



GOVERNORS' MEETING

Minutes of the meeting on 10 October 2013

Present: Mr Neil Arlett, Miss Katie Baker, Mr Martin Churchward, Mr Charles Davies, Mrs Diane Evans, Dr Jonathan Godfrey, Mr Clive Hodgeman, Mr Chris Hodson, Dr Ken Hopkins (Chair), Mrs Heidi Macdougall (Vice-chair), Mr James Miller, Ms Blair Priday, Mr Ravi Tandon, Miss Christine Wright
(14)

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

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Ms Michelle Balcombe, Mrs Carol Clapham, Mr Rob Doran, Dr Amber Tahir, Mr Phil Tranter
(5)

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS AND GIFTS

None

APPOINTMENT OF NEW CLERK TO THE GOVERNORS

The Chair read an extract from the resignation letter of Claire Hodson, indicating that Claire had resigned suddenly for personal reasons. The Chair, in consultation with Vice-chair and Principal, had offered the post to the 'number two candidate at interview' who had accepted. The Chair welcomed Robert Gorman as Clerk to the Board.

The Chair stated that the agenda order was being altered as Charles Davies had another engagement later in the evening.

3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 10 JULY 2013

The Minutes were approved as an accurate record and signed

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There were no matters arising

5. CLERK'S REPORT

The Clerk thanked the Governors for their welcome.

6. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

The Principal began by outlining the celebratory events and activities for the College's 40th Anniversary, and went on to inform Governors that Ms Shirley Tully, previously Finance Director of Richmond Tertiary College, had been co-opted to the Finance and Premises Committee.

New enrolments in 2013/14 were 932 compared with 985 in the previous year. Raw and Value Added results for the previous year had been maintained at a high level. The College had retained its position amongst the top ten sixth form colleges as reported in national newspapers. Focussing on national issues the Principal stated that

- the SFCA's argument for reimbursement of VAT appeared to be won with the Department
- the lobbying role of the Maple Group of 'high performing' SFCs will be through the SFCA
- pay negotiations were continuing and the SCFA as employers had offered a

pay award of 1% to the unions, which they were consulting on with their members

- the planned strike had taken place on 1st October, but not every teacher at the College took strike action. There had been an impact on some lessons. Katie Baker commented that the strike had not appeared to be a major issue with students.

In response to a question from Ravi Tandon, the Principal confirmed that, with the Chair, he had attended an event organised by the group interested in forming the University of Herefordshire. The group were proposing to integrate on-line courses in their programme, and the whole project, which would be science and technology based, would require start-up funding in the order of £50m. The Principal would maintain a watching and supportive brief, and keep Governors informed.

9. COMMITTEE REPORT

(iv) Audit Committee of 1st October 2013

Charles Davies advised certain minor amendments to the minutes, which were duly noted.

Baker Tilly had acquired RSM Tenon in August 2013. HSFC was one of some 40 colleges where there might be a conflict, as currently Baker Tilly provide external audit services and RSM Tenon internal audit. The Audit Committee have to recommend a way forward to Governors, and decide which model of service provision it requires, as next year an Internal Audit Annual Report will not be a mandatory requirement of the Funding Councils. Audit Committees will have to form the opinion of internal audit assurance, and include that opinion within their Annual Report, for transmission to the Funding Councils. The Committee plan to report back to Governors on the appointment of auditors at the December meeting.

The Committee had considered two reports to the Governing Body on the audits of 2012-13, one from the College's Internal Audit Service and the other the Committee's own Annual Report, and these reports were recommended to the Board.

The Committee had agreed that the three Notes included above the Agenda for full Governors' meetings be adopted for Audit Committee use, and recommended that the Board instruct all Committees to adopt the notes as standard practice. A change to the Public Access paragraph of the Governance Procedures was proposed, to remove the words 'and Committee'.

The Board considered the various aspects of the Committee's report and then **AGREED TO APPROVE**

- The Final Internal Audit Service Report for the year to July 2013
- The Annual Report of the Audit Committee for 2012-13
- The External Audit Plan and Strategy for the Annual Accounts to July 2013
- That all the College's committees adopt the three Notes included above the Agenda for full Governors' meetings

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

Charles Davies left the meeting at this point.

7. **GOVERNORS' SKILLS AUDIT AND TRAINING PROGRAMME**

The Principal and Clerk had considered the results of the skills audit report of January 2013 and had concluded that a full audit was not yet warranted. Training, information and awareness sessions would be provided before Governors' meetings as topics emerged, and sessions would be included in Governors' Conferences.

8. **GOVERNORS' HANDBOOK**

The Handbook was distributed in hard copy last year. The Clerk suggested that Governors' input would be useful in determining the content, and it would also prevent undue rewriting work. The Principal indicated that the Handbook would be circulated electronically, asking for feedback.

9. **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

i. Staff and Students Committee on 24 September

Martin Churchward confirmed that the Committee had discussed staff changes, staff absence, and the appraisal of Senior Post holders. There were still some difficulties with the on-line Safeguarding training. It was suggested that Governors might receive an information session from the College's Marketing Manager before a future Governors meeting.

In response to a question from Chris Hodson, Diane Evans outlined the medical support services previously provided by the Local Authority, adding that student welfare services had been taken in-house. All three colleges on Folly Lane were in the same situation. The Committee would monitor the situation and report developments.

After a brief discussion the Board **AGREED** that the same procedures as last year will be used for appraising Senior Post Holders in 2013/14.

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

ii. Curriculum Committee on 26 September

James Miller confirmed that the Committee had considered the analysis of enrolments of new students. Diane Evans stated that many students travelled long distances on a daily basis to attend the College. The Committee had also had a detailed discussion of the College's retention and success rates and the A Level and AS Level results. Particular emphasis was given to value-added analyses of results and the performance by students in all subjects was examined. The Committee praised the way College staff analyse results and take action, and asked for those remarks to be passed on to staff.

The Deputy Principal outlined the work of the Self Assessment Review Group in relation to the above.

The Committee recommended no changes to Curriculum Policy, Curriculum 2013/14 and Course Masterfile. After a brief discussion of the report, the Board **AGREED to no amendments.**

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

iii. Finance and Premises Committee on 26 September

Heidi Macdougall confirmed that the Committee had discussed the proposed extension to the front of College (item to be left to the end of the meeting), and considered the Budget and Financial Forecast Update and the Monthly Management Accounts for July 2013, noting that the College concluded the financial year strongly.

The Finance Director confirmed that the drop out rate had slowed and currently the roll was 1976 students. The main risk to the updated 2013/14 Budget was the ALS Specialist Placement funding, where there was still uncertainty as to the level of funding which will be received from the Local Authority.

In response to a question from Chris Hodson, the Finance Director confirmed that Capital Grant, already partly received, had been deferred to 2014/15 to match the depreciation write-off period. In relation to a further question about the Business Block extension, the Principal stated that there was no additional spend above the contingency, but the College will be more mindful of the difficulties of project costing and contracting in relation to future projects.

The Board discussed the Committee's report and then **AGREED TO APPROVE**

- The Monthly Management Accounts for July 2013
- The updated Budget 2013/14 and Financial Forecast 2014-18

The Committee had noted that there was ongoing work in relation to the insurance renewal.

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

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.

Governors were shown an architect's presentation by the Principal, by way of a proposal only, for a new two storey build to replace the present curved-roof reception. The Principal indicated that the new block could include new areas for Finance and Careers and extensions to Cafeteria and student social space. Indicative costing was just over £1m with a possible completion date of September 2015.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 5 December, at 7.30pm