



# St George's Primary School

**St George's Primary School**  
**Resources and Premises Meeting**  
**Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> November 2018**  
**Lower Site 5:30pm**

## **Present**

<b>Community Governors</b>	P. Walters B. Clark M. Wiggins	Vice Chair R&P Committee
<b>Parent Governors</b>	C. Scott A. Fisher C. Lucking	Chair R&P Committee
<b>Staff Governors</b>	B. Cassidy	Head Teacher
<b>Also Present</b>	K. Choudhary T. Skarratts- Jackson	Clerk
<b>Apologies</b>	L. Horton C. Roberts	

## **Item 1 Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of AOB**

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Noted and received as above.

## **Item 2 Minutes of previous meeting**

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Accepted as a true and accurate record and all actions have been completed.

## **Item 3 Action points of previous meeting**

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**Debtors report:** B. Cassidy informed R&PC that the monies outstanding continues to reduce and that the school classifies a debt as £50 or over. SLT will be able to give much more clarity on the debtor report at the end of this financial year.

**Anglo Saxon Roundhouse:** This is now completed. SLT thanked PTA for the funding contribution towards this project.

**Lockdown Procedure:** After the policy was approved, SLT arranged training for all staff on 9<sup>th</sup> January (over 2 sessions) and this procedure has been introduced to pupils over a number of

school assemblies. The first scheduled date for a drill is 26<sup>th</sup> February. This has been well received by staff, parents and pupils.

**Solar Panels:** the agreement has been signed off by the school and verified by P. Walters (in his capacity as FGB Chair of Governors).

#### **Item 4 Health and Safety Compliance Officer Report**

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Report circulated as part of the minutes.

B. Cassidy reminded R&PC that the school 'buys in' to services provided by Health and Safety Compliance Officer collectively with WA members rather than one school having the financial burden of retaining services independently.

It was suggested that the length of the report highlights the extent of work the school is addressing and R&PC were invited to comment.

R&PC asked has the sports hall roof been fixed and who was liable for the costs?

**RESOLUTION:** SLT stated that the school has faced a number of challenges addressing this and it has represented a large administrative burden on the school however the work has now been carried out. The administrative issues are focused on the fact that the LA was the client for the contractor – not the school.

It was suggested that the larger concern is the work carried out on the Y3&4 classroom roof as there has been a significant leak since.

R&PC asked are the LA liable the Y3&4 roof as the report suggests that they are of the opinion that the issue is not the roof but rather the volume of water sat on the roof and as such, the issue is with the schools drains and guttering?

**RESOLUTION:** The school has had some remedial work undertaken however there may be some more substantive work negotiated with the LA in the future.

R&PC asked if the condition survey highlighted the school roofs?

**RESOLUTION:** The school roof came out very well in the Condition Survey and this will be discussed in the next agenda item. B. Cassidy summarised that in general, the damage to all remedial work as result of roof damaged has been addressed.

#### **Item 5 Update on Local Authority Premises Action Plan**

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B. Cassidy informed R&PC that the school has welcomed back the second caretaker (M. Kinsella) from a long period of absence and has received Occupational Health support.

B. Cassidy informed R&PC that he met with the Mike **Woosey** from the LA today (12<sup>th</sup> February) to discuss the schools action plan moving forward. It was highlighted that this ringfenced budget is the amount of money the LA have to manage all Wirral maintained schools' stock and premises and as such, is allocated on a priority basis across the borough.

SLT discussed the findings from the school's Condition Survey with Mike Woosey and it was suggested that while this is an extensive report it is fairly limited in its effectiveness. It is a

visual survey taken by surveyors which rates different parts of the school premises. 95% of the school's stock was rated grade A to B. There were some issues reported as grade C/D relating to boilers, electrical circuits and structural fabric of the premises. As such, the LA are going to arrange for a fuller report to be carried out by surveyors on grade C/D rated areas to supplement the Condition Survey and have agreed that the key action points are their responsibility – not the schools.

SLT also discussed the schools two-year spending commitments on areas such as refurbishment of classrooms, toilet blocks and window etc. SLT reminded the LA that the school expenditure has exceeded the capital grant by over 500% in last two years - spending circa £225k yet only receiving circa £45k. SLT stated that the school cannot continue of the same pattern of expenditure as these funds should be focused on areas such as curriculum development. Mike Woosey has agreed that the LA will work with the school on its Asset Plan but reminded the school that the LA has not yet received its Capital Grant and does not believe this will be received until the end of the financial year.

B. Cassidy informed R&PC that funding for the Capital Grant fluctuates annually as it is based on the DfE condition survey findings from a sample of schools from the previous year. Once this grant has been put in place, the LA has agreed to put in a 3-year Asset Management Plan in partnership with SLT and governors. As such, SLT will be compiling a report highlighting the areas of greatest need. It was suggested that this report will include toilet blocks, conservatory roof in foundation area, boiler, electrical circuits boards and a deeper investigation into the Condition Survey key areas.

R&PC asked has the time waiting for the Condition Survey to be completed been wasted time?

**RESOLUTION:** The Condition Survey has highlighted areas graded C & D but as the report is only a visual report, it could be argued that time has been wasted as there is no structured nor detail feedback.

R&PC asked has the LA ever contacted the school about exploring new premises options?

**RESOLUTION:** Yes, but for the past 5-year the DfE has repeatedly deferred the schools funding for capital building given the current political and economic landscape in recent years. It was suggested that the current national politics surrounding Brexit means that this is not likely to be addressing any time soon.

## **Item 6 2019-20 Planned Capital Projects**

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B. Cassidy highlighted the following areas for planned capital projects;

- **Top Site Y5 corridor Toilets:** this has been costed and is set for expenditure in next year's budget.
- **4D classroom refurbishment:** This is the final classroom is be refurbish. This has been costed and is set for expenditure in next year's budget.
- **Lower Site Fitness Trail:** this has been funded via the Public Health Sugar Tax fund. This amount is £12k and the school has invited four companies to tender for this project.
- **Lower Site Shaded Area:** The school is currently exploring economies of scale in developing a lower site shaded area (with the support of the PTA) in conjunction with the Lower Site Fitness Trail.
- **Foundation Stage Conservatory:** The school has approached the LA for the cost of work in this area. Following the earlier meeting with Mike Woosey (as discussed above) this will be

going on the Asset Management Plan. It is envisaged that the cost of this work will be circa 35k/ 40k.

- **Remaining tower areas:** The school has approached the LA for the cost of work in this area. Following the earlier meeting with Mike Woosey (as discussed above) this will be going on the Asset Management Plan. SLT stated that this area is becoming an increasing area of concern.
- **F1 Extension:** The school has approached the LA for the cost of work in this area. It was suggested that the area is not fit for purpose and needs to be knocked down and completely rebuilt.
- **Range of structural remedial works:** The school has approached the LA for the cost of work in this area.

#### **Item 7 Management of Communicable Disease advice to schools**

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The link to Health protection in schools and other childcare facilities A practical guide for staff on managing cases of infectious diseases in schools and other childcare settings was circulated in the papers. This was updated by Public Health England in December '18.

B. Cassidy brought the document up on VDU for further discussion.

R&PC informed that this document is regularly updated with best practice for school nationally and it was suggested that the guidance gives a lot of information and acts as a 'one stop shop' for school staff and parents.

#### **Item 8 Risk Assessment Guidance**

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The decision was taken to deferred this item in C. Roberts absence.

R&PC asked does the school have staff specific risk assessments?

**RESOLUTION:** Yes, the school has role specific risk assessments and they are reviewed at regular intervals. B. Cassidy stressed that it is essential that risk assessments are working document and used for training, regularly reviewed etc.

#### **Item 9 National Funding Formula Update**

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B. Cassidy delivered a verbal update on decisions taken by Wirral Schools' Forum on national funding formula transition and implications for GB.

R&PC were informed that the decision was taken in December '18 to defer the National Funding Formula for another year. As result, the school budget for next year is circa £35k short.

The National Funding Formula will be introduced 2020/21 as DfE has stated that this will be statutorily implemented by end of 2020/21 at the latest. As such, this has been costed into the school's budget from 2020/21 onwards. B. Cassidy stressed that any change on policy on this from DfE would have significant impact on school's budget.

#### **Item 10 Period 9 Budget Update**

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R&PC informed that C. Scott and C. Roberts recently met to discuss Period 9 Budget update prior to the meeting.

B. Cassidy informed R&PC that there has been an issue with the LA reporting excel spreadsheet. The issue relates to Period 6 and LA have indicated that an administrative error led to a report inaccuracy. As such, the local authority spreadsheet suggested that Period 6 income from the carry over figure from last year had been factored in to the schools spending – but it had not. The LA have stated that a formula error within a cell on their excel spreadsheet was the root cause of the problem. B. Cassidy met with head of service and school business manager to address this problem.

B. Cassidy suggested that this issue has had a huge administrative burden on the school's finance team. In an effort to resolve this issue, SLT had a challenging conversation with the LA to identify and address the inaccuracy in the previous Period 6 report.

R&PC asked what is the difference between the school's report shared with R&PC and the LA spreadsheet?

**RESOLUTION:** R&PC informed that they are the same spreadsheet as this is a requirement from the LA. SLT expressed frustration with the antiquated administrative processes of financial reporting.

R&PC asked if this has affected any other WA schools?

**RESOLUTION:** Yes, business manager reported that the error has been picked up in other Wirral schools. As such, Head Teachers have written the LA Council Leader to express concerns about this reporting error but also the archaic way of work. It was suggested that the LA should move away from excel spreadsheet, explore streamlining systems and towards more bespoke MIS.

R&PC asked would the school welcome a letter from FGB supporting the schools (and WA) position?

**RESOLUTION:** Yes, SLT would keenly welcome Governors support on this issue.

**ACTION 1(02/19):** Letter to be drafted expressing dissatisfaction with the reporting inaccuracies, the budget challenges which it presents and levels of accountability.

B. Cassidy reassured R&PC that this has not (on this occasion) affected the schools budget spending or projections as the issue is one of **reporting** and lines of communication – not a budget issue. That said, this could have caused a huge issue for the school.

R&PC asked if any of the other WA school have been adversely affected?

**RESOLUTION:** B. Cassidy stated that the is appears to only have affected schools with budget surplus figures from 2017/18.

**ACTION 2(02/29):** B. Cassidy to contact other schools to see how they have been affected.

SLT stated that the finance team has endeavoured tirelessly to address the issue and thanked them for their diligence in challenging circumstances.

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## **Item 11 Projections for 2019-2020 using indicative budget figures**

As discussed above, it was suggested that the delay in implementation of the national funding formula has had a significant factor for the school budget.

SLT informed R&PC that the school budget has been capped by £30k to accommodate the minimum funding guarantee which states that no one schools' budget will increase (nor decrease) by 1%.

SLT suggested that the biggest pressure on projections for 2019/20 is staffing costs, citing three main contributory factors; Pension contributions, 6% LA pay awards and the 2% pay award for teachers.

R&PC asked which staff members does the 6% LA pay award affect?

**RESOLUTION:** Depended on grade, all staff other than teachers as these members of staff are on LA pay scales – opposed to Teachers whom are on the National Pay Scales for Teachers.

R&PC asked when will this take affect?

**RESOLUTION:** From 1<sup>st</sup> April '19.

It was suggested that there are no immediate redundancy pressures but SLT may have to discontinue posts within staffing structure.

In projecting for 2019/20, SLT have done diligence on every single line of the budget and the main variable between now and agreeing the budget for next year is going to be staff cost/ structures. R&PC were informed that B. Cassidy has met with all SLT to discuss staffing cost variances and SLT need within their units. SLT will be drafting a revamped staffing structure over the coming days and meeting to discuss options with the finance team with the view to producing some costings. It was suggested that there may be savings to be made as some staff are nearing the end of their fixed term contracts and if the school cannot afford to renew, they will not renew.

SLT have met with Dragon Club management to look at contracts there with the view to efficiency savings there and it was suggested that there may be considerable savings that can be accrued in this area.

SLT have an upcoming meeting with lunchtime supervisors to discuss economies of scale in this area and best value for money.

Looking at the figures going forward, it is suggested that by the end of next year (based on projected saving) the school could save circa £45k. If achieved, this would mean that the school actual accounting balance would be circa £80k in credit at the end of 2019/20. Complication is that many of these staff have permanent staffing contracts. HR advice is being sought.

It was suggested that the budget is extremely reliant on the school's ability to generate additional income from outside main budget which makes the school slightly vulnerable;

- **Nursery:** this year the school made £230k however next year the school is projected to make £200k but if government policy surrounding free 30 hours provision, this would make the budget vulnerable.

- **Catering:** The school is making operational profit on catering however if the government rules on universal credit were to change then the school would perhaps have to look towards further staff restructures and redundancies.
- **Dragon Club (and extended services):** This area is just about on breaking even point however it was suggested that this should be generating far greater income for the school's budget.

R&PC asked if the school is allowed to make a profit on school lunches?

**RESOLUTION:** Yes, as long as this is operational profit. The school currently reinvests 11p per head more than the LA for meals. The same operational profit rules apply to Dragon Club.

R&PC asked when was the last time SLT reviewed prices for lunches and Dragon Club?

**RESOLUTION:** R&PC informed that this was review yesterday and the school is considering a 25p increase but this will be raised at the next R&PC meeting as there needs to be work done around staffing structures and efficiency savings.

R&PC asked why the school has not increase costs in line with the rising cost of inflation?

**RESOLUTION:** SLT have been loafed to do so in consideration of parent's budgets however the school must now consider this option.

**R&PC asked does the school charge more than other local schools?**

**RESOLUTION:** Yes, an average on 10p per head more for meals. Extended services appear lower cost.

**M. Wiggins left the meeting.**

## **Item 12 Financial Issues**

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R&PC informed that Online Free School Meals Portal there is a slight amendment to the official way the school works. Schools have been campaigning on the issue that there are a number of families that are eligible for free school meal or Pupil Premium that are not being picked up by the LA. As such, a system has been but in place to allow that will allow school to upload information online (adhering to GDPR requirements). This will require the school to upload stakeholders NI numbers and this will tie into the DWP systems and check eligibility for free school meals and Pupil Premium.

R&PC were under the impression that, following a letter sent out by school, it was the responsibility of parents to upload this information themselves?

**RESOLUTION:** Stakeholders can do this themselves however the school will be leading on this and is happy to upload information on their behalf.

One governor stated that there does seem to be some confusion in the system as they uploaded the required information and received an email later stating that their child was not eligible for free school meals, despite being under Year 3 and eligible. This email did cause some confusion and uncertainty on the issue. The email sender was Capita – not the school.

**ACTION 3(02/19):** B. Cassidy to check on the clarity of letter from Capita regarding eligibility for free school meals.

R&PC informed that the school is looking to increase petty cash expenditure increase to £300 and this is to be signed off by Chair of R&PC. The threshold was previously £200. This will lighten the administrative burden on the finance team.

R&PC asked how often are petty cash claims made and what kind of things?

**RESOLUTION:** Claims are made circa 3 – 4 times a week. Claims are only for low level operational things like, for example, a trip to supermarket for juice for an event.

R&PC agreed the policy and C. Scott signed it off. RATIFIED.  
and of change to procedures.

### **Item 13 SFVS (School's Financial Value Statement)**

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R&PC informed that the School Financial Value Statement has to reviewed at the FGB annually however SLT would welcome governors input on this prior to FGB and asked for a volunteer.

C. Scott nominated to work with SLT on the policy prior to upcoming FGB.

**ACTION 4(02/19):** SLT and C. Scott to arrange suitable meeting date/time to discuss SFVS.

### **Item 14 Arrangements for Perf Management Mid-Year Review**

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R&PC informed that all curriculum staff will be having their Performance Mid-Year Review between 25/02/19 – 15/03/19

Non curriculum staff will be conducted in May '19.

Head Teacher Performance Mid-Year Review will take place on 22/03/18

### **Item 15 SLA Arrangements**

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R&PC reminded of the exiting LA SLA agreements.

R&PC informed that the school is not making any substantive changes to SLA and will be looking to and looking to renew rather than review. R&PC were reminded that a lot of work has been done in this area last year and as such, the veracity of the agreements still stands.

SLT highlighted that the school will be looking to renewal HR arrangements with SAS Daniels at £5.9k, which is suggested as excellent value for money.

R&PC asked does agreement include Practice Negligence Insurance?

**RESOLUTION:** No, the school has declined the additional insurance premium given cost considerations.

R&PC asked is it not worth considering the 3-year contract given the overall saving of circa £1k over the length of the contract?

**RESOLUTION:** SLT suggested that this option makes sense given the scales of economy. However, it would not safeguard against any variation in quality of service.



**ACTION 5(02/19):** SLT to further explore the 3-year option and consider the merit and viability of this against the 1-year option.

**Item 16 Flexible Working Policy and Consultation Regarding Changes to Part Time Hours**

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This will be discussed at FGB as the consultation is still open. It was suggested that the school has had a high level of engagement with this.

The school has written to staff with regards inappropriate staff contracts and look to revitalise their contract to ensure that staff hours meet business needs. SLT stated that the school fully supports flexible working but this has to be mutually beneficial and not affect the school's business and growth plan for efficiency and quality of provision.

**Item 19 Date and Agenda Items for next meeting**

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Next meeting Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> May 2019 @ 5:30pm.

**Meeting finished at 7:00pm.**

Chair Sign Off

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Date

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Page	Item	Summary of actions from R&P committee	Whom	Date to be completed
5	10	<b><u>ACTION 1(02/19)</u></b> : Letter to be drafted expressing dissatisfaction with the reporting inaccuracies, the budget challenges which it presents and levels of accountability.	P. Walters B. Cassidy	February '19
5	10	<b><u>ACTION 2(02/29)</u></b> : B. Cassidy to contact other schools to see how they have been affected.	B. Cassidy	February '19
7	12	<b><u>ACTION 3(02/19)</u></b> : B. Cassidy to check on the clarity of letter from Capita regarding eligibility for free school meals.	B. Cassidy	February '19
8	13	<b><u>ACTION 4(02/19)</u></b> : SLT and C. Scott to arrange suitable meeting date/time to discuss SFVS.	SLT C. Scott	February '19
8	15	<b><u>ACTION 5(02/19)</u></b> : SLT to further explore the 3-year option and consider the merit and viability of this against the 1-year option.	SLT	February '19