

Broughton Jewish Cassel Fox Primary Finance Committee Meeting Minutes

School: Broughton Jewish Cassel Fox Primary

Quorum: 3 + Principal (met at this meeting)

Chair: David Bondt

Clerk: Frances Bennett

Date of meeting: 4 April 2024

Venue: Broughton Jewish Cassel Fox Primary School

Attendance

Name	Governor type	'End of Term of Office' date	Present (P) / Apologies (Ap) / Absent (A)
Nicola Taylor	Deputy Headteacher (DHT)	29/06/2024	P - In attendance only for item 17
David Bondt	Foundation	31/07/2025	P
Izzi Rosenberg *(committee Chair)	Foundation	29/07/2025	P remotely, intermittently
David Mechlowitz	Foundation	29/07/2025	P
Yehuda Fagleman	Foundation	06/06/2026	P
Dani Mechlowitz**	Foundation	29/07/2025	P
Shlomie Graff	Foundation	30/06/2024	Ap
Rabbi Yehuda Pearlman	Principal	N/A	Ap

**joined the meeting remotely for a short time.*

***joined the meeting later – see item 7*

Others present

Name	Role
Michael Whitehead	External business support consultant
Rachel Baker	School Business Manager (SBM)
Helen Green	Finance manager (FM)
Frances Bennett	Clerk (One Education)

***left the meeting after his presentation – see item 5*

Agenda Items

1	Welcome and apologies
<p>David Bondt agreed to chair the meeting as the committee chair was unable to facilitate the meeting as he was in transit in Europe. Apologies were received and accepted from Rabbi Yehuda Pearlman and Shlomie Graf.</p> <p>A pre-meeting was held with the external consultant, committee chair Izzi Rosenberg and the chief finance officer (CFO) to review all of the financial matters and he asked the external consultant to bring the challenging cash position to the attention of the committee and then the</p>	

governing body as he would not be attending the full meeting and internet access would be intermittent.

	Actions or decisions	Owner	Timescale

2 Verbal declaration of interests and changes to annual declarations

There were no declared interests relating to the agenda or changes to annual declarations. Yehuda Fagleman declared an interest in State Fayre Bakery, which supplies the school.

	Actions or decisions	Owner	Timescale

3 Notification of confidential items or items for AOB

There were no notifications. Pay for Kodesh staff was mentioned, however, that was discussed outside this meeting as it is not within the remit of this committee.

	Actions or decisions	Owner	Timescale

4 Minutes of last meeting 19.12.23 and matters arising

The minutes of the last meeting 19.12.23 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting. A copy will be signed, for retention in the school.

Matters arising

Q. Is there any update on the estate plan?

Ideally the schools cash position and budget has to be taken into consideration before the plan can be completed.

The Chair stated that the school needs to have a five-year plan regardless of finances. The plan will be completed by the SBM with input from Shlomie Graf and the site manager.

	Actions (A) or decisions (D)	Owner	Timescale
D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minutes of last meeting approved 	Finance Committee	
A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Five-year estate plan to be completed 	SBM	

5 2023-24 management accounts

The external consultant and FM presented the management accounts for review. The accounts show the position up to the end of February 2024 which is six months into the year.

Actual income is £1,323,916 compare to the budget of £1,356,999.

Expenditure is £1,454,458 compared to the budget of £1,332,599.

The original budget was set in May 2023 with a set of assumptions, some of which have not crystallised and some that have exceeded expectations. The main variance in income and expenditure is around SEN hub income that was budgeted for but has not been received and associated staff expenditure which is being absorbed into the school.

Each year the school requests additional funding from Salford LA for special educational needs (SEN) funding. In the first six months of the year £20k per month has been accrued in (the request is submitted in December but funding is not agreed until the following April). This is a prudent assumption and equates to £240k for the full fiscal year and the school has requested £290k.

There is still a variance in charitable donations as this years BJOF campaign is still being planned but it is anticipated that this will catch up by the year end.

The school is currently £33,038 under budget in respect of income which equates to just over two percent of the £1,356,999 income expected.

The school is working hard to achieve a balanced budget for the year subject to the above caveats.

The DHT stated that she requested backdated funding for education health and care plans (EHCPs). This has gone to mediation. She is awaiting a response.

All EHCP funding received to date is included in the management accounts.

Q. Will the school receive a lump sum from the LA for SEN?

The LA has a statutory duty to bridge the bulk of the gap between the notional SEN received from the ESFA (£154k) and the estimated amount expended by the school (£571k).

Last year, the school received £184k from Salford LA as a result of submitting the SEN template and this year, the school has requested £290k as it has a much better understanding of its current cost base. The LA advised that we would be informed before the end of March what extra funds would be made available to us, but unfortunately this has been delayed and we expect to be informed later this month.

Once this years allocation has been confirmed the school will speak to the LA about receiving a quarterly advance payment because the delay in receiving the payment is causing quite severe cash flow problems.

Q. What is the £240k?

It is a prudent assumption for the management accounts of a notional £20k per month over the full twelve months of the school year. The school has to account for it on a monthly basis because the costs are incurred on a monthly basis.

Q. Could the LA pay this quarterly?

The school will request this.

Q. Does this mean the school is not clear on a potential deficit?

Yes. Until the information is received from the LA, the financial position cannot be confirmed to trustees (governors). This has been highlighted to the LA. The school has also contacted the education and skills funding agency (ESFA) about the SEN provision and they are looking into it.

Q. Are other schools in the same situation?

Yes, the need has increased significantly over the last four years nationally.

Generally speaking, the funding from EHCPs does not cover the full costs of support and in Salford it is capped at £10k per pupil.

Q. What happens in other LAs?

Most LA's across the country are struggling with the increased demand, Salford is better than some LA's, however, it is still struggling.

Q. Does the LA only fund pupils from Salford?

No. It covers all the pupils in the school regardless of their home address up to a notional £6k per pupil and anything above that is either covered by an EHCP or an application is made to the LA that the child and family live in. The school applied to Bury for extra funding for two pupils and this is still being reviewed.

The school understands the issues and is trying to mitigate these.

Q. Are any teachers resigning?

No. One teacher will be going on maternity leave.

Staffing costs are £101,314 over budget. Energy costs are £12,038 over budget.

It was agreed that timetabling would change, from September 2024. This was discussed at the committee meeting held on 2 April. The model will be more effective from September.

Q. Where is the £60k for maintenance costs?

This is in the repairs and maintenance and other premises costs cost centres.

The budget is split into 12 equal months although spending does not follow this pattern which then leads to variations throughout the year.

Q. What is the situation regarding the solar panels?

The school has received a response from the supplier. There were different options which are still being considered

Q. Do solar panels work if it is raining?

Yes.

Q. Would the supplier be able to estimate if the panels would be able to generate enough electricity for the whole school?

Yes.

The Chair stated that the render is deteriorating at the front entrance to the school and there is grass growing on the roof. The repair to the render needs to be put into the five-year plan. The roof is part of an eco-roof and this will be reviewed. The SBM noted these items.

Q. If the school does not receive the funding from the LA could the deficit increase to £240k?

Yes. There is six months left in this budgetary year and if the school is going to be in difficulty towards the end of the year, it will need to inform the ESFA. The school has already alerted them about the SEN position.

Q. Does the school need £340k funding?

Yes. Because the need for support has grown post pandemic. The aim is to have a balanced budget by year-end. The budget is being controlled in a way that is not diluting the provision.

Q. What is anticipated at year-end?

There may be an in-year deficit of up to £160k, however the school is yet to see what it is going to get from Salford LA and or if the government issue some more grants before the end of the year, therefore, it is difficult to accurately predict the final figure.

Nursery is changing from next year and there has been a lot of interest shown. Six staff want their children to attend Nursery.

Q. How many are coming into the Nursery?

Currently, 45 have been confirmed out of 60 places.

	Actions or decisions	Owner	Timescale

6	Budget virements		
These were covered in item 5 above.			
	Actions or decisions	Owner	Timescale

7	Cashflow forecast		
The external consultant presented the cashflow and the following points were raised.			
The cashflow is showing a deficit for May to August. The cashflow is based on no money being received in respect of the year book or extra money from the ESFA or LA. £184k has been included for SEN funding from Salford which is the same as last year.			
<i>Q. Could the LA refuse to fund the school?</i>			
They would be failing their duty of care if they refused. Ultimately, the school could ask the ESFA for a loan.			
Governors noted the contents of the cashflow forecast.			

***Dani Mechlowicz joined the meeting.*

	Actions or decisions	Owner	Timescale

9 Resource management toolkit

The external consultant presented the resource management toolkit which is completed every year. It is a self-assessment of the school's financial position. It will be taken to the governing body for approval.

Governors also reviewed the self-assessment dashboard.

	Actions or decisions	Owner	Timescale

10 Service level agreements (SLAs)

Governors were advised that the SLA for SEN is being reviewed.

	Actions or decisions	Owner	Timescale

11 School strategy plan – financial aspects

The Chair stated that the school does not have an estates plan yet. This will be reviewed at the next meeting with the school development plan, finance and premises.

	Actions or decisions	Owner	Timescale

12 Premises, health and safety update

The SBM provided governors with an update and the following points were raised.

There are no condition improvement funding (CIF) bids.

Q. Have the existing projects been paid?

There is one payment outstanding and this will be paid when the last tranche of income is received later this month.

The whole school has a new wi-fi system under the "connect the classroom" scheme and the SBM and FM were thanked for this. The school did not have to pay for the new system. Computeam helped with this and with providing chrome books.

The school is in the process of getting a new server as the current one is fourteen years old and is no longer fit for purpose.

Q. Why does the school need a server?

Microsoft will not support the existing software and the old server is not powerful enough to cope with the increased needs of the school. It is anticipated that the school will be cloud based within the next three years and this can be put into the IT development plan.

Some PCs need to be replaced as they are no longer compliant and they are old and slow.

Q. Do staff have all the equipment that they need?

A few laptops are needed.

The Chair commented that an audit of IT equipment is needed and it was explained that a comprehensive list of all of the IT equipment is currently being developed and this is how and why we have identified the need to change some of the equipment.

Q. When will the office computers be replaced?

Any office IT that needs replacing will be in place for the new academic year or before.

Q. Why are teachers using PCs?

They are more robust than laptops. Anyone can use these. The office, Principal and DHT also uses PCs. It was suggested that all new IT purchases consist of a laptop and docking station so that they can have dual usage. This will be looked into and costed out.

Q. Have the old monitors been disposed of?

Shlomie Graf was dealing with this.

	Actions or decisions	Owner	Timescale

13 HR and staffing

The DHT provided an update for governors and the following points were raised.

Five staff are on maternity leave. One teaching assistant (TA) has resigned and one TA has moved to Nursery. A Reception teacher has been appointed for one term. He has been shadowing staff in the school and performing very well. Pupils are behaving well.

Q. What is his contract?

It is a temporary contract.

	Actions or decisions	Owner	Timescale

14 Policies

There were no policies for review.

	Actions or decisions	Owner	Timescale

15 General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

There have been no GDPR breaches.

	Actions or decisions	Owner	Timescale

16 Key facts

The SBM agreed to send these to the clerk to forward to governors.

	Actions (A) or decisions (D)	Owner	Timescale
A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Send key facts to the clerk to forward to governors 	SBM	

17	Audit		
<p>The DHT was 'in attendance only' for this item.</p> <p>The external consultant presented the next items for consideration by governors.</p> <p><u>17.1 Internal checks</u> The external consultant met with the SBM today. This was to review the actions from the internal checks carried out in December. The report stated that checks were carried out in respect of; Fraud, theft and bribery - this area was graded as a medium risk because the threat is constant and we must all stay vigilant.</p> <p>Safeguarding and whistleblowing – this was graded as low risk because all policies and procedures are reviewed at least annually and one dedicated safe guard lead and three deputies have been appointed.</p> <p>Data and IT was graded as a high risk as the server was twelve years old and is old and slow and non-compliant from a cyber security perspective, however, is in the process of being replaced.</p> <p>Governance structures was graded as low risk as an external review of governance had taken place in 2023, an external company provides governance training and support and skills audits are regularly carried out.</p> <p><u>17.2 External audit.</u> There was nothing to report under this item.</p> <p><u>17.3 Risk register.</u> The risk register was presented to governors. Some areas are marked as 'red' relating to risk, such as inability to recruit. Some are standard risks. The external consultant agreed to review the register.</p> <p><i>Q. What is the situation regarding the safeguarding audit that was carried out last year?</i> It is in the single central record (SCR). There were no major findings from the audit.</p> <p><i>Q. Do governors need a report on this?</i> No.</p> <p><i>Q. Is the SCR up to date?</i> Yes.</p>			
	Actions (A) or decisions (D)	Owner	Timescale
A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review risk register 	External consultant	

18	AOB		
<p><i>Q. Can governors have a date for the next meeting?</i> The budget forecast return (BFR) has to be made in July. This will include the budget and structure.</p> <p><i>Q. Will the school be able to finish later?</i></p>			

The teachers' hours will need to be confirmed to ensure the school is compliant.

A meeting will be arranged for June.

	Actions (A) or decisions (D)	Owner	Timescale
A	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Arrange date for the next meeting	Chair	

Date and time of next meeting:	To be confirmed
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