



GOVERNORS' MEETING

Minutes of the meeting

on 22 October 2020 by video-conferencing

Present: Mr Adrian Allan, Ms Michelle Balcombe, Mr Andy Clarke, Mr Peter Cooper,
Mr James Miller (Chair), Mrs Vicky Orsmond, Mr Andrew Roberts,
Mrs Catriona Ward, Sarah Woodall (9)

In attendance: Mr Robert Gorman (Clerk), Mrs Sallyanne Griffiths (Finance Director),
Mrs Helen Osborn (Director of Studies), Mrs Gillian Slater (MAT Trustee)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Mr Graham Biggs, Miss Caitlin Jenkins, Ms Beth Rudolf, Mrs Danielle Thompson,
Mr Phil Tranter (Vice Principal) (4)

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS AND GIFTS

None.

3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 17 SEPTEMBER 2020

The minutes were approved as an accurate record.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There were various matters which were addressed by the Principal:

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| College's planning permission for the provision of 4 mobile classrooms | - The planning application is moving through. The question of the number of storeys to be dealt with at a later stage. |
| Provision of Canopies for outside space | - 21 car parking spaces had been rented from HLC to allow gazebos to be erected on HSFC car park, temporarily. |
| Where are students academically | - Where they should be at this stage, but for 1 st years the picture is incomplete as to knowledge level from prior school. There is ongoing assessment. |
| Calendars of fixtures and events, how much is going ahead | - Performing online in Music and Drama, but Debating has suffered. |
| Enrolment | - 2069 to date, and moving in the right direction. |
| New Student Governor | - Slippage in SRC process due to Covid situation, but should be decided for next Governors' meeting |

5. CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

The Chair addressed the Governors' self-assessment of Governance. The Clerk indicated that previously used questionnaires had been lengthy as they had covered the governance model of committees and their reporting to the Board. Governors were asked for their thoughts, and, after a brief discussion, it was agreed that the questionnaire be revised, still based around the main headings and the Ofsted Framework. The possible use of SurveyMonkey was mentioned, and the Clerk would liaise with a Governor who had experience of this software.

6. CLERK'S REPORT

Board strength stands at 13, including the Principal, and one Student Governor. It was noted that the new 1st Year Student Governor would be elected in advance of the next meeting.

The last Governors' skills audit, using the NGA's skills audit 2019 version, had been

undertaken in late 2019 with the summary report to the Board in January 2020. Guidance in the DfE Governance Handbook for Academies indicates that there should be a regular audit. There have been several changes in Governors during the current academic year, but the Clerk felt that skills level of the Board had not suffered. The Clerk had discussed with the Chair and it had been agreed that the next audit be carried out early in the next academic year. The Chair added that the Board had recruited the right people with appropriate skills, and enthusiasm.

In relation to training, much was done 'on the job', but had been given a boost by the very good SFCA webinars aimed at Governors. The revised draft programme of webinars had been circulated to Governors and College SMT members. The Chair considered that the structure of Board business over the last 12 months would have given Governors the information and background they need.

7. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

The Principal presented his report, and confirmed that exams are to place in the summer, and College will plan accordingly, also allowing for assessments. It is very challenging as any plans may be subject to alteration.

Students are generally being very sensible and confirming to the rules and guidelines. Attendance is 95% at present. In relation to the wider community, the Principal shared some comments received by the College. The Principal felt strongly that the College had a duty to remain open on as normal a basis as possible in order to preserve the vital and deepening relationships between tutors and students and students with their peers. The Principal added that it also facilitates a higher quality of learning and peer support, and if the College had to move again to other forms of operating, it would do so from sustainable foundations. Governors **AGREED** unanimously with this, and supported the Principal.

The Principal confirmed that today another student member of College had tested positive for Covid-19, the second to do so. In line with the Public Health England advice, the small number of students who had been in closer contact with the individuals who had tested positive for coronavirus (Covid-19) have received a letter informing them that they must stay at home for 14 days.

In relation to transport problems, the Principal confirmed that he had met with Jesse Norman, MP for Hereford, and the chief executive of Transport for Wales (TfW) in the last week, and David Davies, MP for Monmouth, had been particularly helpful in giving support. TfW had made considerable strides and the number of trains in service had been increased. The bus services students use, put on instead of trains, continued to stop at Hereford station, and the Principal was pushing for those services to continue directly to College. The Staff Governor confirmed that the additional 7.40am service from Wales was a complete game-changer.

The Principal went on to give an update on MAT developments, noting that King Edward VI Stourbridge have a timeline to join Heart of Mercia Trust by 1 February 2021. IT, MIS and Finance departments at Hereford and Worcester had moved forward very positively through cooperation. The MAT Trustee present at the meeting confirmed that cooperation was indeed paying off.

Governors **NOTED** the report.

8. FINANCE REPORT

The Finance Director presented the Summary Financial Results for the month to 30 September 2020, stating that, being the first month of the year, there was little to be derived from the numbers at this stage. Government grant re Covid and special Covid expenditure will be recorded separately in the accounts.

Earnings before Interest, Taxation, Depreciation and Amortisation (EBITDA) for HSFC of £364k at this stage, well in excess of the £56k budget, helped by ESFA Bursary and Free Meals funding. Other key performance ratios included Payroll cost% to Income at 60%, 73% for 2019/20.

The HSFC Balance Sheet remains strong, with net current assets of £2.7m.

Governors **NOTED** the Summary Results for the month to September 2020.

In response to the Chair's question about accident insurance the level of cover for students on the sports field, the Finance Director said that the Insurer had indicated any claim would be made under the College's Public Liability policy with cover up to £20m. Personal Accident policy cover for students was in range depending on incident. The Finance Director agreed to review the whole question at the next renewal

9. **STUDENT HEALTH AND GENERAL WELFARE**

The Director of Studies (DOS) and Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) reported on student health and wellbeing, confirming that there were two separate anxieties prevalent among students at present:

- New students and the Covid-19 situation
- Student applications to universities in the current situation

The new team of Personal Tutors at the College had really hit the ground running. The high level of cases has kept all staff involved on their toes and it was difficult to deliver certain things remotely. The two DSLs review all cases constantly.

The Wellbeing teams are exceedingly busy maintaining the level of support necessary. As in previous years, mental health is a key issue and area for concern, as it is nationally.

In response to a Governor's question on the level of anxiety about Covid-19, the DOS indicated that many conversations are taking place with students, and parents, about what the College has in place at the moment, but students like being in College. In response to a question about Mindfulness, the DOS confirmed that messages can be used within College communication to students.

The Principal paid credit to the DOS and the whole team for exceptional work in very challenging circumstances.

The DOS went on to present an updated draft of the College's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures. A summary of the key changes in the draft was circulated and discussed. The updates take into account changes in *Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2020*. Danielle Thompson is the Designated Governor with special responsibility for safeguarding children and young people's issues. The Role of Governors was updated to reflect MAT Board alongside LGB role. A section was added to reflect the College's commitment to educating students and the platforms through which this education is delivered.

After a brief discussion, Governors **APPROVED** the College's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures 2020/21. The Chair thanked the DOS and all the team for their important work.

10. **REVIEW OF RISK REGISTER AND RISK MANAGEMENT ACTION PLAN**

The Principal presented a full Risk Analysis as at September 2020, which includes risks to the College scored by significance and probability together with a rag (red, amber, green) rating. The Risk Register and Action Plan 2020/21, collating the 'amber' and 'red' risks drawn from the full Analysis, is used to manage those risks identified as requiring significant focus or monitoring. The Principal confirmed that the

Register schedule had been compiled by reviewing and refreshing the previous version.

The high level risks were scrutinised by Governors, who asked questions about:

Site security level - Effective site security ensures no unauthorised people can access the College at any time. The Principal indicated that moving to the very high level of security, used by many inner-city colleges, changes the atmosphere of the college. It is important to minimise the risk, as at HSFC, with key pad and card swipe door security, cctv and other forms of security.

Governors felt strongly that the College should avoid overly prominent security fences and gates, as this would be out of step with relatively low risk Hereford and the character of the area, and would probably put students and parents off the College. Governors discussed in some detail, and were content to keep site security at its present level.

Accommodation planning - An Accommodation Strategy, based on student numbers, future enrolment and space utilisation, was in place to meet future needs.

Governors **NOTED** the report.

11 DISASTER RECOVERY PLAN UPDATE

In the absence of the Vice Principal Operations and Progression, the Principal presented a summary, prepared by the Estates Manager, outlining the procedure by which the College's Disaster Recovery Plan (DRP) is reviewed, including exercises where College departments relocate to other areas of the site or work from home. The Estates Manager also meets with each Head of Department on a regular basis. A copy of the College's DRP January 2020 was circulated to Governors, who were encouraged to email any particular questions to the Vice Principal.

12 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Governors thanked the College, SMT and Staff for all they are doing currently.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 19 November 2020, at 6.00pm.