



GOVERNORS' MEETING Minutes of the meeting on 30 January 2014

Present: Mr Neil Arlett, Miss Katie Baker, Ms Michelle Balcombe,
Mr Martin Churchward, Mrs Carol Clapham, Mr Charles Davies, Mr Rob
Doran, Mrs Diane Evans, Dr Jonathan Godfrey, Mr Joe Hamblin, Mr Clive
Hodgeman, Mr Chris Hodson, Dr Ken Hopkins (Chair), Mrs Heidi
Maddougall, Mr James Miller, Ms Blair Priday, Mr Ravi Tandon, Mr Phil
Tranter, Miss Christine Wright

(19)

In attendance: Mr Peter Cooper (Deputy Principal), Mr Robert Gorman (Clerk),
Mrs Ruth Jones (Finance Director)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Dr Amber Tahir

(1)

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS AND GIFTS

The Principal and Estates Manager had each received seasonal gifts of two bottles of wine and spirits. These gifts have been entered in the Board's Gifts Register. There were no declarations of interest

3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 5 DECEMBER 2013

Governors pointed out three minor amendments to the minutes, which were noted by the Clerk.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

None

5. CLERK'S REPORT

The Clerk thanked Governors for returning Governor Handbook review forms, and updated contact details, and reported that attendance at the SFCA Clerks' conference the day before had proved most worthwhile.

6. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

The Principal presented a comprehensive report, but it was agreed that those matters also covered by Committees would be considered later in the meeting, during the Committee reports. The Principal indicated in relation to Staffing that since the report was written the current temporary teacher of Geography had agreed to continue for a year so a replacement will not be sought.

The Principal went on to outline the data for leavers' destinations, indicating that this year's Oxbridge applicants have achieved the 14 offers of places (last year 20). Cambridge had increased entry requirements this year. The previous school for 6 of the 14 applicants was BHBS.

There was considerable discussion of the Government's January Schools' Performance Tables, especially new columns showing average points score per A Level entry and average points score per candidate. A value-added score column was also being included again, showing the College's score at +0.28, joint highest with Greenhead, Huddersfield. In response to a question from the Chair, the Principal confirmed that it had been anticipated that Independent schools would be included, but this had not proved the case.

The Local Authority has increased the parental contribution for bus passes from £660 to £880. In response to a Governor's question, the Finance Director confirmed 130 students were being subsidised at present, and a significant number will be better off buying their own tickets.

National issues reported were:

- The SFCA was currently updating certain national procedures relating to facilities time, capability, disciplinary and grievance
- An SFCA working party is currently preparing proposals to update the Performance Related Pay Scheme
- Despite the DfE having accepted the argument regarding colleges paying VAT the Treasury will not change policy.
- The SFCA in collaboration with other professional associations are concentrating a campaign on the funding gap between secondary and post-16 pupils.
- The SFCA is lobbying to promote more SFCs as the best solution to deliver high quality post-16 education. An SFCA Research scoping paper has been produced in support.

The Principal confirmed that The Good Schools Guide (GSG) had undertaken a day's review visit at the College, and presented a handout of very favourable quotes to be used in the guide. The GSG had reviewed mainly independent schools in the past. Governors asked about any negative quotes in the review. The Student Governor confirmed that lack of social space and crowding at times had been mentioned to the reviewer, although it was understood that the College was working to overcome this.

7. STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Principal presented the College's 2014-18 Strategic Development Plan, drawing the attention of Governors to the Summary of Key Challenges.

The Plan's Summary of Proposed Developments lists 19 action points for 2014-15, with further measures to be followed up for 2015-2018. The Principal highlighted planned developments under Curriculum, and under Governance and Management, where the role of Governors in quality assurance was to be developed.

The Principal also detailed the key assumptions on which the Plan is based.

The Chair stated that he was determined that Governance and Management would not let the College down at any Ofsted inspection. Governors discussed the challenges, proposed developments, ownership of the plan and the need for Governors to be aware of what lies behind the key assumptions. Governors asked questions about the competition between SFCs and emerging sixth forms in schools and academies, forecast pay freeze, the demographic 16-17 cohort projections and maintaining numbers in the face of falling rolls, and consequences for students of any reduction in ALS funding.

The Principal drew attention to the College's Operational Plan 2014, which had been added by way of an appendix to the Plan, to demonstrate how the detailed plans in the Operating Plan underpinned the Strategic Plan.

After discussion, the Board then **AGREED TO APPROVE** the Strategic Development Plan 2014-2018.

8. ANNUAL COLLEGE TARGETS

The Principal presented a schedule summarising 9 Whole College Targets for 2014. The Clerk, having been asked by the Principal, commented that governors are

responsible for agreeing strategic targets for a college, and ensuring that they are SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound), adding a further qualification, that targets are CSMART, challenging.

After discussion, Governors **APPROVED** the targets, as being expected outcomes for the year.

9. COMMITTEE REPORTS

i. Staff & Students Committee on 21 January

In relation to matters arising from the minutes, the Committee Chair referred to: Safeguarding Training, and 2 Governors confirmed that they had been contacted by member of staff and given assistance to finalise the on-line training. Only one Governor had yet to receive a certificate of completion. Replacement for College Finance Director, who is retiring, is Sallyanne Griffiths, the current Bursar of Aylestone School, due to commence on 17 March to give an overlap.

The Committee had received an update on national pay negotiations, considered proposed training for Governors, reviewed the draft Programme for the Governors' Conference and examined the projections for College staffing. There were no recommendations for the Board to consider.

In response to a Governor's question about Performance Related Pay, the Principal confirmed that an SFCA working party was preparing proposals. Ofsted were expecting colleges to demonstrate appropriate recording of capability and performance management procedures. The Principal added that HSFC procedures were robust and recorded systematically, and that schedules will be shared with the Staff & Students Committee.

Governors asked whether on-line applications were better from the College's perspective as they appeared to bypass the school. The Staff Governor confirmed that more direct contact with the student worked better, and that the social networking tools were proving successful for the College.

The Principal outlined the programme for the Governors' Conference. Guest speaker for the Friday evening is Prof. David Green, Vice Chancellor, University of Worcester, who will talk about the 'HE scene'. Governors considered and agreed the revised programme, noting that the whole event is to be held at the Pengethley Manor Hotel near Ross on Wye.

In response to Governor's question about the University of Herefordshire, the Principal confirmed that, with the Chair, he had attended meetings organised by the group interested in forming the University of Herefordshire. The whole project, which would be science and technology based, would require start-up funding in the order of £50m.

The Committee's Minutes were considered and **APPROVED AS A CORRECT RECORD.**

ii. Finance & Premises Committee on 23 January

The Committee Chair reported that three important documents had been considered in detail by the Committee, which recommended them all for Board approval. The first was the Monthly Management Accounts for November, which, as in the previous month, showed a buoyant financial position. After a brief discussion and a verbal report from the Finance

Director, the Board of Governors then **AGREED TO APPROVE** the Monthly Management Accounts for November 2013.

There then followed the Mid-year Budget Update and Financial Forecast for the period 2013-16. The 2013-14 budget has been revised mainly to take account of firm funding allocations for higher cost learners. The Board noted the various factors that contribute to the slightly reduced projected surplus and **AGREED TO APPROVE** the Mid-year Budget Update.

The Committee had then looked at the much gloomier indicative forecasts for the two years from 2014 to 2016, showing Net Deficits of £389k and £551k, respectively. Funding for the forecasts had been reworked following changes in the funding methodology announced by the EFA. Also, students aged 18 or over will now be funded for a lower number of Guided Learning Hours (GLH), and modelling suggests that this results in a funding reduction of 1.5% and 1.8%. The indicative forecasts had been adjusted to reflect a 1.8% reduction, which taken with the other funding changes reduced the funding income forecast by £388k in 2014-15. The Board **NOTED** the outlook for the period to 2016, and **AGREED** the updated Financial Forecasts.

The final document that the Committee had recommended for approval was the Accommodation Strategy. The Committee Chair presented the Accommodation Strategy, which analyses and attempts to address the physical needs identified by the Strategic Development Plan. The Strategy describes and evaluates the existing site and sets out the College's major accommodation needs, considers the constraints of the site and proposes options for development, and then compares and assesses these options. The Committee Chair highlighted the condition rating of current College buildings, and that the Main Block and Reception were now rated as category C/D, where most of the College was A to B. Space needs were summarised as being 2 classrooms, Finance office and student social and study space.

The Committee Chair outlined the summary of options for development which had been reviewed by the Committee, indicating that the Committee's preferred option, the Extension to Reception, will meet the needs of the College. The Student Governor commented that the increased student social space would be most welcome, and the Principal indicated that the movement of the Careers Office to the new extension would increase available space in the Library. In response to a question from the Chair, the Finance Director confirmed that finance was available, if full grant funding was not received, and the College could also use some of its reserves to complete the project. The College had already undertaken preparatory work to establish the practical feasibility of the Strategy's viable building schemes and building could commence in May 2014.

The Board considered the options and then concurred with the Finance & Premises Committee's conclusion that Option 3, Extension to Reception, would meet the various needs, and also enhance the front of College. The Board considered the projected cost of £970,719, in relation to the College's reserves and possible grant funding, and concluded that the scheme was affordable.

The Board of Governors then **AGREED TO APPROVE** the Accommodation Strategy dated January 2014, **AGREED** the Extension to Reception as the preferred option, and **AGREED** that the application for grant funding for the proposed extension be made to the SFC Building Condition Improvement Fund.

The Committee's Minutes were considered and **APPROVED AS A CORRECT RECORD**

iii. Curriculum Committee on 23 January

The Committee Chair confirmed that the Committee had considered possible curriculum changes, students' attendance and retention and students' destinations after leaving the College. Attendance and Retention statistics were especially good. Referring to destinations the Committee Chair indicated that the overall success rate in getting offers was very high at 84.6%.

The Committee had also reviewed departmental targets for Retention and Achievement. After a brief discussion, the Board of Governors **NOTED** the revised Departmental Targets for 2014-15.

The Committee's Minutes were considered and **APPROVED AS A CORRECT RECORD**

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

9.00 am on Saturday 15 March, Governors' Conference