

MINUTES

PENKETH SOUTH PRIMARY SCHOOL

MEETING OF THE FULL GOVERNING BODY – SUMMER TERM 2025

Focus: Finance

Tuesday 20 May 2025 at 5.00pm (at the school)

PRESENT:

Mrs Claire Lawton (Headteacher)
Ms Carla Bonner
Ms Pamela Lucido

Mr Steven Hennessey (Vice Chairperson)
Mr Simon Carroll

IN ATTENDANCE:

Maria Warburton (LA Minute Clerk)

Ms Laura Atherton (Observer)

Part One: Non Confidential Business

1 Welcome

The vice chairperson welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2 Absence and apologies

Apologies have been received from Mrs Bullivant, Mrs Williams, Mr Smith, Mrs Roper and Miss Browne.

3 Declaration for personal interests for any item on this agenda

No interests were declared for any item on the agenda.

4 Items for any other business

There were no other items.

5 Chair's Emergency Decisions

There were no chair's emergency decisions to report.

6 Governing Body Membership

The following terms of office are due to end:

- Mr Jake Smith (parent governor) – 16.11.21

There are two co-opted governor vacancies.

The meeting moved to agenda 12 (Finance) at this point.

Finance (Laura Atherton)

Ms Atherton reported that the budget (version 2) is a work in progress. They are looking at the different allocations and checking funding. The school is looking at a deficit at the moment and they are not at the point where they can approve the budget.

Ms Atherton highlighted the main assumptions they are working on: They have included an increase of 2.8% for the teachers' pay award. There has been an uplift of 4% for support staff from April 2025 and in 2026 there could also be an increase of 3.2%. There is a difference of approximately a £3,500 saving in the budget.

With regards to teachers' pay there has been talk that it could be higher – no grants have been forthcoming for this. If it was higher than 2.8% the government would need to give schools a grant as it would be unaffordable.

GAG funding: This is the 2024/25 current year funding. They are including the core schools' budget grant and have given an example of what the current funding is based on 204 pupils compared to what they are looking at for 2025/26. They are looking at a possible funding cut (just over £2,000) as they are not seeing any inflation in the GAG funding.

A governor asked about the set rates from the government for 2025/26. Ms Atherton explained that there are no confirmed figures as yet and no grants. Schools are expected to fund the 2.8% pay award and whatever support staff works out at with no additional funding. They have done a comparison on teaching staff and support costs compared to next year and there is a £58,000 cost on staffing. The national insurance cost was a big increase – this has been added in. The majority of this is for support staff as rates increased to 15% and the thresholds changed slightly to pay on the lowest threshold. They have a grant towards this; however, it is not quite covering the cost and there is a shortfall of £4,000.

The MAT central charges have also risen up to 4% in order to cover their charges – this was a recent request. On that basis the deficit is £5,850 which is small, they can do some cost saving exercises and look at utilities and premises. If they continue in the current position with no pay awards next year the situation will become worse.

A governor asked if they are being prudent, ie: the nursery numbers are going up each year. Ms Atherton explained that they are basing this on what they know and the hours that are confirmed ready for September.

The numbers do increase, and they do factor that in. They can look at the nursery to see where the opportunities are. They have also discussed lettings with the headteacher. The school has a link club, and the price has not increased for a long time. They have created a new pricing structure for the link club and will see if this is introduced. They will consider whether to do an internal link club at some point in the future.

They have also looked at the catering. They have increased the meal price to £2.70 from September (up from £2.60). The new chief finance officer at the trust thinks they will go with a 10p increase each year, ie: £2.80 next year to keep in line with inflation and salaries. **A governor asked** if the cost was originally £2.40. It was confirmed that it was. **A governor asked** if there could be a drop in take up for school meals. Ms Atherton informed governors that they will keep a watch in case they see a drop in numbers – this is a reason for the more gradual approach in the increase.

Ms Atherton informed governors that she is working on a version 3 for the budget which will be discussed in Part Two (confidential). They need to have a final version submitted to the trust on Friday. Ms Atherton explained that she will work on what she can for the next few days to bring the budget into a surplus condition for a breakeven budget. They have just finished the April accounts which will be sent over. This year is looking considerably healthy with a number of occurrences in their favour staffing wise. However, there are concerns for next year.

The headteacher thanked Ms Atherton for her support.

Ms Atherton left the meeting at 5.13pm.

A governor asked about pay progressions and if staff have asked for these. The headteacher informed governors that it is expected that they will receive it. In the past if a teacher met their appraisal target it went up – now it is a natural progression to move up. If they were to move from the top of M6 to UPS there would be a discussion.

7 Previous full governing body minutes, matters arising and action log

- a) To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 25 March 2025 and discuss any matters arising

AGREED: **The minutes from the previous meeting held on 25 March 2025 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the vice chair.**

- b) Action log
The following action was carried forward:

ACTION: **C/F: The headteacher to arrange a staff wellbeing audit in the summer term.**

The headteacher explained that with regards to including the date of birth for governors – TCAT require this as it is statutory; however, only admin can see it. The headteacher added that she has requested TCAT email addresses for all governors.

The headteacher informed governors that she has put the questions and the TCAT survey onto Governor Hub and passed on governors' comments from the last meeting. A total of 48 parents responded. The headteacher said that she asked TCAT about parents being able to answer the questions for more than one child and was advised that this has now been changed. Also, if there are children at two different schools they can answer for each of them. The results from the survey were really positive – for any responses that were not as positive they have already put things in place.

Transition is very effective. They are ensuring that transition for Early Years will be great this year. There are some in nursery and some from nurseries outside of school – they have 2-year-olds starting and some that are not quite two. They also have some 3-year-olds coming in. They are ensuring that they are sending the right letter to parents with the correct arrangements.

The following action was carried forward:

ACTION: **C/F: The headteacher to arrange a survey to reception parents in October.**

They have reviewed the reports that go out to parents. The end of year report has some information on how the child is doing and what they need to do next.

The headteacher reported that she has spoken with Paul Sinnott and he produced a map which shows that the school owns the field. The school next door has made a garden on part of the field. Eagle Sports also rents out the field from them. The markings for the sports day have been put on (who paid for that). The headteacher explained that they have the option to sell or they should receive some money from it. There is a grant lease, and Mr Sinnott is looking into that. Neither school uses the whole field. There may be some financial gain when renting it out.

A governor asked if the school next door has a holiday club. The headteacher confirmed that they do and that is where the Lettings Policy comes into it.

The headteacher added that they have also been looking into the road at the front of the school – they thought that it stopped at the barrier; however, it continues to the care home and the LA owns the whole road. When the PCSO says they cannot come onto the road as it is private land, they can.

The headteacher reported that the new caretaker has started build a shed for the forest school – the caretakers are working well together.

The following actions were carried forward:

ACTION: C/F: Mr Smith to send his health and safety link governor report to the headteacher.

C/F: Dates to be arranged in advance for the next academic year for link governor visits.

The headteacher mentioned that she had suggested to Ms Bonner that she says that she has forgotten her password to access the National College; however, her email address was not recognised.

ACTION: The headteacher to contact Laura Fletcher (TCAT) regarding Ms Bonner's email address not being recognised.

The headteacher informed governors that Mrs Briggs will arrange to come one of their governing body meetings in the autumn term when the dates for these have been finalised.

8 Pupil Premium update

ACTION: To be carried forward to the next meeting.

9 PE and Sports Premium

ACTION: To be carried forward to the next meeting.

10 Statutory Assessments

The headteacher informed governors that SATs took place last week. The cohort struggled all year in terms of their attitudes towards the tests. However, last week went really well and their attitude improved, and they got on with it. There were no struggles, and the children came in early for a snack and toast and a drink. Most children took the test in the hall, and some accessed it in this room. One child has an EHCP for mental health and has not been in school since October and has been working with a tutor. The headteacher added that they were thrilled when he came into her office to do the test.

Mr Smith came into school for maths. There are processes and procedures to follow: the papers have to be locked in a cupboard and signed for. This is in Mr Smith's report which is very detailed. They have to name the children where everything had to be transcribed. They will now move onto phonics screening after the half term and the multiplication checks for Year 4.

The headteacher explained that Mr Smith gave some feedback from his visit – some children did the test in this room and were allowed extra time based on a number of factors – they were then moved back into the main hall but should have remained in here. Most of the children had finished the test so the extra time was more about checking.

A governor asked when KS1 will be doing their tests. The headteacher informed governors that they will take place week beginning 16th June – it is no longer statutory.

11 Policies

- **Intimate Care Policy**
They have ensured that the new EYFS statutory guidelines are included (the old policy was out of date). The policy has been updated and includes forms at the back for permission. This ensures that a system is in place.
- **Lettings Policy**
The headteacher reported that the last contract they found was from 2016. The link club is paying £500 per term for the loan of a room for three hours (the term could be twelve weeks or ten weeks in spring, and it is still the same price). This works out to approximately £1.50 per hour and it has never been challenged.

The headteacher explained that discussions have taken place about raising the price and the decision was not made. They have contacted the link club again and will meet with them following the half term to discuss the new policy and negotiate the new cost of £20 per hour. It is not known what they pay per hour in the school next door. It is likely to raise to £10 per hour.

A governor asked about bringing the service in house. The headteacher explained that a consultation would need to take place, they could employ staff or TUPE staff and decide how they want to run it. They could ensure they have the right staffing qualities and training. This would increase work in their office; however, there is a potential with staff that may want more hours. They could also consider having a holiday club.

The headteacher informed governors that the policies have been provided to governors for information and do not require approval.

A governor mentioned that there is no reference to wi-fi in the policy.

ACTION: **The headteacher to look into wi-fi being referenced in the Lettings Policy.**

A governor asked if the hourly rate is in line with what they are charging other people; the headteacher confirmed that they are.

12 Finance

This was discussed earlier in the meeting. **A governor asked** if the headteacher feels it has improved since the last time. The headteacher informed governors that it is still not great. The new CFO seems very knowledgeable, and they are tightening up where they can. Lynn Jepson works with the LA every fortnight and has been through what they need to do on a daily, weekly and monthly basis.

13 Health and Safety (including link governor feedback)

This was discussed as part of Mr Smith's link governor visit report.

14 Buildings and Premises

- Update on field and Finlay Avenue/car park
This was discussed earlier in the meeting.

15 Safeguarding and Welfare (including link governor feedback)

The headteacher reported that they had a review in the spring term. The safeguarding team (the headteacher, Mrs Roper and Ms Bennett) work closely together and there is a structure and process in place. A strategy meeting was held last week for some children and child protection meetings are scheduled for next week.

16 Behaviour and Attendance update (including link governor feedback)

The headteacher reported that behaviour is generally good in school; there are three children currently on behaviour plans. A couple of plans enable children to gain points and prizes. One of the children has taken a shine to the caretaker and if they earn some points are able to do some jobs with him, ie: watering the plants. Another child is on a pastoral plan which is a graduated response; they have noted the issues and are identifying a need – she has done really well. The behaviour plans are working for the children, and they will continue with those.

With regards to attendance, parents will know that they have sending out some attendance letters. In April the office staff met with the attendance lead at Bridgewater High School and received some template letters. They have a colour coded chart for attendance (from green to red). Parents have received a letter which states which band their child is in. The school received a few phone calls following this which were dealt with. A governor mentioned that the parents WhatsApp group was busy, and individual parents shared a detailed analysis. The headteacher informed governors that the letter explained that it is the school's statutory duty to inform parents. Over a year the days can add up.

A governor asked if it takes into account sickness or unauthorised absence. The headteacher confirmed that it does – it takes into account every day off.

The headteacher informed governors that attendance in reception is not statutory until the child turns five – it is about getting the children into good habits.

On a positive note, the 360 report shows how attendance has grown since the letters were sent out. The school has always been just above the national average – for the last few weeks it has been quite a bit above that. The headteacher added that she stands at the school gate and always ensures that someone is there. It is about ensuring that the systems they introduce continue.

17 Headteachers Performance Management arrangements and identify an external adviser

This is arranged by TCAT in the autumn term; dates will be sent through.

18 Scheme of Delegation and Consultation Meeting.

- A new scheme of delegation
- The addition of the new element concerning local community
- The renaming of local governing bodies to local challenge bodies if approved

The headteacher informed governors that Melissa Alexander and others at TCAT have been looking into this. Potentially there are some new things happening: opportunities for governors from the local community and how the schools work in the community. There is also a potential name change from governing bodies to local challenge bodies. A meeting is taking place on 4th June from 4.30pm to 6.00pm at TCAT for governors, headteachers and chairs of governors.

19 Governing body self-evaluation

ACTION: Look at and review the Effectiveness tab on Governor Hub and look at The Key's self-evaluation toolkit in the autumn term.

20 Governor Briefing papers

The following governor briefing papers were circulated prior to the meeting for information:

- a) Governor Briefing paper
- b) Oversight of Financial Management
- c) Early Career Teacher Entitlement (ECT) DfE Updated Guidance

21 Governor visits

Ms Lucido informed the headteacher that she would like to do a governor visit. The headteacher explained that she will put some proposed dates together with a focus for each visit. This will cover the academic year for governors to come in a couple of times during that year and then produce a short report after that.

22 Governor training

Governor training requirements may be highlighted as a result of the effectiveness review on Governor Hub or the governing body self-evaluation. The headteacher suggested that they could set up some training for roles or she could talk about the SATs or the Early Years baseline assessments which they do in September.

A governor asked how they could help the school and become more involved as a governor. The headteacher explained that they would like to work more in the community and some governors could become involved in that.

23 Any other business

There were no other items.

24 Future meeting dates

ACTION: **The clerk to email some proposed dates to the headteacher and chair for the next academic year (based on the timings of this year's dates).**

PART ONE OF THE MEETING CLOSED AT 6.08pm

SIGNED
Chairperson

DATE

