



Present: Katie Blood (HT), Tony Firmin, Nikki Harper, Fr Ben Eadon, Catherine Wilson, Ian Beggs

In attendance: Tom Way (Clerk), Fiona Keeling (Deputy HT), Sarah Foster (School Business Manager) – *items 1-2*

Apologies: Jane Gray, Fr Philip Kennedy, Francesca Urquhart, Dan MacIntyre

Absent: Stephen Berry (Chair)

Quorum: 6 out of 11 governors were present. The meeting was quorate (at least 50% attending).

Questions from the governors to the HT and DHT are highlighted in **bold**.

1. Welcome / apologies for absence and declarations of interest

[The FGB meeting was held online via Microsoft Teams]

Governors accepted the apologies for absence from JG, PK and FU.

BE offered to Chair this meeting as the Chair was absent and advised that they have had previous experience of doing this.

TF seconded this, and all governors agreed to BE temporarily chairing the governing body.

There was a broader discussion around the role.

There were no declarations of interest for this meeting.

2. Budget approval

The SBM confirmed prior to the meeting that the school had an agreed negative contingency of £79000, and that the actual shortfall was £54687, and that they will be asking for a negative contingency of £168919 this year.

The HT shared the budget document on Teams for governors.

The HT asked for clarification on the income/expenditure section, and the SBM advised that there is no spare money in the budget and that the vast majority of it is spent on staffing,



and that the school is spending the bare minimum on everything else due to the large staffing bill. The SBM further advised that the school lost out on income last year as there were no lettings or money from clubs, but the deficit is still better than predicted.

Other than loss of income due to no lettings, can you explain what else has increased the deficit?

The SBM advised that the government have changed the schools' funding formula, and that St Barts has lost out as a result, and that there are less children enrolled at the school resulting in a smaller budget – the school has a PAN of 210 and currently has 144 on role. The SBM also advised that nearly all staff are at the top of their pay scale (including non-teachers e.g. TA's).

The HT agreed that the biggest impacts have come from the falling roll and the government's new funding formula, which claims to be fair in that all schools get the same funding but this is disputable as some schools need greater funding. The HT also advised that the IDACI index shows St Bart's as being in a more affluent area than it is due to the property values of central Brighton.

The HT shared the 'costs and thoughts' document and gave a more in-depth explanation of the alternatives and possibilities and the problems relating to these.

Are other schools in the area struggling with the new government funding formula?

The HT advised that some are and that there are also some schools that previously weren't struggling but now are. There was a broader discussion around similar schools and the HT advised that the problem is that the deficit is increasing.

In terms of how the deficit works, at what point would the LA intervene?

The HT advised that they are not sure as there are schools that have had much bigger deficits for longer with no intervention, but whereas previously the solution might have been for schools to borrow money from other schools in the area that have an underspend these schools are becoming rarer, so the LA might start stepping in earlier. There was a broader discussion around this.

There was a discussion around governors getting involved in recruitment for new pupils, and the HT advised that this is always welcome but that the promotional costs of this is an issue too. The HT further advised that Governors could help to put pressure on the LA and local councillors to make decisions about reducing the PAN across the city, as there are predicted to be the equivalent of 14 empty reception classes this year across the city.

The HT advised that the budget will be a big focus in the FGB meetings from September 2021 onwards.



There has been media coverage around the possibility of schools downsizing, do you have any idea of a timeline for this?

The HT advised that some schools have been informally approached about this over the years, but that nothing formal would happen until at least September 2022. There was a broader discussion around this.

What are the starting numbers for September?

The HT advised that they are not as good as last year but also not as bad as it could have been, and that showing potential pupils and their families around the school has not been possible when this previously has helped with enrolment. The HT advised that 3 pupils have been allocated from the LA and that there will be some late enrollers to come as well, and that around 20 is the optimistic estimate and that they are currently at 17 for Reception.

NH advised that regarding promotional leaflet drops, their property management company is involved in this kind of activity and that they would be happy to take on the cost of printing A5 black and white leaflets for placing in the area. The HT and NH agreed to liaise further on this.

Regarding the 3-year budget getting worse, is there no in-built increase in finance each year? And have you had any contact from the Save Our Schools campaign?

The HT advised that they are not sure on the SoS campaign as the school currently doesn't have a parent rep with them, but that they think they are generally aware of the situation. The HT also advised that the budget is not 100% fixed but that there is currently unlikely to be a big increase in funding. The SBM confirmed this and advised that having higher pupil numbers at the school is what will make the difference.

All governors agreed to the budget.

The SBM left the meeting.

ACTIONS

2.1 HT and NH to liaise further on leaflet drops.

3. Minutes of FGB meeting held on 04.03.21 accuracy / matters arising

The GB agreed that the minutes were an accurate representation of the meeting.

The following actions have been met:

- Governors agreed to remove previous action 2.2 regarding finding an Accounts governor as the HT advised that the school is not currently in a position to fund this.



- NH has booked onto Finance training via BEEM.
- Governors have sent photos for their school ID badges.

Matters arising, not otherwise on the agenda:

N/A

ACTIONS

3.1 HT to look into the possibility of setting up a school noticeboard – **ongoing HT + DM**

3.2 DM to book onto Finance training on BEEM

3.3 IB, the Chair and the DHT to send their new declaration of interest forms to the Clerk for the school year 20/21

3.4 Governors to suggest times/dates for monitoring visits and the HT to provide a list of potential governor visit dates for the Summer term – **look into from September onwards**

4. Governor Monitoring/Training

BE confirmed that they had completed the Diocesan safeguarding training for governors on 17.03.21.

NH confirmed that they have booked onto Finance training with BHCC.

The Clerk confirmed that SB's role as Chair expires in July 2021, and there was a broader discussion around holding a Chair election in July. Governors agreed that DM as temporary Vice Chair should contact SB about whether they would like to continue in the role of Chair.

ACTIONS

4.1 DM to contact SB about continuing in the role of Chair.

5. Headteacher's 'School at a Glance' Report, Progress on the SIP

The HT confirmed that they had circulated the report to governors prior to the meeting, and an updated one was shared at the meeting containing the latest pupil data.

The DHT advised that the report contains the end of the Spring term data, and that they have assessed the pupils returning after the last lockdown and have found the gaps in the learning and that they are currently working on filling these gaps, and that the data is quite low in terms of where they should be at for this point in the year compared to previous years. The DHT further advised that although there are no SATS exams this year or Ofsted inspections focusing on academic performance, it is important to track progress and this has been difficult to do with the current data. The HT advised that academically it is not a great picture but that this can be picked up over the next 2-3 years.



BE congratulated the HT on getting the school attendance well above the average for the area and also above the national average. The HT advised that this has improved a lot recently.

Regarding the shattered window listed in the Health & Safety section, what is the latest with this and will the school have to pay for it?

The HT advised that the SBM has been pursuing this and that the school will now be switching company due to the poor responses from the current one, and that unfortunately the school will have to pay for this as it won't be covered by the previous building work funding. NH advised that they are in contact with various trades-people through their work and that they can put the HT in contact with someone if the current company don't get back to them soon.

6. Offers for 2021/22 Reception

[See item 2 above].

7. Covid update

The HT advised that there is not much to update the governors with on this, and that there are no new recent cases and that staff have been diligently wearing masks around the school. The HT further advised that it is very difficult as everyone feels differently about it and that there are various expectations to be managed, and that the problems relate to providing full tuition and allowing governors' monitoring etc. and that the school couldn't carry on in the current circumstances forever, but that hopefully further guidance about the lifting of restrictions will be provided soon.

8. Health & Safety

The HT advised that there was nothing additional to report.

9. Feedback from governor training/school visits

[See item 4 above].

The HT confirmed that there have been no school visits from governors due to the covid restrictions.



10. Urgent business not on agenda

The HT suggested that there should be a slightly different format for the next FGB meeting involving a presentation around the possibilities for a new structure of the governing and the roles of governors within this.

All governors agreed and concurred for a strong start to governance business again in September.

The HT advised that the next FGB meeting in July would also possibly be in person at the school.

The meeting closed at 7:05pm

Signed[*Minutes authorised electronically by the Chair*].... Chair of Governors

Date.....[14/07/21].....

The next FGB meeting will be on Wednesday 14th July 2021 at 5.45pm