



Bevendean Primary School and Nursery
Finance, Personnel and Premises Committee
Thursday 13 February 2025 at 5.00pm [Online]

Name	Type of Governor	Present	Apologies
Mark Dally	Headteacher	Yes	
Kendrick Tugwell (FPP Chair)	Parent	Yes	
Lydia Majic	Co-Opted	No	No
Adrian Strange	Co-Opted	Yes	
Kenya Simpson Martin	Co-Opted	Yes	
Lorna Amys	Co-Opted	Yes	
Nikki Buttress	School Business Manager	Yes (Items 1 – 4)	
Sarah Miller	Associate member	Yes	
Tom Way	Clerk	Yes	

Quorum: 5 out of 6 governors were present. The meeting was quorate (at least 3 governors attending).

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

1. Quoracy of meeting

Governors confirmed that the meeting is quorate.

2. Apologies/attendance list

Governors confirmed that no apologies had been received.

3. Minutes of previous committee meeting

A) Approval of FPP minutes 17th October 2024 and Extra Pay Committee 29th October 2024

Governors confirmed their approval of the minutes of these meetings.

B) Matters arising / Action points

The following actions have been met:



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- TW has checked with OO if he is in a position to re-join governor meetings (he is not and has resigned)
- AS has looked into funding opportunities from B&H buses, and he provided an overview of this here
- MD has amended the Governors' Allowances policy to specify that all requests need to be signed off by both the Chair and the HT
- MD has specified the £15 expenses cap for governors in the Scheme of Delegation
- TW has added the Scheme of Delegation as an item for approval at the next FGB meeting and included it in the list of annual policy reviews
- TW has sent guidance and training links for HT appraisals to KSM
- TW has sent a reminder to governors to complete safeguarding training if they have not already done so
- TW has checked the rules around approving HT appraisal pay recommendations
- TW has amended the dates of objectives and review of progress in the HT appraisal document
- LoA has contacted NB to confirm the pay recommendations, and TW has forwarded the minutes of this meeting to NB confirming this

The following actions are ongoing:

- AS to look into the process for reviewing the Premises Management Documents at the next H&S visit in March and how we are notified if any changes are made to be brought back to the FPP for signing off – **ACTION AS**

4. Finance Update

A) Staffing Update

MD advised that one of our teachers Shaylene Crabb in Year 2 was working as supply in Launchpad last year paid for by the Local Authority (LA), and we have had a teacher leave us suddenly after interviews for the academic year had already been conducted, so we offered the position to Shaylene to teach in Year 2. MD explained that Shaylene had been struggling due to some personal reasons and she asked MD if she could leave with 3 weeks' notice (instead of the usual half a term). MD agreed to this request. MD advised this had helped with the budget slightly because the position will be covered by SM, MD and an HLTA (Higher Level Teaching Assistant) until July. Although this will help with the budget, it will reduce the capacity of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) temporarily, but it is difficult finding a new teacher at this time of the year, and it is good for the class to have stability.

MD advised that a HLTA who has been at the school for 15 years left recently, and this is due to their seeking new challenges, and an exit interview was conducted. We have absorbed this loss and offered one day to a current staff member and another half day to cover this, which has resulted in a saving in the budget. A Year 1 teacher has been signed



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off on long term sick leave until 20th March, and we are covering this with HLTA time. Year 1 is the smallest group, and the Year 1 lead is spending quite a bit of time with the class and Teaching Assistant (TA) support is being provided too. Brig Clay is a support staff member of the nursery, and she is now training to be a teacher on the job and is assisting with cover, but she has to undertake a placement off site soon. The next 6 weeks will be challenging to cover, but we have a plan in place for this, then Brig will be back from her placement and we will have more capacity.

MD advised that one teacher working 2 days per week has started maternity leave today, and there are two other teachers who have been on maternity leave and are coming back as job-sharers covering the class 2.5 days per week each from September. Another TA is going on maternity leave in July, and a midday supervisor is signed off for 2 days per week, which means additional cover is required, and this is being shared by MD, SM and RJ.

Q: Are the sicknesses seasonal-related e.g., flu/colds, or something else?

MD advised that they are mental health-related.

Q: What is the current sickness percentage?

MD advised that he doesn't have these statistics to hand. NB advised that it is not too bad overall, and that if we had taken out an absence insurance policy then we wouldn't have had got much back out of it, as it has mostly been short term sickness with 1-day and 2-day absences. AS commented that it is good to have the percentage to track alongside the national trend, and a month-by-month analysis can be useful as you can see if there are particular points in the year where it is higher. AS commented further that sickness is higher nationally at the moment, and in schools it is anticipated to be slightly higher, and there was a broader discussion around this. MD advised that we can get this information, but we are obliged to grant permission for sick leave and it might be difficult to do anything with this information, though we are clear with staff about what is paid and unpaid. AS suggested that when looking at staff insurance options you would be able to look at the cost effectiveness too. NB confirmed that it would not be cost-effective, and she provided a clarification of what it would have been if we had taken this out in September, and that it would have been very little relatively and not worth it. It would have cost £13k, and we would have only got £4k back. KT advised that when looking at the governor visit report, one future question was if we can support staff to reduce sickness, and as there is not a huge amount that we can do, especially with short-term sicknesses in winter, and it is challenging to give staff time for appointments and hard for them to get appointments, perhaps we could support staff in this by looking at what is included in the insurance in this regard with accessibility to GP phone appointments, as the benefits might be worth considering and could have a positive broader impact. NB advised that they offer a separate wellbeing package too, but considering the members of staff who are taking time off for appointments, they are not the type to speak to 24/7 GPs via phone appointment, and they only see their specific GP regarding long-term issues. KT suggested that from a perspective of morale, and considering that there are some things that we as a committee



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and the SLT have had to take away from staff, maybe this is something that we could squeeze into the budget, as private CBT and GP access might be something that staff would benefit from. NB advised that the other school that she works at is subscribed to the wellbeing service, and some staff members there have used the counselling service, some the musculoskeletal and physiotherapy services, but it has only been approximately 4 or 5 members of staff, and only 1 has used the 24/7 GP. NB advised that she will ask how much it costs. SM suggested that the price of the wellbeing package might go up too if staff use the services more, and NB agreed to check into this too – **ACTION NB**

SM advised that we need to be careful about offering this service then potentially having to take it away if they raise the cost of it, as this could have a more detrimental effect on staff morale. NB advised that a lot of these things are offered by the LA already e.g., counselling, and it is a question of how many staff members would access it. KSM commented that some companies also offer competitive services. AS suggested that we should check into BHCC's services as employees of them, and that we should perhaps advertise these services better for staff. There was a broader discussion around this, and governors confirmed that Occupational Health Plans at the LA have to be paid for on top of what we already pay. AS suggested that it might be better saving the money and budgeting this in allowing for more staff cover, and there was a broader discussion around this. MD advised that there is an issue with this regarding the deficit.

Q: Regarding the potential £13k to be claimed under insurance for an individual's absence, what would this be as a full-time staff member equivalent?

NB advised that this is slightly less than half of an HLTA.

B) Budget Monitoring/Current Outturn

NB advised that the current outturn is good, and that we should end the year with a surplus of £30-40k. The report for the end of January is showing a surplus of £39,328, and the February/March report will cover the remainder of the financial year. MD advised that when we set this budget a year ago the projected surplus was £17k, and through a lot of careful management we have managed to improve this. KT commented that he has looked through the reports for each month and feels that he has a good understanding of this, and he doesn't think that there is much else that can be cut. LoA advised that she spoke to NB and MD this morning and went through the current outturn, and she feels that she also has a good understanding of this and concurs with KT.

Q: When did you become aware of the DfE deficit and loss of £54k in grants?

NB advised that this was back in May last year.

C) Draft Budget



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Q: Is there anything which is particularly alarming or difficult within this?

NB advised that there is not much that we can do about the budget here, and we can't restructure as it will make the school unsafe. The deficit was formed from last year, as we carried forward £80k, but only £40k this year, and this equates to a shortfall of about £85k overall. NB further advised that grants received last year are not being given for this year, and the nursery numbers are half of what we predicted and budgeted for. There is an overall deficit of £172k, but our FTE in staff is down from 42 to 39.

Q: What possibilities are you looking at for improving the deficit?

NB advised that we could increase the rents for lettings, but this would likely only gain us an extra £13k, and if we raise them too much then the groups will cancel their lettings.

Q: What about the table tennis clubs?

NB advised that we have 3 or 4 clubs, and they pay the largest amount, and they probably will be upset if we put the rents up, and in the grand scheme of things it will not make much of a difference in the deficit. There was a broader discussion around this and possibly matching the rent increases in line with inflation. MD suggested that we should look at when the price was last increased and go from there, and AS suggested to consider the cost of utilities too.

Q: Services to schools is budgeted at £115k; what do you get from this?

NB advised that this includes payroll, HR, governor support, free school meals etc. There is one service that could be cut which would save £8k, but that is all, as everything else is completely essential. Free school meals costs approximately £60k. MD advised that these service costs are set by the LA, and that we have reviewed them very thoroughly with LoA, and we have concluded that we can't cut any of them as they are all essential things. It is a large cost, but there is no room to cut it. One change that we have already made is that we cut the ICT service and changed provider.

Q: What about business rates?

NB advised that this is a cost-zero in and out.

KT commented that the biggest cost is staffing, and the school can't reduce this any further, and having a deficit is the only way forward. MD advised that there is an ongoing conversation around pupil numbers in Brighton & Hove. MD further advised that our census was conducted in October when we had 296 children on roll, which was a dip in our numbers, and we are now up to 308, and if we had this many in October then we would have more in the budget, but the LA won't allow for an adjustment for this unless there is a 20% change in our numbers.



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Q: What about EHCPs and funding from this? Are these all completed in a timely fashion, and are correct?

MD advised that RJ is very good at this, and that she spends a lot of her time doing the paperwork for this. We currently have more EHCPs than we have ever had, and we are limited as we have to use educational psychologist time for this, and we always have another EHCP coming through. We are up to 20 at the moment, which is high, and RJ really pushes to get as much funding as we can and the most amount of top up funding, but some children are needing one-to-one support and we are only receiving the lower amount of £6k for this. There was a broader discussion around this, and governors confirmed that £9,900 is the top level of funding available for an EHCP, and that this is a fraction of a full time TA.

Q: What messaging is coming from partnerships and the LA for budget setting for next year?

MD advised that out of 16 schools in our partnership, only 3 did not go into deficit last time, but they will all be in deficit this year, and some in the city have a deficit of up to £800k, and this is made worse if there is no carry-forward. KT commented that this could potentially be a snowball situation for us too. MD commented that something has to change, but if nothing changes, then this could be the scenario for us. MD commented that the only positive in this situation is that we are further down the list of schools in financial trouble that the LA are looking at.

Q: What are years 3 and 4 looking like?

NB advised that she will prepare this after submitting the draft budget. AS commented that it will be interesting to see what is needed to balance ourselves. KT advised that 25 additional pupils would balance the budget. MD suggested that some things could change i.e., some schools could close, and we have also had positive press for Bevendean school over the last few months, but without more school closures, there aren't enough children in the city to fill the places that are available. MD further advised that St Joseph's school may close in July possibly, and lots of families have been moving their children between schools recently. We have had 3 children arrive at the school already, and although most families are going to Hertford school due to the proximity, they are getting full. Coldean school has had a lot of children arrive there, but we might have a few more. AS commented that we budgeted for a larger nursery intake and this never happened, and the only way to grow the school intake is to grow the nursery and change the families' mindset around it, and if we can break the mould and get them to come to the nursery at the beginning then this will help. There was a broader discussion around this. MD advised that the deficit would be £56k higher if we had a full-time nursery, which would total a £220k deficit approximately.

Q: Do you received the same funding for nursery children?



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NB advised that we receive less for nursery children, and she provided an explanation around this. AS advised that nursery children are part-funded by the LA with the remainder by parents, and there was a broader discussion around this. AS suggested that we could change the nursery to accommodate children aged 6 months and upwards, and this would be a large project, but it could potentially work subject to further analysis. NB advised that it costs a lot to do this, as the younger the child the higher the ratio of staff required, and there was a broader discussion around this. NB advised that very few school nurseries offer wraparound care to under 3-year-olds. KT suggested that it might be good to have a further separate discussion around this, and that we would need the data to verify that this could work. There is a concern that there aren't enough children in the area due to the universities, and not enough to justify the staffing costs.

KT asked if all governors are happy to approve the deficit following this conversation, and he confirmed that he and LoA have been into the school and met with MD and NB to drill down into the data as much as possible.

All governors confirmed their approval of the budget.

D) Disposal of Equipment/Write-off

KT confirmed that there are no updates for this item.

E) Schools Financial Value Standard

KT advised that he has met with MD and NB about this, and he gave an overview and clarification of the SFVS. Governors confirmed that they are happy with this document and that there are no questions.

F) Change of ICT Support

MD provided an overview of this and advised that we are looking to go with Olive Solutions, who can provide a cheaper service. MD further advised that their service includes one day a week of in-school support, as well as phone support throughout the week, and it is quite a significant saving, and it is worth looking at this in terms of due diligence and trying to make savings where possible. MD confirmed that he has met with their representative and NB about this, and they have advised that we can have a flexible package and reduce this further if we want to.

Q: When would we get access to the policies included in their package?



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MD advised that this would presumably be once we have signed up. KT commented that their offer states that they review the package annually, and that he would be keen to look at and review this himself.

Q: Are there circumstances in which you require immediate IT support in the school the same day? E.g., a screen in the classroom breaks down.

MD advised that he is not sure there are any examples or situations of this kind. SM suggested that one possibility could be if the computer in the hall broke down for leavers' assembly or the Christmas event. NB advised that if this happened, we could call Olive Solutions and they would either come in to the school or we could speak to them over the phone. MD advised that we have Brendan Kirkwood as a member of staff in the school who is good at dealing with minor IT issues, but otherwise, he is not sure that there are situations in which we would be stuck and need same-day IT support. NB advised that we are going to pay for an umbrella tenancy agreement with the LA, and then after one year we will review this.

Q: What is the cost saving of this?

NB advised that it will be approximately £9k annually.

Q: Who recommended Olive Solutions?

MD advised that NB uses their services at Carden school, and the company is run by someone who previously worked as a school ICT technician.

Q: In the interest of due diligence, could you get two other quotes from other suppliers to compare?

NB confirmed that she will try to do this, though it is quite a niche area so it might be hard to find more, but she will find one other quote at least, and she confirmed that there is no conflict of interest.

Governors thanked NB for attending.

NB left the meeting.

5. Additional Funding Streams

MD advised there are no significant updates for this item, and that both he and SM have applied for several grants and are waiting to hear back on this. SM advised that we received the library grant previously, and we are waiting on the residential grant applications. We received a £1,800 grant last year for residentials, as well as a £250 grant, and we are waiting on what will possibly be a larger grant for the playground.



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Q: Have you received some initial funding for the playground from Just Giving?

SM advised that the gift aid for this was £3k, but the quotes received for the playground are around £100k (half of which is safety services). We are waiting for another quote, and then we are looking to break it down and see if we can save money by using different companies.

Q: Is there potentially any help available from companies that will build us a new playground for publicity purposes?

SM advised that a lot of this kind of work is linked to nurseries from the DfE, but as ours wouldn't benefit from this we can't apply for it, and she gave a further overview of this. SM further advised that we can't apply for funding until we have received the quotes. MD gave an overview of the previous work done for the school pond and how the parent community helped with this before, and he advised that the playground is a much larger project and smaller help from the community would likely not be appropriate in this instance.

6. Premises

A) Update

KT highlighted point C in AS's Health & Safety report which clarifies things that need funding/fixing. MD advised that there are a couple of big jobs required. The hall doors have to be serviced every year, also something had gone wrong with one of them as it wasn't closing, and we had a company come and visit to look at it. They discovered an issue with the door mechanism, and this cost £1k to fix, and there will be an additional £2k on top of this for maintaining them, but we need these doors as they provide two separate PE spaces in the hall. The doors are enormous and they need to be well-maintained and safe, and they can be paid for from DFC money.

MD advised that the guttering around the school is the other issue, as there is some overflow and they need clearing. We are getting quotes to have them cleaned, and the premises manager Chris will look at minor repairs as we go along, and he will let us know if bigger issues are discovered. KT advised that Gregory Roofing is operated by one of the Year 3 children's parents, and they might be able to offer us a cheaper quote for this.

MD advised that Chris will be fully running grounds maintenance this year, for which we have also bought a jetwash and hedge trimmer, and this is a saving in the budget. MD further advised that Chris is doing a good job of keeping on top of things.

B) Work in progress log



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Q: On the work in progress tracker, there are some things that have been on hold from 2022; can we look at if these can be removed? E.g., external fencing quotes were put on hold.

MD advised that the possible fencing work might have been related to a child trying to climb over the fence at the time, so we looked at changing the fencing, and he gave an overview of this. The cost at the time was prohibitive, and we have not had any children trying to climb over it since, and roller bars were installed about 3 years ago to stop any potential intruders from trying to come in, so we probably can take this off of the log.

Q: Was the hot water reconnect put on hold as it is too expensive? Also, the same for the bike shed and the internal lighting audit? Perhaps anything older than 3 years should be archived.

MD confirmed this is the case and agreed with archiving the work.

KT commented that the FPP has noted improvements in this area from a few meetings ago. AS advised that we should make sure that the hedge trimmer has the necessary risk assessment conducted, and MD agreed to this – **ACTION MD**

7. Policy reviews

A) Charging & Remissions policy

MD confirmed that this hasn't changed since the previous version and that NB has checked it through too. KT confirmed that he has read this and that it is standard.

All governors confirmed their approval of the Charging & Remissions policy.

8. Link Governor Monitoring Visits

AS confirmed that he conducted a Health & Safety visit in November, and governors confirmed that there were no questions on the report.

KSM confirmed that she conducted a Leadership, Management, SLT and Staff Wellbeing visit in November, and governors confirmed that there were no questions on the report.

KT thanked both for their reports and commented that they were good to read.

9. AOB

N/A



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10. Date of next meeting

Thursday 8th May at 5pm – 6.30pm.

KT advised that he is scheduled to be working away abroad the week of the next meeting, and that we could either move the meeting, or LoA could lead during it. TW agreed to look at moving the meeting to the week before on 1st May and to confirm this and send an update to governors – **ACTION TW**

11. Close of meeting

The meeting was closed 6:21pm

***** Please see Action Points and Decisions from this meeting below**

Action points from FPP meeting held on 13th February 2025

Item/Action	By	Person responsible
3.1 AS to look into the process for reviewing the Premises Management Documents at the next H&S visit in March and how we are notified if any changes are made to be brought back to the FPP for signing off– ongoing	March	AS
4.1 NB to check what the cost of the staff wellbeing service package is and if the price would increase if the services are used more frequently, and what the current staff absence figures are	Next meeting	NB
6.1 MD to ensure that the hedge trimmer has the necessary risk assessment conducted	Next meeting	MD
10.1 TW to look at moving the next FPP meeting to the week before on 1 st May and	Next meeting	TW



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to confirm this and send an update to governors		
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Decisions made at FPP meeting held on 13th February 2025

Item/Decision
3.1 <i>Governors approved the FPP minutes 17th October 2024 and Extra Pay Committee 29th October 2024</i>
4.1 <i>All governors confirmed their approval of the budget.</i>
7.1 <i>All governors confirmed their approval of the Charging & Remissions policy.</i>