

GOVERNING BODY OF HARBINGER PRIMARY SCHOOL

MINUTES OF FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING

Date of Meeting	24 th September 2020
Venue	Virtually Via Zoom
Chair	Martin Young
Clerk & Minutes	Suzette Nicol
Time	5:00 p.m.

MEMBERSHIP:

Governor	Category
Martin Young (Chair)*	Co-opted
Rebecca Abrahams (Executive Head)*	Staff (Head)
Nimesha Nagahawatte (Head Of School)*	Staff (Head)
Kiran Rahman*	Co-opted
Ranjani Shrutisagar	Co-opted

Also In Attendance	Role/Title
Mai-Anh Dien	School Business Manager (SBM)

*Denotes attendance

PART 1 – OPEN SECTION

	ITEM
1.	Welcome, Apologies For Absence and Declaration of Pecuniary Interests
	<p>The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting.</p> <p>There were no apologies for absence.</p> <p>There were no pecuniary interests declared on items on the agenda.</p>
2.	Election of Committee Chair
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To elect a Committee Chair for the 2020/21 academic year

	<p>Nominations were invited for the position of Committee Chair. Kiran Rahman nominated herself for the position. There being no other nomination, Kiran Rahman was elected as Committee Chair for the 2020/21 academic year.</p> <p>RESOLVED: To appoint Kiran Rahman as Committee Chair for the 2020/21 academic year.</p> <p><i>Kiran Rahman took the chair from this point on.</i></p>
3.	<p>Committee Terms of Reference</p>
	<p>Committee members reviewed the committee's Terms of Reference. Rebecca Abrahams made certain amendments to the terms of reference to ensure it covered the full remit of the committee. It was agreed that Martin Young would re-draft the terms of reference incorporating contributions from Rebecca Abrahams and that the document would be presented at the next full governing body meeting for approval.</p> <p>Action: Martin Young & Rebecca Abrahams</p>
4.	<p>Minutes Of The Committee Meeting Held On 30th April 2020 And Matters Arising</p>
	<p>The minutes of the committee meeting of 30th April 2020 which had been circulated prior to the meeting were reviewed and agreed.</p> <p>RESOLVED: To approve the minutes of 30th April 2020.</p> <p>Matters Arising:</p> <p>A Governor raised the fact that the school appeared to be recruiting more admin staff than teachers. She wanted to know whether the school was replacing the teachers who had left or prioritising admin staff. The School Business Manager said that there were going to be some changes to admin staffing. There were no plans to replace the Year 6 teacher who had left the school last year. Her post was being covered by two other members of staff in a combined role.</p> <p>With regard to signing the minutes, it was agreed that the Chair would send her electronic signature to the Clerk for her to insert it in the minutes and then send the signed copy to the School Business Manager for her records.</p> <p>Action: Chair & Clerk</p> <p><i>Martin Young took the chair from this point on.</i></p>
5.	<p>Finance</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Budget Monitoring Report</u> <p>The School Business Manager referred committee members to the notes accompanying the budget monitoring report which had been circulated prior to the meeting. The budget report was a summary of all the changes to the different budget headings, highlighting where the budget had been</p>

underspent or overspent and providing the justification for this. The budget showed a revenue surplus of £45,858 and a capital balance of £22,988. The overall balance was £68,847.

The School Business Manager mentioned that the school was cutting down on admin staff this year and would not be replacing some of the admin staff it had planned to replace. She mentioned that the admin office had been restructured temporarily until the end of January 2021 and that this would lead to a saving in the budget.

Martin Young said that this was the last year in which the school had an opportunity to reduce the budget deficit. He mentioned that they needed to look at all expenditure carefully.

It was noted that the school had managed to make some savings due to the covid-19 pandemic and staffing changes. A Governor asked what was happening to the portacabin. The School Business Manager said that the portacabin was supposed to have been removed last academic year. However, when it was due to be removed, it was noted that a lot of preliminary work needed to be done before it could be removed as they would need to get rid of the steps, trim the surrounding trees and cut off the water supply. An Authority Change Request (ACR) was created for G4S to give the school a quote. When G4S came back to the school, their quote was over £7k. As a result, the school thought it was not a priority for now.

Martin said that he was of the view that losing the portacabin would provide some space and a better place could be found for the PTA to meet either in the school or in the School House. Kiran said that she was under the impression that the School House was unsafe. It was agreed that Kiran would liaise with Nimesha and Rebecca about the PTA and also agree a place for them to meet.

Action: Kiran Rahman, Nimesha Nagahawatte and Rebecca Abrahams

Mai-Anh informed the committee that there had been a meeting with G4S the earlier in the day in which the School House had been discussed. A decision had been taken for a survey to be carried out on the house to ascertain its safety.

Kiran informed the committee that some parents had discussed the School House and some of them were prepared to come in and clean the house. It was agreed that this would also be discussed during her meeting with Nimesha and Rebecca.

A Governor asked whether there would be any residential trips this year. The School Business Manager said that one had been planned for June to give the school time to plan and manage it. There would be none in this financial year.

Governors thanked the School Business Manager for the budget monitoring update.

Agree Virements (If any)

There were none.

- Asset Management Plan

Governors were informed that Parago had conducted an asset audit in May and that the website was up to date. Governors were also informed that Clever ICT had taken over the ICT contract and had started working with the school a few weeks ago. It was noted that Clever ICT who would be managing the school's assets, would be carrying out a complete overhaul of assets in October and that this would provide a fair idea of what the school had.

A Governor wanted to know whether the audit would cost the school anything. Governors were informed that the school had been with ICT Educational Services for 2 years. Rebecca mentioned that on taking over at Harbinger, a review was carried out of the service provided by ICT Educational Services. Clever ICT had been working with St Luke's for some time and it had been a good partnership. Clever ICT were invited to visit Harbinger and they offered the school a competitive price. A decision was then taken to move over to Clever ICT. Mai-Anh confirmed that Clever ICT were very professional, and the service had been good so far.

Q&A: Was the procurement process in accordance with our rules?

We had two quotes. Because it was under £10k, we only needed 2 quotes. Clever ICT appeared to provide more support than the other company and that was why we went with them.

Rebecca explained that when they came into the school Nimesha was extremely concerned about lack of a platform to support remote learning. It was noted that the ICT journey that Clever ICT had supported St Luke's on involved both business continuity and the provision of remote learning. Everything was cloud based which presented a lot of opportunities to communicate with parents about the learning that their children were supposed to do during lockdown. It was also very helpful in terms of business continuity should anything happen to the building. With this in mind, Nimesha had contacted Clever ICT who said that it would not cost more than the current provider. As both contracts were under £10k, Nimesha and Mai-Anh explained to Clever ICT that they would not be able to proceed with the contract until they had secured Governors' approval at this meeting. Clever ICT confirmed that they were happy to work with the school pending approval by the Governors. Governors were informed that this was an annual contract.

Rebecca informed the committee that the driver for them was that looking at the outcome of school engagement with its current provider, the ICT appeared to be in disarray. In addition, the degree of control over the equipment needed to be looked at and the computer room needed an overhaul.

Following the above discussion, committee members were satisfied that the school had chosen the best provider and **RESOLVED** to approve the contract

	<p>with Clever ICT.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Plans for deficit reduction</u> <p>Rebecca Abrahams informed the committee that a deficit reduction plan could not be presented at this stage as she had only been in the school for two weeks. The school had adopted a policy of natural wastage and would not be replacing staff who had left the school. At the beginning of the year the school had put in place cover for the 2 staff members on maternity leave in the school office. After a couple of days one of them informed Mai-Anh that she would no longer be returning to the school due to fact that her personal circumstances had changed in relation to Covid. A decision was taken not to replace her immediately and to organise responsibilities in the office differently which produced a saving.</p> <p>Rebecca acknowledged that natural wastage was only a short-term response and the school needed to keep spending within its means. She highlighted the need to review the staffing structure to decide where and how money was to be invested and identify how they wanted the service they were going to provide to look. There appeared to be a lot of part-time staff which gave cause for concern about the robustness of the service. It was also about the continuity of care and education for the children which was almost impossible with the numbers of part time staff. She said that one of her tasks was to look at what they had, to see if teams could be organised differently and to determine whether the service was sustainable in the longer term. Some work would need to be done on this in a few months' time and a report would be presented to Governors. There was a need to provide stability into the next financial year.</p> <p>Governors agreed that that was the best way forward. Rebecca added that the staff restructure would need to be handled sensitively as the senior leadership team would need to build trust to enable the team to work effectively.</p>
6.	<p>School Policies And Procedures</p>
	<p>The following policies were presented for review and approval:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health & Safety Policy – Rebecca said that there had not been much time to do any work on this between 1st September and now. She added that there was work to be done on the Health and Safety Policy in terms of the detail, breath and scope and that it needed to be aligned with the Local Authority's model policy. It was agreed that the school would work with the current policy until the alignment was done. Committee members agreed to approve the policy and it would then be amended before the next governing body meeting. • Whistleblowing Policy - Agreed • Charging & Remissions Policy - Agreed • Best Value Statement - Agreed • Scheme of Delegation - Agreed • Managing Allegations Against Staff - Agreed

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pay Policy – Governors noted that the policy was awaiting approval from the unions. Agreed as is. • Online Safety Policy – Policy updated with changes to KCSiE 2020 - Agreed <p>RESOLVED: To approve the above policies and to recommend them to the governing body for ratification.</p>
7.	<p>School Premises Update</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Building Update</u> Committee members were told that a meeting had been held with G4S earlier in the day. The contract was review for Rebecca’s and Nimesha’s benefit. Mai-Anh went through the jobs that needed to be done. There was work to be done during the October half term and quotes were still being secured for the work. <p><i>Martin Young handed the chair to Kiran and left the meeting at this point. He said that he had already received a briefing on the rest of the agenda items from Rebecca.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Health and Safety Update</u> <u>EYU</u> Rebecca said that she had had a walk round the EYU and some of the equipment provided cause for concern. The playground inspection had identified aspects that could benefit from work to ensure longevity. None of the equipment were deemed unsafe. However the garden furniture needed attention. The wood was rotten and this created some sharp corners. <p>Mai-Anh reported that she was still working on the quotes. After the quotes had been received, a comparison would be done to choose the best quote. There was an urgent need to carry out the work as the staff had been told not to have the children in those areas to prevent them from getting hurt.</p> <p>Some questions were put to Rebecca.</p> <p>Q&A: How will the work affect other aspects in the school? The work will be done over the weekend or during the October half term as we cannot have the children on site when the work is done. The essence is the approval so we can agree a contract with the preferred provider quickly.</p> <p>Q&A: Will the cost be under £10k? I suspect the emergency work will fall around the £5k mark which we have the money in the budget for. The money will come from the capital budget. Health and safety involving the youngest children in the school would always be a leading priority. We had a meeting with G4S this morning and it appears that most of the significant work for this school is being undertaken under that contract. We will need to change one of the doors to the fire door.</p> <p>It was agreed that the quotes would be shared electronically with Martin and</p>

	<p>Kiran within the next week as time was of the essence. On receipt of the quotes, Mai-Anh would offer a view on who would best meet the school's needs and then send the quotes to Martin and Kiran for approval. Action: Mai-Anh Dien, Martin Young and Kiran Rahman</p> <p>Kiran undertook to contact Rebecca to arrange a health and safety walk. Action: Kiran Rahman & Rebecca Abrahams</p>
8.	Agenda Items For The Next Meeting
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EYU maintenance and repairs • Budget Monitoring Report • Policies For Approval • Staffing Update
9.	Any Urgent Business
	There was no urgent business.
10.	Confidential Items (If any)
	None
11.	Date And Time Of Next Meeting
	Thursday 14 th January 2021 at 5:00 p.m.

The Chair closed the meeting at 18:21 p.m.

Chair's signature: _____ **Date:** _____