



GOVERNORS' MEETING Minutes of the meeting on 7 February 2013

Present: Mr Neil Arlett, Miss Katie Baker, Ms Michelle Balcombe,
Mr Martin Churchward, Mrs Carol Clapham, Mr Rob Doran,
Dr Jonathan Godfrey, Dr Ken Hopkins (Chair), Mr James Miller,
Ms Blair Priday, Mr Ravi Tandon, Mr Phil Tranter, Mr Fraser Williams,
Miss Christine Wright (14)

In attendance: Dr Ruth Brinton and Mr Peter Cooper (Deputy Principals),
Mr Philip Eyles (Clerk), Ms Claire Hodson (Clerk Designate)
Mrs Ruth Jones (Finance Director)

1. INTRODUCTION

The Chair began the meeting by congratulating the Principal on his appointment as an officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE). He then welcomed Claire Hodson, the Clerk Designate, to her first Governors' Meeting

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Katarina Blair, Charles Davies, Diane Evans, Chris Hodson and Heidi Macdougall (5)

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS AND GIFTS

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

4. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 6 DECEMBER 2012

The Minutes were approved as an accurate record and signed

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

None

6. CLERK'S REPORT

Helen Power's term of office as Parent Governor has expired, so the number of Board Members is now 19. An election of interested parents will now be held to seek her replacement.

This term's Audit Committee has had to be cancelled because the auditors were unable to carry out their work at the agreed time. The Meeting will now take place after Easter, on a date to be arranged.

7. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

The report was comprehensive but it was agreed that those matters also covered by Committees would be considered later in the meeting, during the Committee reports.

This year's Oxbridge applicants have achieved the highest ever number of provision places (20). The Principal thanked those Governors who had helped with mock Oxbridge interviews. The College's attendance and retention data was reported, and the Board noted that high levels have been maintained for both. There was considerable discussion of the January Schools' Performance Tables in a local context, especially the new column showing the percentage of students achieving grades AAB in 'facilitating' subjects. .../2

The Principal reminded the Board what the term 'facilitating' means in educational parlance.

Local Authority cuts and news of academies were the local issues reported. The following national issues were reported: the launch of the Sixth Form Colleges Association (formerly the Sixth Form Colleges Forum), the establishment of an All-Party Parliamentary Group for Sixth Form Colleges and other lobbying activities to promote sixth form colleges and fair funding for them

8. MONITORING THE 2012 OPERATIONAL PLAN

All but four of the 308 objectives were achieved and the Board was given details of the objectives that have not been achieved. These four objectives will now be either addressed in different ways or moved forward into the 2013 Operational Plan

9. STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND ACCOMMODATION STRATEGY

Topical issues, external challenges and 'areas for improvement' arising from the College's Self-Assessment Report (SAR) all contribute to the Plan. The SAR had been considered by the Board in December [Board Minute 9 refers], so the plan for action immediately follows the identification of needs. The Plan's Summary of Proposed Developments lists 21 action points for 2013-14, with further measures to be followed up for 2014-2017. The key assumptions of the plan are also listed.

There was considerable discussion of the plan. Questions were asked about the role of Work Experience, the need to emphasise the College's key purpose and strengths in publicity and the risks it faces, such as falling rolls. The Principal reminded members that the College evaluates and manages risk carefully, and that the Audit Committee monitors the performance of College Management in this key area.

After discussion, the Board then **AGREED TO APPROVE** the Strategic Development Plan 2013-2017

The Board then considered 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. It then proceeds to consider the constraints of the site and proposes six options for development. The Strategy then compares and assesses these options. The Board considered the alternatives and then concurred with the Finance & Premises Committee's conclusion that there are just two viable options. The Board decided to look at the viability of these options later in the Agenda (under Item 11iv) but considered that it needed no more time to assess the Strategy itself. The Board of Governors then **AGREED TO APPROVE** the Accommodation Strategy dated January 2013

10. GOVERNORS' CONFERENCE

The Board considered and approved the revised programme, noting that the Friday evening component is now to be held at the Aylestone Hill Hotel, not the Castle House Hotel

11. COMMITTEE REPORTS

i. Remuneration Committee on 6 December

Since all the Committee's recommendations had been considered and approved at the previous Board Meeting (of which Minute 10iv refers), the only item of business from the Committee was the approval of its minutes. It was soon agreed that these minutes should be **APPROVED AS A CORRECT RECORD** .../3

ii. Curriculum Committee on 17 January

The Committee had considered possible curriculum changes, students' retention and achievement (both very good), an update of 14-16 courses and students' destinations after leaving the College.

The latter had included discussion of the Higher Education Plus course, which the College runs for the Russell Group of universities. The Russell Group had identified Herefordshire and Worcestershire as a part of the nation from which a relatively low proportion of students aspires to attend its universities and the more demanding university courses, such as medicine. The College was then chosen as the site of the Herefordshire and Worcestershire hub, from which courses run weekly on behalf of all local sixth forms and colleges. The Board was most interested in the course, on which considerable discussion ensued

The Committee had also reviewed departmental targets, which had previously been unchanged for several years. It supported the Deputy Principal's request for change and the reasoning behind this change. Rather than having the same targets for all subjects, it is now thought better for each subject to have a target that reflects the backgrounds of the students within that subject. After a brief discussion, the Board of Governors **AGREED TO APPROVE** the revised approach and the revised Departmental Targets for 2013-14.

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

iii. Staff & Students Committee on 22 January

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

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

iv. Finance & Premises Committee on 24 January

Three important documents had been considered in detail by the Committee, which then recommended them all for Board approval. The first was the Monthly Management Accounts for November and December, which 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 and December 2012

There then followed the Mid-year Budget Update and Financial Forecast for the period 2013-17. The Board noted the various factors that contribute to the improved projected surplus and **AGREED TO APPROVE** the Mid-year Budget Update. The Committee had then looked at the much gloomier forecast to 2017, noting the succession of big budgetary cuts which are each eased in by mitigating, but diminishing, transitional protection. The outlook for the period to 2017 was **NOTED** by the Board.

The final document that the Committee had recommended for approval was the Accommodation Strategy. The Board had already considered and approved this under Minute 9 above.

The final matter considered by the Committee was the way in which the Accommodation Strategy might be implemented. The College had already undertaken preparatory work to establish the practical feasibility of the Strategy's two viable building schemes (referred to in Minute 9 above and also listed below). Planning Permission has been obtained for the eastward extension of the Business Studies Block and tenders for the work have been both issued and received back. The two leading bids for this work are now being evaluation in detail by the Quantity Surveyor. The Board discussed the progress already achieved and then considered the cost of both schemes in relation to the College's reserves. It concluded that both schemes are affordable, especially given the two applications for capital funding that the College has just made, to the Education Funding Agency and to the Wolfson Foundation. The Board discussed both these funding applications. There was general support for both building schemes but two concerns were expressed. The first was that the newly planned laboratories may prove to be too small, but the Principal assured the Board that the College's science staff are satisfied that the new laboratories would be large enough. The second concern was that the College needs more students' social space and study space *as well* as more classrooms. Here the Board agreed that social and study space are both important but felt that curricular needs must take priority. The Principal reminded the Board that the top floor of the Business Studies Block has been designed flexibly so that it could convert into study space if rolls should fall and thereby reduce the pressure on classroom space. Another response to the pressure on social space is that it may be possible for more classrooms to be used a social space during the lunch hour

The Board of Governors then **AGREED TO GIVE ITS INFORMED CONSENT** to the two capital projects as outlined in the Accommodation Strategy to

- Extend the Business Studies Block eastwards
- Create two additional science laboratories by combining and remodelling classrooms

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

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

9.00 am on Saturday 16 March