

The Governing Body of Sandy Lane Primary School
Resources Committee meeting on Tuesday 22 November 2022

MINUTES

The meeting opened at 3.51pm

Attendance

Committee

John Cooper
 Sue Duffy
 John Henkel (Chair) – from Item Res 24/22
 Fiona Newsome (Associate Member) – from Item Res 24/22
 Graham Walker
 Heather Weatherhead

Others

Diane Bonham – Business Manager (BM)
 Helen Osman (Clerk)
 Darren Senior (Bursar) – to Item Res 30/22

Documents

A. Audited School Fund account 2021-22	Item Res 26/22	<i>Tabled at meeting</i>
B. Financial Audit report September 2022	Item Res 28/22	<i>Circulated with agenda</i>
C. Evidencing the impact of the Primary PE and sport premium	Item Res 29/22	<i>Circulated with agenda</i>
D. Wellbeing Action Plan 2022-23	Item Res 31/22	<i>Circulated with agenda</i>
E. 2023-24 Financial Year: EHT time and financial split across partnership schools	Item Res 38/22	<i>Tabled at meeting</i>

Summary of Actions

Action No. Res	Action	Person	Deadline
06/22 (i)	EHT to prepare options to enable the school to survive financially in 2023-24 and 2024-25 for consideration at the next LG/LM meeting.	J Cooper	16-10-2022
08/22	School to put the supply agency contract out to tender with a view to a new contract being in lace for September 2023. [Deadline revised at meeting of 22-11-2022]	D Bonham	31-08-2022
24/22 (i)	NG/HS to review Smartlog	H Weatherhead	16-12-2022
24/22 (i)	NG/HS to: include in her termly H&S Learning Walks a review of Smartlog	H Weatherhead	Ongoing
25/22	Bursar to send to Committee members a budget update reflecting the national pay awards	D Senior	02-12-2022
27/22	Governors and Bursar to meet at 10.30am on Thursday 05 January 2023 to review financial benchmarking data for 2021-22.	Governors, Bursar	05-01-2023
28/22	School to provide for the next meeting a written statement of the action taken on each recommendation of the September 2022 financial audit.	F Newsome	06-01-2023
30/22 (i)	EHT, working through the Joint Committee, to seek information on the contracts/SLAs of partner schools and any procurement expertise among their governors.	J Cooper	27-01-2023
30/22 (ii)	Bursar to provide to school details of the procurement practices of his employing Trust.	D Senior	31-12-2022
31/22	School to implement a scheme to offer small gifts to support staff struggling with the cost of living crisis and ensure all staff are aware of the benefits to which they may be entitled.	J Cooper	31-12-2022
36/22	HoS to arrange a meeting for parents on online safety	F Newsome	31-12-2022

The Clerk took the Chair pending completion of Item Res 20/22

Res 20/22 Elect Committee Chair

1. The Committee agreed that the term of office of the Chair should be two years, running until its first meeting in the autumn term of 2024.
2. John Henkel was nominated as Chair. There were no other nominations.
 - **The Committee unanimously elected** John Henkel as Chair.

Sue Duffy took the Chair pending the arrival of John Henkel

Res 21/22 Apologies for absence and their acceptance

3. All Committee members were present.

Res 22/22 Notification of other urgent business and requests to vary the agenda order

4. The Committee agreed to take the following items of other business:
 - Hardship support for staff
 - Recommendation of the Joint Committee on the hours of the Executive Headteacher (EHT) and the financial arrangements with partner schools.

Res 23/22 Declarations of interest for items on this agenda

5. The EHT declared an interest in the item of other business relating to his hours.

Res 24/22 Minutes of meeting held on 04 October 2022 and matters arising

- **The minutes were agreed as a true record of the meeting.**

Actions arising		
Action No.	Action	Status
83/21	<p>NG/HS to conduct an H&S Learning Walk before the end of the Spring term. [Revised deadline agreed at meeting of 04-10-2022]</p> <p>NG/HS confirmed that she had conducted a Health and Safety Learning Walk on 19 October 2022. The Clerk had received her report, which would be circulated with the papers for the Governing Body meeting on 30 November 2022.</p> <p>NG/HS confirmed that she had been satisfied with Health and Safety at the time of her visit. She had made a point of being at school at the end of the day to observe how pupils left the premises and had seen that they had been orderly.</p> <p><i>Fiona Newsome joined the meeting at 3.56pm</i></p> <p>Governors agreed that it would be good practice for NG/HS to review Smartlog¹ termly, in the same way that NG/SG carried out a termly check of the Single Central Record. NG/HS would review Smartlog by the end of the autumn term and thereafter would do so as part of her termly visits to school.</p>	<p>Closed</p> <p>New action</p>
107/21(ii)	<p>Chair to review the inventory. [Revised deadline agreed at meeting of 04-10-2022]</p> <p>The Head of School (HoS) confirmed that Chair/Res had reviewed the inventory when had visited the school for the Governor Day on 10 November 2022.</p>	Closed

¹ Smartlog - cloud-based health and safety compliance management software for organisations across all industries and sectors

120/21 (c)(i)	<i>In the first week of September 2022, Bursar to send to the Clerk a cash flow profile for September to December 2022, for circulation to the Committee and discussion at its autumn 1 half term meeting.</i>	Closed
	Completed.	
06/22 (i)	<i>EHT to prepare options to enable the school to survive financially in 2023-24 and 2024-25 for consideration at the next LG/LM meeting.</i>	Ongoing
	The EHT said that he would bring options to the LG/LM meeting on Friday 20 January 2023.	
06/22(ii)	<i>J Henkel to agree with the Bursar a more easily absorbed format for notes on the budget position.</i>	Closed
	<i>John Henkel joined the meeting at 3.59pm.</i>	
	The Committee agree that, in light of the Bursar's forthcoming departure, this item was no longer required: reporting formats would be agreed with the new Bursar.	
07/22 (i)	<i>J Henkel to review the cashflow forecast for September to December 2022.</i>	Closed
	John Henkel confirmed that he had reviewed the cash flow forecasts to end-December 2022 and end-March 2023.	
07/22(ii)	<i>Bursar to send to Clerk a new cashflow forecast for the period to end-April 2023.</i>	Closed
	Completed.	
08/22	<i>School to put the supply agency contract out to tender.</i>	Ongoing
	The HoS said that Chair/Res had agreed to provide guidance on how to specify the tender document. The Committee agreed that the aim should be to have a new contract in place with a specific preferred supplier in time for the start of the 2023-24 school year.	Revised deadline
14/22	<i>EHT to give HoS time off in recognition of work over the summer 2022 holiday on managing the Early Years project.</i>	Closed
	The EHT said that he had awarded the HoS two additional days leave in recognition of her work on the managing the Early Years construction project, to be taken on dates to be agreed.	

Finance

Res 25/22 Review budget position

6. The Bursar said that the Committee had reviewed the budget position two months prior to this meeting. A further update was not meaningful at this time because information on national pay rises had only just been added to the budget forecasting system. He would therefore issue a budget update in the next ten days.
Action: Bursar
7. **Asked** for his view of the likely revised budget position taking account of the pay rises, the Bursar said that he believed it would be acceptable. **Pressed** on this, he said he believed that the school's budget position would be fine. The Executive Headteacher (EHT) reminded governors that the budget position as reported to the Committee on 04 October 2022 had shown a forecast carryforward of £8k. This forecast had included the bulk of the anticipated pay rises for teaching and support staff. It had not taken account of the financial impact of the two resignations that had been discussed at that meeting – these posts were not being back-filled, which would lead to savings. Furthermore, despite doubts expressed by the local authority (LA), income from the new Nursery had reached the projection of some £80k. **Replying to questions**, the EHT said that Nursery had capacity to admit further children. The Bursar added that he anticipated an underspend on energy.
8. Looking to 2023-24 and beyond, the EHT reminded governors that the school would not have to pay the one-off £138k capital cost of the Early Years Learning Area development project carried out this year. With the 4% rise in funding announced in the budget, the EHT anticipated that the school should be able to balance its budget in 2023-24. The picture for future years was subject to the usual uncertainties.

Asked whether this meant that the school could afford all the necessary staff in 2023-24, the EHT said that it could afford to maintain its current staffing complement.

9. The Committee concluded that the school's tight management of its budget had enabled it to make a significant investment in Early Years in 2022-23. The anticipated budget position for 2023-24 seemed reasonable and had been helped by fortuitous staff departures and a financially-based decision not to backfill. However, many uncertainties remained so a prudent approach would be required. If this prudent approach should lead to a substantial forecast budget surplus in 2023-24, the Committee would consider priorities for using the surplus to further the interests of the school's pupils.

Res 26/22 Approval of the audited School Fund account – Document A

10. **Replying to questions**, the Bursar confirmed that the audit of the School Fund account had raised no matters of concern.
- **The Committee unanimously approved** the audited School Fund account for 01 September 2021 to 31 August 2022.
11. Referring to the fact that he would cease to work as the school's Bursar from April 2023, the Bursar said that he would be willing to continue to audit the School Fund account in future if the school would like him to do so.

Res 27/22 Agree arrangements for financial benchmarking

12. Governors agreed to:
- meet at 10.30am on Thursday 05 January 2023 to review the financial benchmarking data for 2021-22 and to report the outcome to the next meeting of the Committee;
 - focus on income and expenditure per pupil in 2021-22; and
 - follow the principle that expenditure that did not directly contribute to education (eg utilities) should be minimised in favour of expenditure that did so (eg learning resources).

Action: Governors, Bursar

Res 28/22 Update on progress against the action plan from the September 2022 financial audit – Document B

13. The Head of School (HoS) said that all audit recommendations had been actioned and/or completed. she and the Business Manager were working through the changes to the Finance Policy handbook recommended by the auditors. The recommended changes had been made to:
- the procedures for invoices; and
 - the delegated authority to spend (from £5k to £10k)
14. As discussed at the last meeting, the school was making arrangements to go out to tender for a preferred supplier of supply cover.
15. **Asked** whether there were any recommendations in the audit report that the school did not accept, the HoS said that there were not. However, the small number of staff made it challenging to achieve full separation of duties. Governors said that it was legitimate to propose variations to audit recommendations so that they worked within the specific circumstances of the school. The Committee asked that the school:
- prepare a written statement of the action taken in response to the audit recommendations (a column added to the action plan should suffice);
 - include in the statement any proposals to vary the audit recommendations to fit the circumstances of the school.

Res 29/22 Report on PE and Sports Premium funding – Document C

16. The HoS said that the main points of focus for the PE and Sports Premium were the Forest School and the procurement of a new provider of coaching services that would deliver more competition-based

activities, upskill staff and provide activities to support the needs of children eligible for Pupil Premium funding.

17. The Committee was satisfied with how the PE and Sports Premium was being used by the school. **It asked** that the Link Governors for Quality of Education monitor the impact of that expenditure.

Res 30/22 Review the availability of procurement expertise

18. The Committee noted that, in the context of the issues around the letting of the cleaning and caretaking service, it had identified a collective lack of procurement expertise among the Governing Body and leadership team that had not been identified in GB skills audits. The Committee agreed that procurement was different from purchasing and required specific knowledge and skills that were not part of the ordinary skills set of educators. While effective procurement was important, it was not core to the purpose of the school.
19. The Bursar, who was employed by an Academy Trust, offered to share how the Trust undertook procurement. He highlighted the benefits of effective procurement in terms of both savings and quality of service. **Asked** how an expert in procurement might be identified and contracted or employed, he said that it would be both costly and unnecessary to do so: there was a great deal of information and advice available online, though it would require a member of staff to have the time to draw the information together, put systems in place and undertake monthly reviews.
20. Governors considered that the proposal to federate with other schools in the partnership presented an opportunity to develop central in-house expertise on behalf of all the federated schools – this would be more resource-efficient than each school developing their own expertise for the relatively infrequent occasions on which it was necessary to run a procurement.
21. **The Committee agreed** as follows:
- Through the Joint Committee, the school should explore the scope to establish a joint procurement function for the proposed federation.
 - As a first step, and working through the Joint Committee, the EHT would ask the partner schools to provide information on:
 - their contracts, service level agreements (SLAs) and any significant new contacts/SLAs that they anticipated letting in the next year; and
 - any procurement expertise among their governors.
- Action: EHT**
- By the end of December 2022, the Bursar would provide information on how his employing academy Trust approached procurement.
- Action: Bursar**

Darren Senior left the meeting at 4.34pm

Staffing

Res 31/22 Staff wellbeing - including progress against the Action Plan for Wellbeing – Document D

22. Governors noted the evaluation of the impact of the Action Plan for Wellbeing as set out at Document D. The Head said that she had wondered how the recent staffing changes might affect the scores shown in the Staff Wellbeing Dashboard generated by the Pulse² tool: in fact, there had been no dramatic change, with the overall wellbeing score hovering at around 3.7 out of 6.0. There had been some drop-off in the

² Pulse – software designed by teachers to support staff wellbeing in schools through weekly check-ins with line managers.
[Website](#)

use of Pulse by staff and the HoS had asked senior managers to remind staff to use it regularly so that she could monitor wellbeing effectively.

23. The HoS said that the changes to staffing had been implemented and received as well as could be expected. There was, however, a high level of absence at present: replying to questions, the HoS said that these absences were due to typical winter illnesses, including a particularly debilitating cold that had taken some staff out of school for one to two weeks.
24. **Asked** whether she foresaw any particular risks and challenges in relation to staff wellbeing, the HoS said that her main concerns were:
- a continuing high level of staff sick absence, which added to the strain on remaining staff; and
 - financial difficulties facing some staff due to the cost of living increases.
25. The Chair of the Governing Body (Chair/GB) said that she was aware from her work with other schools and with food banks that school staff, particularly Teaching Assistants, were using food banks. She had discussed with the EHT the scope for the school to provide some support for staff who were struggling to manage financially. She understood that the school could make gifts of up to £50.00 to staff without affecting their tax or any benefits they might be claiming. In principle, she proposed that the Governing Body should agree that the school should offer such gifts here staff were struggling, in the same way that it provided crisis support funding to families. **Replying to questions**, she confirmed that this proposal was consistent with considerations of propriety in the expenditure of public funds.
26. The EHT said that while he supported this proposal, he was conscious that another school in the partnership had recently had to withdraw the discretionary payment that it had previously paid to first aiders due to budget constraints. Governors recognised the desirability of consistency across the partner schools where possible but considered that:
- a £50 gift to support a member of staff in crisis was in a different category;
 - the schools had different budget positions and one of the benefits of the proposal to federate was the scope to even out such differences, but in the meantime it was important not to level opportunities down to what was affordable by the least financially secure school.
27. **The Committee agreed in principle** that the school should have discretion to offer a gift of £50.00 to staff who were struggling financially, subject to confirmation that there would be no impact on the tax and benefits of staff. **It further agreed** that:
- The EHT and HoS should determine how to implement this fairly and in line with considerations of proper expenditure of public funds.
 - The availability of such discretionary gifts should not be publicised to staff. Rather, the school should ensure that all staff were aware that they should speak to the HoS confidentially if they were struggling with the cost of living. This would enable the HoS to make a gift discreetly if she judged it to be warranted.
 - The school should continue to ensure that staff were all aware of the benefits that they were eligible to claim, for example by circulating leaflets or signposting staff to the Turn2Us website, Citizens Advice or other agencies.
 - Total expenditure should be limited to £800. If the EHT and HoS thought need would exceed this sum, they should bring the matter back to the Committee.

Action: EHT

Res 38/22 URGENT other business referred from Item Res 22/22 above – Document E

28. Chair/GB said that Document E had been discussed at the meeting of the Joint Committee with Steeton³ on 11 November 2022, at which the Chair of Governors from Myrtle Park⁴ (Chair/MP) had also been

³ Steeton Primary School – partner school to Sandy Lane and Myrtle Park Primary Schools and member of Joint Committee

⁴ Myrtle Park Primary School – partner school to Steeton and Sandy Lane Primary Schools and observer on Joint Committee

present. The paper proposed a reduction in the hours of the EHT from 1.0 to 0.6 fte⁵ and, an increased focus on more strategic issues. The proposal would lead to savings, which would be partially offset by bringing in professional support for the EHT in developing the partnership and moving it towards federation. The figures in the paper were indicative and would need to be adjusted in light of the forthcoming Performance Management review of the EHT and include an estimate of the requirement for professional support. The proposal was that the costs should be shared in proportion to the number of pupils at each school. All three schools would make a saving, particularly Sandy Lane because it was the largest of the schools in terms of pupil numbers.

29. The EHT explained that the strength of the Heads of School, and the emerging strength of middle leaders, enabled him to reduce his hours both to create savings and to allow him more down time. As planned, he had gradually increased the proportion of his time that was devoted to the more strategic aspects of his role and he believed that the time was now right to focus on the strategic role. Chair/GB added that this would also facilitate further development of school leaders.
30. The EHT said that, if the proposal were approved by the GBs, the Clerk had agreed to provide the professional support. He and the Clerk already worked closely on governance and the development of the school's Self Evaluation document. This would be an extension of that practice to include research and paper-writing support, including in relation to the proposal to federate.
31. Chair/GB said that, for a number of reasons, she supported the proposal. She asked each governor for their views and the following points were made:
- It would be important not to underestimate the work involved in moving towards federation. This Committee would keep the need for support under review.
 - The proposal would facilitate the development of in-house talent in the three schools.
 - This was a positive step in the direction that the school and its partners had been pursuing for some time.
 - **Asked** how the three Heads of School felt about the proposal, the EHT said that he had discussed the HR implications of the responsibilities of the HoSs with Chair/GB. It might be necessary to discuss with PACT HR whether those responsibilities might be commensurate with a change from HoS to Headteacher. Chair/GB added that the costs of this would be minimal as Heads of School were not paid less than Headteachers
 - In terms of succession, it could prove challenging to move the EHT role back to full time. The EHT said that clarity about the respective responsibilities of the EHT and Heads of School should help with this. If the proposal to federate proceeded, the federation would be looking to expand and could be expected to need a full time CEO in due course.
32. **The Committee unanimously recommended** that the Governing Body approve the proposal at its meeting on 30 November 2022. Chair/GB said that, if it were approved by the GB, the proposal would be taken into account in the setting of the EHT's Performance Management objectives.
33. Chair/GB said that the Joint Committee meeting had been useful. Chair/MP had been confident that Myrtle Park would want to extend the partnership for a second year and that the GB would be interested in a longer term partnership and possible federation: the Myrtle Park GB would discuss federation at its meeting on 24 November 2022.

The meeting adjourned at 5.02 pm and reconvened at 5.13pm

Res 32/22 Update on other staff issues arising since last meeting

34. The HoS reported that the Assistant Headteacher (AH) was undertaking a phased return to work following long term illness. The person covering for a member of staff on maternity leave would herself embark on maternity leave from the start of the Spring term: the school had secured a strong supply teacher and staff would be deployed to minimise disruption for pupils.

⁵ fte – full time equivalent. A full-time staff member counts as 1.0 fte; someone working 3 days per week counts as 0.6 fte etc

Premises

Res 33/22 Review the scope for letting school premises

35. Governors noted that the Link Governor (Early Years) meeting on 07 October 2022 had asked that the Committee consider whether, in light of the growing reputation of the school, there might be scope to offer the premises for parties or celebrations. A governor who was also chair of Café West said that she believed there was demand in the community for venues for such events. The Clerk reminded governors that schools were expected to consider from time to time whether there was scope to let their premises both to generate income and to ensure that best use was made of school assets to benefit the community.
36. Governors considered that, while the idea of letting the premises for parties and celebrations had merits in principle, the architecture of the building did not lend itself to this purpose. The costs involved in opening, locking and cleaning the building was disproportionate to the likely income from parties and celebrations and, for this reason, the Committee did not consider that this was a priority for the school.

Res 34/22 Monitor impact of contracted out cleaning and site management service

37. The HoS said that the new contract continued to go well. The owners of the cleaning and site management firm came into school regularly and were responsive to the needs of the school. The firm had experienced issues with some of its staff but this had never been allowed to become a problem for the school. Their newly appointed caretaker was developing into the role with the firm's support.
38. The Committee was pleased that the contract was going well. It agreed that there was no further need for this standing item on the agenda: instead, the Head should report on any issues with the contract under the standing item on "other premises issues".

Res 35/22 Update on planned building works

- a) *Boiler in the old building*
39. The HoS reported that the boiler had been replaced during the autumn half term break and the school now had heating. A new water heater was due to be fitted on 23 November 2022: Bradford Council expected the work to be completed within one day and with minimal disruption to the hot water supply. A second phase of the project would replace the pipework and electrical system for the boiler. No timescale had yet been provided for this work, but it was likely to be carried out over the Easter or summer 2023 break.
40. **Replying to questions**, the HoS said that the new boiler was expected to be more efficient.
- b) *Main entrance*
41. The HoS said that the front door had slowly been deteriorating for some time. An initial quote of £6k had been received for its replacement. At the time the school had had no funds to pay for this but would now source further quotes with a view to making provision for the work in planning the budget for 2023-24. **The Committee agreed** that:
- this work should be prioritised if there were any scope to afford it within the current year budget; and
 - if at any time the school judged that the door had deteriorated to the point where it was likely to present a safeguarding risk, it should commence the work immediately and discuss with Chair/Resources how it was to be financed.

Res 36/22 Update on other premises issues arising since last meeting

42. None reported.

Cross-cutting matters

Res 37/22 Notification of any significant safeguarding incidents since the previous meeting

43. The HoS said that a number of pupils had been using Snapchat, which was not appropriate for primary school children. One child had posted images of an intimate nature. Another child, aged ten, had forwarded the images, which was a criminal offence. The incident had been registered by the police as a crime. The school had consulted the safeguarding team at Bradford Council who had advised that the school had acted appropriately. The parents were taking the matter seriously. The police had spoken to the children concerned in school and would do so again at home in front of their parents.
44. The school had increased the ICT safeguarding content in the curriculum. The police had agreed to come into school to do further work on this with pupils. As previously discussed with governors, the school's ICT leader discussed openly with children the ICT that they were using and advised them on safe use: she did not tell them off for using platforms to which they should not have access, so that they did not feel the need to hide what they were doing.
45. **Asked** whether there was a need for a further meeting between parents, the HoS said that would be useful: the school would offer a session both in person and on-line.
Action: HoS
46. A governor said he had noticed that another school had arranged for the police to discuss firework safety with pupils. **Relying to questions**, the HoS confirmed that the police did this for Sandy Lane.

Closing items**Res 39/22 Date of next meeting**

47. The next meeting would be held at **3.45pm** on Tuesday **17 January 2023**.

Res 40/22 Closure of meeting

48. The meeting closed at **5.22pm**.