



GOVERNORS' MEETING Minutes of the meeting held on 26 May 2011

Present: Mr Neil Arlett, Ms Michelle Balcombe, Mrs Katarina Blair, Mrs Carol Clapham, Mr Charles Davies, Mrs Pat Gaze, Dr Jonathan Godfrey, Dr Ken Hopkins (Chair), Mrs Heidi Macdougall, Mr Andrew McDonagh, Mr James Miller, Mr Patrick Morgan, Mrs Helen Powers, Mr John Pratt, Ms Blair Priday, Mr Ravi Tandon, Miss Christine Wright (17)

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

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Rob Doran, Tony Leach and Ellie-Mae Morris-Davies (3)
Peter Cooper (Deputy Principal) was also unable to attend

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS AND GIFTS

None

3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26 March 2011

The minutes were **APPROVED** as an accurate record and signed

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There was only one matter arising, from Minute 4; a long reply to the College's letter to Jesse Norman MP has now been received from the Director General (Infrastructure and Funding Directorate) of the Department for Education.

The Board considered the letter and then agreed that it offers no concessions

5. CLERK'S REPORT

Governors will all consulted on the draft new Instrument and Articles that have been received from the Department for Education. Apart from changing the name of the funding body from Learning & Skills Council to Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA) and removing some of the Local Authority's powers of intervention, there are no substantive changes.

The Clerk gave formal notice that annual election of the Chair and Vice-Chair will take place at the 13 July Board Meeting.

The Clerk also notified the Board that he has enquired about the non-attendance of one of the Student Governors at Board and Committee Meetings. It appears that mail has not been arriving satisfactorily, so measures will now be taken to get around this problem

6. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

The Report covered staffing changes, students' places at the National Youth Theatre, Students' Attendance & Retention (both up to the highest levels of recent years) and Parental Questionnaires.

There was considerable discussion of the Parental Questionnaires, with concern expressed about the low number (84) of responses and the perception by almost a third of those parents that the College does not help students to have a healthy lifestyle. This strong minority perception differed from the questionnaire completed by over a thousand students, where there was general agreement that '*useful support for health and well-*

being is available from the Student Information Service and from the College's nurses, general practitioner and counsellor'. The cause of the differing perceptions was discussed. The College will now make more effort to convey the true position to parents and will also raise with students the importance of ensuring that their parents know what the College provides.

The Principal's Report also covered the nationally agreed cost-of-living increase for teaching and support staff (backdated to last September), which the Board agreed should be implemented at the College, the Hutton Review of Pensions and the National Audit Office's report on value-for-money in Post-16 Education. The Principal will appear before parliament's Public Accounts Committee to answer questions on this value-for-money report, on behalf of the Sixth Form Colleges' Forum.

There was also a discussion of local issues: Local Authority cuts and Ofsted's inspection report on Hereford College of Arts

7. MONITORING OF THE 2011 OPERATIONAL PLAN

For the period up to the end of February, 20 objectives out of 23 have been fully met, and a further one achieved in part. The following objectives will be achieved later in the year:

- extend training in equality and diversity to Governors
- introduce prizes to recognise students' significant voluntary contributions to the local community
- hold a replacement event for the Student Consultation Conference that was originally planned for February

8. REVIEW OF GOVERNORS' CONFERENCE

The evaluation sheets showed that all aspects of the Conference were judged to be a success. The most highly-rated event was the session on the College's proposed response to the funding challenge. The only complaint about the Conference related to the poor quality of the hotel's coffee

9. COMMITTEE REPORTS

i. Finance & Premises Committee on 12 May

The Committee had only discussed the Monthly Management Accounts for February and March, so the accounts for April were presented for direct discussion by the Board. The Committee had also discussed the reduced funding allocation for 2011-12 and reviewed the College's Fees & Charges Policy. The Committee had resumed its discussion of the scheme to build classrooms on top of the flat roof at the end of the Sports Hall Block, as reported to the March Board Meeting (of which Minute 6ii refers), but had concluded that the scheme is currently unaffordable. Instead it gave full support to the plan to upgrade sub-standard hatted accommodation and associated works, taking advantage of the Department for Education's grant of £77 220 specifically for improvements of this sort

After a brief discussion, the Board of Governors **AGREED TO APPROVE**

- the College's Monthly Management Accounts for February, March and April 2011
- the Fees & Charges Policy (unchanged apart from changing dates)
- the recommendation that the College proceeds with the scheme to upgrade 'mobile' hut 5 and reconfigure existing design technology workshops into a drama studio.

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

ii. Staff & Students Committee on 18 May

The Committee had reviewed its Terms of Reference, discussed the Principal's staffing update report and considered how to make progress in training Governors on Equality and Diversity issues. The Board discussed how to recognize the long service of staff who were leaving and resolved to ask the Principal to decide how this should be done.

The main business of the Committee had been to receive the annual report of the Student Representative Council, which had been particularly effective during the past year.

After a brief discussion, the Board of Governors **AGREED** that no changes should be made to the Committee's Terms of Reference, apart from updating terminology.

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

iii. Curriculum Committee on 18 May

The Committee had considered its Terms of Reference and had recommended that no changes be made. It had also reviewed the College's Curriculum Policy at length but in the end had proposed only one minor change which related to the section on External links. The Committee had proposed to change the aim 'To enhance the links with the local, national and international communities' to 'To enhance the links with local, national and international communities and business'.

The College's enrolment target was also reviewed and since 1817 students would be funded, this was a reasonable target for Governors' approval.

After a brief discussion, the Board of Governors **AGREED TO APPROVE**

- the Terms of Reference of the Curriculum Committee (unchanged)
- the College Curriculum Policy, revised as proposed above
- the Enrolment Target of 1817 for student numbers (for 2011-12)

The Committee had also noted that the College *may* need to amend the Course Masterfile in September to offer GCSE Film Studies in addition to AS Level Film Studies

Next, the Committee had considered the cross-college and course questionnaires that students had completed, giving their views on their experience at the College during the past year. Whilst the Committee judged the responses to both sets of questionnaires to be good overall, it noted that the responses to the question about support from Personal Tutors was less good than last year.

The Committee's final task was to review Students' Attendance and Retention but discussion was brief because both were up to the highest levels of recent years.

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

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Working Party proposed at the Governors' Conference to consider raising additional funding to combat the YPLA's funding cuts has now met. It will now consider a possible Alumni Event and also the possibility of approaching parents for a gift following their son's or daughter's A level results

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 13 July. The Board meeting will start at 7.30pm but will be preceded by Governor Training on Audit and Legal Issues at 7.00pm