

WEST CROFT SCHOOL

Full Governing Board (FGB) Minutes

Date/Time	25 th April 2023 5.00pm				
Present	Initials	Category of Governor			
James Ebsworthy	JE	Parent – Vice Chair			
Carol Ley	CL	Co-opted			
Charlene Marston	CM	Acting Headteacher			
Martha Mills	MM	Chair			
Charlotte Pengilly	CP	Parent			
Apologies	Initials	Reason for Absence Sanctioned / Not Sanctioned			
Morgan Taylor	MT	No apologies (unsanctioned)			
In attendance	Initials	Capacity	Guests	Initials	Capacity
Fiona Lowe	FL	Clerk	Lisa Johnston	LJ	SENDCo
			Dawn Wright	DW	Finance Manager

The meeting started at 5.00pm

	Agenda	Led by
1.	Present & Apologies	FL
2.	Declaration of Interests	FL
3.	Minutes of FGB meeting of 7 th March 2023, approval and matters arising	MM
4.	Budget Update	DW
5.	Approval of budget plan for 23/24 academic year	DW
6.	Approval of Year End FRS Report	DW
7.	Update re Extended Provision	DW
8.	Discussion re ongoing plans to address deficit	DW
9.	Approval of telephone contract quotes	DW
10.	Application to DCC to reduce PAN from 90-60	CM/DW
11.	HT Verbal Report	CM
12.	Governor visits and training undertaken	all
13.	Policies	MT
14.	Items brought forward by the Chair	MM
15.	Impact Statement	all
	Date of next meeting	FL

No	Item	Action
1.	Present and Apologies as above. MT advised the Clerk a week ago that he may not be able to make the meeting but has not clarified.	
2.	Declarations of Interest - None were declared for this meeting beyond that which has already been declared.	
3.	Minutes of FGB of 7 th March 2023. These were agreed as a true and correct record and signed as such. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update/review of WestaCoffee – this is included in item 4. In future there will be a separate report 	

4.	<p>Budget Update given by the Finance Manager –</p> <p>It was anticipated/planned that the c/f would be £305k and the actual is £329K. Items of note are the energy saving grant is being carried forward to the new year and the Extended provision c/fwd is £14K. The c/f from 19/04/23 is the figure for the start of 23-24.</p> <p><i>Q. What happened to the Environmental grant?</i> A. This has been c/f to 23/24 and used for doors and windows which were fitted in the Easter holidays. <i>Q. Are there any distortions?</i> A. Not really. There is more nursery income but when we set the budget future additions and the number of days attended are not fully known. There is £80K addition in nursery/PP but the large pay rises have cost us. We are being as careful and sensible as we can without overspending. We now charge out as much as we can and offer less free community resources. We had a lot of ideas a year ago that we did not spend the money on as some were reconsidered. We approve payments as we need to and spend what we have to. We need to have a c/f to prop us up in the future years. We are not taking from the children, just being more careful and thinking more about what is being bought and the impact it will have. The budget will also be linked more clearly to the SDP, and a clear list of resources against the curriculum. We have also cleared out some space to enable us to bulk buy art supplies at a discount. <i>Q. Do any subjects cost more?</i> A. Science and DT, food and art supplies. We have money for topic book boxes as we no longer buy into the library services. That is a saving of £12k per year spent on borrowing books. The next investment is books for writing sequences. <i>Q. If the c/f keeps growing, do DCC ask for it back?</i> A. Yes. If it is over a certain % then we are asked to justify why.</p> <p>The School Budget Share forms the bulk of the budget and is based upon pupil numbers. We consider the amount of FSM/PP money we will get (the amount we get per child is based on Census day in October) and use this income plus the income from EHCP/Nursery/catering to create the final balance. We then allocate staff costs and anticipated spending in all of the areas to balance. <i>Q. How does DCC expect schools to pay salaries with less children?</i> A. DCC runs as a business and schools need to be funded properly to cover pay rises. We need to ensure that the staffing structure for next year is suitable for our children and use staffing cleverly to enable us to continue to have single year classes and some smaller classes. Our numbers fluctuate greatly (often because families realise that it is too expensive to live locally). We use the PP money to fund 3 additional teachers to support the staff structure. PP is currently 40%. <i>Q. Are we in a strong position versus other schools?</i> A. Yes – however the birth rate is falling and the number of children being home educated is rising. 5 members of staff are agency TAs as we were unable to secure people. EHCPs take a long time to be processed and so the funding is delayed. The in-year deficit is high.</p> <p>We are forward thinking and are in a healthy position. We have additional income that many other schools don't have. We also have enough expert eyes on the budget to keep it all on track and work as a team. <i>Q. If EHCPs fluctuate, are they shown on the budget?</i> A. No, as the amounts are unknown. EHCPs are taking 12 months instead of the advised 20 weeks. There are very few Educational Psychologists to add their reports. LJ is managing to secure additional funding by costing all provision requested and resubmitting when not</p>	
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	<p>enough is offered. We used to just accept the amount offered but are now basing all our costs on evidence. The majority of our in-year transfers are high needs children. There is a new Marland School (Special Needs) being built for middle school which will release some pressure. The forecast drop in numbers is budgeted as we have some teaching staff on temporary contracts. These will end as the numbers drop.</p> <p>WestaCoffee (WC) needs to be funded separately from 23/24 – similar to the way extended provision is. <i>Q. Does WC need to be linked to the SDP?</i> A. We could link it to attendance and cost against that. <i>Q. Do we need to do a business plan?</i> A. It is too late. The balance to the end of March showed approx. £1,200 profit, which will be transferred forward. <i>Q. How will we spend the profit?</i> A. We hope to put it back into WC. We want to buy a freezer to sell ice-creams. We currently have a staff member who bakes cakes voluntarily – we provide the ingredients. <i>Q. How are we going to manage the staff for WC long term?</i> A. We can't afford to pay currently, but may be able to in the future. It is more about the service to school, not about profit, but we do need to cost staff in more. It is not a coffee shop – it is about community engagement. The inclusion team use it to reach out to hard-to-reach parents and parents can approach them in a less formal setting. We have not looked at letting out during the school day because of the safeguarding issues, but we are looking to use it with partner agencies – the school nurse etc. <i>Q. Can we use volunteers if it is a business?</i> A. We want to continue using the inclusion team, it is part of their role. In future WC will be on every agenda. Audit will expect a compliant set of records and we will therefore we need to buy a till and there is a meeting tomorrow within school to discuss WC and to help move on. <i>Q. Would you use parent volunteers?</i> A. It is a big job to do and some volunteers might not be appropriate – we would need to conduct interviews and look at hygiene certification and DBS checks. <i>Q. Could the PTA help?</i> A. There is only 1 parent involved currently so it is more a TA! Payment can be through parent pay or cash, we can't take card payments.</p>	
5.	Approval of budget plan for the 23/24 academic year - it was agreed that the budget could be published and sent to DCC	
6.	Approval of Year End FRS Report – covered in item 4 and it was agreed by Governors to submit.	
7.	<p>Update re Extended Provision – There is a £14k c/f. We had anticipated/estimated 60 for breakfast club and get 50 children. For the afterschool club we anticipated/estimated 70 and get 66. In the morning, there are 2 contracted staff and in the afternoon 1 contracted and 1 on casual hours. Governors need to be happy that correct processes are in place and that there is enough money in the pot to cover redundancy if needed. Most parents book and pay in advance but can phone and book if there are places still available. If the number of children within the school reduces, then these numbers could well reduce. DW will continue to monitor.</p> <p><i>Q. The van that the school runs, what is it used for?</i> A. Mainly used to take school meals to Appledore. It was purchased new last year and we are putting aside £1k per year to replace it when needed. A % of the cost is covered by Appledore school. <i>Q. Does it cost us anything to provide this service?</i> A. No, not to deliver the meals. Under the Service Level Agreement (which is reviewed every 3 years) the plate meal goes up</p>	

	every year and we look at staff time/fuel/costs incurred. By providing these meals, it helps us because we can buy and cook in bulk. We currently provide over 300 meals a day.	
8.	Discussion re ongoing plans to address deficit – covered in item 4 and 10.	
9.	Approval of telephone contract quotes – some of the wall points are failing and we will need to go digital within the next 18 months. Following a discussion, it was agreed to use TME as the provider moving forward.	
10.	Covered under Part 2	
11.	HT Verbal Report – Last week was a successful week. Normally when a HT leaves, there can be huge ramifications as everything settles. Staff came back upbeat and on board. All responded really well to the training and staff have offered support to SLT.	
12.	Governor visits and training undertaken – c/f to the next meeting	
13.	Policies • Administering First Aid – minor change – MT not present to recommend – c/f	c/f
14.	Items brought forward by the chair – Some policies will need to be reapproved/signed as there is a change of HT.	
15.	Impact Statement – not completed	
16.	Date of the next meeting – The next FGB on Tuesday 9 th May 2023 at 5.00pm.	

With no further business, the Chair closed the meeting at 6.52pm

Agreed as a true record	Date