

## MINUTES OF MEETING

The minutes of the Finance and Resources meeting of the Governing Body of Guildhall Feoffment Community Primary School held at the school on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2024 at 6pm.

Present:                                   Shan K Don (SKD)  
  Ros King (RK) Chair  
  Lara Knights (KL)  
  Kristian Lee (KL)  
  Andy Mathews (AM) Headteacher  
  Megan Rich (MR)  
  Colin Smith (CS)  
  Fiona-Catherine Thompson (FCT)  
  Stephanie Ward (SW)

In Attendance                               Toby Cunningham (Clerk)

Meeting Started 18.03

## Minutes

### **1      Welcome and Apologies for Absence**

- 1.1      Apologies for absence were received from Rachel Pryer, Emma Rees, Sumathi Sundram, Tiffer Robinson and Ben Tanner,
- 1.2      Governors consented to these absences.

### **2      Pecuniary and Other Interests**

- 2.1      There was no declaration of any pecuniary or other interests with regard to items on the agenda.

### **3      Chair's Action/Update**

- 3.1      To report any action taken by the Chair or Vice-chair  
            RK had been in contact with Feoffment Trust, they are adamant that the trust owns the land and the LA the buildings, but any paperwork to determine the correct owner remains elusive.

Governors **approved** an updated terms of reference.

3.2 Chair updates the board on the governor’s skills matrix and the board survey. There had been Improvements on last years in terms of skills and knowledge. More than 50% had skills in 3 or more key areas. Board diversity had improved over the last year.

RK thanked Nic Hubbard for doing another sterling job in providing the annotated budget report. RK encouraged all governors to do the school finance training  
 RK noted that the minutes of the pay and staffing committee from October now uploaded onto GH showed **approval** of the Capability Policy.

**4 Any Other Urgent Business**

There were none raised

**5 Minutes**

5.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2024 were approved

*Item 7.1 Miss Vickers left not Mrs (updated on GH 30/12/24)*

5.2 Matters arising from the minutes not already on the agenda

Agenda Item	Action	By Whom	By When	Status
11.1	AM to provide details of the type of pastoral issues pupils faced – Update - <i>AM advised that the common issues were anxiety, emotional dysregulation, grief and loss, social anxiety and attendance. The pastoral support team give support, some go to external agencies. 40-50 pupils have pastoral needs</i>	AM	November	Closed
7.1	SW to review website	SW	January	Ongoing
16	Governors to focus on PP, SEND and lowest 20% at Jan Curriculum mtg. <i>SKD advised that in DT during his monitoring visit subject leads had advised there were no TAs in DT. FCT advised that it depended how teachers schedule the afternoon – not every class had a TA in the afternoon, it depended on the cohort needs.</i>	ALL	January	Open

**6 Governing Body Membership and Organisation**

6.1 There were no changes to membership.

7. Headteacher’s Report - to receive and consider the written report of the Headteacher (*copy circulated separately*), to include:

1. Update on Health and Safety to include reports on any Estates meetings:

- Fire safety report
  - Actions completed
  - New schedule for evac chair inspection
  - Revise checking system for call points
  - The Fire Safety Policy was deferred to next meeting

## 2. Catering Update

- AM informed the board that he was working on revised budget figures for bringing the catering operation in-house. He advised that staffing pay would change, with staff moving from the Vertas pay structure onto the LA pay structure which, along with the pension arrangements, was more costly and would likely wipe out the anticipated annual surplus of £8k. Nevertheless, he was committed to the transfer due to other potential costs savings, and improved staff morale and service to the pupils.
- AM had proposed changes to the provision of residential trips for the school. He wanted to increase the opportunities for residential and outdoor adventurous activities. The Sports Premium funding would be used to subsidise costs and improve engagement with PP pupils and families. Governors **approved** the proposal but asked that AM consider organising earlier payment plans to spread the costs for families.

## 3. IT Update:

- IT Maintenance Contract with Croft MSP (the successor company to CPW) for the short term, AM would then arrange for alternative quotes for next year based on the costs and level of service provision.
- Decision on purchase of Chromebooks has been shelved for this year.

## 4. Safeguarding

- There were no issues for governors to note

## 5. Premises Action plan

- AM advised that the key areas were to redevelop early years centre and remodel the outside space using DoE grants to improve facilities for EY and SEND in wrap around care.
- St Edmundsbury Primary School was looking to reduce its PAN from 45 to 30. AM had contacted the place planning team at the LA and had asked for meeting to discuss increasing PAN at GHF from 45 to 52.

# 8 Financial Performance

- 8.1 Budget monitoring report – Received **and approved** a report and commentary on the current budgetary position.

Governors noted the overspends on page 3. These were based on larger than expected increases in pay for teaching and support staff. The teaching salary increase was covered by an increase in grant but not the support staff. This resulted in an increased deficit of £45k forecast for the end of year. AM advised that a deficit had already been agreed and that the school had significant reserves to cover this. AM advised that the pupil roll had increased from 317 in 2023 to 331 in 2024 and this increase in numbers would be reflected in next year's grant. Increasing the school PAN to 52 would improve the budget forecast in the medium to long term. Furthermore, the new government had indicated more spending on primary education, and he was expecting increased school funding for future years. AM was confident that this deficit was temporary and that in the future the current staffing model would be sustainable.

- 8.2 Governors **approved** Record of Financial Responsibility  
Governors noted that there had been an error last year on page 14 about who can see and access the Lloyds account. This has now been corrected.

- 8.3 Schools Financial Value Standard –Governors agreed to **adopt** the standard, noting that it must be submitted by 31 December 2024.

- 8.4 Statement of Internal Controls  
Governors reviewed the statement of internal controls.  
Governors reviewed the school's financial contracts

- 8.5 Governors noted the high charge for waste collection and accepted that this was not something that could be put up for tender.  
AM advised that the contract with Vertas for grounds maintenance might be reviewed going forward. The school had employed a part time handyman.  
In addition, the school might consider changing broadband provider with a new IT provider.

- 8.6 Benchmarking - to receive a report on the school's financial data in comparison to other similar schools  
AM advised that it was always difficult to find comparable schools to benchmark financial performance. Either the geography, local demographics, the fact that we maintain a 2-form year structure on a PAN of 45, or complexity of the site/listed status made comparison difficult.

AM observed that they were spending more on TA support than other schools, this had formed a crucial part of the school improvement strategy and was key to delivering the improved learning outcomes last year. Governors had approved this strategy previously. AM advised that TAs were used both for 121 support and for class support, mostly in the mornings; in most other primary schools TAs were used only to support 121 interventions.

## **9 Updates to the Risk Register**

AM advised that he was still working on the RR, he was reviewing templates and examples from other schools and LAs and would keep the board updated of his progress.

## **10 Compliance**

### **10.1 The following policies and reports were approved**

1. Appraisal Policy (Subject to text bracket customisation page 1 and 8)
2. Complaints Policy – AM advised, in answer to a governor question, that the policy was not for anonymous complaints, these were considered under the Whistleblowing Policy – if appropriate.
3. Managing Serial Complaints
4. Sickness and Absence Management for Staff
5. Flexible Working
6. Alcohol and Substance Misuse
7. Fertility Leave
8. Carers Leave
9. Menopause workplace guidance
10. Pupil Premium Strategy
11. Pupil Premium Policy
12. PE Premium Report

AW advised that the reporting of spending on PP and SP was due to change. There was a surplus in SP funds available from COVID. The new residential and outdoor activity programme had been earmarked for this spending. There was a general concern that unspent funds might be clawed back by the DoE.

RK noted that one advantage of reviewing so many policies together at one time was that it revealed a lack of consistency within the LA standard policies about the process for dealing with complaints and appeals. It was **agreed** that it was inappropriate for the person making the original decision to be the same person hearing any appeal.

Governors agreed to modify these policies by stating that in cases of dispute the person making the original decision cannot sit on any appeal panel. (AM to oversee these emendations and notify the LA).

10.2 General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

Governors noted that their email addresses were on the all-staff list, which meant that personal information might be shared with them accidentally. AM agreed to remove governors from this list and create a governor only list.

10.3 School Website- to receive a report from the website link governor that information published on the school website is in line with the latest DfE guidance [What maintained schools must publish online - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/what-maintained-schools-must-publish-online)

SW had completed a thorough review of the website. She advised that whilst there was a lot of information, the site was easy to navigate. Links worked correctly.

AM advised that the challenge was in sign-posting parents to it, he would feature an aspect of the website in each newsletter.

10.4 Educational Visits

There were no new visits to approve.

10.5 Premises Action Plan

AM advised that the barrier hedge installed last year had not yet grown sufficiently and was not doing the intended job. He was considering options that met the criteria established by English Heritage

KL advised that he had seen a lot of 'Don't Walk Here' signs on icy days and wondered if cones might be more visible. AM advised that on those mornings he (or other member of SLT) was in attendance, to observe and guide parents and pupils and that this was more effective than signs or cones.

11 **Governor Monitoring Reports –**

Governors received reports in the following areas.

- Safeguarding: safer recruitment
- Reading and Phonics
- Writing
- SEND

Arising from these reports, Governors discussed the use of AI in school and education more generally, observing that it was important to recognise that we cannot know what the AI has been trained on and that it is crucial to ask it the right kind of question, and then review its suggestions critically. Pupils would need to develop AI literacy skills in order to navigate this complex area of IT. FCT advised that she was looking into this with the Bury Schools Network as some teachers were already adopting some AI tools and this was becoming a feature of the bought in schemes of work for different subjects.

## **12 Governor Training and Development**

12.1 CS advised that he had completed his National College introductory training and had found this very useful and should be a requirement for all new governors as part of the induction process that was currently under review.

12.2 RK emphasised again the importance for all governors to undertake school finance training.

## **13 Governor Headlines and The Knowledge**

Governors noted relevant items from Headlines and The Knowledge.

## **14 Reflection on the Meeting - to discuss the impact of this meeting on the governing body's strategic objectives.**

Governors noted the current financial position of the school, they felt confident that this was a temporary measure. They were pleased to see progress in changing the provision for catering and IT.

Governors agreed that the use of TAs was essential to delivering improved academic outcomes for pupils and that this was something that set the school apart from others in the area. RK noted that some staff had expressed dissatisfaction to her that TAs were generally only available in the mornings and suggested that it might be helpful to make them aware of this benchmarking.

KL asked that papers were posted with a seven-day notice period prior to the meeting to allow full scrutiny and any items coming in after this should be pushed back to the next meeting.

AM and RK agreed to consider the dates for the Autumn meetings to spread them more evenly while continuing to make them coincide with data and finance reporting. It was suggested to set these earlier in November for Curriculum and the first week in December for Resources

## **15 Dates of Future Meetings - to confirm the dates of future meetings. Governors noted the later start times for afternoon Curriculum meetings. RK urged governors to talk to their**

employers about recognising that their governor responsibilities enriched and upskilled them to the benefit of their employers.

20.03

**21 Jan 2025** 3.30pm **FGB Curriculum:** to review autumn term assessment data

**25 March 2025** 6pm **FGB Resources:** to set the budget for financial year 2025-6

**29 April 2025** 3.00pm **FGB Curriculum:** to review spring term assessment data and approve 3yr budget plan

**10 June 2025** 6pm **FGB Curriculum:** to include SDP and Governor Monitoring reports; PP; Sports Premium; SEND

**15 July 2025** 4.30pm **FGB- Ethos;** tea with staff at 3.45pm; meeting starts at 4.30pm: review of the year and preparing for next year. SEF for School and Governors

Agenda Item	Action	By Whom	By When	Status
10.1	<u>Fire Safety Policy deferred to next meeting (AM)</u>	AM	January	Open
10.1	<u>Policies - Modify polices by stating that in cases of dispute the person making the original decision cannot be part of the appeal process (AM to alert the LA).</u>	AM	January	Open
10.2	<u>GDPR - agreed to remove governors from the all staff email list and create a governor only list</u>	AM	January	Open