

Minutes
Crosby Ravensworth School Resources Committee Meeting
3 February 2023

Members: *Tom Cripps (TC, Chair), Barbara Wallis (BW), Duncan Priestley (DP, Head), Karen Winder (KW, Parent Governor)*

In attendance: Pauline Cleasby (PC, School Business Manager - SSBM); Andrew Clement (AC), Clerk

Meeting start: **1.15pm in School**

Minutes:

Apologies for absence:

There were no absences.

New conflict of Interest declarations:

There were no new conflicts of interests to report.

1. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (7 October 2022)

The minutes of the Meeting 7 October have already been approved by the Resources Committee and were approved by the FGB at the meeting 19 October 2022.

2. DECISIONS MADE BY COMMITTEE OUTSIDE FORMAL MEETINGS

There were none.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES not discussed elsewhere:

There were none.

4. FINANCE:

a) Formal 3 year Budget:

PC reported that the three year budgetary predictions remain in balance. An amount equating to 8% will be carried over from this year. She confirmed that the 5% pay rise for teachers had been included in the budget plan but, as it is unclear who would finance any further increases, no further amount has been added at present.

b) In Year Budget Position:

TC asked if there were any issues to report in relation to the current budget position. DP confirmed that, as PC had budgeted for increase in fuel, although prices have increased significantly, this was not an issue. He did report that there had been a problem with one of the School's boilers. This had been noted by Logic Plumbing, Heating and Electrical, who have taken over the School's boiler maintenance contract. The previous company, Greenfields Heat and Power, had failed to recognise this problem and it is likely that only one boiler has been working for some time. Although there was a £600 cost for the repair, the fact that the heating was only working intermittently resulted in less fuel being used. It is hoped that correcting this fault will ensure that the heating is more effective in future.

PC informed the Governors that School finances have been helped by some extra funding. The Department of Education has made a one-off payment to schools to assist with cost of living increases, money has been made available by the Local Authority under the Learning Improvement Scheme and there are still funds coming in for COVID recovery. Overall, an extra £4500 has been made available.

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DP noted that the cost of providing meals in School was favourable because of the decision to keep the catering in-house. Freda Smith, FS, the School Cook, works closely with PC to source food and other products from a variety of sources including ASDA and the menu is changed from time to time to ensure best value. KW confirmed that just one pupil eats packed lunches every day, the rest taking advantage of meals provided by the school.

DP noted that money will be required for new Phonics Books and some work on the School's main electrical circuit board.

DP questioned the need to send monthly budgets to all Governors. TC suggested, and it was agreed, that the Monthly Budgets were made available on the Governors Secure area of the School website.

c) Summary of changes in Roll:

DP showed a table of the expected numbers on Roll for the next 5 years. He noted that they slipped to 19 pupils at one point but generally were expected to be 20 or over for the other years. The Year when the number were expected to increase from 22 to 29 would cause a problem as the 29 pupils would be funded based on the 22 pupils of the previous year. DP confirmed that the 8% customarily carried over from the previous year's budget should assist in dealing with this.

DP noted that the pre-school numbers are encouraging. He stated that a recent questionnaire demonstrates to prospective parents that the School is willing to adapt to meet their needs. As always, there cannot be any guarantees but, for budgetary projections, the figures appear satisfactory.

d) Staffing Issues:

There were none.

5. GOVERNANCE:

TC detailed concerns relating to possible loopholes in the Financial Delegation Policy. This relates to the processes involved for approval of (relatively small value) payments, which had been highlighted in a letter to all schools from the Council. He asked if there were provisions in place to prevent fraudulent payments. PC confirmed that payments made were passed to DP to check and initial and that no cheques were used by the School. It was also noted that in a small school numerous repeated payments would be far less likely to go unnoticed than in a school with far more contractors and service providers.

DP and PC agreed to check the current procedures and suggest any changes they felt might be useful to prevent such problems. These will be discussed at the next meeting.

Parent Pay

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PC reported that Shap Post Office is closing soon and this means that new arrangements are required to pay in cash or for the School to go “cashless”. Parent Pay is widely used in other schools and allows parents to pay for their children’s meals, trips and other services that may previously have been paid in cash. Parent Pay had quoted a one off registration fee of £300 (to include training), an annual licence fee of £220 and a further annual fee of £1.10 per pupil. This would represent an annual charge of about £242, depending on the number of pupils each year. Although this may appear to be a significant sum, PC pointed out that she currently visits Shap Post Office at least one per fortnight to pay in money. This represented a minimum of 1 hour of time, which would be saved if the Parent Pay option was adopted.

KW stated that she feels this new system would not be a problem for parents. In fact, many already use it for other children at Secondary School where Parent Pay has already been adopted.

Governors were positive that Parent Pay should be utilised, starting in April.

Schools Financial Value Standard - SFVS

TC suggested that item 26 can now be changed from “in part” to “Yes”. He also suggested that item 27, regarding arrangements in place to guard against fraud and theft by staff, contractors and suppliers, could also be changed from “in part” to “Yes”. All Governors agreed. TC confirmed he would amend the document and PC will add a Register of Interests. BW confirmed it was acceptable to use her electronic signature and would like confirmation when this had happened. With these amendments the SFVS was approved.

6. POLICIES AND PROCEDURE UPDATES

Complaints Procedure.

DP provided the latest update of this document from Kym Allan, and invited the Governors to suggest realistic timescales for the various stages, TC and BW both noted the Complaints Procedure was very poorly drafted. A suggestion of creating a Flow Chart to help with this was considered. The Governors agreed the time scales and agreed to review a draft (circulated after the meeting) with the intention of achieving consensus on the whole document. However, since the meeting, it has been suggested that while the Policy could be improved but, as it is produced by Kym Allan, significant changes could cause problems and this should be avoided if at all possible. A further review of this policy will take place to see if minimum changes can make it more acceptable, largely by clearer sub headings and formatting.

Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy and Procedures

All Governors present agreed to ratify this policy.

Governor Allowances:

As agreed at the previous meeting, TC has tested the system for claiming Governor’s Expenses with a small genuine claim. This was paid satisfactorily although it is noted that Governors may need some support in providing claims in the correct format. TC and PC can advise any Governors needing to provide a claim in future.

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7. HEALTH & SAFETY: Management Review

DP supported this item with a *Health and Safety Annual Headteacher Report to Governors*.

He reported that the School had undertaken a non-statutory H&S audit in June 2020. The School scored 83% and this is considered to be very good. This result is an improvement of previous years and the audit will be repeated in 2024.

DP confirmed that Sports Funding had been used to resolve the issue of a “soggy” area in the playground. The area had been cleared and issue was resolved.

DP confirmed that he completed training in IOSH H&S Management in December 2022.

It was reported that the Local Authority comes to the School to complete a Tree Survey to check trees for safety issues. This is done intermittently.

8. FRIENDS UPDATE: trips.

KW reported that the Friends continue to do invaluable work to raise funds. They are paying for Class 2 to go to Hadrian’s Wall and the whole School to go to Carlisle. The Friends are funding 100% of these trips. DP thanked the Friends for their efforts. KW told Governors that the Friends raised money from the 100 Club and raised funds at events and through raffles. The events were intended to be worthwhile for the pupils, running stalls at the Christmas Fair for example, and the funds raised are a welcome bonus. The School is very grateful for those who have kindly contributed in the past.

9. TRUSTEES of the Crosby Ravensworth United Trust update:

AC reported that he has approached the Trustees of the Crosby Ravensworth United Trust to volunteer as a Trustee. The next meeting for the Trustees is on 15 February 2023 and AC will report back when a reply has been received.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

It is expected that dates for the next meeting will be discussed at the forthcoming FGB meeting.

The meeting closed at 3.20pm.