



**Gildredge
House**

Enterprise Committee – Minutes

Meeting Date: Tuesday 28 April 2020

Meeting Venue: *Via Zoom*

Meeting Time: 5:15pm

Governors: Trevor Scott, *(TS)*, Committee Chair
Paul Amos, *(PA)*, Committee Vice Chair
Selene Edwards, *(SE)*
Glyn Freeman, *(GF)*
Julian Mace, *(JM)*
Joel Newman, *(JN)*
Martyn Ashley Taylor, *(MT)*

Ex officio: Stuart Reeves, *(SRv)*, Head Teacher

Also in attendance: Janice Logan, *(DFA)*, *Director of Finance & Administration*

Clerk to Governors: Steve Quayle

Apologies: None

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Item	Discussion	Action
1.	<p>Welcome and apologies for absence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chair welcomed Governors to the first virtual Enterprise Committee meeting and welcomed GF to the Committee. 	
2.	<p>Declarations of Interests</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> None 	
3..	<p>Committee Business</p> <p>Verbal Update of Lockdown Situation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SRv advised it is going well with varying numbers of students in school each day, averaging 38, mainly primary. There are 7 staff and 2 SLT. Welfare phone checks are being made and if unable to make contact within 2 days they visit the home in pairs. If still no contact, they refer to other agencies on day 3. SRv advised home schooling is inherently difficult to monitor, but a lot of parental feedback has been received and this has mostly been supportive. SRv advised having looked into video conference lessons he cannot find a route that satisfies data protection and safeguarding rules. He has also heard a number of horror stories from other schools. Additionally, some students do not have access to the tech required. Some parents have reported they are struggling to home school whilst also working from home themselves but SRv is powerless to do much but empathise with their predicament. Governors commended the school for taking in the children of key workers. Governors asked how much of a structure is being followed by those attending. SRv said it is going as well as it can be in the circumstances but the timetable is a lot more flexible than normal and it depends on which teachers are in each day. Governors asked about the catering contract. SRv said he was quoted a very high price for them to continue through lockdown, which he declined. Governors asked to review the catering contract. Chair said that as a committee we should conduct a deep-dive into the contracts, particularly the catering one. In response to a request for volunteers, GF and SE offered to review the performance of the catering contract and report back to the Committee or FGB. Chair thanked SRv for the way he has continued to run the school. SRv made clear it is a team effort. He added there are also some vulnerable 'shielding' staff and these are being supported. <p>Terms of Reference</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chair advised the TOR are circulated for reference only and his chairing of the meetings will cover off all the items on the TOR. <p>Financial Regulations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chair advised DFA has already been sent questions from some Governors. DFA said she has updated this document as it was overdue and it now includes the previously agreed HR changes, and altered some wording to adopt the appropriate terminology. DFA explained that for large scale tendering management an external consultant is brought in. Governors highlighted errors in the tender process, and advised these will need to change again at the end of the Brexit transition period, so the school should make all these changes now. GF agreed to take this offline and discuss with DFA separately. 	<p>GF/SE</p> <p>GF/DFA</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governors said there are some areas of the document that appear to be out of date and suggested it should be compared against the Academies Handbook and checked by Internal Audit. • Chair asked about the strategic staffing structure. SRv explained the ideal staffing structure, reviewed each year, but the school tries to keep all changes minimal and proposed that as and when there are changes to this these should come to Governors for approval; he wants to formalise the staffing plan going forwards. • Chair asked if all Governors were happy to approve the Financial Regulations – Governors approved. 	DFA
4.	<p>Finance</p> <p>Income/Expenditure Report 19/20</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SRv advised the school is making pleasing progress towards repaying the loan by the end of December. • After May half term, all staff will be informed to order only supplies they need urgently. All contractual obligations have been met, and the school has sought advice re casual workers. DFA advised there have been additional Coronavirus costs, i.e. extra cleaning and additional supplies of soap and paper towels, etc. Government advice is to continue all Health & Safety checks, so the fire safety assessment is complete and the asbestos plan is being redrafted. • The school is still waiting for revised pay scales that have created a lot of extra work, but she is working on the assumption of a 2% uplift, although the union are asking for 2.75%. Governors asked if DFA has modelled 2.75% uplift, but she advised she has not had time. • The lettings income has reduced significantly through lockdown. • Chair asked what lobbying is ongoing to cover extraordinary costs. SRv advised this is being led by ESCC, and ASCL are lobbying on Headteacher's behalf. • DFA advised the largest cost will be school trip cancellations, but the school does have insurance. All those with no cost to cancel have already been cancelled, the rest are being negotiated. • Governors asked about the potential cost of extra staff cover. DFA envisages a phased return so the school will phase staffing appropriately to cover this. She reassured Governors that the supply budget does have flexibility. SRv hopes HTs will have the final say on who comes back and when so that the student numbers relate to the staff numbers he can get back in, because there will not be enough supply teachers available to cover every school's excess need. • Governors suspected teachers will be able to be tested and asked about the need for PPE. SRv finds it hard to envisage social distancing students but continues to make plans as well as possible. • Governors advised the Education Committee will be looking at how to get students back to school in next few weeks. • Chair asked if the school is planning for a second peak in October. SRv advised it is difficult to factor this in but the school has learned lessons from the first lockdown and can react quickly. <p>Draft Budget 20/21</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DFA explained her forecast draft budget to Governors and explained the ESFA funding will not change, but the PPG funding could do, as could the salary and pension grant, plus lettings income. • Staffing is the largest budget and it has been forecasted as the current situation plus two new Pastoral Support Assistants. She reminded Governors the cost of living increase varies. She explained the Government are expecting schools to fund 2% of whatever increase occurs. The National Funding Formula is destined to start in 2 years. Support staff may receive a 3% uplift so this has been budgeted for. • DFA said the school always tends to manage with what money it has by requiring budget holders to bids for extra funding. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DFA has altered the gas budget and added more to repairs, plus increased the H&S budget. One-off large costs will be legionella treatment and additional IT resources. She has included a new income line for Sports Premium for transparency. • The catering budget is based on current FSM and Universal FSM take-up but DFA cautioned this might change because of job losses caused by Coronavirus so she has forecast an uplift accordingly. This provision is not funded on a per-pupil basis, but instead on the area's deprivation profile; however, the Government have advised schools may receive additional funding if their uplift is significant. • Governors asked about a long-term budget and DFA said the school are looking at the 1-year review now, and next she will create the 3-year forward plan. Chair asked when this would be ready and DFA said if Governors agree 1-year budget she will prepare the 3-year budget that needs to be submitted to ESFA by July. Chair said he would like the 3-year review presented to the FGB on 4 June. • DFA said she is exploring new IT systems for budget forecasting which will provide her the ability to analyse and produce better MI. She has had three supplier demos, but would only consider using one of them, which happens to be the market leader. Governors expressed they would like to see a higher-level analysis. Governors asked if the £7.5k budgeted for the new system includes training and DFA confirmed it covers some training. She added that due to bedding-in time she needs to order the new system within the next few days or wait until the next school year. • Chair asked if Governors were happy to approve the draft budget – Governors approved. 	DFA
5.	<p>Staffing & Pay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SRv reminded Governors he had wanted to recruit four Pastoral Support Assistants at the FGB; however, this could render the school's bottom line to zero, which is dangerous. Accordingly, he is now proposing to recruit two of the positions. SRv asked Governors to debate this decision. • Chair asked if SRv is being overly cautious in the budget assumptions balanced against how much the school needs these new post-holders. Chair wondered if Governors should allow SRv to spend the money if this is critical but DFA reminded Governors the school has not yet received confirmation of the amount of grants it will receive. • SRv said if any other staff had resigned, he would not have replaced them, which would have funded these extra positions, but Coronavirus has stopped all movement in the sector; the savings will come in due course but he cannot guarantee when. • Chair said Governors still need to be assured the school is not being too overly cautious. SRv agreed the need will not diminish but that it would be remiss of him to create a potential budget shortfall. However, he highlighted the school has a history of coming in within budget and it could be achieved with belt tightening and extra vigilance. • SRv reminded Governors the school is repaying £16.5k a month in loan repayments. He concluded he would like to recruit four positions but it puts the finances very close to the edge. Chair asked for comments. • DFA said there are too many budget unknowns and it is more difficult than ever before to forecast because the Government has been very generous so far but no one knows how long this will go on. They may, for example, introduce a public sector pay freeze. • Governors commented that the NHS has been told it can have 'whatever it wants' and asked if there is scope in using Coronavirus as a legitimate reason for claiming funding for these extra positions due to the school's need to look after student's welfare when they return. • DFA said the ESFA have published very specific areas of funding and there is already some evidence of backtracking from previous promises. It is possible the school could argue it is in the middle of a repayment plan but unlikely this will make a difference. DFA said she is concerned there will be a realisation schools have not financially suffered by Coronavirus and they may stop being so generous. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governors asked if it was worthwhile conducting a survey on how students are feeling so we can gauge the issues. SRv said the school really needs to see them when they come back to establish what problems there are. He advised there will be a Coronavirus counsellor available for a discounted price. • Governors asked if we could decide on whether its 2 or 4 recruitees at a later point, and SRv added that he might not even be able to attract 4 satisfactory applicants. SRv said if there are four brilliant applicants from the recruitment process, he might revisit this conversation with Governors. • Governors asked about exams costs and SRv said he does not know for sure but he suspects schools will be told to pay what they would have paid normally to exam boards. DFA added the school will be saving some money by not paying for invigilators. • SRv said the salary profile in 2017 was to try to get lots of new teachers into the school. That has not happened in the way it was expected and so the school is not in a position to make all the changes it wanted to make. There are low numbers of applicants coming for interviews and there is difficulty around recruitment and retention that is probably only going to get worse. • Governors asked about the numbers of GH teachers leaving the profession. SRv said one staff member is leaving the profession this year out of six who are leaving the school. Governors asked about developing our own teachers and leaders. SRv said the school offers good career development and staff get a lot of support. He is very comfortable once staff are recruited but it is difficult to get new people through the door. It is recognised across Eastbourne that all schools tend to churn staff around the town and so they are holding a recruitment fair to attract teachers from outside the town. • SRv reminded Governors that in 2017 the school was spending 86% of income on staffing, whereas now this is reduced to 80%. Governors asked about the senior leadership ratio and SRv advised this has reduced to 10% now. • Chair asked Governors for a decision on the recruitment of the Pastoral Support Assistants having given the subject a good airing. Governors agreed to recruit to two of these positions. 	
6.	<p>Audit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DFA explained the audit report is positive. The identified problems are the finance system, the risk register needs to be revisited to establish an agreed format, and the fixed assets register. She explained the asset register has not been properly up kept recently. • A duplicate payment was made for a school trip due to a change of personnel but DFA is in the process of clawing back the money. • Chair asked if Governors were content with audit report – Governors confirmed. 	
7.	<p>Health & Safety</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DFA advised the school has improved its legionella prevention practice and the fire safety test has been done with nothing major needing to be dealt with. She explained the school is compliant albeit not performing best practice, which is being worked on. The asbestos survey is due next week, and she has volunteers to oversee the PAT testing that has fallen behind a bit. SRV commended the vast improvement in this area, which is down to the personnel involved. • Governors stated PAT testing only needs to be done in line with a risk assessment and not every year contrary to popular belief - GF and DFA agreed to discuss this offline, but in brief the risk assessment being completed is more important than the PAT test itself, but there needs to be a clear policy on this. • Chair asked if Governors need to organise an H&S visit but Governors advised there was one planned before lockdown, which will now be conducted when things get back to normal. 	GF/DFA

8.	<p>Risk Register</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair said the Risk Register has not been finalised and this needs to come offline with two Governors to focus on this with SRv and DFA and bring back to FGB with options for how to proceed. GF and JN volunteered to do this piece of work. 	GF/JN
9.	<p>Premises</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DFA explained there is a Capital Improvement Fund (CIF) bid being worked up with external consultants to address significant concerns regarding the Devonshire Wing flat roof, plus the school's boiler is old and failing. • DFA warned that the CIF funding programme may stagnate due to Coronavirus, but the Devonshire Wing has several classroom leaks and issues with deteriorating windows, so if the flat roof fails several classrooms will become unusable. • DFA reminded Governors when the school was built the boiler and flat roofs were not part of the project works. The boiler used to have a building management system but it now needs manual controlling each day. There are additional issues with windows, catches, drainage and pipework because it is a big building and quite old. • DFA had hoped to do more refurbishments of the toilets but the capital funding will not allow for this at the moment. SRv added there is a lintel that needs work as it is clearly being stressed. • Governors asked what work has been done on the CIF tender and DFA advised the external consultants are scoping this project up and will run the tender, and the ESFA prefer applications from consultants. The consultants were due to undertake a survey but this was delayed by lockdown. The consultant chosen has a high success rate and they work on a no win no fee basis. They seem confident they will make the CIF application deadline. • Governors stated the school should not be allowing Coronavirus to be used as an excuse to delay this work. SRv said he has experience of this sort of work and the external consultants generally only take on projects they are sure they will get funding for. • Chair asked if Governors can be provided with an addendum about longer-term strategies going forwards. 	
10.	<p>Any other urgent business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 	
11.	<p>Confirmation of future meeting dates:</p> <p>Full Governing Board</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuesday 4 June 2020 (<i>Via Zoom</i>) 	
12.	<p>Meeting Close</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair closed the meeting at 7.15pm 	