



ST ALBAN'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Love one another as I have loved you

PART ONE

**MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL MEETING OF
THE ASSETS COMMITTEE**

14 NOVEMBER 2022 at 0930 hours

DRAFT TO HT: 17/11/22

PARTICIPANTS

John McDonald [Headteacher]

Peter Matthews [Chair]

Kevin Doogan

Lorraine Adamson

Carmen Davies

Bridget Pullen

Collette Haig

Apologies/Non-participants: There was a full attendance.

**In attendance: Joanne Holmes, School Business Manager
Eileen Coyle, Clerk to Governors
Daniel Stenhouse, LA Bursar [item 3.]**

In opening, the Headteacher invited everyone to join in a prayer to St Alban.

1 PRELIMINARIES

1.1 CONFIRM GOVERNORS ASSIGNED TO THE ASSETS COMMITTEE. CONFIRM CHAIR AND INVITE NOMINATIONS FOR VICE CHAIR.

The membership of the Assets Committee comprises: The Headteacher, Kevin Doogan, Peter Matthews, Lorraine Adamson and Carmen Davies.

The Headteacher invited nominations for Chair of the Assets Committee.

Peter Matthews confirmed his willingness to Chair the Assets Committee in 2022/23.

Peter Matthews was elected Chair of the Assets Committee in 2022/23.

PETER MATTHEWS IN THE CHAIR

The Chair introduced and welcomed the new members Lorraine Adamson and Carmen Davies to their first meeting of the Assets Committee.

1.2 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR: The Chair invited nominations for Vice Chair.

Lorraine Adamson volunteered as Vice Chair of the Assets Committee.

No further nominations were received.

Lorraine Adamson was elected Vice Chair of the Assets Committee in 2022/23.

1.3 Apologies for absence: There was a full attendance therefore no apologies were received.

1.4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: No changes to the Declarations of Interest were made.

1.5 FINANCIAL SKILLS MATRIX:

ACTION POINT: THE FINANCIAL SKILLS MATRIX TO BE ISSUED TO THE GOVERNORS.

1.6 CONFIDENTIALITY: Confidentiality to be observed for all items discussed at this meeting.

2 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ASSETS COMMITTEE ON 21 JUNE 2022/MATTERS ARISING

The Headteacher showed a screen shot of the minutes.

PROPOSED by the Headteacher that the minutes of the Assets Committee on 21 June 2022 are a correct record of the meeting.

There was no dissent.

MATTER ARISING: There were no matters arising from the previous minutes.

3 FINANCIAL ASPECTS

3.1 BURSAR'S PERIOD 6 REPORT, RECONCILIATION STATEMENT AND PROJECTIONS

The acting bursar, Danny Stenhouse, introduced the school's new bursar.

The bursar reported that he had met previously with the Headteacher and the school business manager to discuss the figures at period 6, to gain an idea of where the budget might be at the end of the financial year and to look at the projections going forward for future years.

The bursar's commentary is appended.

GOVERNORS' QUESTIONS

Q: The Governors will want to know why Supply is much higher than budgeted for.

A: [Headteacher] Some is to do with long term staff absences, some of which has been offset by Insurance.

A teacher has been absent since June and that is showing in supply spend, but some expenditure has been offset by income received so far.

£10,000 has been built in to cover the additional cost.

The bursar explained that only income that is known about has been built in; anything that is '*future based*' is not included until it is actually received.

Q: The deficit for 2023/24 is likely to be £90,766. How is that likely to change? Is it based on the current overspend on Supply? If so, that is not sustainable going forward. The deficits for 2024/25 and 2025/26 total £197,618, giving a total deficit of £287,394.

A [Headteacher] We had to pay for maternity cover, but we know that teachers will be returning from maternity leave at the end of this year. Also some TAs left to take up new jobs.

It's a piece of work we will need to look at, perhaps at period 9, to make sure we are not at risk of overspending.

We're also considering going from 14 to 13 classes, and have mixed age classes in year 1 and year 6. There are things we can do, but we may need to look at the structure, and possible restructuring large classes.

Bursar's response addressing Headteacher]: I think you are right. We discussed the possibility of a potential restructuring to bring the budget back to credit, but no figures have been built in until the matter has been discussed with the governors.

Headteacher's further response: We need to look at the contracts first to see how to balance the budget. Start looking at period 9, in January/February. We need to have an Assets meeting [or a small group] in January/early February, to try

to reduce the amount of spend between now and the end of this financial year, to see if there is some carry forward.

Bursar's response: You have a healthy credit. You have time to sort it out. There's no need to do anything yet.

The Headteacher -

- i. **thanked the Acting Bursar for all his hard work; adding that the format is much clearer now;**
- ii. **thanked the School Business Manager for the clarity on where the school is spending.**

The bursars withdrew.

3.2 IMPACT/IMPLICATIONS OF OUTCOME OF BUDGET REVIEW: The Headteacher stated that the impact of the budget review had been discussed under agenda item 3.1. It would be wise to wait until December and link it with a review of the PAN. Nothing can change in 2022/23, apart from considering reducing the number of children joining the school to avoid exceeding the legal class limit of 30 pupils; currently there are 36 children in some classes. There is a need to make a recommendation to the Governing Board on the PAN and the earliest date on which change can be implemented.

3.3 TRADED SERVICES. SLAs BROCHURE AND PRICE LIST: The link to the brochure and price list had been sent to the Committee with the agenda. The Headteacher advised that at its next meeting, the Board would be in a position to choose which services to sign up to, and which to change, in the next financial year.

Meanwhile, the Committee may wish to consider whether to stay with Jim Cookson, or to return to the local authority for Construction and Facilities Management. There is a danger, as more schools choose to change to Jim Cookson, that his capacity may diminish and he might be unable to provide the service going forward.

A governor stated that she works closely with the LA's Facilities Management service and she was aware that the service is struggling to engage competent contractors to work in a timely manner - a problem that would exacerbate if more schools go back to the LA. Information on a session at the Floral Pavilion would be sent out shortly, providing an unbiased opinion that would enable schools to make a judgement.

Q: How do the costs compare:

A: [Headteacher]. Jim Cookson is about £1,000 cheaper than Facilities Management. The Committee needs to be made aware that as a voluntary aided school any expenditure in excess of £2,000 would be funded by the Diocese, not by the LA as is the situation for LA schools.

I am confident that the LA has competent staff to deal with Legionnella and safety checks, but nevertheless the Governors need to be aware of the risks. I propose

that a decision is made in January when the pros and cons are known. I am happy with the current Health & Safety SLA.

The SBM stated that the Health & Safety briefing would be sent to the Governors, when there would be an opportunity for Governors to ask questions. The briefing was very good and she encouraged the Governors to watch the video. There is no requirement to go with the LA, but the Governors need to be aware of the risks. It's about protection for Governors. She quoted an example where a contractor had exposed a school community to asbestos.

4 PERSONNEL ASPECTS

4.1 WHOLE SCHOOL STAFFING STRUCTURE 2022/23: In drawing attention to the link on the staffing structure, the Headteacher expressed his appreciation to the Committee for supporting the new structure. It had increased significantly the capacity of the leadership team, taken away some of the pressure on the Headteacher and the Deputy Headteacher and also enabled concerns to be shared at a much earlier stage.

Considerable investment has been made in training for TAs to progress to TA2/TA3/TA4 enabling them to cover teacher absences, potentially reducing staffing costs.

4.2 STAFFING CHANGES: AUTUMN 2022: A member of staff is due to return to work on 2 December following a long term absence due to an injury. Another member of staff had given notice of a return from maternity leave. She was happy with a job share but had accepted a permanent part time post in a nearby school to start in January 2023. The supply arrangement in place would continue to avoid disrupting the children's learning.

Some TAs had secured posts in other schools, eg St Mary's College. The non-replacement of these posts would save money in the budget.

One member of staff is absent with Covid.

5 BUILDING AND GROUNDS ASPECTS

5.1 FORMULA CAPITAL MAINTENANCE PRIORITIES: The Headteacher reported that a start date is awaited on projects which include the erection of a two-metre high fence at the front of the school to give some privacy and security for the children in the playground. It appears that there is a shortage of money, that other projects have priority, and the expectation is that this school's projects will be deferred to the next financial year.

Quotations for £200,000 had been received for work on the roof. Work on a section of the roof had been completed last year, with a further section completed this year.

5.2 DEVOLVED FORMULA CAPITAL: This school usually receives between £10/£12,000, which can only be spent on certain items, one of which is IT.

The school needs a new server. The possibility of obtaining a quote [likely to be in the region of £6/7,000 for the installation] has been discussed with the Diocese.

The school is '*future proof*' in terms of Wi-Fi.

Projects going forward include work on the pupils' toilets and re-surfacing the playground

The wooden floor had water damage and a temporary solution is in place pending the replacement of the floor.

The Diocese has been asked to provide a new serving hatch in the kitchen. The tiles in the kitchen were condemned on the grounds of hygiene [grouting] during a health & safety inspection and need to be replaced with splash backs.

The boiler in year 2 is over 25 years' old. A request has been made for an air conditioning unit.

Lorraine Adamson stated that the above items would be looked at as part of the forthcoming Health & Safety Inspection.

Q. What is the total estimated cost of these projects?

A. Over £100,000. There is £10,000 in the budget which has been committed. There has been no spending so far in this financial year.

6 REPORTS/COMPLIANCE

6.1 SDP. FINANCIAL ASPECTS. SEF SUMMARY: The Headteacher reassured the Committee that everything in terms of school improvement is supported by finance. The things that need to be looked at include extra support for staff training; something the school is committed to in terms of school improvement, and is around £40,000 now.

The number of books in the school is being looked at. It's been several years since new books were ordered. The bursar has been asked to build in an extra £10,000 to upgrade the books stock.

The Committee authorised the school to obtain quotes for the purchase of new books.

6.2 SFVS. SEGMENT FOR REVIEW: Working with the business manager, the Assets Committee is responsible for responding to the SFVS annual questionnaire. The next return is due by 31 March 2023.

Rather than wait until then, it is good practice for the Assets Committee to respond to a selection of questions at each meeting.

A governor commented that the governing Board is now in a much better position to answer questions.

The Committee agreed that the answer 'YES' given in the relevant section of each question 9,10,11, 12 and 13 of the questionnaire was the appropriate response in each case.

6.3 GDPR: The Headteacher stated that whilst he was not saying that the school is non-compliant with GDPR regulations, he was unable to say, with confidence, that

it is fully compliant in all aspects. Potential areas of concern relate to staff's password use, data protection, the use of encrypted memory sticks, privacy issues, and the storage and timely destruction of data, documents and records relating to pupils. There is a lack of clarity on the understanding of the staff of some policies and the degree to which the policies relate to them.

From a governor's perspective, it is important to work through the many policies in place so they have confidence that the whole school staff is fully aware of their responsibilities.

Wirral's GDPR Officer visited the school and recommended a visit by an expert who offered advice on dealing with some of the historic documents the school holds.

7 POLICIES AND PROCEDURES. FINANCIAL DOCUMENTS

7.1 WHOLE SCHOOL PAY POLICY. 2022: The Headteacher advised that the Pay Policy had been received last week, following consultation with the recognised trade unions. There appears to be few changes based on the 2021 policy. Two matters for attention are: The need to adopt the policy, and to convene a meeting of the Pay Committee. He confirmed that the teachers' appraisals had been completed by the due date, 31 October, and some staff had progressed up the pay scale.

The school has adopted a number of CES policies, which are is mainly in line with Wirral's policies, following consultation with the unions, Governors and staff.

7.2 SCHOOL EMERGENCY PLAN: The Headteacher reported on the need to update the school emergency plan and recommended that the plan is brought to the next meeting of this Committee.

The staff need to be trained on the use of the evacuation chair. The LA offers training for staff.

8 ADMINISTRATION

8.1 GOVERNORS' QUESTIONS: The Governors raised questions throughout the meeting, which were addressed by the Headteacher.

8.2 GOVERNOR TRAINING. REQUESTS/ATTENDED:

No reports on Governor training attended, or requests for training were received.

Q: Is there someone who looks after Governor training to inform the Ofsted report.

A: Pending the identification of a Governor to be responsible for training, Governors who attend training should send their report to Kevin Doogan.

8.3 LINK GOVERNORS' VISITS/WRITTEN REPORTS:

Lorraine Adamson advised that she had arranged a link visit at noon, a week on Friday. It would be helpful if one or two governors could join her on a walkabout.

8.4 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING:

RESOLVED: To confirm the date and time of next meeting on Monday, 6 February 2023 at 0915 hours.

In closed session

PART TWO

9 CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF THE PART TWO MEETING ON 14 NOVEMBER 2022.

PARTICIPANTS

John McDonald [Headteacher]

Peter Matthews [Chair]

Kevin Doogan

Lorraine Adamson

Carmen Davies

Bridget Pullen

Collette Haig

Apologies/Non-participants: There was a full attendance.

In attendance: Eileen Coyle, Clerk to Governors

9 CONFIDENTIAL MATTER ARISING FROM THE MEETING ON 21 JUNE 2022.

The Headteacher reported that the school is required to investigate two reports from the LADO and another from the Police.

If not resolved to everyone's satisfaction, the matter would be referred to the Governors' statutory committees when the Governors will need to be impartial. For that reason, the details cannot be shared at this stage.

10 HEADTEACHERS' APPRAISAL

The Headteacher reported that his appraisal had been arranged for 6 December at 10 am..

The expectation would be that Kevin Doogan would lead the process, supported by the Chairs of the Assets and Standards Committees.

11 PROPOSED VISIT BY ASSISTANT DIRECTOR:

Provisional arrangements had been made for the Assistant Director to visit the school 30 November.

In closing the meeting the Headteacher thanked the Governors for all their work as volunteers.

He added that Governor training is important and he would ensure that everyone has access to the training available.

The meeting closed at 1056 hours.

SIGNED AS A TRUE AND ACCURATE ACCOUNT OF THE MEETING OF THE ASSETS COMMITTEE ON 14 NOVEMBER 2022.

_____ CHAIR

_____ DATE

PERIOD 6 BUDGET REPORT

Budget Heading	Bursar's commentary
INCOME	<p>There had been uncertainty at budget setting on whether the grants for Catch-up and Covid would continue.</p> <p>Confirmation has now been received that the grants will continue for 2022/23 and for 2023/24 to offset the spend on tutoring and mentors, etc.</p> <p>Pupil Premium Income was much better than predicted at budget setting due to an increase in free school meals.</p> <p>The SBM is investigating income from Other Sources, which have not been received for a while.</p> <p>Income for school trips increased over budget to offset the additional spend.</p> <p>Insurance income has increased over budget due to additional staff absences.</p> <p>SEN Resources Income is slightly better than at budget setting.</p> <p>In total, the budget is £69,000 better off than at budget setting.</p>
BUDGET 2022/23	<p>Based on the October pupil census, the projected income is £169,124, which is slightly better than at budget setting, but higher numbers are going out, and lower numbers are coming in.</p>
STAFFING	<p>Some fixed term contracts are coming to an end, as are supply teachers. The light overspend at present will be offset against teachers leaving.</p> <p>The teachers' 5% pay increases and the fixed one-off payment to support staff have been built in to the budget.</p> <p>These pay rises, which were more than projected at budget setting, resulted in an overspend of £135,000.</p>
PREMISES	<p>Expenditure is on budget – there are no areas of concern.</p>
SUPPLIES AND SERVICES	<p>Known additional spend has been built into the budget.</p>
TRANSPORT	<p>Expenditure is on budget – there are no areas of concern.</p>

SOFTWARE/ON LINE LICENCES--	There had been uncertainty at budget setting. More work would be carried out at period 9 in order to get a more accurate budget.
BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT/LEGO THERAPY	Some additional spend has been incurred.
PE GRANT.	The SBM is investigating any adjustments that can be made to avoid an overspend.
SUMMARY	Most other budgets are on target. This year's budget will be overspent by about £18,000, compared to budget setting.
CAPITAL EXPENDITURE	The Diocese funds Capital expenditure in VA schools.
END OF YEAR PROJECTIONS	<p>There is a potential deficit of £117,465 at the end of the current financial year.</p> <p>The projections going forward are:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">2023/24: Deficit £90,766</p> <p style="text-align: center;">2024/25: Deficit £89,553.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">2025/26: Deficit £107,065.</p> <p>The school is carrying forward a healthy credit of £290,150.</p>