

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE RESOURCE COMMITTEE OF ST MATTHEW'S GOVERNING BODY,
HELD ONLINE ON THURSDAY 30th APRIL 2020 AT 10.00 A.M.**

Present: Ricardo Herbane (RH)(Chair), Debora Lucarelli (DL), Chris Jaggar (CJ), Richard Warwick (RW), Rosa Mottershead (RM), Julie Murphy (JM), Christina Bates (CB), Tony Davies (TD) (Head teacher) Adrian Strowger (AS) (School Business Manager)

Clerk: Lis Silver

1. Apologies for absence:

There were no apologies for absence. It was noted that the Co-chair RM was attending the meeting but is not a voting member of the Committee. The meeting was held on Google meetings because of the requirement for social distancing during the Covid-19 crisis.

2. Declarations of direct or indirect pecuniary interests relevant to any of the Agenda items

There were no declarations of interest related to agenda items.

3. Resources Committee meeting held on 6 February 2020

The minutes of the last meeting of the Resources Committee were agreed as an accurate record.

4. Matters arising and agreed actions update

- **All weather pitch** – it was noted TD had confirmed planned date for All-weather pitch project
- **Updated Critical incident plan** had been circulated following review at last meeting. It was noted this plan had been executed as part of the school's response to current Covid-19 crisis.
- **Chair of Resources had signed SFVS after viewing BCP**
- **Agenda for next FGB** - to include proposal that teaching staff governors rotate Committees. Action outstanding because last FGB postponed because of timing of Ofsted inspection on same day, rapidly followed by changes to delivery of teaching required under lockdown.
- **Budget approval timetable** – it was noted that despite all the changes linked to the ongoing crisis the timetable for the agreement of budget was being maintained. However, that the proposed budget included a number of assumptions about the Covid-19 crisis and might need to be updated when it becomes clearer how Lockdown will be ended.
- **Purple Mash** – it was confirmed that the invoice had been received in April for the full annual contract. Although this was bought primarily for delivery of the ICT curriculum in school it was being used for some home learning activities. Staff had received a rapid overview at the last staff meeting before closure of the school.

5. Review of March 2020 Year End

TD advised the Resources Committee the school had finished the financial year as expected with a budget close to break even. This was a positive outcome at the end of a difficult year. The final result was a small deficit of £14k, resulting from income that was delayed as a result of the Covid-19 school closure. He noted that without the fundraising activity of the parents the deficit would have been significantly bigger. This fundraising had enabled the school to have some flexibility and provide 1 to 1 support to children with significant difficulties allowing them to stay in school.

TD advised that the overall picture from the last year and the budget for the following years was confirmation that the school had adopted the right strategy for managing staffing. The 3-year forecast indicates that with the new funding levels this strategy will result in a predicted carry over and future opportunities to look at areas that need development.

The school had 2 planned residential trips in the Summer term which are now unlikely to happen. The Year 4 trip to Grafham will be postponed till next year, however this is not possible for the Year 6 trip to Butlins. The school subsidises trips for Pupil Premium (PP) children so there will be a sum of money not spent on the Year 6 trip. The staff governor asked about whether the school

would lose this money if it wasn't spent or whether it could be spent on Pupil Premium children now. Whilst it seems unlikely that the trip can take place it has not yet been cancelled by the provider, so the school needs to hold on to the money. It seems unlikely that this money would be claimed back and since PP money is not designated to individuals could be ringfenced for spending on PP children over the rest of the financial year. Pupil Premium children are likely to require additional input to make up for the lost learning time and to prevent the attainment gap widening because of their time out of school. The school will need to look at a 12-month strategy to close the gap and to manage the variety of experiences that these children will have lived through whilst the school was closed. It was noted that if school does re-open after half term there will be a lot of additional work required to ensure that all children in the school feel safe and secure after the extended break.

It was noted that the £60k variance (Line E19 Learning resources not ICT) in the Budget Forecast is linked to Educational visits and the timing of expenditure compared to receipt of parental contributions. One of the governors asked if there was any risk to the school from the costs associated with cancellation of the trip. TD confirmed that he does not anticipate a problem since it is likely that Butlins will contact the school to confirm that the trip is cancelled however if for any reason this did not happen there is insurance to cover any costs. In answer to a question he confirmed that there are no other contracts that are likely to result in the school losing money. The school has contracts for cleaning and school meals, but these are managed in a different way.

The staff governor asked why it was necessary to write off payment for the Mud Jungle project from the After School club since this project has been running for a year and the After School club received a grant towards their contribution. TD advised that the timing of the closure was the reason the money had not yet been received and it was unclear if the money was ring fenced for the project, but this would be followed up.

The Committee thanked AS for the very helpful Year End Summary report.

6. Draft Budget for 2020/2021

TD advised the Committee that this year's draft budget contained many additional assumptions, as outlined in the high-level commentary, associated with the Covid-19 emergency. He noted that there is one additional underpinning assumption; that the previously announced funding levels for the next 3 years will be adhered to. These increased levels of funding will generate a significant amount of carry forward and allow the school to develop and expand some areas of provision. Assuming the promised funding does materialise the school will be in a much healthier position. TD advised that unlike other years the budget has been developed with online meetings and without himself and AS being able to meet. He thanked AS for his patience at all the necessary revisions because of the fast changing situation currently. Even in the last few days since this document was circulated new Covid-19 costs have been emerging so further updating of the budget is likely to be necessary. In answer to a governor's question about Year 3 of the budget he advised that there is always a high degree of uncertainty and this year it is even more speculative.

TD noted that there is one further adjustment that he is aware of regarding the funding needed by the local authority for the High Needs block deficit (as discussed at the last Resource Committee). The consultations on this were postponed at the time of the lockdown but he is aware that around £10k may be used for individual school's budgets.

The Committee noted the following:

- rental income stopped in March and there is no clarity about when it might resume – the current budget is based on lettings returning to usual levels in September.
- a sum of £20k in the budget for maternity cover - this is to cover a member of staff who went on leave in November 2019 and is expected to return in November 2020

- budget includes money for Sports Coaches – Lisa Wolff, who along with coaching, covers PPA. Her employment is on a contract rather than as an employee (as in previous years)
- the school have been asked to furlough agency staff who, in normal circumstances they would have continued to employ this term. In many cases the school will continue to get funding for the post from the relevant ECHP.

The situation with contracted school meal staff is complex. The majority of staff, including the Contract Manager, are furloughed on full pay with the school able to reclaim 80% from the government scheme. The chef is coming in 3 days a week to prepare lunches as required. TD has reviewed the costs associated with school meals and is confident that will be covered by the payments made for Universal Free School Meals. Governors asked if this payment was likely to be withdrawn through clawback since the school is unable to provide meal numbers at this time, but were advised that this is unlikely since the government will want to protect small suppliers like school meal contractors, who are all in a vulnerable position at the moment, so that they are able to resume providing meals when the school reopens. The school was up to date with financial transactions with the school meals contract at the time of closure so there is no significant liability.

Governors asked about whether there will be additional costs to the budget if the school does reopen in June. TD advised that other than costs that we are not yet aware of the only significant extra cost will be for staffing. The school has good stocks of educational supplies and there will be a small additional cost to provide a cleaning kit for every classroom – office staff are already working on sourcing these materials. The additional staffing costs will be associated with staff that are required to shield for 12 weeks and who will probably not be able to return in June and it is anticipated that these costs will be covered by sickness absence insurance.

TD advised the meeting that there is one unbudgeted item that he wanted to bring to the attention of the Resources Committee. There are 2 teachers who are contracted to cover maternity leave until the end of May/early June. Normally their contracts will finish when the teacher returns from maternity leave. However, if the school does reopen after half term then these additional teachers will be needed since they have built a relationship with their class and it would be extremely difficult for the returning teacher to take over virtual teaching of a class they have never met in person. The returning teachers will be used to cover classes where the teacher is unable to return because they are shielding and/or have significant health issues. Both of the cover teachers have worked extremely hard in the current scenario and shown great commitment to the school and therefore it feels more appropriate to continue their contracts until the end of August. The total cost will be £8k. TD asked if the approved draft budget could be amended to include this additional item of expenditure. Governors agreed that this adjustment to the budget seemed a wise investment.

RM left the meeting at 10.50am

The Resources Committee unanimously approved the amended draft Budget for 2020/2021 for ratification by the FGB at their next meeting by a virtual “show of hands”.

Action: Resource Committee members asked to confirm their approval in writing by email to the Chair with the Clerk copied in.

Action: Budget document to be reissued by Head for FGB meeting with agreed £8k amendment to the budget on Line E28

7. Questions and Answers re current issues

One of the governors asked if there needed to be a contingency in case the school was expected to run extended hours on return. TD advised that despite the speculation in the press the DfE had confirmed that they would not be asking schools to work extended hours, or open on Saturdays or in the holidays. It is not clear what the school will look like if it does reopen in June, but it is likely that children will only be attending for 50% of the time to help with social distancing in classes.

One of the governors asked about whether there was any recruitment needed this term to cover resignations for September. TD confirmed that the budget included funding for full staffing. He is planning that any recruitment needed e.g. to cover staff returning from maternity leave and wanting to work part-time can be covered by internal recruitment. If there are more applicants internally than jobs available then he proposed using an online interview process, to take place as soon as possible. He noted that whilst he was comfortable interviewing staff on-line that he knew he did not feel this was a good option for external recruitment if that proved to be necessary. However, there are some former St Matthews teachers who may be available if recruitment for part time days is needed. If this is not enough to cover the vacancies then he proposed using agency staff initially and running the recruitment process in September.

A question was raised about the fact that the Admin staff budget was regularly £10k over budget because of overtime with the Business Manager often needing to come in during the holidays. It was suggested that this expenditure should be included in the budget and the possibility of recruiting an additional caretaker was suggested. AS advised that generally he needed to come in because of the specialist nature of the work being undertaken. TD confirmed that the school recognised that there is a genuine need for additional caretaking hours but that this is a discussion to be taken at another time. He advised that the school are aware of this regular overspend but the financial system software is not flexible enough to easily register the budget since it is set up based on actual staff contracts.

8. Any Other Business

One of the governors asked if the school could be more systematic in the way invitations to meetings are organised and it was agreed that meeting arrangements would in future be put on Google so that everyone knew where to look.

9. Dates of future meetings and agreed agenda items

FGB Meeting – Wednesday 6th May 2020 at 7.00pm – Google meeting

Resource Committee – to be scheduled in June

Action: Chair to agree a date for Resource Committee next half term e.g. by Doodle poll

The Chair thanked the Head for his continuing work with the Cambridge Primary Heads and the income this generates for the school budget. He also thanked the School Business Manager for his valuable contributions to the meeting. He asked the Head to pass on the Committee's thanks to all the staff for their hard work under difficult circumstances

Approvals:

The Resources Committee unanimously approved:

- the amended draft Budget for 2020/2021 for ratification by the FGB at their next meeting by a virtual "show of hands".

Actions:

- Resource Committee members asked to confirm their approval of the draft budget in writing by email to the Chair with the Clerk copied in.
- Budget document to be reissued by Head for FGB meeting with agreed £8k amendment to the budget on Line E28
- Chair to agree a date for Resource Committee next half term e.g. using Doodle poll