

The Swanage School
MEETING OF THE STAFFING, FINANCE & PREMISES COMMITTEE

Held on Wednesday 20th March 2024, 5.30pm

Minutes

Present: Tanya Hamilton- Fletcher (Chair), Isobel Tooley, William Knight, Amanda Rowley

In attendance: Andrew Thomas (Business Manager), Sarah Percival (Clerk)

Item		Action	Lead	By
SFP 4.1	Apologies for Absence Apologies were received from Tim Marcus, Dan Parker, Claire Barnes and Jenny Maraspin			
SFP 4.2	Declarations of Interest There were no declarations of interest			
SFP 4.3	Minutes of the Last Meeting The minutes and confidential minutes of the meeting held on 7 th February 2024 were APPROVED, subject to a minor correction.			
SFP 4.4	Matters Arising & Actions (where not on the agenda) Mental Health training for staff- The Safeguarding link governor has met the new Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who will update at the next meeting.	Report to next meeting	DSL/ THF	Summer I
	SFP 2.6- Leavers & Starters- this check of governors' information is now included in the annual plan. The Chair queried the DBS renewal process, which is not consistent			
	SFP 3.4 Admissions policy to be updated	Update and publish	Clerk	Summer I
	SFP 3.7 Encourage healthier eating, balanced with less single-use plastics and keeping the kitchen viable.	Breakdown on canteen costs/ healthy eating	AT	Summer I
	FINANCIAL MATTERS			
SFP 4.5	Business Manager's Reports Budget:			

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The report shows the beginnings of overspending due to the cost of staff absence and the cost of cover. However, all unnecessary expenditure is being curbed and the recent Teaching Assistant vacancy is not being filled in order to help control the budget. Two senior members of staff are leaving and the replacements will be on lower pay scales. • The 5% increase in TPS employer contributions was not known when the budget was planned. The government is going to publish a formula for compensation so the school will get a top-up payment when the increase happens. This will not cover the whole shortfall but it will be manageable. • Within the budget, there is a reserves fund for prolonged staff absence, capped at £24k a year. This will be used and the reserves built up again over the next few years. • Cash reserves are beginning to be depleted due to the purchase of Chromebooks for Y7 and the LED lighting in the sports hall. • Further capital expenditure will be put on hold, except for essentials, such as health & safety items. • An ongoing fund is needed for Y7 Chromebooks, as their lifespan is 5 years. <p>SEN Additional Funding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amanda Davis, Corporate Director of Learning & Education with Dorset Council, was very impressed with the school on her recent visit. The issue the school faces with underfunding for SEN was discussed. • The SENCo has produced a very detailed costing of the provision needed for these pupils: £150k, against budget of £50k, showing that it is not possible for the school to provide the support needed. • Amanda Davis has advised that the school has a good case for applying for additional funding to cover costs this year, which is to be taken to a strategic panel within Dorset Council. • This item was deemed confidential. • The Business Manager (AT) reiterated that it was only a potential opportunity in early stages of discussions and suggested that the SENCo could come to the next meeting to explain further. 	<p>Provide report on additional SEN funding possibilities</p>	<p>SENCo</p>	<p>Summer I</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The committee were informed that Student Committee had expressed a need for an additional Teaching Assistant (TA) as the SENCo was under immense pressure; there is not enough TA support for our provision; this impacts lessons which affects the teachers and student. The school needs to reach its full complement of TAs as soon as possible so any shortfall funding available from Dorset should be used. • There are no plans to recruit another TA before September, until the school gets any additional funding, but AT assured the committee that the Head was managing the situation. 			
SFP 4.6	<p>Review of Income Generating Activities: Reports were provided in the meeting pack which covered the following: <u>Lettings:</u> It was noted that, although numbers were slightly disappointing, they are improving. The lettings team now have other roles in school so they are double-tasking while on site for lettings, making this a more efficient role. <u>Canteen:</u> points raised include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Profit should have increased after the till price rises, but this was offset by food inflation. • The catering staff are competent and work hard to get the best deals available, while still being ethical. There is only a small amount of wastage. • Free meals for visitors and staff are limited and all recorded. Staff are entitled to one free meal a week. • Catering staff on minimum wage will have 10% pay increase in April. Staff costs will increase more than inflation. • Prices need to increase to make the catering viable. • Good food has a positive effect on behaviour and attendance, as well as social relationships. This should be taken into account when considering the loss made. • The overheads of gas/ electricity are an uncountable cost. <p><u>Transport:</u> making a small loss, but there are 3 minibuses with 48 pupils using daily transport. There are now more students from out of the area, so the provision is needed. The IT technician is now also a minibus driver. <u>School Trips-</u> the loss made is due to the number of Pupil Premium students, who receive a 30% discount.</p>			

	<p>Pricing for 2024-25: after discussion, the following increases were agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lettings- 7.5% • Transport- 5% • Catering- 10% 			
	STAFFING MATTERS			
SFP 4.7	<p>Data Protection The report was provided in the meeting pack. There were no concerns.</p>			
SFP 4.8	<p>Policies The following policies were discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TSS Pay Policy- APPROVED • TSS Business & Critical Incident Plan- this was APPROVED, subject to the agreed inclusion on the front page 'See separate document for lockdown procedure' and the correction on p5. • TSS Cash Handling Policy- it was noted that the changes requested at the last meeting had been made- APPROVED 	Include changes and publish	Clerk	Summer I
SFP 4.9	<p>Staffing The report was deferred to the next meeting due to the Head's absence. The following were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 senior members of staff are leaving. One has requested an exit interview which is arranged with 2 governors. • An English teacher has been recruited but maternity cover is still needed- there are 2 candidates lined up. • The governors would like to see a detailed breakdown of staff absence with the cost of cover. • A staff member with recurring absence has politely been made aware of how much time they have been off. • Good cover for Science has been arranged but there have not been any applications for the permanent position. • The governors were concerned about arrangements for the Attendance Lead next term, as the current one is leaving. 	Updates on attendance, staff absence, recruitment & temperature check following staff survey	JM	Summer I

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dorset Council have a pilot planned for a shared attendance officer which the school is applying for: the funding would be £20k and there would be a shortfall as the costs would be £30k. Solutions are being looked into, such as the possibility of an attendance officer also working as careers officer to potentially get top up funding from the LEP. 			
	PREMISES & INFRASTRUCTURE			
SFP 4.10	<p>Dorset Council – Health & Safety SLA Review The report was included in the meeting pack. AT reported that the actions had been RAG rated and are being worked through. The level of detail is high and minor points have been raised: it was good to have external reassurance. Most of the actions are not critical and the costs are being managed. Some will be covered at the next INSET session. The link governor for Health & Safety is to give a review of the recommended actions- deferred to next meeting.</p>	Provide review of actions	DP	Summer 1
SFP 4.11	<p>Building & Premises Strategic Sub Group <u>Lockdown & site security:</u> AT reported that John Bird of Rider, Lebett & Bucknall, a national company of school surveyors and architects, is coming to do a free assessment of the site as the school has a good chance of securing some ESFA funding. A CIF bid will then be submitted at the end of 2024, to include all the issues regarding security fencing and lockdown system. The cost is likely to be around £100k and any match funding from the school would greatly increase the chance of a successful bid. It was suggested the school would need to contribute at least £20k. All the issues with security and intruders have been logged with the police to support the bid. It was suggested that additional funding might be brought in if one of the ideas discussed under SFP 4.5 came to fruition, but AT explained this was an embryonic idea and would not bring in extra funding for the building.</p> <p><u>IT Infrastructure & Security:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> QuoStar made a presentation at the last meeting. The IT Link governor would like to improve cybersecurity. Cyber Essentials is to 	Report progress to next meeting	AT	Summer 1

	<p>be embedded in every piece of equipment across the school and Multi Factor Authentication is to be introduced. AT met with QuoStar last week and they are producing a report with costings as both a strategic adviser and also to support the school in writing a significant bid for the work to go to open tender.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This item was deemed confidential. • It was noted that the school's IT technician is developing well and could take on more in the future. 			
SFP 4.12	<p>Any Other Business The Chair thanked the Business Manager for his considerable input this meeting. The risk register needs to be reviewed before the next Audit & Risk committee meeting. Two new risks were added by Student Committee, which need to be assessed by SFP.</p>	Review at next meeting. Send new risks to Chair	Clerk	Summer 1
SFP 4.13	<p>Confidentiality Items 4.5 and 4.11 were deemed confidential</p>			
	<p>The meeting closed at 7.25pm. The next meeting will be held on 15th May 2024 5.30pm To include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health Training for staff- report from new DSL • Policies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Finance Procedures – Data protection – Health & Safety • Staffing report, to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – A temperature check following the staff survey findings – Staff absence update, breakdown & cost of cover – Recruitment update • Risk Register review 			

