

FINANCE & PREMISES SUB COMMITTEE MEETING

FRIDAY 05 OCTOBER 2018

08:00-10:00

MEMBERS

FOUNDATION

Lynne Evans
*Loretta Okpokiri

LA GOVERNOR

Christine Richardson

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Catherine Mitri

PARENT GOVERNORS

Ben Pullenayegum (Chair)
Elina Burgess

EX OFFICIO HEADTEACHER

Curtis Sweetingham

IN ATTENDANCE

Gina North **

* Denotes member NOT present

** School Finance Manager, not Governor

MINUTES

PART I

1. Welcome from Chair

(minutes by Dictaphone)

2. Acceptance/Non-acceptance of Apologies for Absence

No apologies received from Christine Richardson or Loretta Okpokiri, who were not present at the start of the meeting.

3. Minutes of the Meeting

The Chair explained that there are no previous minutes to approve, due to the new format being adopted for the F&P Sub Committee meetings, but that this meeting will be minuted, unlike the calls, where the Sub Committee go through the Priority List. The Chair explained that the focus of this meeting will be on finance, any other updates and policies, but not the Priority List items.

4. Matters Arising

No matters arising (as above).

5. Declaration of Pecuniary Interest

No declarations of pecuniary interest.

6. Appointment of Sub Committee Chair

LE NOMINATED Ben Pullenayegum.

No other nominations.

Governors voted UNANIMOUSLY in favour of BP continuing in role as Chair.

7. Terms of Reference

The Chair explained that there have been no changes made to the Terms of Reference from the previous year.

Governors CONFIRMED they were happy to approve the Terms of Reference.

8. Budget

GN presented the budget to the Governors, which is in a new format, as requested by the LA.

GN explained that schools now have to report quarterly rather than twice a year, and explained that along with the new format, the LA don't want virements, unless they are major changes.

GN explained that the Year End Forecast was supposed to have been done in June, but the LA didn't have the format ready, so they've only had two weeks to fill the new format in, with a deadline of the following week.

(Christine Richardson joined the meeting).

GN recapped the first points of the budget presentation for CR.

GN explained that she is going to try to set two budgets on the finance reporting system, so there is a fixed original budget, and a latest version of the budget, because otherwise it's hard for Headteachers to know how much money they have left to spend in the budget, if always reporting back to the original budget which they know has changed.

The Chair CLARIFIED that Barnet don't want changes to be shown in the budget submitted to them, so a static budget will be kept for them, alongside a live working budget for the Headteacher to work from. The static budget will updated on a quarterly basis for reporting to the LA, but not used on a day to day basis.

GN AGREED that she will fix the budget for quarterly reporting, and then the latest forecast, saying where the finances are expected to be at yearend, in column E, which is usually the budget after virements have been made. This will mean that the HT will know if, for example, the staffing budget has changed, and how much money is really left.

The Committee discussed the reason for the LA changes.

The Committee discussed the challenges of working with previous budget format, and GN explained how things have changed, and what you need to get your head around to understand the new format.

The Governors AGREED that this format for accounts is very confusing.

GN ANSWERED that she can feed back to the LA that the Governors have found it confusing.

The Chair RAISED that the confusing accounts system creates a barrier for anyone who wants to try to help struggling schools, as they can't easily come in, look at the accounts and understand how to help.

GN explained that the change to quarterly reporting is to fit in with other LAs nationally.

The Governors AGREED that there is no problem with reporting quarterly, but that the format is confusing.

GN explained that the format has been set up to fit in with the LA's Integra system.

The Chair ASKED which of the two budget versions GN will produce will be shown to the Finance Committee, the LA version or the working version.

GN ANSWERED that the Committee will be shown the version to be submitted to the LA, because that is what they need to approve, to be reported back. She explained that the HT has a breakdown of items on the accounting system, and she suggests that on that budget, she changes the budgets to reflect what the new year end forecast is, which is £58,648, only so the HT knows really how much money he's got left.

The Chair and GN concluded that the working budget is just for the HT's reference, and the Governors will continue to see the budget to be submitted to the LA.

GN ADDED that for the next meeting she will try inserting a different column, showing actual to previous, so Governors can see what's changed since the previous meeting, rather than always comparing to the original budget.

The Chair ASKED whether the comments in the system are for the Governors' benefit, or whether they go to Barnet as well.

GN ANSWERED that the comments go to Barnet as well. The comments currently in the system are for the Governors' benefit, and if the Governors want to change them at all for Barnet, then she can do that. She explained that Barnet just need the figures, with details of any major variances, but she adds information to remind herself, or if it might be of interest to Governors.

Action: BP to write to LA explaining confusion over new budget format

The Chair RAISED that there will be an October F&P meeting, which will tie in with the October budget report to the LA, and ASKED whether approvals are at October month end, March month end, which is effectively year end.

GN ANSWERED that it's September month end, called "October projection" because the school has to report on the position as at the end of September, so the half year position. She explained that the budget reports are end of June which is the first quarter, end of September, and then the end of December.

The Chair CONFIRMED that the meeting at the start of October will be fine to approve the September month end, and a full meeting on the 18th of January will cover December month end.

GN explained that in March the school doesn't have to do a budget report, because then they will be doing year end and the budget.

The Chair ANSWERED that in the schedule there is a meeting for yearend for the 18/19 year, and then budget meeting for the next year, and ASKED if these meetings are at the right times.

GN ANSWERED that the meetings are scheduled at the right times.

A Governor ADDED that these have to then go to the FGB as well.

The Chair ADDED that there is a meeting at the end of June, which will cover the end of June budget submission, so the meetings are all appropriately scheduled to cover the new budget reporting dates.

The Chair handed back over to GN to continue presentation of the budget.

GN explained that she had prepared some notes about the main changes to the income, and summarised:

I01, original funding was £985,719, brought forward balance year to date, £103,514. Normally, about 15% of budget funding comes as cash in the bank to pay for bills, and 85% is held back by the LA to pay for salaries. This is recorded on Integra, which is the finance system that Barnet report on, to report all the schools' figures to the council. The Integra system hasn't been updated at all with any actuals this year, so halfway through the year, it's a long way behind with things, and nothing's been reported centrally, so the school hasn't received any income in to the central account. The salaries are being paid, so there isn't an issue, but reporting-wise it looks very strange, that there's a budget of nearly a million, but only £103,514 in year to date. That is the reason why, and it's nothing to worry about, it just looks unusual.

The Chair ASKED about the balance brought forward.

GN ANSWERED that the £69,137 was the underspend for last year, which was very similar to what was predicted. She ADDED that this was reported on in June 2018 in the Outturn Report.

GN EXPLAINED that the funding is as per the original budget, but the amount that's showing at the moment is only the cash amount that the LA have given the school. The balance will be held in a central account, as income, and the LA will notify the school of the amount, so the school can record it on their system, but the LA haven't yet gone through the loop to officially notify the school officially that the money has been put in to the central account, so it can't be recorded yet.

A Governor ASKED if that balance is in a physical bank account that's held by the school.

GN ANSWERED that it isn't. The cash held by the school is the £103,514, which is cash the LA has given to the school. The central account balance is not a physical account, it's a notional account.

A Governor ASKED whether all other expenses, apart from the salaries, have to be funded out of the £103,514 that's in the bank account.

GN CONFIRMED that this is the case, that all other expenses are to be covered by the £103,514 in the bank account, plus the additional lines of income detailed, and the underspend.

GN explained that as time goes on, the school is going to have to be very careful about cash again, as is the case for more and more schools.

GN continued presenting the budget:

I01, the school started with a budget of £985,719, the second column shows balance year to date, £103,514, the third column is the difference between the two. So, there is still £882,205 due to come in, for salaries, and this will be paid in to the central account by the LA.

GN explained that by the end of the year she predicts the school will only have £859,754, a drop of £22,451. She explained that the main reason for the drop is that there has been a fall in the number of nursery places, from full (26) to 20, so 6 places down. GN explained that with Early Years funding is on a termly basis, so it depends who's in, so the income is not static, but the costs of salaries need to be met throughout the year, so it is challenging.

The HT RAISED that this is a big problem nationally, as there are less children in the reception and nursery year groups nationally.

The Committee discussed LA forecasting and that too many schools are being built in some areas, with not enough children to fill them.

GN and the HT explained that a number of schools have closed their nurseries, are considering closing, or have reduced nursery hours.

The Chair ASKED if St John's could close the nursery if they wanted to.

The HT ANSWERED that it would be a big project, but it's possible.

GN RAISED that there is a knock-on effect, as it may be that the nursery helps to keep reception full, by feeding in to reception.

The Committee discussed whether the impact is due to parents choosing to use private nurseries.

The Chair RAISED that it would be helpful to know at what point closing the nursery would be something to consider.

The HT ANSWERED that he and GN are planning to establish the exact breakeven point of the nursery. He added that that's hard to do, in itself, because of the variables, 30 free hours vs 15 free hours, etc.

Action: HT/GN establish breakeven

GN ADDED that the other complication is that some people are entitled to 30 free hours, but don't want all 30. They might only want 20. But then you can't offer the 30 hours to somebody else. She explained that it's very complicated.

A Governor ASKED how long it would take to compile the financial element of this, and EXPLAINED that if the school was to consider going down the route of closing the nursery, there will be timelines for consultations.

GN ANSWERED that the second half of the Autumn Term would be easier, because the first half term is very busy, as there are forecasts to do, and an audit to do, so by Christmas would be a realistic timeframe.

Governors discussed that any changes to the nursery would be a major project, many factors to consider especially how long the drop in numbers is going to last. To revisit.

GN reported that SEND funding hasn't changed, the school only has one Education Healthcare Plan, maybe the school will get more, but there is just one in at the moment.

GN reported that PP grants are based on figures adjusted for the January, so for this particular budget the figures were adjusted in July, based on January 18 figures. She explained that the reduction is actually greater than estimated, so PP funding has gone down by £3,500.

GN reported on Other Government Grants, where the Teachers Pay Grant is included. GN explained that the government has decided to fund the cost of giving teachers more than a 1% pay award. The recommendation is 3.5% for the main payscale, 2% for threshold and 1.5% for leadership. St John's had budgeted 2% for all, which was a good position to start from, so the only impact is the main payscale teaching costs are higher than was expected, the leadership costs slightly lower than was expected, and overall there is approximately an £800 difference.

The Chair ASKED if the government is doing this as a one-off, or forever.

The HT ANSWERED that it's for the next two years.

GN ANSWERED that the government have proposed to allocate the funding based on pupil numbers, so this year schools receive £18.05 per pupil, and the following year approximately £31.15 per pupil.

GN EXPLAINED that the income will be £3,791, based on 210 pupils. After the additional costs are taken off, the school is better off.

GN handed out notes providing additional explanation of the funding implications of the grants.

GN presented:

I06 the Teacher's Pay grant is $210 \times £18.05$, which gives £3,791. This, less the extra costs of £864 under E01, which is where the school pays for teachers from, gives a £2,957 improvement.

The Chair CHALLENGED where the £2,957 is in the budget.

GN ANSWERED that the improvement is spread across the budget, so it's a combination of the figure showing an increase in income, and then part of the increase in expenditure under E01 is due to staffing changes, but some is due to the Teacher's Pay award.

The Chair ASKED for clarification on the impact of the different pay increase percentages for teachers.

GN ANSWERED that overall the pay increases would cost £864 additional under E01, but because a grant has been given to fund it, when you take the additional cost away from the additional income, the school is £2,957 better off.

The Chair CHALLENGED how this will look next year.

GN ANSWERED that she has the grant in the 3-Year Plan for the next year, but hasn't split out what the additional cost is. She added that she can do that.

The Chair ASKED whether the £2,957 includes costs of NI and pensions.

GN ANSWERED that it does.

GN explained that the main reason for the additional income is because the school budgeted for a 2% pay award, rather than 1%.

LE AGREED that it is because of the original budgeting that the school is actually in a better position.

The Chair ASKED what this year's census day pupil number was.

The HT ANSWERED there were 210 present on census day, which is full, and explained that nursery is not included in the future.

GN REPORTED that the government have recently announced that teachers' pension costs will be going up, from current 16.5% to 20%, but have said they will fund the additional increase. She explained that for the 3 Year Plan she has

included costs going up only to 18%, and if they're higher than that, hopefully it will be funded, which might, again, be a bit of a win.

The Chair and GN AGREED to look at the 3 Year Plan and consider how pay awards will impact the school's position going forward before deciding whether to make pay awards in line with the government recommendations.

The Chair ASKED how pay awards are decided, and whether the F&P Committee approve the budget and then the Personnel Committee approve the pay award.

The HT and LE confirmed that both Committees play a part in the decision.

GN ASKED when the Pay Committee meeting is scheduled.

LE ANSWERED that the Pay Committee meeting is in mid-October.

The Committee discussed what approach other schools are taking regarding passing on the government recommended pay awards.

The HT reported that the LDBS think schools must do it, all academies are doing it. GN ADDED that Barnet are recommending making the pay awards in line with recommendations.

The Committee AGREED that in principle it should be approved, but they need to see the proof that it's a sensible thing to do for the finances in future.

The Chair RAISED having the figures will help, as it could be that making a pay award of 3.4% rather than 3.5% wouldn't be noticeable for individuals, but cumulatively, it might make a big difference. He added that it is helpful to be able to justify and explain why.

GN reported that in I07 there is extra income.

GN reported that in I08 there is an increase of £3,230, and outlined the breakdown:

£4,500 is an increase of After School Club income, which is doing really well. The forecast for ASC has been increased to £32,500. It will hopefully be higher than that, but because there are some areas of uncertainty in the budget, such as the nursery hours, and so on, the full figure hasn't been included for now. Breakfast Club income forecast has also increased to £16,500. However, there is a reduction in Nursery Extended Day Income, so because numbers are down, there is less income.

The Chair ASKED if this is because the numbers of pupils are down, rather than people not wanting nursery.

The HT ANSWERED that it's a bit of both, because if there are more pupils, there's more opportunity to sell hours.

GN reported that there is additional income from a new letting for an art activity.

GN concluded that it's really good news on ASC and BC, but still a concern with nursery numbers.

The Chair ASKED if extra hours have been brought in for ASC and BC.

The HT ANSWERED that extra hours are being allocated pretty much every day on timesheets, but it has been budgeted for and will be reviewed again this half term. He AGREED that extra people are being used, so whilst ASC and BC income is going up, there are additional costs for staffing to cover the 45 to 50 pupils regularly attending now.

The Chair ASKED if the school is in a better or worse position on ASC and BC, taking in to account the additional income and expenditure.

GN ANSWERED that the school is better off.

The Chair CHALLENGED that more analysis would be helpful, as ASC and BC is the one income flow that can be controlled, so it's important to know where the breakeven is, to make decisions about staffing.

The HT ANSWERED that it's a moral decision too, which makes it hard, because ultimately the clubs are there to provide a service, and while obviously the school can't make a loss, they are important to provide.

LE CHALLENGED that both ASC/BC and lettings could be considered as a separate business, with incomes and expenditure accounted for, including percentage of overheads and staffing.

GN ANSWERED that she can set up separate budget groups for both ASC/BC and lettings.

Action: GN set up separate budget groups for ASC, BS and Lettings

GN reported on decisions taken regarding the Staff Insurance Scheme:

The decision was taken, in the end, not to go with the Barnet scheme, as it is very expensive, you don't get anything for the first three weeks of absence, although it is very easy to administer and there are no questions asked, and instead to go with another company called Schools Advisory Service, which is much cheaper, the admin is more onerous, but the policy kicks in after five days, so if somebody is off for two weeks, you do get some money back.

The decision was taken following analysis considering the cost of the extra premium against the £2,655 that would be paid as maternity cover.

Overall the school gained £3,289, which is the saving made by going with a different insurance company. Although £2,655 from I11 was lost, under E10 and E11, Supply Teacher Insurance and Staff Related Insurance, there's a big saving there.

GN explained that they wanted to keep the money saved in a separate pot, as a contingency. If this is done, the real contingency of £11,000 dips down a bit, so it's whether the Governors want to do that or not.

The Chair AGREED that the saving should be kept as a contingency just for staff maternity cover, as the change to SAS for insurance is a bit of a gamble.

GN explained the contingency of £12,137 at the bottom includes the £3,289, so if the £3,289 is to be kept separately, the real contingency will then be £8,848.

The Chair ASKED if the following year the school will make an equivalent saving due to going with SAS rather than Banet, or whether it is a one-off.

GN ANSWERED that the following year it will still be cheaper than going with the LA.

LE ASKED whether the maternity cover contingency can be a separate line item, so it is carried forward as a contingency for maternity cover and not spent elsewhere.

GN ANSWERED that it can, and she will amend the budget to show this.

GN reported that in I18 Additional Grants for Schools, this line includes the PE grant which is estimated for the following term, which hasn't changed from the budget, and infant free school meals, which was adjusted in July.

GN explained that the two bits of funding that changed after the budget was set are Pupil Premium, where money has been lost, and infant free school meals, where money has been gained, which is good news.

GN explained that the projection expected that the school would lose approximately £2,000, but they gained £7,000, so the net impact is £9,821. However, more money has been put in to E25 to cover the cost of additional meals, but again that is something else that needs to be looked at really closely, because there's talk of a new contract for school meals, and the prices were increased in September.

The HT AGREED that this needs to be considered.

The HT EXPLAINED that the school is not currently in contract with ISS, who provide the school meals, and have been trying to set up a meeting to discuss the contract. There have been some changes in senior management, and the new manager is due to come in for a meeting. The suggestion is an increase on food price year on year, if the school goes for a shorter, three-year contract. With a five-year contract, it's maintained a little bit longer.

The HT and GN reported to the Committee on other schools which outsource their catering to a different company and now make a small amount on each meal.

The Committee discussed the pros and cons of ISS, who are linked to Barnet, and the service they provide.

The Committee discussed the potential to increase the cost of school meals by a small amount.

GN RAISED that the cost of school meals has recently increased from £2.15 to £2.34 already, in line with ISS's increase, to cover costs. GN explained that other schools, if they're paying £2.10 to the caterers, they can still charge £2.34 for the meals, and make money on the difference.

A Governor CHALLENGED whether the quality of the food is noticeably different between providers.

The HT ANSWERED that he hasn't worked with any other providers, so can't compare. He added that who you have in the kitchen is an important factor, and the school has a very good cook, and a very good team.

LE RAISED that it would be interesting to know the percentage take-up of children opting to pay for school meals is at St John's, versus the percentage at another school, with a different provider, as that can tell you a little bit about the quality.

The Committee AGREED that children's decision to opt in for school meals versus packed lunch can depend on many factors, including fussiness of children, and that preference also changes with age.

The DT RAISED that another factor which impacts on uptake of school meals is religion, because a lot of children whose parents may not want them to have a school meal, because they want them to have particular food.

The Committee AGREED this would skew figures a lot.

The HT explained that it's a big process, if they do want to change provider, and it is something that should certainly be considered.

The Chair ASKED what the timeline is to make any change.

The Committee discussed the implications and necessary considerations such as supporting the TUPE of kitchen staff when changing provider.

The Committee AGREED that there is no rush from the school's perspective to fix the contract right away, so it's something to be considered in the future, once the school have had a chance to meet with ISS and also sought information on what an alternative company would offer, for comparison.

GN explained that you can use an external company to handle the tendering process, so they will arrange the whole process of the school meeting and testing different suppliers. This is done for no charge, but the company will then take a percentage of the meal price going forward for the duration of the contract. She explained that if the per meal cost ends up being a lot cheaper than the current

cost with ISS, even taking in to account the percentage that goes to the company that handled the tender, there is still a significant saving.

The Committee AGREED to carry this forward and discuss in January.

School Meals provision carried forward to discuss in January

GN continued to present the budget:

E01, the costs for teaching staff have gone up, partly due to the teachers' pay award, but the main reason is that some of the new staff who came in in September are on higher points than others. Although there are savings with two NQTs, they've lost the main payscale teacher and replaced with a threshold teacher, and overall there is an increase in costs.

E03, DT started maternity leave sooner than expected, and this was covered internally, so it's a saving, no additional cost.

E07 has increased a lot. This line covers pay for mealtime supervisors. The national pay award for non-teaching staff was more than 2% for the people at lower grades, and was about 9% for MTSs. There is no to cover the pay award for non-teaching staff.

On premises, there was additional budget put in for knotweed treatment and for some new grass.

The Chair ASKED what the cleaning charge was.

GN ANSWERED that the cleaning was a bit more than originally forecast, because it's gone up, due to an increase in minimum wage. She added that she has asked for a new contract to be sent through, which has been done, with an extension to the end of the financial year, and will need to double-check the figures.

E19, in the original budget there was £10,000 put aside to spend on things from the PTA, and £5,000 is going towards playground equipment.

Special Facilities has gone up because of the increase in ASC/BC provision. The increased expenditure is still less than the additional income being made, £3,162 increased expenditure vs £7,000 income.

Catering supplies, increase in meal cost has been included in the budget, but there is additional money from the additional grant in I18. Net positive, but needs to be looked at in more detail.

Agency Supply Teachers, at one stage it was budgeted for an extra week for every half term. Due to other costs, this has been cut back to only one day a fortnight now.

E27, a saving on Non-Stop Action, Kick and Christian Sports, as two of them are the same thing.

GN SUMMARISED that all of the pluses and minuses add up to the revenue balance carried forward of £12,521, so although the contingency figure is shown as £12,137, with virements and tidying up the budget, the balance would now be £12,521. At the start of the year, when the budget was set, the balance was £11,000, so it's an improvement of £1,521. However, £3,289 of that is due to staff insurance, so if that is earmarked, the real contingency goes below the £11,000.

LE RAISED that the forecast is actually £56,000 deficit.

GN EXPLAINED that the revenue income is 1221, which is the total of all income codes. She explained that when the budget was set, the balance expected was the contingency, the left over money, £12,137. The brought forward income of £67,137, plus income in-year of £1,229,427 equals £1,298,564, and the balancing figure is the contingency, so the contingency figure was going to be the carry-forward figure. GN explained that it wasn't great, that £69,137 was carried forward, and there's only £12,000 to take to the next year, but that's the worst-case scenario. Now, it's £12,521 to carry forward.

The Governors discussed the confusion around the new budget format.

9. DRAFT 3 Year Budget

GN handed out copies of the Draft 3 Year Budget to help with understanding of the new budget format and the school's financial position.

GN explained at the start of the year we have £69,137, so the figures on the budget are as follows:

Brought forward - £69,137

Income - £1,290,598

Expenditure - £1,290,097

GN explained that the balancing figure is the £12,520 which is the contingency. She explained that the first column shows that the £12,520 will be spent, so it's a real contingency, assuming it will be spent over the three years. So coming forward to the new year, we start with zero, which isn't a great starting point, but explained that she tries to show a worst-case and hopefully, it will improve.

The Committee discussed that it might be possible to carry forward the contingency if it isn't spent, and continue rolling it forward.

GN explained that as there are so many things changing in this year, she needs to make sure it's all fed through properly in to the following years, especially things like the teachers' pay award, which is quite a big job to do.

GN explained that when the 3 Year Plan was updated at the end of June, BP had spotted that something hadn't carried forward properly on E03, as somebody's hours had been reduced, and they shouldn't have been, so that has been corrected, but the DRAFT 3 Year Plan is just to give a snapshot that if nothing is done, the financial position won't be good again.

GN ADDED that this financial position is the same for every school.

A Governor ASKED what the school's position is in comparison with other schools.

GN ANSWERED that all small schools seem to be in a similar position.

LE RAISED that GN is doing a lot of work behind the scenes costing things out, so that eventually when there are discussions at FGB about things the school could consider, there should theoretically be some figures to start playing with, so at least there is some idea. She added that the nursery financials need to be looked at.

10. Review Contracts

Nothing to review.

11. Premises Management Documentation

Nothing to review.

12. Policies to Review

a) Accessibility Plan Policy - Review October 2020 - APPROVED

b) Financial Management Policy Review October 2020

The Chair explained that there have been no changes made to the policies circulated for review, and ASKED if all Governors are happy with the policies as they are.

GN RAISED that there a couple of minor changes to be made to the Financial Management Policy, as where it talks about the Data Protection Act under 1.6 it should say GDPR, and under 2.2.1 it says two year end projections, the new requirement is to do three, so this needs to be changed.

GN ADDED that the policy refers to the credit card, and the wording should be amended to reflect that there are two cards, and what the limit is, because the overall limit is £2,000, as it is £1,000 per card.

GN RAISED that under computer systems it refers to a backup being kept offsite, but it's now a cloud-based backup.

GN RAISED that under income it should mention use of school money, as there is no mention of that.

GN RAISED that free school meals seems to say a lot about parents providing evidence annually, and proposed to cross out the second line, as it refers to Income Support and should be Universal Credit now.

GN RAISED that she will change the review date to October 2019 as the auditor would prefer it reviewed annually.

Action: GN to make changes to Financial Management Policy, Credit Card Policy and circulate and approve offline

The HT RAISED that the government are making changes to reduce the amount of free school meals.

The HT and GN discussed how this means both free school meals and pupil premium numbers have gone down.

c) Health and Safety Policy - Review October 2020

EB RAISED that there are aspects within the policy where there are pieces of legislation that cover it, for example asbestos, and it's not mentioned in the list of legislation at the top, and also there is somewhere that a piece of legislation has been updated, and the new legislation has been added but the old one not removed, resulting in unnecessary duplication.

EB RAISED that particularly with the asbestos, it's really important the asbestos register, and it should mention in the policy where the asbestos register is located, or how to access it, because it's really important.

EB RAISED that the policy mentions that certain Governors have specific roles, and while it's right that the name of the responsible Governor is not included in the policy, as that can change, it should specify where that is documented.

Action: EB to update references to legislation in Health & Safety Policy

The Committee discussed where the asbestos register is, and the importance of knowing where it is, to share with any contractors who come on site, in addition to staff.

d) Lettings Policy

The Committee discussed that the Lettings Policy had been revised significantly the previous year, and was circulated for approval, but never came back.

The HT summarised that the only change was that instead of AS checking the hall is ready, AS checks that the people letting the hall check the hall is ready, so the onus is on them.

The Committee AGREED to APPROVE the policy.

Action: LE to check the format of Lettings Policy and circulate

e) Business Continuity & Critical Incident Policy 050617

EB RAISED that the main thing to do now is to test the Business Continuity policy, because it's been reviewed several times, and the only way to be sure is to do a desktop test, talking through scenarios to see if the policy covers them.

Action: EB and CS to arrange Business Continuity desktop test with AS

f) Credit Card Policy

GN produced a hard copy of a Credit Card Policy last reviewed in 2015 with her proposed changes tracked.

GN proposed to change the date of review to October 2018, the date of next review to October 2019.

The Committee APPROVED GN's proposed changes to Credit Card policy.

GN RAISED that current limits are £1,500 on one card and £500 on the other.

Policy to be changed to reflect one card limit of £1,500 and one of £500 rather than two with £1,000 each.

Action: GN to update policy then send electronic version to LE, for formatting and upload to Google Drive

The Chair proposed then adding the updated Credit Card Policy to the Financial Management Policy going forward. The Committee AGREED.

13. October Audit

The Chair ASKED what needs to be done for the October Audit.

GN ANSWERED that the auditor is coming in on Monday, and that she will come in to look at the lettings, the income, financial reporting, Governors' minutes.

The Chair ASKED if it's an internal audit. GN ANSWERED that it's an internal audit.

GN ANSWERED that the minutes are spot on, so there will be no qualms with that.

GN explained that the things that came up last time were the Financial Management Policy had to be updated.

LE ASKED if GN has all the minutes, and added that once they are approved they are uploaded to the website, and all minutes are on the Google Drive.

GN RAISED that she had lost access to the Google Drive.

Action: LE to set up Google Drive access for GN

GN outlined the highlights from the previous audit:

The Financial Management policy said the school didn't have a petty cash float, but one had been set up just the month before, just for postage, so that is now in the Financial Management policy.

The FM policy stated that the credit card could not be taken off site, but on occasions it does go off site, so that needs to be reflected in the policy.

Approval of purchase orders, which is now included.

New banking arrangements to be updated, which has all been done.

GN confirmed that a safe has been put in place, and that the assets register has been completed.

GN summarised that all the things that were raised at the previous audit have been addressed.

The Chair ASKED when feedback will be received from the upcoming audit.

GN ANSWERED that the auditor gives a verbal feedback on Tuesday lunchtime and the draft report should be received the following week, to which the school can then respond with any comments, if they feel anything is unfair, and then they write to the Chair of Governors within a month, and the school has to respond within so many weeks.

Action: Feedback from October Audit in January F&P Meeting

14. Any Other Business

No other business.

15. Date of Next Meeting: Friday 18 January 2019

16. Close