



ST ALBAN'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Love one another as I have loved you

MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE ASSETS COMMITTEE

15 JUNE 2021 at 1915 hours

PARTICIPANTS: John McDonald [Headteacher]
 Kevin Doogan [Chair]
 Pat Duprey [Vice Chair]
 Pat Higgins
 Bernie Mooney

Non-participants: Peter Matthews, Bridget Pullen

In attendance: Eileen Coyle, Minute taker

KEVIN DOOGAN in the CHAIR

1 WELCOME, AND APOLOGIES FOR NON-PARTICIPATION

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Assets Committee.
The absences of Peter Matthews and Bridget Pullen were noted.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Governors declared that there were no changes to the Declarations of Interest made at the Governors' meeting on 30 September 2020.

Having reviewed the agenda, the Governors confirmed that they had no personal, financial, contractual or prejudicial interest in any item on the agenda for to-day's meeting.

3 CONFIDENTIALITY

The Governors agreed to maintain confidentiality in relation to all matters discussed at this meeting.

4 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ASSETS COMMITTEE on 23 FEBRUARY 2021.

The Headteacher shared a screenshot of the minutes.

PROPOSED by Kevin Doogan, **SECONDED** by Pat Duprey, and unanimously -

RESOLVED: To confirm that the minutes of the Assets Committee on 23 February 2021 are a true and accurate record of the meeting.

5 MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE ASSETS COMMITTEE ON 18 MAY 2021.

PROPOSED Kevin Doogan, **SECONDED** by Pat Higgins, and unanimously -

RESOLVED: To confirm that the minutes of the extraordinary meeting of the Assets Committee on 18 May 2021 are a true and accurate record of the meeting.

6 MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

6.1 ASSETS COMMITTEE: 23 FEBRUARY 2021.

RECRUITMENT OF DEPUTY HEADTEACHER: Due to the failure of two candidates to meet all the requirements, a decision had been made not to proceed to the interview stage but to re-advertise the post in September.

RECRUITMENT OF BUSINESS MANAGER: The post is currently being advertised with a closing date of 5 July 2021.

TAs – RESTRUCTURING. To be discussed in the part two confidential meeting.

6.2 EXTRAORDINARY MEETING 18 MAY 2021.

The completed SFVS had been signed by the Chair of Governors and submitted to the LA before the due date. No feedback has been received from the LA.

7 DELEGATED BUDGET: BURSAR' S REPORT

The Headteacher had forwarded electronically a copy of the bursar's report to the Committee in advance of the meeting.

He commented -

7.1 BUDGET OUTTURN 2020/21: The financial year 2020/21 ended with a healthy in-year balance of **£121,741 Credit** carried forward to 2021/22.

7.2 BUDGET PROJECTIONS: The Committee needed to be aware that a modest **deficit of £15,675** is predicted at year end 2022/23, with a substantial **deficit of £100,518**, being projected for the financial year 2023/24, increasing to a **deficit of £175,620**, at the end of 2024/25.

To address the deficits, a policy of recruiting staff on fixed term temporary contracts is in place and consideration is to be given to the possibility of reducing the number of classes.

The Chair commented that although the size of the budget is pretty good and the overall picture looks good, historically, it has always been difficult to predict what will happen going forward. He agreed that the Headteacher was taking a sensible approach to recruitment.

The Headteacher continued that some of the issues are concerned with uncertainty around future pupil numbers. Schools across Wirral, and beyond, are facing pressures in managing their budgets, with some having large deficits going forward.

The Committee would note from the Headteacher's report to the Governing Board that pupil premium children have increased by around 20%, with an increase around 31% in the number of children eligible for free school meals. A few years ago, the pupil premium grant was about £58,000; last year it was £145,226, and in the current year it has more than doubled to £160,675.

7.3 BUDGET SETTING 2021/22: The Headteacher drew the attention of the Committee to variations in the budget as follows:

SAVINGS:

STAFFING: Two experienced teachers had left and replaced by one NQT. [Thus reducing the current year's budget for teachers from estimated an £1,010,511 to £946,858.]

A TA had left and not been replaced.

The APT&C budget had reduced in current year to reflect an unfilled vacancy.

INCREASES:

PREMISES: Cleaning materials budget increased from £2,250 to £4,000 to reflect additional cleaning due to Covid-19.

SUPPLIES AND SERVICES. Equipment. Classroom supplies increased from £25,000 to £30,000 to cover the additional costs of implementing the new curriculum.

EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS. Nil budget. £17,000 spent on accelerated reader, Maths Wiz

TEXT BOOKS [for Singapore Maths] increased by £1000 to £7000.

SOFTWARE AND ON LINE LICENCES: Budget £12,500 increased to £20,00 to cover the cost of new software for remote learning.

PROFESSIONAL FEES/PUPILS. Budget £20,000 increased to £30,000 for curriculum enrichment, pupil wellbeing and English and Maths consultancies.

THIRD PARTY EXPENDITURE: Courses, staff training expenditure increased from budget of £10,000 to £25,000, for SLT and middle leadership training and resources.

A Governor advised that it was important to make sure there is enough money in the budget to support the staff.

The Headteacher stated that the school had purchased a package on staff workload and wellbeing which was quite unique.

RESOLVED: To -

- i. **recommend that the Governing Board approves the budget set for 2021/22 at its meeting on 22 June 2021;**
- ii. **thank the Headteacher for the presentation.**

8 CAPITAL EXPENDITURE: MAINTENANCE PRIORITIES

The Headteacher explained that the Diocese holds Devolved Formula Capital on behalf of the school, therefore quotations are sent to the Diocese.

Wirral Council had been awarded a contract to deliver and manage the internet connectivity for all Council buildings. A number of schools have a new supplier, TNP [The Network People].

The Headteacher had forwarded to the Committee a quote for upgrading the speed of the internet, the aim being to future-proof the school.

Installation and set up costs would be £2,320; annual rental charges £1,965, additional support £380, giving a **total cost of £4,465 in year 1.**

The costs in year 2 would be annual rental £1,965, plus support cost £389, giving a **total cost of £2,345.**

With the Committee's approval, the Headteacher proposed to go ahead, using DFC funding. Sixty days notice was required, which would allow the installation to take place in the summer break, ready for September.

The Chair stated: I am happy with that. The money comes from the DFC which means the Governors' Liability will be £1,000 for £10,000 worth of work. It's a very good price.

The Headteacher reported on a discussion with the LA's Chief Building Inspector relating to the car park in connection with the development of early years. He intended to meet with the Diocese to discuss the matter further.

Information about the roof was still awaited.

About £10,000 had been allocated from the maintenance budget for the installation of an extra door in the corridor.

RESOLVED: To note -

- i. the first year and second year costs, and accept the quotation for upgrading the speed of the internet, funded from the DFC allocation;**
- ii. note the report on Maintenance Priorities.**

9 FINANCIAL REPORTS

9.1 PUPIL PREMIUM REPORT: In a verbal update, the Headteacher explained that the pupil premium had been done differently this year; normally, schools would have had data to look at. Data on disadvantaged children for the past three years had been used. Everything the grant has been used for has to be evidence-based. Really good use is being made of the pupil premium. There is a need to improve the quality of the teaching, therefore it everyone benefits.

The Headteacher showed a screen shot showing the key issues and the key responses. He intended to add something called evidence-based education, from the Great Teaching Toolkit Community, which Ofsted use to talk about on the impact of learning.

The Your Student Dashboard pulls together all the whole staff CPD for the next year, which means that CPD will be done in-house using whole school resources with very little external training. The cost of funding three TLRs, who would be responsible for making sure the children are Champions, had been built into the budget.

The Chair commented that he liked the idea; he would also question the impact of staff going out on courses. It's about understanding assessment design and development. Apart from doing things within the school it is great for the Governors because they will be able to share things. It is a large chunk of money but worth it because some external courses are very expensive.

The Headteacher continued that the Assessment Lead Programme for 20 members of staff would cost around £3,000; the challenge is not to overwork the staff. He wanted it to have a whole school impact. It allows flexible learning around the timetable and there are no travel or supply cover costs. It would be bespoke depending on what the school wants. The next priority would be school visits.

The committee commented:

- *It's excellent, sounds really good.*
- *Everyone would have access to some training.*
- *The fact that the whole school will be working together with the same aims and goals makes a big difference*
- *It will grow and you are doing something about it.*

The Headteacher continued that there is an element of trust, and for that reason he did not want to overload people with too much work.

The Chair replied: We trust you to keep an eye on it and that you will feedback to us.

9.2 CATCH UP FUNDING: The school is now on its third cohort of pupils, which means it is able to offer extra tuition to 120 pupils. Each cohort is seen three times a week for five weeks. The impact had been shared at the Standards meeting. Some children had '*jumped up*' quite a few levels and one or two had difficulties with assemblies, but in general it is very positive. This year, the school has spent £10,000 of catch up funding, which is considered to be money well spent.

A decision is to be made on whether to use the funding in the same way next year because of the desire to return to a full curriculum. The Headteacher is discussing how they use the funding with Headteacher colleagues.

9.3 SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN – FINANCIAL ASPECTS: The Headteacher had covered elements of the SDP in earlier discussions - the pupil premium, for example.

10 SCHOOL FUND ACCOUNT

The bursar had advised that the school fund account had been taken to the Finance Committee last year and it is not yet due again.

The Chair advised that the School Fund account needs to be audited annually by a qualified independent auditor who would report to the school in writing and sign an audit certificate which should be presented at the next meeting of the Governing Board.

RESOLVED: **To charge the Headteacher with –**

- i. identifying a member of staff to update the school fund account;**

- ii. **appoint a qualified independent auditor to audit the School Fund.**

11 STAFF WORKLOAD AND WELLBEING

An anonymised survey is carried out every two weeks. The survey reported on was the third one. On average, 65% of the staff had responded to the survey.

The Headteacher gave examples of the graded responses received to statements such as:

- *I have a voice in how things are done in St Alban's Primary School*
- *I feel I am appropriately involved in the running of St Alban's Primary School*
- *I am involved in the thinking about how to make things better at St Alban's Primary School*
- *I am working towards goals for improvement*
- *My manager makes sure I really understand my goals.*

The Headteacher had provided detailed feedback to each of the responses given. He added that it was a great tool for exploring how people think and feel; the skill set had improved, especially for TAs

A Governor commented: Feedback at staff meetings is the most important thing, everyone knows you are responding, if not directly because it is anonymous, and that will encourage the staff to see the Headteacher or their line manager if they are struggling.

12 FINANCIAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The Headteacher reported that some policies were already in place, delegated responsibilities, for example, and others were being worked on. Some controls are in place, although the school does not have a business manager at present.

13 HEALTH & SAFETY ASPECTS

A revised action plan has been received following the audit. The actions identified were minor; the main one being the fire risk from lit candles.

A dedicated health and wellbeing day will take place in September. Occasionally, the staff use pieces of furniture and equipment when they should be using a ladder, therefore the afternoon will be devoted to manual handling and working safely on ladders.

14 OTHER BUSINESS

Responding to a query by a Governor, the Headteacher updated the Committee on the replacement of the lighting system with LED lights. He had contacted the company, Salix, for information and was awaiting a reply. He had also contacted the Diocese and a person in the LA. He would notify the Committee as soon as positive information is received.

The Headteacher referred to a letter from the children containing very good ideas for the school day. The letter would be shared with the Governors next week.

The meeting continued in closed session.