



GOVERNORS' MEETING

Minutes of the meeting on 5 February 2015

Present: Ms Michelle Balcombe, Mrs Carol Clapham, Mr Charles Davies, Mr Rob Doran, Mrs Diane Evans, Dr Jonathan Godfrey, Mr Chris Hodson, Dr Ken Hopkins (Chair), Mr James Miller, Mr Rob Newton, Mr Phil Tranter, Mrs Shirley Tully, Miss Christine Wright (13)

In attendance: Mr Peter Cooper (Deputy Principal), Mr Robert Gorman (Clerk),

The Chair of Governors announced that Heidi Macdougall had requested a leave of absence to mid March, which had been granted, to care for her terminally ill mother in Surrey.

The Chair went on to confirm that at the last Finance and Premises Committee meeting, Blair Priday had announced her retirement from the Board of Governors due to pressure of other work. The Chair had thanked Blair for all her work with the Board, and the College, over the last four years.

The Curriculum Committee had been one member short for a while. The Search Committee had thought it useful to co-opt Dr Marion Hawkins, already a co-opted member of the Audit Committee, to the Curriculum Committee, which, in turn, the Committee had agreed to at its last meeting. The Board then **APPROVED** the co-option. The Chair of the Search Committee proposed, in view of the recent vacancy, and Marion Hawkins' willingness to become a Governor, that Dr Marion Hawkins be appointed a member of the Board. The Board **AGREED** to **APPROVE** the appointment.

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Mr Martin Churchward, Mr Joe Hamblin, Mr Clive Hodgeman, Dr Amber Tahir, Mrs Heidi Macdougall (leave of absence), Mr Ravi Tandon, Ms Sally-An Griffiths (Finance Director) (6)

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS AND GIFTS**

None

3. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11 DECEMBER 2014**

The minutes were approved as an accurate record, and signed.

4. **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

The Principal reported that, in relation to item 10, Shirley Tully had agreed to act as Governor with special responsibility for students with Special Educational Needs/Difficulties.

5. **CLERK'S REPORT**

The Clerk reported that declarations of interest and eligibility from two members remained outstanding. The Clerk also reminded Governors that Points of Detail in minutes should be notified before a meeting to the Clerk or Committee Chair, to save time at Governors' meetings.

The Clerk reported that attendance at the SFCA Clerks' conference on 26 January had proved most worthwhile. Of particular interest had been a presentation by a Senior Ofsted Inspector. The new Common Inspection Framework becomes effective from 1 September, with shorter, more regular inspections planned for Good and Outstanding colleges as well. The inspections will be of a more monitoring type and exactly the same as for school sixth forms. Greater importance will be given to Leadership and Management with institutions having to demonstrate ambitious vision, clarity and direction, and inspectors looking for evidence of challenge.

In response to members' requests for more detail, the Clerk agreed to circulate the presentation when it became available. The Deputy Principal, stating that currently inspections are made on a risk basis with emphasis on data, indicated that the College is well prepared. In response to a member's question expressing concern that the framework is for schools as well, the Principal confirmed that the SFCA are pressing for equivalent data and performance measures to be used.

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, in relation to Staffing, drew Governors' attention to the number of staff who gained Worcester University's Diploma in Leadership and Management as part of their continuing professional development. The course is completed on a part-time basis over two years. Special mention was made of Paul Rogers from the Estates department. Governors expressed their congratulations.

The Principal went on to outline the data for leavers' destinations, indicating that this year's Oxbridge applicants have achieved 14 offers of places, much the same as in previous years, but still more than double the national average.

The DfE's January Schools' Performance Tables were circulated, and there was considerable discussion, especially of the columns showing average points score per A Level entry, average points score per candidate and value-added score where the College's score at +0.25 was joint highest with Carmel, St Helens, amongst the top 10% of all SFCs.

Local issues highlighted the LA's review the continued viability of some schools. Nationally, the SCFA's VAT campaign continued to gather support with some 12,000 signatures on the e-petition.

The Principal circulated a flyer for the English Symphony Orchestra's concert on 27 February at Hereford Cathedral with HSFC's Academia Musica choir, featuring Mozart's Requiem and encouraged Governors to attend. The concert demonstrated the high standard which the choir has achieved.

7. STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Principal presented the College's 2015-18 Strategic Development Plan, drawing the attention of Governors to the Summary of Key Challenges and the difficulty of planning in the current, uncertain, climate of austerity plans impacting the 16-19 sector. The Principal detailed the key assumptions on which the Plan is based, risks and mitigating action, particularly:

- funding rate of £4000 per learner
- 1% staff pay rise
- number of students on roll

All had an effect on the operating budget and the College is always looking to find savings. The Principal confirmed that the SMT were working towards eliminating a deficit in 2015/16, as the College cannot fund a deficit from its reserves.

The Plan's Summary of Proposed Developments lists 20 action points for 2015-16, with further measures to be followed up for 2016-2018. The Principal highlighted planned developments under Curriculum, External Links and Quality, where quality assurance procedures had to conform to proposed changes in Ofsted's Common Inspection Framework.

Governors discussed the challenges, key assumptions and risks and the need for Governors to be aware of what lies behind the key assumptions. Governors asked questions about the extent of the curriculum offer, the cost impact of new courses, competition from other schools and consequences for students of the reduction in ALS funding. The Principal responded by stating that many colleges are taking a 'wait and see' approach to the changing structure of A Level provision. It is planned that the Governors' conference will cover curriculum issues in detail, and the critical relationship to level of funding and cost to College.

In response to a member's question, the Principal agreed that under Key Assumptions, a new assumption

box will be added relating to the Retention of 4AS and 3A2 course option, as long as funding will allow.

In response to a member's question concerning the College's Mission Statement and external links with proposed University for Herefordshire, the Principal confirmed that the promoters had raised £1m already for the University (towards the required start-up funding in the order of £50m), which plans to offer modular liberal science degrees in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) subjects with team building skills. It is understood that a specialist engineering college in the USA, and Sheffield, Bristol and Warwick universities have already agreed to support the project.

After discussion, the Board then **AGREED TO APPROVE** the Strategic Development Plan 2015-2018.

8. COMMITTEE REPORTS

i. Staff & Students Committee on 20 January

The Acting Committee Chair outlined the new framework for teachers' pay, referring to the SFCA's presentation on the *Reform of Professional Standards Payments (PSP) and the Introduction of Pay progression based on Appraisal outcomes* which the Committee had considered in some detail. The key difference is that all pay progression is linked to satisfactory performance, with formal appraisal annually. It was clear that the College's procedures already incorporate most of the new framework, and the Committee had agreed to its adoption.

The Committee had considered the College's updated redundancy policy and procedures, reflecting current employment law around age limits and normal retirement date. The Board noted the Committee's recommendation and **AGREED TO APPROVE** the updated Redundancy Policy and Procedures.

The amended Governor Induction, Training and Development Policy and Procedures had also been considered by the Committee. Apart from changes to job titles, the only significant change was the addition to Induction of informal meetings with the Clerk. The Board then **AGREED TO APPROVE** the amended Policy and Procedures.

The Committee had also considered:

- staffing projections - recruitment of additional staff not anticipated
- learning support staffing – College's delivery model has to be changed to meet the funding gap resulting from new funding methodology and changed EFA formula
- Governors' skills audit and training needs - the questionnaire from December 2014 demonstrated that there continued to be a good balance of experience on the Governing Body.

It was felt that training needs could be met by in-house training sessions before Governors' meetings, with a session on curriculum and possible changes should be covered at the Governors' Conference in March.

The Principal outlined the programme for the Governors' Conference, with Governors' meeting and review of mission and strategic objectives, followed by sessions on curriculum and possible changes, and the General Education Programme (Education for Life). A visiting speaker for the Friday evening session is planned. It was agreed the Principal should approach Karen Usher who leads the University for Hereford project. Governors considered and agreed the revised programme, noting that the event is to be held at College.

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

ii. Finance & Premises Committee on 22 January

The Acting Committee Chair reported that the Committee had discussed the Monthly Management Accounts for November and December which indicated that College finances remained in a good financial position. In response to a member's question about the high amount of funds with Lloyds TSB, The Principal confirmed that much of the funds would be

used in January to March due to the reduced payment profile for EFA funding in that period, and capital expenditure on the Front of College project. In response to a member's question about the 'cash-based operating position as percentage of income' performance indicator, it was explained that the cash-based position was gained after adding back depreciation, grant write-offs and any other non-cash income and expenditure items.

After a brief discussion, the Board then **AGREED TO APPROVE** the Monthly Management Accounts for November and December 2014.

The Acting Chair outlined the amendments to the Financial Regulations, covering Capitalisation and Depreciation, Internal Audit, Fraud, Bribery and Corruption, Virement and Collection of Debts. The Committee had discussed the amendments in some detail, and it was confirmed that none was contentious or of major significance. The Board then **AGREED TO APPROVE** the amended Financial Regulations 2014-15.

The Committee had received an update on the Front of College extension project, which was going to plan, and had given its support to two capital grant applications in relation to a first floor extension to the Sports Hall and double glazing to Aconbury block. No further major projects were in view.

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

iii. Curriculum Committee on 22 January

The Committee Chair confirmed that the Committee had considered students' attendance and retention, students' destinations after leaving the College and possible curriculum changes, Attendance and Retention statistics were excellent. Referring to destinations the Committee Chair indicated that the overall success rate in getting offers was very high at 86%.

The Committee had also reviewed departmental targets for Retention and Achievement. All courses were targeting 95% attendance, and targeting to exceed the SFC benchmark figure for retention. The target for Achievement is to improve or maintain value added performance at A Level and BTEC National. After a brief discussion, the Board of Governors **AGREED TO APPROVE** the Departmental Targets for 2015-16.

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

9. START TIME FOR GOVERNORS' MEETINGS

A member proposed, and it was seconded, that meetings of the full Board of Governors should commence at 6.00pm rather than 7.30pm currently. The Board then **AGREED** to the start time of 6.00pm with effect from the meeting on 21 May 2015.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

9.30 am on Saturday 14 March, Governors' Conference