



## MEETING OF THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE ON MARCH 19<sup>TH</sup> 2026 AT 8.30AM IN THE SCHOOL

*“We are a community with a lifelong passion for learning.”*

**Present:** Ian Stewart (IS), Sandie Lovell (SL) School Business Manager. Helen Fernyhough (HF) Deputy Head, representing Hilary Priest (HP) the Head as she is on sick leave, Jenny Barker (JB).

**In attendance:** Dawn Pettipiece (Clerk).

### Minutes

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| <b>1</b> | <b>Welcome &amp; apologies for absence</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Please inform the clerk of any apologies before the meeting</li> </ul> Hilary Priest (HP) gave her apologies. Rob Hill (RB) Chair, did not attend the meeting.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>2</b> | <b>Attendance &amp; declaration of interest</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Please sign the attendance form</li> </ul> The attendees signed the form. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Governors are reminded that they must declare any conflict of interest which becomes apparent during the meeting.</li> </ul> There were no declarations of conflict of interest.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>3</b> | <b>Minutes of the last meeting 12<sup>th</sup> February</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Part 1 and Part 2 (confidential) minutes for approval. Please read the minutes (in meeting folder).</li> </ul> The minutes were approved and IS signed them as acting chair.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>4</b> | <b>Matters arising from the last meeting</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update on last facilities meeting</li> </ul> <b>ACTION:</b> To put this on the agenda for the next meeting. <b>DONE.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussion about re-joining the Mutual Fund</li> </ul> SL had sent a comparisons sheet to the governors about the pros and cons of re-joining the Mutual Fund. It would cost about £10000 to re-join the fund now which is about £3000 more compared to the fees when the school was in the fund. There is enough money in the budget to re-join.<br>When we were in the Mutual Fund we didn't always get back what we had paid into it.<br><b>HF: Is that money to pay supply teachers?</b><br><b>SL: Yes. We got 50% of their wages after 5 working days and if there was any money left at the end of the year we got the other 50%. When we came out of the fund the governors agreed for money to be set aside to pay for supply staff and we have done that in previous years, but last year the budget could not afford it. If we want to re-join the Mutual Fund, it would need to be done by 31<sup>st</sup> March as the fees go up in April.</b><br><b>IS: We should put money aside for this if we do not re-join the fund.</b><br><b>HF: Do we pay staff to cover or give them time off in lieu?</b><br><b>SL: We have had to pay overtime to the TA's (teaching assistants) to cover staff sickness in respect of current staff absences.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>JB entered the meeting at 8.50a.m.</li> </ul> <b>SL: We should consider whether money should be put aside in the budget to cover staff absences if we do not re-join the fund. IS: We need to discuss major decisions like this with HP.</b><br><b>JB: Could we join together with other schools in the PP (primary partnership) to have a central fund for staff cover?</b><br><b>SL: As far as I know all the other PP schools are in the fund and they are different sizes to us so would have different requirements.</b><br><b>ACTION:</b> The decision about whether to re-join the fund and whether to put money aside if the school does not re-join to go to the next FGB agenda. <b>DONE.</b><br><b>ACTION:</b> SL/HF to contact HP about re-joining the Mutual Fund or whether money should be put aside to cover sickness in the budget. <b>DONE. The Head has decided not to re-join the Mutual Fund.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify levels of surplus/deficit balances at financial year end and plans to use/recover</li> </ul> <b>IS: We only have a small surplus.</b> |

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|  | <p>SL: Yes, and in the following years we have a deficit. This is the third year that Devon County Council (DCC) have allowed us to do that.</p> <p>IS: At this time of year the budget does not look good, but it seems to improve going forward.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor progress towards actions identified in external financial reports (e.g. audit)</li> </ul> <p>SL: Audits have been suspended by DCC due to the ongoing problems with BROMCOM. The system has changed and we have an audit once a year now in the summer term. This item needs to go on the autumn term Resources agenda as we can use the figures from the summer term audit.</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> Clerk to update the yearly Business Cycle to put this item in the autumn term Resources meeting. <b>DONE.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has Benchmarking been done?</li> </ul> <p>IS: If RH is unable to do it I can as I have done it before.</p> <p>SL: It needs to be done by next Thursday. The format has changed and it is now easier to do.</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> JB will send a message to RH asking him if he is able to do Benchmarking by next Thursday. IS will do it if he is unable to. <b>DONE.</b></p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> SL will send the link to Benchmarking to IS. <b>DONE. NB: Benchmarking was completed by RH and sent to the FGB via email on 25.3.26.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update on the plans for the school to run the afterschool club – four members of the FGB approved this matter.</li> </ul> <p>IS: There is a plan.</p> <p>SL: I looked at this and spoke to the person presently running it to find out the costs and profit. HP and myself also talked to staff in the school and they were prepared to continue working in the club if they were given a pay rise. We should make a profit, but if staff are off sick we would have to pay for cover. There are staff who are available for that. The profit should cover on costs such as sickness pay etc.</p> <p>Initially we want to keep it to the present hours and days to ensure it is running smoothly and can then think about extending the hours and having the club on a Friday too. There will be four staff working the first hour, which is busiest and then reduces to three staff members for the final hour when it becomes quieter. We would need to ask parents if they would be interested in extending hours and days to see if it is viable. It will be set up in Parent Pay and one of our staff has agreed to do the admin. We are not sure how much admin time is needed. Initially it will be more to set everything up.</p> <p>As the club has not increased its hourly rates for a few years we are putting the price up by 25p per hour to cover costs. I have discussed the rates other schools in the PP charge for their clubs and our costs are low.</p> <p><b>JB: Some parents are saying they cannot pay for the whole term and can only afford to pay for half a term and are worried their child will lose their place.</b></p> <p><b>SL: DCC said the club needed to start as we mean to go on and to set it up that parents pay termly.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The committee discussed this and various other matters that had arisen on the parents WhatsApp group.</li> </ul> <p><b>JB: Some parents are concerned that they have to pick their children up by 5pm.</b></p> <p><b>SL: That is the time that the present club currently finishes. We haven't had time yet to explain to parents how the club will run. The reason it is set at 5pm currently is due to parents being late picking up their children up so we have to pay staff until 5.15 to cover this.</b></p> <p><b>SL: We need to have some information to send out to parents about how the club will operate and have some "rules". I have got information from other schools about how they run their clubs with "the rules" etc. and DCC are supposed to be sending some.</b></p> <p>JB: It is positive that the club will now be OFSTED (Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills) as it means parents can access funding schemes from the government.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The committee discussed ways that parents could access funding to help with the afterschool club fees.</li> </ul> <p><b>SL: Parents have to go to a website and claim back money and that site pays the Grove School. Parents need to tell us their reference number and the date they paid so we can find their payment to claim the money. The school does not have its own bank account, so the payment goes to DCC.</b></p> <p><b>JB: This will be quite a change for the parents and we need to communicate to them the benefits of the school taking over the club.</b></p> <p><b>SL Yes it is. We only had a short time to take over the club as the person running it now will finish on the 31<sup>st</sup> March. We have received a few emails from parents who have raised concerns, we have contacted them to explain and reassure them</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The committee discussed the afterschool club in detail looking at various different issues.</li> </ul> |
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|   | <p><b>ACTION:</b> SL to organise a communication to parents of children in the afterschool club explaining how to book and pay for sessions and to send out a step by step guide to accessing free childcare funding. <b>DONE.</b></p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> SL to see if a link could be put on The Grove School website for parents to access free afterschool club funding. <b>DONE.</b></p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> SL and HF will speak to staff to find out what questions parents have been asking about the afterschool club. <b>DONE.</b></p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> HF will put a post in the schools group WhatsApp chat asking if any parents had any questions about what happens when the school take over the club. <b>DONE.</b></p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> SL and JB will meet up to put together a list of frequently asked questions and answers about the afterschool club and the positive aspects of the school running the club. They will also inform parents that the school will be sending out a consultation about whether it is viable to extend the hours/and or days the afterschool club runs. These matters will go out in a newsletter. <b>DONE.</b></p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> JB will put together a consultation that will go in the last newsletter before the summer half term, asking parents whether there is a need to extend the afterschool club hours and/or open on Fridays too. The parents will also be asked if they have any suggestions of how to improve the club. <b>Moved to 18 June agenda as next one too soon.</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 5 | <p><b>Budget</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To monitor FRS (in meeting folder)</li> </ul> <p><b>IS:</b> I noticed the <b>High Needs Block</b> budget has increased since last year.</p> <p><b>SL:</b> We currently have more <b>EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plan)</b> children than we did last year. To help me work out the anticipated income I have a spreadsheet showing how many children are in school, when they will be leaving and the funding for each child. We expect the income the school receives for high needs children to reduce.</p> <p><b>JB:</b> Is that <b>EHCP</b> funding?</p> <p><b>SL:</b> Yes. Funding for <b>SEND (Special Education Needs and Disabilities)</b> is already in the budget and when children are awarded an <b>EHCP</b> we get extra funding. The amount depends on the level of the child's needs.</p> <p><b>JB:</b> What about the <b>Oak Room</b>?</p> <p><b>SL:</b> There is no specific funding in the budget for that but we know two member of staff are proposing to leave. Their current salaries etc. have been included in the budget to possibly accommodate this, although one member of staff will need to be replaced as they work in early years.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The committee discussed the staffing levels and staffing needs of the school and how this affected the budget.</li> </ul> <p><b>IS:</b> 90% of the budget is spent on staff and it is increasing going forward and that is not sustainable. A discussion about staffing levels needs to go on the next <b>FGB</b> agenda.</p> <p><b>HF:</b> We are lucky to have a <b>TA</b> per classroom. We have some children who dysregulate and become disruptive and they need to come out of the classroom.</p> <p><b>JB:</b> Would the <b>Oak Room</b> work for those children?</p> <p><b>SL:</b> I am sure <b>HP</b> has ideas about how to fund <b>SEND</b> and the <b>Oak Room</b> and as the budget doesn't need to be approved until the end of June we have time to make the necessary adjustments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The committee discussed this matter further.</li> </ul> <p><b>ACTION:</b> Item to go on next <b>FGB</b> agenda to discuss longer term strategies around the budget for staff which can be shared with <b>HP</b> when she returns from sick leave. <b>DONE.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2025-26 budget – progress</li> </ul> <p>The committee looked at the budget and discussed various areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To decide bought-in services</li> </ul> <p><b>JB:</b> You have a good agreement with your gas and electricity supplier.</p> <p><b>SL:</b> Yes. The only thing that is not in the budget is paying insurance for staff absences. I have included all the usual service costs that we have been charged in previous years.</p> <p><b>JB:</b> In the budget the <b>SCOMIS/BROMCOM</b> costs are less than they were previously.</p> <p><b>SL:</b> Yes. We were told that would happen in the long term.</p> <p><b>Shall we continue working with other school head teachers in the PP, so that they can assess each other's performance? This service is provided free.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The governors approved the head teacher's performance being managed by a <b>PP</b> head.</li> </ul> <p><b>SL:</b> <b>DCC's</b> rules in the past were that the school budget had to be in "the black" for three years in a row, but now it just has to be next years.</p> |

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|   | <p>I have put in an estimate of how much money we will get from the pre-school and that will increase.</p> <p><b>JB: So, the main thing is that the school is in “the black”?</b></p> <p><b>SL: Yes. The budget is better than last year. We have until the end of June to finalise the budget. When HP comes back to work she may want to make some adjustments, but hopefully these figures are not much different to the final ones.</b></p> <p><b>IS: So they will be ready for the next Finance meeting?</b></p> <p><b>SL: Yes.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The governors approved the current services being purchased again for the new financial year.</li> </ul> <p><b>ACTION:</b> The final budget to go onto the next Resources agenda and then the following FGB agenda for approval. <b>DONE.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plans for 2024-25 surplus/deficit</li> </ul> <p>This has been discussed further up in this item.</p> |
| 6 | <p><b>Business brought forward by the Chair</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There was none.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 7 | <p><b>Date &amp; time of next meeting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resources meeting 7<sup>th</sup> May 2026</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

The meeting finished at 10.10am.

|   | Action                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | By whom | By when                                 |
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| 4 | Update on last facilities meeting to go on next agenda. <b>DONE.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Clerk   | Next meeting                            |
| 4 | The decision about whether to re-join the fund and whether to put money aside if the school does not re-join to go to the next FGB agenda. <b>DONE.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Clerk   | Next FGB meeting                        |
| 4 | HP to be contacted about re-joining the Mutual Fund or whether money should be put aside to cover sickness in the budget. <b>DONE.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | SL/HF   | Next FGB meeting                        |
| 4 | The yearly Business Cycle to be updated to put this item in the autumn term Resources meeting - Monitor progress towards actions identified in external financial reports (e.g. audit). <b>DONE.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                        | Clerk   | Next meeting                            |
| 4 | RH to be sent a message asking him if he is able to do Benchmarking by next Thursday. IS will do it if he is unable to. <b>DONE.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | JB/IS   | End of week                             |
| 4 | A link to Benchmarking to be sent to IS. <b>DONE</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | SL      | End of week                             |
| 4 | A communication to be sent to parents of children in the afterschool club explaining how to book and pay for sessions and to send out a step by step guide to accessing free childcare funding. <b>DONE.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                | SL      | End of week                             |
| 4 | Find out if a link can be put on The Grove School website for parents to access free afterschool club funding. <b>DONE.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | SL      | End of this half term                   |
| 4 | Discussion with school staff to find out what questions parents have been asking about the afterschool club. <b>DONE.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | SL/HF   | End of week                             |
| 4 | A post to go in the schools group WhatsApp chat asking if any parents had any questions about what happens when the school take over the club. <b>DONE.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | HF      | End of week                             |
| 4 | Meeting to put together a list of frequently asked questions and answers about the afterschool club and the positive aspects of the school running the club. They will also inform parents that the school will be sending out a consultation about whether it is viable to extend the hours/and or days the afterschool club runs. These matters will go out in a newsletter. <b>DONE.</b> | SL/JB   | End of this half term                   |
| 4 | A consultation will be put together to go in the last newsletter before the summer half term, asking parents whether there is a need to extend the afterschool club hours and/or open on Fridays too. The parents will also be asked if they have any suggestions of how to improve the club. <b>Moved to 18<sup>th</sup> June agenda as next one too soon.</b>                             | JB      | Last newsletter before summer half term |
| 5 | Item to go on next FGB agenda to discuss longer term strategies around the budget for staff which can be shared with HP when she returns from sick leave. <b>DONE.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Clerk   | Next meeting                            |
| 5 | The final budget to go onto the next Resources agenda and then the following FGB agenda for approval. <b>DONE.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Clerk   | Next Resources                          |

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