



Oldcastle Primary School
Inspire ★ Motivate ★ Educate
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Minutes Finance 27.01.21 – Virtual Meeting due to Covid-19

Apologies – Jane Hughes

Present – Nia Vaughan, Rachel Evans, Barrie Lewis, Ceri Littlewood, Sara Peters, Clare Davies, Lyn Walters, Nerys Sales, Damian Faulkner.

1. Chair of the Finance Committee

For Information	To be Actioned
LW nominated Barrie Lewis to remain in the post of chair of the finance committee. RE seconded with agreement from all those who were present. Barrie Lewis will remain as chair of the committee.	Agreed by all present.

2. Budget Review

For Information	To be Actioned
- CL provided an up to date budget. The document is available to view in the drive. - Budget 1,416,004 Plus other income and underspend from last year provides a total amount available of £1,834,710. Estimated Spend sits at £1,756,344, leaving an underspend of £78,376, this is based on the LA calculation. However having re-calculated the estimated spend there is an additional £51,087 which will not be spent due to an anticipated underspend in the following areas - Teaching staff, Support staff, Agency costs, Repairs and Maintenance and small pockets of budget allocation where because the school has been closed it has not used up the full allowance. This leaves an estimated underspend of £129,463. The school is usually allowed to keep £50k to roll forward to next year, however this year it anticipated the under-spend is likely to be re-claimed by the LA, although this is not confirmed. Governors agreed to spend the funds now to add value to the school in this current year. £20k of this is already allocated to a project with Cardiff University and this will be shared between Oldcastle and the cluster, the school will get a share of this which could be as much as £6,600. This amount is not included in the calculations below as the amount is unknown. - This leaves £109,463. Some items (already agreed) are due to be paid in the next month, £10,000 on the credit card, school books for accelerated reading and well-being packs. £3841 benches. £10,118 outstanding bills though COA Total of £23966 already committed. This leaves £85497 - The school has a wish list which will be covered in the spending plans (section 3), taking into consideration there is £85,497 available.	

An update was provided on private funds ASC is holding £22088.50, however the staffing costs for this year will be moved to budget in April, last year the amount was £38,000 however it will be lower this year due to Covid. Music is holding £20095.63 however this is holding staffing costs for the music teacher this year and the music SLA, this is estimated to be around £17,000. The main private fund account is holding £59882.18, there are one or two cheques to come out. This is holding the funds to finish the interior of the canteen, which was put on hold due to Covid, circa £18,000. There is also some fund raising sitting in this account which can be spent on the items that benefit the whole school. Funds from here could be moved to budget to cover any agreed spend should the need arise, providing it is to benefit the whole school.	
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3. Spending Plans

For Information	To be Actioned
- The school has a wish list – Discussion was held around each item on the wish list. - The nursery toilets have been on the wish list for some time, a quote was provided last year (£57K), having revisited the plans and changed them to replace like for like, the addition of one cubicle and a general refurbishment of the area, including all sanitary items, floors, walls etc. A new quote has been sought at a new cost of £34,658. Further quotes will need to be sought to ensure the school meets procurement rules, but the quotes are likely to be in the same area or cheaper. The cost will not exceed this amount. Discussion was held on the options and governors agreed the area was in need of refurbishment. - The area behind the canteen is a dead area, and needs developing, a quote has been sought to build an outdoor learning wooden cabin at a cost of £18,460, this will provide room for at least half a class to work inside the cabin whilst the other half work in the outdoor area. The cost to develop the outdoor area around the cabin is £1,858. Governors asked what the cabin would look like and the size? The cabin will be like a wooden log cabin, it will not require planning consent as it will be moveable. It is 36 meters square and will be built to fit in that particular space, it can be moved in the future if required. Further quotes are being obtained to ensure best price and fit. It should last the school a long time and will offer great opportunity to enhance an area which is currently not being used. CD asked how governors could be assured the area would be well used, and how it fits in with the new curriculum. In addition could the area be used at lunch time. NV advised that as Humanities AOLE, it was a lovely idea and assured the area would be well used by teachers for teaching humanities, mapping, sustainability and outdoor work.	- Agreed to proceed by all present. - Agreed to proceed by all present. - CL responded that outdoor learning fits in really well in the new curriculum and the plan offers a good flow to the area, making it much easier

CD asked if there would be water to the area to save carrying water – CL advised water is nearby but it could be looked at if required.

NS asked if the area could be used by the community and agreed that it seemed to fit in really well with the new curriculum. – CL advised community use could also be considered in the future.

- Additional iPads, on top of the ones already agreed last term. **£11,465**
- Purchase of an online reading system so that children have access to books at home, this would be through the schools link with accelerated reader. The system works well with the school existing system and offers extensive material and other material. Cost **£4500** for a 3 year package, the 3 year package is cheaper than the usual £1700 pa.
- The school would like to purchase a wellbeing dog, much research has been carried out not only on the benefits it would provide to all pupils and staff, but also around how it would work, the health and safety aspects, the dog's welfare, training, insurance and vets, and risk assessments. The dog would help with all aspects of wellbeing, thrive, behaviour and a buddy dog.
The LA have been contacted to ensure health and safety aspects are covered and they thought it was a wonderful idea and were delighted that the school was considering it. The risk assessment is available to view in the governor drive. CL offered reassurance around training and handling.

LW asked what dog was being considered - CL advised it was likely to be a Labrador or similar, research led to this decision. LW went on to say what a wonderful idea it was and wanted to ensure the school realised the amount of exercise that would be required to keep a dog fit and healthy. CL advised the dogs care and welfare would be set in advance, i.e. it would only 'work' 4 days a week, exercise would be regular and fit for the dog, and training would be carried out by a No 1 owner along with other staff who would be involved on a day to day basis with the dog. CL has already had training conversation with a variety of people including the local police dog training facility who are working on a similar project with failed sniffer dogs.

DF asked if consent would be required from parent's - CL advised no only if specific work was being done on a one to one basis. Parents would of course be informed when the dog is introduced to the school and the dog would be accompanied by an adult at all times

DF asked had the school considered a hypo-allergenic dog - CL advised it had been a consideration however research showed that no dog was truly hypo-allergenic and often access to a dog reduced allergies in this area. The school would address this in the risk assessment for specific children.

to use. It could be used at lunch time however additional supervision would be required. The outdoor area could be used easily in conjunction with the other canteen outside area.

- Agreed to proceed by all present.
- Agreed to proceed by all present.
- Agreed by all present with the request that the project be presented to all governors for approval at the next FGB meeting. Governors in attendance at this meeting wished to note their agreement as some may not be able to attend the next FGB meeting.

BL advised he was not as enthusiastic as everyone else but could see the benefits the project offered to children. He had concerns around the school being too busy to be responsible for a dog, what if the No 1 carer left or was unwell? CL advised that all options had been considered and there would be a No 1 and No 2 carer, if No 2 had to take over permanently from No 1, a second No 2 would be put in place. This would be written into the risk assessment. The dog would live with No 1 carer, who would be responsible for it.

The initial cost of the dog is around **£5,000** this includes the dog, training, initial vet's bills and insurance and starter food.

Ongoing costs are likely to be around £1000 a year.

CD asked what would happen if the dog was not suitable or eventually retired? - CL advised that it would then need to be rehomed and a decision would be made at the time, an option would be that it may be rehomed by a member of school staff.

BL asked if the school currently allows dogs on the premises, as parents may question this with a dog now present daily – CL advised that the dog would be considered a working dog, i.e. similar to dogs for the blind or buddy dogs.

Total cost of agreed spend is £75,941 out of an available £85,497 in Budget.

4. Health and Safety Update

For Information	To be Actioned
- A report was provided and presented by S Peters and is available to view in the governor drive or on request at the school. - A health and safety walk was completed with the lead governor BL on 19/1/21. - The annual LA compliance check was completed on 14/1/21. The school have a few items to action as noted on the report, these are mainly due to changes in legislation or new items that the school has installed. - The caretaker continues to refurbish and paint areas as required along with carrying out all the usual checks and thanks were given for this. - BL thanked S Peters for all her hard work and a job well done for Health and Safety within the school.	

5. Staffing Update

For Information	To be Actioned
- Two new staff members have joined in early January, as appointed last year. - A rota is in place for on site provision as covered in the curriculum meeting.	

6. AOB

For Information	To be Actioned
• CD advised that she had challenged the LA around the process of the parent governor ballot, based on the information provided it was not a legal process and the outcome could not be relied upon. • The clerk confirmed that the LA have now agreed to suspend all parental governor ballots until a robust process is in place. • The LA have provided a communication advising that the school should now follow WG guidance. This guidance will be sent to governors tomorrow and an additional FGM has been called to agree the next steps. This will be Monday Feb 1st at 4.30pm. • DF asked what steps are being taken to advise the prospective candidates of what is happening, and that it should be made clear to the candidates that the decision was not made by the school but by the LA. The clerk responded that advice has been sought from the LA, along with a request that a communication be provided for the prospective candidates explaining the decision. Clarification has also been sought around the nominations being carried forward to a time when a ballot can take place. A communication to the candidates will be sent as soon as the LA provide this information. • The clerk confirmed that it is important the candidates understand the decision is made by the LA and not the school or governors. • BL wished to congratulate the school on the production of the wellbeing packs, he was with his grandchildren when they received the packs and they were thrilled. Congratulations to the school for a job well done, he was sure the children and parents were thrilled.	

This is a true and accurate record of the meeting.

B. Lewis

Chair of the Finance Committee – B Lewis

March 18th 2021

Date

