

**Holbeach Primary School**

**Non-confidential minutes of a meeting of the Resources Committee of  
Holbeach Primary School on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2025 at 6.30 p.m.**

**In attendance:**

<b>First Name</b>	<b>Surname</b>	<b>Governor Type</b>	<b>End of Office</b>	<b>Present</b>
Ross	Baptie (RB)	Co-opted Governor Committee Chair	26/11/2027	Yes
Emma Jane	Boyd (EJB)	Parent Governor	18/10/2027	Apologies received
Tom	Bulpitt (TB)	Headteacher Ex-Officio	-	Yes
Katie	Drew (KD)	Co-opted Governor	27/03/2027	Yes
Glenys	Englert (GE)	Co-opted Governor Vice Chair of Governors	18/09/2027	Yes
Sharon	Farnley (SF)	Co-opted Governor Chair of Governors	06/04/2027	Yes
Charlie	Killick (CK)	Staff Governor	17/01/2027	Yes
Sylvia	McCloskey-Quigg (SMQ)	Parent Governor	01/12/2026	Yes
Steven	Orpwood (SO)	Co-opted Governor	06/07/2026	Yes
Ben	Pitcher (BP)	Local Authority Governor designate Vice Chair of Governors	-	Apologies received
Miriam	Baguley (MBy)	Governance Professional	NA	Yes
Chloe	Clifford (CCd)	Governance Professional	NA	Yes

(v) denotes virtual attendance

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from BP and EJB. Apologies for late arrival were received from SO.

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**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations, in addition to those already registered, were made.

**3. NON-CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2024**

The non-confidential minutes of the meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2024 were circulated to the meeting.

RB noted minor amendments that would be provided by to MBy by email following the meeting.

RESOLVED: that the non-confidential minutes of the meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2024 were approved to be signed as an accurate record of the meeting subject to the minor amendments to be provided.

#### **4. MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising and all actions were complete or formed part of the items within this meeting.

#### **5. BUDGET 2024-2025 UPDATE**

##### **5.1. Budget Monitoring to the end of period 9**

TB provided a verbal update, noting that going forward, Gareth Hudson (GH), finance consultant, would produce a budget monitoring document to ensure financial updates were provided on a regular basis and at least six times a year. Link Governors for finance had reviewed the October budget monitoring and updates to this were minimal.

- The final year outturn was expected to be a £100k in-year deficit with a nominal overall deficit of £25k. This represented a slight deterioration when compared to the November budget monitoring; however, it did not take into account additional income of £20-25k which was expected to be received in relation to an insurance settlement.
- £50k received in relation to the expansion of wrap-around care would be used in part to fund the additional staffing required, but the remainder could be offset against areas of overspend.
- A verbal assurance of support in relation to ill-health retirement pension costs had been received from the Local Authority (LA). The extent/value of the support had not yet been confirmed and written details continued to be sought, but the total amount of support being requested was £125k. Any funding of the extraordinary pension costs would not be via the Schools' Forum; however, the Forum's support had been of benefit in raising the profile of the issue with the LA.
- The annual cost of the Schools' Forum was £8k. Continued membership would be determined by a cost benefit analysis, which would also include careful scrutiny of the Forum's terms of reference.

SO and SMQ joined the meeting at 6.40 p.m.

- Additional agency support was now in place in Year 1, meaning there were three adults in each class.

The Committee discussed budget updates, especially with regard to the recommendations made by the School Resource Management Adviser (SRMA). While it was agreed that the recommendations lacked some flexibility when responding to a dynamic financial situation, they provided a useful base on which to plan a sustainable staffing structure. Benchmarking data had also been of value.

##### **5.2. End of year budget projections**

As discussed under item 5.1.

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## **6. UTILITIES CHARGES UPDATE**

RB referred to the detail contained within the Link Governor report circulated with the agenda and highlighted the following points:

- expenditure on utilities through LA schemes was running at approximately £80k per year, but despite GH's best efforts over a significant period of time, the level of charges could not be validated
- the school was potentially being charged for incorrect meters; LA portal charges often did not match with usage.

Following a review of the extensive communications between GH and the LA, RB had written to the LA expressing concern over the situation in December 2024 and requesting a representative attended a Governor meeting to provide clarity. No response had yet been received despite further follow-up, and consideration should be given to escalation through the LA's Complaints Policy.

TB noted that provision of utilities had been as part of the pooled energy scheme. Given there had been little, if any, saving on the rates charged, consideration would be given to withdrawal from the scheme at the end of the financial year if lower rates could be obtained elsewhere.

In response to questions, TB said that it might be possible to opt back in at a later date, but this could be subject to additional charges. However, given the challenge in ensuring transparent charging through the LA, a move to a direct supplier was possibly in the school's best interests.

The Committee stressed the need to provide feedback on the scheme and potential withdrawal to the LA and asked whether any clawback of charges could be secured given the significant amount of time GH had had to spend on the issue. TB said the difficulties with the scheme were well known among School Business Managers (SBM) and feedback was being provided.

RESOLVED: Finance Link Governors to liaise with TB and GH regarding the utility tendering process, with recommendations to be presented to the next meeting of the Committee.

## **7. SCHOOL FINANCIAL VALUE STANDARDS (SFVS)**

TB provided a verbal update noting that GH was in the process of drafting the annual return, which was due to be returned to the LA by February 2025.

RESOLVED: Finance Link Governors to review the draft submission, with final submission to be ratified by the Full Governing Board (FGB) at the next meeting.

## **8. ANNUAL BENCHMARKING**

TB advised that this item would be covered in greater detail in the Headteacher's Report presented to the next FGB meeting.

TB highlighted issues with benchmarking data, even when comparing relatively similar schools, because of lack of reliability and granular detail, and differences in attributing costs across budget lines.

TB noted that staffing costs represented 83% of expenditure. Although this was well above the level recommended by the SRMA, the significant negative impact of reducing staff also had to be taken into consideration.

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## **9. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

TB provided an overview of the current allocation of financial roles and responsibilities across SLT and the administration team following GH's move from SBM to financial consultant.

The review cycle of the items listed on the agenda were noted.

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## **10. GDPR**

- No reportable incidents.

TB advised that staff had completed the relevant training during inset day. Staff reported that they found the training useful in raising awareness of issues in relation to GDPR. Governors to ask questions around GDPR during link visits.

RESOLVED: Governors to complete GDPR and cyber security training.

## **11. PREMISES REPORT**

### Schoolhouse update

TB advised that there was no further update to the information provided by Fiona Gavin (FG) at the FGB meeting in November 2024. TB to follow up with the contact at the LA provided by FG and continue to monitor the situation with regard to the schoolhouses earmarked for disposal.

The schoolhouse would continue to be developed as a community hub which parents had found to be very useful.

### Premises

Phil Morriss (PM), Assistant Headteacher, had developed a schedule of works in conjunction with the premises manager, including those that required a tendering process.

In response to questions regarding concerns raised by the water company about a possible water leak, TB said that nothing had been found. Further investigation had been hampered by unclear billing which made usage difficult to monitor.

Health and safety

There had been a slight decrease in accidents/incidents, possibly linked to higher staffing levels.

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**12. LINK GOVERNOR REPORTS**

Finance 10<sup>th</sup> December 2024 – RB and SO

The contents of the report circulated to the meeting was noted.

Health and Safety 19<sup>th</sup> November 2024 and special meeting 4<sup>th</sup> December 2024 – KD and GE

KD and GE referred to the reports circulated to the meeting. It was noted that the special meeting of the Health and Safety Committee had been in response to concerns raised about behaviour and the impact of this on staff. Questions to both reports were invited.

The Committee asked the frequency of staff meetings. TB said they were held on a weekly basis and were included in directed time. Meetings were not held in weeks where there were parents' evenings. Meetings had been used as an opportunity to deliver CPD, but in response to staff feedback, the time would also be used to carry out pupil progress meetings.

The Committee asked if the meeting time was also used for shared planning activities. TB said further information would be provided as part of the Headteacher's Report to the next FGB meeting. Examples of recent shared planning meetings were provided and included maths topic planning and phonological awareness through rhyme.

The Committee asked about staff choice of CPD. TB said some choice was given to provide ownership and to support wellbeing. Staff had been able to choose the CPD topic at a recent inset day.

The Committee noted other ways in which information could be shared rather than through meetings but agreed there was the potential for written information to be missed. TB agreed that presentations during meetings should be time limited to maximise effectiveness.

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**13. POLICIES**

Governors received and reviewed the policies circulated with the agenda.

- Business Continuity Plan – SF and LA contacts to be added.
- Asset Management Disposal Write-Off Policy
- Financial Management Policy
- Premises Management Policy
- Debt Management Policy
- Staff Expenses Policy

- Cyber Response Plan

In response to points raised by the Committee, TB agreed to review the scope of the policies with a view to separating different procedures to ensure clarity.

The Committee asked about phishing tests and noted that staff should receive regular reminders of the dangers of phishing attacks. TB to check with the IT provider and revert.

TB provided assurance that, despite reductions in SLT, with clear planning, sufficient capacity remained for an effective emergency response.

RESOLVED:

1. KD to provide minor amendments to PM by email
2. TB to provide separate procedures regarding **lockdowns/cyber-attacks?**
3. that the policies presented should be recirculated to the next FGB for approval.

#### **14. DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS**

- Training with Michele Holmes – Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> February 2025
- Resources Committee - Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> April 2025 at 6.30 p.m.
- Curriculum and Standards Committee – Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2025 at 6.30 p.m.
- FGB – Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2025 at 6.30 p.m.
- Safeguarding training – to be confirmed.

#### **15. ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING**

- Review of budget 2025-2026

#### **16. ANY URGENT OTHER BUSINESS, AGREED WITH THE CHAIR IN ADVANCE**

None

#### **17. CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS**

None.

Meeting closed 7.47 p.m.

**CHAIR'S SIGNATURE:.....**

**DATE SIGNED:...../...../.....**