



An Daras Trust
Igniting Curiosity Growing Capabilities

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15/05/2024

Minutes

Finance, Resources & Staffing Committee 1 - Summer 2024 Wednesday 15th May 2024 at 9.30am at central office

1. Welcome and Apologies

Present: Peter Hague, Ian Wilkinson, Gill Shippesides, Will Hermon

Present on Zoom: Steve Tavener

Apologies: Claire Paul, Jon Sharpe, Jo Callow (Ex Officio)

In Attendance: Emma Gilbert (CFO), Toni Martin (Governance Officer)

2. Declarations of Interest/Pecuniary Interests relevant to this Agenda

None declared.

3. Minutes of previous FRS Spring (15th May 2024) and matters arising

- Identify budgeting issues (EG). *Discussed at audit committee but to be covered here in item 6.*
- School Resource Self-Assessment Tool to audit committee (EG). *Complete.*
- Put figure together for absence fund and take to Audit (EG). *Complete.*
- Reserves and GAG policy to be merged and presented to full Board on 20th March (EG).
Approved.
- Confidential minutes: proposal for payroll manager's pay (EG). *Agreed at Audit.*
- Confidential minutes: Update directors on possible deputy options (CP). *Discussed at full Board on 20th March 2024. CP has identified someone and will approach them to discuss.*

Committee agreed the minutes and the Chair signed a copy.

4. Confidential Agenda Items

Some items under item 6 are recorded at confidential minutes.

5. Transfer Matters

WH noted the Duchy accounts presented to us on transfer. The accounts are looking overspent going forward; the funding that they are coming in with is not what was expected. The main issues seem to be focussed around Callington. The deficit is looking around £300K. Changes will be required and this will not be seen as popular, as it will seem that An Daras are making lots of changes but this is required to fix the problems created by the previous Duchy Trust.

Is there access to grants to help rectify this as this is a historical problem and not an An Dara issue? No, ESFA would expect us to make changes and if these don't work then they may assist.

Does that mean their reserve is used? Effectively yes. **How do we 'wind the Duchy Trust' up when they have a negative budget?** We cannot do that, they effectively start with nothing. **Do we have a breakdown of the £226K expenses, is it one or two big things or lots of small things?** It seems to be a lot of small things and shows a lack of control. If you are going to make difficult decisions, then

this should be done this year and not let it run into next year. This will be looked at, with the possibility of accruing things going forward.

The directors approved the Grant Funding Agreement between Cornwall Council and An Daras relating to the Nursery re-design and improvement at Callington Primary School. This is something taken on by Duchy Trust previously and now has to be taken on by An Daras.

6. **Review/Discuss Balanced Budget for Financial Year**

The committee were provided with draft budgets and a list of assumptions including staffing, utilities, catering, repairs and reserves.

LT, PT and Wer budgets for next year are looking reasonable in terms of setting a budget. NP, SSCA, WHA, SC and CG are proving tricky to set a balanced budget. It is noted that the larger schools are proving more difficult this year as the classes of 30 are not full, yet they are not small enough to combine classes. Therefore, funding the class teacher and TA per class is proving difficult to balance. Callington numbers are also low. We also have a stable and experienced leadership team that cost more money each year. Also some teaching staff are moving up scales. Teacher pay rise of 6% is only partially funded. Pensions have also increased by 5% employer contribution; a grant will be received to help with this but may not address completely.

WH discussed potential options for staff restructuring and options for savings. These were discussed and recorded at confidential minutes. The budget will be adjusted and other options looked at, and this will then be discussed further at FRS 2 this term.

The mini-bus proposal was discussed (purchase of a Launceston based mini bus) that will save money over time and expensive future transport costs won't have to be factored into the budget. The funding for the bus can come out of capital funds, and not impact on the income and expenditure. **This was approved.**

The DFC budget can be spent on 3 new ovens for schools and save further maintenance costs going forward. **It is important that we have a discussion with Aspens to see where savings can be made and changes to improve the service.** This will be done. There was further discussion on capital funding, and how this can be allocated. Is there anything that we lease, that could be paid for instead? This will be looked into and discussed further at FRS 2. **Action: Discuss capital funding expenditure opportunities (WH/EG)** at FRS 2

7. **Review 3-year Budget Return**

This was discussed briefly at this stage.

8. **Policy Review**

Flexible Working Policy – new policy required, provided by solicitors. One point was noted and some typos which will be amended. **Approved.**

9. **DONM**

Next meeting will be Weds 19th June 2024 at the central office.

It was agreed that having this short budget focussed FRS 1 in the summer term was useful and will continue. **TM will amend meeting planner to insert FRS 1 and 2 for summer term.**

Meeting closed at 11am.

TJH Martin
Governance Officer

Distribution List:

J. Sharpe – Director (Chair)
S. Tavener – Director (Vice)
P. Hague – Director
C. Paul – Director
I. Wilkinson – Director
G. Shipsides - Director
W. Hermon – CEO Director
E. Gilbert – CFO
J. Callow – Ex Officio Observer