



GOVERNORS' MEETING

Minutes of the meeting on 11 March 2021 by video-conferencing

Present: Mr Adrian Allan, Ms Michelle Balcombe, Mr Andy Clarke, Mr Peter Cooper, Miss Caitlin Jenkins, Mr James Miller (Chair), Prof David Langley, Mrs Vicky Orsmond, Mr Andrew Roberts, Rev Kina Robertshaw, Ms Beth Rudolf, Mr Felix J Smithson Mrs Danielle Thompson, Mrs Catriona Ward, Sarah Woodall.
(15)

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

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
None

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS AND GIFTS
None.

3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 21 JANUARY 2021
The minutes were approved as an accurate record.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES
The Chair had written to the DfE (copied to the three most local MPs) in relation to the pressure on senior staff of the likely appeals process this simmer, but had received no direct reply. Bill Wiggin, MP for North Herefordshire, had in turn communicated with the DfE and had received a reply from Nicolas Gibb, Minister of State for School Standards; this seemed just a standard reply letter to any query on this year's process. The Chair added that recent remarks from the interim Chief Regulator of Ofqual had been far from helpful.

The Principal confirmed that King Edward Stourbridge joined the MAT on 1 February.

5. CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS
The Chair was anxious that Governors should meet in person as soon as possible, and proposed that the June meeting of the LGB be held on Tuesday 22 June at the College, the day after the government roadmap would allow. Governors were in agreement.

6. CLERK'S REPORT
The Clerk referred to the Governing Body Skills Audit, the last being reported to the Board in March 2020, and that, at the LGB meeting in October 2020, it was noted that the next audit be carried out early in the next academic year.

The Clerk also reminded the Board of those Governors with special responsibility:

Equality and Diversity	-	Michelle Balcombe
Data Protection	-	Catriona Ward
Safeguarding	-	Danielle Thompson

7. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT
The Principal alerted Governors that a member of staff was involved in a legal case which may gain press coverage, but did not directly concern the College.

The Principal's report, already circulated to Governors, included an update on the College's arrangements for examination assessments and safety aspects under Covid-19.

Vice Principal, Catherine Brearey, outlined the grade assessment process, noting at this stage it was broad brush. Examination boards will continue to offer support to schools and colleges and are expected to provide detailed guidance for teachers and heads of centres by the end of March. Vocational qualifications were following the same arrangements. The college will set the grades and the examination boards will take random samples to check that they are in line with previous results. Judgements can only be made on the evidence seen. It is understood that each subject will have its own rationale and methodology.

All the courses run by the College will be assessed by tests, written by the examination board but marked by HSFC teachers, in May and June. Teachers and staff will be responsible for additional marking and the grading process.

Teachers will not be able to discuss grades with students before results day, but will be able to tell students what pieces of evidence will be used. The appeals process would be run by the College, which will be onerous. Any appeals will be with the process and its administration. A portfolio of evidence including historical data, classwork and homework, will be important. The College is working to mitigate the amount of work involved by saving batches of evidence electronically. This will also facilitate retrieval for appeals when A Level results come out on 10 August.

The Principal added that although the College had a good system in place, there would still be turbulence over the summer, but if students can be given confidence in the system, it will minimise the numbers appealing. The whole assessment process will be a lot of work for every college.

A Student Governor indicated that there was a lot of anxiety amongst students, who wanted to know where they are and whether on track. A Staff Governor felt that standardisation within assessments will give staff the ability to say whether students are on track. Details of evidence will be much clearer following the end of March announcement.

Vice Principal, Phil Tranter, gave an update on the Covid testing arrangements, confirming that all students are encouraged to take Lateral Flow Tests. Up to the evening before this meeting, out of 2026 students, 1860 (92%) were tested. Some had used a local test centre. No positives had been recorded. Tests 2 and 3 will follow on. The College Sports hall was converted into a mass testing centre, and in 4 days 2700 tests had been completed. A Student Governor confirmed that it all went very well. Staff testing, twice a week, has now moved to home tests. Later in the month, students will also do home tests.

The Chair was full of admiration, and wished thanks to be passed on to the team of volunteers involved.

Adrian Allan joined the meeting at this point.

Turning to the pay situation, the Principal confirmed that National Joint Council had agreed pay awards for teachers and support staff, with effect from 1 September 2020 and 1 October 2020, respectively. Details of the national pay awards had been circulated to Governors in the Principal's report. The Chair recommended that HSFC accept the agreements and Governors **AGREED**.

A schedule of Retention statistics, November to February for 5 years to 2020/21, indicated an overall 98.1% for 2020/21.

The latest Inspection Data Summary Report (for HSFC) for 16-19 study programmes from Ofsted had also been circulated to Governors, with essentially no change from last year. The report is very pleasing and an important document for Governors, and uses whole country data. No new value added data is expected next year, and no Qualification Achievement Rate (QAR).

In relation to accommodation, the Vice Principal reported excellent work from Estates Manager, Paul Rogers, in procuring grants from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme to upgrade College lighting to LED, and assist with producing a heat decarbonisation plan for the College.

Governors **NOTED** the report.

8. **FINANCE REPORT**

The Finance Director presented the Summary and College Financial Results for the 5 months to 31 January 2021, adding that the surplus to December remained well ahead of budget due to the front-loading of EFSA funding. Earnings before Interest, Taxation, Depreciation and Amortisation (EBITDA) for HSFC of £877k, at this stage, were well in excess of the £296k budget.

The updated forecast produced a deficit for HSFC of £79k, at this early stage, against a £112k budgeted deficit, with EBITDA at £732k against £697k budget.

ESFA grant re Covid-19 had been received, further Covid-19 expenditure is still being incurred, but further funding will be available. Autumn term invoices in relation to transport charges and bursary travel are awaited from Herefordshire Council. Examination fee expense is a dynamic situation, and there may be no major savings in the year.

The Finance Director indicated that the Balance Sheet remained strong, with net current assets of £3.1m.

In response to Governor's question about the building of MAT central cash reserves, The Finance Director confirmed the need for a central pot to respond to emergencies. The Principal responded to Governors' questions about growth at WSFC and briefly outlined future plans.

Governors **NOTED** the Summary and College Results for the period to January 2021.

9. **STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

The Principal presented the College's Strategic Development Plan 2020/21 to 2022/23, and confirmed that there few changes from the previous year.

The Plan outlines the Challenges and Risks facing the College, including maintaining numbers in the face of increased competition, and the impact of the funding challenges of 16-19 funding being the unprotected part of DfE budget, and increasing costs. Other Key challenges and risks included:

- continuing to develop curriculum to meet needs of students at level 2 and level 3
- maintaining quality of outcomes and experience for students despite funding challenges
- continuing to collaborate with other schools and colleges in the best interest of students despite increasing competition
- maximising benefits of multi-academy partnership and looking for opportunities to take advantage of this.

The 3 year Operating Plan contains detailed actions for 2020/21 and outline for the following two years. Key assumptions on which the Plan is based, and the 3 year Financial Strategy are also included.

The College's Mission Statement and Strategic Objectives are included in the Strategic Development Plan. Risks have not changed significantly, and there have been no major changes to curriculum, resulting in few changes from the previous year. The Chair felt that all were clear on what we are doing as a College, and there

would be a more fundamental review next year.

The Board **AGREED** the College's Mission Statement and Strategic objectives, and **APPROVED** the College's Strategic Development Plan 2020/21 to 2022/23, subject to review by the MAT.

The Principal went on to present the MAT's Accommodation Strategy 2019/20 to 2021/22, including HSFC, and confirmed that it was based on moderate growth and the existing College footprints. Accommodation needs at HSFC included:

- replacement of the College's mobile classrooms. The bid is fully funded by the CIF Fund if successful
- additional catering facilities
- changing facilities adjacent to playing field

Governors **ACCEPTED** the College's accommodation strategy.

10. **EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION REPORT**

John Pratt, Director of Studies, presented the report. The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy had been updated for 2020/21 to reflect changes to dates and titles. A copy of the Policy is included on the College's website. After a brief discussion the Board **APPROVED** the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy (including Disability Disclosure and Confidentiality Policy) 2020/21.

The DOS went on to take Governors through the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Report 2019-20, highlighting:

- Summary of events and activities to advance and celebrate Equality, Diversity and Fundamental British Values across the College. The summary is posted on the College website, but Covid arrangements have meant that a number of activities had been cancelled or postponed. Where opportunities arise, teachers make explicit reference to these themes in lessons and students are reminded of them in tutorials
- Covid risk assessment and E&D impact assessment
- Updated data from Summer 2020 exam results and destinations according to Protected Characteristics
- The College's work with the National Collaborative Outreach Programme (NCOP) to close the achievement gaps and progress to HE
- Student laptops and 16-19 Bursary Fund.

Data on Students' Protected Characteristics (including race and ethnicity, gender, religion and belief and disability as defined by DfE) is gathered from Application Forms and Enrolment Questionnaires. Value-added according to protected characteristics is monitored, and the College strives to reduce the achievement gap between different ethnic groups, though the small numbers involved meant that statistical significance was an issue. Individual BME students' progress is monitored closely by DOSs, so a narrative for each can be developed. Students are performing in line each other. Destination data by characteristic was also discussed, and Governors noted that it was very positive.

Equality Objectives for 2019-20 including the achievement against targets were reviewed in the Report. A full list of objectives is posted on the College website.

Equality objectives set for 2020-21 included:

- continue to raise awareness of ED&I and FBV issues raised in lessons
- develop LGBTQ+ support
- develop a BME forum
- rework College's Accessibility Plan
- investigate neuro-diversity and unconscious bias training for staff

The College's Accessibility Plan 2020-21 was also discussed. The College always seeks to improve accessibility for all groups to all curriculum areas, and the Director of Studies confirmed that a check for wheelchair use on College premises had been undertaken by the Chair of Governors. A Governor praised the College for help provided to her son at College.

The Chair felt that the whole report demonstrated a very strong overall picture and praised the culture of the College as being right.

The Chair thanked the Director of Studies for such a comprehensive report, and the huge amount of effective work within the College. The Board **NOTED** the Report.

11 PREMISES UPDATE

Vice Principal, Phil Tranter, presented the update report including:

- Catering - Catering to be brought in house, fully up and running by August
- Tutor Hub - Hub area now finished and working well. Stage 2 will provide space for Counsellors and Chaplain
- Accommodation - Planning application made for new building near all-weather pitch. CIF bid submitted in January, decision due April/May
- Energy Efficient lighting across College site - Funded by grant from Salix. A decarbonisation plan to be completed by September 2021.

Governors **NOTED** the Report.

12 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Application numbers stood at 1401 at 5 March, and were the highest at this point over the past few years.

A Governor commented that the College's virtual open day was excellent, and could well be used in future. The Vice Principal thought there could well be a mixed offering next year.

Work related training to commence – Governors will kept informed.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 29 April 2021, at 6.00pm.