

DRINGHOUSES PRIMARY SCHOOL



Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting (virtual) held on Wednesday, 25th November 2020 at 8.45am

Present: Ben Sutton (Headteacher) Matt Boxall (Acting Chair)
Pat Wilson Claire Neal (SBM)
Claire Scott-South

In Attendance: Dawn Gledhill (Peripatetic Bursar)
Samantha Vince (Observer, CYC Governance Support and Development Service)

		Action																					
1.	Election of Committee Chair There were no nominations for the position of Chair of the committee. It was agreed that the Chair would be elected at the next Committee meeting. Mr Boxall agreed to act as Chair for this committee meeting.	Agenda																					
2.	Approval of the Committee Terms of Reference 2020-21 There were no comments and the governors approved the Committee Terms of Reference.																						
3.	Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest Apologies were received, with consent, from Diane Grayson and Michael Noakes. There were no declarations of interest.																						
4.	Minutes of the Last Meeting 27th January 2020 - Previously Distributed. The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting and were approved to be signed by the Chair.																						
5.	Action Points and Matters Arising <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th><th>Action</th><th>Status</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1.</td><td>Update Terms of Reference.</td><td>Completed.</td></tr> <tr> <td>2.</td><td>The Bursar to circulate updated monitoring report with correct figures (Carried forward).</td><td>Completed.</td></tr> <tr> <td>3.</td><td>Updates to be added to the following areas of the SFVS: 4, 20, 21, 23, 24 and 28 Headteacher to add her notes.</td><td>Completed.</td></tr> <tr> <td>4.</td><td>Send a suggested annual schedule of business for the Finance Committee to the Chair for review.</td><td>Completed.</td></tr> <tr> <td>5.</td><td>The SBM to look into cancelling of secure emails for Governors.</td><td>Completed.</td></tr> <tr> <td>6.</td><td>The SBM to circulate her report and calculations on catering in terms of intake and FSM income.</td><td>Completed.</td></tr> </tbody> </table>		Action	Status	1.	Update Terms of Reference.	Completed.	2.	The Bursar to circulate updated monitoring report with correct figures (Carried forward).	Completed.	3.	Updates to be added to the following areas of the SFVS: 4, 20, 21, 23, 24 and 28 Headteacher to add her notes.	Completed.	4.	Send a suggested annual schedule of business for the Finance Committee to the Chair for review.	Completed.	5.	The SBM to look into cancelling of secure emails for Governors.	Completed.	6.	The SBM to circulate her report and calculations on catering in terms of intake and FSM income.	Completed.	
	Action	Status																					
1.	Update Terms of Reference.	Completed.																					
2.	The Bursar to circulate updated monitoring report with correct figures (Carried forward).	Completed.																					
3.	Updates to be added to the following areas of the SFVS: 4, 20, 21, 23, 24 and 28 Headteacher to add her notes.	Completed.																					
4.	Send a suggested annual schedule of business for the Finance Committee to the Chair for review.	Completed.																					
5.	The SBM to look into cancelling of secure emails for Governors.	Completed.																					
6.	The SBM to circulate her report and calculations on catering in terms of intake and FSM income.	Completed.																					

6.	<p>Budget Monitoring Reports - Previously Distributed.</p> <p><i>Revised Budget</i> The Peripatetic Bursar was invited to discuss the key variances in the report for period 6 (September).</p> <p>The Bursar highlighted the total net movement of the in-year surplus balance from the 20/21 Start Budget to the 20/21 Revised Budget deficit balance as a result of increased expenditure of £97,000. It was confirmed that £47,000 of this was now committed expenditure which would be discussed in item 12 on this agenda.</p> <p>A large variance which was highlighted was an increase of £48,000 in staffing. This was explained as a mixture of the pay award being greater than was allocated in the budget and additional hours to support the new class bubbles requirements for Covid-19. It was noted that the original budget had been agreed before Covid-19 and in the revised budget, additional staff costs had been included to support Covid-19 requirements until the end of March 2021.</p> <p>Although there had been an increase of £29,000 for the new in-house catering staff, this had been off-set by savings on managed service costs as catering was now being done by the school.</p> <p>Other increases in spend were highlighted such as cleaning and learning resources costs in response to Covid-19 requirements. However the school had been able to claim a small amount of this back.</p> <p><i>The Acting Chair asked if there was an outbreak at school and some bubbles had to close, would there be any additional expenses incurred or was everything set up now (such as licences, staff, etc).</i></p> <p>The Headteacher confirmed the majority of set-up costs had now all been covered, with the exception being if a staff member had to go home and cover was required. He did note if this was the case, the bubble would likely also be sent home so extra supply staff may not be needed.</p> <p><u>Summary</u> The revised budget showed a predicted deficit of £30,000. The Bursar was not too concerned as £47,000 was as a result of "Committed Reserves" expenditure that had not been planned at the Start Budget but had now been considered at the Revised Budget. Together with the £48,000 increased staffing costs as a result of the national pay awards beyond that which had been provided in the Start Budget and the increase in staff hours due to the impact of Covid-19, the school was quite fortunate to have a reasonable level of school reserves which could be used as required.</p> <p><i>Forecast Budget – previously distributed</i> Questions were invited from the governors.</p> <p><i>A governor queried which code the in-house catering staff sat under on the budget forecast sheet and it was confirmed the costs were listed under the catering supplies code.</i></p> <p><i>A governor noted the Income figures had been significantly reduced (apart from the after school club) and asked whether the assumption had been made that other lettings would not re-start in this budget year.</i> The Bursar confirmed this was a pessimistic forecast which only included the after school club income.</p>	
7.	<p>Covid 19 Costs – previously distributed</p> <p>The School Business Manager (SBM) was asked to review the costs attributable to Covid-19.</p> <p><u>March-July 2020</u> - £9,000 had been spent which mainly covered additional utility costs for opening</p>	

	<p>in the Easter holidays and May half term, as well as additional staffing costs in the summer term to set up bubbles. It was noted that £1,500 of this had been claimed back, but not more costs could be claimed back now in relation to Covid-19.</p> <p><u>September- end October 2020</u> – most additional costs related to extra staffing for cleaners, Teaching Assistants and in the office, as well as cleaning materials. The net costs was confirmed as £3,000 to the school, which would not be able to be claimed back unless rules were changed in future. It was anticipated that there would be on-going costs of £3,000 per half term to maintain the arrangements for Covid-19.</p> <p>The Acting Chair noted the additional costs were not as high as feared and there had clearly been good stewardship of the school finances in very difficult circumstances.</p>	
8.	<p>Catering Update - previously distributed</p> <p>The School Business Manager was asked to review the costs attributable to bringing catering in-house.</p> <p>It was noted there had been a lot of changes to the costs as when the business plan had been created, the pandemic was not expected. In order to satisfy new rules to cope with Covid-19, additional equipment had been bought to enable meals to be served in classrooms.</p> <p>The first term showed a slightly reduced income, possibly because parents wanted a hot provision and parent confidence with the new kitchen was naturally cautious. However the school had undertaken a lot of parental surveys and had received plenty of feedback on the menus. Numbers of children having school dinners had now increased dramatically and were higher than when catering was out-sourced (from 155 meals a day with the caterer to 175 meals a day with the in-house catering). There had been no complaints about value for money and everyone was happy with the quality of meals being provided.</p> <p><i>The governors noted this was really good to hear as it had been a big risk to the school to bring catering in-house and congratulated all those staff who had been instrumental in setting this up. They liked that the school had been prepared to listen and respond to feedback and noted this was reflected in the increased numbers of children now enjoying school meals.</i></p>	
9.	<p>Capital Plan – previously distributed</p> <p>The School Business Manager was asked to review the capital plan.</p> <p>It was noted that this summer, proactive repairs and maintenance and the addition of a multi-use room (for the after school club) had been completed by City of York Council (CYC). The second part of the works were planned for next summer and included a new library, completing moving the main office to the front of school and the kitchen refurbishment.</p> <p>It was noted that the work the school had planned to spend their capital budget on this year had been moved to the following year and would be paid for by CYC so the school was reviewing how it could spend the capital budget in a different way this year.</p> <p><i>A governor queried what the contingency plan was if there was a problem in the main kitchen now the catering had been brought in-house.</i></p> <p>It was confirmed that although there was a small kitchen at school, this was used for teaching and the after school club and would not be big enough to produce all the school meals needed. The emergency plan was to provide sandwiches for a day whilst any broken equipment was fixed. The SBM confirmed some capital budget had been ring-fenced in case any equipment needed to be fixed or replaced quickly.</p>	
10.	<p>Charity Commission Return – previously distributed</p> <p>The School Business Manager was asked to review the Charity Commission Return.</p>	

	<p>The SBM confirmed the Charity Commission Return had been completed which showed the record of financial history of the School Fund, which was under the £10,000 limit.</p> <p><i>A governor challenged that the stated objective of this fund was ‘to advance the education of the pupils at Dringhouses school’ and asked how pizzas and a teacher’s tea and coffee fund contributed to this, as without a narrative to explain it, it looked ‘odd’.</i></p> <p>The Headteacher explained these items supported staff well-being and helped to maintain staff morale in a difficult time, which in turn benefited the children. The governors were supportive of this activity and requested a comment be added on these entries to confirm they supported staff well-being.</p>	SBM
11.	<p>Review of Voluntary Fund Account (School Fund) 2019-20 report – previously distributed</p> <p>The School Business Manager noted this item was similar to item 10 and confirmed that the Fund hadn’t been audited in the past few years. The audit had now been completed and no issues had been reported by the auditors.</p>	
12.	<p>Proposals for how to spend the committed revenue balance of £40,000 in the budget</p> <p>The School Business Manager was asked to review what the proposals were for the £40,000 of committed revenue in the budget.</p> <p><i>Revenue to capital transfer</i></p> <p>Partly for kitchen contingencies and partly to re-develop the school’s outside space in the future, perhaps for a MUGA area or to lay some astro turf where the wood chippings currently were, as well as to re-surface the playground which the after-school club planned to use as a car park.</p> <p><i>Staffing</i></p> <p>The Headteacher confirmed the majority of the £24,000 of catch-up funding received from the government would be spent on staffing to facilitate the re-structure of PPA time as well as on catch up interventions. The Deputy Headteacher confirmed the catch-up plan was in the final stages and some staffing changes would be required to support the implementation of this after Christmas.</p> <p><i>New library</i></p> <p>The SBM confirmed the school would be given a new library next summer which would be a real selling point for the school. The school suggested they may use some of their capital funding to add to the CYC budget to make the library more special. The SBM confirmed they were planning to approach a local company who had produced some innovative designs in other schools to discuss a design.</p> <p><i>The governors expressed concern that allowing the after school club to use the playground would incur costs for the school to re-surface it.</i></p> <p>The SBM confirmed it wasn’t being used by them at the moment and it wasn’t clear whether they would need to. It was confirmed the playground was opened up for other lettings to use as there were so few spaces in the vicinity for parking and it made the school more attractive to rentals, but this could be reviewed.</p> <p><i>The governors queried whether the playground was used as an outside space by the after school club and the SBM confirmed they used other areas in school for this. The playground would be used as a car park for dropping off and picking up children. The governors raised concerns about the Health & Safety implications of using the playground for this as well as the potential cost of re-surfacing the playground.</i></p> <p>It was agreed to review the decision to let the after school club use the playground, given the governors’ concerns, as it was not written into their user agreement at the moment.</p>	SBM

13.	Policy Review Freedom of Information It was noted this was a Statutory policy and it had remained unchanged. No comments were raised by the governors and they approved the Freedom of Information policy. Delegated Authorities No comments were raised by the governors. Governors approved the Delegated Authorities.	
14.	Any Other Business No other business was raised.	
15.	Dates and time of next meeting: 20th January, 2021 at 8.45am	

The meeting closed at 9.58am

APPROVED AT THE DRINGHOUSES FINANCE COMMITTEE ON 28TH APRIL 2021 – NO SIGNATURE DUE TO COVID RESTRICTIONS.

Mr Matthew Boxall (Acting Chair)

Date

DRINGHOUSES PRIMARY SCHOOL
Action Plan following the Meeting of the Finance Committee
held on Wednesday, 25th November 2020

Action		Item	Responsible	Timescale
1.	Add comment to the entries of pizza and tea and coffee fund on the School Fund to explain they supported staff well-being	10	SBM (CN)	By the end of December
2.	Review the decision to allow the after school club to use the school playground as car parking	12	SBM (CN)	By the end of December

Items for next FGB:

None were raised.

Items for next Finance Committee:

- Election of committee Chair