

**Directors Meeting Minutes: Extraordinary meeting  
21st March 2016 7pm**

Attendees : Mr P Lovern (PL) (Executive Head), Mrs H Bowman (HB) (Chair of Directors), Mr P Halifax (PH) (Vice Chair of Directors), Mrs C Humphries (CH) (Director), Mr G Wood (GW) (Director)  
Clerk to Directors: Mrs A Howard (AH)

TSSMAT: The Small Schools Multi Academy Trust  
RC: Richard Crosse  
SM: St Mary's  
HP: Howard Primary  
PAN: Planned Admission Number  
NQT: Newly qualified teacher

1. **Prayer** - PL started the meeting with a prayer.
2. **Apologies** - Mrs S Cockayne (SC) (Director), Mrs M Havelock-Crozier (MHC) (Director), Mrs J Smith (JS) (Director)
3. **Nursery provision** - PL thanked Directors for attending at short notice. He informed Directors that the Pre-School in Kings Bromley, which feeds into RC, had recently closed; an Ofsted inspection (report now available on-line) had taken place which had raised a number of issues and the Pre-School committee had decided to close the provision. The Pre-School was open just two mornings a week, with a number of children going on from there for lunch and the afternoon session at RC. A parent has approached PL to ask whether the school can do anything to help and PL had called the meeting to consider whether a nursery could be provided. The Village Hall is not a suitable venue as other organisations use the hall and equipment could not be left out. PL suggested two options: either a purpose-built nursery on-site or the purchase of the bungalow opposite the school which could be converted into a nursery.

PL confirmed to Directors that the local planning authority had been approached, as it would involve a change of use; the person he had spoken to was supportive and said it was potentially viable. There would have to be a pre-application consultation, which would cost in the region of £1000. PL had also spoken to the bank and asked whether they would consider a loan for this purpose, to which the answer was positive, in principle; a business plan would be required. The bungalow had been reduced twice in price, and was now £330,000, which was considered higher than comparable properties in that area.

Directors discussed the possibility of buying the property outright, as there is a surplus of around £200,000-£220,000 once other commitments have been taken into account, plus VAT to reclaim. HB expressed the view that it was important to keep a contingency.

The usable space of the conservatory, lounge and bedroom is around 50 square metres. There would be room for a staff room/office and also space for children's toilets including a disabled-access toilet. Food could be prepared in the school kitchen. There is room for extension in the future, using the garage space; the garden is very secure, giving a safe area to play outside. GW advised that the Ofsted website contains much useful information on the space, ratio of staff, etc required for a nursery.

Directors looked at a possible business plan. Fees at a comparable nursery are £239pw, so with a full occupancy of around 22 for 50 weeks, this would give £262,000 income. At present, £51 per child is received from the government for 15 hours nursery provision, however it is planned that

from September a certain number of places will receive 30 hours of fully-funded provision from the government (there may only be 415 such places in Staffordshire). However, there is no obligation to take funded places; PL suggested that it should be a semi-private nursery, with parents asked to pay the difference between the government funding (£102pw) and the full cost of private provision (£239pw). There would be extra charges for early and late hours, with parents being asked to specify their childcare needs over the year.

With regards to staffing, GW suggested that an NQT and apprentices could be employed; however PL considered it important to have a trained teacher as the nursery manager, with an NQT perhaps as a nursery nurse. CH advised that the nursery staff should have their own terms and conditions and would be employed for 50 weeks a year, with 6 weeks holiday. HB thought it was important to aim for quality and trained teachers; PL wanted the children to start learning in TSSMAT-appropriate ways.

PL then showed the Directors the plans he had received from the architect for the extension/building work. There were a number of phases, with Phase 1 building 2 additional classrooms (£350,000), Phase 2 building above the 2 classrooms (£350,000), Phase 3 linking the two buildings (£80,000) and Phase 4 building over the flat roof of the existing classroom (£150,000). HB thought the classrooms upstairs in the school house were not fit for purpose and it was important to consider providing new classrooms. PL noted that he was receiving further applications, including the first application from the new housing development due to be finished in August. He has advised the Schools' Organisation Team that it is likely the school will be over-subscribed and short of space. The school will have to be enlarged and the PAN raised from 15 to 22 or 23.

Directors discussed financial issues and whether it was worth spending money on the nursery, but PL saw the purchase of the bungalow as an asset which could be sold or rented out in future if plans changed. In answer to PH's question, PL said that TSSMAT could not be overdrawn. The Trustees may look at selling the farm, but PL thought that funding of extra classrooms could be provided by CIF funding, as an expanding school. Other options could be for an investor to buy the bungalow and leasing it to TSSMAT. GW obtained clarification on how TSSMAT had gained such a large contingency fund, which included the School Fund, a carry forward from the previous budget, the conversion costs and grant. CH wanted Directors to be aware that the Employers' contribution may rise in future. The nursery provision could be run under the auspices of the MAT or be run as a separate company.

It was decided that firstly the amount of floor space required for a proposed nursery should be ascertained. If the bungalow was big enough, an offer of £230,000 should be put in. The next stage would be the consultation process and gaining planning permission. It was agreed that neighbours in Lanes Close were likely to protest against a change in use, particularly with regard to parking issues. HB emphasised that the scheme would not involve a great change in the number of children and offered to do a leaflet drop in the area to allay concerns.

Item	Action to be taken	Action by whom	Action by when
3	Ascertain floor space required.	PL	22/3/16
3	Put in offer, if appropriate.	PL	Easter
3	Move on to consultation process/planning/information to neighbours.	Directors	tba