



View from The Chair - This Year's Budget

By Sarah Seed

This is the time of year when the school is told by the County Council how much money we will have to spend over the next 12 months. For the past 4 years, we have seen a steady reduction in the amount of money we are allocated as a school, and sadly this year the picture is no different. It looks like in 2013/14, we will receive around £40k less than we did this year.

Now, £40k may not sound that much, but it is a further cut on top of an already stretched budget. So why are things so difficult for us as a school? There are a number of factors that have hit us in particular:

- Children in Cambridgeshire have less spent on them per head than any other local authority in the country. A similar sized school in Surrey would receive an incredible £250,000 more than we do – enough to fund 7 additional full time teachers!
- We have an old school building – we all love it, but it is expensive to maintain! We receive no more money to spend on maintenance than any other school in the county. This creates a significant disparity since schools with new buildings, for example, Queen Emma, obviously have significantly less need to spend money on maintenance than we do.
- Schools receive a set amount of money each year for capital projects (a figure which, for our school, has been reduced by 80% over the last couple of years). Most of this money is used up in repaying loans from the County Council that we have had to take out in the past to fix a leaking roof and to replace one of the boilers. The other boiler will need replacing soon.
- As a school, we receive very little pupil premium. Pupil premium is a reallocation of existing funding given to schools to support the most disadvantaged children and close the attainment gap between them and their peers. Increasingly, more funding will be allocated through the pupil premium and that will have a negative impact on our school. Some schools around us already receive 5 or 6 times the level of pupil premium that we do.
- We have more children wanting to join us in reception than we have spaces but as we are unable to accommodate them at this stage we have to turn them away. However, for the past few years we have lost significant numbers of children to private schools at the end of Year 2. We are unlikely to fill most of those places. On one level, that sounds great as we have smaller class sizes in Key Stage 2. However, as the majority of our funding is received by way of a fixed amount per pupil, smaller class sizes means less funding from the Council. For each child who leaves at the end of Key Stage 1, we will lose around £10k if we cannot fill their place over the Key Stage 2 period. Last year alone, this reduced our overall funding by £20k.

SO IS IT ALL BAD NEWS? Well, the most important thing is that the school continues to drive up standards despite these financial difficulties. The staff do an incredible job with limited resources and an ageing building.

This Year's Budget, continued...

The school has put a huge amount of effort into maximising its income, whilst still seeking to provide a valuable community resource – the hall and the community room are hired out every night of the week and at weekends meaning that we raise three times more than the average school.

And, through the hard work of the Friends of Morley and the generosity of our parents, we raise double the average raised by parents' associations nationally.

WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD? We are hoping to have a significant investment in our school buildings in the future – the Council does recognise our particular need, and we form part of its 5-year building plan. Unfortunately, building work is currently not likely to start before 2017/18, but we are currently looking at ways in which we can bring that start date forward and possibly funding some of that work ourselves.

WHAT DO WE NEED FROM PARENTS? Please, please continue to support Friends of Morley in any way that you can – every little thing does make a big difference! If you do have any ideas for fundraising, we are all ears! For example, if you are aware of any grants that the school might be eligible for or if you are aware of any schemes that are run by your employer, then do please get in touch with either a Governor or with Friends of Morley for us to investigate further. We are keen to explore every avenue to help Morley continue to improve, and to offer a rich learning experience for all our children.

MEET THE NEW GOVERNORS

ANTONY CARPEN: I've come full circle, having been a pupil at Morley between 1984 and 1991. I spent seven years in the civil service and am now a freelance social media and public policy trainer.

BECKY GROVER: I am now in my sixth year of teaching at Morley. In that time I have worked in Years 1 and 2 and I now teach in Reception. I joined the governing body in September and this new role is providing me with a fresh insight into the workings of the school.

HELEN DEVLIN: I am Fellow Director of Development at Robinson College. I have worked as a fundraiser for national charities and universities for over 20 years. I have a son in Y1.

JAMES CARNEGIE: I've worked in governmental, non-governmental and business organisations. I am looking forward to supporting Morley in its efforts to meet the many challenges that it faces as the world shrinks and the importance of an excellent education grows. I have a daughter in Y1.

RACHEL CALDER: I currently work as a commercial contracts solicitor at Cambridge City Council. I have a son in Reception and I am looking forward to making a positive contribution to the school.

PHILIP COLLIGAN: I have a son in Reception. I originally studied law, but chose a career in public services and have served in national and local government. I currently work for a foundation that supports innovation.

TO FIND OUT MORE

For more information on the role and responsibilities of the Governing Body please see the school website.

If you would like to contact the Governing body please email the Co-Chairs of Governors, Sarah Seed or Nicky Odgers at chair@morley.cambs.sch.uk or ask the school office to pass on a message.