



AUTUMN TERM (2) 2023 MEETING OF THE FINANCE, PREMISES, HEALTH & SAFETY COMMITTEE	
MINUTES	
Date	Wednesday 22 nd November 2023
Time	18.30
Place	Online (Zoom)

PRESENT: Mr S Pilgrim (SP) (Chair) Mr J Hunt (JH)
 Mr T Green (TG) Mr E Hillyard (EH) (Headteacher)
 Ms L Minton (LM)

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs L Jackson (LJ) Director of Finance, HR and Resources
 Mrs S Lary (SL) Deputy Headteacher

GOVERNOR

APOLOGIES: None

NOT PRESENT: None

Action Support Challenge

NB. Governors’ questions are highlighted in *italics* throughout these minutes.

Item	Discussions and Decisions Made	Actions
1	<p>Welcome and Apologies for Absence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SP welcomed everyone to the meeting, which was held online and recorded in order for minutes to be taken after the event, as the Clerk was not present. 	
2	<p>Notification of Any Other Business</p> <p>None</p>	
3	<p>Declarations of Interest</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> TG is a Member of Buckinghamshire Council. 	
4	<p>Minutes</p> <p>The Minutes of the meeting held on 27th September 2023, having been circulated, were approved.</p> <p>Actions and Matters Arising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All actions were complete. Revised TLR Structure document to be shared with Governors. 	LJ

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AUDIT		
5	<p>Audit Review</p> <p>Statutory accounts and associated documents had been circulated. These will be signed off at the Members' AGM on 13th December.</p> <p>Q: Is this the final Audit Findings report, or could it change?</p> <p>A – LJ: A couple of small amendments may happen. For example, 4.2 – Payroll costs require additional reconciliation but LJ has questioned this; waiting for audit response. Articles of Association were always on the school website, so this point will come off.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management response to be recorded if items are left in the final version for the Members to sign off. 	LJ
6.1	<p>Confirmation of Internal Audit Areas of Risk for 2023-24</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work on next year's internal scrutiny will commence once this year's accounts have been signed off. The areas of scrutiny chosen by Governors are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ SEN Funding Review ○ HR Management ○ Payroll Systems & Management 	
6.2	<p>Internal Audit Report for 2022-23</p> <p>Audit Report on Governance had been circulated. There were quite a few areas of development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full Governing Body self-review to be booked in. • JK will take over the induction process. • Use of GovernorHub to help the process, e.g. records of statutory documents. The Key has been purchased by the school and may include GovernorHub as part of the subscription (or at a reduced price). LJ to investigate. • Skills Audit to take place. • Scheme of Delegation to be reconsidered. • Point 5 – some items need to go through FGB not just FPH&S. Minutes of FPH&S go to FGB anyway, but some items need to be highlighted and minuted at FGB e.g. 3-yr financial forecast. • Accounting Officer letter to be shared once a year. <p>Q - Should documents approved by FPH&S be sent out sooner to FGB (prior to FGB papers) to allow more time for questions in advance and avoid answers to questions being dragged into the next meeting?</p> <p>A - In the past the aim has been to condense the number of communications with Governors so that they know when to expect papers and can read everything together. Discussion points must actually be minuted at FGB; questions emailed may not make it into</p>	LJ

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	<p>the FGB minutes. If something can't be answered on the night, the answer can be supplied afterwards by email and added to the minutes before they are published in order to make sure everything is recorded in the right place.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Schedule of Business across all the meetings has been requested, so additional finance agenda items can be included on FGB agendas. • The Terms of Reference also require review. • Overall, this is quite a big project. LJ has committed to completion of all of the above by July 2024. <p>Q - Are there any required timescales? LJ – No, July is acceptable and reasonable.</p> <p>Q – There is one high risk item, the strategy document. What is required here? A - They have looked at the development plan. They think it covers some but not all, e.g. need to include KPIs. School feels it may be more of a formatting issue than a content issue, so tweaks will be made to the SDP to bring it in line with expectations. Governors meet once a year to review the SDP but it hasn't been looked at afresh for five years, so it is due for a revamp this academic year.</p>	LJ
7	<p>Appointment of Auditor LJ reported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Happy with Landau Baker. Working well together and the audit doesn't take over too much operational time at school. • Costs benchmarking took place a couple of years ago. They are at the lower end but have recently been taken over by a larger firm. Costs haven't (yet) risen as a result of this. <p>Governors were happy to continue with the current auditors and recommend this approach to the Members.</p>	
FINANCE		
8	<p>Year End 2022-23 LJ had circulated the final year end figures for 2022-23.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Started with reserves of £1,075,192. • A few figures have changed slightly but very little is different from what was expected. • Funded capital project for LED lighting couldn't take place in the summer due to unavailability of the units, so this was completed at half term. The income for this was received in 2022-23 but the costs came out in 2023-24 so this affects the 	

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	<p>bottom line in 2022-23 year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final utilities costs now known: Electricity £148,106 and Gas £28,414. Gas has been running lower than expected. The new gas contract will be considered at the end of the first quarter to analyse whether costs in the budget for next year are in the right place. • ICT overspend: Works were done over the summer so the forecast has been adjusted for 2023-24 to make sure there is no change in the bottom line over the two years. • Result is a final year end surplus of £228,275. • £41,464 missing expenditure from 2022-23 for the capital project which reduces surplus to £186,811. • As a result of this, reserves have increased to £1,303,468. <p>Income & Expenditure 2023-24</p> <p>LJ had circulated the latest I&E figures for 2023-24.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revaluation of Teacher Pension Fund: Contribution to Teachers’ pensions will increase in April by 5% (from 23.6% to 28.6%). This is understood to be funded, but no details have yet been received so the pension contribution has not been changed in the forecast figures. This will be updated in the new year when more information is known. • Expenditure is currently as expected. • Staffing is 91% of GAG. • 6.5% teacher pay increase has been included. An additional 105,238 for additional increase over budgeted figure. • All staff assumed paying into pension pot but some opt out. Calculations next time – clearer figure. Previously £100k saving. • Electricity £96,661. Gas big increase to £163,730 but were benefiting from a cheap fixed rate previously. Hope for efficiencies to be made here. • ICT overspend – forecast reduced as before. • Forecasting a deficit of £106,469 this year, but this includes the pension contributions which probably won’t be paid out (approx. £100k) and £41,464 capital project expenditure from last year - which is distorting the in-year deficit figure. • £20k of Sixth Form funding will come from pupil growth which school won’t get the benefit from until next year. No additional staffing cost associated with this. • Head of Music salary for full year is in the accounts but this is a worst case scenario so there may be a reduction here. • Forecast reserves are £1,196,999; still a healthy position. <p>Q – Are we happy with a 1.5% reduction in reserves?</p>	

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	<p>A – The Reserves policy has increased to £607,500 to take into account increased salaries. The cost for the reception refurbishment is looking at around £400k, so the forecast reserves figure still leaves some available over that. There is also still some money available in the school fund (c£150k) which is available for use.</p> <p>Q – Could the school fund be used on payroll if necessary? LJ – Yes. There hasn't been any benefit to locking away money until recently. Now there is some benefit, but we need to be clear how much needs to be available for reception. Then we can put some away on the treasury account to take advantage of interest available.</p> <p>EH highlighted two future risks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This year, school is drawing from 210 students in Year 11 (rather than previously 150) for Sixth Form. Hope this will have an impact on numbers in Y12 for September. The break-even for each Sixth Form year group is 100 for courses to be self-sufficient. However, there is current discussion that the Level 3 BTECs (Applied Science, Sport and IT) could be removed from League Tables. In this case, there could be a recruitment issue for Sixth Form for those students who get 4s and 5s at GCSE, as there currently isn't anything to replace them. These students will only be able to do one vocational subject alongside A-Levels instead of two, from September 2025. • SEND funding may be changing, which may impact. Students are in funding bands but details are not yet known. <p>There were no further questions on the accounts.</p>	
9	<p>16-19 Student Support Fund Payments LJ reported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only five applications have been received for bursary funding, despite much encouragement and communication. So, these five will receive a healthy bursary from the pot of £607, paid termly. They have to sign an agreement based on school attendance and attitude to work, which is then monitored throughout the year and receipt of funds depends on positive reports in these areas. <p>Q - Can they spend it on anything? A – Yes. School is not required to police what they spend it on, just that they qualify for the grant based on income levels. It is a grant awarded to support them in their studies.</p> <p>Q - How many of these students are repeat beneficiaries? A - At least one.</p>	

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	Governors approved the five students for this award.	
10	Review of Trustees' 'Musts' from AFH <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LJ had circulated the updated document for 2023-24. • There were no comments or questions and Governors were happy with the document. 	
PREMISES, HEALTH & SAFETY		
11	Premises Report LJ reported: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No CIF bid this year. Reception extension is the priority. • Decarbonisation funding: Funding is not available for PVs, just heat decarbonisation. School has been advised to look at 'rent- a-roof' schemes for PV panels (school benefits from reduction in electricity cost). PVs now last as long as 25 years so this may be a possibility. Alternatively, school could invest in PVs themselves. • 3 boilers are nearing end of life, so a CIF bid could be submitted to replace these, but there is a minimum of £50k per bid so this may have to be built in with a wider project. Alternatively, school could look at applying for decarbonisation funding for heat pumps, but the benefit of installing heat pumps in older buildings needs further research. • Priority at the moment is to use the electricity monitoring system to reduce the electricity being used in school. <p>Q - Why not consider a ground source heat pump, rather than air source?</p> <p>A – We have been advised that they are too expensive and recommended more for brand new buildings. More research on this is needed. The school development plan needs renewal this summer. If one of its objectives is, for example, to become carbon neutral by 2030, school can start working on a more in-depth look into heat pumps, PVs etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Snagging continues on the expansion plan. A new item has been added: When the music extension was built, drainage from reception has been compromised. Bucks have been consulted and the suggestion is to drain the roof from reception onto a neighbouring roof. Currently having to pump the roof regularly. • Kitchen extraction system: Approval from Bucks to install a control system. This requires five days of down time for 	

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	<p>installation so will probably take place in the February half term.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reception extension: Tender packs have been received from three companies out of four approached. One was much higher cost than the other two. A meeting has been scheduled with the two remaining companies to go through figures and assumptions. The price is likely to be about £400k. The final figure will be sent to Governors by email for consideration and approval as school would like to get this built during the spring. <p>Q - What was the previous estimate?</p> <p>A – Approx. £250k but this was over two years ago and building costs have risen sharply.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A list of items completed over October half term had been circulated. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ All interactive screens in tower block have been replaced, which has made a big difference. ○ LED lighting project complete. ○ Glass replaced in fire doors in the tower block. • Priority items for ICT for this year: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Auditing CCTV system as the current system has grown year on year. ○ PC audit in order to prepare a programme for replacement. ○ Second internet line provider is being changed (reduction in cost). Prep being done to ensure smooth transition in January. ○ VR headsets company did a demonstration, but this was underwhelming – so other companies are being considered. ○ A new monitoring and filtering system is being considered to ensure compliance. ○ A phishing campaign run termly to educate staff is showing good results, with 519 occasions when staff correctly identified a potential scam and took no action. <p>Q – The cost of the VR headsets is one aspect, but ongoing cost of using the system needs consideration.</p> <p>A – The ongoing costs from the demonstrating provider were reasonable but the graphics were underwhelming. The impact on students is important.</p> <p>Q – Do you use an external provider for the phishing scheme? How</p>	

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	<p>does this work?</p> <p>A – Yes. Training (emailed) is supplied in short snippets. The phishing campaign looks like a genuine email.</p> <p>There were no further questions from Governors.</p>	
12.1	<p>H&S Termly Visit</p> <p>TG/LJ completed a walkabout last week and the report was circulated.</p> <p>Q – The stairway handrail: Can/should this be fixed?</p> <p>A – There is a handrail on one side but the wall is hollow so cannot take a rail securely. The wall could possibly be filled but this could compromise the stairs due to added weight. Stairs are wide and well lit, not heavily used and there is another staircase that can be used as well. The stairs are carpeted and have one turn and a half landing (not a steep drop) and there have been no issues.</p> <p>LJ to add justification details as above to the audit box and close it off as an issue.</p>	U
12.2	<p>H&S Audit Update</p> <p>LJ reported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All action points now complete. 	
12.3	<p>Risk Register</p> <p>LJ had circulated an updated version of the document, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reserves change Data protection cyber security – additional information added Student numbers: importance of making sure numbers stay up, especially when primary school numbers drop. Sir William Ramsay is joining a MAT and may become a stronger competitor school. More detail on this to be added to the risk register for the next meeting. Curriculum: A-Levels v BTECs issue 	
OTHER MATTERS		
13	Policy Reviews	
13.1	<p>Charging for External Exams</p> <p>The document had been circulated with no changes. Governors had no further comments and approved the policy.</p>	
13.2	<p>Reserves</p> <p>The document had been circulated with figures updated for this year. Governors had no further comments and approved policy.</p>	

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13.3	<p>Retirement</p> <p>The document had been circulated with no changes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3.2.3 – ‘County’ to be removed from Bucks Council. LJ to search to ensure this didn’t appear elsewhere. • Formatting page 6 and footer to be added. <p>Governors approved the policy subject to these changes.</p>	LJ
13.4	<p>Pupil Premium Strategy Statement</p> <p>LJ had circulated the report showing how the PP monies had been spent. This must be published on the website.</p> <p>EH highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are various PP categories based on parental income, LAC/PLAC or service families. • Within that, there are disadvantaged students in receipt of FSM. Progress of that group of students was not good in the summer (P8 figure was -1.14). School recognises that the outcomes of this group of students need to change radically for this summer. <p>Governors approved the statement for website publication.</p>	
14	<p>Teacher Appraisal Report</p> <p>EH had circulated a document and reported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers are on a 6-point payscale, then transition to the upper pay scales which rely on whole school responsibilities and meeting appraisal targets consistently. • Overseas teachers don’t necessarily have British teacher qualifications so are sometimes employed as ‘Unqualified Teachers’ even though they have qualifications and experience in their own country. • 44% progression and 45% not: Does not mean staff failed appraisals; some are at the top of their pay scale. HGSS staff are relatively experienced and some have been at the school for a long time. <p>Q - Do some teachers not want to progress into upper pay scale?</p> <p>A - Most do, but it does mean that staff have to open to having people in your classroom and taking a whole school approach; supporting others with their teaching etc.</p> <p>Q – What is the progression rate for last year for comparison? Is there a link between teachers leaving the school and lack of progression?</p> <p>Last year – 49% progression, 40% not. We are in a recruitment market</p>	

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	<p>where those applying for jobs have greater power than those trying to recruit, especially in English, Maths, Science where competition is strong and schools are offering lots of incentives.</p> <p>Q – Are you offering a competitive package?</p> <p>A – We have adverts out for Head of English. We have fringe allowance which makes us more competitive than other schools in Bucks. We offer the role out internally too. Core subjects (Maths, English and Science) come with a heavy weight of responsibility in terms of whole school performance as they carry between them 6-7 qualifications for each child. Head of Department role in a core subject is a big job. You can't be a Head of English and on the SLT (too big a challenge).</p> <p>Q – Are there fewer people willing to commit to that sort of job these days?</p> <p>A – We are actually in a good place recruitment-wise, but it is really hard to find teachers. Head of Science took a year to find. Recently been successful in History and Business & Economics. Now interviewing for Science roles even without a gap because it takes so long. If we offer more money, it starts to skew all the scales of existing staff.</p>	
15	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>EH – Post-mock exams, disadvantaged students to be reviewed at the next meeting.</p>	EH
16	<p>Date and Time of Next Meeting</p> <p>Wednesday 6th March 2024 at 6.30pm</p>	
17	<p>Evaluation of Meeting</p> <p>Governors confirmed that the meeting was conducted in an open manner and that all governors were invited to participate and contribute to discussions.</p> <p>The meeting closed at 8pm.</p>	

Signed Date

CHAIR