

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE ASSETS COMMITTEE
OF ALDERLEY EDGE COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL
ON TUESDAY 8TH NOVEMBER 2022**



GOVERNORS PRESENT: Lindsey Walsh (LW) Headteacher
Tom Williams (TWi) Chair of Committee
Teddy Weyman (TWe)
Marc Asquith (MA) (joined via Microsoft Teams)
Wendy Davies (WD)

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Sarah Lomas Clerk to Governors

PART ONE MINUTES

The meeting commenced at 5:05pm.

ITEM		ACTION
1.	<p>APOLOGIES & ADDITIONAL AOB ITEMS There were no apologies to receive, all members of the committee were present.</p> <p>The following item of AOB was raised for discussion under Item 19:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hiring agreement for the MUGA pitch. 	
2.	<p>CONFLICT OF INTEREST Governors declared the following interests:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> TWi is a Director of NEO Projects Limited. <p>There were no potential conflicts of interest with the business of the meeting declared by governors.</p>	
3.	<p>ELECTION OF CHAIR TWi was nominated as Chair of the Committee. No other nominations were received. Following a vote, TWi was duly elected as Chair of the Assets Committee for a one-year term of office.</p> <p>The clerk highlighted that CF was included in the membership of the Assets Committee on GVO.</p> <p>ACTION: Remove CF from Assets Committee membership on GVO.</p>	Clerk
4.	<p>ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR TWe was nominated as Vice Chair of the Committee. No other nominations were received. Following a vote, TWe was duly elected as Vice Chair of the Assets Committee for a one-year term of office.</p>	
5.	<p>PART ONE MINUTES & MATTERS ARISING The part one minutes from the previous meeting on 21.06.22 were confirmed as a true and accurate record of proceedings. Governors approved the minutes.</p> <p>ACTION: Clerk to upload an electronically signed copy of the minutes to GVO.</p> <p>The action log from the previous meeting was reviewed and the following item was noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Item 3 – The comments on Policy 100 had been responded to and resolved and the action was now complete. <p>All other actions were marked as complete or ongoing.</p>	Clerk
6.	<p>FINANCE MATTERS LW shared the latest update with governors following the finance meeting which took place on 03.11.22. The main points were highlighted as follows:</p>	

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Budget Update

- A carry forward in Year 1 of £11,009 has been identified but this was only possible due to the carry forward of £25,000 from 2021-22 and the £25,000 top up grant that was provided in the summer term.
- Year 2 is showing a deficit of £51,656 and the main reasons for this are:
 - The deficit would have been significantly larger at £106,000 if the school had not been able to transfer funds from the Squirrel Club.
 - £12,000 is attributed to unconfirmed Sports Grant funding from Autumn 2023 and Spring 2024 but committed costs are included.
 - There is £13,000 less carry forward from the previous year.
 - At least £10,000 has been allocated for increased energy costs.
 - A full year of increased staffing costs.
 - The absence of the £25,000 one off top up grant.
 - The usual annual increase applied to costs.

Governors noted that deficits do usually reduce as the school approaches the start of the financial year.

- Year 3 has a predicted deficit of £200,739.

The main concern is the fact that this position has only been achievable through the use of the entire Squirrel Club reserves which leaves no additional funds available in the case of a worsening situation.

Q: At what point does this become a significant problem in terms of the day to day running of the school?

A: It is difficult to say as there are unknown factors. The school will know more when the national budget is announced.

Governors noted that any essential health and safety items and emergency education provisions would need to be implemented.

Governor Comment: It is worth noting that the Squirrel Club fees are flexible and there may be the potential to increase the fees as further income for the school.

The school responded that there is potential to increase the Squirrel Club fees but that fees were recently reviewed, and the outcome of this review was that Squirrel Club fees are largely in line with other local providers.

Q: When were Squirrel Club fees last increased?

A: January 2022.

Q: Has any additional income from the MUGA been factored into the budget and when could we expect this income stream to start?

A: Nothing has been factored into the budget at present and any income would not likely begin until the spring due to the lack of lighting. There has been some interest from Wilmslow Sports to use the pitch on a Saturday but nothing has been agreed. There was also initial interest from a local hockey club but this did not materialise into a booking.

Q: Do we need to advertise the MUGA facility further?

A: This is not worth doing at the present time as we cannot offer lighting but in the spring term this could be done.

Catch-Up Premium

- Catch-up funding finished in 2021 and is now received as Recovery funding and tutoring funding. For tutoring, the school receives £1,080. The government pays 60%

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	<p>of 15 hours tutoring costs but this is based on an hourly rate of £18. The school confirmed that tutoring is undertaken by school staff and payment for this is managed carefully through the additional use of Pupil Premium funds and all monies are accounted for. It was noted that school will spend significantly over the allocated funding by the end of the year.</p> <p>SFVS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school received good assurance from last year's SFVS submission. There is a new template for this year's SFVS but this has not yet been released. It was confirmed that TWi will be reviewing the SFVS prior to submission. ACTION: Target a first review of the SFVS prior to Christmas. It was noted that SFVS good assurance contradicts the audit of limited assurance. <p>Manual of Internal Financial Procedures (MIFP)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The MIFP has been reviewed by LW and SB. A new template was issued in March 2022 and the main changes were highlighted as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The level of expenditure requiring three quotes has been increased from £5,000 to £10,000. The level of expenditure for tenders has reduced from £50,000 to £25,000. These changes have created difficulties whereby it has been challenging to source contractors to quote and tender. Q: Could we include a caveat that states the school will strive to obtain tenders in line with guidelines but that in the current market this may not be possible and will do everything possible to ensure best value is achieved? A: The school can go out to tender, but they may not receive the tenders in which case the school has used best endeavours to achieve best value. Q: Could we include the proposal that if tenders are not received that an EFGB would be held? A: The MIFP has been amended to include the following text: <i>NB 2022 – 2023 - In the current financial climate, where companies are refusing to tender as prices cannot be guaranteed, best endeavors will be made to gain tenders. Where this has not been possible, evidence will be provided to show the lengths the school has gone to but Governors may decide – at an extraordinary meeting - not to delay a project and incur increasing costs as a result of being unable to obtain tenders.</i> Q: How often do we tender for projects of £25,000 or over? A: Infrequently. ACTION: TWe to review and comment on the MIFP and sign ahead of the FGB meeting on 24.11.22. ACTION: Committee governors to complete the finance audit. 	<p style="text-align: center;">TWi</p> <p style="text-align: center;">TWe</p> <p style="text-align: center;">All govs</p>
7.	<p>BUILDINGS</p> <p>TWi confirmed that he had undertaken a site visit on 04.11.22 to monitor the premises and any health and safety matters. A verbal report was provided as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concerns included the oak tree adjacent to the 'Pen' which is showing further signs of disease. The school are currently in the process of obtaining three quotes for removal of the tree. Cost implication will be reviewed against the budget on receipt. There are a number of loose roof tiles which will be assessed further upon inspection. There were no new items to report regarding the building condition. There are a number of items that would benefit from work, but the funds are not available except for emergency items. Playground incidents have reduced. Following funds raised by the PTA, the phase one refurbishment of the playground will begin in mid-late November. 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no scope for any project work before April 2023. • There is £2,500 available for unplanned maintenance or materials. 	
8.	<p>INSURANCE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school is currently awaiting the price for school trip insurance. Last year this was £445. • Public liability insurance costs are £1,445. The school confirmed that it has not claimed on this policy. • Buildings insurance costs are £3,865 and again, the school have not claimed on this. • Staff absence insurance was discussed where the school confirmed that following a departure from ChESS last year, that the decision has been made to return to using the ChESS insurance as the policy of the previous provider became onerous. The costs for this are £4,563 which is a £1,500 increase but this has been accounted for within the budget. There have been no claims to date. It was noted that claims do not commence until the 15th day of absence. 	
9.	<p>DEBT WRITE OFF The school confirmed that there were no school debts to be written off.</p> <p>The outstanding fees of £1,748 from Squirrel Club were discussed. The school confirmed that the outstanding fees were difficult to claim back as they were linked to Pupil Premium children. An attendance ban has been issued to one family in order to stop debts escalating.</p> <p>Q: Are fees not requested in advance of attendance, how often are payments reviewed and what would trigger a ban? A: The payment of fees is due upon invoice as set out in the terms and conditions. The accumulation of fees occurred over the summer holidays and so was difficult to monitor.</p> <p>Governor Comment: From a parents' perspective, the invoicing for Squirrel Club is not completely transparent. Parents are not aware if they are in credit or debit until they are chased by school.</p> <p>The school confirmed that the issue with being able to monitor the accounts is due to not having an online payment system for parents. The school use the free Cheshire East system which is limited in its function. It was countered that more visibility for parents in terms of knowing where they are up to with payments may ensure that some families do not get into this situation. Any outstanding fees should not be more than a month out of date before contact is made to chase payment.</p> <p>Q: If the school do not want to introduce an online system due to expenditure, are there any other ways that the system could be improved? A: The system is reliant on parents and more frequent monitoring will increase the workload of staff. If the school does have to write off the debt, it may an online payment system worthwhile.</p> <p>The school confirmed that the debt is not a significant concern as if it had to be written off, Pupil Premium funds could be used to cover this. It was confirmed that this is an unusual incident and in the majority of cases the school are successful at recovering debts.</p> <p>ACTION: Monitor the Squirrel Club finances and update at the next Assets Committee meeting.</p> <p>Q: What is the cost of subscribing to an online payment system? A: This has been considered previously and would cost in the regions of £2,000 but given that the outstanding monies owed by parents is relatively low and limited to specific</p>	LW

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	<p>individuals rather than a growing trend, it was previously decided that this was not worth investing in at this stage but will be reviewed again if debt patterns increase.</p>	
<p>10.</p>	<p>SQUIRREL CLUB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a forecast carry forward of £46,000 at the end of 2022-23 which includes £24,000 from previous years and a conservative estimate of £22,000 for this financial year. • There is a conservative prediction of £10,000 profit for the next two financial years which totals £66,000. Cheshire East have transferred these funds into years 2 and 3 to offset the school's forecast deficit. • The conservative profit prediction is based on full costs of running the provision being attributed to the club and possible reduced attendance as family financial positions change. <p>Q: What are the attendance levels at Squirrel Club? A: These have increased back up to pre-pandemic levels, there are waiting lists on some days due to staffing ratios. Space is also a limiting factor which restricts the growth of the facility.</p> <p>The Squirrel Club terms and conditions and Charging policy were discussed and it was confirmed that these have already been updated once this year and governors were asked if it was felt necessary to review them again. It was commented that if the school increase the prices this will have a negative impact on families in the cost of living crisis and may affect attendance.</p> <p>The school confirmed that the fees are broadly in line with other schools and that it is a fine line between judging Squirrel Club as a business or a service. An additional review of prices this month has shown that no local schools have applied significant increases to their wraparound care fees.</p> <p>The school Bursar has compiled figures relating to energy costs based on the floorspace and the usage of both pre-school and the Squirrel Club. These figures show a predicted 6.3% increase in energy costs for the Squirrel Club.</p> <p>The energy costs are an estimate as these facilities do not have their own meters and therefore a calculation of the building footprint against a proportion of the overall gas bill has been undertaken as a suggestion to reflect the increased energy costs within the rent charged.</p> <p>Governor Comment: While the school will likely have a significant increase in energy costs it is important to ensure that any price increases are timed correctly. It would be inappropriate to increase prices as inflation drops where energy increases have already been included. It may be prudent to act earlier so as not to contradict inflation changes.</p> <p>The school confirmed that additional monies are not required this year and therefore, fees can be reviewed in the spring term.</p> <p>ACTION: Review Squirrel Club charging policy at the spring term 2023 Assets Committee meeting.</p>	
<p>11.</p>	<p>INVENTORY</p> <p>The school confirmed that there were no inventory discrepancies to report. The following items were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are two items that are to be removed from the inventory relating to specialist equipment for a pupil who has now left the school to attend specialist provision. • A number of Netbooks were removed from the inventory schedule in the summer term 2022. 	

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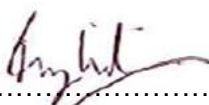
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A dishwasher has also been removed from the schedule. 																			
12.	<p>GOVERNOR TRAINING WD commented that governors have been alerted to a number of training courses via email following the Teaching and Learning Committee meeting on 12.10.22.</p> <p>The school confirmed that there are still a number of declaration and confirmation forms outstanding that are being followed up.</p> <p>Governors are continuing to attend a range of training.</p>																			
13.	<p>POLICIES The following policies had been circulated for review via GVO prior to the meeting:</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">7. Charging and Remissions</td> <td style="width: 50%;">81 Baby sitting</td> </tr> <tr> <td>9. Health and Safety</td> <td>91 Social Media</td> </tr> <tr> <td>15 Recruitment and Selection</td> <td>92 Domestic Abuse</td> </tr> <tr> <td>12 Resources</td> <td>100 Pension</td> </tr> <tr> <td>14 Staff code of conduct</td> <td>106 Capabilities</td> </tr> <tr> <td>40 Staff Development</td> <td>109 Lockdown</td> </tr> <tr> <td>66 Teacher appraisal</td> <td>111 Staff wellbeing</td> </tr> <tr> <td>69 Leadership Development</td> <td>116 Induction</td> </tr> <tr> <td>77 Acceptable use of IT</td> <td>117 Flexible working</td> </tr> </table> <p>Governors approved the above policies.</p>	7. Charging and Remissions	81 Baby sitting	9. Health and Safety	91 Social Media	15 Recruitment and Selection	92 Domestic Abuse	12 Resources	100 Pension	14 Staff code of conduct	106 Capabilities	40 Staff Development	109 Lockdown	66 Teacher appraisal	111 Staff wellbeing	69 Leadership Development	116 Induction	77 Acceptable use of IT	117 Flexible working	
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14.	<p>STAFFING A staff survey was last undertaken in January 2022. The school have reviewed the action plan for staff wellbeing and workload. It was commented that the teachers and staff are appreciative of all that the governing board are doing to assist in staff wellbeing.</p> <p>Q: When will we need to discuss the potential MAD days initiative? A: In the summer term 2023 when the budget for the next academic is drawn up. ACTION: Add consideration and discussion of MAD days initiative to the spring term FGB agenda.</p> <p>Staff training relevant to this committee is ongoing and all staff have completed their cyber security, Ofsted and data protection training. The school Bursar is attending ongoing finance training. First aid training is also taking place along with LW attending Safer Recruitment training.</p>	Clerk																		
15.	<p>SCHOOL RESIDENTIAL VISITS The school are changing the location of the Year 2 trip from Pettypool to Delamere for pupil safety.</p> <p>Q: What are the benefits of changing location? A: There is no outdoor access for pupils because the accommodation has secure entry points. Also, the teacher that is attending the trip would have led the activities at Pettypool which is not a realistic expectation but at Delamere, all activities are included.</p> <p>There are also additional trips to Whitehall and Pensarn for Year4 and Year 6 respectively. The school had scheduled site visits to inspect the provision.</p> <p>ACTION: Add approval of residential trips to FGB agenda on 24.11.22.</p>	Clerk																		
16.	<p>DIRECTOR'S REPORT The clerk highlighted relevant items from the Director's Report and the following items</p>																			

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	<p>were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uniform guidance – The school sent consultation letters to parents regarding uniform. The annual survey does not garner significant responses from parents with 20-30 returns. The feedback is that parents are happy with the uniform and do not want to change any items. However, there are some difficulties with the current supplier Marks and Spencer, with poor communication and stock delays. There have also been some complaints about the quality of the uniform. ACTION: Investigate uniform supplier options. Staff pay update – The model Pay Policy has now been released and unions are considering industrial action. Safer Recruitment – CF completed this training in October 2022. GDPR staff training – All staff have completed data protection training. 	LW
17.	<p>TO NOTE ARRANGEMENTS FOR PRODUCTION OF MEETING PRECIS ACTION: TWi to complete the meeting precis.</p>	TWi
18.	<p>MEETINGS The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Wednesday 15th February 2023 at 5:00pm.</p>	
19.	<p>ANY OTHER BUSINESS An item relating to the hiring agreement for the MUGA pitch was raised for discussion.</p> <p>The agreement has been uploaded to GVO for comments from the Board. Governors communicated their thanks to MA for drafting the agreement.</p> <p>Governors agreed the MUGA Hiring Agreement.</p> <p>The school confirmed that when the Letting Agreement Policy is next reviewed, all other agreements will be aligned with the content of the MUGA agreement.</p> <p>MA offered to review the document further upon its renewal date.</p>	
20.	<p>IMPACT STATEMENT Governors helped to move the school forward in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governors discussed the school budget and offered challenge in terms of how the deficit could be reduced through increased advertising of lettings, increased fees for wraparound care and recouping energy costs. Monitoring and completion arrangements for the SFVS were agreed with a first review planned for December 2022. Potential caveats to the changes in the MIFP were discussed to allow for best endeavours in seeking tenders. The issue of debt write off relating to Squirrel club fees was discussed with consideration given to improving invoicing and monitoring and the potential to investigate costs for an online system suggested. The Squirrel Club charging and lettings policy was considered with proposals to recoup energy costs. The was set for review in the spring term. Governors considered staff wellbeing and agreed to review the potential implementation of the MAD days for next year once the budget has been drafted. The issues with the uniform supplier were discussed and it was agreed to investigate alternatives. Governors agreed the MUGA Hiring Agreement. 	

The meeting moved to part two.


Chair
15.02.23.....Date