

SHILLINGSTONE CE VA PRIMARY SCHOOL

Minutes of extraordinary FGB meeting

held in School on Thursday 1st February 2018 at 7pm

Present:

Mrs S Weedon, Chairman (SWe)	Mrs J Whitehouse-Sharpe, Headteacher (JWS)
Mrs S Baines (SB)	Mrs J Barlow (JB)
Mr P Clark (PC)	Mrs R Oakley (RO)
Mr K Pitt-Kerby (KPK)	Mrs A Powell (AP)
Mrs S Vail (SV)	Mrs S White (SWh)
Mrs K Willey (KW)	

In attendance: Mr C Whitfeld, Clerk (CW)

1.	Welcome by SWe, prayer by AP.	
2.	Apologies: Mrs K Drake (KD). Apology accepted.	
3.	Declarations of interest for this meeting: AP re income generation, in her capacity as SCC Bookings Manager; SV as member of Staff.	
4.	<p>Financial update:</p> <p>SWe reported on “extremely positive” news received this week following talks with Vanessa Eddy, Local Authority’s Head of Finance for Schools, and notification of increased funding received by School Finance Officer Mrs J Weedon.</p> <p>Thanks to one member of Staff’s maternity leave, surplus funds in the current year’s budget under supply cover and capitation headings, and continuation of Special Needs funding under the old system until September 2017, there will now be a carry-forward total surplus this financial year of nearly £29,000 compared to a forecast deficit of £50,000. A surplus next year of some £15,000 is also now predicted.</p> <p>Management of the School’s finances does, however, remain difficult. The situation for JWS and all Staff remains “really tough.”</p> <p>It was agreed that some of this year’s surplus funds should be used in some way to ease the burdens on Staff at least to some extent.</p> <p>JWS stressed the really important need to ensure parents, and Staff, are aware of the enormous amount of work going on in the background to arrive at the current financial position, particularly what the Finance Officer has been doing by way of modelling a variety of different budgeting scenarios, and the fact that the School is working with a reduced staffing level.</p>	<p align="right">JWS, SWe to consider ways of doing this</p>
	<i>(PC arrived at 7.15pm)</i>	
5.	<p>Advice from Vanessa Eddy:</p> <p>A “cash-funded” School CANNOT go into deficit. Reverting to funding under the Local Authority umbrella would be advantageous in this respect while</p>	

	<p>costing about £700 a year. While other schools might also be heading into deficit, it is the first time Shillingstone has ever been in this situation.</p> <p>After discussion it was agreed unanimously on the proposal of KPK, seconded by AP, that the School should revert from cash-funded to the LA umbrella.</p> <p>If, while cash-funded, the School should go into deficit the LA would issue a “notice of financial concern” and the School would have to submit a business plan indicating how recovery would be achieved – the maximum time allowed usually being about three years. If this recovery plan was not deemed satisfactory the School’s right to manage its own finances could be withdrawn, which, from a financial point of view, would have a significantly detrimental effect on the School.</p> <p>At County, discussions are taking place with the Schools Forum over funding issues, and Shillingstone was advised to make its own case known to the Forum.</p>	<p>JWS to action with Finance Officer</p> <p>JWS, SWe</p>
6.	<p>Briefing of Simon Hoare MP and County Councillor Deborah Croney:</p> <p>Even with the improved position, it was agreed that the MP and Councillor Croney should still be invited to School to discuss its finances as soon as possible.</p> <p>Shillingstone Parish Council is also hoping to raise the School’s financial concerns with the MP and Councillor Croney.</p> <p>A further urgent reason for lobbying the MP is the National Funding Formula due to be introduced in 2021-22 which is predicted to be non-beneficial to small rural schools.</p> <p>Parents of SEND children should also be asked to lobby their MP about the effect the cuts are having on their children’s education. (One parent has already done so.)</p>	<p>SWe, JWS, PC</p> <p>JWS to invite them to write</p>
7.	<p>Support from Diocese:</p> <p>SWe has now spoken to Dan Roberts, Diocesan Adviser to Foundation Governors, who is also Chairman of the Blandford Educational Trust. He expressed his sympathy and concern for Shillingstone’s situation but could offer no financial help from the Diocese. He is “very happy to shout for Shillingstone School” as everyone should be shouting about how the funding cuts are affecting children’s education. He had already contacted the Regional Schools Commissioner about the need for something to be done.</p> <p>SWe agreed to phone Mr Roberts again now that the updated budget figures have been provided. She will also urge him to write to the MP about school funding.</p>	<p>SWe</p>
8.	<p>Updating parents, and briefing Staff:</p> <p>Letter to parents, drafted by PC, needs slight amendment to take account of changed circumstances. It should be sent out before half-term.</p> <p>SWe has met all Staff, and would now welcome the chance to meet them again – once the budget figures are confirmed with the Finance Officer after half-term – to thank them all for all they have done to ensure the children’s</p>	<p>PC to amend</p>

	<p>education is, and continues to be, unaffected; and reassure them that, at least for the coming year, their jobs are secure. This message needs to stress, however, that the School will still be “only just about getting by” in the coming years. The message needs to be honest and absolutely clear, and as unambiguous as possible.</p> <p><i>[Staff updated by JWS after this meeting.]</i></p>	
9.	<p>Parish Magazine article:</p> <p>JB was thanked for the article she had drafted. However, the question arose: What was the objective of such an article? Even before the changed circumstances were known, the need to delay such essentially negative publicity for the School was realised. This was agreed to be the right decision.</p> <p>Instead, it was agreed that good news from the children themselves, from Staff, etc, should be promulgated as much as possible via the Parish Magazine, the Blackmore Vale Magazine, Unity.com (at Sturminster Newton), etc.</p>	JWS, SV
10.	<p>Hiring out School facilities:</p> <p>The “Income Generation” report written by SB and AP was commended.</p> <p>SB confirmed that a lot was already happening with many of the “checks and balances” already in place. So the School is ready to “roll it out” – and has started to do so with an advertisement in the latest Parish Magazine.</p> <p>There are many potential ways in which the School premises can be used, starting in a small way and building up from there. SB particularly mentioned such weekend activities as dancing classes and martial arts classes, missing in the village and therefore requiring car trips to venues elsewhere.</p> <p>SB agreed to compare the School’s Lettings Policy with other schools’ policies; and to investigate such potential users as Health Care and Social Services.</p> <p>RO agreed to investigate the possible formation of a Table Tennis Club.</p> <p>SWe cautioned the risks of conflicts of usage and income with the Portman Hall and Shillingstone Church Centre.</p>	SB RO
11.	<p>Sponsorship research:</p> <p>KW and KD were thanked for their draft sponsorship letter. In the changed circumstances this was not considered appropriate.</p> <p>However, KW, in consultation with JWS, could invite local firms – particularly those where present parents are involved – to benefit themselves and the School through advertising on their own “sponsorship boards” on the School premises at a suggested rate of £200 per board per year.</p> <p>Before any further action on this matter, JWS and SWe to suggest suitable sites for such boards. JWS also to advise on potential clients among parents, and publicise in letters to parents what is being planned.</p>	JWS, SWe

12.	<p>Outside lighting:</p> <p>RO drew attention to the lack of outside lighting when, for example, collecting children from after-school activities in winter; and in case of need for the defibrillator on the School wall. She agreed to investigate the provision and costs of solar-powered sensor lighting.</p>	RO
13.	<p>Parents Newsletter:</p> <p>Parents were notified in March 2017 that the Parents Newsletter would cease being published in paper format, but the PTA is unhappy about no printed copies being available.</p> <p>It was agreed to continue with the present emailing method of circulation.</p>	JWS
	<p>Next meeting: <u>Termly FGB meeting Thursday 15th March 2018 in School at 7pm.</u></p> <p>[NB – Note change of date from Thursday 8th March]</p>	All Governors
	<p><i>The meeting closed at 9pm.</i></p>	

Action table – 1st February 2018

<u>Agenda item</u>	<u>Action required</u>	<u>Nominated Governors</u>	<u>Deadline</u>
4	Use of surplus funds for Staff benefit	JWS, SWe	a.s.a.p.
5	Switch from cash-funded to LA umbrella	JWS, Finance Officer	a.s.a.p.
5	Submit Shillingstone’s case to Schools Forum	JWS, SWe	a.s.a.p.
6	Invite Simon Hoare MP and County Councillor Deborah Croney to School	SWe, JWS, PC	Urgent
6	Ask parents of SEND pupils to write to MP	JWS	Urgent
7	Brief Diocesan Adviser on changed situation, and urge him to write to MP	SWe	Urgent
8	Updating letter to parents	PC	Before half-term
9	“Good news” for Parish Magazine, BVM, etc	JWS, SV	a.s.a.p.
10	Comparison of Lettings Policy with other schools	SB	a.s.a.p.
10	Possible Table Tennis Club	RO	a.s.a.p.
11	Seek potential “sponsorship board” clients, and consider siting of such boards	JWS, SWe	a.s.a.p.
12	Outside lighting provision and costings	RO	a.s.a.p.
13	Continue present circulation method for Parents Newsletter	JWS	a.s.a.p.