



ST ALBAN'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Love one another as I have loved you

MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE ASSETS COMMITTEE

**23 FEBRUARY 2021
at 1830 hours**

[first draft: 27/02/21]

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

Non-participants: There was full participation.

In attendance: Ann Evans, Deputy Headteacher
Fleur McAlavey, Assistant Headteacher
Liz Robinson, LA Bursar [Item 6]
Eileen Coyle, Minute taker

The Headteacher opened the meeting with a prayer.

KEVEN DOOGAN in the CHAIR

1 WELCOME, AND APOLOGIES FOR NON-PARTICIPATION

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and expressed thanks for the full participation.

The start time had been changed to accommodate those who wished to attend LA training on School Finances at 5 pm on the same date.

The Chair commented that the later start time probably suited Governors' work and family commitments, and suggested that future meetings start at 6.30 pm instead of 5 pm.

RESOLVED: **To change the start time of meetings of the Assets Committee to 6.30 pm.**

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 19 NOVEMBER 2020.

The minutes of the meeting of the Assets Committee on 19 November 2020 had been posted on the Google drive. The Headteacher shared a screenshot of the minutes.

PROPOSED by Bernie Mooney, **SECONDED** by Kevin Doogan, and unanimously -

RESOLVED: **To confirm that the minutes are a true and accurate record of the meeting of the Assets Committee on 19 November 2020.**

5 MATTERS ARISING

5.1 GOVERNORS' SAFEGUARDING TRAINING: Arrangements had been made for Wirral's Safeguarding Partnership's training officer to deliver on-line training for Governors on Safeguarding and Safer Recruitment between 9 am and noon, on Tuesday, 2 March.

The Governors expressed a wish and willingness to join the training.

The Headteacher gave an undertaking to send the link to the Governors.

5.2 LED LIGHTING: Previously, the Governors had approved in principle a proposal to replace the current lighting system with LED lights, using the Government-approved Salix scheme, funded by a five-year repayable loan. The repayments would be met by a reduction in electricity costs.

Following the presentation by a company at the previous meeting, the Governors had asked the Headteacher to source alternative quotes.

Several companies had visited the school and quotations had been received from three. The LA had recommended the company, Salix, which had submitted a quote that was about £21,000 less than the quotation provided by the initial company. The site manager had recommended acceptance of the quote from Northern Lights, which provided better quality fittings.

The Headteacher had visited a school where a LED lighting system had been installed about five years ago and was now beginning to benefit from the savings.

RESOLVED: To accept the quotation from Salix for the replacement of the current lighting system with LED lights.

5.3 OTHER ACTIONS would be addressed as part of the agenda for this meeting.

5.4 PROGRESS ON COMMITTEE'S THREE PRIORITIES: The Headteacher reminded the Committee that the three priorities for 2020/21 were:

- carefully monitor the school's budget and the impact of the reduced intake;
Addressed at this meeting.
- respond to the SFVS questionnaire, being aware of recent changes and additional questions, [eg. on benchmarking]
The Committee is well on track to comply with SFVS requirements
- monitor pupil premium and catch-up funding, ensuring that it is spent appropriately on children who are entitled to free school meals or are disadvantaged.
For consideration as an agenda item at this meeting.

6 FINANCIAL ASPECTS

In welcoming the bursar, the Headteacher expressed his appreciation for her unfailing support, particularly following the departure of the school's business manager in early January.

6.1 THE BURSAR'S BUDGET REPORT AND RECONCILIATION STATEMENT had been posted on the Google drive.

The bursar's commentary is attached.

The bursar explained that indicative figures given by the DfE had been used at budget setting. Since then, the DfE had allocated additional income to schools, including the Teachers' Pay and Pension grant and inflated the Pupil Premium grant, which in total provided £96,000 additional income, and resulted in a predicted credit balance of £37,810 at the end of the current financial year.

6.2 BUDGET – THREE-YEAR PROJECTIONS: The bursar reported that, at present, the estimated number of pupils joining school in September is 43, with 57 leaving year 6 in July 2021. The impact of this fall in pupil numbers, after carrying forward this year's credit balance of £37,810 and allowing for savings in the posts of Deputy Headteacher and Business Manager, would result in a **deficit** of **£35,637** in 2021/22, increasing to a **deficit** of **£129,396**, in 2022/23, and a **deficit** of **£146,582** in 2023/24.

There was no response from the Governors to the bursar's invitation to ask questions. She invited them to email her at any time they wanted updated costings, when she would always respond.

6.3 FORMULA CAPITAL. MAINTENANCE PRIORITIES: The Headteacher reported that approval had been given to deal with repairs to the roof. £5,000 had been included in the budget presented at this meeting.

The Headteacher continued that problems had been experienced with anti social behaviour, particularly during the holidays when, on return, a considerable amount of broken glass had been found on the playground. In addition, there had been some incidents of theft of children's bikes etc and a couple of night-time call-outs.

The site manager had recommended the installation of CCTV and had obtained three quotes, ranging between £2,120, £2,200 and £3,500. Some maintenance costs would be incurred in addition.

In response to the Chair's enquiry about what the school would receive for the quote of £2,200, the Headteacher quoted from the specification, adding that it would give peace of mind 24/7.

RESOLVED: **To accept the quote of £2,200 for the installation of CCTV to cover the side of the building and the playground.**

6.4 ADDITIONAL AGENDA ITEM INTRODUCED BY THE BURSAR: SCHOOLS FINANCIAL VALUE STATEMENT [SFVS]: In previous years, the former Headteacher, the Deputy Headteacher and the business manager had completed the SFVS questionnaire. However, the expectation was that the Finance governors would undertake the task by researching the answers to the questions and showing evidence by quoting the minute number and the date on which the particular topic had been discussed by the Assets Committee. She appreciated that Governors are volunteers and a good deal of time and training is involved, but from the school's perspective it shows awareness of Governors' knowledge of the school's finances and procedures, whilst informing the school of the aspects it needs to concentrate on, and the information the Governors need to enable them to undertake the task.

The questionnaire comprises 29 questions. There are various controls. For example, it asks if the school has a statement on Separation of Duties, where one

staff member places the order and another signs off the invoice for payment. It asks the Governors if they are satisfied with the controls in place, or indeed, if they know what the controls are.

In completing the questionnaire, each question should indicate whether the requirement has been met in full, in part, or not at all. An answer 'No' or 'In Part' means that it is something that the Headteacher and others, need to work on. It's a question of going through each question, making sure the evidence is there, and being satisfied that they can answer 'Yes' to all the questions. It would be a good training exercise for governors who had not been previously involved, and make them aware of where the budget comes from and how it is spent.

The deadline for submitting the completed questionnaire had been extended from 31 March to 28 May. The bursar offered to help the Governors to create an action plan for completing the task, or to work with the Headteacher, depending on their wishes.

The Headteacher explained that he had completed a fair amount of work already, but it was not yet complete.

The Headteacher continued that another aspect is Benchmarking, where schools compare themselves to similar schools. The data allows the Governors to ask questions and challenge on, for example, the number and the costs of staff employed in this school compared with other similar schools, and whether it shows prudent use of public money. These are the sort of things that Ofsted will be looking for.

The Headteacher offered to arrange a further meeting to share some of the questions, and to look at the raw data on benchmarking.

RESOLVED: To –

- i. thank the bursar for budget report , advice and offer of support;**
- ii. agree to the Headteacher's suggestion to arrange another meeting of this Committee to look at the SFVS questionnaire and benchmarking.**

The bursar withdrew at 1951 hours.

7 ADDITIONAL AGENDA ITEM PROPOSED BY THE CHAIR.

The Chair stated that, realistically, any savings required will only come from Staffing. He asked for information on the profile of the staff, ie the percentage on the upper pay scale, those in receipt of TLRs. etc, and the age profile of the staff.

The Headteacher replied that the school has a mixture of highly experienced and less experienced staff. A number of staff members are approaching the end of their careers and were expected to retire soon. A staff member will be retiring this year, but savings from natural wastage are not anticipated at present. Savings arising from delays in the appointment of a new deputy head and business manager have been factored into the budget.

The Headteacher continued that applications for places from September include 38 first choices, 17 second choices, and 14 third choices – a reduced intake this year compared to last year and a trend which is common across most Wirral schools.

A decision by a local Catholic primary school to reduce its admission from 45 to 30 might have a favourable impact on this school. A reduction in the planned admission number may be something that this school needs to consider in the future. The school's improvement associate [SIA] had suggested that the school might consider going down to one-form entry.

The Chair suggested that the timing is not right just now, but it might be something to look at, going forward.

The Headteacher continued that changes currently being looked at include changing the start and finish times of the before and after school club, which currently starts at 8.00 am and finishes at 4.45 pm. 73 responses had been received to a parental questionnaire, of which 59% of families indicated that they would be in favour of increasing the hours wraparound care available to support their family; 9.6% of families had responded 'No'; and 26% 'Maybe'. 69% of parents had replied that they would use the after school club, and 16.9% replied 'No'. 49.3% of families had expressed a preference for the breakfast club to start at 7.30 am.

Ways of making the school more attractive to parents have been looked at, for example, offering nursery provision – experience shows that parents are reluctant to move their children to another school after attending nursery, and offering a school holiday club.

A governor agreed with the notion of having nursery and good before and after school provision. Extending the opening hours of after school provision would make it very appealing to parents who work etc, and may be a way of attracting more children into the school.

The Headteacher stated that he was aware that there was an appetite amongst the TAs to work extra hours. There would be a need for a person to be in charge of the provision, and to take account of Safeguarding. Full consultation with the staff and the unions would be required.

The Headteacher had looked at the system in operation in other schools. He had an appointment this week with a business manager at a primary school in Wallasey to find out how it works at that school. The business manager had said that the facilities are well used and that the staff have two separate contracts. He described the implications on the administration of the Payroll and on the staff's pension schemes.

On the downside, the Headteacher warned that the fact that many parents are now working at home and that there have been reports in the media about job losses arising from the pandemic, could have a negative impact on the take-up of before and after school facilities.

8 FINANCIAL REPORTS

8.1 PUPIL PREMIUM 2019/20. STRATEGY 2020/21: The Headteacher explained that he needed to spend more time working on the report to ensure that it reflects what has happened since the school partially re-opened in January, for example the additional spend on staffing. He proposed to continue working on the report with a view to having it ready for the next meeting of the full Governing Board.

8.2 CATCH-UP FUNDING: The school had received Catch up funding totalling £30,800 in 2020/21, based on 385 pupils on roll; the contribution from the school's budget would be £825.

The school had complied with the requirement to publish the information on catch up funding on the school's website by the end of January. He shared a screenshot on the primary spending plan.

The school had used the template issued by the Government, under the headings, Teaching; Targeted Academic Support and Wider Strategies, to produce St Alban's Catholic Primary School's six page Catch up Programme Plan.

The Headteacher had volunteered to work with ten schools in Wallasey to decide how to spend the money effectively, using best practice. A meeting had been arranged next week.

No comments were forthcoming in response to the Headteacher's invitation for further discussion or questions the detail of the spend.

9 SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS

A report showing comparative charges in 2020/21 and 2021/22 had been posted on the Google drive, for the information of the Committee.

The Headteacher pointed out that the cost of Insurance had increased by £1,000 for next year, due to changes in the charge is calculated and the underwriting arrangements.

The Deputy Headteacher reported receipt of three quotes for Staff Sickness Absences. She reminded the Committee that the school changed to Aviva last year and there have been no issues with the company this year. The quote for this year - £7,000 based on 18 fte teachers and support staff - is around the same amount for last year. It includes wellbeing, occupational health, counselling as well as immediate members of the staff's families.

The Deputy Head recommended that the policy with Aviva is renewed for a further year.

The Headteacher recommended that the school remains with the Local Authority for Health & Safety.

RESOLVED: To renew the SLA's for 2021/22 based on the discussion and recommendations at this meeting.

10 POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The LA document School's framework. Health & Safety Policy and Guidance, had been posted on the Google drive.

The Scheme for the Financing of Schools had been agreed by the Schools' Forum.

RESOLVED: To adopt –

- **the School's framework: Health & Safety Policy and Guidance;**
- **the Scheme for the Financing of Schools. .**

11 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING: 15 JUNE 2021. 6.30

The Headteacher thanked everyone for their support at a lengthy but productive meeting.

He gave a commitment to improve agenda planning to ensure that future meetings conclude at a reasonable time, whilst allowing adequate time for debate.

12 OTHER BUSINESS

Peter Matthews thanked the Governors who had kindly sponsored him in a walk to raise funds for the Diocese's Youth Team; just over £1,000 had been raised.

The Deputy Headteacher and the Assistant Headteacher withdrew.

The meeting continued in closed session.

**ST ALBAN'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
ASSETS COMMITTEE: 23 FEBRUARY 2021
LA BURSAR'S COMMENTARY**

HEADING	COMMENT
INCOME	<p>The school has received additional income totalling £19,346, through various additional grants, including the Teachers' Pay and Pension grant which will be incorporated into the DSG at £180 per pupil from April 2021.</p> <p>The Teacher' Pay and Pension grant in its current format ceases at the end of this financial year therefore no separate provision has been made for the three years to 2023/24.</p> <p>Universal free school meals income down significantly due to low intake in September, and increase in number of FSM in KS1. Budget reduced from £ at budget setting to £46,226 for next three years.</p> <p>Sports grant. At budget setting, the Government had only confirmed the grant until August 2020, but in the summer they decided to extend it for one for one more year [£8,260].</p> <p>Catch up funding calculated on 386 pupils at £80 per pupil, based on the October census. £7,900 received to date, with a further £10,00 due in Spring and a final payment in Summer 2021.</p> <p>Catch up funding: The school has been reimbursed in total for additional cleaning costs and PPM incurred due to Covid-19.</p> <p>In addition, all primary schools have received £1,000 ring fenced funding from Public Health England to offset the cost of PPE.</p> <p>Pupil Premium grant: £150,215 in 2020/21. Estimated increase to £158,330.</p> <p>Child Meals. Budget £10,511. Income to date £5,825, 177 due to fewer children taking meals in lockdown. Estimated income for three years £15,016.</p> <p>Parental Contributions/Child Meals is income coming in through Parent Pay. The actual amount received will be confirmed when bank statements are received. £300 had been received in December, and £1,200 has been estimated for the next three months.</p> <p>Before and After school clubs. Assumptions have been made that the provision will open up again in September.</p> <p>Mentoring. The school as no student teachers this year, but it is possible there will be students next year.</p> <p>Recharges SEN resource units. This is funding for children SEN and EHCPs. Estimated income was £28,000 at budget, but one pupil left in the Summer term. A year 6 child will be leaving at the end of the summer term next year. Shortfall of £5,177 due to reduced units. Estimated income reduced to £21,346 in 2021/22, and £13,080 thereafter.</p> <p>INCOME SHORTFALL £19,356 at 31 March 2021. Estimated income reduced, going forward.</p>

EXPENDITURE	<p>Admin. staff. Saving on vacancy for business manager [three months] £8,684. Budget 21/22 reduced pending filling vacancy.</p> <p>Teachers: Budget based on filling vacancy on M6. New teacher appointed on M1. Provision made for two TLRs in new structure.</p> <p>The Deputy Headteacher leaves in April, and will not be replaced until September. 5/12 salary included in budget. Savings on replacement deputy head will partly be offset by other changes.</p> <p>Teaching assistants: There has been a slight change in working hours for some TAs including the out of hours school club. One staff member is being paid in another category. Saving £1,700 offsets some of the overspend.</p> <p>Cleaners: Budget included ten additional hours which have not been used, apart from 'as and when' needed. Reclaimed from DfE re Lockdown. Saving £8,637.</p> <p>Mid day assistants: £2,267 saving from an unfilled vacancy.</p> <p>Short term supply: Pupils have not been in school for part of the year enabling the school to covers the first three days of absence internally, until the insurance 'kicks in'.</p> <p>EMPLOYEE expenditure underspent by £39,170.</p>
Premises	<p>Building maintenance overspent by £1,039. Budget increased in 2021/22 for Governors' 10% contribution to Diocese [£5,680]</p> <p>Cleaning materials. Overspend £4,379 covered by DfE Exceptional Needs Grant [Covid-19].</p>
Transport	Underspend £1,250 due to no expenditure on transport to baths/playing fields due to Covid-19.
Supplies/Services	Underspend £1,250 due to no expenditure on transport to baths/playing fields due to Covid-19.
Equipment	<p>Tools/Materials. Nil Budget. £863 expenditure reclaimed from DfE.</p> <p>First Aid. Nil budget. £1,010 spent.</p> <p>Sports equipment: £12,993 PE ring-fenced Grant has not been used due to lockdown.</p> <p>Educational materials. Nil budget. £2,295 spend offset by underspend £5,553 on text books.</p>
Catch-up funding	Ring fenced catch up funding £18,167 in 2020/21. £12,510 in 2021/22. All funding has been committed this year. An overspend in home learning resources and on-line activities
Telephones	Overspent by £3,000 due to installation of new system.
Prof. Fees	Pupils. Potential <u>Saving</u> £4,861.
Dual Reg. Pupils	Nil budget. £6,693 spend 2020/21. Two pupils at present. They have been offered places at either a Speech & Language base, or a Behaviour base but will be charged to this school in the meantime. £8,360 estimated spend in 2021/22
Subs/Member-ships	£1,000 budget. Overspent by £9,841. National Trust, Historical Society etc.

TOTAL OVERSPEND SUPPLIES & SERVICES: £42,996. There are good reasons for all the other small overspends.	
Third Party Expenditure	Nil budget. £6,693 spend 2020/21, £8,360 estimated spend in 2021/22 Staff CPD. Spending has reduced because all training is currently on line; reducing costs significantly. Budget increased because the school has joined SLA sessions.
TOTAL OVERSPEND. THIRD PARTY EXPENDITURE: £8,382.	
Support Services	SLAs on budget
Edsential – Meals	Underspend £9,510. Budget increased by £9,000 to £98,000 going forward.
SAVINGS. SUPPORT SERVICES: £10,932.	

ST ALBAN'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

FINANCIAL YEAR 2020/21. PERIOD 9 REPORT.

	Total Budget	Spend to date	Est. spend	Total Est. Spend	Balance		Budget Estimate 2021/22	Budget Estimate 2022/23	Budget Estimate 2023/24
Total Income	-1,908,753	-1,911,915	-16,195	1,928,110	-19,356	Change since last budget	-	-	-
Total Expend	1,860,866	1,487,831	354,583	1,842,413	-18,453		1,851,542	1,822,491	1,822,491
In year balance	-47,887	-424,084	338,380	-85,696	-37,810 credit		1,887,179	1,951,887	1,969,073
							35,637 Deficit	129,396 Deficit	146,582 Deficit

	Total Budget	Spend to date	Estimated spend	Total Est. Spend	Balance		Est. Budget 2021/22	Est. Budget 2022/23	Est. Budget 2023/24
Delegated budget C/F	-89,876	-89,876		-89,876	0	Del. Budget C/F	-175,572	-	-10,539
LMS Reserve	137,763			0	-173,763			139,935	
Cum. Bal.	-1	-513,960	338,388	-175,572	-175,572		-139,935 Credit	-10,539 Credit	136,043 Deficit

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Delegated Budget		-1,567,839	-1,567,839	-1,567,839

Pupil Premium		-158,330	-158,330	-158,330
Other income		-125,373	-96,322	-96,332
TOTAL RESOURCES		1,887,179	1,951,887	1,969,073

Subsequent change In year balance		35,637 DEFICIT	129,396 DEFICIT	146,582 DEFICIT
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