

Colyton Grammar School

Minutes of the Finance and Resources Committee: Part One

Date of Meeting: Thursday 1 October 2015

Venue: Headteacher's Office

Present:

Governors	Mrs S Burns-Price, Mr G Davis, Lt Col T J Dyer, Mr M Goscomb, Mr M Marsh, Mr B Merrett, Mr B Salter, Mr R Scott, Mrs J Wainwright and Mrs F H Wilkinson
Staff	Mr R Stidwell
Visitors	Mrs L Linnell
Secretary	Mr S R Cook

Mr Cook took the chair for Items 1 and 2 and welcomed Mr Martin Goscomb to his first governors' meeting. Mr Goscomb had been appointed as an "Other Governor" under Article 50 with effect from 1 September 2015 at the Board meeting held on 9 July 2015.

Mrs Linnell (Chair of the Staffing Committee) was also welcomed to the meeting. Mrs Linnell wished to gain a further understanding of the financial issues in the current economic climate, and their impact on the school's budget.

1. Disclosure of Interest

There were no disclosures of interest.

2. Election of Chair

Mr Cook drew attention to the Procedure for Electing the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Board which had been approved by the full Board at the meeting held on 11 December 2014. Proposed by Lt Col Dyer, seconded by Mr Marsh and unanimously agreed that the Committee should adopt this Procedure for electing the Chair and Vice Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee.

Mr Cook then outlined how the procedure would operate, given that two written nominations for the role of Chair had been received from Mr B Merrett and Mrs F H Wilkinson. He drew attention to the written nomination statements from Mr Merrett and Mrs Wilkinson that had been circulated the previous evening. Mr Merrett and Mrs Wilkinson were invited to address the Committee setting out their reasons for standing for election and gave short statements.

Mr Merrett and Mrs Wilkinson then left the room. Ballot papers were distributed and Mr Cook and Mrs Wainwright counted the votes as follows:

Mr B Merrett – 1 vote

Mrs F H Wilkinson – 7 votes

Mrs Wilkinson was therefore appointed Chair for the academic year 2015/16.

3. Apologies

Apologies were received from Dr C Bastin and Mr G Hayne.

4. Election of Vice Chair – Finance

(this item was taken after Item 5: Election of Vice Chair – Grounds and Buildings)

Mr Cook reported that no written nominations had been received prior to the meeting. Proposed by Mr Merrett, seconded by Mr Marsh and unanimously agreed that Lt Col Dyer should be appointed Vice Chair – Finance for the academic year 2015/16.

5. Election of Vice Chair – Grounds and Buildings

Mr Cook reported that no written nominations had been received prior to the meeting. Proposed by Mr Marsh seconded by Mr Scott and unanimously agreed that Mr Salter should be appointed Vice Chair – Grounds and Buildings for the academic year 2015/16.

6. Approval of Minutes of Meeting held on 22 June 2015

These were approved and signed.

7. Matters Arising

(a) Item 7: Colyton Parish Council - Play Area Request

Mr Cook reported Mr Colin Pady had informed the school of a proposal for siting the new Play Area on his field to the south of the new school playing field. The proposed site is to the left of the access route which the school rents from Mr Pady. The proposal was recently considered by the parish council, but the outcome is not yet known. In response to Mr Stidwell, Mr Cook agreed to seek clarification from Mr Pady as to why the proposed site was at the school end of the access strip. It was also noted that the school will need to monitor use of the new play area to ensure that it does not affect the safe operation of the school.

In relation to the wider issue raised by Lt Col Dyer, Mr Cook reported that he and Dr Bastin had met over the summer to review the existing committee structure and related terms of reference. He had been asked to write a paper for consideration at the next Chairs' Committee which will then be considered by the Board in December.

(b) Item 12: Colyton Leisure Partnership Forum Report

Mr Cook reported that discussion with the school's solicitors on the current revised draft are ongoing.

There were no other matters arising.

8. Finance Working Party Report

This item was taken under Part Two Minutes.

9. School Development Plan

Mrs Wainwright distributed the current summary of the School Development Plan for 2015/16, and confirmed that the full detailed plan would be available to all governors shortly, so that each committee can give consideration to the relevant sections prior to the formal approval of the plan at the December Board meeting.

She drew particular attention to the following areas of relevance to the Finance and Resources Committee:

- Capital Projects (including the proposed Condition Improvement Fund bid for the Staff House and Feoffees' roof and windows projects)
- Strategic Financial Planning (under the Support Services heading) covering the ongoing response to and planning for the significant funding challenges of the next few years

Mr Stidwell outlined the challenges of providing new texts for new specification A Levels, which had been discussed at the Leadership Group meeting earlier this evening. Proposals include providing library copies of key texts and students purchasing their own copies.

10. Succession Planning Statement

Following a short discussion about wider issues including comments made by Mr Merrett relating to the two previous Headteacher recruitment rounds, it was agreed to recommend

that Board moves the requirement for committees to formulate a succession planning statement to the summer term. This will enable governors to explore these issues prior to the appointment of a chair and vice chair in the Autumn term.

Mrs Wilkinson indicated that it would be appropriate to continue to seek to appoint another qualified accountant to the Board, perhaps from within the parent community.

Mr Cook agreed to send out reminders to governors to complete the Skills Audit circulated at the end of the summer term.

11. Health and Safety Report

Mr Salter drew attention to the Health and Safety Report which had been circulated prior to the meeting. In response to Lt Col Dyer, Mr Cook drew attention to the section in the Health and Safety Committee minutes covering the Devon Health and Safety Service audit of the Design and Technology department and PE.

Governors also discussed the recent small electrical fire in the main school boiler room, which had been caused by flooding. In response to Mr Goscomb, Mr Cook confirmed that the school will have to pay an excess as part of the insurance settlement. In response to Mr Salter, Mr Cook outlined the potential issue with erosion if a new boiler is installed alongside the older existing boilers, and confirmed that the school is seeking appropriate professional advice as part of the replacement arrangements.

12. Site Management and IT Report

Mrs Wilkinson drew attention to the Site Management and IT Report which had been circulated prior to the meeting. It was agreed that the Site and IT Teams should specifically be thanked for the very significant work undertaken over the summer.

13. Capital Projects Report

(a) Academies Capital Maintenance Programme

Mr Cook reported that following significant pressure from the school and TFQ (the school's architects), Devon Contractors had replaced the director overseeing the scheme, and brought in a new site foreman to arrange and supervise the large number of outstanding snagging issues. Very significant progress was made over the summer, and the only remaining issue of any substance is the missing canopy over the north east entrance door.

The issues with leaks in the four corners of the main hall have been resolved satisfactorily although this will continue to be monitored following heavy rainfall.

Following delays caused by a dispute between Devon Contractors and the contractor employed to "re-colour" the bricks, this work is being carried out this week.

The most recent payment request from Devon Contractors has been substantially reduced following negotiations between TFQ and the school's Quantity Surveyor. The major outstanding issue relates to additional electrical works to support the specialist lighting and sound installation.

Currently the final settlement looks though it will come in slightly below the overall school budget for the project.

(b) Take Five and Site Workshop

Mr Cook reported that following the change of overseeing director and foreman for the main Cottrill Hall project, very significant progress has also been made on the outstanding snagging items on the Take Five extension and the new Site Workshop. The same contractor responsible for "re-colouring" the Cottrill Hall bricks will also deal with the damage to the metal entry doors to the Site Workshop and store.

(c) Condition Improvement Fund Bid 2016/17

Mr Cook reported that TFQ are currently working on updating the information required for a further submission of the Staff House project under the Condition Improvement Fund (CIF) programme. A detailed project for the Feoffees' Building is also being prepared, to include the repairs required to the south facing roof and replacement windows.

The Education Funding Agency (EFA) have published new guidance on the CIF programme. The application website will open during October with a deadline of 16 December and decisions will be notified in March 2016.

The Parents' Association have recently agreed to set a target of £100k for fundraising in support of the additional science lab which forms part of the Staff House project. This figure includes the £20k already pledged by the Parents' Association towards the overall project. The Committee expressed its delight at, and appreciation for, this generous offer from the Parents' Association.

An application to the Wolfson Trust for £45k for equipping and constructing an additional science lab (as part of the Staff House project) has successfully passed the first stage of the grant assessment process, and a representative of the Wolfson Trust is visiting the school on Wednesday 7 October for further information. The Wolfson trustees will make a decision in December.

It was agreed that the contribution that the school should make to the CIF bid should be discussed at Finance Focus Evening.

(d) West Court

Mr Cook reported that the majority of the works on the West Court project have been completed, and the outdoor table tennis tables are ready for installation. The remaining works should be completed by the end of the half term holiday.

14. Revenue Funding Position at 31 July 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.

15. Municipal Mutual Insurance

Mr Cook reported that there have been no further demands for payment from Municipal Mutual Insurance. The annual accounts for the year ending 31 August 2015 will show a current provision of £34,009.

16. Bradbeer Fund

Mr Cook reported that the Bursary Panel meeting for the Autumn term will take place on Thursday 8 October.

Mr Cook reminded the Committee that the Available Reserves figure of approximately £670k shown in the July Financial Statements includes about £430k of the Bradbeer Fund which has been designated for future capital projects (£300k) and the remainder for "Other Special Purposes". In discussion, the following points were made:

- Mr Merrett indicated that there needs to be clarity about the use of the Bradbeer Fund in the light of the financial challenges facing the school
- Mr Marsh indicated that while he felt Mr Bradbeer would not have wanted his legacy to be used to "bale out" the lack of government funding, he would not have wanted the school to suffer and would approve using some of the fund to "cushion" the impact of funding cuts

- Lt Col Dyer indicated that the designated Bradbeer Fund should only be used “in extremis” for the ordinary running costs of the school
- Mr Salter emphasised the benefits of the proposed capital schemes and the importance of the school making a significant contribution

It was agreed that this should be discussed further at the Finance Focus Evening, as part of the discussion about the CIF Bid (see Item 13(c) above)

17. 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) Budget Monitoring Policy
- (b) Finance Policy
- (c) Portable Appliance Testing

18. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

19. Next Meeting

Finance Focus Evening (all governors) – 6.30pm on Thursday 22 October 2015
 Committee meeting – 6.30pm on Wednesday 2 December 2015

Signed:		(Chairman of Committee)
Date:	2/12/15	