



GOVERNORS' MEETING

Minutes of the meeting
on 11 December 2014

Present: Ms Michelle Balcombe, Mr Martin Churchward, Mr Charles Davies,
Mr Rob Doran, Dr Jonathan Godfrey, Mr Joe Hamblin, Mr Clive Hodgeman, Mr Chris
Hodson, Dr Ken Hopkins (Chair), Mrs Heidi Macdougall, Mr James Miller, Mr Rob
Newton, Ms Blair Priday, Mr Ravi Tandon, Dr Amber Tahir, Mr Phil Tranter (16)

In attendance: Mrs Shirley Tully, Mr Robert Gorman (Clerk),
Mrs Sally-Ann Griffiths (Finance Director)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Mrs Carol Clapham, Mrs Diane Evans, Miss Christine Wright (3)

2. APPOINTMENT OF STUDENT GOVERNOR

Rob Newton was nominated after winning the election by first year students. The Board
AGREED TO APPOINT Rob Newton as a Student Governor

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS AND GIFTS

None

4. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 9 OCTOBER 2014

The Minutes were approved as an accurate record and signed

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

None. The Principal reported that he and the Chair had taken Neil Arlett out for lunch and
presented him with a book to mark his retirement from the Board.

CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

The Chair read out a letter he had received from the Principal which requested that the
proposed salary increase for the Principal be 1% to be in line with all other staff. Members
expressed the view that the response was very refreshing but not unexpected. The Chair
asked members to bear the request in mind when the Remuneration Committee report was
discussed later.

The Chair went on to request that the Search Committee report be taken early in the agenda
as it involved the appointment of a new governor.

Shirley Tully left the meeting at this point

11. COMMITTEE REPORTS

ii. Search Committee on 11 November

The Committee Chair briefly outlined the Committees discussions involving board
membership, skills and expiration of membership terms, and put forward the Search
Committee's recommendation that Shirley Tully be appointed as governor for a four-
year term. All were in favour, and the **BOARD AGREED** to **APPROVE** the appointment.
The Chair also asked that the Board approve the College's amended Appointment of
Governors Procedures. After discussion, the **BOARD** confirmed its **APPROVAL**.
Members were reminded that persons interested in becoming governors at the
College could contact the Principal for an initial discussion.

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

Shirley Tully rejoined the meeting at this point

6. CLERK'S REPORT

The Clerk confirmed that 3 College Governors and the Clerk had attended the Ofsted Dash Board training event at Worcester Sixth Form College, and went on to remind Governors to return any outstanding signed Declarations of Eligibility and Interests, and Skills Audit and Training Needs questionnaires.

7. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

The Principal presented his report and welcomed Rob Newton as a new Student Governor. Quality Assurance was discussed relatively briefly since College Self-Assessment featured elsewhere on the Governors' Agenda. Retention remains at a very high level but attendance, though good, dipped slightly towards the first half term. The Principal thanked the Deputy Principal for his role in the production of the Self-Assessment Report 2013/14. Work on the Extension to Front of College is on schedule for September 2015.

Local issues included Wigmore High School's decision to postpone its proposed sixth form to September 2016, and nationally the SFCA's revision of the pay framework for teachers making the award of performance payments more rigorous and pay scales more uniform. The Principal confirmed that the detailed features of the framework reform, for possible full implementation by September 2016, would go to the relevant College Committees for discussion in detail.

The Principal then went on to outline the SFCA's Drop the Learning Tax campaign to secure a VAT refund scheme for Sixth Form Colleges, and urged Governors to sign the e-petition. The Finance Director stated that in the last financial year, the College had suffered VAT in the order of £600k, including VAT on major capital projects.

8. WHOLE COLLEGE TARGETS

The Principal presented a schedule summarising the actual outcomes against the previously agreed 9 Whole College Targets for September 2014, noting that the total roll was now 2025 after drop outs. Governors are responsible for agreeing strategic targets for the College, and ensuring that they are SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound). Members particularly noted:

- the achievement of A*/A/B at A Level at 59.9%
- the ALPS A and AS level VA scores of 3 and 2, respectively

In response to a member's question, the Principal confirmed that the drop out rate was not unusual, and asked if travel distance was a factor, stated that analysis in previous years had demonstrated that more drop outs came from Hereford City than from 25 miles away.

After discussion, Governors **NOTED** the successful outcomes for the year.

9. COLLEGE SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT ON THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2013-14

The Deputy Principal introduced the SAR report and its summary report, using a PowerPoint presentation to explain its purpose and the way it is constructed through an annual process stemming from the Mission Statement and 3-5 year targets. All departments, staff and Governors contribute to what is considered to be a valuable and robust process for the whole College.

The College's overall effectiveness and Common Inspection Framework Criteria were all

assessed as 'Outstanding', but there are still a number of Areas for Development, which the Board considered, including the need to improve a small number of courses and embrace the forthcoming assessment and curriculum changes. Leadership and Management is a key area of focus for Governors, where areas for development included: induction of new governors and managing College finances in the face of severe cuts.

Value Added performance continues to be exceptionally strong, and Success rates also remain high. Curriculum area grades were examined and discussed. Learners' views are taken into account in the report, and members noted that students liked the high quality of teaching, and effective monitoring of their progress, amongst other things. A member commented that the DfE Level 3 Value Added score compared with other local schools was outstanding. A member, who had taken part in the SAR process, had observed no degree of complacency in the process, which had been completed with considerable integrity. The SAR summary was amended to include an updated AS value added score from 3 to 2, and to include the strategic role of governors as a strength in the leadership and management section.

The Board spent considerable time on this agenda item. It then **AGREED** that the Self-Assessment Report is a robust and realistic summary of the College's strengths and weaknesses. The Chair congratulated the Deputy Principal on the management of the self-assessment process and the Report.

The Board then **AGREED TO APPROVE** the Self-Assessment Report 2013-14 and the SAR Development Plan.

10. **APPOINTMENT OF GOVERNOR WITH SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

The Principal indicated that the College was intending to appoint a governor with responsibility for students with Special Educational Needs/Disabilities (SEND), and asked members to consider if they would be interested in taking on this responsibility, and contact him for more information.

Peter Cooper and Phil Tranter left the meeting at this point.

11. **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

i. Remuneration Committee on 9 October

The Committee Chair presented the minutes from the Committee meeting of 9 October, the recommendations of which had been approved by the Board at its meeting later the same day. The Board **NOTED** the request from the Principal, discussed earlier in the meeting (5 above), and **AGREED** that the salary increase for the Principal be 1% to be in line with all other staff.

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

iii. Finance & Premises Committee on 27 November

The Committee Chair reported that the Committee had discussed Monthly Management Accounts for October, looked in detail at the Financial Report and Accounts for 2013-14 and had considered the College's 2015-16 Grant Application for capital projects.

Management Accounts for October

Payroll costs are running at less than budget, but as a percentage of income are forecast to increase to 75.6% for the year, reflecting the £500k reduction in income from the prior year.

. Cash balances and net current assets remain strong.

The Board considered the Committee's report and the College's Monthly Management Accounts for October 2014, and then **AGREED TO APPROVE** the College's Monthly Management Accounts for October 2014

Financial Report and Accounts

The Committee had recommended the Report and Accounts for approval, subject to the report from the Audit Committee. The performance against financial targets for the year was strong, and that the operating surplus was helped by savings on Salary costs. The College returned a £211k Surplus on Continuing Operations after Depreciation and FRS17 adjustments. The Balance Sheet remained strong with Net Current Assets of £2.298m.

The Board considered the Financial Report and Accounts carefully but resolved to defer approval until after the report from the Audit Committee (see Minute 11iv).

2015-16 Grant Application for capital projects

The Committee had discussed two proposals, and their related borrowings, in some detail, Bids had to be with the Funding Agency by 19 December:

- (i) to complete double-glazing to the remaining area of the 'older' College buildings at an estimated cost of £70k and using a SALIX loan to be repaid over 5 to 8 years.
- (ii) to construct classrooms as a first floor extension over the flat roof area of the Sports Hall at an estimated cost of £450k, with 25% borrowing. This project had previously been discussed and agreed by Governors earlier in the year (see Minutes of meeting 22 May, item 10iii), and already has planning permission. The construction could start in September 2015.

Governors then discussed the proposals and related borrowings in some detail. In response to a member's question, the Finance Director indicated that the borrowings were relatively small sums, £70k over 8 years, and £100k over 10 years. The SALIX loan is interest free, while the second loan would come from a fund specially set up by government at around 2%pa. A member commented that this represented very affordable borrowing.

The Board **AGREED** that grant bids for both projects:

- (i) Double Glazing to 'older' College buildings, estimated cost £70k financed by 100% SALIX loan
- (ii) First floor extension over Sports Hall, estimated cost £450k with 25% borrowing

be submitted to the Funding Agency.

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

iv. Audit Committee on 2 December

The Committee Chair reported that the Audit Committee had examined all aspects of the Annual Financial Report and Accounts, which had previously been examined by the Finance & Premises Committee (see previous Minute), and noted that both Audit opinions in the Statements are unqualified.

It had also examined the Financial Statements Auditors' Findings Report, where no material funding or regularity issues were noted. The College's accounting policies are appropriate and are consistently applied, and net unadjusted misstatements were

considered immaterial. The draft Letters of Representation and Regularity Audit had also been scrutinised.

After discussion, the Board then **AGREED TO**

- adopt the Financial Statements, Report and Accounts for 2013-14
- approve the Letters of Representation within the Audit Findings Report
- authorise the Principal and Chair to sign off the above documents

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

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Governors were reminded of the dates of the College's Academia Musica Orchestra and Choir events over the Christmas period. Members who had attended the recent College production of 'Guys and Dolls', expressed their enjoyment, and congratulated all involved for an outstanding performance. The Principal also reminded Governors of the Presentation Ceremony on 17 December.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 5 February 2015, at 7.30pm