server, 5 monitors and 5 towers and 1 ipad along with a selection of leads had been disposed of.
	vi) Technology – teacher laptop lease renewal Mrs Poulter and Mrs Griffith noted they were reviewing renewal of the lease.
	vii) Staff Recognition Fund It was noted that this had been put on hold due to budget constraints.
	viii) Schedule of future maintenance requirements and financial implications On going, no current works.
	ix) Possible Governor Fund Mr Fettes suggested that Governors could perhaps reach out to the community for support.
	Discussion took place, most felt that parents should not be asked to pay for staff or teaching resources and that they would wish to see their contributions adding luxuries or extras for their children.
	Mr Fettes suggested that an option could be set up via Parent Pay for donations where parents could indicate clearly what area they wanted their contributions to support.
	Mrs Poulter would investigate whether Gift Aid could be claimed via Parent Pay on donations. **Action: WP investigate if Gift Aid on donations can be claimed via Parent Pay**
	914/24f Governance **i) Governor Visits**

	Mr Fettes noted that he would be conducting a Science visit next week.
	ii) Governor Training Needs None identified.
	iii) Feedback from SAC Committee An extract from the SACC Committee minutes held on 30 January had been circulated with the minutes.
	SACC had recommended that F&R continue to underwrite the tutoring plan, it was noted that due to earlier discussions in the current meeting this could not be confirmed.
	SACC had requested F&R consider if there were any specific areas they wanted focus on in the Governor Visit day on 5 June. No suggestions were raised.
	SACC had recommended that F&RC agree the process that needs to be followed to access the small fund put aside to award to staff and any criteria that needed to be met – however this had been put on hold earlier in this meeting.
	iv) Triangulation back to SAC Committee All Governors would be updated of the financial position at the FGB on 19 March.
	915/24f Policies 4 policies had been circulated to the Committee on 9 January with comments requested by 26 January: a) Staff Code of Conduct Policy and Guidelines b) Teacher Appraisal Policy c) Teacher Pay Policy d) Finance Policy
	These were all approved to be presented for ratification to FGB.
	916/24f Health and Safety No issues to report.
	917/24f Safeguarding, Child Protection and Prevent Mrs Griffith noted with thanks that all Governors had completed their Prevent online training.
	There were no issues or incidents to report.
	918/24f Any Other Business Mr Aherne suggested the size and suitability of the school hall be investigated to see if it could be hired out for use as a Padel court. **Action: WP investigate suitability of school hall as a Padel court**
	919/24f Impacts as a result of this meeting • Budget deficit solutions discussed • Impact on staffing considered • Meetings to be set up to investigate process to follow • Timeline planned for difficult conversations • Car Park improvement put on hold • Staff recognition fund put on hold • Ways of cutting other costs discussed • 4 policies reviewed

	920/24f Date of Next Meetings Teams meeting to be set up to progress staffing conversations once timeline confirmed. **Action: JG/TF convene Teams meeting once timeline confirmed** 10.30 am Thursday 2 May 2024 – short budget meeting via Teams
	Meeting concluded 10.45