

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF
THE FINANCE AND STAFFING SUB-COMMITTEE
OF LOSTOCK HALL PRIMARY SCHOOL
ON TUESDAY 14TH NOVEMBER 2023**

GOVERNORS IN ATTENDANCE:	Graham Hamilton (GH)	Headteacher
	Ben Sleeman (BS)	Co-opted Governor
	Clare Heyes (CH)	Co-opted Governor
	Mike Duzinkewycz (MD)	Parent Governor
	David Morgan (DM)	Parent Governor
	Victoria Moffatt (VM)	Parent Governor (joined the meeting at 5:58pm)
OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:	Sarah Lomas	Clerk to governors
	Tina Carruthers (TC)	Financial Controller (left the meeting at 6:05pm)
	Rachael Palmer (RP)	School Business Manager
	Elizabeth Dockry (ED)	Deputy Headteacher

MINUTES – PART ONE: NON-CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

The meeting commenced at 5:02pm.

ITEM	ACTION
<p>1. APOLOGIES AND ANY OTHER BUSINESS Apologies were received and accepted from Sally Greer, CFO of TTLP.</p> <p>Governors noted that VM would be late to the meeting arriving at approximately 6:00pm.</p> <p>There were no other items of business tabled for discussion at this meeting.</p>	
<p>2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST The following declarations of interest were made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GH's wife works for Connex Education who provide tutoring services to the school. 	
<p>3. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR MD volunteered for the role of chair of the Finance and Staffing Committee. No other nominations were received. Following a vote MD was duly appointed as Chair of the Finance and Staffing Committee for a one-year term of office.</p>	
<p>4. TERMS OF REFERENCE a) Terms of reference for the finance and staffing committee had been circulated to governors prior to the meeting via Governor Hub. Governors recommended the approval of the terms of reference for 2023-24 for ratification at the Local Governing Board meeting on 21.11.23.</p>	

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<p>5.</p>	<p>PART ONE MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING</p> <p>a) The part one minutes from the previous meeting on 19.06.23 were confirmed as a true and accurate record of proceedings. Governors approved the minutes. ACTION: Upload an electronically signed copy of the minutes to Governor Hub following the meeting.</p> <p>b) The action log from the previous meeting was discussed and the following items were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Item 3 relating to the creation of a business plan for the purchase of the Soundfield equipment was discussed. It was noted that at the previous meeting it had been suggested that a point be made about the higher level of SEND pupils compared to other schools as a proportion of the total pupils. It was also noted that the equipment would serve to support staff well-being and the ability to manage pupils needs within the class. <p>Q: Despite the staffing issues at TTLP will this delay approvals for schools?</p> <p>A: Governors agreed that a business case should be submitted regardless of any staffing issues. MD offered his support in reviewing the business case prior to submission.</p> <p>Q: Does the school have costings for the equipment?</p> <p>A: Historic costings were obtained at £1,500 per unit however costs may have risen, and the school would need to obtain a new quote.</p> <p>Governor Comment: It will be important to illustrate the specific needs of the pupils in the school when discussing the financial implications.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Item 3 Relating to preschool finances was confirmed as being underway and a paper has been uploaded as part of the meeting pack which will be discussed under the Item 6 of this meeting. 	<p>Clerk</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>FINANCIAL MATTERS</p> <p>a) TC presented the latest set of management Accounts and Forecasts from the Trust.</p> <p>Documents had been uploaded to Governor Hub and circulated prior to the meeting. Governors were directed to the first document which illustrates where the school finances closed last year and sets out the headlines as far as follows: The school finished in a positive financial position with a surplus. The budget is regularly adjusted over the course of the year to account for additional grant income received and then a final budget was set to reflect the financial position on the basis that growth funding would be achieved for the 7th class teacher. At this point a £12,000 surplus was estimated. The target was to achieve a £12,000 surplus but the school reached £15,000 surplus so finished in a favourable position.</p> <p>Q: What were the savings in occupancy costs over the summer?</p> <p>A: These was applied throughout the year in the form of estimates. The estimates based on the energy improvements implemented were applied prudently and these prudent estimates enabled savings which could be reutilised in other areas such as excess supply teaching costs. These savings were repurposed and effectively offset over the course of the financial year.</p>	



Q: What was the cumulative underspend in before and after school club, early years and pupil premium?

A: There was an overall underspend and this cumulative area.

Q: Can the committee be assured that pupil premium funds are being spent in their entirety?

A: Yes, pupil premium funding is being spent effectively with some funds used to cover additional staffing costs.

Q: In considering catering costs there have been issues with Chartwells and the parent account where money was being transferred from parents to Chartwells. It is noted that there is an underspend here of £1,300, what is this relating to as surely the school have a fixed price on catering costs?

A: This underspend is not related to what parents pay for school meals. This relates to the universal free school meal credits which depend on the pupil numbers recorded on census day and any funding is lagged. The assumption within the budget is that every child will take a school meal but where pupils do not take a meal Chartwells will only charge for meals that are taken.

Q: Are the figures based on the census data taken from the previous year?

A: The figures are based on the census data taken in October of the academic year. If school numbers are low need in terms of take up of meals it needs to be investigated why meals are not being taken.

It was noted that very few pupils bring a packed lunch but this is down to personal choice.

Q: Has the school enquired with parents as to why they do not take a meal for that children where they are eligible for universal free school meals?

A: In some cases, this is because of allergies and in other cases it is a personal choice.

Q: In terms of the 7th class teacher funding how is this represented in the figures?

A: it was agreed that this figure would be applied to the bottom line of the budget and last year the school received £37,000 of growth funding.

Q: How was the process in terms of obtaining the funding from the local authority?

A: The funding was received at the last minute in the summer term and it has been confirmed that growth funding will continue until the PAN of 210 is reached.

Q: What are the current pupil numbers in school?

A: 192 and it is likely that the number will remain under 210 for 2023-24.

Governor Comment: School are receiving a number of enquiries from residents of the new residential Woodford estate which is positive for the school. There have been 70 inquiries for 30 places at the new primary school so there will be a number of pupils requiring places at other local primary schools such as Lostock Hall.



Reference was made to the second paper circulated to governors prior to the meeting which provides a summary of the year and reports on the current position of the school following the budget submitted in May 2023.

It was confirmed that pupil numbers were estimated at 193 following census day. It was confirmed that the school remains at 23 for reception pupils and overall pupil numbers were 189. Although the forecast was above this figure and whilst numbers are lagged the funding and budget for next year is slightly adrift.

Q: Were the school unable to secure the 28 pupils anticipated for Reception class?

A: Yes, the Local Authority are struggling to predict numbers at present and therefore this remains a difficult area for the school to predict also.

Staffing was highlighted and governors noted that the Trust Board sat at the beginning of August to review all budgets for schools and to check the assumptions made. At the time the Board met the teachers' pay award was announced and the news of this increase at 6.5% required all budgets to be adjusted to reflect this. Having input the 6.5% pay award and the cost of 3% of this award being funded figures within school budgets were duly readjusted. 5% had been previously included within budgets with no funding assumed.

Governor Comment: The pay award provided a favourable position for the school with an £11,000 surplus.

Governors noted that the support staff pay rise of a one-off payment of £1,925 applicable to every pay scale was not included. This amount is slightly higher than 5% but 5% had been budgeted for. In November the trust finance team spend time dismantling the budget and re-forecasting based on new figures and staffing is considered as part of this review.

Governor Comment: Overall the school are forecasting a budget surplus for three years ahead even when considering pay awards and the 5% unfunded pay award for support staff which is in addition to the receipt of the growth funding for the 7th class and the work of the board to secure this funding.

Q: Do the Trust recognise that the school have managed to achieve a 1% reserve and do they still require 3%?

A: The aim of the 3% target is for a contingency fund. Prudent utilitiess budgeting has provided savings for this year and more income maybe generated from the breakfast and after school clubs. It is in the school's interest to strive towards achieving the 3% reserve target from the outset.

A summary of the reserves was provided as follows which was based on audit numbers. The Trust receives £900,000 in funding per year and schools are then invited to bid for these monies.

Q: To clarify the free reserves – are these funds that the school has available but that are now held separately and the school cannot access these funds but must bid for them?

A: This is the money that the school has built up and is held at trust level the process for accessing such funds would need to be clarified.



Governor Comment: It is understood that the school has to make a business case for an application of these funds and that it is more difficult to access these funds but not unattainable.

Q: The SCA funding that was allocated to the school last year was £50,000 and the school has spent £30,000 of this with £21,000 remaining which is now being allocated in the free reserves. Is there a case to ensure that the school spends the full SCA allocation within the year?

A: The free reserves is not related to the SCA funding. The school received the SCA funding and upgraded the kitchen equipment over the summer term. The bill for these works was settled in September.

Q: The school has £270,000 in reserves but of that £110,000 is allocated and then the additional £160,000 is free reserves is this correct?

A: Yes, but that includes for the SCA funding that the school has been awarded. Governors need to consider the free reserves funding.

Q: If the school has excess SCA funding should the school ensure that this is spent within the year?

A: Any SCA funding will be spent within the year allocated as it has been secured as part of committed works.

Q: Does the school have any thoughts on SCA bids for works for the forthcoming year?

A: The cupboard housing the electrics has been highlighted as requiring work to upgrade to current standards. However, the school did not have an electric report to submit to the Trust in support of these works. The school have historically applied for a refit of the fire alarm system to include a flashing light element for those pupils with hearing impairments. This was applied for following fire safety assessment findings which the Trust were informed of. Some school toilets within the school also require refurbishment. Any SCA works need to be related to health and safety.

Governors noted that a number of health and safety works were completed through the former CIF bids prior to the changeover to SCA bids.

- b) Governors were informed that the contracts register is currently under review and any changes will be reported on at future meetings.
- c) The asset register has been completed and reviewed. It was confirmed that future works would include an itemised review of the site by RP and the site manager.
- d) Governors noted that TTLP have an overall risk register in place, but that RP will be adapting this template for a specific school risk register going forward.

ACTION: Bring the draft risk register to the next Finance and Staffing meeting for review.

Q: Is the risk register operational or do governors need to review this?

A: There will be both operational and strategic items on the risk register which can be reviewed at the next meeting.

- e) An update on works undertaken relating to income generation sources and wrap around care provision was provided as follows:

It was confirmed that the most efficient way to work out the potential monies available to support the school is to undertake a review at the year end to compare income and expenditure. The income generation figures are obtained and then staffing costs from both salaried and casual staff along with none pay related

RP



expenditure are subtracted and then the direct cost surplus is considered. Any surplus monies generated are fed back into the school budget and surplus figures have been generated this year. Governors noted that the purpose of the work undertaken is to ensure that the school do not make an unreasonable level of profit whereby VAT and corporation tax would be required to be paid. A figure is also included for rental income from little sports coaching over the summer holidays.

Q: What is the purpose of undertaking this work – is this specifically for school auditors or HMRC?

A: The Trust do not pay VAT. The trust is allowed £85,000 of income before it goes over the threshold so any income generation from schools will contribute to this level after which both VAT and corporation tax would need to be paid. The paper has been prepared for interest purposes in order to analyse the figures and ascertain what monies are available to further support school.

Governor Comment: The finance team and school were praised for the work that has gone into this report.

Q: Does a report such as this need to be prepared on an annual basis?

A: A report should be prepared either on an annual or bi-annual basis.

The school confirmed that fees for before and after school clubs (BASC) were increased last year and that this should be monitored going forward to ensure that the school do not fall into deficit. It was noted that this should be a straightforward process as the way the accounts are set up enables clear monitoring of such areas.

Pre-school – Governors noted that the funding for preschool hours is due to change with the funding to increase slightly to £4.51 per child per hour. The school need to review the preschool costs and assess whether charges can be increased.

Governors noted that preschool numbers are declining and in the autumn term 2023 funding was down by £2,000 compared to autumn 2022. Governors were informed that a number of parents are reserving a place in preschool for September but then changed their mind with minimal notice which is what led the school to change the contracts to require half a terms notice prior to pupils leaving. The school is anticipating that numbers will rise. It was also noted that there are staffing costs and SEND funding associated with preschool as well. It will be important to balance the anticipated increase in pupil numbers with the rising costs. Given the cost-of-living crisis the school needs to be mindful not to overprice the provision due to the negative impact on families. The BASC provision is at capacity but preschool is not and parents of pupils in the preschool also require wrap around provision and if they are unable to gain a space in BASC this will influence their decision on whether the child attends preschool or not. School is in direct competition with private nurseries in the area and may lose pupils to these establishments due to the BASC provision being at capacity.

Q: Do all pupils in preschool convert to reception places?

A: 99% of preschool pupils convert into the main school and the admissions criteria was altered to include this as an oversubscription criterion.

It was noted that the main issue with BASC provision capacity is due to the floor space available.



Q: In terms of wider opportunities could the school offer a different variety of extracurricular activities within the classroom which are not necessarily sports based to enable the hall to be used for BASC more regularly?

A: This is worth consideration.

Governor Comment: Consideration needs to be given to the pipeline of students in order to ensure the school meets the PAN of 210 and the preschool is one of the main areas that will ensure this growth.

Governors were informed that some children from The Hollies which is a privately run preschool and BASC provision at Lower Park School requested places in the preschool following unsuccessful Reception applications at Lower Park. At The Hollies pupils are not guaranteed a place whereas Lostock Hall offers a more positive message whereby if a pupil attends the preschool they will be allocated a place in Reception should they apply.

Q: What extracurricular activities take place in the hall are there any clubs other than gymnastics and multi sports?

A: Gymnastics and multi sports are the clubs that take place within the hall.

Q: Is that another option to use a classroom to provide additional space for basc?

A: This could be possible but would have an impact on teaching staff who work out of school hours.

Q: What is the current demand for BASC?

A: Waiting lists are in place at present.

Governors noted that one of the first questions the school is asked when parents tour the preschool is whether wrap around care provision is available.

The school confirmed that it would like to be able to provide more wrap around care provision to facilitate the need from families and it is a question of how this can be provided rather than if it can be provided.

Governors noted that it was important to consider the costings of sessions and not raise these too significantly for it to have a negative impact on the take up of places.

Governor Comment: Private nurseries charge significantly more, and the school are in a very strong position in respect of the charges and demand available.

Q: Has the age range of the preschool changed?

A: Pupils classed as rising threes are eligible for BASC provision.

Q: Would the addition of younger pupils in BASC require increase staffing ratios?

A: Yes, staffing would need to be reviewed based on pupils' age. SEND is also a factor for any pupils with EHCP's who have one to one support within class.

Governor Comment: There is a bigger picture to consider which includes staffing and the board needs to agree a consensus view to enable a way forward.



If the school had increased capacity for BASC this would provide a more desirable image of the school and higher preschool numbers. The knock-on impact of this would be the growth of the PAN to achieve pupil numbers of 210.

Governor Comment: The value of the current gymnastics and multi sports clubs that are in place should not be underestimated and rather than removing these clubs consideration should be given to the location of BASC to enable the sports provision to continue.

Q: Would it be possible for the school to introduce more classroom clubs and limit the sports and gymnastics clubs?

A: The school would not want to limit the sports offer available at present.

Q: Could the days be more flexible to accommodate numbers within BASC and sport clubs?

A: The school appreciate the demand for the BASC provision but it is effectively a shadow school and priority should be given to the provision of the extracurricular activities currently on offer to enhance the wider curriculum available to pupils.

Governor Comment: Clearly, this is a very complex area and there will be difficult decisions to be made to ensure that future growth can be secured.

Governors noted that there is a limit to how many pupils the school can take within preschool.

Governor Comment: The analysis of BASC provision should be approached through developing an analytical investigative approach to build evidence to support the case.

Governor Comment: There is potentially an element of parents that will always use private nurseries to avoid school holidays.

The school would need to make provision for how space is sought for an additional 15 potential pupils and the costs of staffing and ratios associated with this potential growth.

Q: Can the school and Trust begin drafting potential forecast scenarios which include staffing and space required and any extracurricular club clashes that would need to be navigated?

A: Yes, this could be undertaken as a piece of work as part of the overall review of the provision.

ACTION: ED and TC to meet to undertake costing forecasts for the preschool.

ACTION: Report back on preschool forecasts at the next Finance and Staffing Committee meeting in the spring term.

TC left the meeting at 6:05pm.

- f) Governors have been briefed on the spending of the sports premium at the Curriculum and Welfare Committee meeting. It was confirmed that funds have been spent in part on coaching provision along with additional resources and staff cover where required.

ED/TC
ED/TC



	<p>g) With regard to pupil premium funding the office staff maintain a record of expenditure which is reviewed with Jennie Myers who is the pupil premium lead. JM attended a recent conference on disadvantaged pupils, and it was recommended that families are consulted on the pupil premium spend as to what would benefit them the most. For the first time this year the school consulted directly with families, and this has been a very positive process. Uniform has been purchased and trips subsidised in line with family requirements.</p> <p>h) Voluntary school funds – The account is reviewed each year and this has been reviewed by RP and TC with no issues to report.</p> <p>i) The school confirmed that the admissions oversubscription criteria does not require review.</p> <p>j) The review of the preschool session costs were discussed under item 6h) of this meeting.</p>	
7.	<p>GDPR</p> <p>A minor data breach was reported to governors where an e-mail was sent from the office which was not blind copied to recipients. The school contacted the Trust and data protection officer (DPO) immediately and in line with procedures pursued an e-mail. All matters were considered resolved following these actions.</p>	
8.	<p>PREMISES</p> <p>a) There were no actions required following the health and safety audit and the results from the audit were very positive. The school has previously discussed leveraging the health and safety audit results to access additional funding for improvements required.</p> <p>b) The estate management plan is to be reviewed in May 2024.</p> <p>c) It was confirmed that the school received 0.7% of the SCA funding allocated to the trust and the funds were put towards the kitchen refurbishments.</p> <p>d) Priorities for the 2024 SCA bid applications were discussed earlier in this meeting under item 6a).</p>	
9.	<p>STAFF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT</p> <p>The headteacher confirmed that all CPD training was listed within the headteacher's report. Safeguarding training, prevent and designated safeguarding lead training has taken place. There has also been training on Pathways to Write and Pathways to Read. GH has undertaken Ofsted training and there have been other courses on phonics and SEND.</p> <p>Two members of staff have signed up to the national professional qualification in leadership.</p> <p>The school commented that the performance management process was very positive for all staff.</p> <p>A member of staff has also been enrolled on a moderation for writing course.</p> <p>Governor Comment: It is very positive news to hear about all the training opportunities in place for staff and thanks were expressed to the school for facilitating such opportunities.</p>	
10.	<p>SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN UPDATE: F&S</p> <p>Governors noted the information provided within the headteacher's report on the school development plan. There have been upgrades within school including the installation of new LED lighting. There have been some issues with the installation of the lighting and the service received from the building company. However, this is a matter for the Trust to resolve regarding the tender process and has been raised directly with the Trust.</p>	



	The challenge partner review which took place was a very positive experience for the school and there have been a number of ideas put forward for improvements and further progression.	
11.	ADMISSIONS / PUPIL NUMBERS Pupil numbers were discussed under Item 6.	
12.	GOVERNOR TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT a) It was confirmed that the board is currently in the process of collecting all training records. Governors were requested to log their training certificates on Governor Hub following any training undertaken. Governors were also reminded to review the training offer regularly and contact the school with any requests for Cheshire East training. b) There were no governor monitoring reports to receive at this meeting.	
13.	DIRECTOR'S REPORT The clerk highlighted relevant items from the director's report relating to high needs funding and sports grant funding.	
14.	POLICIES: a) It was confirmed that the Teaching Staff Pay Policy for 2023 to 24 was not available from the Trust at this time. Governors and the school expressed their disappointment at this delay.	
15.	ANY OTHER BUSINESS There were no items of other business table for discussion at this meeting.	
16.	POINTS TO HIGHLIGHT/COMMUNICATE TO THE LGB AND TTLP The disappointment in the pay policy not being available for review was expressed by governors. The concerns relating to the Trust's responsibility in effectively monitoring the group size of the school and that this was not being fulfilled were highlighted.	
17.	IMPACT OF THE MEETING Governors helped to move the school forward in the following ways during this meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governors reviewed the financial performance of the school noting a surplus position and the work undertaken by the Board to secure the additional growth funding along with the savings made from the teacher pay rises to support the positive financial position of the school. • A review of the BASC provision was undertaken and the committee established plans for additional work to forecast potential scenarios for the growth of this provision. • The recruitment of midday assistants was discussed with an action taken to undertake a local leaflet drop to widen the interest in positions from potential applicants. 	
18.	DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS: The dates of the next finance and staffing meetings were confirmed as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuesday 5th March 2024 at 5pm • Tuesday 18th June 2024 at 5pm 	

The meeting moved to Part 2.

.......... Acting Chair

.....05.03.24.....Date

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