



Sir John Cass's Foundation Primary School

Non-Confidential Minutes of the Staffing, Finance and General Purposes Committee of Sir John Cass's Foundation Primary School

Wednesday 14 November 2018 at 4.00pm in the Board Room at the school

Membership:

A Wright	Chair	Present
A Allan	Headteacher	Present
Rev L Jørgensen		Apologies
Deputy H Jones		Present
M Piper		Present
J Greenlees		Arrived at 17:24
A Frain		Present
Z Lawley		Apologies

Observers

L Webb	Business Manager	Present
H Khan	Acting Deputy Head	Present
Christine Beaumont	Senior Finance Officer City of London	Present
T Shortland	City	Apologies
Madalina Brockmann	Clerk	Present

ACTION LOG

Item	ACTION	Responsible	Deadline
7.1.2.a	Approach We Work.	HJ	
7.1.2.b	Ask parents if they have links to city companies for projects in the school that could benefit from grants.	Senior Leadership team of School	
10.1	To report on December Audit to governors.	Business Manager	5.02.19 Committee
11.a	Share plans for toilets, canopy and dining room with governors once discussed with Building working party.	Business Manager	
11.b	Provide fuller descriptions required by members in the City in relation to the two credit cards users.	Business Manager	
11.c	Submit proposal of Lettings Policy to governors	Business Manager	5.02.19 Committee

12	Review contracts and report back to governors	Business Manager	5.02.19 Committee
13.1	Complete Performance Management Review	Performance Management Review Panel	
15	Approach Christ Church regarding benchmarking in addition to other identified schools	Business Manager	
16	Approach Lightmongers Livery regarding funding for more efficient classroom lighting	Business Manager	
18.1	Consider the Children's Centre SLA. The Head will review the new document and circulate to the governors via email by 30 November 2018 before the next FGB on 5 December 2018 if received; so it can be approved in principle on the agenda for 6 Dec 2018	Head / governors	30.11.2018 / 5.12.2018

Part 1: Non-Confidential

1. Opening prayer
2. Welcome to new Governors
3. Apologies and governor attendance Apologies were accepted from Rev L Jørgensen.
4. Declaration by Governors of any personal and pecuniary interests in respect of items on the agenda not included in the Annual Business Register None were declared.
5. Dates of the forthcoming meetings and events It was noted that the next full Governing Body Meeting would take place on 5 December 2018.
6. Minutes of the previous meeting; minutes of committees and updates 6.1 The minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting 6 June 2018 were AGREED as a true and accurate record of the meeting. 6.2 Matters Arising <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACTION POINT 1: Mr T Wilson to check the criteria for grants from the Lord Mayor's Fund: the criteria was looked into, but it was a very specific issue and no longer applicable. • ACTION POINT 2: Mr T Wilson to prepare a prioritised spreadsheet of non-capital and capital projects. The Business Manager was working on this, including incorporating the list of priorities for the school arising from the LDBS survey. This action would be

pending and in the future it was aspired to have one spreadsheet to list all various projects.

- ACTION POINT 3: Ms T Shortland to talk to Social Care regarding establishing a referral pathway for vulnerable families that are unable to afford the children's centre fees. The School / family had signed up with the Childcare affordability scheme have signed up, but it was noted that this was the case only for one family.
- ACTION POINT 4: Mr T Wilson to circulate the Air Quality Monitoring Report to governors. This was done.
- ACTION POINT 5: Mr T Wilson to circulate the income audit report to governors when it is available. This was done.

7. Working Parties

7.1 Fundraising Working Party

7.1.1 Membership

It was noted that the members of the fundraising working party were ZL, IC, and LW. The working party had not yet met as the Fundraising Protocol had not previously been available. However, the Protocol was now available.

7.1.2 Update

The governors noted the following update. It was noted the School had received £3500 from the Film Office and a further £500 from a photographer. Both ZL and IM had approached some companies locally and are waiting for a response from their contacts. The school was waiting for a response regarding a performing arts grant from Sir John Cass's (SJC) Foundation, namely £35,000 for Performing Arts and £19,950 Cass benefits.

The meeting with City Police regarding monies for the Adventure cube was cancelled, but discussion is ongoing. The sum involved would probably be around £3,000-3,500.

The Business Manager had been in touch with the Samuel Butler Foundation regarding the Kench Hill and London landmarks mural project. The applications would be submitted during the course of the week.

Urbanest was a new developer that introduced themselves to the school and wanted to raise money for the school for play equipment and the library. The Business Manager was waiting to hear about the proceeds raised following the event they planned.

Reading Partners were discussing a possible donation for the library. The legal firm HFW have also mentioned a possible donation however this has not yet been paid and an amount has not been confirmed.

The Business Manager had written to Rachel Ellis from the Tower Hamlets Business Partnership; they had met during the summer to discuss Reading Partners and libraries.

QUESTION: was the funding for libraries received?

ANSWER: The School was waiting for HFW to send money; they could use section 106 from the budget if necessary, which is money received from developers.

It was noted the School had commissioned a plaque for Dorsett Hotels as they had donated £18,000 to the School in respect of the play equipment.

LW had met with Richard Foley of the Foundation.

"We Work" organisation needed to be approached.

ACTION: HJ to approach We Work.

ACTION: It was discussed that Grants were usually done through established connections. It was suggested that the School ask parents if they have links to city companies as there are projects in the school that could benefit. Parents should be offered examples as illustration.

7.2 Capital works Working Party

7.2.1 Confirmation of membership

The Capital Works Working Party membership was confirmed as HJ, AW and LW.

7.2.2 Update

No update was available.

8. School Improvement and Development

The single year plan was discussed briefly, which reflected changes from income audit and progress made regarding the fire risk assessment.

9. Budget Monitor – period 7 October

It was noted that the following was reflected in the figures: staff severance; energy bill had not been paid in full; library expansion; in the staffing costs: TA on long term sickness, greater use of agency; cleaning will go over as a greater regime has been instigated for the second half of the year.

QUESTION: Didn't the overall high levels of permanent TA staff in school mean that a long-term sickness could be covered internally without recourse to agency staff?

ANSWER: Yes, for short term such as one day this is available within the school, but this absence is a long-term situation due to long-term sickness.

73% of the SJC budget was spent, when the percentage should be 58%. It was noted the School had overcommitted approximately £80,000 for boiler, which skewed the figures. There are other commitments which need reversing and once completed the figure should be reduced to 60%, however a better picture would be available in the spring. The budget was reviewed with the City on a monthly basis.

It was noted that salaries were on track although one long term sick person impacted on temporary staff too. There was no high area of spend apart from salaries. 2% pay awards will continue to increase costs. It was expected that budgeted income would also need to increase. It was important to control costs on a quarterly basis, reporting back to governors and Theresa Shortland from City if any area was unavoidably not under control.

QUESTION: Any progress on the previous discussions about how the cost of resources shared between the children's centre and the school should be split?

ANSWER: There was a percentage of split staff – various of staff from the office including the School Business Manager and also the Headteacher.

10. Income

10.1 Income Generation audit outcomes

The school was given an **Amber** level of assurance that there is an adequate framework in place. Six recommendations were offered and accepted by the school; 4 amber and 2 green. As the rating was amber, the City are expecting an audit in December as they had asked the School for evidence they had fulfilled the recommendations.

Action: Business Manager to report on December Audit to governors in February.

The recommendations were as per the report of the Business Manager, as follows:

- 1) Target timescales for completion of risk mitigation actions should be specified to facilitate monitoring and this information should be included within relevant updates to the School's Committees in the interests of transparency. **14th November 2018**
 - a. Single year plan has been updated and dates added for completion of targets.
 - b. Single year plan monitored termly.
- 2) Procedures for income recovery should be updated to reflect the responsible officer at different stages, ensuring that appropriate separation of duties and management checks are also incorporated. **16th February 2019**
 - a. The Financial procedures manual has been updated and this will go to Governors on 14th November 2018 for discussion and approval.
 - b. Procedures will now show separation of duties in the form of roles and responsibilities. Management is now in place in relation to debt recovery.
- 3) Review of outstanding school meals income should be undertaken at an increased frequency and consideration given to proactive measures to reduce the likelihood of debts accruing. **14th November 2018.**
 - a. Outstanding school meals income will now be checked every two weeks in line with other debts to ascertain progress.
 - b. Debts will accrue year on year going forward due to the school being involved in a City pilot for Free school meals for children in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6. This will allow the school greater time to recover old debts.
- 4) The school should maintain a record of debts in respect of School meals income, updated on a timely basis, supported by evidence, to include:
 - i. Age of the debt by category e.g. 30 to 60 days, 60 to 90 days, 90 plus days
 - ii. Action taken to recover the debt including demonstration of recovery options exhausted prior to submission for write-off.
 - iii. Status updates
 - a. Dinner debt – an aged debtor will be produced every two weeks. Since Audit attended the school the dinner debt has reduced to £10,767.92.
 - b. Evidence will be retained which demonstrates recovery has been exhausted.
 - c. Recovery will continue where we target last year's debts
 - d. An aged debtor report will be presented at each Governor's meeting for them to monitor debt levels. **16th February 2019**

- 5) Debt recovery activity should be compliant with agreed procedures and records should be maintained that facilitate independent review, including demonstration of recovery options exhausted prior to submission for write-off.
 - a. David Bridgman is providing an aged debtor report for other debt every 2 weeks. The school is working closely with David in relation to older debt, payment plans and letters before action.
 - b. Invoices are being sent out promptly at the start of each month for Breakfast club, Tea club and Play Centre. Parents are being chased upon receipt of the aged debtor report from the City where letters before action are being considered.
 - c. The debt recovery summary report is still a work in progress. This will be ready for **16th February 2019**.
 - d. Accounts receivable staff are aware of new procedures.
- 6) Consideration should be given to requesting payment in advance or receipt of a deposit for premises hire to protect the School against non-payment.
 - a. The lettings policy will be re-written to include the need for deposits from new hirers. In practice this is happening however needs adding to the letting policy. Amended policy due 14th November 2018 – will not be available until **16th February 2019** as the question of charges is being looked at as a whole. Information has already been gathered from some schools but we are waiting on a number of schools for their data.
 - b. This should mitigate the risk of non-payment for lettings.

10.2 Debt Recovery

It was noted that a lot of debts were substantially over 120 days, specifically around 3-4 years old and work needs to be done to recover debt.

There was a split between City and School debt on the Aged Debt Analysis report, adhering to City guidelines. In relation to City debt for the Nursery and Play Centre LW only intervenes at the point where the school needs to decide on whether a letter of action is issued or payment plan. This is confirmed to the City – David Bridgman

Dinner money debt has now decreased to £10,767.92. Update due 16 February 2019.

Reference to debt collection has been added to the Single Year plan.

QUESTION: Is City debt included in the report? Would the money go to the School or City if the debt was recovered?

ANSWER: The recovered debt would go to the City.

It was clarified that the School bore the risk for the Play Centre and Nursery in relation to staffing costs.

The governors discussed the Children Centre information on the Aged Debtor Analysis and noted a couple of inaccuracies.

10.3 Write offs

It was noted that someone recently paid a debt from 2015, which had reduced the required write off. The write offs put forward at this meeting related mainly to 2013/14.

The write-offs were AGREED by the governors totalling £4,111.20

10.4 Review of Private Fund

It was noted that two accounts were held at Coutts – Reserve and Current. Since 1 April 2018 residential trip monies were paid directly to the City and not into the private fund account. The School held £18,000 from Dorsett Hotels in the Reserve. 1,000 from the PTA were monies for the play equipment. There is also money in relation to the minibus. The current account only holds donations to the school, monies from the Foundation and monies raised in relation to charities. Having completed a reconciliation of the accounts, there are some trip monies that still need to be moved over and this would be done in the following month. All charitable monies had been sent off. It appears that the account had not been audited for 2 years. The Business Manager had reconciled the fund and written to Audit requesting an audit of this account. The City reply said that a major audit is about to take place across the City which the School would be a part of.

11. Premises Update

11.1 LDBS Condition survey (incorporating the Health and Safety walk)

A visit was performed on 7 September 2018 with Steve White and Warren Harper from Wilby Burnett. There are a number of 2Cs that the School needs to respond to. Priorities have been updated with LDBS. They are:

- No 1 Canopy repairs to make safe £10k – this should be complete next weekend but was not budgeted for.
- No 2 Roofing phase 2 this is tendered and would be funded by the LCVAP bid for 2019/2020. Expected LCVAP is £95k although not confirmed. Roof cost is £118,800. DFC should fund approximately £5,000 leaving the school to find some additional monies. LW will approach the Foundation for support with this.
- The roof will take up all the LCVAP and DFC monies for next year but as such it has been given priority.
- No 3 Mains water pipework replacement - Awaiting a pipework design – expected cost to be £400,000 to £500,000. Water temperatures are not at the correct level at present and boiler life will be seriously reduced if this is not done.
- No 4 Toilet refurbishment - £112,000 with a new design. £75,000 direct replacement.
- No 5 Dining hall improvements - awaiting costs.
- No 6 Canopy and playground remodelling – Approximate costings - £400,000 plus £100,000 for landscaping.

Business Manager will organise the pre-planning meeting regarding number 6 with Planning, including Archaeology and Heritage side.

Wilby and Burnett will get tendered costs for items 2, 4 and 5 on the basis that the roofs will be LCVAP funded.

The LDBS scheme will be changing in 2020-2021. LDBS monies will now go into one pot for all schools and SJC will need to bid for money. This represents a risk and there is potential for the School to lose out compared with historic funding levels.

QUESTION: Will the School be introducing mixer taps to reduce bacteria?

ANSWER: That represents a temporary solution that would cost £10,000. There was a strong preference to invest more in a long-term solution. The funding would come from the SJC Foundation and City – contact Andrew Carter.

QUESTION: What is the expected source of funds for the toilet refurbishment?

ANSWER: The toilet refurbishment would come from the basic grant of £600,000.

QUESTION: What is the timescale?

ANSWER: Toilets and the dining room will go out to tender at the same time, Play Centre toilets possibly also, but this would be confirmed. The expectation is that work would be completed over the Easter holidays but maybe the Summer holidays.

Section 106 and Basic grant monies

The Business manager had meetings with the accountants in the City to discuss mainly the Basic grant monies and Section 106 monies and what can be taken from which area.

The Basic grant is purely capital spending and relates wholly to the bulge class and the accommodation of the additional children within the school. It has been agreed that the Toilets, Dining room, new Play centre toilets, lower playground and emergency lighting can come from this grant.

Section 106 is paid by developers to mitigate the negative effects of development where planning permission would not normally be granted. It was anticipated that there would be an additional demand for school places in the vicinity of the site where residential units were being put up. It has been agreed that the Canopy (split community and school), Library (school), visitor system/cctv/intercoms (split community and school) and Adventure cube (split over weeks of childrens centre use/school use) can come from this grant. Capital department have agreed in principle that these projects can go through. The school will be using the new Protocol to apply for this funding formally.

The School already had plans for the toilets. They were in discussions about the canopy and the dining room. All of these will go out to tender and the Business Manager would send in a proposal once plans were drafted. These will obviously be available to the Building working party first.

ACTION: Business Manager to share plans for toilets, canopy and dining room with governors once discussed with Building working party.

ACTION: Fuller descriptions were required by members in the City in relation to the two credit cards users (Graham Watson and Jo Wheeler).

ACTION: The Business Manager was working on a Lettings Policy for the next Committee meeting in February 2019.

Voluntary contributions for trips will be asked for in advance going forward. Costings will be undertaken prior to the trip being booked.

It was noted that the DfE guidance was for “voluntary contributions” but the School can still request payments in particular school journeys.

QUESTION: Is it voluntary if people can afford it?

ANSWER: it is voluntary for everyone, but the wording on letters will be changed going forward.

12. Contracts Update

There were a number of contracts to be looked at:

- SIMS Agora which was not satisfactory, the School was considering Parent Pay which appeared to provide more.
- The Catering contract.
- Hygienic removal of nappies and sanitary items - this was cancelled by previous Headteacher, and the School was considering Simply Washrooms, a more ecological company.
- Capita - did not meet the school’s needs; Herts for Learning and SIMS support were to be discussed.

ACTION: Business Manager to review contracts and report back to governors in February 2019.

13. Staff

13.1 Review of the staff performance management process

The review had been undertaken by the Performance Management Review Panel. Only one review outstanding, namely the Headteacher’s. The Panel consisted of the Chair, Rev LJ and HJ as well as one person from LDBS. Review was being arranged.

ACTION: Panel to complete Performance Management Review for Headteacher.

13.2 Recruitment

13.2.1 There was an advertisement out for a Year 4 teacher, deadline Friday 16 November 2018.

QUESTION Was the role part time or full time?

ANSWER: Both, preference full time, as the School was mindful of the needs of the children, ensuring a smooth transition; the expectations were high, and the candidate needed to fit with the school ethos.

In the meantime, staff had been redeployed to support, as the School were conscious not to let standards slip anywhere.

13.2.2 Two new staff were starting in the Childrens Centre, including one experienced Early Years practitioner.

13.3 Human Resources

13.3.1 A Premises Manager has been taken on until 31 August 2019 especially in light of the amount of projects and health and safety/fire risk assessment works that need to be completed. He will work 2 ½ days per week and the School shares him with St Peter's Docks.

14. School Meals

Refunds of school meal fees for the period April – July 2018

In the summer, the City agreed to pay for free school meals backdated to April 2018, however as parents had already paid for the meals in the summer term a refund was due. The City was therefore refunding £121.60 as a summer term refund payment to those parents who had fully paid for meals, depending on attendance. It was clarified that the sum represented the fact that there were 64 days during the term x £1.90 equalling £121.60. If the child has had no absences and there was no balance owing, then this is the sum the School aimed to refund. For those parents with unpaid dinner balances, the net balance would be repaid. The City and the Business Manager were reaching the end of a process to find the best way to refund parents. City would not normally transfer money to the School's private account which presented an issue. The following solution was considered: payments being sent by BACS to parents from the main City account - however each parent had to be set up as a supplier in the City which was costly. It was considered whether SIMS Agora can refund parents. The most likely solution was that each parent would be sent a cheque once absences and eligibility for free school meals had been checked against the figure. Conversations were ongoing and a decision would be made by the City.

The governors were informed that the Business Manager was looking at absences, and filling in the spreadsheet for each child, which was a complex process.

QUESTION: Will the refund reduce non-dinner debts to the School?

ANSWER: No, only outstanding dinner debts will be taken into account and not other debts (e.g. Play Centre).

QUESTION: Are parents still paying for meals?

ANSWER: The Business Manager had checked and parents now seemed aware that all school meals were being provided free to parents. Some were still paying but this would be refunded.

15. Report on Benchmarking Exercise

ZL and the Business Manager met to look and discuss the benchmarking figures for 2016/2017 in October 2018. Having analysed them, the figures were found to be slightly skewed, as two of the schools were found to be more than one form entry.

The School was attempting to do forward-thinking benchmarking, and looking at St Luke's and St Peter's primary schools to benchmark. The governors suggested Christ Church School on Brick Lane as another suitable benchmark, particularly given the close relationship held with this school.

ACTION: The Business Manager to approach Christ Church regarding benchmarking in addition to other identified schools.

16. Fire Risk Assessment update

The Fire Risk Assessment was undertaken in February and sent to the School in July by Tower Hamlets. It was noted that a considerable amount of work was to be done. The School started on the actions prioritised with high importance; as detailed below:

- Propane gas cylinders on the roof top to be removed;
- Various statutory certificates to be gathered together and sent to Tower Hamlets;
- Fire Doors;
- Fire safety signs and notices;
- Evacuation plan;
- Boiler room – remove, manage and monitor storage in boiler room;
- Entrance reception lobby stairwell – remove, manage and monitor;
- Emergency lighting;
- Install fire blankets in various locations;
- PEEPS review and fire evacuation plan;
- Boiler room area storage needs removing;
- Entrance reception area lobby stairwell had storage of boxes/combustibles which need removing;

Due to the cost associated with the necessary changes to make the School compliant, a staged approach would be adopted. To date the following work had been completed:

- Signage and fire blanket have been installed - £1300;
- Electrics - 36 sockets being installed (extension leads will no longer be used) and 24 mag locks checked and returned to working order - £5,910;
- The emergency lighting system was drained and a survey completed of the emergency lighting areas to identify non-compliant areas – the cost of this will be £16,770 according to the first quote. In the process of getting more quotes;
- Each new fire door will cost between £1,500 and £2,000. The Business Manager will arrange a fire door survey in due course.

It was noted that these works had not been budgeted for and may need to come from Reserves.

Working on the items that have to be resolved:

- The school did not have the correct level of lighting. When looking at replacing all lights, the cost was £27,000. LED lighting was considered as more cost-efficient. The governors suggested approaching Lightmongers Livery.

ACTION: The Business Manager to approach Lightmongers Livery regarding funding for more efficient classroom lighting.

17. GDPR compliance progress

It was noted staff attended a presentation on GDPR on Inset day in September where a number of aspects relating to GDPR were discussed, in particular how the School moved information around and when it needs to be sent to external parties. This was added to the annual Inset day agendas. Data mapping was complete. Privacy notices had gone out.

18. Any other business

18.1 Children's Centre SLA

It was noted that the Children's Centre SLA was not signed by governors at the last meeting as changes were requested, however it was imperative to have a signed document in order for funds to be released. The Headteacher and Business Manager had a meeting with the City and it was agreed that various changes would be made - KPIs would be added, the Finance section would be broadened and the weeks would be changed..

ACTION: Consider the Children's Centre SLA. The Head will review the new document and circulate to the governors via email by 30 November 2018 before the next FGB on 5 December 2018 if received; so it can be approved in principle on the agenda for 6 Dec 2018.

18.2 Crossing patrol

HJ was in contact with the developer Alkarim who had provided the section 106 monies from the Minorities development for the crossing patrol on Bevis Marks.

No Confidential business was discussed.