



MINUTES OF THE CORPORATION MEETING HELD ON 15th DECEMBER 2009

Date: Tuesday 15th December 2009
Venue: Sixth Form College
Room: Committee Room
Time: 1630hrs - 1920hrs

Present: Mr J Boyle (Chair)
Mrs S Walsh MBE (Vice Chair)
Mr T Bateson
Cl. D Clapham
Mr J Corry
Mr G Curry
Mr S Davies
Mr A Goodinson
Ms F Greeves
Mr C Hodson
Mr R Hutchinson
Ms S Lightowlers
Mr T Nicholson
Ms J Trembles
Mr R Weaver
Mr P Welsh

Together with: Ms K Kirkwood (Deputy Principal)
Dr E Jones (Vice Principal) for item 5
Mr A Lloyd (Vice Principal)
Mrs A Pickup (Director of Finance)
Dr J Burgess (Clerk to the Corporation)
Mrs J A Trainor (Assistant to the Clerk to the Corporation)

Action

- | | |
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| 47.2009 | Preliminaries and apologies for absence
The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and formally introduced Ms S Lightowlers and Mr C Hodson to their first meeting as Student Governors.
Apologies had been received from Mr S Carswell, Dr A Mohan, Dr D Sanders and Mrs C Tyler. |
| 48.2009 | Declaration of Interest
a) Principal, Deputy Principal and Clerk in item 22.
b) Cl.Clapham in items relating to National Challenge Trust and The Designation of the Sixth Form College. It was agreed this interest did not cause a conflict and Cllr Clapham could fully participate in these items. |
| 49.2009 | Consideration of any items of urgent business.
None. |
| 50.2009 | Appointment of new Governors
Following the recommendation of the Search Committee (1 st December 2009 48.2009 D1), it was proposed that Ms J Trembles be elected to the Corporation with immediate effect for a four-year period. |

The Chair welcomed Mr Steve Davies to the meeting. The Corporation were advised that he had been proposed and seconded by parents, and confirmed his appointment as the Parent Governor.

Action

50.2009 D1 Resolved: that subject to CRB clearance Ms J Trembles be appointed as a Governor for a four-year period.

50.2009 D2 Resolved: that Mr S Davies be appointed as a Parent Governor for a four-year period.

51.2009 Re-branding of the College identity.

Dr Jones introduced Mr Peter Stubbs from 2am Design Consultancy and invited him to update the Corporation on the progress achieved in re-branding the College identity. Mr Stubbs introduced three core concepts that had been worked upon over recent months. The aim was to reflect the college values and strategic direction, as well as provide a memorable identity, which would have immediate recognition and durability into the next decade. Governors gave unanimous support to Core Concept 2 and requested that further development work be undertaken and its web application explored to best effect.

The Chair thanked Mr Stubbs and Dr Jones.

52.2009 Minutes of the last meeting of the Corporation held on the 1st July 2009
(Paper A)

52.2009 D1 Resolved: that the Minutes be approved.

53.2009 Matters arising from the Minutes of the Meeting held on the 1st July 2009
All matters had been actioned.

54.2009 Principal's Report
(Paper B)

Student Enrolment

The Principal was pleased to report that the College had recruited a further 206 students in the Autumn 2009. She drew attention to the growing popularity of the College's BTEC provision. Whilst noting the potential increase in the size of the post 16 market, Governors explored the entry profile of some local high school students who lacked a suitable foundation to progress to programmes at the College.

Student Destinations

Student progression into Higher Education had improved last year with an additional 58 students securing places at HE institutions. There was a growth in student progression to the 'elite' Universities, with the best ever entry to Oxford and Cambridge, though an increasing number of students were opting to study at local universities.

Success Rates

Overall College success rates rose to 88.3%, a rise of 1.6% over the previous year. Despite a proposed change in the method of computation for next year, the College is striving to increase this to 90%.

Sixth Form Designation

The Principal explained the background to the invitation to designate the College to the new separate Sixth Form College sector. The advantages and drawbacks of joining this new group were identified and discussed. Overall, Governors believed that the advantages of being designated were compelling.

Clerk
To action

External recognition for good practice

Governors were delighted to learn that the College had been highly commended for its application for a Beacon Award in curriculum innovation and also had been recommended to receive the Gold status for Investors in People. The latter was a remarkable achievement and the management team were congratulated and thanked for their hard work.

Governors noted and supported the College's policy statement on face covering.

54.2009 D1 Resolved: that the Report be received

54.2009 D2 Resolved: the College be designated a Sixth Form College from April 2010

55.2009 Key Performance Indicators – December 2009

(Paper C)

Governors scrutinised the 13 key performance indicators and were informed that a further 47 lesson observations had taken place and these would be added to the results. It was agreed to see if further benchmarks / targets could be added, but overall Governors welcomed the style and format of the report.

Principal
To action

55.2009 D1 Resolved: that the KPI December 2009 Report be received

56.2009 Accommodation Strategy

Mr Lloyd introduced an informative power point presentation to illustrate possible new options available to the College for taking forward its property improvement strategy following the collapse of the LSC Capital Funding Programme. A series of modest smaller projects would have to be considered, which still retained consistency with the overall design plan of the completed new buildings, maintained sufficient classrooms to meet anticipated demand but re-housed students from leased temporary accommodation and dated cramped classrooms. Architects had worked on a number of options and it had been agreed, as a priority, to seek to replace the existing dining area and related buildings and create a new performing arts area and additional teaching rooms. This had the aesthetic advantage of completing the front elevation of the College, providing an attractive and contemporary public space and moving the refectory facilities to the existing Concert Hall at the rear of the site.

The Director of Finance explained that a number of funding scenarios for the new project had been developed and assessed. Based upon affordability, she believed the College could seek a £4m loan via the local authority, from the Public Works Loan Board, over the 50-year life of the asset, at interest rates of between 4.75% and 5.25%. It was hoped that the LSC would approve the 66% borrowing against projected income. This loan, together with some £1.5m from existing loans and resources, would allow a project of approximately £5.5m to be approved.

Mr Lloyd illustrated a project costing to £5.5m and a development programme timetable, which anticipated demolition of the existing area in the summer of 2010. Governors critically reviewed the proposal, considered alternatives and assessed the inherent risks. After discussion they agreed that the need, the educational case and the financial affordability was proved and the practicality of the proposed project was sound and concluded that managers be authorised to proceed without further delay in order to ensure commencement in the summer vacation window.

Governors warmly thanked Mrs Pickup and Mr Lloyd for their diligence and commitment in taking forward the Accommodation Strategy.

56.2009. D1 Resolved: that approval be given to the Accommodation Working Party to proceed with the revised capital development project for phase 3, as presented on the 15th December 2009, to a maximum total costs of no more than £6m, with borrowings not exceeding 66% of income and initially a maximum fee exposure of £30k. This project would create a Performing Arts facility, additional teaching rooms and provide a re-located light refreshment dining room in the Calder Building.

Miss Lightowlers and Mr Lloyd left the meeting.

57.2009 Minutes of the Audit Committee held on the 24th November 2009 (Paper D)

57.2009 D1 Resolved: that the Minutes be received

- 58.2009 Matters arising from the Minutes of the 24th November 2009**
 Mr Curry, the Chair of the Audit Committee, commented that members had discussed future ways of improving the attendance statistics of the Audit Committee. He also advised that since the meeting, the College had been advised that the new Internal auditors, RSM Bentley Jennison proposed to merge with the existing external auditors Tenon Group Plc on the 30th December 2009. The Director of Finance stated that a joint meeting was scheduled in early January 2010 at the College, to examine the implications and the way forward.
- He recommended approval of the Report and Financial Statement for the year ending 31st July 2009. (*Paper E.*)
- Governors also reviewed the Management Report from the External Auditors Tenon (*Paper F*)
- The draft Representation Letter (*Paper G*) was reviewed and agreed.
- The Annual Report of the Internal Auditors (*Paper H*) was considered and agreed.
- Mr Curry reviewed the Annual Report of the Audit Committee (*Paper i*) and recommended its approval.
- Finally, the proposed Internal Audit Strategy (*Paper J*) from the new internal auditors RSM Bentley Jennison, for the next three years, was considered and approved.
- 58.2009 D1 Resolved: that the Report and Financial Statement for the year ending 31st July 2009 be approved.**
- 58.2009 D2 Resolved: that the Management Report from the External Auditor Tenon be received.**
- 58.2009 D3 Resolved: that the Representation Letter to the External Auditor Tenon be approved.**
- 58.2009 D4 Resolved: that the Internal Audit Annual Report 2008/2009 be approved.**
- 58.2009 D5 Resolved: that the Annual Report of the Audit Committee 2007/2008 be approved.**
- 58.2009 D6 Resolved: that the Internal Audit Strategy be approved**
- 59.2009 Minutes of the Strategic Planning and Standards Committee held on the 29th September 2009**
 (*Paper K*)
59.2009. D1 Resolved: to receive the minutes
- 60.2009 Matters arising from the minutes of the 29th September 2009**

The Principal observed that the contentious issue of students taking extended holidays in term time continues to be a problem, although the number of applications was down nearly 50% from the previous year. The College and local schools were keen to communicate the message that this was not acceptable on an intensive two year full-time further education programme.

61.2009 Minutes of the Strategic Planning and Standards Committee held on the 1st December 2009

(Paper L)

61.2009. D1 Resolved: to receive the minutes

62.2009 Matters arising from the minutes of the 1st December 2009

None.

63.2009 Minutes of the Search Committee held on 12th October 2009

(Paper M)

63.2009. D1 Resolved: that the Minutes be received.

64.2009 Matters arising from the minutes of the 12th October 2009

Mrs Walsh briefly reviewed the actions taken to strengthen the membership of the Corporation, which included a more formalised approach to the process. She drew attention to the Attendance Record for 2008 – 2009 *(Paper N)*. For the second year, this had a number of worrying aspects, particularly in comparison to the attendance record of previous years. She reflected that the Search Committee were keen to recruit talented and skilled members, however, their availability for meetings was often a problem. In discussion it was agreed to re-schedule Corporation meetings to commence at 1700hrs.

Clerk
To action

Govs
To note

64.2009. D1 Resolved: that the Attendance Record for 2008 / 09 be received

65.2009 Minutes of the Search Committee held on 1st December 2009

(Paper O)

65.2009. D1 Resolved: that the Minutes be received.

66.2009 Matters arising from the minutes of the 1st December 2009

Governors were saddened to learn of the proposed retirement of Mrs Carole Tyler, perhaps the longest serving member on the Corporation. However, they were very pleased to support the recommendation of the Committee to appoint Ms Kathryn Talboys to the Corporation for a 4-year term of office commencing 7th April 2010.

The draft programme for the residential Conference was discussed and Governors were urged to ensure that they could attend this important and very beneficial annual training and development event.

Govs
To note

66.2009. D1 Resolved: that, subject to CRB clearance, Ms Kathryn Talboys be appointed to the Corporation from 7th April 2010 to 7th April 2014.

66.2009. D2 Resolved: that the draft programme for the Residential Conference be approved.

67.2009 Minutes of the Administration and Finance Committee held on 7th October 2009.

(Paper Q)

67. 2009. D1 Resolved: that the Minutes be received.

68.2009 Matters arising from the minutes of the 7th October 2009

None.

69.2009 Minutes of the Administration and Finance Committee held on the 25th November 2009

(Paper R)

69.2009. D1 Resolved: that the Minutes be received

70.2009 Matters arising from the Minutes of the 25th November 2009

Mr Welsh drew attention to the preparatory work the Committee had undertaken in respect of the next phase of the property re-development and noted the re-tendering process for the Catering Services Contract.

He invited the Principal to brief colleagues on the opportunities presented by the **National Challenge Trust**, *(Paper S)* which the Committee had approved the statement of Intent. The Principal reviewed the background of this Government initiative and the specific proposal for the College to be the Lead Partner in the transformation of the nearby Collegiate High School. She highlighted the risks involved but urged that the major benefits from a successful collaboration for the School, the College, the local authority and the community were very significant. Governors questioned the practical implications and the timeframe, but were very supportive of this initiative and wished the management well in this new and important development.

70.2009. D1 Resolved: that the College's participation, as lead partner, in the National Challenge Trust be approved.

Mrs Walsh left the meeting.

71.2009 Minutes of the Self-Assessment Committee held on 17th November 2009

(Paper T)

Mr Weaver, Chair of the Committee, described the function of the Committee in reviewing the processes and work of the Governors and preparing a quality improvement plan to enhance the governance process. The Governors reviewed the minutes, the Strengths and Areas for Development and agreed the proposed action plan. They supported the proposal to re-issue passwords and circulate guidance on the use of First Class to all Governors. Mr Weaver thanked Ms Kirkwood for her insights and support on this process.

71.2009. D1 Resolved: that the Minutes be received.

71.2009. D2 Resolved: that the Self Assessment and proposed Action Plan are approved.

72.2009 | **Estimation of Risk**
The meeting reflected on the items discussed and noted two significant new risk areas in respect of the next phase of the Accommodation Strategy and in the collaboration on the National Challenge Trust.

The Clerk, senior management, staff and students left the meeting.

73.2009. | **Confidential items**
The meeting considered and approved the recommendations detailed in the minutes of the Remuneration Committee held on 3rd December 2009.

73.2009. D1 Resolved: that the Minutes and recommendations of the Remuneration Committee 3rd December 2009 be approved.

Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Corporation is **Wednesday 30th March 2010 at 1700hrs.**

The Chair thanked members for their attendance and contributions.

Signed: _____

Chair: _____

Date: _____