

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE OF ST MATTHEW'S GOVERNING BODY, HELD AT SCHOOL ON WEDNESDAY, 11TH FEBRUARY, 2015 AT 6.15 P.M.

Present: Kevin Blencowe (Chair), Lucy Walker, Sarah Ransome, Joanna Dean, Zoe Thorn, Melissa Hatcher, Tony Davies (Headteacher), Anne Maskell (Clerk)

1. Apologies for absence

ACTION

Apologies for absence were accepted from Sam Wilkes Read and Adrian Strowger.

2. Declaration of pecuniary interests

Governors present had no additional interests to declare relating to items on today's agenda.

3. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising

Minutes

The minutes of the last meeting, held on 13th November, 2014, were agreed with the following amendments:

Item 11

- The LA officer consulted by Zoe was Stuart (not Shane) Wood.
- Jo felt that her viewpoint regarding the school's legal obligation was not adequately represented in the minutes and it was agreed that the relevant sentence be amended to 'Martin felt a certain level of risk was acceptable. Jo said that she felt the school was not meeting its obligations under the Education and Inspections Act 2006, which stated it has 'a legal duty to promote wellbeing of all children and young people and a ... legal duty to ensure the safety of all children and young people, encourage good behaviour and to prevent all forms of bullying.'

Item 16

- To be amended to 'AOB items should be notified to Kevin **before the start of the meeting**'.

Matters arising

- Remedial work to deal with high temperatures in classrooms. The LA has agreed to all three proposals and we are now pushing to establish a timescale. They may be able to undertake the work before the summer holidays if it can be completed without undue disruption. It was agreed that we should aim to have clarification before the March FGB.

Tony

- Playground development. The PTA has agreed to fund the cost of installing a Trim Trail and Adrian has had preliminary sketches done – these will need further refinement. It may be possible to have the Trim Trail in place by Easter unless it needs to be scheduled alongside other work in the summer holidays. The MUD team met The Arts Council last week and should get some steer as to funding soon. Lucy

said that she hopes to work with them on the next stage of the project, and will look into supplementary funding from Section 106. It is hoped to have the larger of the pieces commissioned by MUD in place during the summer holidays and it may be appropriate to schedule this work to be done at the same time as the Trim Trail and replacement of the grass. We have had a quote of £10K for putting in safety surfaces and Astro turf.

- Online payments. Although we now have online access to our bank account, the facility for parents to make online payments is not yet in place. Adrian hopes to find out more from the Finance Forum he is attending today.

- Personalization of policies. Tony distributed a paper summing up the action that had been taken. There are no substantial amendments which affect our current practice. Governors agreed that it would be good to review the induction process for new governors- a school- specific checklist would be particularly useful. Zoe agreed to take this forward.

Zoe

- Tony has investigated whether the school can commit to paying the Living Wage to all its staff, but unfortunately we are bound by the LA's locally levelled and agreed job descriptions and rates of pay, and they have not registered with the Living Wage Foundation. The Head of EPM is currently talking to the LA about this. The only staff affected at St Matthew's would be our Midday Supervisors and the cost of paying them all at the Living Wage would be an additional £1,500 per annum.

- Procedures for meetings. Further to discussion at the last meeting, it was felt that circulating a draft agenda two weeks before meetings for general comment would not be feasible. It was agreed that agenda items for the next meeting would be a standing agenda item, and any further suggestions should be sent to Kevin a week before the agenda is circulated.

All

- Playground supervision. Tony said that he had, as requested, reviewed the risk assessment and health and safety policy in the light of previous discussions and did not feel that either needed further revision. Jo said that she had looked again at the LA audit report from 2011 and thought that they should be asked to repeat this visit. Governors supported this proposal, subject to clarification of any costs involved. Tony will follow this up with Stuart Wood. It was pointed out that if parents raise any concerns about issues in the playground this should be reported as soon as possible to Tony or another member of staff without delay so that they can be addressed quickly.

Tony

4. Review of January Budgetary Control Report

Copies of the January BCR had been distributed with the agenda. The forecast variance is £23,615 which is higher than expected, largely due to additional recruitment required to support children with SEN and medical needs. This expenditure was approved by governors at the last meeting. The likely end-of-year position, dependant on budgetary pressures in the remaining two months, looks set to be a deficit of £54,373. Tony's accompanying report looked in detail at spending within the differing cost centres – the erratic billing for utilities continues to be a problem and has resulted in a forecast variance of £11,000. This also makes it difficult to accurately budget for utilities in the next financial year.

5. Budgetary predictions for 2015-16

Copies of the draft funding statement for the next financial year, as at 23rd January, 2015, had been circulated with the agenda for today's meeting for governors' information. Putting these figures into the current budget-setting toolkit (we have yet to receive the next

financial year's toolkit) enables us to generate a three-year prediction. The figures for years 2 and 3 are unlikely to be very accurate, but it does give an indicative carry-forward figure of £50K for the end of the next financial year. This is a very rough initial estimate, especially as we do not yet have the budget setting toolkit for the next financial year in place. Our budgetary allocation overall is up by c £200K (£35K of this is to fund our additional Year 4 class). Detailed budgetary planning with our SFA Ray Byford will be undertaken in due course before a draft budget is presented to governors.

6. Planning for the next SDP

Tony said that there are particular financial pressures relating to staffing, particularly our TA structure and staffing of the school office, which will need to be run through the budget-setting toolkit in due course. There will be a need to exercise caution however as the continuation of certain areas of funding is not yet clear. Tony said that he had just started working on a curriculum development questionnaire for teachers to identify key resourcing issues – R.E. and I.C.T. have already been flagged up. Our current classroom laptops are in need of updating and a rolling replacement programme will be included in budgetary planning. The next stage will be for teachers to share the results of the questionnaires with each other so that an audit of current resources can be carried out.

7. Draft Charging and Remissions Policy

Copies of the draft policy had been distributed with papers for today's meeting. There is no substantial difference from our previous policy. Governors asked about the wording of item 1 which relates to music lessons as it does not specifically mention Cambridgeshire Music. Tony said that the current wording had been suggested by Cambridgeshire Music; although they currently deliver music tuition in school we are not obliged to use them and could change to another provider. We currently use some of our pupil premium money to fund music lessons for children who are registered as eligible. We have just been advised that we are able to charge parents for additional hours in our Nursery over and above the 15 government-funded hours. We may need to add something into the policy to cover this in due course. The policy was formally agreed by governors. It will be reviewed every three years unless there is a significant change in practice.

8. Staffing update

Mark Wellington has requested to reduce his working days to four per week and this has been agreed. Liza Benazet, who is currently working three days per week in Reception, will reduce her hours at her request and cover the additional day in Year 3. Kate Spencer-Allen will increase her class-teaching days in Reception to four per week and Mary Henry, a regular supply teacher who the children know well, will cover the other day. We have been struggling to recruit a Nursery teacher and our current temporary member of staff leaves at the end of March. We have just held another recruitment drive which has resulted in no suitable candidates coming forward. We may need to make another temporary appointment and look at agency candidates. Tony said that the LA is attempting to address the recruitment difficulties in Cambridge by organizing a Cambridgeshire recruitment website which would also help with recruitment costs. Jo said she knew of a school where parents had produced a glossy brochure in a more pro-active approach and this had been very effective. Sarah said she thought the school had agreed to try to avoid 4:1 splits in class teaching and keep to 3:2. Tony said he did agree with this in principle but he had sought EPM advice, and it is difficult to refuse a request unless we can cite strong business reasons, i.e. difficulty in recruitment, which

would not have been justified in this case as we had a candidate keen to undertake the extra day. Communication between job-share partners continues to be of paramount importance.

9. E Comms update

Tony reported that we are almost ready to launch E Comms. There has been a technical issue with SagePay and Dinner Money which it is hoped will be resolved shortly. Jo and Sarah will test the online payment system with small payments soon. Adrian will contact them after half term. Jo said she is already a user of SagePay so it might also be helpful to test it with someone who is a new user. The current plan is for it to go live in the week beginning 9th March and Tony will launch it at Meet the Head on Friday, 13th March. New E forms are being designed which will enable parents to send back replies more easily. The first draft of the website is nearly ready – Tony showed this to governors –and there is a plan to have a protocol in place for parent/teacher communication. It is also proposed to issue newsletters fortnightly in future.

Adrian

Thanks to Sam and other governors for exploring the various options for the new system.

10. Agenda items for next meeting (Thursday, 30th April)

Draft budget

Financial benchmarking exercise to compare our spending with schools of similar size and demographics.

Final report from auditor.

E Comms Policy/E Safety Policy (Tony and Sam have previously discussed, now needs further discussion with ICT Co-ordinator Jess Hurst)

Approval of EPM charges for next financial year.

Other items for FGB meetings:

Changes to Home/School Agreement in the light of E Safety updating.

Health-related behaviour survey – action plan prepared by Ruth Platt.

Next parent questionnaire (to go out in summer term)

Safeguarding

Mechanism for feeding back from training undertaken