



GOVERNORS' MEETING

Minutes of the meeting on 22 June 2021 by video-conferencing

Present: Mr Adrian Allan, Ms Michelle Balcombe, Mr Graham Biggs, 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 (14)

In attendance: Mr Robert Gorman (Clerk), Mrs Sallyanne Griffiths (Finance Director), Mr Phil Tranter (Vice Principal), Mrs Helen Osborn, Mr John Pratt

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Mr Andy Clarke, Sarah Woodall (2)

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS AND GIFTS

None

3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 29 APRIL 2021

The minutes were approved as an accurate record.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

The Chair confirmed that the issue mentioned at the previous meeting was the subject of an appeal to Governors.

5. CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

The Chair informed Governors that Sarah Woodall was presently in hospital and was also awaiting surgery in the next few weeks. The Chair had suggested that she consider taking leave of absence. Governors were in agreement and wished to send their best wishes.

The Chair went on to express his regret that the meeting was being held virtually again, but was hopeful that the September meeting would have a social element.

6. CLERK'S REPORT

The Clerk, referring to the election of Chair and Vice Chair of Governors for 2021-22, confirmed that he had received no nominations. The current Chair was eligible to stand. It was proposed by Michelle Balcombe, and all **AGREED**, that James Miller be re-elected as Chair of the Governing Body. The Chair proposed Danielle Thompson as Vice-Chair and all **AGREED**.

The Clerk went on to present the draft calendar of meetings for the next academic year, stressing that the programme of business was a draft in so far as business may be added, removed or rescheduled during the year. The academic year has a cycle of events on its calendar which form the basic business for the Board. Governors **AGREED** the calendar of meetings and business for 2021/22.

7. **PRINCIPAL'S REPORT**

The Principal, in congratulation, said that he was very happy with a Chair and Vice-chair who know the College. The Principal's report, already circulated to Governors, included staff changes, HESA Degree classification data and Attendance data.

The Principal confirmed that the Teacher assessed Grades (TAGs) had been signed off in the last few days, and thanked staff involved, in particular, Vice Principal, Catherine Brearey and her team. The Principal felt that there may still be further disruption nationally next year. A Staff governor felt that the College had done the best it could throughout the process for students. A Student governor felt that the whole thing had been dealt with fairly well, with videos and other online support from the College. The Principal confirmed that last year's grade criteria was used as a benchmark, and results were in line within a reasonable margin. The College team would email every university offering a place to HSFC students about the College's TAGs and the process, given the increased completion for places.

In response to a Governor's question, the Principal briefly outlined the appeals process. The Principal went to indicate that the other big worry is not being able to hold College Open events as before. Not being able to show the College off was a threat to numbers. What would be done by the College, making use of its strong virtual packages, was outlined. It was noted that applications remain healthy.

A capital bid has been made for 16-18 Capital Expansion funds for the 2-storey building, which can be delivered within the required timescale for spending.

New staff joining included teachers of English and Art/Photography. There are several internal appointments. In response to a Governor's question, the Principal indicated that the ratio of female to male staff at 2:1 was fairly standard nationally.

The Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) continuation data 2019/20 showing degree classifications obtained by HSFC students was discussed. HSFC compared very favourably within the sixth form sector, with 89.3% of its cohort gaining first and upper seconds honours against 85.2% nationally. For Russell group, HSFC was 92.6% against 91.7% nationally. The Chair noted the excellent figures for students whose parents do not have HE qualifications, with 88.5% for HSFC against 83.8% nationally.

Attendance analysis by month and by level was reviewed. It was noted that attendance was creditable. Retention to end of May, and November to May were both healthy at 94.3% and 97.1%, respectively.

Governors **NOTED** the report.

REPORT OF STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

Student Governor, Felix Smithson, presented the Annual report of the Student Representative Council (SRC) for 2020/21, which had already been circulated.

The SRC acts as a consultative group, mainly on cross-college issues, and arranges fund-raising and social activities for the student body. Representatives to the SRC are drawn from each tutor group. SRC members had met several times with the Principal and were involved in a range of discussions including Covid-19 restrictions and modified timetabling. The SRC had not been able to do as much as it would have liked due to the national restrictions, but activities included:

- providing input on issues regarding student health
- providing insights on development of extra-curricular activities
- collecting donations for Hereford Food Bank, and donating 67 shoe boxes to the 2020 Christmas Box Appeal to Bulgaria.

The Chair commented that, given that it had been a horrible year, the fact that the SRC had done anything was an achievement, and asked that thanks be passed on to the whole SRC.

8. **FINANCE REPORT**

The Finance Director presented the Summary and College Financial Results for the 9 months to 31 May 2021, adding that the net surplus to May, at £666k, remained well ahead of budget due to the skewing of EFSA funding including Bursary and Free College meals, received in advance. Some expenditure was also skewed, and spring and summer transport invoices were awaited from Hereford County Council.

Earnings before Interest, Taxation, Depreciation and Amortisation (EBITDA) for HSFC of £1.27m, at this stage, were well in excess of the £533k budget. Additional funding had been achieved, and the Salix LED lighting project was already producing savings.

However, the updated forecast for the year produced a net surplus for HSFC of £160k, at this stage, against a £112k budgeted deficit, with EBITDA at £969k against £697k budget.

The Finance Director was, overall, happy with the College's position and indicated that the Balance Sheet remained strong in what has been a difficult year.

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

The Finance Director went on to present the Financial Forecast 2021/22 to 2023/24, confirming that the budget for 2021/22 was robust, and the second and third years of the forecast, at this stage, were indicative of direction of travel. Student numbers are based on those in 2020 accounts.

Budget assumptions were outlined, and key risks were highlighted. Budget reviews in the autumn and spring, using updated student numbers and payroll costing reviewed in the light of the pay awards and pension contribution funding, will give a more accurate position. Governors will be kept informed of developments.

In response to a Governor's question about any decline in student numbers, the Finance Director confirmed that the forecasts included only conservative growth in future years. In response to a question about the Finance team's capacity in the expanded MAT, the Finance Director confirmed that work with King Edward VI College was going well and pressure was levelling off now.

The Board, after discussion, **AGREED** the Budget for 2021/22, and noted the indicative budgets to 2023/24.

Governors received a brief update on HSFC-specific work of Internal Audit, including work involving HR policy which had proved a very useful review.

9. SAFEGUARDING ANNUAL REPORT

The Director of Studies (DOS), Helen Osborn, senior Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), presented the HSFC annual Safeguarding Report, and confirmed that more significant changes to Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) statutory guidance is expected in September, which will be updated in College Safeguarding policy.

The DOS went on to give an overview of students being monitored. No student's names are mentioned in the annual report at any stage. Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) monitor the implementation of the safeguarding policies through fortnightly meetings with the Directors of Studies (DOSs), at which the College Counsellor is also present. All reports of safeguarding issues are 'logged', and followed through. DOSs have access to supervision themselves on a monthly basis with a trained counsellor.

At 15 June 2021 there were 402 (last year 448) students on the Vulnerable Students file, excluding 207 (last year 112) related to safeguarding information received from previous schools with no further concerns raised to date at HSFC. The pre-enrolment process is good, but takes a significant amount of time.

A summary schedule of Logs, by Lead Issues, comparing the last 10 years' data is included in the report. Mental health including extreme anxiety and stress accounts for the largest category, comprising over 50% of the vulnerable students. This is reflected in number of referrals to College counsellor and other wellbeing services, still in demand and continued during lockdown. The newly established pastoral support team have been a key integral part of ongoing support, with the College operating a joined-up approach. Most meetings have continued on line.

To date since September, 11 referrals have been made to Multiagency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)/social services team and external agencies depending on the nature of the safeguarding concern.

Other points reported included:

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| online Herefordshire Council local authority safeguarding audit | - completed in December 2020, with clean result |
| student perception of College questionnaire | - 98% of HSFC students indicated that they feel safe in College. Tutors will follow up. |
| Education for Life (E4L) | - the main platform for educating students on safeguarding issues and other key areas, now incorporated into 2 year tutorial programme |
| safer recruitment | - practices put in place, working with Head of HR, have been audited to ensure that HSFC continues to meet all safer recruitment duties and responsibilities in line with statutory guidance |
| Action Plan 2020/21 | - Completed. Focused learning walks delayed due to Covid restrictions |

The DOS went on to outline the action plan for 2021/22, including:

- review tutorial resources to continue to develop engaging sessions about staying safe
- develop mental health strategy and procedures
- review instances of peer on peer abuse cases

HSFC Governors are expected to complete an online safeguarding training programme. All new Governors should complete this training on joining the Board and all Governors should refresh their knowledge at least every three years.

In response to a Governor's question about sexual harassment at schools currently in the headlines nationally, the DOS confirmed that concerns about any lead issue are acted upon as they arise. Team are currently working on how the College can help students to report where necessary, and linking up with SRC for their input on this. The Chair thanked the Director of Studies very much for her work and comprehensive report, adding that the whole team has done a fantastic job. Governors discussed and then **APPROVED** the report.

In relation to PREVENT, the College's Prevent Strategy was circulated. John Pratt, DOS, and Single Point of Contact for Prevent, confirmed that there were no substantial changes from the previous version other than dates and references. Personal tutors will raise concerns with their DOS. The Board **AGREED TO APPROVE** the updated Prevent Strategy for 2020/21 with minor changes.

The DOS, who leads on the operational delivery of Prevent-related duty at the College and represents colleges on the multi-agency Prevent Steering Committee for the County, and attends Channel meetings, went on to update Governors on various issues involved. The regional Channel Panel is a multi-agency group.

The Strategy covers all forms of terrorism, although Herefordshire is considered low risk area. There have been no Channel referrals from the College. Referrals nationally have fallen.

Prevent and Equality and Diversity go hand in hand, and are presented to students in that way, and all receive training during induction. All staff have undergone training, and Governors also use the user-managed access, WRAP (Web Resource Authorisation Protocol) -based training.

The Chair thanked the Director of Studies for his work in what had been an odd year.

10. **REVIEW OF COMPLAINTS AND COLLEGE RESPONSES**

The Chair had reviewed all 28 complaints against the College during the year, together with the Principal's responses, and confirmed that there was nothing that gave cause for concern. Majority of complaints were in relation to grades and examination results not as expected or effect Covid restrictions, leaving 6 'general' complaints (last year 9). Governors discussed the complaints briefly, which were judged to have been handled promptly and fairly, and the process transparent. There had been no complaints about the Local Governing Body or its Governors. In response to a Governor's comment, it was noted that in a couple of places in the narrative, identifying data will be redacted.

As last year, the Principal confirmed that compliments were now recorded, and presented a schedule to Governors.

Governors thanked the Principal, and **NOTED** the reports.

11. RISK REGISTER, ACTION PLAN AND POLICY AND PROCEDURES

The Principal presented the updated Risk Management Policy and Procedures. The MAT has an overall brief through its Audit Committee. The HSFC Risk Register is now a section of the MAT Register. Governors reviewed the Risk Management Policy and Procedures with minor changes.

The College SMT, as the Risk Management Group, considers all aspects of Risk Management, and reviews the risks identified as requiring significant focus within the RM Risk Register and action plans. The LGB monitors these significant risks, controls and mitigations and the action plan. The Principal presented the schedule of the HSFC major risks, RAG rated, for review. Governors noted the post-mitigation red risks.

After a brief discussion the Board **AGREED TO APPROVE** the

- Risk Management Policy and Procedures 2020-21 with minor changes
- Risk Register and action plan 2020/21

12. PREMISES UPDATE

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

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| Catering | - | Catering to be brought in house in August |
| Tutor Hub | - | Hub area now finished and working well. Stage 2 will provide space for Counsellors and Chaplain. All to be finished over summer |
| Accommodation | - | Planning application made for new building near all-weather pitch. CIF bid submitted in January, decision due by end June |
| Energy Efficient lighting across College site | - | Funded by grant from Salix. Installation to finish by end June |
| Summer works | - | Installing 72 new smart boards across College |

The Vice Principal added that premises and offering to students will be in a strong place in September. The Principal expressed his thanks to the Vice Principal and his team. Governors **NOTED** the Report.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chair thanked Student Governor, Caitlin Jenkins, for her considerable contribution over her 2 year term. Caitlin had been real asset to the Board, and Governors wished her the best of luck at university.

The Chair, announcing that Michelle Balcombe was stepping down as a Governor, praised her record of service to all committees over the years and said her contributions would be much missed. Michelle commented that she had enjoyed every minute.

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 16 September 2021, at 6.00pm, and planned to be at College.