

AYLESBURY GRAMMAR SCHOOL

RESOURCES INCLUDING FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 3RD MARCH 2016, 8.00AM



PRESENT:	Mr G Gate (Chairman) Mr P Bown Mr M Brock Mr J Collins Mrs J Dennis	Mr K Hardern Mrs G Miscampbell Mr M Pilkington Mr M Sturgeon (Headmaster) Mr R Williams
IN ATTENDANCE:	Mr P Aston Mrs C Cobb Mr D Shiels Miss E Treherne Mrs R Wilson	Observer Clerk Facilities Manager Observer Finance Director

1 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The following items were agreed to be taken under any other business:

- Victoria Park
- Work Place Pensions
- New Library

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

2 MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

2.1 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 5TH NOVEMBER 2015

The minutes of the meeting held on 5th November 2015 were previously circulated and agreed to be a correct reflection of the meeting.

2.2 MATTERS ARISING

Tendering Process – The Finance Director confirmed the Financial Procedures Manual (FPM) had been amended to reflect that a contractor must declare if they have a connection with the school as part of the tendering process. **Mr Brock stated the enquiry documents sent to contractors must also be amended to reflect this.** The Finance Director agreed to review the documents to ensure they do.

Charging Policy – The Finance Director confirmed the policy had been amended to reflect the 5% increase previously agreed by Governors.

Solar Panels – The Facilities Manager confirmed the solar panels had been installed on the Sports Hall roof and were working. **Mr Aston asked when the school would start to receive income from the electricity generated?** The Facilities Manager was uncertain and agreed to email all Governors to confirm that the panels had been fully commissioned, if everything is metered and what income is being received. Governors also discussed and agreed they would like an annual report on income from and performance of the solar panels and this should become a standing annual item for the finance director's report and the agenda

ACTION

Finance
Director

Facilities
Manager

RiF Agenda

Meeting arranged for 11th December – The Chairman reported the meeting had been cancelled, as matters to be discussed had not progressed enough to hold a meeting.

3 FINANCE REPORT

The Finance Director had previously circulated her report. Arising from the report:

2015/16 Budget

- There has been a transfer of £32,000 from the repairs and maintenance budget to capital to cover costs of converting the old biology labs. When setting the budget, a certain amount is allocated to capital and a certain amount to revenue. **The Chairman asked if the £250,000 allocated for general improvements (£200,000 for facilities and £50,000 for premises) would cover the costs of both the library and redevelopment of the Biology labs?** The Finance Director responded that funding for all costs associated with the library is coming from an external source, a legacy, which has been left to the Foundation for the benefit of the school. **Mr Aston noted full Governing Body approval has not yet been given for the library project.** Mr Collins responded that the library project has not yet been presented to Governors as plans are currently being drawn up so projected costs can be established for the scheme. The Foundation has indicated that the executors managing the legacy would be supportive of the Foundation allocating the capital to one significant project such as the library. A presentation will be made to the FGB at their next meeting when a costed design proposal is available. Governors expressed their appreciation regarding the legacy. **Mr Williams asked if an expected timeline on the library project is known?** The Headmaster responded a meeting has taken place with the architects and the design and specification is complete with the timeline on the project being finalised. If the proposal is approved by the FGB the work should be completed by September 2016. Governors therefore discussed and agreed a sub-committee should be formed now to include the Chairman, Mr Aston, Mr Brock and Mr Williams to consider the library project and tendering process assuming approval of the scheme at the next FGB meeting occurs. The FGB will be asked to authorise the sub-committee to progress approvals within agreed limits.

Chairman, Mr
Aston, Mr
Brock & Mr
Williams

FGB Agenda

Funds held

Mr Williams asked where the sixth form facilities development fund is currently being held? The Finance Director responded in the School Support Fund

2016/17 Projections

- The projected budget share for 2016/17 has increased by £30,000 owing to an increase in the AWPU however the budget overall will be £40,000 worse than 2015/16 due to other changes. The school's current projection is a break even budget and more detail will be presented at the June meeting
- The Year 7 late transfer test results are not yet known but it is hoped the remaining places in Year 7 will be filled in Year 8. However, no funding will be received next year for the shortfall since funding is based on current headcount.
- The admission numbers for September 2016 are extremely positive. 240 boys have qualified with AGS as their first choice school of which 70% are in catchment. 50 are from Aylesbury schools, which

is a significant and very positive increase. Mr Hardern congratulated the school and noted that this may in part be due to outreach work by the school SLT.

- **Mr Pilkington asked if the planned cost saving measures (currently valued at c.£60-80k) in Year 13 are going to happen if the budget is better than originally projected?** The Headmaster responded they will be and Heads of departments have been made aware. **Mr Pilkington asked if there are funding increases in future could decisions made to reduce costs be reversed as the impact on staff is significant and its effect on delivering the curriculum is still unknown?** The Headmaster responded it would be kept under review. **Miss Treherne also reported the reduction in staff does not just impact on the classroom but all the other areas of responsibilities staff have and staff well-being must be considered.** Governors discussed and agreed the Learning and Teaching Committee must keep this under review as effective learning / teaching and staff well-being were extremely important

L&T
Committee

Benchmarking

- The Finance Director reported staff costs for catering and cleaning were higher than most schools as the school directly employs all these staff and a lot of schools use agencies to fulfill these roles
- **Governors asked if any subjects have been cut in their entirety?** The Headmaster responded only subjects which the Government have stopped have been cut

Audit Tender

- Governors discussed the tenders received for the annual audit and agreed Landau Baker should be appointed based on a combination of price and experience but subject to acceptable references to be obtained by the Finance Director.

Energy Provision

- The school has to renew its energy purchase agreement through Lazer or find an independent broker. The Finance Director felt the energy quotations from either Bucks CC (via Lazer) or an independent firm would be broadly similar, so the larger question was around whether Governors felt it was important for the school to take control of its energy provision. **The Chairman asked if there was capacity within the school for somebody to do this?** It was agreed that the resource was not available internally. **There was also discussion around Lazer's ability to get a better price as they were bulk buying on behalf of a lot of schools? Mr Brock asked if Lazer fix the price for four years?** The Finance Director responded that Lazer renegotiates the supply contracts with energy firms annually. The Lazer contract, to act as broker, would last for 4 years, Lazer expect to get a bulk discount to market rates based on the volumes they procure, Governors discussed and agreed the contract should remain with Lazer for four years.

Finance
Director

Business Continuity Plan

- **Mr Aston felt the plan offered for approval did not satisfy the requirements of a workable Business Continuity Plan and he agreed to forward links to alternative specialist templates for the Finance Director to consider.** The Finance Director agreed to bring back the revised plan to the next meeting

Mr Aston
Finance
Director
RiF Agenda

Premises Purchasing Procedures

- The Finance Director felt the proposed procedures are cumbersome for purchases of £1,000. **The Chairman referred the Finance**

Director to the Responsible Officer's report, which indicates the school is not clear on the audit trail. The suggested admin process is that a specification should be produced before quotes are obtained, which would add clarity to the audit trail and bring the school into line with externally recommended process guidance.

- **Mr Williams asked if the current purchasing procedures are a part of the audit process?** The Finance Director responded that the auditors review the processes and our compliance with them as part of their work on Regularity for the EFA. If the auditors requested paperwork to support any areas, then it is provided.
- **Mr Aston expressed his concern that things should be carried out in a totally transparent way, noting that it had been minuted at the last RiF meeting as part of the Auditors' Report that in the Auditors' opinion "In future it would be useful to have documentation to support the thought process, as to why a contractor who undertook a capital project was then used for other work, showing that best value was clearly achieved during the tendering process, and in the appropriate circumstances that it was justified to transfer this value judgment to further work without re-tendering. The auditors need documented rationale for the decisions made."** The Finance Director responded the financial procedures manual has been updated to reflect this. **Mr Aston was therefore concerned the requirements of the Financial Procedures manual were not being met in terms of obtaining comparable competing quotations.** The Finance Director responded that in relation to the science rooms there had been a misunderstanding at the last meeting around the sub-committee wanting a principal contractor. The Chairman reported for clarity Governors wanted a plan for the whole project to justify approvals against the budgeted funds. **Mr Aston reported a full specification must be drawn up for all tenderers to quote against to ensure consistency and that all quotes were comparable.** The Headmaster responded the Facilities Manager could not be expected to write a specification for all work and contractors would not wish to continue working for the school if they were asked to come in and create a specification for each job they were asked to undertake no matter how routine or small, so whilst the principle is good it would present challenges. **The Chairman noted that in such circumstances for larger value works the use of external expertise (e.g consultants) may be necessary and appropriate.**
- **Mr Hardern proposed that for regular suppliers every 2 or 3 years check points could be built in so value for money can be demonstrated. Mr Bown noted that the benefits of any administrative system must be commensurate with the administrative workload required to achieve compliance**
- **Mr Aston proposed and Governors agreed the financial procedures manual should be reviewed and if necessary the current value thresholds amended. Mr Collins stated the school need to be able to react quickly under the procedures and the lower limit for the need to obtain multiple quotations should be raised from £1,000. Mr Williams requested that mandatory parameters are still included to a minimum standard along the lines suggested by Mr Harden so auditors and the RO can judge compliance re best value.** The Finance Director agreed to revise the manual with Mr Aston and Mr Williams agreeing to operate as reviewers, and the revised financial procedures manual would then be taken to the FGB for approval.

Finance
Director

FGB Agenda

- The Chairman thanked Mr Aston for the huge amount of work he had undertaken to assist with the premises purchasing procedures and other topics covered by RiF.

Shared Parental Leave Policy

- Governors reviewed and approved the policy and agreed it should be recommended to the FGB for approval. In future the policy should be kept under review by the C & D Committee

Pupil Premium

- The Finance Director agreed to produce an anonymised review list showing how the pupil premium funding is being spent and this would be taken to the L & T Committee for further consideration.

Science Campaign

- To date the Development Director has raised £240,000
- Governors agreed that, whilst this was very good, consideration must be given to drawing down on the reserves in order that the science block is completed this academic year. A review should be carried out at the next FGB meeting with supporting financial documentation and an update from the Development Director on fundraising progress. The FGB should be asked to consider the release of reserves to complete Science in accordance with this timetable, with reserves being replenished using fundraising income.

Mrs Dennis and Miss Treherne left the meeting

4 PREMISES REPORT

The Facilities Manager had previously circulated his report. Arising from the report:

CiF Bid Applications

- The outcome of the bid applications will be known in April. The replacement of windows application was for £485,000 and the sixth form centre £392,915. **The Chairman asked if there was a quotation for the installation of the windows to support the bid.** The Facilities Manager responded that a quotation was submitted alongside the CiF application. **Mr Williams asked whether the work would need to be done within specified timetables if the grant was obtained.** The Headmaster said there would be time restrictions but they would not be an issue.
- **Old Science Laboratories** – following the last meeting the appointed sub-committee had agreed that the project should be delivered as a managed service by a principal contractor. Three quotes have been obtained to carry out the fit out.
- The Facilities Manager referred to quotes received for remaining Physics labs Ph4 & 5. All agreed that the tender comparison showed that Shield were most competitive and should be appointed to carry out the fitting out of the physics labs. Prior experience of using Shield on other labs had been satisfactory.
- **The committee also reviewed the tender comparison for the Chemistry labs. Mr Aston asked if the quote for £73,000 to fit out the largest chemistry lab included the air handling?** The Facilities Manager confirmed that more work was required on the common air handling system specification in order to finalise costings, but the total sum per laboratory would be adequate

ACTION

FGB Agenda
C&D
committee

Finance
Director
L & T
Committee

Headmaster
Development
Director

FGB Agenda

- **Mr Williams asked whether the Top Notch exclusion of the fume cupboards, of which 3 were required at a cost of £9,000 each, needed to be added to the stated costs regarding their tender to show a true comparison.** It was confirmed that this should be done. (Top Notch had excluded the fume cupboards but provided a provisional figure of £9,000 each unit, effectively adding £27,000 per laboratory to the Top Notch price). The Facilities Manager stated that the £73,000 sum for Shield included the fume cupboards
- Governors discussed and agreed that, in principle, Shield should be selected as the preferred contractor for the Chemistry labs but that price reductions should be sought for the follow on laboratories to ensure that the quotes for the other labs are revised downwards if possible to reflect the reductions in size.
- **The Chairman asked if the total quote received included the fitting out of the common areas of the science building?** The Facilities Manager responded £15,000 has been allocated for the common areas.
- **The Chairman asked if the CiF bid application for replacing the windows is unsuccessful what is the cost for replacing the windows in the science labs?** The Facilities Manager responded £35,000. **The Chairman asked if this price included the entrance doors that need updating.** The Facilities Manager confirmed this was correct.
- **The Chairman also asked what the new overall project total was as the individual lab costs appear in aggregate higher than the original projections?** The Facilities Manager responded £520,000, which is £20,000 more than projected but this may be improved upon as quotes for remaining labs are further negotiated. It was noted that no contingency was included in this sum.

Long Term Plan

- The Headmaster reported he had invited Urban Projects Bureau to give a presentation to Governors at the summer FGB meeting on the vision for the whole school site for the next 25 years and beyond

FGB Agenda
Headmaster

Fire Alarm

- A meeting with a specialist external consultant has been held and the minutes are attached. Documentation has been provided to the consultant for review, and the next stage is for the consultant to return to carry out a site audit on 11th April. Following this, a follow on review meeting will be held as a matter of urgency and an action plan will be drawn up, including creation of a specification for improvement of the fire alarm system. **Mr Williams expressed his concern over the speed things were being done.** The Facilities Manager responded the fire alarm is being tested on a daily basis and that the specialist had been appraised of the current situation and regimes and had confirmed that the school's processes to date are entirely reasonable in his considered opinion given the nature of the school and its facilities. The Chairman pointed out Mr Bailey, the specialist consultant and an ex-Assistant Chief Fire Officer with Bucks Fire and Rescue, had raised at the meeting that the Directors (i.e. the FGB) are the "responsible persons" under the 2005 Fire Safety Order legislation and the Facilities Manager is the competent person.
- The Headmaster agreed to email the Fire Risk Assessment previously provided to Mr Bailey to the Chairman and Mr Aston to review

Headmaster

Health and Safety

- As agreed at the Autumn RiF meeting, Mr Chris Stops (a specialist external consultant) carried out an audit of health and safety procedures and practices (excluding the fire procedures) in February. The report was received and a draft initial action plan was drawn up by the Headmaster, Finance Director and Facilities Manager
- **Mr Aston was very concerned about the content of the report. It shows a clear disconnect between the health and safety policy as written and day-to-day practice, as evidenced during the audit. Despite ample time to prepare, the fact that evidence to support compliance was not instantly available was deeply disappointing. Mr Williams said that it was difficult to match up the report and the action plan and proposed that a list of the recommendations is drawn up as an additional column to the action plan for ease of management and review. The Chairman was concerned as it is evident that whilst things may be being carried out, they are not being done as detailed in the Health and Safety Procedures Manual. The Chairman questioned whether there is a resources issue at the core of this.** After extended and broad discussion, Governors agreed that a sub-committee should be formed to include the Headmaster, Mrs Dennis, Mr Collins and Mr Chris Stops, as the external expert resource, and their urgent remit was to carry out improvements to health and safety management and procedures, including a review of the terms of reference of the Health and Safety Committee and its function in line with legislation and best practice. The Headmaster agreed urgently to set up the meeting to go through the report.
- **Mr Hardern asked if there was an asbestos management plan already in place?** The Facilities manager responded there is an asbestos survey and asbestos register, which form the underlying basis for an asbestos management plan, but there is not a full plan in place. Formulation of the plan would be addressed as part of the review previously outlined
- **Mr Pilkington recommended that staff were adequately involved the process, this was unanimously agreed**

Headmaster,
Mr Collins
and Mrs
Dennis

5 RESPONSIBLE OFFICER REPORT

The report of the Responsible Officer was previously circulated. Arising from the report:

- **Mr Aston asked if standard purchasing terms and conditions of supply are used?** The Finance Director responded most staff purchase things from catalogues and their standard terms of trade are acceptable.

6 GOVERNOR SEF UPDATE

There were no further updates to the Governor SEF.

7 SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Headmaster reported he would be giving a full update on progress being made on the SDP at the next FGB meeting.

8 HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

This Committee met on 1st March 2016 and minutes had been previously circulated. It was agreed that more comprehensive minutes from a reconstituted Committee would be required as part of the output from the Health and Safety review.

Health and Safety was also discussed under Minute 4.

9 POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR REVIEW AND APPROVAL

- **Shared Parental Leave Policy** – see Minute 3

10 FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- Health and Safety Procedures and audit action plan status
- Fire policy

FGB Agenda
FGB agenda

11 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 16th June 2016 at 8.00am

12 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

12.1 VICTORIA PARK

The Headmaster reported Hale Leys Football Club is currently looking for a venue to play their matches and have approached the school about Victoria Park. They would need a football pitch (currently Victoria Park has markings for a cricket pitch), boundary area for spectators, changing facilities and lighting. The Headmaster has been very clear they would need to pay for all these areas and the AGS Foundation would have the ownership of any buildings erected. A lighting survey will be carried out to support the planning permission application. To date an application has been made to AVDC to establish if in principle a building, to include changing facilities and a stand and lighting could be carried out, a response has not yet been received.

The Headmaster further reported the PE department has been consulted and they have said it would not impact on the curriculum but would be a fantastic facility for the school to have.

All agreed it would be excellent if the project did go ahead. **The Chairman reported if it is viable then contracts including adequate safeguards around funding will need to be drawn up by solicitors.**

12.2 WORK PLACE PENSIONS

Mr Hardern asked what the situation is with work place pensions? The Finance Director responded all new staff are opted in as a matter of course and for existing staff we went through the auto-enrollment process at our staging date of 1st April 2014.

12.3 NEW LIBRARY

The Headmaster circulated the proposed plans for the new library and said a high quality fit out specification had been included. Governors agreed conceptually the plans were very good but they did not like the fit out design. The Headmaster agreed to come back with alternative options.

Headmaster

The meeting closed at 11.35am

Signed Date

CHAIRMAN