

The Swanage School  
**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FINANCE & PREMISES COMMITTEE**  
Held on Wednesday 24 June 2020, 5.30pm

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

Item		Action	Lead	By
	The meeting was held by remote access due to the school closure as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.			
FP 6.1	<b>Apologies for Absence</b> Apologies were received and accepted from Tim Marcus.			
FP 6.2	<b>Declarations of Interest</b> There were no declarations of interest or conflict with any agenda item.			
FP 6.3	<b>Minutes of the Last Meeting</b> The minutes of the meeting held on 20 May 2020 were confirmed as an accurate record. The minutes will be signed at a later date.			
FP 6.4	<b>Matters Arising &amp; Actions</b>  <u>FP 5.5.1 Business Manager's Report – Budget Out-turn</u> Clarification was sought in relation to the minutes regarding pupil premium funding and it was confirmed by AC that the variance between the budget and projected out-turn was a budgeting error and not an error in the census submission.  AC confirmed that the reason the out-turn forecast for agency staff was lower than the actual spend to date was due to a member of staff being budgeted for on one line and pay coded to another.  <u>FP 5.5.2 Health &amp; Safety: RIDDOR</u> AC had confirmed, shortly after the last meeting, that there was no need to report Covid-19 cases under the RIDDOR process unless it was demonstrable that the infection had been caught on school premises.			

	<p><b><u>FP 5.6 Draft 3-Year Budget</u></b> A breakdown of the E-19 learning &amp; teaching resources budget had been sent by AC to the Chair, following questions raised at the last meeting on the variance between the forecast out-turn for 2019/20 and the budget for 2020/21 (the variance primarily relating to Covid-19 related matters such as cancellation of Challenge Week trips and lower costs for printing etc during the school closure).</p> <p><b><u>FP 5.7 Policies and Procedure</u></b> The Financial Procedures had been updated in line with the amendments agreed at the last meeting.</p> <p>The auditor had confirmed that where multiple service level agreements / contracts are held with the same supplier (with separate termination arrangements), each should be treated separately for the purpose of controls and scrutiny.</p> <p><b><u>FP 5.9 Pensions</u></b> AC confirmed that auto-enrolment for the Local Government Pension Scheme is in July 2020. All staff had been informed and payroll will also write to them.</p> <p>Other matters arising on which there were no specific actions:</p> <p><b><u>FP 5.4 (FP 4.4) Bank Accounts</u></b> AC confirmed that access to online banking (for Lloyds Bank) has now been set up for more than one user, subject to receipt of the card reader, which would allow online banking with Lloyds to commence. She noted that caution would be exercised to avoid relying on all redirections working straightaway.</p> <p><b><u>FP 5.4 (FP 4.5.iii) Exam Fees</u></b> AC confirmed that as yet there was no news on the provision or otherwise of refunds in relation to exam fees paid for the cancelled GCSEs.</p>			
FP 6.5	<p><b>Reports</b></p> <p>I. <b><u>Business Manager's Report</u></b> The Business Manager's Report, including the budget monitor to 31 May 2020, balance sheet, key performance indicators and cashflow, had been circulated. There were no questions other than in relation to the cashflow forecast, where governors asked AC to clarify the calculation method and clarify a number of</p>			

points. AC confirmed that it was a cash-based forecast on a manual spreadsheet (showing receipts in and expenses out in the months expected/paid rather than on order or invoice dates) and that:

- the significant increase in overhead (general) expenses from October onwards reflected the usual costs when staff were in school and placing orders, following the quieter period of the school closure and summer;
- pupil premium funding is paid to schools in July, October and January, with the January payment having been received late in 2019/20.

Governors noted the helpful format of the budget monitor report with year-to-date actuals shown alongside year-to-date budget and forecast out-turn at year end.

In response to a question from the Chair, AC confirmed that the circulated forecast out-turn was as reported at the last meeting. Several lines, where it was observed that the year-to-date actual spend was greater than the year end forecast, would be updated when presented for the June accounts.

#### Department for Education updates

AC reported that an announcement from the Department for Education (DfE) is expected shortly regarding claiming for costs related to the Covid-19 pandemic. She noted that free school meal vouchers would need to be provided throughout the summer and that the School had registered with the government's scheme, having been providing Co-op vouchers to date. She confirmed that three laptops provided to Year 10 students had been funded and that an application for funding for data dongles had been submitted.

The Chair noted that whilst some schools had an obligation to report how much energy they have been using, the School would not have to do this due to its small size.

#### Payroll

AC reported that BCP, the current payroll service provider, was ceasing contracts with academies with effect from 31<sup>st</sup> August 2020 but, due to an administrative oversight on their part, had extended this to 31<sup>st</sup> September 2020 for The Swanage School. With a panel of governors, AC and JM had looked at five alternative providers and had appointed Orovia, a specialist education provider. AC noted that costs would be similar to BCP but the online system was an improvement, with access for staff to see their records, update their details and submit timesheets, as were the free reporting options. An HR package was also available. A parallel payroll would be run over the next three months to check the system is working well,

<p>prior to the contract with BCP ending. In response to a question, AC confirmed that cumulative information for the current year and payroll history will move over to the new system.</p> <p>2. <u>Premises Report</u>  A report from the Site Manager had been circulated and it was noted that lots of work is being undertaken to keep the premises safe and maintained. Governors asked AC whether she was content that actions related to Covid-19 had been completed satisfactorily and she confirmed that she was, also noting that the Site Manager has recently completed his Health &amp; Safety Level 3 Certificate.</p> <p>JS (link governor for health &amp; safety) reported that she had not visited the School since the beginning of the Covid-19 outbreak in March, so the usual levels of oversight had not been possible. Having met the Site Manager shortly prior to school closures and having been involved in discussion relating to the risk assessment for re-opening, she was satisfied that appropriate measures are in place.</p> <p>The Chair asked for a report at a future meeting on the storage of flammable materials and compliance in this regard with the applicable regulations, particularly in relation to whether outside storage is required.</p> <p>In response to a question, AC confirmed that a new cleaning protocol involving one major clean and two sanitising cleans per day had been in place during the Covid-19 outbreak.</p>	<p>Flammable materials report</p>	<p>AC (JH)</p>	<p>Autumn Term</p>
<p>3. <u>IT Report</u>  AC reported that the new telephone system will be live on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> June 2020 and among other benefits will give each member of staff a virtual mailbox and ability to show The Swanage School as the caller when making outward calls on a mobile phone. The Chair queried whether the system will run in tandem with the current PBX, or be replacing it, and asked for some further information on the technological aspects to be provided. AC confirmed that it was a replacement system although noted that she would check whether Telefonics Systems maintenance would still be required.</p> <p>AC reported that the transition from Progresso to Arbor (Management Information System) was going well, noting that final data migration is expected to take place on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2020. Whole staff training had not yet taken place, with roll out and initial training having been to key staff in the first instance. JM outlined the basic-level interaction with the system that the majority of staff will need to have, noting that Arbor has a user-friendly interface that will make training straightforward. She observed that the system also had an excellent parent-facing portal.</p>	<p>Further information</p>	<p>AC (MW)</p>	<p>July '20</p>

	<p>4. <u>Data Protection Report</u> [Confidential minute]</p> <p>5. <u>Health &amp; Safety Report</u> JS confirmed that she and another governor with NHS experience had met (via remote access) with JM to discuss the risks of re-opening to more students (Year 10 in addition to key worker children and vulnerable students), noting that they felt confident that the leadership team were keeping abreast of fast-paced developments and appropriately following latest guidance. JM noted her belief that the School is fully compliant with the guidelines, observing that their approach is cautious and that processes put in place are being followed. She informed governors that consideration is being given to mitigation strategies that will be needed for a wider re-opening in September and that this will continue throughout the summer.</p> <p>KL reported that the impact of the school closure on students' wellbeing and loss of educational traction was evidently significant, and therefore risks related to lack of motivation and engagement were likely to be higher than anticipated. This would be discussed in more detail at the Student Committee.</p> <p>Governors asked what support they could provide over the summer, noting their willingness to continue to provide feedback and oversight on risk assessments during this period.</p>			
FP 6.6	<p><b>3-Year Budget 2020/23</b> An updated budget had been circulated, an initial draft having been scrutinised at the last meeting of the committee. There were no further questions and the budget was <b>AGREED</b> for recommendation to the full governing body.</p>	FGB agenda	Clerk	July '20
FP 6.7	<p><b>Insurance Annual Review</b> A summary of the Risk Pool Arrangement (RPA) insurance had been circulated, along with a breakdown of other insurances held alongside. It was noted that the other insurances, which covered engineering inspection, mini-buses, occasional business use and overseas travel, were all held with Marsh Insurance. AC reported that the service provided by Marsh is good. The cover provided by Marsh in relation to overseas travel was greater than that provided by the RPA. It was noted that overseas travel insurance may not be needed in the coming year, depending on whether the current pandemic may prevent overseas trips from taking place.</p> <p>Noting that, whilst there was no reason to replace Marsh as a supplier, it would be good practice to re-tender from time to time, it was <b>AGREED</b> that insurances should be re-tendered during the next academic year. AC suggested that the process should commence in late 2020 / early 2021.</p>	Start re-tender process	AC	Dec '20

	<p>In response to a question, AC confirmed that the premium for the RPA Insurance is solely based on the number of students and does not reflect any claims made. It did not cover loss of income (such as loss of lettings income due to the school closure) or costs relating to cancelled overseas travel. It did cover legal advice, however in a recent case the RPA had not been informed prior to legal advice being sought, and therefore the claim had been refused. A current claim for replacement of two broken windows was progressing.</p>			
FP 6.8	<p><b>Annual Review of Designated Funds and Free Reserves</b></p> <p>Referring to an email discussion prior to the meeting, the Chair noted that it would be necessary, over the coming years, to set aside reserves for maintenance costs over and above the current £50k maintenance fund. Based on previously estimated costs for repairs and replacement of c£1.2m over a period to 2040 (report dated November 2016, as circulated), and assuming that the School was likely to need to fund c20% of this, an additional sum of £9.5k per annum would be needed over the next 20 years, in addition to the current £50k designated reserve. Noting that this assumed 80% or more of any repairs/replacement would be funded by the Education &amp; Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), there was a discussion of the criteria for funding bids to the Condition Improvement Fund (CIF) to apply for capital funding. The Chair summarised that the success of bids relates to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Need (on a priority scale), it being noted that replacement of structural items at the end of their life ranked reasonably high.</li> <li>- Value for money, both of the project work and of the value to the ESFA.</li> <li>- Estate management and robustness of the estate management plan.</li> </ul> <p>There was some discussion of the merits of appointing an external advisor such as a surveyor or architect with school-sector experience to advise on the estate management plan and the likely contribution from the ESFA to any capital projects.</p> <p><b>AGREED</b> that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- AC and JM should review the maintenance plan written in 2016 and develop it further, taking into account any additional research or information available.</li> <li>- External advice may prove useful in relation to the CIF fund evaluation criteria, the likely contribution needed from the School and on developing a robust estate management plan. However, given some concerns about value of external advice at the present time (when the likelihood of</li> </ul>	<p>Update Maintenance Plan</p> <p>Quotes for external advice</p>	<p>AC/JM</p> <p>AC</p>	<p>Autumn '20</p> <p>Autumn '20</p>

	<p>needing to make a funding bid remains some years in the future), it was agreed that costs of external advice should be discussed and agreed by the Committee prior to any appointments.</p> <p>Noting that allocation of costs to restricted / unrestricted funds is made by the auditors at year-end, the Chair asked AC to make the auditors aware that wherever there is discretion the governors' wish would be to use restricted rather than unrestricted funds.</p> <p>Recognising that, even with extra funding, the School's unrestricted reserves would likely be below the target range of 12.75-18.75% (as set out in the Reserves Policy), it was agreed that a recommendation be made to the full governing body to seek to increase unrestricted reserves (e.g. through continued prudence in spending).</p> <p>In relation to the Staff Absence Designated Fund it was noted that, when adjustments are made at year-end, costs relating to sick pay for Mr Hobson and acting-up allowances to cover his absence could be attributed to the fund. The fund would then be increased in line with the calculations set out in the fund parameters, to build it back up.</p>	Advise auditors	AC	Aug '20
		Recommend to FGB	Chair	Jul '20
		Attribute costs	AC	Aug '20
FP 6.9	<p><b>AUDIT COMMITTEE</b></p> <p><u>Risk Register</u></p> <p>Draft wording for a number of risks relating to infectious diseases had been circulated. It was suggested that a control factor for wellbeing of staff would be to provide refresher training on display screen equipment to assist staff in appropriately setting up their home environment for working from home.</p> <p><b>AGREED</b> that any further comments on, or additions to, the draft wording be sent to the Clerk for incorporation into the Risk Register.</p>	Update	All / Clerk	Jul '20
FP 6.10	<p><b>Succession Planning</b></p> <p>The Chair noted that as the Audit Committee was responsible for reviewing governance matters as a whole as well as finance matters, it should therefore concern itself with succession planning for both the whole governing body and for the chair-ship of the Finance &amp; Premises Committee (including Audit Committee).</p> <p>The Clerk reported that a discussion on succession planning for the board as a whole would be on the agenda for the next meeting of the full board. For the Finance &amp; Premises Committee (and Audit Committee), the Chair noted that it remained his intention to step down as soon as another suitably skilled governor is willing or recruited to take on the role, in keeping with best practice.</p>			

FP 6.11	<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p> <p>AC noted that whilst the meeting had been in progress she had received information from the ESFA regarding claiming for additional costs related to the pandemic, and would pass on any relevant information to the Committee. At present there was no information from the DfE in relation to funding for catching-up students educationally which had been mentioned in a statement by the Prime Minister. JM reported that the leadership team will devise a catch-up plan working within current budgets, adjusting if additional funds become available.</p> <p>A governor noted that a £7m fund had been announced for alternative provision, which might be available to the School if currently paying for any students in alternative settings.</p>			
FP 6.12	<p><b>Confidentiality</b></p> <p>The minutes relating to a data protection breach would require confidential minutes.</p>			
	The meeting closed at 7pm			