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**TEVERSHAM CHURCH of ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**FULL GOVERNORS' MEETING**

**Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> April 2025 6 pm**

***Online***

***MINUTES***

**Present: Governors:** Rebecca Simpkin Smith, Headteacher, Nick Moir (NM) (Chair), Sharon Byrne (SB), Tim Barrow (TB), Fiona Herczog (FH), Rebecca (Beka) Wylie (BW). Jo Haywood (JH), Alissa Nolan (AN), Ian Robinson (IR). Sara Smith (SS).

**Associate Members:** Mel Webster (MW)

Ann Abineri in attendance as Clerk.

The meeting was quorate.

<b>1.</b>	<b>Welcome from the Chair and Prayer led by NM.</b>  <b>Declaration of pecuniary interests:</b> none declared in relation to items on this agenda.	<b>Actions</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Apologies for Absence:</b> Ed Smith (Associate member) not expected to be present.	
<b>3.</b>	<b>Minutes of meeting 25th February 2025</b> Agreed subject to two corrections. To be signed electronically by the Chair. <b>A Governor's query</b> regarding Carry Forward was clarified by the HT and MW. It was noted the year ended in a better situation than had been predicted in February 2025. £74,000 carry forward was used to balance the budget last year.  Confidential Minutes from the 25 <sup>th</sup> February 2025 meeting will be approved separately. The Clerk confirmed that Confidential Minutes can be found by those with appropriate access in a restricted access folder within a meeting folder.	

4.	<p><b>Budget 2025-26: discussion and pre-approval (subject to finalized budget)</b></p> <p>The draft budget has been made available.</p> <p><b>A Governor asked</b> why the position is better than expected and the HT and MW outlined the following factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reductions on staff, which has been an in-depth focus of previous FGB meetings</li> <li>• In year savings e.g. cut back on agency and supply staff</li> <li>• Core School's Budget grant</li> <li>• Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) funding</li> <li>• Additional funding through sports clubs</li> <li>• Accumulation of small savings e.g. cost of VOIP lower than expected, lower electricity bill than expected</li> </ul> <p><b>A Governor asked</b> why the position is often better than predicted and the HT explained a budget is set on a prudent scenario and some matters are unpredictable.</p> <p>It was noted that SEND funding has taken a long time to come through and we have a high number of children with EHCPs. The budget is a snapshot of funding at the time it is created without including money that hasn't come through yet.</p> <p><u>Re budget approval</u></p> <p>Budget meeting with LA schools finance officer Gaynor Pope took place today and a balanced budget has been drafted. It has been difficult to plan a meeting with the term dates being reliant on Easter therefore this is an information meeting tonight and the decision to submit will be made at the next FGB meeting (20<sup>th</sup> May 2025).</p> <p>TB, as Chair of Resource Committee, said the snapshot is useful and <b>asked about</b> the staffing level figures in this year and subsequent years. MW explained there are variances because a recent staffing decision was not known at that time and a further adjustment will be made. It was also noted that because the school year does not coincide with the financial year, when staffing changes occur, figures often represent two thirds of the year.</p> <p><b>A Governor asked</b> about funding for music lessons for children in receipt of Pupil Premium. The HT has been keeping parents of those children informed but at present funding has not been identified. This will affect nine pupils. <b>A Governor asked</b> why we have to make this cut in light of our carry forward. MW explained that with a potential £15,000 carry forward at the moment, it would leave us at potential risk. The HT pointed out that the 2.8% pay award for teachers has been rejected by unions. The Government will not increase what they have said they will fund. On LA advice, the budget is assuming 3% increase and has built this in.</p> <p><b>A Governor asked</b> if any schools are receiving budget deficit letters again this year. MW explained that the LA have advised that schools cannot consider carry forwards a sustainable way to set a budget. The HT added that savings we are making this year are likely to help the situation next year.</p>	
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	<p><b>A Governor asked</b> about the entry in the Cost Centre Analysis Expenditure for teacher salaries asking why this is negative. MW explained this is an accounting strategy because the staffing position wasn't confirmed.</p> <p><b>A Governor asked</b> about Teacher Assistants basic pay and MW explained this is assigned in this way due to an assumption about 'natural wastage', again unconfirmed.</p> <p><b>A Governor asked</b> about external contract cleaning, asking if this sum is correct because it seems very expensive. The HT explained this had been discussed with the Finance Officer and all schools are experiencing high cleaning costs due to the firms also having higher overheads.</p> <p><b>A Governor asked</b> when we last reviewed cleaning contract and MW explained that there had been a situation where a cleaning company had to be sourced very quickly. The cleaning is satisfactory but a review and tender process could be considered in the near future.</p> <p><b>A Governor asked</b> about the rates cost centre. MW explained that as a school our funding for Community Charge comes in and goes straight out again i.e. cost neutral.</p> <p><b>A Governor asked</b> about the 'agency staff pay non teaching' and why this is double what was expected. The HT explained that the budgeted part was the apprentice but there was unexpected agency cover in the summer term as we hadn't been able to appoint to a vacancy.</p> <p><b>A Governor asked</b> about that and other unexpected cover coming to £27,000, and asked whether we should budget a higher amount for next year for 'just in case'. The HT explained that £20,000 has been allowed for this contingency. <b>A Governor challenged</b> the sufficiency of this. The HT explained this is one of the challenges of budgeting. MW pointed out that staff allocation has been challenging but managing with in-school cover has improved. The HT pointed out that cover depends on the needs of the children being supported by TAs. It was agreed that the HT/MW should check this amount before next FGB.</p> <p><b>A Governor commented</b> on the constraints of the spreadsheets in terms of understanding and MW explained the spreadsheet comes from the budgeting software we are required to use. MW explained the first section is income and the second expenditure. Both sections are added up i.e. positives then one deducted from the other.</p> <p><b>A Governor asked</b> about the pay of admin staff and how their pay compares with teacher pay. The HT explained that all staff are paid on the correct scale but some posts are part time and some are full time.</p> <p>Governors agreed that they approve the draft budget in principle but a decision will be made at FGB 20<sup>th</sup> May 2025 for submission by 23<sup>rd</sup>. May 2025.</p>	<p><i>Action:</i> HT/ MW to check cover figure.</p>
5.	<p><b>Decision on Catering Tender</b> Tendering process took place in February 2025. All four companies who looked round the school tendered. DfE Procurement Process used to ensure equity in the process. Score on price and score on non price were given with a pre-set decision to give price 60% weighting when completing scoring.</p>	

The figures for the first year of the contract were shared with Governors. It will be a Three year contract. MW pointed out that tender D had included an assumption for increased meal numbers so all tenders were adjusted to show this.

MW explained that she visited a school that each company is currently working with and outlined her findings for each company. It was noted that one company (A) has received a large subsidy which affects the picture. Tender B, reported that the kitchen staff do not see much of the Operations Manager. A school using Tender C did not recommend the company and what MW saw was not encouraging.

Tender D visit was hindered by the school not being prepared – MW saw the kitchen and spoke to staff but SLT was not available. She checked with another school who uses Company D who have given a good report of all aspects with the exception of recruitment which MW recognizes is a difficult area across catering.

The HT and SS offered information on the presentations and proposals.. Company A seemed a risk in the area of price but the food and food service seemed very attractive. Company D seems to have a good strategy for flexible menus and offers input into food and healthy eating teaching. Company D seem to have a good plan for staffing. Company C and B less attractive, largely for cost reasons. A and D had good strategies for managing allergies. Company D has a pre order system which is good financial management. The HT was impressed with Company D's Operations Manager.

**A Governor asked** about the projected increase in meal numbers and the HT explained that all four companies had convincing strategies for trying to increase uptake such as meetings with parents.

**A Governor asked** if the costs would be the same if the take up was smaller and MW explained this is price per meal in the first year – if the company included other factors, MW recalculated to create comparable figures.

**A Governor asked** if there can be a break point in the contract if prices rise. The HT explained the contracts follow ESPO requirements.

**A Governor asked** if one year contracts are available and the HT and MW explained that process has to be followed. **A Governor pointed out** that the DfE seem to have set safeguards.

**A Governor asked** if the children sampled the food. The HT explained that House Captains and Deputy House Captains enjoyed the food although it was noted that D put on a good show.

**A Governor asked** whether current staff can be transferred to employment by the new company under TUPE arrangements and MW confirmed this.

The Chair summarized that D seems the best option taking into account what has been discussed and those present agreed. Therefore a vote took place and Company D was chosen by unanimous agreement.

The HT thanked MW for her hard work on this.

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<b>6.</b>	<b>Any Other Urgent Business:</b> None received.	
<b>7.</b>	<b>Date of next FGB:</b> 20 <sup>th</sup> May 2025.	