**Finance Officer Report for Leadership & Resources Committee Meeting**

**Date of meeting: 6 October 2020**

**FINANCIAL INFORMATION**

**Number on Roll (NOR)**

The autumn census took place on 1 October 2020 and our NOR was 97. This is the NOR we predicted, and the NOR on which the budget we receive for 2021/22 financial year will be based.

**Budget Monitoring and Income & Expenditure Return (information attached)**

You may recall that schools needed to submit their five year budget plans to the LA by 31 May this year, which was a month earlier than in previous years. At this time, it was unclear how/when schools would be reopening in full due to the continued COVID-19 pandemic, and thus this was bound to affect some areas of our budget planning. The budget monitoring report attached is a comprehensive review of the school’s forecast financial position as at the end of March 2021. You will see from the unusually large number of explanatory notes at the bottom of the report that there are lots of variances that need following up/monitoring more closely.

The I&E return has been completed during a scheduled visit with our LA Support Accountant. She specifically noted the capital expense to create a new Hercules classroom that we did not originally budget for (cost approx £5K), and is looking forward to hearing our plans for spending the Sports Grant money we have carried forward from last financial year.

The I & E return needs to be considered and approved by L&R (to be signed by DB and KW so that I can submit it to the LA before the end of October) and then it also needs to be added to the agenda of the next FGB.

**Pupil Premium Grant (PPG) 2020/21**

The LA has confirmed we will be receiving £28,210 Pupil Premium Grant for 2020/21, in respect of 18 pupils, and this matches our estimate. The majority of the PPG will be spent on Teaching Assistant hours. Note we budgeted to spend £3,647 PPG on purchasing Ipads and this is likely to happen soon. The Head/Asst Headteachers are best placed to determine what else the PPG will be used for, a guide was included in the Budget Notes 2020/21 that I compiled, a copy of which is available upon request.

**Sports Premium Grant (SPG) 2020/21**

The LA has confirmed that the SPG has been extended for the 2020/21 academic year. This was unexpected but welcome news, and means that we will be receiving another £16,820. There are strict guidelines on what the SPG can be spent on (no capital purchases for example). Valued input from teachers is being sought from their staff meeting today.

**Coronavirus Catch Up Premium**

Schools will receive £80 per pupil, which is aimed to ensure that schools have the support they need to help all pupils make up for lost teaching time since schools closed in March.

Please note that this funding is not included in the Income & Expenditure return for September. It is being paid in three tranches during the 2020/21 academic year and I will make sure it is included in the December I&E as by then the school should have received the first tranche and plans should be in place on how the money will be spent.

**School funding: exceptional costs associated with Corona virus March – July 2020**

I submitted a claim for £1,800 in respect of the various unforeseen costs that occurred during the above period. I am not expecting the claim to be honoured in full as the funding is being prioritised to the schools who had COVID-19 cases during the period and thus needed extensive cleaning.

**Bank account and credit card statements**

The school current account balance on 1 September was £136,074.16

The balance of the school fund account on 31 August 2020 was £1,256.58

The balance on the school credit card as at 22 September 2020 was £187.91

The school fund accounts for 2019/20 need to be independently verified and I have a reciprocal arrangement with the Finance Officer at Lacock school whereby we will check each other’s and this will be completed in the next week or so (SSQ have their own arrangement for auditing their school fund account).

**SFVS 2019/20 and 2020/21**

Here is a reminder of the action points that need addressing this year:

* To develop a school strategy for increasing attainment. The L&R Chair will attend the S&P committee before the end of the 2019/20 academic year to change how the school formulates demands on finances.
* DfE ‘Deals for Schools’ will be explored for future purchases/contracts.

We now also need to start preparing our 2020/21 SFVS – more news at the next L&R meeting.

**ICT Support Contract**

The school has had this contract with Oakford Technology since approx. 2012 and the cost for 2019/20 was £1,254. The contract is due for renewal this month. I have requested quotations for both a one year renewal, and a three year renewal, and I am hoping they are received before the L&R meeting. I do not anticipate a significant increase in cost for a one year contract for 2020/21.

SSQ use a different ICT Support provider. My suggestion is that we renew the contract with Oakford for one year which will allow KW the time to get to know the service provision and compare it with the service levels that SSQ receive from their contractor, with a view to potentially combining a contract for both schools if deemed beneficial.

IF L&R governors agree with this approach, the 12 month contract cost falls within KW’s autonomy.

**Cleaning Contract**

The school’s cleaning contract with Churchill’s runs until June 2021. The original cost for the contract this year was due to be £10,154, however we were informed that from June 2020 the cost would need to increase following the government’s increase to the National Living Wage in April. The revised cost is therefore £10,645.

The school would need to give six months notice if it didn’t wish to renew the contract in June next year. In view of the COVID19 circumstances we are currently faced with, I am satisfied that should the school need an urgent decontamination, Churchills have the experience and resources to do this for us. The two cleaning operatives that clean the school daily are reliable and responsive.

Nonetheless, I will seek alternative quotations from alternative contractors in due course.

**Catering Contract**

Our current contract with Edwards & Ward falls for renewal on 31 October 2020. Unfortunately due to furloughed E&W management staff during virtually the whole of lockdown and the summer, communications with the contractor have been frustratingly slow and disjointed. I have received some preliminary renewal proposals from E&W and it seems that keeping the catering staff hours at the current levels will mean a significant increase in the subsidy the school will need to pay. KW and I are meeting with the contractors on 6 October to discuss our options in more detail. I am also seeking alternative quotations, but with less than a month to go before the contract is due for renewal, I think realistically we are likely to remain with the current provider if a suitable compromise can be agreed on the subsidy level. Our subsidy for this year has been £1,987, and it was based on serving 59 meals per day. More news to follow.

**Meal numbers Term 1**

Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM) – average take up is 36 per day (42 eligible)

Free School Meals (FSM) –average take up is 4 per day ( 8 eligible)

Paid meals – average take up is 14 per day (47 eligible)

The average total meals currently served per day is 54.

**Donations/Grants**

We received a Tesco grant of £1,166 back in May, which was applied for by SR towards the artificial grass costs. As the artificial grass proceeded via the Sports Grant instead, we need to decide urgently what the Tesco grant monies should be spent on (it needs to be something for the playground).

The family that were interested in contributing to an extra building at the side of the school have decided to move their child to a private school now. They have pledged a £1,000 donation but stipulated that it needs to be spent on Hercules class. Hopefully the donation will be forthcoming soon.

LH received a call during lockdown that the school was due to receive a bequest of £500.00 from a villager’s estate. Despite discreet enquiries, the money has not arrived yet.

An offer of £500.00 was received to purchase the kiln, and the sale proceeded during the summer holidays. The kiln was inspected by a qualified kiln engineer prior to sale, the cost of which was met from the sale proceeds.

**PREMISES**

As usual there have been lots going on over the summer:-

* Classroom 003 (the new Hercules). The following works were completed by Kier contractors and paid for by the LA:-

Creaky floor – this has been resolved. The floor joists were extremely damp due to water ingress from a ground-level vent on the outside wall (which has now been sealed).

Strange damp section of wall, plus damp in Pluto (cloakroom area) walls and windowsill – these sections of walls were stripped right back to the brickwork, sealed with a thick damp proofing material and replastered. NB. A very small section of damp has appeared on the wall in Pluto, adjacent to where damp works were done. I have reported this to the LA who are due to come out to inspect.

In addition to the LA works, the school arranged for both the classroom and adjoining Pluto to be redecorated and the installation of LED lighting and acoustic clouds. The classroom looks fabulous.

* Staff room -the LA arranged for a new larger extractor fan to be installed at LA cost.
* Roundhouse – the LA arranged for the dangerous doors to be replaced at their cost. I also spent many hours clearing out all three sections of the roundhouse so they are now safe, tidy and organised.

* Fencing/gates – the LA arranged for the wooden playground gates to be replaced with more higher, secure green metal gates, as well as replacing the wooden fencing by the EYFS play area, and a new gate was installed by the side of the school near the bike racks. The school now looks and feels more secure.
* I need help from a governor to come up with a plan on resolving the blocked gutter and valley issues that we continually experience with the design of the EYFS shelter. The gutters cannot be easily cleared safely and the build up of debris in the gutters and valleys causes leaks and damp issues to the building.
* We budgeted for classroom 002 (currently Chameleon) to be redecorated in 2020/21 and I am waiting to hear if SNC Maintenance can fit this in during the October/February half term. The Fire Exit door in this classroom needs replacing and I will be arranging this to be done soon.
* There are various flooring issues that probably need thinking about sooner rather than later (children’s toilets and foyer are the most in need). I will discuss this governor/s during Premises Plan reviews.
* I am in touch with the contractors who laid the artificial grass last year as some areas are bumpy, so it is going to be relaid.
* Classroom 004 (currently Phoenix) had a roof leak during last week’s heavy rain. This is a sign that the valley above is already blocked up with leaves.

**GDPR**

The school has subscribed to the Somerset Council DPO service again this year. Unfortunately HS and I couldn’t complete the scheduled GDPR walk after Easter as planned due to the lockdown period. It will be rescheduled. In the meantime, we have received the annual DPO review report from our DPO and as expected we have action points to follow up on. There is still a lot of work to do with regards to our GDPR here.

**HEALTH & SAFETY**

A Health & Safety walk was carried out by KW and myself on 28 August 2020. All issues identified are in the process of being resolved. A copy of the walk information is available on request and has been sent to the H&S governor JN.

In July we had our 3 yearly Fire Risk Assessment carried out by JHJ Fire Safety – all good.

The first fire drill of the academic year was carried out on 24 September 2020. Some alterations are needed to our procedures as a result, and it is noted that two pupils have Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans in place.

Our tree surveyor pointed out that there are two very large dead trees by our front boundary fencing that could cause a safety issue. I have noticed from the Parish Council minutes that it is already aware of these issues and the trees are being removed.

The LA has issued updated Business Continuity guidance which incorporates dealing with a pandemic. Our Business Continuity Plan needs to be updated in light of the new guidance and this will be done as soon as possible.

**WRAPAROUND CARE**

As mentioned on the budget monitoring report, bookings for Early Morning Club (EMC) are on the low side. It costs £20.00 per day (Grassroots staff) and thus we need at least eight children per day to cover this and we currently have an average of five per day. It could be that many parents are still working from home due to COVID-19 and thus do not need to use the club to drop their children off enroute to work.

The ASC (Grassroots) costs £70.00 per day to run and again we need at least eight children staying for both sessions until 5.25pm to cover this cost. We have an average of 12 children attending, most of which are booked in until 5.25pm

Details of the spaces available at the clubs will be advertised regularly via the weekly newsletter to parents to try and encourage more take-up. Should the school consider increasing the fees charged from January 2021 if necessary?

**POLICIES**

As many of you will remember, CS and I were going full steam ahead to have all the L&R policies up to date, ratified, and input on the School Bus Policy Management System. We were so nearly there at the end of Term 6!

Now that the federation with SSQ is imminent, I hope that we will be given some clarity across both schools about who/how/when policies will be reviewed, ratified by which governors, and added (by whom?) to School Bus for the relevant staff to read. At the time of writing, the following policies need reviewing (overdue/or due soon):

* Health & Safety
* Data Handling
* Lettings
* Purchasing
* Staff Wellbeing
* Admissions
* Charging & Remissions
* Staff Computer Use
* School Security
* Emergency & Critical Incident
* Business Continuity
* Lone Working
* Plus various LA Model Policies that the LA has recently updated that we need to adopt

As always, prompt feedback regarding this report and the decisions made at the meeting is always appreciated, as it means I can proceed where I can without having to wait for the minutes to be published.

Lizzy Moor

Finance Officer

5 October 2020