

**Finance & Resources Committee Meeting**  
**Monday 6<sup>th</sup> October 2025, 5.30 p.m.**  
**Queen Emma School**  
**MINUTES**

Sean Lang (CoG)	Richard Baldwin
Sarah Jarman (EHT)	Richard Wilson
Julia Neal	Harriet Phillips
Nicole Wilson	Nicky Pedder (FBM)
Anna Biard	Cath Stubbs

	Item	Supporting Paperwork	Actions
1	Apologies for absence (Clerk)	Apologies received from Stanley Wilson	
2	Elect Chair (Clerk)	Proposal of HP to continue to chair the committee, this was seconded by R Baldwin. HP thanked the group for the re-election of Chair to the Finance & Resources Committee	
3	Declaration of Interest (Chair)	No interests declared for this meeting.	
4	Agree Minutes of the last meeting	Minutes 30.06.2025 The Governors were happy to accept the minutes as an accurate version of the last meeting	
5	Matters Arising	Regarding item 15 on today's agenda: EHT went back to the staff member with the decision from the last meeting (not approved). The staff member then asked if the governors if we meet the staff cover costs were she to fund the cost of the course herself. EHT added that this member of staff has since gone on to start NPQ/SENCo training and is working with the DfE English hub. She also applied for an Early Years Lead Practitioner within the Local Authority, but wasn't successful. So in terms of Forest School training, the Governors felt that any additional time to be covered for training for this member of staff would be disproportionate to what she is already being enabled to do. <b>Governor decision: Not approved</b>	
6	Review Terms of Reference (Committee)	Terms of Reference 2025 FMB informed the Governors of the changes in this document and authorisation values must correspond with our QF financial procedures. FBM confirmed that the Terms of Reference document has been updated and is	

		<p>in alignment with QF financial procedures.</p> <p>Governor Challenge: Do we ever review the Pupil Premium funding? Answer by EHT: Yes this reviewed in F&amp;R or is it reviewed in S&amp;I committee meetings. EHT went on to add that Governors are always included in the decision process and where Pupil Premium will be spent as they are invited to attend the budget setting meetings. The sum is set and the S&amp;I committee gauge effectiveness of how it is spent. The information about allocations of the pupil premium funding can be located on the school websites.</p> <p>Governor Challenge: Is this done in the S&amp;I Committee? Answer: All deputy the head teachers present confirmed this, EHT added that it is included it in her Headteacher's report and it's on our website.</p> <p>HP asked the group if they thought this is sufficient (ie. the current process) as HP doesn't remember discussing it at F&amp;R and wants to make sure it is definitely considered. Answer: Yes all funding is covered at governing body meetings and are adequate (PP, Sport Premium, SEND)</p> <p>SJ – explained that the ToR had a large overhaul in recent years and the review was to reflect the changes in the QF financial procedures.</p> <p>"Alongside the S&amp;I committee- 6a.2 - wording to be updated.</p> <p>Terms of Reference - Accepted</p>	Clerk to amend ToR with new wording
7	Review QF Financial Procedures for Schools	<p>Revised in October 2025 for governor approval for the QF Financial Procedures for Schools.</p> <p>EHT pointed out that the checklist on p19 is new, regarding agency staff. This checklist with now be added to our Agency Policy. SJ pointed out that the LA documentation reflected changes previously made at The Federation.</p> <p>Accepted and approved (NB Clerk had already accepted the tracked changes, this was explained by EHT)</p>	SJ to adapt Agency policy when this becomes due for review to reflect the same wording as the QF procedures.
8	Personnel Up-date (SJ)	<p>EHT informed the group that the FBM is moving on to new role.</p> <p>Shortlisting for a new FBM happened today, 1 application was received and the interview is on Friday. The LA is giving us a certain level of support in the interim period. EHT is to finalise with the LA the amount of time/support they can give. Our existing Finance Manager can support/has supported previously to a point, then it has to be passed on to our school financial advisor in order for us to produce a CEA. The Finance Manager will be working 5 extra hours per week in the interim period whilst we recruit for a new Federation Business Manager.</p> <p>FBM explained the complexity of the SMER month end reporting process; we populate it, the LA (the school's financial advisors)) pick it up, they support our Finance Manager who then enters into SBS. This is followed by</p>	

		<p>a further deep dive is done which is reported back to the EHT. EHT then passes on any HR changes to the LA. Governor Challenge, HP asked if this is enough support for EHT: EHT replied that yes, she will have access to data in order to produce monthly reports.</p> <p>FBM added that currently FMS and SBS do not talk to each other. Which has been found to be even more complex since we have split the school budgets. FMS is a combined total for both schools, whereas SBS does is separately but it has to be manually input.</p> <p>HP congratulated FBM for her new job and on behalf of all the governors, thanked her for all the positive changes she has implemented.</p> <p>This was the only personnel update.</p>	
9	<p>School Business Manager Report (NP), including:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Premises</li> <li>• H&amp;S</li> <li>• Finance</li> </ul>	<p>Budget vs Actuals Report Federation Business Manager's Report October 2025</p> <p>This went to FIG on Friday and notes from this are on the FBM report.</p> <p>Staff Pay Awards 2025 and Teacher Salary Progressions 2025 have all gone through and are on the budget. It was highlighted that in the absence of a FBM in post – Steph Kirbyshire is our new School Financial Advisor and we had a very positive first meeting.</p> <p>School month end reporting continues to be challenging.</p> <p>Re forecast Q2 at the end of October.</p> <p>QED Pupil Numbers - Current uptake is 88.6% = equating to 88.6% of funding = to 48 children = circa £250K</p> <p>QED Staffing – this isn't moving how it needs to.</p> <p>The report mentions the admission of 20 new children since September. EHT asked if these are included in the data? FBM confirmed they are not included but will be used in the reforecasting of the budget. Governor HP commented that potentially the budget may show an improvement in income.</p> <p>QEM Pupil Numbers – one Reception class again with a 92% whole school update. There is still room for additional pupils, but governors will need to consider how they manage the demographics of the area in upcoming meetings. Governors will need to consider how this will affect the structure of the Federation, in particular Queen Emma. UIFSM is pre populated for the school by the LA Finance Team. UIFSM has been duplicated on the QEM budget which has negatively impacted the budget as it is listed twice. The School Financial Advisor was notified and the pre populated funding line on the budget was removed.</p> <p>Regarding the Significant Variances on the report, FBM concluded that these will be work in progress as the budgets will be out of kilter until the reforecast.</p>	

		<p>It is expected that the future demographic is likely to show that our pupil numbers will be 90 per year across the two schools.</p> <p>The Budget Recovery Plan will be due by. May 2026 and until the future demographics will need to be considered. Belinda Harvey (LA School Improvement Advisor) will be advising the school on structures to consider.</p> <p>It is likely to be a slow process, going forward that will need to be managed in a sensitive manner. Redundancies will be avoided wherever possible.</p> <p>A Governor RW concluded that EPM's wording of temporary contracts need to be checked.</p> <p>Benchmarking, in particular Educational ICT. This is high because it was from last year and it was on the wrong line. Governor Challenge RW: Are the 'Similar Schools' considered the same? Answer: FBM Said that similar schools were compared e.g. size and context.</p> <p>Utilities: FBM talked about the long standing difficulties with the QEM heating system, concluding that it will work this winter, but missing elements not put in at the time of original installation mean that the new heating system will not be efficient. It has also transpired that these missing elements has cost us in the region of 50k-60k per year since 2011 and the LA have been challenged on this.</p> <p><b>Governor Challenge:</b> Will the LA fund installation of the new elements which will mean that the heating system runs efficiently? (asked by RB)</p> <p><b>Response:</b> FBM said that this is to be confirmed. A copy of the email to from the FBM to the LA is included in the FBM report in this meeting's documents.</p> <p>Catering. We are running higher than similar schools. Over staffed and over budget. Aspens have said that QF will not be charged for this however we need this confirmed in writing. Improvements in presentation and meal quality have been noticed in some respects. We are hopeful that the change in personnel will be positive. Aspens staff at Queen Emma have reportedly not been using the ovens properly, with a lack of steam where appropriate (they are steam ovens). Clerk/School Sec to take photos of any unpleasing looking meals and send to EHT. The current contract ends at the end of 2026 calendar year and it will be under review until then. Julia @ Aspens understands how frustrated we are.</p> <p><b>Governor Challenge HP:</b> Is there anything else to highlight in this report?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- KS1 playground @ QED. The boat has been considered high risk, the matting is shrinking in that area. We've spoken with PSFA and we're going to look at everything again. A new spec will be included to put into a new framework tender to be submitted that now includes the removal of the boat.. FBM</li> </ul>	
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		<p>wants to focus on this before she leaves.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- LA mobile classroom re-roofing at Queen Edith. This has been completed successfully.</li> <li>- PCM and our estates management plan. This needs to be reviewed, longer term planning/budgeting is required.</li> <li>- Swimming Pool at Queen Edith. Ongoing. Continuation of hiring The Perse swimming pool for this year.</li> <li>- Playground equip in both schools. Ongoing maintenance is very costly, to be considered when looking at new contracts. One off bolt costs highlighted as an example.</li> </ul>	
10	Pay Awards 2025	Pay awards have been approved	
11	Feedback from FIG meeting (HP & SL)	<p>CoG gave a brief summary regarding matter of the transfer if of the school land/building to the Queens' Federation, pertaining to the 2 site manager properties. In 2011 when QEM was opened, QED and QEM became a Federation, not a trust and it is semi -autonomous. This meant that we can control our own admissions and our site.</p> <p>No legal transfer found of deeds was found or created (that we know of) of the transfer of the school site to the Federation. Previously LA have acted as if they own it, carrying out maintenance and repairs etc. The question is, who owns the site..... and who owns the houses? The issue has be re raised by the solicitors (facilitator between council and school) they have asked for our take on the situation.</p> <p>CoG confirmed that control of admissions was given to us. The site however has not been legally handed over to the Governors. CoG confirmed that it should have been, but it hasn't materialised.</p> <p>Alison Cramer (LA Assistant Director) is going back to Chris Sutton (LA Governance Lead) to find out more.</p> <p>CoG kindly wrote a helpful statement explaining this to solicitors.</p> <p><b>Governor Challenge (RW):</b> Who asked solicitors about this?</p> <p><b>Response:</b> EHT, we did because it was the time of Ofsted. The previous Clerk instigated this, she then left the Federation. The lawyer then left and the new lawyer contacted the current clerk to re-open conversation.</p> <p>The conclusion was that if we get legal title of QEM house, Alison Cramer at the LA confirmed that the school should benefit from this at the most recent FIG.</p> <p><b>Governor Challenge:</b> Are the trees ours or the LA? As they are always causing problems with the neighbours.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> To be discussed in Item 14.</p> <p>All of the above is all ongoing.</p> <p>Other feedback from the FIG meeting was that the recovery plan submitted was not approved because it did</p>	

		<p>not represent the savings required. Some other schools were reported to be in a similar position. The overall attitude to our situation is very supportive and it was noted that the LA took on board the child implications and not just financial implications of our recovery and budget plans.</p> <p><b>Governor Challenge (HP):</b> Did FIG mention that QED is also consider the financial situation of Queen Edith?  <b>Response:</b> The FIG was focussed around Queen Emma only, although the LA should be aware of all of the financial positions of their schools.</p> <p><b>Governor Challenge (RB):</b> Regarding the May 2026 deadline and having talked about things for a year or so, they keep moving the date back. Are there any concerns that they will be run out of patience?  <b>Response:</b> EHT, the LA are working to DfE regulations, we must re submit by May 2026 so they can monitor our progress. Jonty will listen to all our business plans before a final submission.</p> <p><b>Governor Challenge (RW):</b> So, the plan we did in May 2025.... we were virtually in the dark?  <b>Response:</b> EHT, the demographic figures were the game changer and our subsequent changes have made a significant difference at year end.</p> <p>EHT added that we need to be mindful Ofsted are due 2027/28 and we need to be in a stable situation. EHT asked CoG and HP if there was anything else from FIG they wanted to add to this part of the meeting? No not really; take a formal decision at FGB regarding implications for demographics, all off the above will need to be considered, possibly at the December meeting.</p> <p>Demography figures will finally mean that we can plan for the long term.</p>	
12	Audit for first HR Committee of the academic year (NP)	<p>Audit 2025 – 2026 (EPM document)  Pre populated checks and balances in place.  Governor SR has left- Possibly to be replaced with Governor Phil Kirkman as the named governor on this document.</p> <p>Any other comments? None</p>	HP to contact Phil Kirkman
13	Policies for review and ratification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Health &amp; Safety Policy 2025  Paediatric First Aid has been updated.</li> </ul> <p><b>Policy Ratified</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policy on the use of mobile phones and other smart devices in schools</li> </ul>	

		<p>EHT has updated this policy as per LA document.</p> <p>Governor Challenge (RW) - Do we had any problems with phones? Answer - No we don't, all parents are cooperative. Children hand their phones in at the office if they have them and are asked to switch them off prior to entering the school site.</p> <p><b>Policy Ratified</b></p>	
14	Tree Surveys	<p>EHT summarised the communication from the LA. .</p> <p>Part of the requirement is to zone off trees on our site. As a result, within that zone EHT has to complete a tree risk assessment for each site. If it is an emergency situation you email <a href="mailto:trees@cambridgeshire.co.uk">trees@cambridgeshire.co.uk</a>. The tree is surveyed, quote for the work is given and the work is carried out.</p> <p>After a webinar on the subject, EHT confirmed that the trees on the school site are the responsibility of the land owner and the land users, therefore it is our responsibility to maintain the trees.</p> <p>Governor Challenge (RW) – Is the boundary clear? Answer EHT – yes and illustrated on the tree survey supplied by the LA. The survey is carried out annually to 2.5 years by the LA, according to their documentation.</p> <p><b>Governor Challenge (RB):</b> Do we have any choice?</p> <p><b>Response:</b> EHT, No</p>	
15	Forest School training request	<p>Policy &amp; Application for Time Off for Training or Study- LC @QEM</p> <p>See above in matters arising</p>	
16	Health and Safety	<p>Queen Edith H&amp;S Meeting minutes 23.06.2025</p> <p>No comments</p> <p>Queen Edith H&amp;S Meeting minutes 09.06.2025</p> <p>There was a query over the aforementioned heat stroke child at QEM. EHT informed the governors that this was also dehydration, EHT had spoken with mum, child had been outside and very hot all weekend.</p> <p>SJ is considering the installation of an air conditioning unit in one class so that children can get respite in the Summer months at Queen Emma – she will liaise with the PSFA, but but the cost of ongoing maintenance needs to be considered.</p> <p>Governor Challenge (HP) - Car park change of access, what was this matter? Answer EHT- Too many staff were parking on the roundabout at Queen Emma leaving little or no space for lunchtime nursery parents dropping off and collecting. This resulted in parents parking on the roundabout itself. Staff have co-operated with parking in the allocated staff parking and the issue has been resolved so far.</p>	

17	What is the impact of decisions made during the previous meetings	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. We made a decision about the trim trail but this has since been stalled.</li> <li>2. SLT continue to cover teaching staff absence to reduce costs. Not ideal, but for some reason there is a lot of staff sickness at QEM.</li> <li>3. Not specifically the last meeting, but ongoing tightening decisions continue to impact our financial situation</li> <li>4. See change of wording in agenda item</li> </ol>	
18	Safeguarding	<p>Nursery staff Early Years DSL safeguarding personnel training has taken place QED doors by the office. The LA representative was supposed to come out today although did not arrive. She has re-scheduled.</p> <p>Online safety lead training completed this term by EHT for the Federation.</p>	
19	Correspondence Circulated	None	
20	Items to be reported to parents	None	
21	Any other business	None	
22	<b>Date of next meeting:</b>	<b>24<sup>th</sup> November 2025, 5.30pm</b>	

Signed:



Harriet Phillips, Chair of Finance &amp; Resources committee

Date: 24/11/25