

Responding to the Goring Neighbourhood Plan consultation

The governors would like to express their appreciation to everyone who attended the Extraordinary Parish Council meeting in the Village Hall in September, and for the remarkable level of support for the issue of the future of the school. Since that meeting a small group of parents and governors have been working with three of the Parish Councillors and are currently considering proposals for a feasibility study of various options for the school buildings, including refurbishment and rebuilding.

In the meantime, the draft Goring Neighbourhood Plan has been published, and includes 'a plan for the future of the school' as a Strategic Project:

The strategic project should determine any need for upgraded, extended or new facilities in Goring Primary School and the best way to provide these, compliant with the Plan Spatial Strategy and Policies. Subject to consultation, the preferred option should be put forward to the relevant planning authority if appropriate (SODC or a subsequent iteration of the Goring Neighbourhood Plan). (p. 91)

While it is commendable that the school has been included, the Plan could go further in taking the opportunity to improve such a key part of Goring's infrastructure. If any parents or carers would like to respond to the Plan consultation in this regard, the key issues are as follows:

- Incorporating the school as a strategic project is a positive move, however it is important to include within the scope renewing/updating the school facilities, rather than focusing only on the feasibility study.
- The current wording is likely to rule out building a new school on a new site as it claims that Goring has few sites that are suitable for development – and each of these has been included in the Plan for housing. One solution would be to provide for an appropriately worded exception site for the school (as it does in the event of insufficient affordable housing) in order to keep all options open for expansion, relocation and funding.
- The Plan considers only the capacity of the school, not its condition, which is inconsistent with its focus on the sustainability of local facilities and infrastructure.
- The suggestion that the school's maintenance issues can be tackled by a 'vigorous programme of fundraising' seems a suboptimal solution and does not account for the possibility of the feasibility study concluding that the school buildings are at the end of their expected life.
- Estimates of extra school place applications as a result of new housing do not include those generated by infill housing so are likely to be unduly low.

The draft Plan can be found here:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1dV0SC4F3wKRc8MQX57ZMqlk_g9He2DNM/view

Details of how to respond can be found here: <https://www.goringplan.co.uk/home/make-comments>

Kitchen open for business!

We are delighted that our spruced-up kitchen is at last back in action. We now have a shiny new extractor and oven, and hot school lunches are back on the menu. Thank you to everyone for their great forbearance and understanding over the past few months.

We would also like to thank Stacey and all the staff who made our special 'pizza census day' lunch such a success in very challenging circumstances!



A brief guide to school funding

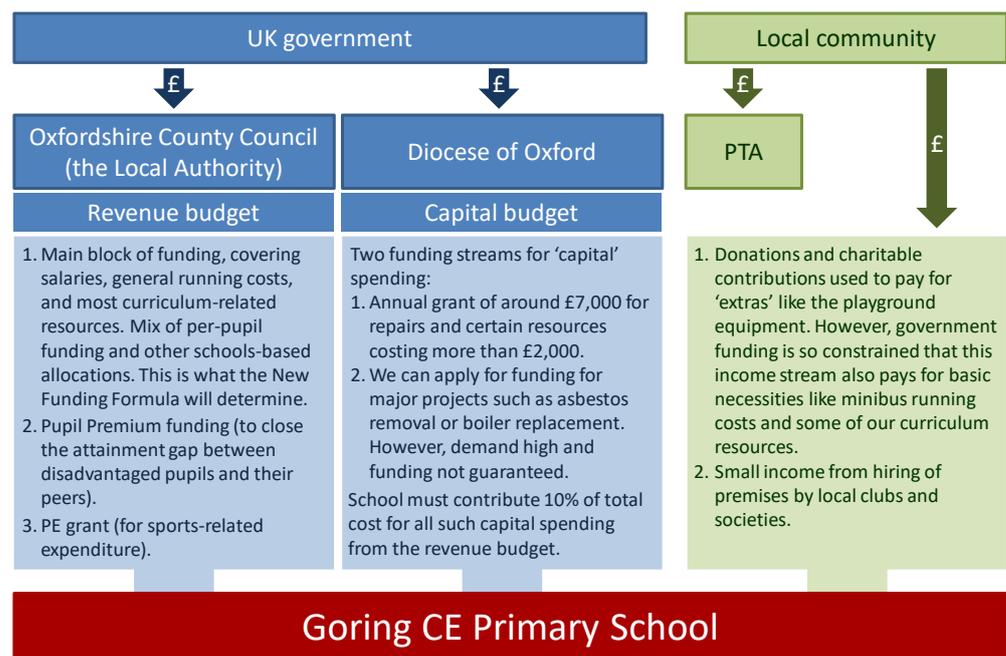
A number of questions about funding have been asked in light of the focus on the condition of the school buildings and our regular updates on the new Funding Formula in this newsletter, so we thought a brief summary of our funding streams might be informative. The diagram below shows the three main sources of revenue: central funding via the Local Authority which covers most of the school's operational costs; capital funding from the Diocese to cover buildings and maintenance; and charitable donations (eg, from PTA fundraisers) and income from hiring the school premises.

The revenue budget stream consists mainly of per-pupil funding (to be determined by the new Funding Formula from 2018/19), plus grants such as the PE grant and Pupil Premium funding. The governing body is responsible for ensuring that such grants are allocated appropriately and their impacts scrutinised. As reported extensively in the media, 'central' funding from the government has been insufficient and inconsistently allocated for a number of years, and we have found balancing the budget a significant challenge, particularly with various cuts to Local Authority services such as Early Intervention. Unfortunately, the new Funding Formula is unlikely to offer us a meaningful increase – early indications suggest not more than 1%, which represents a cut in real terms when cost increases are factored in.

Because we are a Voluntary Aided school, the governors, not the Local Authority, are ultimately responsible for the buildings. However, the pot of money allocated to this (typically £6,000–£7,000 pa) is far from adequate. Funding for major projects can be applied for, but is usually granted only for serious emergency repairs, and we have to fund 10% of the total from our 'revenue' pot.

Many of the enhancements to the school, such as the new play equipment and the other improvements to the outside space, are entirely funded by the PTA (and other local charitable donations), which is why the success of the various fundraisers is so crucial. However, as noted in the diagram, this income stream is also used for some of our basic expenses such as books and IT equipment, and it is anticipated that this trend will continue as central funding remains constrained.

If you have any questions regarding school funding, please email clerk@goring.oxon.sch.uk.



Security improvements

The safeguarding of children and staff at Goring Primary School is a priority for the governing body, and as part of our overall safeguarding and security strategy we have recently invested in upgrading the security of the premises.

The back gate and the gate between Miss Slarks' and Mrs Mitchell's and Mrs Pipe's classrooms are now on a timed lock to coincide with drop-off and pick-up. Inside, the doors leading off the office/reception area are now on a security lock, preventing any unauthorised person in the reception area from going beyond this point.

The staff wear security badges with photo ID, and all visitors to the school, including parent and carer volunteer helpers, are required to sign in and wear a visitor's badge during their visit.

For more details about the security procedures and protocols for visitors, see the School Visitors Policy on the policies page of the website.

Road safety



The new traffic-calming signs have now been installed close to the school on the Wallingford Road, and will soon be programmed so the 20mph limit is enforced at our busy times. We would like to thank the Parish Council and everyone in the local community who helped raise money for this important road-safety initiative.

The governors would like to wish the school community a very merry Christmas and a happy new year

