Rudolf Steiner School South Devon School Council
Minutes of the Meeting - Monday 17th December, 2015

Present: Mark Drewell (Chair), Christopher Cooper (CC), Ian Powell (IP) joined the meeting after Matters Arising, Edwina Ratcliffe (ER), Juliet Crittenden (JC), Marcus Link (ML) by invitation

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1 | Declarations of any conflict of interest in the matters to be discussed
   | None |
| 2 | Declarations of any benefits to any trustees arising from any of the matters to be discussed
   | None |
| 3 | Meeting Minutes
   | Minutes of the meetings held on November 23, 2015, were agreed and signed. An amendment to the Minutes of October 5, 2015, clarifying the discussion at that meeting on bank signatories was accepted and the revised minutes were duly signed. |
| 4 | Matters Arising
   | a) PTA meeting of November 7 - The Chair reported that a positive and helpful meeting was chaired by Kim Howard.
   | b) Wood chip boiler - ML reported that the boiler is now working well. Engineers will be visiting soon to recalibrate. The RHI income for this year is estimated at £2,000. |
| 5 | Finance and Recruitment Report
   | Following the written report by the School Administrator the following arose:
   | 5.1 Outlook for next term - The number of children starting in January is currently 253. The variance between the full contribution rate and actual receipts is 26 per cent. We are maintaining our ability to meet our ongoing costs which are around £80 000 per month. The finance team were congratulated for their work on bringing down the amount owing from current families against current term invoices. Learning from the financial situation in 2015, a new approach for admissions is being pursued which recognises the need to appeal to more families who can afford the full contributions whilst ensuring that the school remains accessible to families from all financial backgrounds.
   | 5.2 Notice period payments - The payment for notice periods is being insisted upon per the policy.
   | 5.3 The Greenwood Bridge - A grant received from Die Freunde of £15,600, provides at least half the money needed for the rebuilding of the Greenwood Bridge. Two reliable contractors have been approached. Timing of the work is important and currently planned for the Easter Holiday. Council approved a budget of £30,000 for the bridge repair to be executed by the SMT. While the amount allows for any contingencies that may arise the SMT was encouraged to keep costs as low as possible.
   | 5.4 Staff payrises - The overdue pay rise is happening, planned to be paid in March and to be backdated to September. This follows from the changes made to restructure teaching staff salaries into a simpler, fairer system. It is suggested a Flier Notice be posted to encourage donations to build up an extra salary fund to cover the back pay. It was also agreed that the Staff contributions policy needs to be re-visited.
   | 5.5 Bursary Fund - £8,000 has been raised for the Fund and is under the control of the PTA. This will be kept separate until further notice. Ideally, we would need £60/70,000 annually (5%-6% of a normalised operating budget) in order to create a sustainable resource to significantly reduce variance between full contributions and current actual contributions.
   | 5.6 Financial reporting - The Chair congratulated ML on the financial information now available and requested that a monthly report is developed showing income and expenditure compared with budget along with any known revisions in outlook for the remaining months of each year. This will make financial oversight easier as well as support improved management decision making. |
| 6 | Safeguarding
   | Following a recent email from Jonathan Hobbs, ER as Council Safeguarding Representative said she would follow this up. She has a re-training booked for March. On Council’s behalf she will carry out the audit required (in June) and establish an annual review process thereafter. ER will ensure the policy, process and people (with clearly defined duties) so everyone knows what they have to do if there is an issue. She will act in an oversight capacity to Jonathan Hobbs who has... |
| 7 | **Health & Safety**  
ML gave some history. Previously the school employed a H&S Officer who was contracted for this work for two days per week. This covered Educational work (trips, inductions, etc.), fire safety assessments, risk assessments, and estates safety. The H&S group was disbanded in December 2014. Kevin Jones only took on the Estates aspects of the role.  
Our Insurers have concerns about some of our procedures as our management systems in this area are not as strong as is desirable. This is being urgently addressed by the administration. The budget for H&S is currently £14,000 per annum, which includes paying a part time H&S Officer. ML is reviewing this and plans to change to a system where we use a third party contractor to advise us and has arranged for a specialist to visit next Tuesday (December 22). Assuming their work is acceptable, this approach would cost significantly less (possibly in the order of £7,000 per annum) and would include support 24/7, training, annual reviews and legal certificates "at the push of a button". The H&S group can be reformed without the need for a fully qualified officer in charge. ML would chair. This out-sourcing should cut down the risk element on site as the Expert Adviser will have the overall responsibility for systems. IP stressed how important it is to have an individual on site who can interpret H&S needs in the light of this school, for example around Upper School crafts. Progress on the overall system improvement will be reported at the next meeting. |
| 8 | **School Information Management System (SIMS)**  
ML advised that installing a SIMS was essential to provide a sound IT platform for a more efficient administrative system. For example SIMS would allow a single integrated staff database and also a Pupil Register so absence rates and census requirements, etc., would be very easy to access and report on. The package, including VAT and training would cost approximately £10,000 the first year and thereafter £7,500. Council requested that ML proceeds with this as soon as possible taking into account cashflows. It would have major benefits throughout the school, which could move towards a "nimble and more intelligent administration". |
| 9 | **Legal Issue**  
No response as yet from the complainant and the deadline has passed. |
| 10 | **Strategic Plan (Tara Davis joined the meeting for this item)**  
A plan was set out and agreed that March 7, is the deadline for agreeing the preliminary budget and a contribution rate for 2016/17. Tara and ML will work out a realistic global figure by February 8 for Council approval. Development plans for the next school year and overall intentions for 2017 and 2018 must be included so we have a one year budget and overall 3 year forecast. A proposal was made for a two stage process to involve all stakeholders in the planning process. Stage 1: an all day Teachers’ Inset Meeting on February 22nd (school will be closed), followed by an Open All School Meeting on Saturday February 27. |
| 11 | **Bunkhouse**  
Council approved the offer of an interest free loan of £40,000 from a benefactor to enable us to complete the building so it is ready for initial use. Clear conditions of repayment have been set out and agreed. A number of intial uses are being explored (as well as some combination of them):  
a) keep to the Bunkhouse plan  
b) as classrooms  
c) multifunctional use including parents’ space, café, shop, reception and admissions.  
The final decision rests with the School Management Team (SMT) who will consult with College and with Council (the latter because of the financial implications of use). SMT is also supported in this arena by the Estates Group who will also assist ML in operational oversight day-to-day during the completion of the building.  
Given that the building will inevitably be multi-functional over its lifetime, irrespective of the initial use, a new name is being sought which will be more generic than “Bunkhouse”. SMT has final authority in deciding the name. |
| 12 | **Trustee Recruitment**  
There are currently 4 or 5 names who are potential recruits. These to be approached to undergo a recruitment procedure. The Chair and ER to work on this matter. |
**13 AGM**
Date set for May 18th, 2016.

**14 Date of next meeting** - Monday 11th January at 6.30 (IP will hand over to JL as the new Teacher representative on Council)
Meeting dates for 2016 were set:
Monday February 8
Monday March 7
Monday April 11
Monday May 9
Monday June 6
Monday September 12
Monday October 10
Monday November 7
Monday December 5

ALL