



GOVERNORS' MEETING Minutes of the meeting on 3 July 2014

Present: Mr Neil Arlett, Miss Katie Baker, Ms Michelle Balcombe, Mr Martin Churchward, Mr Rob Doran, Mrs Diane Evans, Dr Jonathan Godfrey, Mr Joe Hamblin, Dr Ken Hopkins (Chair), Mr Clive Hodgeman, Ms Blair Priday, Dr Amber Tahir, Mr Ravi Tandon, Mr Phil Tranter, Miss Christine Wright
(15)

In attendance: Mr Peter Cooper (Deputy Principal), Mr Robert Gorman (Clerk), Ms Sally-Ann Griffiths (Finance Director)

Dr Ken Hopkins left the room at this point

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 2014-15

Dr Ken Hopkins was nominated and re-elected as Chair of Governors, and in her absence, Heidi Macdougall was nominated and re-elected as Vice Chair of Governors

Dr Ken Hopkins returned to the room at this point

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Mrs Carol Clapham, Mr Charles Davies, Mr Chris Hodson, Mrs Heidi Macdougall, Mr James Miller
(5)

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS AND GIFTS

None

4. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 22 MAY 2014

The Minutes were approved as an accurate record and signed

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Minute 10iii: a member asked whether it was correct to describe the College's finances as being in a 'buoyant position', when a deficit budget was being proposed. The Finance Director commented that the next couple of years would be challenging, but plans were in place to respond.

6. COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The Clerk reported that all Governors' Committees have sufficient members and invited any Governors who wish to change their committee to let him know

7. CONFIRMATION OF CYCLE OF MEETINGS

A schedule of Governors meetings and calendar of business was circulated, and **NOTED** by the Board.

8. CLERK'S REPORT

Elections will need to be held in the Autumn Term to nominate one Student Governor (to replace Katie Baker who leaves the College this term). The Clerk thanked Governors for returning the completed Assessment of Board and Committee meetings questionnaire. There was the possibility of Ofsted Dashboard training for Governors at an event to be hosted by Worcester Sixth Form College on 22 October. The Clerk will circulate details to HSFC Governors.

9. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

The Principal presented his report listing new teaching staff and 'leavers' for 2014. He and Governors wished to particularly thank long-serving members of staff retiring

this year; Chris Chedgely, teacher of General Studies, and Chris Copley-May, teacher of I.T. and Computing.

Applications received to 17 June are 80 up compared with the same date last year. Staff Governor, and Director of Studies responsible, advised that the number might decline slightly as the 4 July deadline was reached.

Five students gaining National Theatre places this year have all been supported by the local Sylvia Short Educational Charity.

Feedback from the annual Parental Questionnaire was again very positive.

A College Staff Questionnaire had been carried out in collaboration with a group of other colleges, and the Principal was pleased with level of the responses. The question answered least positively by staff was about the opportunity to progress within the College. The Principal indicated that staff turnover at the College is low, and, with a relatively flat management structure, there were not many opportunities for internal promotion. The survey also indicated that staff, generally, were happy and did not want to leave. A benchmarked version of the results will be available in September.

National issues highlighted were:

- SFCA lobbying in relation to better redistribution of transitional funding protection, the funding gap between 11-16 and 16-19 per capita funding and removal of VAT paid by SFCs
- SCFA published reports – *Assessing Value for Money in Sixth Form Education*, and *SFCA Funding Impact Survey findings*

The Principal felt that, although the funding problems were recognised by Government, it is unlikely that there would be any increase in SFC funding. The Funding Impact Survey report shows the high performance of SFCs is under serious threat as a result of cuts to the sector's funding:

- 68% of SFCs forced to drop courses
- 38% of SFCs forced to drop courses in modern foreign languages
- 22% of SFCs have cut Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths courses
- 95% of SFCs have reduced staffing levels
- 71% of SFCs forced to reduce or remove extra-curricular activities, such as sport, music and educational visits

Members expressed their concern at the situation nationally, and in response to questions the Deputy Principal confirmed that HSFC had not dropped courses, and the Principal indicated that further comment would feature in the Finance and Premises Committee report to follow.

The Principal ended his report on a lighter note, outlining the activities to be sampled at the College's Summer Celebration on Saturday, 5 July, to mark the College's 40th Anniversary, adding that over 300 students have already 'logged on' to get tickets.

10. REVIEW OF COMPLAINTS (2013/14) AND THE COLLEGE'S RESPONSES

The Chair has read and reviewed all seven complaints against the College during the year, together with the six Principal's responses. One response had been from the Chair. All have been resolved without further complaint.

The Board discussed the complaints briefly, which it judged to have been handled promptly and fairly. There had been no complaints about the Board or its committees.

11. COMMITTEE REPORTS

i. Staff and Students Committee on 10 June

The Committee Chair reported that the Committee had reviewed the following policies and had then recommended them to the Board for approval. After a brief discussion the Board **AGREED TO APPROVE:**

- Recruitment Policy and Procedures 2014-15
- Pay Policy and Procedures 2014-15
- Appraisal Policy and Procedures 2014-15
- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy and Procedures 2014-15
- Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy & Procedures 2014-15

The Committee had received a comprehensive Annual Report on safeguarding issues from the Director of Studies with Lead responsibility, and had **APPROVED** that report under its delegated powers. The Committee Chair also **ASSURED** the Board that

- The College thoroughly monitors students at risk
- College staff comply with the Safeguarding Policies and Procedures listed above, and wellbeing of students was being addressed

In response to a member's question about reduced resources to external support services and whether the College had sufficient experience in house, the Director of Studies confirmed that a member of staff was 'ex-Connexions', and staff were aware of all relevant websites and literature available, stressing that external support was still available but with reduced capacity.

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

ii. Audit Committee on 17 June

In the absence of the Committee Chair, a committee member presented the report, indicating that a good Internal Audit report had been received in relation to College Learner Number Systems, with all recommendations low in scale.

The Committee had discussed and agreed the Internal Audit Plan 2014/15, and reviewed the performance of the Internal Audit Service (IAS), with a series of Performance Indicators for the IAS for 2013/14.

The Committee had then considered all aspects of Risk Management (RM) and made recommendations to the Board. After a discussion, particularly in relation to the RM Action Plan, the Board then **AGREED TO APPROVE** the

- Risk Management Policy and Procedures, 2014-15
- Risk Analysis and Register, June 2014
- Risk Management Report 2013/14
- Risk Management Action Plan, 2014/15

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

iii. Finance & Premises Committee on 19 June

The Committee had considered the Draft Budget for 2014-15 and the Financial Forecast for the 2015/16, with operating deficits of £564k and £283k respectively, reflecting the reductions in funding. The Committee had noted plans outlined by the Principal and Finance Director as to what might be done to mitigate the situation, involving a review of the curriculum model and staffing structure.

The Deputy Principal confirmed that the College's approach was to reach a solution which addressed both problems facing the College: the curriculum change to linear qualifications and reductions in funding. AS Level qualifications will become harder to deliver. The College's basic plan is:

- Alter the default programme from 4 to 3 AS's in the first year with an option for any who wish to take 4 to do so

- staffing changes to be managed through 'natural movement'
- possibility of enrolling overseas students on a 'home-stay' basis.

The Principal added that this reflected the change in government policy, and retained what universities have always valued, and quoted from a recent article in Times Higher Education by the chief executive of UCAS, 'there are few incentives for schools and colleges to do anything other than revert to the old-style three-subject A Level programme in England'.

In response to an array of member's question, the Deputy Principal stated that the changes will help in two years time, but not in 2014/15. About 5% to 10% are expected to opt for four subjects in the first year. The additional timetable hours available will allow increased opportunities for extra- curricular activities.

The Committee had also reviewed the April Management Accounts had noted that the College remains in a healthy financial position and had recommended the accounts for approval.

The draft budget, financial forecast and management accounts were all discussed by the Board, and then the Board **AGREED TO APPROVE** the

- Monthly Management Accounts for April 2014
- First Draft Budget 2014/15, and forecast 2015/16

The Committee had also reviewed the Health and Safety Policy, and agreed to recommend it for approval by the Board with no changes for the coming year. The Health & Safety Annual Report had also been examined and noted. The Board **AGREED TO APPROVE** the Health and Safety Policy for 2014/15.

The Committee had also received an update on the Extension to Front of College capital project, confirming that planning permission had been obtained. The tender has been prepared with a return date to allow for an August decision. Start date may not be until early September, but certain demolition works may take place, which in turn will enable the main contractor to proceed quickly, once agreed. The Architect and Quantity Surveyor will liaise with the demolition contractor at every stage. The Principal confirmed that contracting with the demolition company separately had proved useful, and demolition work is planned to start on 12 July.

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

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Neil Arlett, retiring as Governor in early October, was invited to attend the next full Governors' meeting. The Chair noted that it was Katie Baker's last meeting as Student Governor, thanked her for her most useful contribution over her term of office, and the Board wished her well for the future.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 9 October 2014, at 7.30pm