

# Colyton Grammar School

## Minutes of the Finance and Resources Committee: Part One

Date of Meeting: Monday 22 June 2015

Venue: Headteacher's Office

### Present:

Governors	Dr C Bastin, Mr G Davis, Lt Col T J Dyer, Mr P Evans, Mr M Marsh, Mr B Merrett, Mr B Salter, Mr R Scott and Mrs F H Wilkinson
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Staff	Mr R Stidwell and Mrs J Wainwright
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Visitors	None
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Secretary	Mr S R Cook
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### 1. Disclosure of Interest

There were no disclosures of interest.

### 2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Mr P Anderson, Mrs S Burns-Price and Mr G Hayne.

### 3. Approval of Minutes of Meeting held on 19 March 2015

These were approved and signed.

### 4. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

### 5. Budget for 2015/16 and Three Year Plan

Mrs Wilkinson drew attention to the draft budget plan which had been circulated prior to the meeting.

Mr Cook gave a short Powerpoint presentation (see attached slides) focusing on the following:

- Recent press coverage of the growing crisis in school funding across many areas of the country
- The recent survey of 87 Devon schools, 85% of which are predicting deficit budgets within three years
- The decreased funding and additional costs which have contributed to the crisis
- Recent predictions of surplus and deficit budgets for Colyton
- The significant cost savings made to date – in the region of £160k
- Other areas for exploration, as discussed at the January Training Evening and outlined in the main budget document
- Specific issues relating to IT spending

In response to Mrs Wilkinson, Mr Evans explained that dropping the PAN to 120 would not necessarily lead to retaining the £100k sparsity funding as there is no guarantee that this element of the formula will be retained in its current form. In the longer term, the additional 11-16 funding and the impact on post-16 funding resulting from larger numbers will be positive.

In response to Mr Merrett, Mrs Wilkinson indicated her reluctance to make very radical cuts at this stage and the need to be cautious. Mr Evans reiterated the importance of ensuring Colyton remains an attractive option. He also suggested that the government *will*

need to make some recognition of the crisis affecting very large numbers of schools. He reminded the Committee of the briefing session with Rt Hon Oliver Letwin MP last year, when the information presented by the school clearly enabled him to understand the reality of the situation.

Lt Col Dyer reflected that the school's continuing success and new facilities make it more difficult for the school's financial situation to be appreciated.

Dr Bastin reminded the Committee of the need for any recommendations to be approved by the full Board in view of the sensitive nature of the decisions required. Lt Col Dyer also pointed to the need to balance the reality of the funding challenges against the need to retain public confidence.

In response to Mr Merrett, Mr Marsh and Mr Evans reiterated the potential negative impact of going very public with the funding crisis. Mr Evans indicated the importance of actively lobbying where appropriate to raise the profile of the funding issues.

Mr Merrett pointed out that the school has already made savings of £160k and can see no reason for not approving the budget for 2015/16 which shows a surplus of nearly £41k, but to use the next period of time to identify further cost savings and look at increasing income.

In response to Dr Bastin, Mr Evans confirmed that for 2015/16 the small surplus projected for 2015/16 is based on a similar curriculum programme to that currently in place. Mr Evans and Mrs Wainwright gave the example of dropping Y13 games in 2014/15 being the first cost saving measure to have a direct impact on students.

Mr Evans and Mrs Wainwright both gave the example of selective schools which have reduced their senior leadership teams and asked them to undertake more.

In response to Mr Salter, Mr Evans indicated that the majority of the schools in the Devon survey are probably academies.

In response to Dr Bastin, Mr Merrett and Mr Evans reflected that the existing available reserves of c£650k could be used to cover annual budget shortfalls for a short period of *time*.

Mr Merrett emphasised the value of presenting clear figures to support effective lobbying e.g. a projected deficit of £400k, with savings of £160k already made.

Mr Evans identified some possible options for consideration including e.g. an additional form of entry, particularly as the new CEM test is likely to make identifying students at the lower end of the ability range more reliable. Mr Cook agreed to put a business case together, and indicated that staffing costs are more likely an issue than accommodation issues. He also agreed to contact other SWAT schools about their experience in generating additional income.

Following further discussion, the following were agreed:

- (a) To recommend the Board to approve the budget plan for 2015/16
- (b) To continue to examine future cost savings and increased income generation, but to delay implementation of these for up to twelve months pending clarification of key decisions about a national funding formula, and post-16 funding
- (c) To be prepared to use some of the existing available reserves (currently c£650K) to provide a period of stability over the next three years. Further discussion relating to the inclusion of the Bradbeer Fund element of the "available" reserves took place under Item 17, and it was agreed that this should be discussed further at the July Board meeting.

Mr Cook also agreed to produce a notional five year budget for consideration in future discussions

In relation to IT spending, it was agreed to recommend to the Board that:

- (a) The current five year replacement programme be extended to six or seven years as appropriate, with the exception of equipment required to deliver the Computer Studies programme.
- (b) The laptop replacement programme be severely curtailed as outlined in the budget report.

Lt Col Dyer offered to work with the Network Manager in reviewing IT costs.

Following a suggestion from Dr Bastin it was agreed that an additional Training Evening be held in October to consider budget issues, and that a smaller group of governors should be appointed at the July Board meeting to look at formulating more detailed proposals.

## **6. Best Value Review**

Mrs Wilkinson drew attention to the Best Value Review on Income Generation which had been circulated for the previous meeting. As agreed, the Chairs' Committee had also considered this document at their recent meeting.

The following issues were raised in discussion:

- Mr Cook confirmed that Cranbrook School and Reading School both have a boarding element which explains the higher facilities and services income. It was noted that Reading School have a very targeted appeal programme for raising funds for improvement projects. Sir Thomas Rich School would appear to have high levels of letting income
- In response to Mr Scott, it was agreed to further explore the options for extending PV systems on the Sports Centre, remaining small areas elsewhere in the school, and possibly off the school site
- In relation to the re-launched Alumni and Friends scheme it was agreed that it would be helpful to have governor input about the scheme at the new Year 7 Tea Party in early September. In response to Mrs Wilkinson it was also agreed to add a reference to the financial assistance available to students in the prospectus.
- Mr Cook was asked to prepare a business plan for the provision of services such as catering, IT, building and grounds maintenance etc to other schools.
- Mrs Wainwright indicated that increased contact time was a more attractive option than increasing the size of Key Stage 4 classes
- In response to Mr Stidwell, Mr Evans outlined the various options available for school uniform shops
- Various possibilities for increasing income from Take Five were discussed including the creation of a trading company, increasing the cost of school meals, providing frozen meals/"meals on wheels", expansion into areas such as wedding and function catering
- Mr Evans outlined a number of issues relating to the growing trend for the formation of Multi Academy Trusts (MATs) including primary and/or secondary working alongside failing schools

- Lt Col Dyer suggested a more proactive approach to identifying sources of support for bursary programmes.

#### **7. Colyton Parish Council – Play Area Request**

Mr Evans gave the background to the discussion at the recent Chairs' Committee, outlining the practical issues in terms of location, safeguarding concerns, access to the school site outside school hours, the responsibility for maintenance and the need to obtain the Secretary of State's permission for leasing the land. He indicated that this is normally the kind of issue which he or Mr Cook would deal with on a daily basis, but on this occasion Colyford Parish Council had specifically requested that governors consider the issue, and the Chairs' Committee had been the first available opportunity to do so.

Lt Col Dyer further drew attention to the discussion at the recent Chairs' Committee meeting (see Item 10 of the Chairs' Committee Minutes for the meeting held on 14 May 2015), and asked for clarification of the relationship between the Chairs' Committee and the Finance and Resources Committee.

Following discussion, it was agreed that the existing committee structure should be reviewed to avoid duplication.

In response to Mr Merrett, Mr Cook briefly outlined the background to the School Futures Group.

#### **8. Responsible Officer's Report**

Mrs Wilkinson drew attention to the report prepared by Mrs Hopkins and circulated prior to the meeting. It was noted that there were no issues to raise.

#### **9. Health and Safety Report**

Mrs Wilkinson drew attention to the Health and Safety Report which had been circulated prior to the meeting. Mr Cook reported that the written reports following the recent audit by Devon Health and Safety service have not yet been received. The re-location of rubbish bins and the revised hot works permits system, following the risk management visit by Zurich Municipal were noted.

#### **10. Site Management and IT Report**

Mrs Wilkinson drew attention to the Site Management and IT Report which had been circulated prior to the meeting.

#### **11. Catering Report**

Mrs Wilkinson drew attention to the Catering Report which had been circulated prior to the meeting. The Committee noted the recent audit report from Somerset County Council Catering Support Service.

#### **12. Colyton Leisure Partnership Forum Report**

Mr Cook circulated copies of the minutes of the last forum meeting held on 9 June 2015.

It was noted that LED are not currently able to provide support for increasing the number of car park spaces. They have, however, expressed an interest in shared use of the netball courts.

With reference to the draft revised Management Agreement, it was noted that this is currently with the school's solicitors for checking.

#### **13. Cheque Signatory Arrangements from September 2015**

Mrs Wilkinson drew attention to the paper which had been circulated prior to the meeting, outlining a proposal for cheque and account signatory arrangements from 1 September 2015, following Mr Evans' departure.

Proposed by Mr Marsh, seconded by Mr Scott and unanimously agreed that from 1 September 2015, the following mandates are put in place:

- (a) For all bank accounts held with Lloyds and Natwest - any two (but normally the Business Manager) of Jayne Wainwright (Headteacher), Steve Cook (Business Manager), Richard Bush (Deputy Head), Andrew Gregson (Deputy Head) and Rex Stidwell (Deputy Head)
- (b) For all other accounts – Jayne Wainwright should replace Paul Evans as the Headteacher signatory.

#### **14. Capital Projects Report**

##### **(a) Academies Capital Maintenance Programme**

Mr Cook reminded the Committee of the reports given at recent meetings. He reported that Devon Contractors undertook a large number of snagging works on the Cottrill Hall during the recent half term break, but a number of significant items (such as the replacement of the canopy over the north east door, the finishing of the tinting to the brickwork, completion and tidying of the plant room) are now scheduled for completion by the end of August. Devon Contractors have been asked to provide a detailed programme for these works, but to date this has not been supplied. The hall continues to work very well as a venue for examinations, both in terms of temperature, light and acoustics.

Site Staff have completed shelving and fitting out all areas apart from one Parents' Association store and the Media Gallery. Some additional light, sound and projection work will be completed once the Media Gallery has been completed.

Mr Cook also confirmed that in addition to the retention sums be held back, other amounts relating to unfinished or unsatisfactory works have also been retained and Devon Contractors have been given clear notice that the school withdraw any works not completed by the end of August from the contract and commission these separately.

##### **(b) Take Five and Site Workshop**

Mr Cook drew the attention of the Committee to previous reports. While some additional snagging works were completed over the recent half term, some significant issues such as the doors to Take Five, the Site Workshop and the East Wing remain unresolved. As with the Cottrill Hall, Devon Contractors have been requested to provide a detailed programme for completing these works by the end of August and funds have been retained accordingly.

##### **(c) Staff House and Additional Science Accommodation**

Mr Cook reported that an appeal on the rejected Condition Improvement Fund (CIF) bid for the Staff House was submitted in early May, but no date has been given for a decision.

Following the discussion at the last meeting, where the importance of improving staff accommodation and providing additional Science facilities was particularly noted, Mr Cook had prepared a phased scheme for the Staff House works. He circulated plans, together with details of a five phase programme. TFQ have provide a provisional cost for Phase One of £347k, and have indicated that the school's case for a bid under the CIF scheme would be strengthened for completing the condition elements of the remaining scheme that related to the current Staff House building.

Following discussion, it was agreed to delay a decision on this major capital commitment, given the overall funding situation discussed under Item 5. It was noted that following a successful Stage One application to the Wolfson Trust, the school has been invited to submit a more detailed proposal for consideration at the next trustees' meeting in December.

Lt Col Dyer suggested that temporary accommodation could provide a short term solution to the shortage of Science accommodation. Mr Evans indicated that, given the overall budget situation, he considered it was appropriate to manage with existing accommodation.

Mr Salter expressed a clear view that the current plans represent the ideal solution and best value for money. It was agreed that the project should be put on hold, pending funding becoming available.

(d) West Court

Mr Cook reminded the Committee of previous plans for the development of the West Court (the current west playground which was used as a Site Compound during the recent capital projects). The original scheme drawn up by TFQ in 2013 was costed at approximately £90k. Mr Cook presented a revised plan with a total cost in the region of £24k, less a contribution of £2,097 from the Parents' Association (PA). The plan is for simplified hard landscaping that can be managed by the school workforce, supported by local contractors.

Proposed by Mr Merrett, seconded by Mr Scott and unanimously agreed that this project should be approved, with a maximum budget of £22k, plus the PA contribution, and implemented during the summer break. It was agreed, however, that the canopies (currently budgeted at £8k) should be excluded for the time-being.

**15. Revenue Funding Position at 31 May 2015 and Reserve Position**

Mrs Wilkinson drew the attention of the Committee to the financial statements, including the detailed narrative, which had been circulated prior to the meeting. The Committee expressed satisfaction with the report.

**16. Municipal Mutual Insurance**

Mr Cook reported that there have been no further demands for payment from Municipal Mutual Insurance, and a recently received statement supports the current provision in the accounts of £34,009.

**17. Bradbeer Fund**

Mr Cook reported that following the Summer Term meeting of the Bursary Panel, there is a remaining balance of £1,317 from this year's bursary fund. In addition to the amounts awarded in 2014/15, a further £8,864 of grants to departments has been deferred until next year when the linked activities take place. The remaining balance is likely to be spent on the cost of the current PolyU Global Challenge visit to Hong Kong.

**18. Policies for Review**

Proposed by Mr Marsh, seconded by Mr Scott and unanimously agreed that the following revised policies which had been circulated prior to the meeting should be approved:

- (a) Charges for School Activities
- (b) Remissions Policy

**19. Any Other Business**

(a) Succession Planning

In response to Mr Merrett, it was agreed that the governors' Skills Audit should be updated.

There was no other business.

**20. Next Meeting**  
To be confirmed.

Signed:	<i>Fred HUNTER</i>	(Chairman of Committee)
Date:	1/10/15	