**HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**
**Potten End C of E Primary School**
Minutes of a meeting of the Governing Board held on
Thursday 13 May 2021

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| Present: | Rob Dale (RD Chair) | Marianne Barker (MB) |
| | Emma Harris (EH-Vice) | Geraldine Salt (GS) |
| | Denise Kennedy (DK-Head) | Joe Roberts (JR) |
| | Jamie Lam (JL) | Jon Slupek (JS) |
| Remote: | Melanie Hall (MH) | |
| | Mandy King (MK) | |
| | Beverley Hamilton | |
| | David Bowker(DB) | |

In attendance: Ann Hingston (Clerk) Steve Cutler (Associate Governor)

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| Meeting commenced at 7.36pm | |
| 1. **Welcome-**The Chair welcomed the governors to the meeting. This was the first meeting back in school, socially distanced in the Hall. Some Governors chose to attend remotely on Microsoft Teams. | |
| 2. **Apologies-** An apology was received from Chris Eaton which was **approved.** | |
| 3. **Conflict of Interest-** No conflict of interest was declared. | |
| 4. **Approval of Previous Minutes 11/03/21 -**Minutes from 11/03/21 were **approved** by all present. | |
| 5. **Matters arising from Minutes 11/03/21** | |
| • Adverts went out in the school newsletter and local community newsletter but with no response. Will continue to advertise and reassess in July if we need to use services as advertised through Herts CC/ Governorhub. | |
| • Skills Matrix went to new Governors and the updated spreadsheet was shared with FGB. This will be discussed further at the next FGB. | Next FGB |
| • SEND offer has been updated on the school website. | |
| • In-house training in the process of being booked-awaiting possible dates from HFL. | Clerk |
| • Feedback on Governor Induction at next meeting. | PK |
| • The length of time DBS certs should be kept varied greatly across many schools. A decision was made that we hold a copy for at least 6 months. | |
| • RD uploaded info onto Hub. | |
| • Asset register info was forwarded by Clerk. | |

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| • Crib sheet and folder for Ofsted created and in the process of being reviewed. MB asked for input from the Resources Committee.<br>• WhatsApp group was created.<br>• Governor Health check on Hub only holds the information for the person currently completing it, so it was decided that another tool should be found to use that can create a map of everyone's responses.<br><br>**<u>Budget Approval</u>**<br>*All Governors were emailed with a revised version of the budget produced yesterday at the FSS final review.*<br><br>*The previous version had been approved by the Resources Committee.*<br><br>RD: The key points are:<br>• DK wants to invest which will need to come from the £194,000 surplus.<br>• The next few years will reflect a deficit but by year 4 & 5 there will still be a surplus.<br>• If we don't spend some of the carry-forward then County may claw it back.<br>• DK had a further meeting with FSS & Office Manager which was a full day and changed some of the figures.<br>• The revised version is more positive as the projected pupil numbers were input using current known numbers which improved the numbers in future years. We will be losing the low headcounts in Year 5 & 6 and anticipate getting 30 in Reception.<br>Q: Is this due to staff leaving and us not recruiting replacements?<br>A: Someone will be replaced on a fixed term contract so that we don't incur the on-costs going forward more than a year.<br>• Staff costs have increased. This is due to the addition of a fixed term contract for a full time TA replacing a part time person who is leaving. Notification that they were going to leave was emailed yesterday so was not known when the Resources Committee reviewed the budget.<br>• Staff costs have also increased because FSS incorporated the 2% support staff increment which hadn't been supplied by Herts until this week.<br>• A teacher will also be taken on as 0.4, on a fixed term contract for a year, again to avoid on costs.<br>Q: What investments are you planning to make?<br>A: We need to make some serious investments in the next 12 months. The school has not been invested in for many years and is reflecting this fact. The plan is to modernise the Year 1 classroom including the toilets and sink area. The layout needs to be changed-whiteboard moved, cupboard doors to be modernised and the woodchip on the walls removing. It will also have new furniture as it is really dated. The 3 quotes for the toilets alone are coming in at approx. £15, 000. | Resources |

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| Q: Was the money a re-shuffle?<br>A: Yes FSS did a capital re-shuffle as we only receive £8000 per annum from Herts for capital expenditure, so it needs to come from the carry forward.<br>Q: What other investments are you planning as the amount doesn't reflect the work mentioned so far?<br>A: The library toilets need replacing and the quotes are coming in at approx. £18000 per toilets block. Also the year 5 & 6 classrooms need modernising too with new furniture.<br>Q: So you are planning on doing all of the toilets?<br>A: Yes- they are in an appalling state and will benefit all the children.<br>Q: What if the boiler fails as this is a huge amount of money to replace?<br>A: It has been serviced and is continuing to operate ok, so we will have to replace it when it fails but not until this point. We do have a carry forward so there is money available in an emergency.<br>Q: What do we do to justify spending more than 2.5%, which will show as red?<br>A: We just need to justify it on the SFVS in the comments. It doesn't mean that you can't invest.<br>Q: Do we receive financial planning advice from anyone at Herts?<br>A: No. We pay for the services of FSS but she inputs and does basic accounting.<br>JS: It is a sensible carry forward and we have a 5 year plan.<br>DK: Pupil Premium will change. The budget looks like it will drop off however this will not be the case. The October Census doesn't reflect the children even at this point in time, so we will receive more next year, and that trend should increase as the majority of the children receiving it are lower down the school.<br>Q: Why do you think is it increasing?<br>A: It is partly Covid related as people's circumstances have been affected and also the demographic of the school has changed.<br>DK: SEN funding will change as we are losing 3 EHCP children in July however we are working on 4 more EHCP's at the moment.<br>Q: Has there been a dip in funds since the change to funding for SEN?<br>A: The old Exceptional Needs Funding has changed to a banding system. The banding change is happening with current children when their review is due so this is having a staggered effect. It is now a lot harder to get funding.<br>AK: It is right for the school that investment is being made from the carry forward.<br>Q: Why has the CPD cost gone up?<br>A: There has been a change in the approach to pupil premium spending. The Education Endowment Agency recommends a 3 tier approach. The majority of the funds should be spent on tier one which is "Quality First Teaching". Tier two should be intervention based and tier three should be enrichment i.e. trips /clubs etc.<br>The school plans to invest in a new phonics programme as Letters and Sounds has been deemed unfit for purpose. This new programme will cost £5000 and involves CPD which would come from pupil premium.<br>Q: Has it been recognised that phonics has gaps? | |

A: Yes, it used to work in the old context of the school but is now not enough. It needs to be more structured and embedded right across the school. There are children further up the school who are not secure in their phonics and this must change.
Q: Looking at I.T- have we got enough in IT resources to cover replacing laptops etc.?
A: I.T. resources covers items such as Purple Mash and part of the investment going forward in year 3 is to replace pupil laptops and staff laptops. Now staff are using them in the classroom, as well as at home, they will need to be replaced regularly.
Q: In terms of staffing are we reducing the number of staff?
A: No we won't be increasing staffing and not actively reducing either.
Q: Is there an assumption that there will not be a Nursery from 22/23?
A: Yes although this has not been officially decided yet. This is based on the low pupil numbers and that it is not showing as being financially viable for the purposes of the budget.

**The budget was approved by all Non- Associate Governors present- in school and remotely.**

**Write off approval**

DK explained that FSS had to make a write off at year end for: £ 126.00 swimming, £275.25- (£94.50 Science day, £153.75 Feeling good week £ 27.00 Greek day) which was not received in 20/21 and is therefore considered bad debt. This was mainly due to Lockdown/Covid cancellations.

**All Non- Associate Governors present on site and remote approved the write off.**

**SFVS**

RD: Explained to new governors what the SFVS is and that it must be approved and submitted by 28th May 2021.

Items of note from SFVS:
Free School Meals has increased significantly from 5% to 15%. This is due to Covid and changes in the demographic of intake- especially of new in-year admission children.
The financial data shows that we are spending a high proportion on staffing.
DK: We have a significant number of staff who are top of their pay scale with no NQTs. There are pro & cons to this scenario. We have a fantastic team of experienced teachers who can deliver high quality first teaching and who have had a lot of CPD invested in them to achieve this. The lowest we have is on M4.
JS: This is the situation we have, which should be considered as a positive for the school, and it isn't something that can change unless a member of staff leaves.

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| Q: Would you recruit an NQT to replace a teacher who leaves?<br>A: Possibly, however NQT's now require two year's training and more investment.<br>Q: Are we seeing the level of teaching reflecting these higher pay scales?<br>A: Yes- the level of quality first teaching is high across the school.<br>Q: Is a teacher on M6 through longevity or achievement?<br>A: Mainly longevity – if they achieve their targets they automatically increment.<br>RD: The % spend on teaching resources is low.<br>DK: Not concerned about this. There was a drop due to Covid.<br>Q: Are we investing more in resources?<br>A: The school is actually well resourced. We now have SEN resources/laptops and general I.T equipment. Phonics is where we may need investment.<br>Q: Where are contactors, who provide teaching such as Game On / Dragon of the North and Basketball, factored in?<br>A: They are in under "other spending".<br>RD: Senior Leaders are 16% of the workforce which is in the higher bracket, which doesn't take into account 2 out of the 5 members of SLT are teaching full time.<br>JS: There is extra spend next year as we have added in 0.4 to a member of SLT.<br>Q: Does this mean that we have too many leaders?<br>A: We only have a Head and a 0.4 Deputy Head who are on the leadership pay scale.<br>RD: All agreed that the leadership on the SFVS should be amended to 2 from 3.4 people as this truly reflects the leadership time and pay scale.<br>Pupil to adult ratio is high but ok. This will be affected by the low pupil numbers in Y5 & 6.<br>The teacher contact ratio is 0.01% off the guidelines.<br>AK: It would be worth noting that if the opportunity arises it would be sensible to reduce the amount of part time staff because they are more costly, with on costs and PPA.<br>RD: Resources action point will be to look at future staffing.<br>DK: Thanks should be go to RD & JS who have worked hard on the SFVS and Budget- especially at short notice.<br><br>**SFVS approved by all Non-Associate Governors attending at school and remotely.**<br><br>**<u>Nursery</u>**<br><br>EH: There are decreasing numbers of children coming to our Nursery. Last year it was 15, now 9 and only 6 in September.<br>It was proposed that a proper due diligence should take place with a working party presenting back to FGB.<br>The Nursery will go ahead in September 2021 regardless of there only being 6 children.<br>Q: At what point do you know if any of the new children are SEN?<br>A: We don't until they arrive. The same goes for Reception. | Resources |

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| EH: There are three options: close Nursery, keep it on regardless, even if it is not financially viable, or go to 30 hour provision.<br>Q: Do we need governors with marketing/EYFS/financial backgrounds to look at this?<br>A: Yes- that would be ideal.<br>MH as EYFS lead, as well as a governor, offered her expertise. RD, JS, MB, GS and BH also volunteered to be on the working party.<br><br>**Safe-guarding**<br><br>RD: Audits have taken place of the Single Central Record. RD explained to new Governors what is on the SCR and its significance.<br>As safe-guarding link governor RD has done a spot check on SCR with the Office Manager. A few minor issues were raised as paper back-up was not always available. All issues have already been addressed. No gaps were found on the actual SCR.<br>DK: The SCR was audited by Herts CC in October 2020 and they only found a few minor items to address-which were all rectified immediately. They gave it a green light. DK will do a spot check next term and RD will audit it again later in September when any new staff will have been added.<br>RD: The new door entry system has been installed and is in operation.<br>A governor health & safety walk is overdue due to Covid restrictions and needs to happen soon. Pete Gobby, the caretaker, does however do safety walks regularly, and reports back to the Head.<br><br>**GDPR**<br><br>A GDPR audit was undertaken by EH (DPO) and the Office Manager. They went through what data is stored, where and for how long.<br>A new GDPR spreadsheet was completed by the Office Manager and is being checked by the DPO & Deputy DPO. When it is agreed it will be shared on Governor Hub.<br>Sense checks were made about data around the school and a new lockable finance cabinet is now in place. The archives are going to be scanned and stored on a cloud going forward, rather than hard copy. The scanning has commenced and starts with leavers from 2020-21.<br>EH: Thanks to Ann & Janette in the office for working so diligently to complete the audit & commence scanning.<br><br>**Church/ Diocese**<br><br>JR: It is exciting to have a bit of normality having classes back in church each week. These Collective Worships are recorded and shown to the rest of the school.<br>JR & DK have met to discuss school vision /SIAMS and how to launch the vision. They will be meeting again in a few weeks to advance this conversation. JR has written a report which he will share.<br>DK: We would like to have an outside reflection area.<br>Q: Does this mean that crosses etc will only be outside not in classrooms? | Health & Safety Link/ Resources |

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| A: No they will stay in classrooms too, and hopefully also be outside. Children are still seeing prayers written and used and we are in the process of writing a school prayer. Miss Holmes has written a great action plan but this has not been put in place due to COVID.<br><br>**AOB**<br><br>RD: Chris Eaton asked for 2 items to be raised:<br>Q: What plans are there about bringing normality back into school?<br>A: Until we receive further guidance nothing will change.<br>Q: Would you consider keeping the staggered start and finish times going forward?<br>A: No. Parents feel left out by not being allowed on site and it puts pressure on staff, who now have numerous emails to respond to instead of a quick chat at the gate. It is having an impact on the community feel of the school too. Aside from the fact that it is logistically challenging having to stagger everything from breaks/ lunches/ use of the hall. Normality is more likely to come back from September and envision staying as we are until July even if restrictions lift in June. The main priority is to give the current year 6 the best experience possible in their last term at the school.<br><br>EH: After the next FGB in July it has been suggested that we could have a brief social gathering with nibbles and drinks, which could be held outside. More information to follow.<br><br>Meeting closed at 9.33pm<br><br>Next FGB Meetings**:**<br>• Summer FGB– Thursday 8 July 2021 at 7.30pm. | |

**Summary of Actions**

| **Action** | **Person** | **Deadline** | **Y/N** |
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| Consider the use of governor recruitment services if no one has applied | FGB | Next FGB | |
| Revised skills matrix to be analysed before next FGB so can use in recruitment discussion | JL | Before next FGB | |
| Training course to be finalised for after half term | Clerk | asap | |
| Feedback on Induction process | PK | Next FGB | |
| Input on Ofsted crib sheet | Resources | asap | |
| Look at future staffing | Resources | Next committee meeting and going forward | |
| Health & Safety walk | H&S Link /Resources | Beginning of next half term | |