



Gusford Primary School

The *Active Learning* Trust

“Promoting Achievement and Success”

**Meeting of Finance and Property Committee
held on Monday 9th November 2015, 5.30pm
(rescheduled from 19th October 2015)**

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| Present: | Mr Gavin Fisk (Chair) | GF |
| | Mr Roland Fothergill | RF |
| | Mr Colin Tapscott | CT |
| | Ms Marilyn Toft | MT |
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| In Attendance: | Mrs Toni Cornish (Clerk) | TC |
| | Mr Richard Marlow (Bursar) | RM |
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| No. | Item | Explanation | Who | Time |
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| 1. | Apologies: | Given and noted above. | | |
| 2. | Confirmation of Minutes and Matters Arising from the last meeting | | | |
| | | The minutes of the previous meeting held on 15 th June 2015 were reviewed. The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting. | | |
| 3. | Matters Arising | | | |
| | <u>Minutes from meeting 15th June 2015</u> | | | |
| | <u>Item 3 – Financial Controls Manual</u> | – CT confirmed that he would raise issues regarding suppliers linked to the school with Gary to review charges for goods and services on a case by case basis. | | |
| | <u>Item 6 - Charging Policy</u> | – RM confirmed the hiring of school facilities is covered under the Risk Protection Arrangement (RPA) for academy trusts, which is an alternative to insurance where UK government funds cover losses that arise however, this does not cover vehicles. | | |
| | <u>Item 8 – Health and Safety Update</u> | – Security of gates was discussed and it has been agreed to install 6ft high metal gates with adjoining fencing to prevent entry from the side of building and to ensure children are not able to leave the premises unauthorised or unaccompanied. The gates will be coded, staff will be aware of this code and access to emergency vehicles will not be affected. CT drew a diagram for Governors to explain the positioning of these gates. RM confirmed a quote is awaited for these works. | | |
| | <u>Health and Safety Manager</u> | - MT confirmed this was discussed by ALT who agreed this position would be a valuable asset for schools to share the cost. However, at this stage there were no funds available from schools to finance this position. | | |

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| 4. | Opportunity to declare an interest on any item on the agenda | | |
| | No interests were declared | | |
| 5. | Policy Review | | |
| | Scheme of Delegation - Governors noted this document was listed for review June 2015. RM confirmed the Record of Financial Responsibility contained within this document was amended with those points agreed at the FGB meeting held on 5th October 2015. RM confirmed there had been no further changes from ALT. Governors noted these amendments and TC agreed to update the policy review schedule. | | |
| | Actions Agreed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TC to update policy review schedule with above policy. | TC | |
| 6. | Finance Update | | |
| | <p>Approval of Whole School Budget 15/16 - Not applicable to this meeting. The Whole School Budget 15/16 was approved at the FGB at the end of the last academic year.</p> <p>Outturn Report (Management Report) - Circulated by RM ahead of the meeting. RM reported the school were two months into the financial year and this report has been forecast appropriate to spending to date. RM highlighted to Governors the estimated c/f from last year was approximately £145,000, better than the previous estimated figure.</p> <p>MT questioned why there was such a difference. RM confirmed last year they budgeted a deficit but predicted expenditure was lower and income higher. CT confirmed when the deficit figure was presented, there was a need to check calculations in relation to staff pension payments etc. but confirmed this figure is accurate. CT explained how the school bank accounts operate a system whereby the bank account maintains a regular balance of £10,000; any monies above this are automatically transferred into a savings account. This means it takes longer when reconciling two bank balances.</p> <p>GF asked RM to expand on why there was this process of transferring money into savings. RM explained this was due an expectation to the higher interest rate generated within a savings account however, this rate is the same in both accounts and believes ALT plan to close this account in the future and retain just the one bank account. RM/CT confirmed they will be revisiting the budget to discuss fund allocations and we could ring fence monies for future years to spend on premises.</p> <p>MT questioned what figure should be held in reserve. CT confirmed this figure should ideally be 3% (approximately £50,000/£60,000).</p> <p>GF felt there was a variation in the forecast carry forward figures and questioned whether Governors or the school should be doing anything further to ensure these figures are accurate, i.e. cash flow forecasting, auditing.</p> <p>CT explained the following:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ALT had discussed a plan to change costs centres but due to the change in ALT personnel this had not occurred. This had unfortunately caused delays whilst we waited for this to be confirmed. • The use of PS Financials had not always been easy to track movements made by central ALT staff or get swift communication on this under the previous ALT finance adviser. CT's discussion with the new ALT head of finance indicated that central movements would not be happening and would be passed onto the school. | | |

This will make it easier to track movements. CT confirmed accounts are regularly audited.

- Cash flow forecasts accurately reflected the bank balance.

RM explained staffing expenditure is higher than budget at present, particularly admin. These staffing figures are produced using Oravia and PSF systems and there is a need to have faith in the system that these figures are correct, although we will be checking this.

GF asked RM/CT to expand on the anticipated changes to cost centres and the expectations that these were going to change and whether the aim in the future is for Gusford to make changes in preparation for next year to alleviate any problems.

RM confirmed these cost centres had been standardised as directed by ALT however, these changes had not transpired through ALT and the school had to revert to old cost centres. It is felt that ALT is now allowing schools to manage cost centres for themselves.

MT questioned whether the ALT processes are now more secure/robust. CT stated it was early days, ALT staffing changes had recently taken place and it would be difficult to answer at this stage. RM confirmed he has confidence with ALT that these changes have been put in place. RM explained they need to have greater confidence with staffing expenditure as this is higher than budget, particularly admin. These staffing figures are produced using ALT systems and there is a need to have faith in the system that these figures are correct.

RF questioned whether the FET team increase in costs is listed under admin. CT confirmed these are and this could explain the increase however, further work would be needed to confirm if this is the case.

RF questioned whether the forecast admin figure of £164,853 is likely to increase. RM confirmed this figure has been forecast using the figure for expenditure based on the past two months.

RF questioned why the Pupil Premium figure of £201,120 was listed as higher than anticipated. CT explained this was the final amount allocated, although the earlier figure had been £183,000.

MT questioned what areas are covered under general office costs (page 5 GPS 5145 £19,424) which was showing a £17,422.39. RM explained this can contain many elements and includes money spent with premier sport which is an expensive commitment, shown on the system as full years spend (£8,500 for this terms provision spent so far). **RF questioned whether a proportion of PP comes out of this.** CT explained how PP money is spent across many different areas which can cause difficulty when tracking. Some of this expenditure is also sponsored by Sports Premium and parent income from clubs etc. This is tracked using a separate spreadsheet though.

RF highlighted the HR/Payroll costs and questioned whether these were separate from ALT costs. RM confirmed this figure is for Education Personnel Management (EPM) and is not part of the 4% sponsor income (GPS 1150) payable to ALT. CT confirmed free advice is received from Jan Steele as part of this payment.

CT thanked RM for his fantastic efforts, juggling both his new/old roles as well as training his replacement Deborah Campbell. Governors noted the excellent work RM has completed with producing figures. RM thanked Governors and confirmed Deborah is settling in well, has lots of experience within schools and provides valuable support to him.

Virement Report - There were no virements at this stage for Governors to approve.

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| | RM confirmed any re-budgeting made would be emailed to all members of Finance and Property Committee and will be discussed with all Governors at the next FGB meeting schedule for 7th December 2015. | | |
| 7. | Health & Safety Action | | |
| | <p>GF reported that due to the pressures with the uploading of the budget, as detailed above, the planned annual internal H&S inspection will be scheduled prior to Christmas.</p> <p>CT confirmed there had been two incidents this term.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A child had activated the fire alarm button. The evacuation went very smoothly however, a few areas were highlighted which will require tightening. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Although speed was good, more high visibility jackets were needed to allow swift identification of fire marshalls. ○ Each class now has their own clipboard containing a register for each teacher to collect in the event of an emergency situation. ○ A meeting has been planned to discuss the implementation of these changes. RM or Deborah will attend training at another school. <p><u>MT questioned whether the school were able to see what had triggered the alarm.</u></p> <p>CT confirmed the alarm system allows identification of where the alarm was triggered and further investigation ascertained the nature of this. CT reported feedback from Parent Council was that they were pleased a notification had been received that there was a false alarm. RF confirmed feedback from parents was that there was good communication following the incident.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● CT reported the second incident involved the Police when an offender, being pursued by the police, threw a package over the school fence. A member of staff was in the vicinity allowing swift containment of area and a Police dog identified the package. A full sweep of the grounds was made by Police and staff to ensure the safety of children before they were allowed out. The offender at no point entered the premises, albeit his foot came through the fence. The fence has since been repaired. At the time of the incident the children were not outside. CT was swift to send an urgent communication via ParentMail to ensure parents were informed and that the incident was not exacerbated <p><u>GF spoke of the wooden external play area which has been taped off but that children are still playing on the equipment after school.</u> RM explained that a beam is rotten on one of the pieces of equipment, flagged during an annual risk assessment and a quote for repair is awaited. CT assured Governors children are not playing on this equipment during the school day when staff are present. It was agreed RM would ask the Premises Manager to cordon off the area with orange fencing and to clearly signpost why the area has been taped off. This will also be published in the school newsletter.</p> | | |
| | <p><u>Actions Agreed:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● RM to ask Premises Manager to cordon off wooden play area with fencing/add a sign/publish in newsletter. | RM/CT | |
| 8. | Income Generation | | |
| | RM confirmed the Solar panels have been installed. These will not generate any additional income but will reduce electricity bills which has been taken into account within the school budget. The installation went well and an invoice has been sent direct to SCC from Inviron for £47,000. There will be no cost implication for Gusford. GF noted this was a good time to have panels installed due to the planned reduction in | | |

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| | Government Grants for these projects. | | |
| 9. | Premises Matters | | |
| | <p>Grounds Maintenance - RM reported the service provided by Suffolk County Council Grounds Maintenance was unsatisfactory and they were not fulfilling the terms and conditions of their contract. The school grounds were untidy and scruffy in appearance. Various excuses have been received by SCC, manpower, SCC broken equipment. As a result of this, RM gave notice of cancellation of their contract (6 months). Quotes have been received from Ipswich Borough Council for grounds maintenance, much cheaper than SCC. RM obtained two quotes from IBC, one of which included them to commence within the SCC cancellation period. The annual costs for 16/17 were considerably less and RM was more confident that IBC have greater ability within providing a service and able would be able to manage any manpower issues. The specification was the same as SCC. RM reported the only area which requires clarification is the frequency of the field being cut (every week during summer). However, if this figure was to cost an additional £500, it would still be cheaper than SCC. <u>MT questioned whether the specification is fit for purpose.</u> RM confirmed it was and no additional works are required.</p> <p>Governors noted SCC were not fulfilling their contract and were in agreement with a new contract with IBC.</p> <p><u>RF had noticed the hedgerows were untidy.</u> CT confirmed these are budgeted to be pruned once a year but could be increased on an as and when required basis.</p> <p><u>GF noted there was an untidy area within the school grounds which children cannot access, previously maintained by Mrs Matson, and could benefit from improvement perhaps as an extra club area for growing vegetables or somewhere to eat their lunch with benches/pergola.</u> The area currently contains a pond and different levels and GF felt this would be an opportunity for the groundsmen to develop. MT suggested using for outdoor learning. CT confirmed they were already incorporating this in other areas however; RM could explore having this area cleared. CT acknowledged these positive ideas however, with the pressures on staff at the moment; they would not be able to maintain these projects. It was agreed CT would approach staff and ask for their ideas.</p> <p>RF reported that the shingle outside Brookside was a positive addition. RM explained a trench was dug, a porous pipe laid, back filled and covered in shingle to allow drainage which has helped.</p> | | |
| | <p>Actions Agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CT to approach staff for ideas to develop unused area of ground. | CT | |
| 10. | Any other business | | |
| | Governors noted there were vacancies on the Governing Body. CT agreed to follow up. | | |
| | <p>Actions Agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CT to follow up Governing Body vacancies. | CT | |
| 11. | Date and time of next meeting | | |
| | The next meeting is scheduled for 7th March 2016, 5.30pm. | | |

The meeting closed at 19:05pm

Minutes Agreed

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____