



# GOVERNORS' MEETING

## Minutes of the meeting on 16 December 2010

**Present:** Mr Neil Arlett, Ms Michelle Balcombe, Mrs Katarina Blair, Mrs Carol Clapham, Mr Charles Davies, Mr Rob Doran, Mrs Pat Gaze, Dr Jonathan Godfrey, Dr Ken Hopkins (Chair), Mr Tony Leach (for Items 1-9), Mrs Heidi Macdougall, Mr James Miller, Mr Patrick Morgan, Miss Ellie-Mae Morris-Davies, Mrs Helen Powers, Miss Christine Wright (16)

**In attendance:** Dr Ruth Brinton (Deputy Principal), Mr Philip Eyles (Clerk), Mrs Ruth Jones (Finance Director)

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**  
Andrew McDonagh, John Pratt, Ravi Tandon and Peter Cooper (Deputy Principal) (3)
2. **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS AND GIFTS**  
None
3. **APPOINTMENT OF STUDENT GOVERNOR**  
The Board of Governors **AGREED TO APPOINT** Ellie-Mae Morris-Davies as the new Student Governor. She had previously been nominated for appointment by the student body following an election
4. **USE OF TIME DURING THE MEETING**  
In order to make the best use of the Board's time, the Chair consulted members about the allocation of time to agenda items. It was then agreed that the Department for Education's white paper on 'The importance of Teaching' and the College's Self-Assessment Report were the two most important items of business, so they deserved the most thorough debate. Minutes 7 (last paragraph) and 9 cover these discussions
5. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 7 OCTOBER AND MATTERS ARISING**  
The minutes were **APPROVED AS A CORRECT RECORD** and signed.  
There was one matter arising, from Minute 5. The latest information about local academies was requested and the Principal reported that Fairfield and Wigmore High Schools have now applied for academy status, in addition to John Kyrle High School (Ross on Wye) and Hereford Academy which were discussed on 7 October. However, whilst John Kyrle High School and Hereford Academy already have sixth forms, it does not necessarily follow that Fairfield and Wigmore High Schools will ask to do the same
6. **CLERK'S REPORT**  
Notice was given of meetings of the Remuneration Committee and Search Committee on 20 January. The latter is likely to make a nomination for the remaining Governor vacancy – for an Independent Governor to replace Denis Holly
7. **PRINCIPAL'S REPORT**  
The Report covered Self-Assessment (see also Minute 9), the College Annual Report, an analysis of UCAS applications and successes, changes in the role of the local authority (including the failure to appoint a new Director of Children's Services) and national issues. Some of these national issues were discussed briefly, including the Browne Review of Higher Education Funding, the Comprehensive Spending Review and national negotiations for cost of living increases for sixth form college staff. For teaching staff, pay negotiations are largely over, as the college employers have made a final offer of 0.75%. For support staff a 0.75% rise has been agreed and recommended nationally.

As agreed (see Minute 4), there was an extended discussion of the white paper on 'The Importance of Teaching'. Each section of the white paper was covered in depth, with long discussions on academies (within 'the new school system') and on school funding. The intentions of the latter are clear – helping pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds – but the effect of some of the details, such as the abolition of the Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) is uncertain. If the measures that replace the EMA are ineffective, there is a risk that fewer students may enrol at the College in future

#### 8. **2010 OPERATIONAL PLAN MONITORING**

The Board **NOTED** that 99% of the objectives for the period January to September 2010 have now been achieved. Two objectives had not been achieved: one concerns actions relating to the Independent Safeguarding Authority (actions that the Government has asked to be delayed) and the other relates to the Herefordshire Safeguarding of Children Board. The College cannot meet its objective of having an approved procedure until Herefordshire Safeguarding Board gives its guidance on the remodelled safeguarding procedures that the College has submitted to it. The failure to appoint a new Director of Children's Services for Herefordshire may be a related factor in this delay

#### 9. **COLLEGE SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT (SAR)**

This report was the second important item of business that the Board had prioritised for a thorough discussion – Minute 4 refers. Discussion began on cross-college aspects of the report where all twenty-one areas and components had been graded as **OUTSTANDING**, *except for Safeguarding*. Here the delay in approving remodelled procedures had reduced the grade to **GOOD**. (See Minute 8 for an explanation for this delay, which is for reasons beyond the College's control).

A sample of the 24 curriculum areas was examined and discussed in detail. The Principal explained that grades for these areas had already been validated by a review group, comprising senior managers, the Chair and Clerk to the Governors, and representatives from departments and the Local Authority. The Review group had validated both the curriculum and the cross-college grades.

All identified weaknesses and 'areas for improvement' (ie minor weaknesses) from the 2009-10 SAR have been put into the 2010-11 Development Plan. There are two actions relating to Governance: a mentor scheme for new governors and a revamped scheme for governors to contribute to lessons

There was then a brief consideration of the results of the 2009-10 Development Plan. This had resulted from the 2008-09 SAR.

Having devoted considerable time to this agenda item, Board members **AGREED** that the SAR was a robust and realistic summary of the College's strengths and weaknesses.

The Board of Governors then **AGREED TO APPROVE** the College's Self-Assessment Report covering the academic year 2009-10 and the new Development Plan

#### 10. **GOVERNORS' CONFERENCE**

It was agreed that there will be another Governors' residential conference in March, at a venue to be determined by the Principal. An outline programme was agreed (to include curriculum developments and issues emerging from the Government's White Paper) and it was agreed that a number of College staff will be invited as dinner guests

#### 11. **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

##### i. Search Committee on 7 October

The recommendation of the Search Committee had already been approved at the 7 October Board Meeting, of which Minute 3 refers, so it was not discussed again. The Committee's minutes were then considered and **APPROVED AS A CORRECT RECORD**

ii. Finance & Premises Committee on 2 December

The new Business Studies block was officially opened on 2 November, the new artificial pitches are working well and the Library extension [the Student Cloisters] is due for completion in January. The repainting of the netball courts will be carried out in the Spring.

The Committee had recommended adoption of the Annual Financial Report and Accounts, subject to any further audit and the report from the Audit Committee. The Board considered this recommendation and decided to consider all aspects of the Annual Report and Accounts together, after the Audit Committee had reported. There followed a discussion of the Monthly Management Accounts for August, September and October, which the Board of Governors then **AGREED TO APPROVE**.

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

iii. Audit Committee on 7 December

The Committee had considered all aspects of the Annual Financial Report and Accounts, which had previously been considered by the Finance & Premises Committee. There was a detailed discussion of the favourable factors which had led to an out-turn surplus of £802 000 compared with an initially projected surplus of £396 000. Pension provision for support staff had also been considered.

The Committee had also considered the Financial Statements Auditors' Findings Report for the financial year 2009-10. The auditors had concluded that there are no accounting or control issues to report. The Committee has also considered the proposed response by the College in the draft letters of representation, and had concluded that the letters are in order.

After a brief discussion, the Board of Governors **AGREED to**

- adopt the Financial Statements, Report and Accounts for 2009-10
- authorise the Principal and Chair of Governors to sign them
- approve the Audit Findings Report
- approve the Letters of Representation within the Audit Findings Report

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

**12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

None

**12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

7.30pm on Thursday 3 February 2011 in the Meetings Room