



WEST OXFORD C P SCHOOL

Ferry Hinksey Road
OXFORD
OX2 0BY

Tel: 01865 248862

Fax: 01865 203555

E-mail: headteacher.2533@west-oxford.oxon.sch.uk

VLE: www.klp.rm.com

Website: www.westoxfordschool.co.uk

Headteacher: Clare Bladen BA(Hons) PGCE, NPQH

MINUTES OF THE 2nd HUMAN AND PHYSICAL RESOURCES MEETING IN 2014/15 HELD AT SCHOOL ON MONDAY 2nd MARCH 2015 AT 6pm

RATIFIED BY HPR 24TH JUNE 2015

Present: Andrew Roland **AR** (Chair), David Seymour **DS**, Godfrey Cole **GC**, Clare Bladen (head teacher) **CB**, Colin Cook **CC**(until 7.50pm) ,also, Claire Maxwell **CM** (Chair of Governors) (until 7.30pm)

In attendance: Ursula Irvine (clerk) **UI** and Sue Bright **SB** (Bursar) for items 3 and 4

1. **Apologies for absence** - none

2. **Procedural items**

Quorum: The meeting was quorate.

Declaration of Interests relevant to agenda: none

Notification of any other urgent business : none

Recommendations for the next full governing body meeting: none

Summary of actions – to be carried out by the next HPR meeting, unless stated otherwise.

SECTION 4

CB to circulate draft budget by 27th March 2015.

AR, DS, CB and CM (the budget sub-committee) will meet with **SB** at 8am Friday 17th April to review and progress the draft budget. (Any queries/suggestions to be raised in advance of the meeting so far as possible.)

SECTION 5

CB to ask Jo Carr to send out approved letter concerning parent pay debts, and ask her to prioritise efforts to chase outstanding debts, advising her of the governors' concern about these. A target was set of reducing parent pay debts to £1,500 by the 22nd May half term holidays.

CM to review the level of parent pay debt at 22nd May 2015 for further discussion at HPR3.

AR to prepare letter to OCC from the governors concerning the windows outstanding for replacement

CB to provide **AR** with copy of the last such letter sent to OCC and to instruct Matt Bird to take photos to be enclosed with the letter.

CB to establish options and obtain 3 quotes by the end of April 2015 for a fire door for the hall and circulate to HPR.

CB also to get quotes by the end of April 2015 for renovation of staff room (including kitchen and toilets) for circulation to HPR with a view to work being undertaken over the

Signed

Date.....

HPR minutes, page 1 of 7

summer holidays. The initial available budget is £11,000 so the project may need to be undertaken in stages, but CB to obtain quotes also covering the possibility that further funds are freed up as a result of the fire door work proving cheaper than anticipated.

CB to action £21,000 ICT spend.

CB to liaise further with Matt Bird with a view to undertaking a critical incident drill before the Easter holidays.

CB to discuss with Carol at OCC HR the objectives, options and procedure concerning possible reorganisation of roles in the school office. **CB** to report to HPR3 with a clear proposal, with the aim of any changes being introduced by September 2015.

CB and Peter Smith to update and improve policies spread sheet.

CB and **CC** to undertake further staff stress survey (which had been proposed to staff for February 2015) and report results to HPR3.

DS to undertake a joint governor visit with a member of ESW.

SECTION 6

CB to finalise all policies approved, (drugs, allegations of abuse, charging and remissions, H&S and welfare, debt, freedom of information, admission to nursery) subject to implementing final corrections and amendments, and ensure these are formally adopted by the school, accessible, and implemented.

CB and **AR** to liaise to confirm which policies remain outstanding with a view to **CB** preparing these for circulation prior to HPR3 and **AR** allocating them to HPR members for review.

SECTION 7

CB to get costings for smaller expenditure items with a view to work being undertaken over the summer if funds are available.

SECTION 9

CB to press to get library finished and open for use.

CB to undertake appraisals during the fortnight commencing 16th March and will liaise with SB concerning anticipated pay increases. Targets to be set in July ahead of September 2015.

3. Budget Monitoring

The surplus figure with four weeks left to run in the financial year was £83,000. SB noted that the approach of other schools to the level of surplus they seek to maintain varies. A carry forward of 8 percent or more must be justified – this may well be possible, for example where major expenditure is planned but dependent upon something else happening first – such as if the fire door work is delayed in order to be done at the same time as the replacement of the windows. However, the school would have to be careful that in a year's time it is not still running a surplus in excess of 8 percent. She confirmed that it is sufficient to have quotes or clear plans in place in respect of spending the excess surplus – in that case by the time it is investigated the school is likely to be able to demonstrate a definite commitment to the further spending. SB confirmed that the school has tended to have a healthy surplus but has never so far been asked to justify its surplus so is not currently regarded as a “serial offender” such that a real risk of budget being clawed would arise.

CB confirmed that she meets with Martin Bayliss of OCC each year to go through the budget in detail and if there were any concerns about the level of surplus they would be raised in this meeting. This year's meeting is likely to take place before the budget sub-committee meeting of 17th April. The Schools Financial Value Standards (SFVS) certificate is prepared by SB and signed off by CM as chair of the governors. CB said that

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Date.....

HPR minutes, page 2 of 7

again this is something she would go through with Martin Bayliss and she was confident that the governors could rely on SB to guide them in respect of it.

With regard to expenditure and income figures in the budget monitoring report, SB confirmed that more than expected had been spent but deliberately in order to reduce the surplus (for example on maintenance projects). A long overdue invoice had also finally been received which affected the figures. When asked whether the school had got all of its expected income to date, SB confirmed that some further income is due from catering and the ASC. There had also been a problem with the solar panel meter and not all money due from Global Energy in respect of the period when the meter was not working properly is expected to be recovered.

SB confirmed that the capital budget is currently at £12,000 with a further £6,000 anticipated in the coming year. This can be carried forward for only 3 years so the school needs to consider spending it. It could be allocated to the fire door, refurbishment or ICT subject to a de minimus figure of £2,000.

4. Draft Budget

The budget for the coming year needs to be prepared within the context of a three year balanced budget. SB reported that the preliminary funding figures are now in the budget planner but some of the income figures remain either unknown or uncertain so there is currently a limit to what can usefully be achieved in working on the new budget. It is, however, possible to start to build up a cost picture based on this year's costs. CB noted that staffing is the biggest cost. Normally if any teachers are intending to leave they will give notice by Easter, so after that point it should be possible to make a reasonably accurate projection of staff costs for next year. She confirmed that she could anticipate reasonably accurately what the likely pay awards for staff would be although these would only be determined later on. Some teacher's salaries would be plateauing out, whilst if any teachers left it was likely that they would be replaced by more junior teachers on lower pay scales. It is already known that three statemented children will be leaving the school this year so that will impact on allocation of TAs. Planning can also progress in relation to teaching staff for reception from September. Currently the funding figures are based on 207 pupils and it was confirmed that 210 pupils would reflect total capacity with each class at its maximum number.

SB and CB will work on the new budget and circulate a draft budget by 27th March 2015.

Action CB: AR, DS, CB and CM (the budget sub-committee) will then meet with SB at 8am Friday 17th April to review and progress the draft budget. (Any queries/suggestions to be raised in advance of the meeting so far as possible.) **Action: AR, DS, CB and CM**

5. Minutes of 23rd October 2014 meeting and matters arising

Actions had been performed, were on going or were covered elsewhere in the meeting save as noted below:

Write off policy and dinner money debts: The write off policy and pro forma letter to parents concerning outstanding dinner money payments were approved. There is concern, however, over the high sum of dinner money debts – currently approximately £3,400. 13 parents owe between £50-£100, 24 parents owe £11-50. So whilst parents may not view their individual debts as particularly large, the cumulative effect is significant. 3 sets of parents have already been referred to legal services to pursue repayment. Following its approval the letter will be sent out to all other parents owing dinner money. GC and CM had discussed with Jo Carr (JC) how best to manage the situation and

Signed

Date.....

HPR minutes, page 3 of 7

achieve a sustained reduction in the level of debts. The letter asks parents to keep dinner money in credit but it was felt that a cultural change is needed and the letter is seen as just the start of the process. It was queried whether JC needs help in tackling the debts as there will need to be a persistent effort to follow on from the letter. JC feels that she is the best person to deal with this given that she knows most parents personally and knows how to have the necessary conversations with them. The difficulty will be whether she is able to prioritise dealing with this in the context of the other demands on her time. CB favoured leaving the matter with JC to deal with. There was concern that some extra resource or new strategy would be necessary to turn the situation around but it was agreed to see how JC gets on in tackling the debts first. A target was set of reducing parent pay debts to £1,500 by the 22nd May half term holidays. CB will confirm to JC that the letter should now be issued, and ask her to prioritise reducing the level of debt in line with the target. CM will review progress by 22nd May and report to HPR3 when it will be considered what if any further action is required. **Action CB and CM:**

Windows: Kathy Wilcox had heard that OCC do not have funding to replace the outstanding windows. OCC have offered an assurance to CB that the windows remain on their "to do" list, but no date for undertaking the work has been given. The concern is that there is insufficient funding for all the work that OCC is committed to undertaking. It was confirmed that whilst repair costs fall to the school, replacement costs are the responsibility of OCC and this is not something that the school could or should cover from its own budget. It had been suggested that the school should consider putting pressure on OCC by going to the Oxford Mail which strategy had apparently worked for Rose Hill School in getting a broken boiler replaced. It was agreed that AR would write a further letter to OCC on behalf of the governors. CB will provide the last such letter to him as a starting point and she will also ask Matt Bird to take some photographs of the worst /most dangerous problems to be enclosed with the letter. It was suggested that the letter should state that if the work is not undertaken promptly, OCC may end up with a Rose Hill situation to deal with – or worse, give the H&S risk of glass falling out of the windows.

Action AR and CB:

Fire Door: It was agreed that it is essential to progress this. The cost was estimated at up to £20,000. It is difficult to come up with a feasible plan since a door in the back wall, which is still awaiting replacement windows, would lead out into the fire escape. Adding a door to the side wall or corner may impact on the windows that have already been replaced but may be unavoidable – it would at least mean that the fire door could be progressed without having to wait for OCC to proceed with the back wall window work and could provide a useful alternative entrance for the hall for after school users. CB to establish options and obtain 3 quotes by the end of April 2015 for a fire door for the hall and circulate to HPR. **Action CB:**

Extra Spending: It was agreed that aiming for a 5% surplus carry forward would be reasonable to help supplement funding in future years and so keep the three year forecast out of deficit. This would free up approximately £40,000 from the current surplus to spend now together with £12,000 capital. The priorities for significant spending were identified as ICT, the fire door, and renovation of the staff room.

There was further discussion as to whether replacement of the school gate should be included in this list but it was decided that no provision for spending should be made for this. Introducing a more secure, electronic gate would cause major logistical difficulties for after school clubs and would require a change in culture and ethos in needing to clear the playground promptly at the end of the school day, which would be unwelcome. The main concern with the gate was not of outsiders gaining access to the school but of children

getting out from the playground onto the road which could best be prevented though adult supervision.

The ICT wish list involving proposed expenditure totalling £21,000 was approved.

On the basis of the £20,000 estimate for the fire door work, this left £11,000 to cover at least a first stage of refurbishment for the staff room. CB will get quotes by the end of April 2015 for this for circulation to HPR with a view to work being undertaken over the summer holiday, the quotes to take into account the possibility that further funds are freed up as a result of the fire door work proving cheaper than anticipated, such that it may be possible to undertake more if not all of the refurbishment in one go. **Action CB:**

Critical Incident Drill: This has not yet been undertaken. CB has been discussing it with Matt Bird. There are very many different possible scenario and they are concerned to get the drill right and not to scare the children. CB committed to getting it done before the Easter Holidays. **Action CB:**

Possible office reorganisation: CB had had initial discussions with relevant staff concerning current roles in the office and the possibility of creating a business manager role and what terms and conditions (including with regard to hours) and responsibilities that might involve. CB now needs to give further thought to what exactly is needed and discuss with Carol at OCC HR the objectives, options and procedure concerning the possible reorganisation of roles. CB will then report to HPR3 with a clear proposal, with the aim of any changes being introduced by September 2015. The implications of possible changes will therefore need to be taken into account in planning the new budget. In particular the question remains as to whether a new role may be created or simply an adjustment to existing roles. If a new role is created then it is envisaged that this would need to be advertised externally. The job description and objectives would need to be very clear. There was discussion as to the extent to which a business manager role would/should actually involve responsibility for strategy. There was concern firstly that it may not necessarily be appropriate for all of the more mundane office work, such as dealing with invoices, to be reallocated elsewhere, let alone to SB, and that an inflated idea should not be created of the role's strategic importance. – CB is responsible for strategy and arguably the point of the role would be to free her up to focus more on strategy not to delegate that responsibility. A business manager would probably, though, sit on the SLT. CB envisaged that in any event SB's services will be retained, albeit perhaps on a reduced basis. She provides a helpful overview of the school's finances, is objective and has valued experience and knowledge of other schools.

Policies: CB and Peter Smith to update and improve policies spread sheet.

Stress survey: CC reported that his meeting with staff to discuss the stress survey results had gone reasonably well. Staff said that mostly problems arise from factors over which they recognise that the school has no control, such as changes in the national curriculum. No particular suggestions were made by staff for alleviating work stressors. CC had proposed that a further stress survey be undertaken in February 2015, so he and CB would need to instigate this. **Action CB and CC:**

Governor visits: DS to liaise with Jen Crouch asking her to nominate an ESW member for a joint governor visit, and to undertake the visit by HPR3.

The minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

6. Policies

The following policies had been reviewed and were discussed and approved by HPR subject to final proof-reading and minor amendments to be implemented by CB, who will then ensure that the policies are formally adopted, accessible and implemented by the school:

- Drugs policy;
- Allegations against teaching and non-teaching staff;
- Charging and remissions;
- H&S and welfare;
- Debt;
- Freedom of Information;
- Admission to the nursery.

Action CB:

CB answered various queries arising from the policies and how these operated in practice, including any areas of concern for compliance.

CB mentioned that Laura Cheeseman has updated the nursery handbook which will include details of the admission policy. She confirmed that OCC is directly responsible for admissions from reception upwards.

CB and AR will liaise to confirm which policies remain outstanding with a view to CB preparing these for circulation prior to HPR3 and AR allocating them to HPR members for review. **Action CB and AR:**

7. Maintenance

Beyond the larger matters for expenditure already discussed, CB will get costings for any smaller maintenance requirements with a view to these being dealt with over the summer if sufficient funds are available. **Action CB:** This could include, for example, new floor covering for the nursery rooms. The possibility of better enclosing the Year 2 classroom which is currently open to the corridor will be kept under review, although CB was concerned that whilst this should make the classroom quieter, it may also make it too dark.

8. Health and Safety

CC had undertaken a H&S visit which had thrown up no major concerns although he had flagged up some minor issues to be addressed.

9. AOB

(i) Peter Smith (PS) Appointment:

CB gave positive feedback in respect of PS's appointment and the role he is undertaking on the SLT.

(ii) Reception teaching staff:

CB reported that the job share arrangement in reception is working well. It is planned to last until the end of the academic year, but the school may look to continue it beyond then. A fee will be payable if the agency teacher is employed by the school direct although the sum payable will reduce the longer the agency contract continues in the meantime.

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Date.....

HPR minutes, page 6 of 7

(iii) Library

CB reported that the library is close to being ready. Matt Cuttle has ownership of the library project. CB will use the next staff meeting to focus on getting the library finished and open for use as soon as possible and will report back to HPR3. **Action CB:**

(iv) Staff Appraisals

CB said that appraisals are scheduled for the fortnight of 16th March 2015 and she will liaise with SB concerning any anticipated salary increases to feed into the budget. She aims to set targets in July, ahead of September 2015. **Action CB:**

10. Date of next meeting: Wednesday 24 June 2015 at 6pm for next full HPR meeting.

Budget sub-committee (AR, DS, CB, CM, and SB) to meet on Friday 17 April 2015 at 8am

The meeting closed at 8.30pm.