



GOVERNORS' MEETING Minutes of the meeting on 16 June 2022 in College Meeting room

Present: Mr Ian Archer, Mr Peter Cooper, Miss Lois Knight, Dr David Langley,
Mr James Miller (Chair), Rev Kina Robertshaw, Ms Beth Rudolf, Mrs Nicola Taylor,
Mrs Catriona Ward (9)

In attendance: Mr Robert Gorman (Clerk), Mrs Sallyanne Griffiths (Finance Director),
Mrs Catherine Brearey (Vice Principal), Mrs Helen Osborn, Mr Phil Tranter (Vice Principal),
Mr John Pratt

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Andy Clarke, Andrew Roberts, Felix J Smithson, Danielle Thompson, Sarah Woodall
(5)

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS AND GIFTS

None

3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 5 MAY 2022

The minutes were approved as an accurate record.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There was no news yet of an Ofsted inspection.

5. CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

The Chair informed Governors that Sarah Woodall had been in hospital again and was recovering slowly. Also, Andy Roberts had been working in London and was now working overseas. The Chair recommended that both be granted leave of absence for the foreseeable future until there was more news.

Both would not appear in the Board's absence statistics and the Board will effectively comprise only 12 members until his situation resolves. The Board **AGREED** the leave of absence for both governors.

Vice Principal, Phil Tranter, updated governors on the planned rail strikes and impact on students travelling to College and examinations. All parents had been contacted about the plans, including virtual teaching for those who cannot get in. A communication from the DfE gave flexibility on start times for examinations.

6. CLERK'S REPORT

The Clerk, referring to the election of Chair and Vice Chair of Governors for 2022-23, confirmed that he had received no nominations. The current Chair was eligible to stand. A Governor proposed, and all **AGREED**, that James Miller be re-elected as Chair of the Governing Body. The Chair proposed Danielle Thompson be re-elected as Vice-Chair and all **AGREED**.

The Clerk went on to present the draft calendar of meetings for the next academic year, stressing that the programme of business was a draft in so far as business may be added, removed or rescheduled during the year. In response to a Governor's question as to the transactional nature of much of the business, the Clerk indicated that the academic year has a cycle of events on its calendar which form the basic business for the Board. While much is transactional, matters concerning curriculum policy, academic results, student welfare strategic development are also covered. The Vice Principal confirmed that College 3 Year Plans are also reviewed at MAT level. After a brief discussion, Governors **AGREED** the calendar of meetings and business for 2022/23.

7. **PRINCIPAL'S REPORT**

The Vice Principal, Catherine Brearey, presented the Principal's report, already circulated to Governors, including staff changes, HESA Degree classification data and Attendance and Retention data.

The Vice Principal commenced by giving a presentation entitled *Why Change*, outlining MAT and College plans in response to the recent White Paper which had indicated that all educational institutions should be in a MAT by 2030. Changes to the composition of the College's SMT were outlined. With the Executive Principal, Peter Cooper, now focussing more on the MAT, for at least a period of time, Catherine Brearey becomes Acting Principal and Phil Tranter, Deputy Principal, with a shuffling of existing middle managers to support them.

The Acting Principal went on to outline the growth of safeguarding and impact of Covid on the College's Tutor Model. John Pratt becomes Director of Safeguarding, Inclusion and Development. Senior Management changes include:

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|----------------|---|---|
| Matt Bunston | - | Safeguarding and Pastoral Support Manager |
| Sophie Wheadon | - | Senior Curriculum Lead Vocational |
| Helen Osborn | - | Academic Progress Manager |

The 3 Strand approach to the organisation and structure of the teams was outlined: Safeguarding, Academic Progress and Impact. Also outlined were the timings of Quality Assurance arrangements into the next academic year.

The H.E. Statistics Agency (HESA) data of degree classifications obtained by students at UK universities in the 2020/21 academic year, comparing HSFC data with the SFC sector, State and Independent sectors was presented showing degree classifications obtained by HSFC students. Continuation rates data 2019/20, after completion of the first year were also included.

HSFC compared very favourably within the sixth form sector, with 89.7% of its cohort gaining first and upper seconds honours against 85.4% for SFC sector nationally. For Russell group, HSFC was 93.4% against 92.5% nationally. Excellent figures were noted for students whose parents do not have HE qualifications, with 86.4% for HSFC against 83.6% nationally.

New staff joining included Head of Chemistry and Head of Law. There are several internal appointments. The Principal's report noted that some good staff left during the year, but he was pleased with the calibre of the new appointees. In response to a Governor's question about exit interviews, the Acting Principal confirmed there were conversations with leavers, not retirees, but such interviews could be considered.

Attendance analysis by term was reviewed. Overall attendance in this transitional year was down, but it was noted that it was creditable. Retention to end of May, and November to May were both healthy at 90.8% and 94.3%, respectively.

Governors **NOTED** the report.

REPORT OF STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

Student Governor, Lois Knight, presented the Annual report of the Student Representative Council (SRC) for 2021/22, which had already been circulated.

The SRC acts as a consultative group, mainly on cross-college issues, and arranges fund-raising and social activities for the student body. Representatives to the SRC are drawn from each tutor group. SRC members had met several times with the Principal and Vice Principal and were involved in a range of discussions including remote learning, social space, the Student portal and other possible IT developments from the student perspective.

It was noted that 9 Ukrainian students attend College presently. SRC Finance Officer, Patryk, had given a talk to Leominster Rotary, has also been in discussion with the HSFC Finance Director about SRC funds and development of new income streams as the decline in sale of NUS cards continues.

Other SRC activities included:

- providing input on issues regarding student wellbeing and mental health
- liaison with the Beacon College
- raising £382 for Children in Need and £140 for Ukraine
- collecting donations for Hereford Food Bank and donating 60 shoe boxes to the 2021 Christmas Box Appeal

The Chair commented that, given that it had been another difficult year, much had been achieved, and asked that thanks be passed on to the whole SRC.

Peter Cooper joined the meeting at this point

8. FINANCE REPORT

The Finance Director presented the Summary and College Financial Results for the 8 months to 30 April 2022, noting that the net surplus to April, at £372k, remained well ahead of budget mainly due to funding for Bursary and Free College meals, together with pay costs and non-pay savings. Transport savings arose as Spring term 2022 travel invoices are not yet received.

Earnings before Interest, Taxation, Depreciation and Amortisation (EBITDA) for HSFC of £923k, at this stage, were well in excess of budget. Pay costs as % of income were 69% for HSFC at 30 April.

The updated forecast for the year produced a net deficit for HSFC of £241k, at this stage, against a £269k budgeted deficit, with EBITDA positive at £581k against £550k budget.

The Finance Director was, overall, happy with the College's position and indicated that the Balance Sheet remained strong. HSFC's £3.7m capital project, the new Thornbury building, had received the first instalment of funding from ESFA. Total grant is £2.691m. The Finance Director explained that funding and expenditure for the project will be detailed separately from the College I&E and Forecast schedules.

Governors **NOTED** the Summary and College Results for the period to April 2022.

The Finance Director went on to update Governors on various matters. Internal Audit work was commissioned on a MAT basis and LGB governors would be updated on College-specific work of Internal Audit. An HSFC Estates audit had identified no significant issues and had proved a very useful review. External audit work was due to commence in October. In relation to Gender Pay, the Finance Director confirmed there was a process in place to see that male and female staff are treated equally, with the median being used as the measure. Insurance cover was negotiated on a MAT-wide basis, giving the College an increased level of coverage for less premium.

9. SAFEGUARDING ANNUAL REPORT

Helen Osborn, DOS and Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), presented the HSFC annual Safeguarding Report, and confirmed that an update to Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) statutory guidance is expected in September, which will in turn be updated in pastoral and safeguarding system operating at the College. The DOS went on to give an overview of students being monitored. No student's names are mentioned in the annual report at any stage. Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) monitor the implementation of the safeguarding policies through fortnightly meetings with the Directors of Studies (DOSs),

at which the senior College Counsellor is also present. All reports of safeguarding issues are 'logged', and followed through. DOSs have access to supervision themselves on a monthly basis with a trained counsellor.

At 25 May 2022 there were 562 (last year 402) students on the Vulnerable Students file, excluding 183 (last year 207) related to safeguarding information received from previous schools with no further concerns raised to date at HSFC. The pre-enrolment process is good, but takes a significant amount of time.

A summary schedule of Logs, by Lead Issues, comparing the last 10 years' data is included in the report. Mental health including extreme anxiety and stress accounts for the largest category, comprising 48% of the vulnerable students, and reflects a national trend.

The pastoral support team are an integral part of ongoing support, with the College operating a joined-up approach. To date since September 2021, 23 referrals have been made to Multiagency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)/social services team and external agencies depending on the nature of the safeguarding concern.

Other points reported included:

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| online Herefordshire Council local authority safeguarding audit | - | completed in December 2021, with clean result |
| student perception of College questionnaire | - | 98% of HSFC students indicated that they feel safe in College. Tutors will follow up. |
| Collaborative work across the MAT | - | to share resources and good practice and create a supportive network |
| Action Plan 2021/22 | - | Completed |

The DOS went on to outline the action plan for 2022/23, including:

- embedding new Safeguarding and Pastoral support Model from September 2022 to give continued commitment and focus
- providing adequate training to new members of staff, and training itself to be reviewed
- continued development of the PSHE curriculum. Weekly IMPACT strategy timetabled sessions, like College's previous E4L sessions

[Personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education is an important and necessary part of all students' education. PSHE is a non-statutory subject and teachers have the flexibility to deliver high-quality PSHE within programmes of study. PSHE can encompass many areas of study.]

HSFC Governors are expected to complete an online safeguarding training programme. All new Governors should complete this training on joining the Board and all Governors should refresh their knowledge at least every three years.

In response to a Governor's question about security of data, the DOS confirmed that PIN number access was required to access all records.

The Chair thanked the Lead very much for her work and comprehensive report, adding that the whole team has done a fantastic job. Governors discussed and then **APPROVED** the report.

In relation to **PREVENT**, the College's Prevent Strategy was circulated. John Pratt, Single Point of Contact for Prevent, confirmed that there were no substantial changes from the previous version other than dates and references. Personal tutors will raise concerns with their DOS. The Strategy also contains a detailed Prevent Risk Assessment which is reviewed by the College's SMT. Next review date is July 2022.

The DOS, who leads on the operational delivery of Prevent-related duty at the College and represents colleges on the multi-agency Prevent Steering Committee for the County, and attends Channel meetings, went on to update Governors on various issues involved. The regional Channel Panel is a multi-agency group.

The Strategy covers all forms of terrorism, although Herefordshire is considered low risk area. There have been 2 Channel referrals from the College in academic year 2021-22, both led to no further action.

Prevent and Equality and Diversity go hand in hand, and are presented to students in that way, and all receive training during induction. All staff have undergone training, and Governors also use the user-managed access, WRAP (Web Resource Authorisation Protocol) -based training. Communication to students starts at induction. Notices and awareness messages are displayed throughout College and embedded within lessons wherever possible. Examples were circulated to governors.

The Board **AGREED TO APPROVE** the updated Prevent Strategy for 2021/22 with minor changes. The Chair thanked the Director of Studies for all his work.

10. **REVIEW OF COMPLAINTS AND COLLEGE RESPONES**

The Chair had reviewed all 9 complaints against the College during the year, together with the Principal's responses, and confirmed that there was nothing that gave cause for concern.

Governors discussed the complaints briefly, which were judged to have been handled promptly and fairly, and the process transparent. There had been no complaints about the Local Governing Body or its Governors. The Principal confirmed that low-level concerns were now being tracked to observe any emerging patterns.

As last year, the Principal confirmed that compliments were also recorded, and presented a schedule to Governors.

Governors thanked the Principal, and **NOTED** the reports.

11. **RISK REGISTER, ACTION PLAN AND POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

The Principal presented the Heart of Mercia Risk Management Policy and Procedures. The MAT has an overall brief through its Audit Committee. The HSFC Risk Register is a section of the MAT Register. Governors reviewed the Risk Management Policy and Procedures.

The College SMT, as the Risk Management Group, considers all aspects of Risk Management, and reviews the risks identified as requiring significant focus within the RM Risk Register and action plans. The LGB monitors these significant risks, controls and mitigations and the action plan. Changes within the Risk Analysis 2021-22 were summarised separately. The Principal presented the schedule of the HSFC major risks, RAG rated, for review. Governors noted the post-mitigation red risks.

After a brief discussion the Board **NOTED** and **AGREED** the

- Risk Management Policy and Procedures 2022-23
- Risk Register and action plan 2021/22

12. **PREMISES UPDATE**

Vice Principal, Phil Tranter, presented the update report which included:

- Thornbury block project on target, incorporating 9 classrooms, sports facilities and dance studio, but will also increase student social space. Design images were circulated to governors
- multiple office moves across College to accommodate growth of tutorial provision

- removal of existing HV electrical distribution switchgear, HV cable and larger capacity Eco transformer replacement
- redecoration and other summer works

The Chair expressed his thanks to the Vice Principal and his team. **Governors NOTED** the Report.

In response to a Governor's question on a separate matter, the Vice Principal confirmed that enrolment was currently at 1552 of which over 1000 had been interviewed.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chair had received a letter from Carmel Long, Head of Philosophy and Ethics, on her retirement after 34 years at the College, praising the College and wishing the College and its Board all the best for the future.

The Chair went to thank senior staff of the College for their great ability to work together, fellow governors, most of whom are working, for bringing strength of experience from outside College and the Clerk for keeping everyone on the right path.

Student Governor, Felix Smithson, was thanked in his absence, for his contribution over his 2 year term.

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 15 September 2022, at 6.00pm, at College.