



# Black Firs Primary School

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## Finance Committee Meeting Thursday, 10<sup>th</sup> March 2016

### Minutes

**Present:** David Whitewright (DW), Martin Casserley (MC), Daphne Wright (DW), Toby Hassall (TH), Roland Domleo (RD), Dave Lupton (DL), Andrew Brown (AB), Alex Thompson (Clerk)

**Guests:** David Hermitt (Cmat), Julia Leonard (Cmat)

**Apologies:** Damien Calnon

Agenda	Notes	Actions
1. <b>Welcome &amp; Apologies</b>	David welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions took place. Apologies were noted and accepted.	
2. <b>Pecuniary Interest</b>	None declared.	
3. <b>Minutes of Previous Meeting &amp; Any Matters Arising</b>	<p>Minutes of the last meeting were approved as an accurate record and seconded. A copy of these can be found on share-point.</p> <p><b>Matters Arising:</b></p> <p>Budget Review- MC confirmed that there is now a formal agreement in place with Congleton High School (CHS) regarding the funds borrowed from Black Firs (BF). The agreement stipulate that the funds will be returned to BF by 31.8.16.</p> <p>Debt Report – An update was given by MC which included the family who had accumulated a substantial debt with the school. The parent is now repaying the debt at £10 per week and pays in advance for any activities.</p> <p>Projects – MC confirmed that the water pressure issue has now been resolved. He gave an update to governors regarding the artificial pitch &amp; tracks informing them that the tree survey had been conducted (at a cost of £600) and that he is currently awaiting the outcome of planning permission. Previously there had been complaints from some residents who were trying to restrict use, however the residents forum kindly wrote to residents explaining that the school currently has</p>	<b>All: For information</b>



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	<p>non-restricted use and that the changes are simply removing the grass and replacing this with artificial grass. MC also responded to a letter from Fiona Bruce MP as some residents had also registered their complaint with her. He also spoke to her at a recent meeting to clarify that there will be no change of use once the artificial pitch has been laid.</p>	
<p><b>4. Budget Review &amp; Finance Update</b></p>	<p>Budget review and cash flow documents were available prior to the meeting via share-point. These confirmed that actual carry forward as at 31<sup>st</sup> August 2015. The monthly cash flow document detailed the monies received since June 2014. The group reviewed and discussed the budget figures.</p> <p><b>Governor challenge: ‘The figures are confusing on the spreadsheets and it is difficult to identify which are the deficit figures as some are in brackets, some are in red and some are neither’.</b></p> <p>Julia explained that these are variances and the different formats are system-generated. Julia asked if governors would prefer the deficit figures to be in red, which can be done manually. All governors agreed that this would be preferable.</p> <p>AB commented that as the finance system is new it would be helpful if the information and spreadsheets could be explained at meetings until governors are more familiar with it.</p> <p>MC gave an overview of the finance to date including opening balances and current expenditure to date. The group then discussed the budget in finer detail including Pupil Premium, General Annual Grant (GAG – issued by the EFA) and Special Education Project income. Julia asked if initially MC/governors can check the accounts on a month-by-month basis so that any issues or inaccuracies can be identified and rectified immediately. Monitoring in this way will ensure that the budget and financial statement is accurate moving forward and will prevent any errors being repeated in the future.</p> <p><b>Governor challenge: ‘One statement refers to money owed to Black Firs. Where is this money and when will it be returned?’</b></p> <p>DW confirmed that this is the funding that CHS have borrowed. Both RD and AB felt that this was not clear in the accounts and requested additional detail on items such as this in future accounts. This would be helpful and would enable governors to understand and articulate this properly; particularly should there be an Ofsted inspection.</p> <p>AB expressed his appreciation to MC for all the time that had been spent reconciling the account. Governors agreed that they feel more confident and comfortable now that they have received information regarding the accounts and have had confirmation that the school has received all monies it is due.</p> <p>Governors discussed the VAT reconciliation worksheet and the issue with the over-claim.</p> <p><b>Governor challenge: DW asked sought clarification that the VAT over-claim issue been addressed. AB also asked what processes had been put in place to ensure that this does not happen again in the future.</b></p> <p>JL explained that due to the system not being closed down properly it was showing that a claim was required, when in fact this had already taken place. The</p>	<p><b>JL:</b> Amend deficit figures on spreadsheet for continuity</p> <p><b>All:</b> Check accounts on a monthly basis &amp; report any issues or inaccuracies to Cmat</p>

	<p>implication of which was that a second claim had taken place causing a double-claim, which now being repaid. JL confirmed that procedures are now in place to ensure that this isn't repeated in the future.</p>	
<p><b>5. Budget Setting</b></p>	<p>MC confirmed that Cmat are now producing management accounts for the school on a monthly basis, with the income and expenditure information provided separately. Governors agreed that receiving this information on a monthly basis is vital, particularly when they will be setting and agreeing the budget for 2016/17 in the next few months.</p> <p><b>Governor challenge: 'In terms of income are we on track as we expected or are there any large variances?'</b></p> <p>MC responded that sundries will fluctuate but everything else is on track. MC then shared a screen grab from the TSB bank account and explained that the school is currently in the process of changing from the TSB to Barclays. Governors commented that the name on the account is Kim Harwood (KH) and asked what had been put in place to ensure that she no longer has online access. MC confirmed that KH cannot access the online banking. She returned the bank card and card reader to the school upon her departure. MC also confirmed that the password to the online banking system has been changed since KH left.</p> <p><b>Governor challenge: 'What is the timeline to transfer from TSB to Barclays? Can we agree that this will be completed by the end of the financial year (31.8.16)?'</b></p> <p>MC agreed that the transfer will have taken place by the end of August 2016 and that the issue has been that funds cannot be transferred electronically from one bank to another.</p> <p>JL shared that the card system with Barclays operates differently and that they issue a charge card rather than a debit card. MC was concerned that a charge card operates similarly to that of a credit card (rather than a debit card) and therefore school will be charge 2% for using it. JL agreed to look into this and feed back to MC.</p> <p>A discussion took place regarding the number of charge cards that will be required and also the credit limit for each of these. JL confirmed that there will be a combined limit for the charge cards. DH suggested that the school identifies 5 or 6 staff who are strategically placed as they are those who mostly need to make purchases. A further suggestion was that school carries a small petty cash fund, although this is something the school moved away from and would not particularly wish to return to. MC to await outcome of JL discussion with Barclays and make decision re charge cards.</p> <p>The group discussed the current situation regarding free school meals (FSM) and AB asked if the whole school is eligible for this. MC confirmed that only children in the infants are eligible for FSM and that the information is detailed in the budget as part of the formula at the bottom of the GAG, as well as in the source of fund statement.</p>	<p><b>MC:</b> Transfer to Barclays by end of August</p> <p><b>JL:</b> Discuss with Barclays any cost implications for using a charge card</p>
<p><b>6. Debt Reports</b></p>	<p>Debt reports were received by the group and discussed. MC confirmed that school no longer has an issues with school meal debts as these are now paid upfront online. There were no comments or issues raised from governors regarding the debt reports.</p>	



	<p>MC shared that ParentPay will only allow one timetabled activity, which is current school lunches. He is currently discussing this with Cash Office as he would like to have three accounts so that parents have the facility to pay for other activities, however there may be an additional fee for this service.</p> <p><b>Governor challenge: ‘Do we know how much the fee will be and who will be paying the additional cost?’</b></p> <p>MC stated that the charge would likely be 1.2% per transaction and that previously the school payed the fee, however this may need to be added to cost of the activity in the future.</p>	All: For information
<p><b>7. Capital Projects</b></p>	<p>All weather pitch project – already covered earlier in the meeting under ‘matters arising’, however MC highlighted to governors that this is a self-funded project and that, on current figures, the carry forward figure is now £65k (not c.£180k as initially thought).</p> <p>The re-fenestration project and classroom extension project bids were submitted in December 2015 and MC is still waiting to hear the outcome of those.</p>	All: For information
<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p>	None identified.	
<p><b>Date of Next Meeting</b></p>	16 <sup>th</sup> June at 4.30pm.	All: Please note