



GOVERNORS' MEETING

Minutes of the meeting on 29 April 2021 by video-conferencing

Present: Ms Michelle Balcombe, Mr Graham Biggs, Mr Andy Clarke, Mr Peter Cooper, Miss Caitlin Jenkins, Mr James Miller (Chair), Prof David Langley, Mrs Vicky Orsmond, Rev Kina Robertshaw, Ms Beth Rudolf, Mr Felix J Smithson, Mrs Danielle Thompson, Mrs Catriona Ward, Sarah Woodall (14)

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

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Mr Adrian Allan, Mr Andrew Roberts (2)

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS AND GIFTS

Under item 8, Fees and Charges, the Chair indicated that he was a member of a band that uses College accommodation for rehearsals.

3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11 MARCH 2021

The minutes were approved as an accurate record.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

The Chair confirmed that the member of staff involved in a legal case was no longer with the College. There is a possibility of an appeal to Governors. A Governor asked if there was any news yet on planning for the new building. The Vice Principal indicated that there was not, but there should be in May. The Student Governors, when asked, confirmed that they were happy with the temporary shelters.

5. CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

None.

6. CLERK'S REPORT

The Clerk gave notice that the election of the Chair and Vice Chair of Governors for 2021-22 will take place at the next Board meeting on 22 June, and that any nominations should be communicated to the Clerk. The Chair announced that the current Vice Chair, Michelle Balcombe had indicated that she wanted to stand down.

7. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

The Principal's report, already circulated to Governors, included staff changes and updates on the College's arrangements for examination assessments and safety aspects under Covid-19. New staff joining included teachers of Fine Art/Photography, Business and Media. The Principal said that recruiting had been a different process during lockdown with real-time interviews and lesson delivery.

Attendance and Retention to end of term 2 were both healthy at 94.4% and 97.4%, respectively.

National Qualification Achievement Rate (QAR) figures for 2019/20 had been released, showing an overall national Level 3 QAR of 76.5% (78.4% for 2018/19). HSFC's figure was 84.5%. [The overall QAR is the number of achieved learning aims as a percentage of the total number of learning aims in the cohort that ended.] The Principal felt that the College's rate increased due to efforts to get students on to the right course for them at an early stage.

The Funding allocation for 2020/21 had been confirmed by ESFA, and was in line with what the College expected. The College-wide LED installation was completed over the Easter break, and feedback from staff and students was very positive.

The next Open Event is being planned for 7 July at the College, all being well, with every effort made to convert applications into enrolments.

The Principal remained concerned about the DfE's proposal to remove funding for Advanced General Qualifications affecting mixed programmes. Presently, many colleges deliver mixed study programmes, comprising academic and AGRs such as BTECs.

Governors were updated on arrangements for summer 2021 grading process. The Vice Principal confirmed that the evidence gathering stage had already started. Some challenges have already been made to marks where teacher-assessed grades have not met a university's requirements. The whole process was a massive exercise for the College. The HSFC Centre Policy (for assessment) and HSFC Subject Methodologies (for all qualifications) documents had been circulated to parents and guardians. Copies had also been circulated to Governors.

The Chair was very impressed by the way the process is being handled by the College. Governors **NOTED** the report.

8. **FINANCE REPORT**

The Finance Director presented the Summary and College Financial Results for the 7 months to 31 March 2021, adding that the surplus to March remained well ahead of budget due to the front-loading of EFSA funding, Bursary and Free College meals. Earnings before Interest, Taxation, Depreciation and Amortisation (EBITDA) for HSFC of £792k, at this stage, were well in excess of the £414k budget, while Premises costs were over budget due to LED lighting project. Back-dated pay from the staff pay awards will be paid in April. Examination fees are as expected.

The updated forecast produced a Net deficit for HSFC of £15k, at this stage, against a £112k budgeted deficit, with EBITDA at £796k against £697k budget.

The Finance Director was, overall, happy with the College's position and indicated that the Balance Sheet remained strong, with net current assets of £2.82m.

In response to Governor's question as to whether there was anything worrying on the horizon, the Finance Director indicated the Pension Fund, which was outside College control, with the next actuarial valuation in 2023.

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

The College's Fees and Charges Policy and Procedures had been updated to include requirements following Brexit, current rates and schedule of letting fees. The Board, after a brief discussion, **AGREED** the updated Fees and Charges Policy 2021/22.

9. **CURRICULUM POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

Vice Principal, Catherine Brearey, presented the Curriculum Policy and Procedures, indicating that they were very similar to the previous version, with no significant changes. After a brief discussion, Governors **AGREED** the Curriculum Policy and Procedures for 2021/22.

10. **HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY AND ANNUAL REPORT**

Vice Principal, Phil Tranter, presented the Health & Safety Policy 2020/21, indicating that there were only minor changes, in respect of names and dates. All staff receive a copy of the document and have to acknowledge receipt. The Board **AGREED** the

minor changes to the Health and Safety Policy and Procedures 2020-21, which had originally been approved at their meeting on 20 May 2020.

The College uses the services of a Safety consultant, to advise on all safety matters and to assist the College in complying with all H&S legislation, and a new consultant was being appointed.

The Health and Safety report as at April 2021, prepared by the Estates Manager, was presented, which included a breakdown of reported accidents during the year, compared with the previous 6 years. Safety Audits are carried out twice a year by each department and any issues investigated. Fire alarms are tested every week and records kept. The College has over 60 first aid trained staff. H&S main concerns are around COVID-19.

In response to a Governor's question, the Vice Principal confirmed that the acronym CLEAPSS referred to Consortium of Local Education Authorities for the Provision of Science Services. [advisory service providing support in science and technology for a consortium of local authorities and their schools including Independent schools, and post-16 colleges]

Governors thanked the Vice Principal, and **NOTED** the report.

11. **ATTENDANCE, RETENTION, STUDENT AND PARENT QUESTIONNAIRES**

The Vice Principals presented the reports. All schedules had already been circulated to Governors.

Attendance

The 6 year comparison of Attendance by term was reviewed. The Overall figure for 2020/21 to end of 1st half of Summer term was 94.1%, compared with full year 2019/20 overall at 93.4%.

Retention

The 6 year comparison of Retention by term was reviewed. Retention for September to April and November to May 2020/21 was very encouraging and much in line with recent years, at 94.6% and 97.4% respectively.

Enrolment

Application numbers stood at 1469 at 23 April, compared with 1432 at this point last year. Some 800 pre-enrolment interviews had been completed so far, and the first visit to a school since lockdown had taken place that week. The school-leaving date for many local schools is 29 May. The position was looking good for September if the College's anticipated conversion rate holds. One major partner school had commented how much they liked HSFC's virtual presentation.

In response to a Governor's question, the Vice Principal confirmed that no transport problems had been experienced recently with trains from Wales. The 9.30am start had resulted in the loss of some enrichment time.

The Principal added that lessons learned from on-line learning can be applied to wider audiences for certain lessons, and pooling resources to form a 'virtual college' would improve roundness of education. Questionnaires will be sent to students about their remote learning experience, in order that the College can improve lessons when back in classrooms.

Parental Questionnaires

The results of the on-line Questionnaire to Parents 2021 were very reassuring. The Principal commented that the College was clearly getting the communication right, when 603 responses were received.

Course (SPOC) Cross-College and Subject questionnaires 2020/21.

It was noted, as in previous years, how remarkable it was that a similar pattern of responses amongst substantial numbers of students emerges year on year from the data. Results showed small changes, but overall from both SPOC questionnaires were very reassuring, given Covid restrictions had obviously had an impact. The Student Governors felt that students did take the questionnaires seriously. A Governor added that students rarely hold back when responding to such things.

The most favourable for Cross-College being that over 88% of students felt safe in College, and 93% had the technology for remote learning. Least favourable responses, as in previous years, related to finding a computer to work on and getting healthy food in College. Subject questionnaire responses were very favourable, with Teacher's knowledge and understanding of coursework being the most favourable at 96%.

Governors **NOTED** the Reports.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

A governor passed on some excellent feedback about the College from a neighbour. The Principal thanked Governors for their support over the last 12 months.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 22 July 2021, at 6.00pm, and planned to be at College.