



GOVERNORS' MEETING

Minutes of the meeting on 13th December 2007

Present: Mr Neil Arlett, Ms Michelle Balcombe, Mr Rob Doran, Dr Jonathan Godfrey, Miss Jenny Gunning, Mrs Pippa Hadfield, Mr Steve Hancorn, Dr Ken Hopkins, Mr Bob Ing, Mrs Heidi Macdougall, Miss Emily Marshall Mr Andrew McDonagh, Mr Rob Soutar (Chair), Mr Ravi Tandon, Mrs Margaret Turner

In attendance: Mr Peter Cooper (Deputy Principal)
Mr Philip Eyles (Clerk), Mrs Ruth Jones (Finance Director)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Amanda Attfield, Charles Davies and Amy Morgan
Ruth Brinton (Deputy Principal)

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS AND GIFTS

None

3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 4 OCTOBER 2007

The Minutes were **APPROVED** as an accurate record and signed.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

None

5. CLERK'S REPORT

The Clerk had previously circulated fresh contact details for Governors and a summary of the Further Education & Training Act 2007. There was a brief discussion of the implications of the Act. A request had been received for a Governor to attend the College's Environmental Group and Michelle Balcombe agreed to do so. As agreed at the 12 July Governors' Meeting (Minute 9iv of that meeting refers), each Governor returned a slip indicating whether he or she might be prepared to stand for the post of Chair of Governors following the end of the current Chair's eligibility to serve in July. The next stage, early in 2008, will be to explain the role more fully to potential Chairs so that they can decide whether to become firm candidates. The resignation of Stephen Byatt from the Governing Body was also reported

6. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

Student destination data was discussed, especially progression to Higher Education and to competitive Higher Education courses. Progression to local employment was also considered.

As in October, there was considerable discussion of the proposed sixth form at Wyebidge College. Although there is strong statistical evidence that students perform less well in small sixth forms, the protagonists for a sixth form there remain convinced that a sixth form would make Wyebidge College pupils achieve greater success. A related problem is that falling rolls in other 11-16 schools will create spare capacity that could lead some of these schools to also bid for a sixth form

7. GOVERNORS' ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Few parents attended, but all who did so liked the Governors' Annual Report. Topics discussed included the following: how students change courses during the

first weeks of the academic year, students' study and social space and the environmental impact of the new buildings at Hereford College of Technology

8. COLLEGE SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Report's purpose is to be a mechanism for the College to assess its strengths and weaknesses, and hence to develop an action plan for improvement. This year, the assessment used two frameworks: the old Common Inspection Framework and the new Framework for Excellence. The latter was further discussed later: see Minute 9.

The College's very strong performance statistics compared with benchmarks had led the Self Assessment Review Group to award Grade 1 to all major aspects of both frameworks. Reference was made to various component grades that are 'good' rather than 'outstanding' and to the academic departments that are graded 'good' or 'satisfactory'. Although students in a 'satisfactory' department perform in a similar way to that expected for comparable students nationally, College management and the teachers concerned would prefer outcomes closer to the college norm and are working together to achieve this. The self assessment of governance, which is a component of the overall review, listed the key strengths of governance and also the need (and means) to improve Governors' attendance.

The Governing Body **AGREED TO APPROVE**

- The Self Assessment Report
- The Development Plan at the end of the report

9. FRAMEWORK FOR EXCELLENCE PILOT

The principal reported that the College is a pilot for this assessment framework, which will become mandatory for all colleges from September. He proceeded to explain the three dimensions that the new self-assessment will have: effectiveness, finance and responsiveness. Each dimension is assessed by examining the relevant key performance areas, which were listed and discussed.

The College was congratulated on being a successful pilot for the new framework

10. COMMITTEE REPORTS

i. Search Committee on 12 July 2007

The minutes confirmed the verbal report given at the July Governors' meeting. They listed the skills required in new Governors, proposed an advertisement for new governors with these skills and initiated planning for the Chair of Governors post. Details were given about Dr Hopkins, who was nominated and elected as a Governor in October.

The Committee's minutes were **APPROVED AS A CORRECT RECORD**

ii. Remuneration Committee on 29 November

The Senior Post Holders withdrew for agenda item. The Committee's minutes were considered and it was **AGREED** that *they shall remain confidential* until January 2009. The minutes covered recommendations for revised salaries of Senior Post Holders and revised terms of reference for the Committee.

The Governing Body **ADOPTED** these recommendations and **APPROVED** the Committee's minutes **AS A CORRECT RECORD**.

The Senior Post Holders then returned

iii. Finance & Premises Committee on 29 November

The Financial Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 July 2007, as amended by the Finance and Audit Committees, were discussed and **ADOPTED** by the Governing Body, ready for the Chair of Governors and Principal to sign

The Monthly Management Accounts for August, September and October were **APPROVED**

There was discussion of the Accommodation Strategy and the options within it, as follows:

- a. *New building on land adjacent to the sports field, to contain 4 to 6 further classrooms, additional space for support and student services and study/examination space. The building could be on stilts to conserve parking spaces. Estimated cost: £1.1million to £1.7million depending on building height*
- b. *Raise the roof over the foyer area to create a second storey that could contain another performance classroom and a further general classroom. Estimated cost: £510 000*
- c. *Artificial pitch development*
 - i. *artificial pitch – estimated cost £490 000 to £550 000*
 - ii. *multi-use game area, including fence and floodlights – estimated cost £180 000*

It was **AGREED** that the feasibility of Option a. will be investigated in more detail, Option b. not considered further at this stage and Option c. should remain under review and possible consideration

The Committee's minutes were **APPROVED AS A CORRECT RECORD**

iv. Audit Committee on 4 December

The Governing Body **APPROVED** the report of the Financial Statements Auditors on

- the accuracy of the Financial Statements, Financial Report and accounts for the year ended 31 July 2007
- the proper application of funds allocated for specific purposes and their management in accordance with legislation
- the Regularity of the College's systems and controls, based on the Learning & Skills Council's Audit Framework

The Financial Statements Auditors provided an unqualified opinion on these matters and also a Management Letter, which commented on the accounts at length.

The Governing Body **AGREED** that the Chair and Principal should sign the College's Letter of Representation, which is its formal response to the auditors

The Committee had received a report by auditors without management present at which the performance and positive approach of the College's financial team was strongly commended.

The Committee had reviewed the Governors' Self Assessment, which contributes to the College Self Assessment Report considered under Minute 8. Its recommendation that the Governors' training needs, which derive from the Governors' Self Assessment and the Governors' Skills Audit, be referred to the Staffing Committee was **APPROVED**.

Governors **NOTED** the Committee's examination of the Audit aspects of the Framework for Excellence (see also Minute 9) and the auditors' report on the College's pilot year

The Committee had considered its annual report to the Governing body. The report will be considered at the Governors' Meeting in February

The Committee's minutes were **APPROVED AS A CORRECT RECORD**

v. Search Committee on 13 December 2007

A verbal report was given, with a written report to be considered at the February Governors' Meeting. The Committee requested that Polly Garnett and Denis Holly join the now depleted Audit Committee as co-opted non-governors (unless either is subsequently elected Governor) and this was **APPROVED** by the Governing Body. After discussion about a replacement for Stephen Byatt, the Committee gave notice that Denis Holly FCA will be nominated for election as Governor at the February Governors' Meeting. His curriculum vitae will be sent to Governors before that election.

The Committee's Terms of Reference and Governors' attendance records were reviewed

11. PRESENTATION EVENING ON 17 DECEMBER AT THE SHIRE HALL

This year Governors will meet staff for drinks before the presentation

12 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

It was **AGREED** that the format of the Governors' Conference on Friday 8 February and Saturday 9 February should be unchanged from that of recent years.

The venue has yet to be decided

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Friday 8 February 2008