

The Swanage School
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE & PREMISES COMMITTEE
 Wednesday 27 January 2016, 5.30pm

Present: William Knight (Chair), Geoff Atkinson, Tristram Hobson (Headteacher), Steven Parker, Amanda Rowley, Carl Styants, Isobel Tooley

In attendance: Sue Fletcher (Clerk), Katy Kerr (Business Manager)

Item		Action	Lead	Date
FP4.1	Apologies for Absence There were no apologies.			
FP4.2	Declarations of Interest There were no declarations of interest or conflict of interest arising from any agenda item.			
FP4.3	Minutes of the Last Meeting The minutes of the meetings held on 24 November 2015 and 9 December 2015 were confirmed as an accurate record.			
FP4.4	Matters Arising & Actions <u>FP2.5.2i Revised Budget</u> This had been approved at the meeting of the full governing body (FGB) held on 9 December 2015. <u>FP2.5.2v Pupil Premium</u> The statement had been published on the website. <u>FP2.7 External Audit Actions</u> The Clerk and KK confirmed the actions arising from the external audit were in hand. <u>FP2.8 Policies</u> The policies approved at the last meeting (Charging & Letting Policy and Data Protection Policy) had been published on the website. <u>FP 2.10.1 Solar Panels</u> KK informed governors that the Dorset Community Energy Scheme would be able to fund the school for the installation of solar panels. Approval from the committee would be sought once details and contracts had been checked, with installation likely to be Summer 2016. <u>FP3.3 Annual Financial Statement</u>	On agenda	Clerk	March 2016

	The statement of accounts had been approved at the meeting of the FGB on 9 December 2015.			
FP4.5	<p>Reports</p> <p>I. <u>Premises</u></p> <p>KK provided an update on key snagging issues that continue to be the subject of discussion between the school and Kier, in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The wing doors: slamming issues persist and Kier are to propose designs for wind breaks to protect the East and West wing doors from the wind. - Sound-proofing in the music room: a new stud wall is to be erected between the music practice rooms and the drama space, with removal of the existing window between them. A similar solution may be used between the practice room and the music room. - Leaks: Kier had discovered that the leaks on the South and West elevations may be caused by an expansion gap on the wall, rather than by leaking windows as previously thought. <p>Due to the lack of resolution to date of the long-standing snags, the Chair had been in touch with the Education Funding Agency (EFA) to see if they might assist in gaining resolutions from Kier, given that Kier are on the list of approved contractors.</p>			
	<p>2. <u>Business Manager</u></p> <p>i) <u>Annual Accounts Year Ended 31 August 2015</u></p> <p>KK confirmed that the annual accounts and annual accounting return had been submitted to the EFA ahead of relevant deadlines.</p> <p>ii) <u>Budget Monitor</u></p> <p>KK reported that there had been little activity to affect budget variances since the last meeting. In response to questions she clarified that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - supply staff provided by an agency are coded separately to those found and employed directly by the school (codes E26 and E02 respectively). Spend for agency supply staff related to mathematics teaching in the period between a member of staff leaving in December 2015 and the replacement being appointed and in place, anticipated for Summer 2016. A reduction in teaching staff costs for the outgoing teacher would largely offset this; - the negative variance for learning resources (E19) was primarily due to the purchase of a high-spec photocopier. Other items were clustered in this code that were not particularly intuitive as learning resource costs, for example mini-bus fuel and lease, trips & visits and printing. KK offered to circulate a detailed breakdown after the meeting. 			

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the staff absence fund would not be drawn on to any significant extent to cover a period of maternity leave, as 92% of statutory maternity pay can be reclaimed from HMRC, and as the replacement teacher is on a lower pay-grade and therefore less expensive to employ. A science technician had taken a long period of sick leave but, as the absence had been covered internally, only the cost of overtime payments to other staff members would be drawn from the fund. - the cancelled trip to France had been re-booked for December 2016 meaning that the loss to the school would be minimal re-booking and administrative costs rather than a c£3k cancellation loss. <p>iii) <u>Cashflow</u> KK presented a cashflow report, which showed a cash reserve of c£150k at the end of a two year period. She and SP will meet to decide on reserves for a maintenance fund. The Chair noted that it will be several years until the school is in a steady state (with full cohorts in each year) when a sustainable cashflow position will need to have been established.</p> <p>iv) <u>Reportable Accidents</u> There had been no reportable accidents in November and December, although it was agreed one accident requiring the calling of an ambulance would be reviewed to ensure it did not require reporting. Also agreed that AR would review the RIDDOR flowchart at her next health & safety inspection to gain a deeper understanding of what accidents were reportable.</p> <p>v) <u>Student Numbers</u> [This is a confidential minute].</p>	Reserve Funds. On agenda.	SP/KK Clerk	Mar 2016
	<p>3. <u>Responsible Officer</u> SP presented the Committee with a report summarizing his review of the Parent Pay system, conducted over the course of three meetings at the school. He noted that Parent Pay is now the core cash receipt system at the school for payments via bank, cash or cheque and that three income centres are in use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • school meals, where early experience led the school to taking advance payments for a week at a time, thereby enabling better prediction of demand for meals which in turn had reduced waste and increased efficiency; • snack breaks, where the thumb print recorder was used to draw down a pre-paid balance on each student's account; • trips & events, where the groups involved had an account set up for parents to pay. <p>Payments could be made directly via Parent Pay or to the school. Parent Pay transferred payments fortnightly along with a statement of individual transactions. Payments made at the school were received by one member of staff and recorded on the Parent Pay accounts by another. Cash deposits were banked from the takings held in the safe and notified to the Finance team for the bank reconciliation.</p>	Review case. Review RIDDOR.	KK AR	Feb 2016 Jul 2016

	<p>SP noted that the system appeared to be working well, was effective and liked by staff.</p> <p>SP noted that any unpaid accounts would arise from trips & events rather than catering (which was prepaid) and that these would sit on the Parent Pay system and not on the school's financial system. The school would be able to employ a sanction of excluding specific children from future trips if bills remain unpaid, however this would need careful management if the activities were important opportunities for the student concerned. Therefore, there was a potential for bad debts which would need to be written-off in accordance with the financial regulations.</p> <p>The Chair noted that the relevant clause in the financial regulations included a qualifier relating to a time before the academy trust had submitted two years of audited accounts. Now that two years of accounts had been submitted, this clause could be redrafted when the financial regulations are updated.</p> <p>SP was thanked for his review and report.</p>	Redraft without qualifier	SP/KK	Jul 2016
FP4.6	<p>Policies</p> <p>There was a brief discussion on the pros and cons of amalgamating the finance-related policies into one document, and likewise the premises-related policies. Some governors felt this would make such a lengthy document that it would become more difficult to read, although for operational staff it might be easier to have only one document to refer to. It was generally felt that greater differentiation of policies and procedure was desirable, with the former for governors to approve and the latter an operational matter for the leadership team to keep updated. It was agreed that a meeting of the committee chairs could usefully discuss this further.</p> <p>1. <u>Anti-bribery Policy</u> Approved the Anti-bribery Policy. It was confirmed there is a gift register in place and noted that it is the responsibility of the Responsible Officer to check the register, the Business Manager to keep it updated, and the responsibility of individual staff members and governors to report gifts.</p> <p>2. <u>Related Party Transaction Policy</u> Approved</p> <p>3. <u>Fire Evacuation Procedures</u> Approved the Fire Evacuation Procedures, subject to minor amendments as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Para 7 and 9: confirm location of Assembly Point B, replacing reference to Middle School playing field. - Para 12: Replace reference to “change of lesson bells” with “hand bell”. 	<p>Discuss</p> <p>Publish</p> <p>Publish</p> <p>Amend/circulate</p>	<p>Chairs Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p>	<p>April 2015</p> <p>Feb 2016</p> <p>Feb 2016</p> <p>Feb 2016</p>

	<p>4. <u>Health & Safety Policy</u> Approved the Health & Safety Policy, subject to removing the reference to the Governing Body having responsibility for formulating of a health & safety statement since the policy is this (page 1, second bullet point).</p> <p>Governors requested confirmation that they were notified of all overseas trips in accordance with the policy. This was done via the Headteacher's Report for FGB meetings and also published in the weekly school "Bulletin". It was agreed that in future the Premises Manager should be asked to notify AR directly, in her capacity as the link governor for H&S, and for her to have an opportunity to review the risk assessment.</p>	Amend/publish	Clerk	Feb 2016
		Notify GS	KK	Feb 2016
	<p>5. <u>Visitor & Intruder Security Policy</u> There was some discussion of the proposed lock-down procedures and the difficulties that the school would have in alerting staff to a lock-down given the lack of a whole-school bell, intercom, phone or speaker system. Quotes had been received for an intercom/bell system but further options were still being investigated. It was agreed that proposed lock-down procedures be reviewed by the leadership team and revisited by the committee in July 2016, and for now removed from the Visitor & Intruder Security Policy.</p> <p>Approved the Visitor & Intruder Security Policy, subject to removal of the lock-down procedure and replacement of "school gates" with "school premises" (Appendix B, third bullet point).</p> <p>Agreed to consider thumb-printing governors for easier access for out-of-hours meetings.</p>	Review. On agenda	SLT Clerk	Jul 2016 Jul 2016
		Amend/publish	Clerk	Feb 2016
		Thumb-printing	KK	Mar 2016
FP4.7	<p>Income Generating Activities 2014-15 KK explained that the income categories included in her written report reflected EFA categorization as "income generating" despite in some cases making losses, and reported that with the exception of music lessons, the other categories (catering, uniform, transport and trips) were broadly in line with budget expectations. Agreed that in future the income from lettings should be added to this report.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Music lessons: the funding of pupil premium students for one-to-one lessons had been proving costly and so this subsidy had been changed to group lessons. The use of peripatetic music teachers had also been changed from September 2015, with teachers invoicing parents directly except where a pupil premium subsidy applied, in order to reduce complications for the school and prevent the school bearing costs when there is a question over attendance at lessons. - Catering: KK noted that the school is doing its best to minimize catering losses which for 2014-15 stood at c13k. She reported that the uptake for meals is not as high as had been hoped despite the increase in student numbers and noted that despite increased costs for staff and ingredients, the price for a meal had 			

	<p>not been raised. The school were proactive with regard to encouraging eligible students/parents to claim free school meals (FSM) and at present approximately 30 of the 36 eligible student took the meals. Whilst accepting the leadership team's view that catering is unlikely to become a profitable activity, the Chair and other governors were keen to see it break even in the longer term to avoid subsidy from funds that could otherwise be used for educational resources.</p> <p>Agreed that KK would present a report specifically on catering to the next meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Transport: the loss on transport for 2014-15 stood at £1.2k, which had been budgeted and which the committee had previously agreed to bear in order to continue providing the pick up/drop off service. It was recognized that the service will be likely to continue making a loss until such time as the school is full from within the catchment area or Dorset County Council agree to subsidise students from out of catchment travelling to Swanage, as they currently subsidise in the other direction. Pursuing travel subsidy with Dorset CC would require careful consideration however as the outcomes were potentially sensitive, e.g. if subsidy were removed altogether. 	Catering report	KK	Mar 2016
FP4.8	<p>Contracts Review</p> <p>KK provided governors with a summary of current contracts. There had been a substantial increase in the cost of contracts for cleaning and grounds maintenance in 2015-16 compared to 2014-15, which governors questioned, but this was due primarily to 2014-15 having been only a part-year in the building. In the case of cleaning, the greater number of students and increased use of all areas of the building also resulted in higher costs. KK noted that she would meet with the cleaning company for a review and, if it was decided to re-tender the service, consideration would be given to employing in-house cleaners which might prove marginally cheaper but would come with the drawback of increased management and administrative time being required. She confirmed that cleaning costs are not affected by out-of-hours lettings, since Schools Plus are responsible for cleaning in relation to these.</p> <p>A number of additional contracts not on the report were identified – for example, gas and electricity maintenance, phone/broadband maintenance, risk pooling insurance and Schools Plus – and KK would circulate an updated copy of the report with these included, along with contract end dates.</p>	Update/circulate	KK	Feb 2016
FP4.9	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>[This is a confidential minute].</p>			
FP4.10	<p>Confidentiality</p> <p>A commercially sensitive item raised under Any Other Business was deemed confidential. An update on the students on roll has also been treated confidentially.</p>			
FP4.11	<p>Next Meeting/s</p> <p>Full Board of Governors – Wednesday 10 February 2016</p>			

	<p>Finance & Premises Committee – Tuesday 8 March 2016</p> <p>Provisional agenda items for next meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - School Development Plan: mid-year review - EFA funding allocation - Insurance - IT annual report & plan, and IT register - Tainted Donations Policy and Freedom of Information Policy - Solar panels - Reserve funds - Catering 			
--	---	--	--	--