



GOVERNORS' MEETING

Minutes of the meeting on 19 November 2020 by video-conferencing

Present: Ms Michelle Balcombe, Mr Graham Biggs, Mr Andy Clarke, Mr Peter Cooper, Miss Caitlin Jenkins, Mr James Miller (Chair), Mrs Vicky Orsmond, Mr Andrew Roberts, Ms Beth Rudolf, Mrs Danielle Thompson, Mrs Catriona Ward, Sarah Woodall (12)

In attendance: Mr Robert Gorman (Clerk), Mrs Sallyanne Griffiths (Finance Director), Jon Weller (Head of Music), Marco Martinelli (Head of Enrichment), Prof David Langley, Felix J Smithson (Student), Mark Ridgeway (IT and MIS Director)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Mr Adrian Allan (1)

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS AND GIFTS

None.

3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 22 OCTOBER 2020

The minutes were approved as an accurate record.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

The Clerk confirmed that he had circulated more detailed notes from Phil Tranter in relation to the Disaster Recovery Plan update. There were no other matters arising.

5. CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

The Chair reported that the Search Committee had met via tele-conferencing on 5 November to consider the appointment of a new governor. All Committee members had agreed to recommend that Prof David Langley be appointed as an Independent Governor. The Chair went on to propose, and Governors **AGREED** that Prof David Langley be appointed as an Independent Governor. The notes of the Committee meet were also approved.

The Chair introduced new Student Governor, Felix Smithson, to the Board, and Governors **AGREED** his appointment.

6. CLERK'S REPORT

Board strength stands at 15, including the two new Governors. The Clerk thanked all Governors for returning their Declarations. The Governors' self-assessment of Governance questionnaire had been revised, still based around the main headings and the Ofsted Framework. The possible use of SurveyMonkey had been considered. Governors were happy with the Clerk's suggestion that the questionnaire be circulated by email.

An extract relating to governance, strengths and areas for development, from the College's draft SAR had been circulated. In relation to the areas for development, the Chair indicated that he had not actually met several of the newer Governors face to face due to the Covid-19 restrictions, and that when things got back to normal, Governors should meet up in a social setting to better develop full cohesion in the Board. Also, the Board should look to its BAME element. After a brief discussion, Governors **APPROVED** the extract, including the areas for development.

The Clerk presented the updated HSFC Governance Procedures, and confirmed that the procedures ran to 12 pages, the remainder of the document comprising appendices. The updates were mainly due to the status of the College, now within a MAT, the move to a more non-committee model, changes to dates and references and updated policies. Governors' attention was particularly drawn to the appendices on Composition of the LGB, Whistleblowing procedures (now taken from the MAT), and Complaints against the Board (updated in line with DfE and ESFA guidance). In response to a Governor's question about the term of office of Vice-Chair, the Clerk confirmed that the Chair and Vice-Chair are elected or re-elected annually, although the Chair may serve for a maximum of 8 years, there is no specific limit set for Vice-Chair, other than the limit as a Governor.

In response to a question, the section about Chair's delegated powers was discussed. Governors accepted that the Chair of Governors should have delegated power to make decisions (on behalf of the Board) in cases of urgency on any significant matter where delay is likely to be seriously detrimental to the College, a student or member of staff. Chair's action must be reported back to Governors no later than the next meeting of the full Governing Body.

The Clerk was requested to amend the Governance Procedures accordingly.

After a brief discussion, Governors **APPROVED** the HSFC Governance Procedures 2020-21, subject the amendments above.

7. **PRINCIPAL'S REPORT**

The Principal's report circulated to Governors had contained a link to a video showing some of the work currently being done with students. Governors agreed that they had found all the College's news updates very useful. The Principal pointed out that, under the present Covid-19 situation, some decisions had to be taken very quickly, with the Chair kept informed.

New changes to the College timetable to deliver longer lessons but maintain contact time, while minimising the number of people in College at any time, were outlined. The timetable will operate on a fortnightly basis, with students being in College less often but for longer periods. In response to the Chair, Student and Staff Governors confirmed longer lessons had worked well, getting through a lot more material, although very demanding on staff. In response to a Governor's question about vulnerable students, the Principal indicated that the College has a very strong learning support service, and praised staff involved. A Staff Governor added that the personal tutor system is working very well. The new covered outside space, not being used in the new lockdown with the need to discourage socialising, would be useful in the future.

The Principal went on to say that, at this stage, examinations will take next year, in accordance with guidelines. In response to a Governor's question about access to resources for students from disadvantaged backgrounds, the Principal indicated that this had been addressed by the College.

Attendance overall at 95.2% is very strong at present. Retention to November at 97.1% was slightly down on last year.

In relation to transport issues, the Principal confirmed that improvements are being seen, and the College was still working with the transport companies to improve the situation. A Parent governor observed that things seemed to be on a more even keel.

Governors **NOTED** the report.

8. **FINANCE REPORT**

The Finance Director presented the Summary Financial Results for the 2 months to 31 October 2020, stating that, at this early stage of the year, the forecast has not

been restated and overall forecast was recorded as in line with budget. Additional Government grant re Covid-19 had been received, but further Covid expenditure is still being incurred. There was no further news on Teachers' pay award. SFCA will negotiate on the College's behalf. EFSA Pension funding 1st instalment had been received in November, but future instalments are not certain.

Overall Earnings before Interest, Taxation, Depreciation and Amortisation (EBITDA) for the MAT of £348k at this stage, well in excess of the £111k budget.

In response to a Governor's question about examination fees, the Finance Director confirmed that £40k in credit notes had been received from the exam Board relating to late entries issue. In response to a question from the Chair about Ofsted, the Principal indicated that Ofsted's EIF framework was more focused on outputs than finances.

The Finance Director indicated that she felt comfortable about HSFC finances. The Balance Sheet remaining strong, with net current assets of £2.62m.

Governors **NOTED** the Summary Results for the period to October 2020.

9. REVIEW OF EXTRA- CURRICULAR AND ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES

The Head of Music presented on what music activity was offered at HSFC and how Covid-19 had affected what could be done. As well as Music A Level, HSFC's offer includes Music theory grades 5, 6 and 8, instrumental and vocal lessons, Choral and Instrumental Academies and recitals. Close tabs had been kept on government guidelines and advice from Musicians' Union, Incorporated Society of Musicians and other colleges to open up to live rehearsal and performance as safely as possible.

A Level numbers at 42, were up on the previous 2 years. Music theory is also offered as enrichment. Choral Academy presently has 22 students. A succession of students go on to study music or music-related courses at university. Any student, or member of staff, from the College can be put in touch with a performance tutor to arrange private lessons. In response to a Governor's question about technology, the Head of Music confirmed that it played a very big part and used extensively with all performing arts working closely together.

Governors were reminded that next term the Academia Musica choir are performing Handel's Messiah with English Symphony Orchestra. The Chair thanked the Head of Music for an excellent and most interesting presentation.

The Head of Enrichment presented an overview of Enrichment activities, including Sports Academies, indicating that it pretty much business as usual. Drama and Theatre Studies had moved to digital productions and small chunks of performance of 2-5 minutes. The Performing Arts Academy have joined the National Theatre project which works with teachers and colleges across the UK to open access to the arts.

Governors heard about enrichment covering the Students' Union, student debates, visiting speakers and events and targeted external presentations/webinars.

The Chair thanked both presenters for all their work in what was seen as a hugely important area.

10. IT, HARDWARE AND NETWORK UPDATE

The IT and MIS Director presented an update report on developments since the previous report in May. Teacher laptop rollout is now complete and support staff rollout started. The update went on to digital strategy and the forming of small working groups to aid development in Curriculum, Business and Support groups in next 12 months.

The update in relation to IT Recovery included achievement of Cyber Essentials certification, improvements in backups and Circuit upgrade by Jisc/Openreach giving an independent direct link to the exchange.
The Chair thanked the Director for doing such an excellent job in this critical area.

Governors **NOTED** the report.

11 ATTENDANCE AND RETENTION

Already covered within Principal's Report above.

12 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 21 January 2021, at 6.00pm.