

The Swanage School

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE STAFFING, FINANCE & PREMISES COMMITTEE

Held on Wednesday 30th November 2022, 5.30pm

Present: Tanya Hamilton-Fletcher (Chair), Jenny Maraspin (Headteacher), Tim Marcus, Dan Parker, Amanda Rowley, Isobel Tooley

In attendance: Misty Nickells (Auditor for Item 2.8, Andrew Thomas Business Manager), Sophie Weld-Davies (Clerk)

Item		Action	Lead	By
SFP 2.1	Welcome			
SFP 2.2	Apologies for Absence Apologies were received from William Knight and Jessica Starmer			
SFP 2.3	Declarations of Interests There were no declarations of interest			
SFP 2.4	Minutes of the Last Meeting IT had not received the confidential minute from the last meeting. The Clerk apologised and is now aware of the process, The minutes of the meeting held on 18 th October were approved.			
SFP 2.5	Matters Arising & Actions There were no matters arising from the minutes The action list has been updated			

SFP 2.6

Reports

Business Managers Report

- AT reported that the Government are setting aside £2.3 billion of extra funding for schools in 2023-24, so The Swanage School is likely to receive additional funding this academic year and next. Number have yet to be confirmed.
- The school has been prudent with using utilities and we are significantly under budget at present.
- The total staffing pay has increased. More staff have been recruited and the budget assumes a pay rise of 3% not 5%. This has resulted in staffing pay being over budget, but the overall income looks to be increasing due to grants and AT is optimistic that, although he does not think the school will break even this year, it will be within the original deficit budget.
- The access points for broadband need to be replaced and AT will bring a proposal to the next committee.

IT Report

- AT reported that Jamie Langtree is proving a good asset to the school. He deals with the low and medium level operational issues and Quostar look after the high level and IT strategic items. There are 12 issues that have noted with our IT systems, Quostar is working through the list.
- JM, TM, JL, and Digital Garage have looked at the data storage solution for the Digital Media Suite and have come back with two options. Option 1- Purchasing a group of big hard disks with software which means that a group of students can work on the same file at the same time. Option 2 is to purchase a box of servers which is a separate computer that has software that can share drives. TM reported that Option 2 would be the better option as it is cheaper with an outlay of £14k but can also have a wider use in the school. AT asked for the committee's approval to send the £14k. The committee **APPROVED** this spending.
- Digital Media Suite Progress - A Digital Garage engineer has been at the school to complete a site survey. The cabling will be completed during the Christmas break with the hardware and lights being installed in the February half term. There might be some saving on the cabling by using items on site that were installed when the school was built but have not been used. There is the potential to join two music practice rooms together. This will be reviewed and is likely to have no large financial outlay as it will be taking a stud wall down and some painting work.
- In response to a governor's question regarding what happens if the school has moved to cloud storage and the internet goes down, AT reported that, although some storage is saved on Cloud,

<p>the majority of the systems are based on servers which are in the IT room. The physical ones will be safe for a few hours in case of fire. The consensus is that there is a high cost in moving and storing everything on the Cloud. The current servers are 10 years old and were not new when they were bought and at some point, within the next two years there will have to be a decision on what to do when the servers need replacing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A governor asked for clarification about what services were run on the physical servers and AT confirmed that the back-up of the school system is on one server and fingerprint info etc are on the other. AT went on to say that the Cloud storage would cost £500 a month and to replace the physical servers it would be £20k. A governor commented that it felt like the right time to get the process started to look at replacing the servers now before they break. AT agreed, the critical systems are done for this year but would come back to the committee with a plan. • It was agreed that AT would come back at the next meeting with an update on works and then start looking at costings to bring to the committee in September. In response to the original question, JM stated that the school can cope for 2 to 3 weeks if the internet goes down. <p><u>Audit & Risk Committee feedback</u></p> <p>The audit committee looks at risks but is for reflection not action. They are also there to look at the audit of the accounts and the overall accounts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KPI's - ISOT (ISBL School Optimisation Tool) was discussed as AT queried the necessity of it against the length of time it took to input the data. AT has spoken to JM who is keen to pursue the Integrated Curriculum and Planning model, which AT and RF will populate, and JM can complete the management time and then evaluate and review the leadership structure. AT is happy to leave the KPI's in but is questioning what benefit they bring; the Chair agreed that they are not driving any decisions <p><u>Teachers pay scales</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers Pay Scales – There was an agreed pay rise of 5% from the last meeting. Since then, 2 members of teaching staff have come forward and spoken to JM regarding the salary increase. As it does not fall in line with national (England) pay scales for teachers. The Swanage School teaching staff salary range had broadly in line with the national pay scales. But now following both the national rate and TSS rate change are £1672 less for M2, £1390 less for M3, £1105 less for M4 and £656 less for M5. 	<p>To look at costings and works</p>	<p>AT</p>	<p>Feb 23 meeting</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In response to a governor asked how this has happened the reply was that the government had increased the pay for MI by 8.8%, which meant that that this had pushed the next 4 grades up by more than 5%, hence the pay difference. • The Chair reminded the committee that in discussing the pay rise it needs to be fair and equitable to all and The Swanage School needs to be seen as a competitive employer. JM told the committee that there were 5 staff involved and she had made the staff aware that the decision made by the governors was made without pertinent information. Governors expressed concern that if the committee thought that the school was in alignment then how are we not and is the school confident that the upper pay scales are correct. • The committee APPROVED unanimously the increase in pay to the same level as the national (England) rates. AT will apply the new rates and make the changes to the December 2022 pay roll for staff impacted. 			
SFP 2.7	<p>Investments</p> <p>AT has updated the group on location and interest rates of the four £85k funds on deposit. These sums form part of the school reserves.</p> <p>He suggested to the Committee that £85k would be placed on a two-year term deposit, another on a one-year. The two others on 90-day notice accounts. All sums are fully protected by the FSCS, with the respective banks and building societies. The interest is paid the main Lloyds Bank Business account.</p> <p>In response a governor questioned why there £250k on the Lloyds account. AT responded that this is as the main operational funds covering payroll and funding for the Digital Media Suite.</p> <p>The governors APPROVED AT's suggested approach for the next 12 months. AT wil now deposit the funds accordingly.</p>			
SFP 2.8	<p>Feedback From Audit Committee – External Auditor's Report and Management Letter 2022-23</p> <p>Misty Nickells from Griffin Chartered Accountants joined the meeting at 6.45</p> <p><u>Feedback from the Audit Committee</u></p> <p>On page 48 the overall revenue position is incorrect.</p>			

On page 10 the reserves are supposed to have £50k for staff absence and £50k for maintenance but there is £74k in there. The £26k was spent on computers and the money has been allocated from the wrong account as GAG funds cannot be designated. The designated funds should be intact. This amount needs to be returned from the unrestricted reserves. MN will adjust the accounts to show £26k against GAG funds and take the rest from unrestricted funds. MN asked AT to email with the details.
The overall result from the audit showed that the school had a surplus of £8813 which is a good position to be in. The policy is to have between 12.5 and 18.5 % of annual income in a reserve fund.

Pension Reserve

This has gone down significantly but there are a lot of assumptions. There are changes in the actuary's assumption on page 57 but not sure why this has gone down. The discount rate has decreased taking into account the value for money. Realistically when inflation comes down this will swing back the other way. The pension contributions concern The Swanage School. There is a review every three years to see if employers need to increase the pension contribution and this will be going up from 1.6% to 1.8% from April. In response to a governor's question regarding pension income MN confirmed that this was a return on investments on the pension scheme and has come from the FRST report.

Management Letter

The RAG rating is red, amber, and green and has highlighted the following

- There are adjustments to the opening balance due to errors in posting
- There are missing pension opt out forms from school staff
- The Trustee declarations need to be the same on both the school records and Companies House

Points from last year which have been resolved

- There was the wrong rate of pay for a staff member.
- Accrued income was posted incorrectly
- Purchase orders
- Expense Claims
- Donations should be posted in the unspent fund rather than deferred

Overall, it was a positive audit result and with no further questions from the committee and after AT confirmed that Griffin was approved as external auditors next year MN left the meeting.
The Chair thanked AT for all his work on the accounts the previous fiscal year.

SFP 2.9	<p>Annual Report and Financial Statements 2022-23 These were RECCOMENDED to go to the FGB subject to the Auditors changing items as requested</p>			
SFP 2.10	<p>Policies THF will look at the legislation for private adoptions to update the Adoption Policy. AT will email the schools HR advisor at Dorset Council to review and update the Maternity Policy, Adoption Policy, Maternity and Adoption Support Policy and the Flexible Working Policy</p>	Policies to go to HR adviser	AT	For Feb meeting
SFP 2.11	<p>Link Governor Reports <u>Health and Safety</u> AR has met Ian and has reviewed the action list with him. Each action has been completed except for the H&S training for staff which was meant to be done at the last inset day.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The risk assessments have now been managed well and AT has now taken over responsibility for them. The school is now older, and things are starting to fail and lights within the school are being replaced by LED lights. • The lights in the sports hall are not going to LED as the cost is too high to replace them on an individual basis. One of the grills has also broken and Ian was not going to look at those until the lights needed doing, AT reassured AR that it was on a hinge so should not fall. • The batteries in the emergency lights on the outside walkway are failing, replacements could come out of the maintenance fund. • Work has been done on the playing field to make it more usable. • The sports hall roof leaks but has done for years. The floor is showing signs of wear and tear. Ian is going to monitor it but will look at the warranties. The cracks are happening underneath the floor and are around 3 to 4m long. • The cables in the music room are now tidied away as it is the new Creative Media room. • First Aid – AT has also taken this over and implemented a new accident logging system and more staff are being trained in first aid. <p><u>Mental Health</u> JS has been has met with Mandy Sands to get an overview of the mental health challenges for staff and staff wellbeing. Many staff are unaware that there is a link governor for mental health and so JS has drafted an email to introduce herself and will attend a staff briefing to allow staff to ask any questions.</p>			

SFP 2.12	<p>Any Other Business AT has been researching companies that can provide data protection support and advice for the school, for when the existing arrangement ends on 31.12.2023. Judicium Education offer this service with an annual fee of £3k. However, another company, Handsam, offer a similar provision for £915 a year, including a bi-annual desktop audit. They come recommended by other local schools.</p> <p>AT suggested moving to Handsam after the current contract ends, this was AGREED by the committee.</p> <p>AT to put arrangements in place.</p> <p>AT left the meeting</p>			
SFP 2.13	<p>Senior Leadership Team Remuneration Has been minuted as a confidential minute</p>			
SFP 2.14	<p>Confidentiality Item 2.13 is a confidential minute</p>			
	<p>Next Meeting There being no other business the meeting closed at 7.44pm</p> <p>The next meeting will be held on 8 February 2023</p>			