

The Swanage School

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FINANCE & PREMISES COMMITTEE

Held on Wednesday 18 March 2020, 5.30pm

Present: William Knight (Chair), Jenny Maraspin (Acting Headteacher), Nicola Newman
 Present via remote access: Tim Marcus, Amanda Rowley, Isobel Tooley
 In attendance: Anna Carvisiglia (Business Manager), Sue Fletcher (Clerk), Kay Lawton (Acting Deputy Headteacher)

Item		Action	Lead	By
	The meeting started at 5.42pm. Several governors were in attendance via remote access due to the Coronavirus outbreak.			
FP 4.1	Apologies for Absence Apologies had been received from Jessica Starmer.			
FP 4.2	Declarations of Interest There were no declarations of interest or conflict with any agenda item.			
FP 4.3	Minutes of the Last Meeting The minutes and confidential minutes of the meeting held on 5 th February 2020 were confirmed as an accurate record and signed.			
FP 4.4	Matters Arising & Actions <u>FP 3.5 (FP 6.9 2018/19) Bank Accounts</u> AC reported that the Lloyds Bank Account was now open, for which AC as Business Manager and JM as Acting Headteacher were signatories. The debit card was in AC's name. A paying-in book and cheque book had been received. An application was pending for online banking, with AC and the Finance Assistant Karen Goode having authority to process online payments. AC confirmed that if any payments are made to herself, JM would authorise the paperwork, and payments to JM would need authorising by a governor.			

<p>AGREED: WK as Chair of the Finance & Premises Committee would be added as a signatory. If a further signatory is needed, the Chair of Governors could also be added.</p> <p>Governors were content that the process for ensuring appropriate use of the use of the debit card were satisfactory; that is, with the Finance Assistant making payments and the Business Manager checking the payments, plus scrutiny by the Auditor.</p> <p>AC explained that the current bank, CAF Bank, did not have provision for money to be put on-call either short or long term. In response to a question, AC confirmed that there is a CAF deposit account, but that the interest is poor. Lloyds Bank had provision for money to be placed on-call, although details were not yet known.</p> <p>AC requested guidance from governors on how much to hold in each account. The risks of splitting money over several accounts to benefit from the UK Government's 85k protection scheme needed to be weighed up against earning interest from putting money on-call.</p> <p>The Chair expressed that he would like the Committee to see a review of the marketplace on where the best returns could be achieved, before committing funds to the Lloyds on-call market, for example other building societies or banks that might give a better return. However, another governor felt that the return on funds is not a top priority at the current time, given uncertainties for the economy and the banking sector that may occur due to the Coronavirus crisis, and suggested that some funds should be kept in reserve in the CAF bank, whilst allowing some to be put on-call through Lloyds.</p> <p>AGREED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - That reserves equal to the Maintenance Fund and Staff Absence Fund should be retained in the CAF bank. - That other reserves should be put on-call with Lloyds whilst undertaking further research, subject to knowing what the conditions for on-call funds are (AC to circulate when known). - That cash should be transferred to Lloyds to operate day-to-day business through Lloyds. <p>NOTED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - That the ESFA will need to be informed the Trust has a new bank account. <p><u>FP 3.5 (FP 2.6) Health & Safety Policy</u> The updates had been completed and the policy would be republished.</p>	<p>Circulate on-call info.</p> <p>ESFA notification</p>	<p>AC</p> <p>AC</p>	<p>Apr '20</p> <p>Apr '20</p>
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	<p><u>FP 3.8.2 Catering</u> AC reported that 26% of students regularly having school lunches are entitled to free school meals (76 students are entitled to FSM, 5 of whom regularly do not have lunch).</p> <p><u>FP 3.9 Annual Contracts Review</u> The Clerk confirmed that the subscription to Dorset Governor Services was no longer being paid and so could be removed from the list of contracted services.</p>	Update list	AC	Apr '20
FP 4.5	<p>Reports [JM and KL were not present during this item, which was taken after the items following.]</p> <p>I. Business Manager A written report had been circulated, on which AC asked for any questions.</p> <p>i) <u>Budget monitoring</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Pupil premium</u>: A governor asked why pupil premium income was lower than anticipated, noting that the first two instalments of funding are based on the figures from the previous year's census, known when the budget is completed, and therefore that it should be possible to predict with some accuracy. She also asked if the funding had been affected by previously identified incorrect data in relation to the number of Year 7 students who attract the pupil premium. AC reported that the figures for the number of pupil premium students come from other staff members and she confirmed the Year 7 correction had been made for the January census for next year's funding. The Chair suggested that as it should be the January census data that informs the budget, the variance indicated that this had not been done accurately. He asked if there may have been clawback (e.g. if students had left the school). AC would revisit pupil premium funding to investigate the variance more closely. - <u>Trips</u>: Governors observed that it is likely that Challenge Week in July will have to be cancelled due to Coronavirus and asked if any activity or accommodation deposits will be lost. AC had not yet looked at this and would also see if any cancellation fees might be covered by the insurance. 	Clarify	AC	Apr '20
		Consider	AC	Apr '20

<p>- <u>Exam fees</u>: Noting that there is a large overspend against budget on exam fees, a governor asked if the budget could have been more accurate given that it is known how many students will take each exam. AC reported that the budget had been provided to her by the Exams Officer and that she will ask him for an explanation. Governors asked for this to be a learning point for next year given that it had been significantly underestimated.</p> <p>A governor reported that breaking news from the Government was that all examinations had been cancelled for 2020 due to the coronavirus. AC noted that she will assess the impact on fees when looking at the budget outturn, although suspected that processing and administration costs would mean full refunds would not be given to schools.</p> <p>ii) <u>Balance sheet</u> Received, no questions.</p> <p>iii) <u>Key performance indicators</u> Received, no questions.</p> <p>iv) <u>Cashflow</u> Received, no questions.</p> <p>v) <u>ESFA funding allocation</u> Information on the General Annual Grant for 2020/21 had been circulated, on which there were no questions.</p>	Clarify	AC	Apr '20
<p>2. Premises AC reported that the new Facilities Manager has settled in well.</p> <p>In respect of leaks in two of the classrooms, governors advised that records be reviewed as there had been previously identified design faults in the building, which had caused leaks and which Kier should have rectified, to ensure it is not a recurrence of the problem.</p> <p>A governor expressed concern over plans to dig up selected paving stones to plant trees at the front of the School, asking whether the effect of roots on the rest of the paving had been considered. AC confirmed she had asked this question and had been reassured that roots would</p>	Assess impact on budget	AC	Apr '20
<p>A governor expressed concern over plans to dig up selected paving stones to plant trees at the front of the School, asking whether the effect of roots on the rest of the paving had been considered. AC confirmed she had asked this question and had been reassured that roots would</p>	Check with expert	AC	Apr '20

	<p>not be problematic given the type of tree planned, however agreed that this should be checked with a qualified person.</p> <p>3. Data Protection An annual report had been circulated.</p> <p>Governors asked whether it had been discovered who had obtained access to the HR filing cabinet. AC reported that it had been accessed by children of a member of staff who had been waiting in the office. Governors suggested that children should not be permitted or left unsupervised in offices where there is sensitive data, or that office staff must ensure data is locked away.</p> <p>4. Health & Safety Governor AC reported that the H&S Governor had completed a thorough inspection on 28th February 2020, a summary of which had been circulated. The Chair asked if it was known whether items without a completion date had in fact been completed. AC thought there were probably outstanding things to follow-up on in relation to these items before they can be marked as completed.</p>			
FP 4.6	<p>Management Information System A business case for moving the management information system (MIS) from Progresso to Arbor had been circulated several weeks prior to the meeting. A number of questions had been raised by governors and answered in advance, in preparation for a decision.</p> <p>AC confirmed that Arbor is the preferred choice due to its superior functionality, having also looked at other alternatives, and noted that there is a two term implementation period.</p> <p>In response to questions at the meeting, AC and JM confirmed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - From an educational management perspective, Arbor would deliver a high level of functionality and was superior to Progresso in analysing data, sharing information and reporting, and should save significant time for such activities. The interface and the parent-facing unit were also impressive; the latter would streamline communication to parents. - Annual running costs are on par with Progresso. The one-off set-up fee had been negotiated downwards to £5k and would include some free training. 			

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Auditor had confirmed the set-up cost could be capitalised if wished, which would spread the cost over, say, 5 years. <p>APPROVED the cost of moving the MIS from Progresso to Arbor, noting that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The required 90 days' notice should be served to Progresso immediately to ensure additional costs are not incurred. - A decision on whether to capitalise the set-up cost would be deferred until the budget outturn is completed. 	Serve notice and commence with Arbor	AC	Mar '20
		Revisit	F&P	May '20
FP 4.7	<p>Lettings APPROVED the proposed increase in charges, noting that on most of the available facilities these represented a 2-3% increase rounded to the nearest 25p.</p> <p>It was confirmed that most regular groups and upcoming events had already cancelled due to the coronavirus crisis, and that the School would have to cancel remaining bookings should the decision be made to close schools, which appeared likely. This would represent a significant drop in income from lettings, although it was recognised that some overheads and other costs such as lighting, printing etc would decrease as a result of a school closure. The weekly loss of income from lettings would be in the region of £775 in term-time and £240 in holiday weeks, in addition to loss of income from known events of £2.3k. Depending on how long the school is closed, the lost income could therefore easily be in the region of £10k or more. This would be reflected in the budget outturn calculations.</p>	Update budget outturn	AC	May '20
FP 4.8	<p>Policies [[JM and KL were not present during this item, which was taken after the item following]</p> <p>I. <u>Reserves Policy</u> APPROVED the proposed policy subject to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Removing reference to the Business Manager having responsibility for ensuring compliance with the School's policies and procedures, replacing this with a statement limited to responsibility for implementing the reserves policy (but not for hitting targets). - Replacing reference to a "capital maintenance" schedule with "capital and maintenance schedule" (meaning the schedule already in place for identifying items for replacement into future years). - Removing a stray heading on p.2 	Update & publish	Clerk	Mar '20

	<p>2. <u>Freedom of Information Policy</u> APPROVED as proposed.</p>	Re-publish	Clerk	Mar '20
FP 4.9	<p>AUDIT COMMITTEE</p> <p>1. <u>Risk register review</u> Deferred, although noted that the committees and the full board had considered the risks under their remits, and changes had been incorporated into the Risk Register. The Chair of the Student Committee had circulated an extract from the Student Committee minutes which outlined the evidence seen in respect of student-related risks.</p> <p>2. <u>Internal audit feedback</u> AC confirmed that the first internal audit of the year had taken place on Monday 16th March 2020. The report had not yet been received, but the audit had gone well and the auditor had been pleased. The auditor had predominantly looked at cash income, debtors (e.g. hirers, mini bus and school uniform sales) and bank reconciliations. Two cash sheets had not been signed and there had been a query in relation to a date on a remittance from the ESFA, but nothing material had been found. The report is expected within a week.</p> <p>Thanks were recorded to the Finance Assistant Karen Goode.</p> <p>3. <u>Scope for next internal audit</u> For the next internal audit to take place in the Summer Term, where governors would set the scope, the following proposals were AGREED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Controls over non-standard transactions (e.g. things recorded on spreadsheets) - Contracts with service providers (e.g. solar panels) - Staff contracts: is pay in accordance with contracts, especially where changes have been made, and are contracts in place and up-to-date for all staff. If tested in the previous audit (which had looked at HR and payroll), replace with an audit of income management, such as income coming from the Local Authority, e.g. in relation to students on managed moves, pupil premium income etc, and whether the school is making claims where it should be, 	Defer	Clerk	May '20

	<p>whilst recognising that testing some of these elements may be difficult for an auditor to carry out.</p> <p>[This item was taken earlier in the meeting. JM and KL left the meeting as information regarding school closures had been released by the Government.]</p>			
FP 4.10	<p>Any Other Business [Confidential]</p> <p>[JM and KL returned to the meeting and briefed governors present on the Government's announcements regarding school closures with effect from 20th March 2020 and cancellation of exams].</p> <p>Governors recorded their thanks to JM, KL and all staff for the superb work they have done to date in preparing for such a closure.</p>			
FP 4.11	<p>Confidentiality An item raised under Any Other Business would require a confidential minute.</p>			
	<p>Next Meeting 6 May 2020, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Budget outturn forecast (2019/20) - Draft budget & 3-year plan (2020/21 +) - Premises Annual Report - IT Annual Report - Finance Procedures Review - Investment Policy Review 			
	The meeting closed at 7.10pm			