



# GOVERNORS' MEETING

Minutes of the meeting  
15 October 2009

**Present:** Mr Neil Arlett, Michelle Balcombe, Mrs Katarina Blair, Mrs Carol Clapham, Mr Rob Doran, Mrs Pat Gaze, Dr Jonathan Godfrey, Mr Denis Holly, Dr Ken Hopkins (Chair), Bob Ing, Heidi Macdougall, Mr Patrick Morgan, Mrs Helen Powers, Mr John Pratt, Mr Ravi Tandon, Miss Christine Wright (16)

**In attendance:** Dr Ruth Brinton and Mr Peter Cooper (Deputy Principals), Mr Philip Eyles (Clerk), Mrs Ruth Jones (Finance Director)

1. **APPOINTMENT OF STUDENT GOVERNOR**  
The Board **AGREED** to appoint Patrick Morgan as a Student Governor.  
He had previously been nominated by the student body following an election
2. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**  
Charles Davies, Andrew McDonagh, James Miller, Sam Tyler (4)
3. **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS AND GIFTS**  
None
4. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 9 JULY 2009**  
The minutes were **APPROVED** as an accurate record and signed
5. **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**  
None
6. **CLERK'S REPORT**  
The Clerk reported that there are now no Governor vacancies and reminded Board members that there will be a Governor Training evening on Financial and Legal issues on 10 November
7. **PRINCIPAL'S REPORT**  
The report gave details of enrolments and examination results (see also Minute 10 iv), national league table rankings, finance (see also Minute 10 v), the transfer of staff locally from the Learning & Skills Council to the Local Authority, significant changes to OFSTED's Common Inspection Framework and national pay negotiations. A national pay settlement recommendation seems imminent, so it is likely that there will be proposals for consideration at the December Governors' Meeting. It was agreed that discussion on all the topics which feature in later Agenda items would be postponed until the appropriate agenda item comes up. The College's League table was discussed and it was noted – with congratulations to the Principal and staff – that the College achieved the top position of all non-selective colleges nationally
8. **DESIGNATION AS A SIXTH FORM COLLEGE**  
Governors' papers for the meeting had included a briefing paper prepared by the Sixth Form Colleges' Forum, with significant input from the Local Government Association.

There was a discussion of the benefits of formal Designation and it was explained that, although the Local Authority would manage the performance of designated sixth form colleges and could in theory commission new arrangements, it would NOT be able to divert College funding to other purposes.

The Board of Governors **AGREED TO ACCEPT FORMAL DESIGNATION** as a sixth form college under the arrangements offered by the Department for Children, Schools and Families

#### 9. **SCHOOL REVIEW TASK GROUP REPORT**

Herefordshire Council are consulting stakeholders and the public about the report from its task group on ways of reorganising primary and secondary schools to deal with falling rolls. The Principal had prepared a draft response on behalf of the College and this was considered and discussed. The main concern about the task group's proposals is that the county is relying on proposals for rationalisation coming from clusters of the schools themselves, rather than the county giving a clear lead based on what is best for the majority of its school children. The likely result is that difficult decisions will be deferred, leading to a poorer use of resources and a possible reduction in educational standards

The Board **NOTED AND CONCURRED WITH** the Principal's views. His draft response will now be amended to incorporate the points that had been raised, and then submitted to the Local Authority as the College's response

#### 10. **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

##### i. Search Committee on 21 May

The Board had already approved the Committee's recommendation that Tony Leach be appointed as a co-opted, non-governor of the Curriculum and Finance & Premises Committees. Minute 10iv of the 21 May Governors' Meeting refers.

The Committee's Minutes were then considered and **APPROVED** as a correct record

##### ii. Staff and Students Committee on 23 September

The Committee had received two detailed reports on staffing: one detailed all newly appointed staff and the other reported on staff absence. It was noted that annual staff absence is about one day less than the national average for the education sector.

The Committee had considered two matters which would need the Board's approval. The first concerned senior post-holders, with the same proposed arrangements as in 2008 and the second was a series of proposals regarding the constitution of the Student Representative Council. The latter proposals for the Council had supporting documentation that had taken two meetings to refine, but a version that the Committee could fully support had finally been prepared.

After brief further discussion, the Board of Governors **AGREED TO ADOPT**

- the same procedures for appraising senior post-holders as used in 2008 (with Rob Doran assisting the Chair of Governors in appraising the Principal and Clerk)
- the Student Representative Council Constitution
- the Student Representative Council Code of Practice
- the Governors' Policy and Procedures for the Student Representative Council

The Committee's Minutes were then considered and **APPROVED** as a correct record

##### iii. Audit Committee on 29 September

As reported in its Minutes, the Committee had given detailed consideration to key documents which the Governors' Meeting proceeded to discuss. The Board then

**AGREED TO APPROVE**

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- the Annual Report of the Internal Audit Service 2008-09
- the proposed College response to the Financial Management and Control Evaluation (FMCE) questionnaire
- the Annual Report of the Audit Committee to the Board 2008-09
- the External Audit Strategy (Plan)
- the appointment of RSM Bentley Jennison as internal auditors for the year to 31 July 2010
- the appointment of Baker Tilly as the College's Financial Statements Auditors for the year to 31 July 2010

The appointment of auditors for the period beyond July 2010 was discussed. The Board **AGREED** that the Audit Committee will undertake a retendering process to determine which firms should be recommended to the Board for appointment to provide the College's Internal Audit Service and the College's Financial Statements Auditors for the period August 2010 – July 2013

The Board **ENDORSED** the Audit Committee's approval of the arrangements for producing the Governance Self Assessment Report 2008-09 and there was a discussion of the analysis of Governors' attendance at Board and Committee Meetings 2008-09. Attendance at Board Meetings was GOOD at 78% and the overall attendance at Committee Meetings was also GOOD at 78%. Nevertheless, *some concern was expressed* that average attendance at the Curriculum and Search Committees was below 70% and the Clerk reported that the average attendance at the four committees held during the current academic year was only 65%. The importance of regular attendance was emphasised and *the Clerk agreed* to undertake a mid-year analysis of Governors' attendance to help the Board monitor it.

The Committee's Minutes were then considered and **APPROVED** as a correct record

iv. Curriculum Committee on 29 September

Enrolment has been maintained at the same level as last year (1030 in 2009, 1026 in 2008), despite falling rolls in the partner schools, but its nature has changed. Enrolment from partner schools is at its lowest level since 2007, and now only provides 60% of the College's intake. The shortfall has been made up by students from independent schools and schools outside the county. This source now provides a third of the intake, compared with only 20% five years ago. These students have been drawn to the College by its excellent results, and the economic situation has helped recruitment from independent schools, but the Board agreed that heavy reliance on independent and out-county schools *poses a risk*. Good examination results must continue in order to retain this market

The summer's examination results were discussed. At A-level, examination performance was outstanding at the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile of the ALPs value added scheme and on several measures (including the absence of underperforming departments) the College was top nationally. At AS-level, the results were also outstanding, at the 88<sup>th</sup> percentile of value added. At GCSE, all but one subject had pass rates over 50% and in English and Mathematics the pass rates were 67% and 75%, once previous successes in the November retake are taken into account. All agreed that these are OUTSTANDING examination results.

The Board considered and **APPROVED** the following changes to the Course Masterfile, all with effect from September 2009

- Delete BTEC Certificate in Sports Science
- Delete AS-level Citizenship
- Add Short Course GCSE Citizenship

The Committee's Minutes were then considered and **APPROVED** as a correct record

v. Finance and Premises Committee on 5 October

The Finance Director addressed the Board about the Financial Forecast, Budget for 2009-10 and the Management Accounts for June and July. The latter will be subject to accounting adjustments which will be made prior to the preparation of the financial statement for the same period to July. Following a brief discussion, the Board

**AGREED TO APPROVE**

- the revised Financial Forecast (2009-2014)
- the revised Budget 2009-10
- the Management Accounts for June and July 2009

There was brief discussion of the new building, which is progressing well, and discussion of the insurance renewal. The cost of renewal has risen £882 compared with 2008 and the Board noted and approved that no insurance has been taken out against a terrorist attack on the College.

The Committee's Minutes were then considered and **APPROVED** as a correct record

**11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Governors' handbook was distributed

**12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

7.30pm on Thursday 17 December