

SASS FP NonConfMins 080322 Ca

STEPNEY ALL SAINTS CHURCH OF ENGLAND SECONDARY SCHOOL

**Non-Confidential Minutes of a Meeting of the Finance and Premises Committee
held via Zoom on Tuesday 8th March 2022 at 4.30 p.m.**

In attendance

Governors

Mr Paul Woods (PW)	Headteacher
Mrs Angela Hancock (AH)	Foundation PCC Governor
Ms Katie Carr (KC)	Co-opted Governor
Rev. Trevor Critchlow (TC)	Committee Chair
Mr David Richards (DR)	Committee Vice-Chair
Mr Simon Cook (SC)	Co-opted Governor
Mr Tim Duncan (TD)	Co-opted Governor

Present

Ms Nichola Ahmed (NA)	Observer, School Business Manager
Mr Benjamin Siaw (BS)	Observer, Deputy Headteacher
Ms Charmaine Strelitz (CS)	Director, Clerking and Appeals Associates Ltd

The meeting opened with a prayer.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from TC for late arrival.

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2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16TH NOVEMBER 2021

The non-confidential minutes of the meeting held on the 16th November 2021 were circulated to the meeting.

RESOLVED: that the non-confidential minutes of the meeting held on the 16th November 2021 were approved to be signed as an accurate record of the meeting subject to noting that apologies had been received from Tim Duncan ahead of the meeting which had not been picked up until the meeting had closed.

4. MATTERS ARISING NOT COVERED IN THE AGENDA

Chair's Action

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NA noted that the paper had been circulated to the Committee. NA noted that there had also been a late notice notification that support staff received a 1.75% increment which was provided for within the budget and approved under Chair's Action.

5. FINANCE REPORT

NA noted all papers circulated to the meeting.

5.1. Budget Monitoring, Period 11, February 2022

Income variances were noted.

Positive budget adjustments	
6 th Form Adjustment for 2020-21	£19,491
Teachers' Pay Grant – Transitional Funding	£54,181
Teachers' Pension Grant – Transitional Funding	£96,182
COVID Summer School Grant	£16,412
COVID Testing Grant	£50,490
COVID Costs	£34,400
Total	£271,156

NA advised that the third instalment of the Covid catch-up (recovery grant) would not be received until the next budget year and that the Portal grant for school laptops might also not be received until the 2022-2023 budget year.

Expenditure was largely in line with budget set or offset against income such as Covid-19 expenditure. NA summarised key variances.

- In-year staff savings had reduced the staffing budget to 77% from a 79% budget set. This was largely due to using internal cover staff or fixed-term contracts as well as support staff not appointed as planned.
- Swimming pool changing room expenditure which had been approved by the Committee and Governing Board with approval of a £220k virement.
- Covid-19 cleaning costs which was offset against a Covid-19 grant.
- Energy costs were not expected to go over budget as the school had a fixed price contract in place currently.
- Uniform expenditure was £45k which had been a result of the school's commitment to buy back dead stock as well as issue Year 7 with uniforms as part of their transition plan. It was noted that the school had also received a significant income from uniform sales which was offset.
- Bought-in Professional Services. NA noted that there had been an unexpected charge of £7,800 for Admissions Appeals by the Local Authority which was currently being investigated with the school finance team.

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5.2. End of Year Projections

NA advised that the school was working with the School's Finance Team to ensure all financial systems and procedures were up to date and in place. The surplus carry-forward was projected to be £1.1m which represented £568k brought forward from 2020-2021 and an in-year balance of £546k.

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The Committee asked if that position was likely to change significantly and if it was within the permissible carry forward. NA said she did not expect a significant change. PW said that the balance control mechanism (for surplus carry-forward) was something which was under review by the Tower Hamlets Schools' Forum.

5.3. Budget Priorities 2022-2023 and Draft Budget

NA noted that the draft budget circulated was a provisional and early draft. This included the increase in staffing costs, and assumed increments such as pay, pension, energy and general costs. NA said that it also factored in PW's staffing plans linked to the curriculum vision and school's development priorities.

PW said staffing was 76% and the school had an EBAC entry of 75% which had all been supported by the laptop roll-out. PW noted that he expected a staffing turnover of approximately 10%.

The Committee referred to staffing expenditure at 76% and what the current percentage was and how the turnover would be managed. NA said the staffing budget was set at 79% and her assumption was that 10% of any staff turnover would be at a lower scale, but that not all would be and that the strategy allowed flexibility in the budget and support required for new staff.

5.4. Future Projects

NA provided a summary of identified projects, which had been built into the draft budget.

- Upgrade of lighting system.
- Upgrade of fire alarms.
- New minibus.
- An application had been made to the Portal Trust for a new Imax suite.
- Phase 2 Sports Facilities.

NA said the total cost was estimated at £121k which was built into the draft budget. NA said that they wanted to consider replacing classroom furniture, which she would present in more detail.

PW noted that they would always like to retain between 5% and 7% and that given that, the surplus carry-forward should be used on students to ensure the school had facilities they deserved which also drew in the community.

PW said the swimming pool was almost complete, on time, in the budget agreed and that he would like the Committee to review the next phase. PW suggested that Phase 2 would include the development of a fitness suite. PW noted that the feedback they were getting from the families was that the school buildings were not attractive. PW said that the provision of the wider facilities could offset that along with the fantastic results.

BS noted that the school was outstanding and stressed the importance to offer outstanding facilities which would benefit future generations, all genders, enhance provision for students for health, wellbeing and learning. BS noted discussions he had had with external agencies about the different provision which could be offered in the space.

5.5. Draft Drawings

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The Committee reviewed the drawing and asked if the space was currently in use.

BS stated that the area identified was part of the current facilities which was just a concrete expanse which was not well used. The plans provided for a large pitch area as well as being able to split into smaller 7-a-side pitches. BS said that it would provide for other sports such as hockey, PE spaces, and recreational facilities during breaktime. BS said the intention was also to provide courts for badminton and tennis as well as making changes to the sports hall for basketball and other indoor activities.

PW said the notion of expanding sporting provision and bringing the community in had always been a vision of his since joining the school; they had relied on external bids which were not forthcoming. However, they were now in a healthier financial position wanted to use the school's surplus on single expenditure profits which would benefit the school and its students' long term.

PW noted that they had looked at the condition survey and had considered the heating costs. The LDBS were working with the school to apply for DfE grants that would address the heating issues with a greener solution. The bid for the ADT will be submitted in October 2022. There was a significant programme of enrichment. They were developing commitment to the performing arts through Music and Drama and lots more students accessing theatre shows.

The Committee asked if this was likely to be the biggest ticket item. PW said they would be considering another phase, to develop a spin studio or yoga suite but those would be very expensive. The Committee suggested that the school developed a strategic plan for estates, including architect planning and boundary spaces.

The Committee noted suggestions such as the area being a multi-use pitch, not just a football pitch to meet needs of all genders, and that it was floodlit. PW agreed and said all those areas were being considered. PW in response to questions noted that the school always ensured it was adequately staffed and provided flexibility in the structure which would be a priority before presenting this type of project.

SC noted that the Women's European Football Tournament was being hosted in the UK in 2023 so there might be funding opportunities available which could be explored.

AH noted that she had met and discussed the plans with PW regarding this proposal and noted her experience as an ex-PE teacher as well as being active in the Hockey community. AH said there was lots of infrastructure around the project and said that this project would really promote the community links and thanked PW, BS and NA for their work so far.

RESOLVED: that the Committee approved the concept in principle and requested that PW developed an estates strategic plan for consideration which would be part of the future surplus spending plan.

5.6. Benchmarking

NA noted that the data circulated included some of the commentary around the disparity between the local schools' use of CFR codes. The Committee discussed the benchmarking set and NA noted that it was not always like for like as schools coded their accounts in different ways.

The Committee asked NA what she had gained from the exercise. NA said that it had been a useful tool, but she did not think it added any value to the data or that she would

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have done anything differently. The Committee asked if there was anything which was like for like, or any key high-level elements which were similar. NA said it was a limited range of comparators, but items such as total number of teachers or E15 water and sewage.

PW said one of the teaching benchmarks for staffing was approximately 80% but as a benchmark it was subjective as it was dependent on context. Internally it provided them with areas to review and unpick, but it came down to subjective use of coding although internally it was useful to support constructing the budget and any disparities being clear and knowing what their rationale was for their decision making. PW suggested that the leadership team could provide further alterations based on their conclusions of the benchmarking but noted that it was a work in progress.

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6. SCHOOL FINANCIAL VALUE STANDARD

NA noted that the only change was the Self-Assessment dashboard and summarised the document. NA noted that the proposal was that the school would send out interim budget monitoring reports to meet the requirement for Governors to have them six times yearly, similarly the Self-Assessment dashboard was only being presented for the first time.

The Committee confirmed receipt and review of the School Financial Value Standard.

RESOLVED: that the SFVS was approved for recommendation to the Trust Board for approval and submitting to the Local Authority.

7. INDEXATION IN THE TEACHERS' PENSION SCHEME

NA noted that the paper had been circulated to the Committee. NA noted that there had also been a late notice notification that support staff received a 1.75% increment which was provided for within the budget and approved under Chair's Action.

8. GOVERNOR OFSTED PAPER

The Committee noted the paper circulated and that the celebration would be funded from the Governors' Fund. Governors noted that the Governors' Fund was not funded by any public funds. The Committee asked for confirmation that the Governors' Fund could support staff social events.

RESOLVED: that the Committee approved the recommendation in principle subject to confirmation that the recommendation was in line with regulations and not funded by any public funds.

9. RISK REGISTER

The Committee agreed that the Risk Register was reviewed by a strategy group and submitted to the Governing Board.

10. SWIMMING POOL UPDATE (IN PREMISES REPORT)

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NA noted the premises report circulated and that the swimming pool completion was due in the Easter Holidays and hoped it could be visited at the next meeting.

11. GDPR

NA advised that there had been no breaches.

12. POLICIES

The Committee noted policies as circulated and relevant changes.

- H&S and Risk Assessment.
- Business Continuity.
- Financial Code of Practice

RESOLVED: that the Committee recommended the listed policies and documents for approval at the next Full Governing Board meeting.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- Tuesday 24th May 2022 at 4.30 p.m. via Zoom

14. ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

- Updated Staffing Structure
- Risk Registration Consideration
- Benchmarking

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.

Meeting closed 5.50 p.m.

CHAIR'S SIGNATURE:.....

DocuSigned by:
Trevor Critchlow
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01-02-2023

DATE SIGNED:...../...../.....