



## **GOVERNORS' MEETING**

### **Minutes of the meeting on 15 September 2022 in the College Meeting Room**

**Present:** Mr Andy Clarke, Mr James Miller (Chair), Rev Kina Robertshaw, Ms Beth Rudolf, Mrs Nicola Taylor, Mrs Danielle Thompson, Mrs Catriona Ward (7)

**In attendance:** Mr Robert Gorman (Clerk), Mr Phil Tranter (Vice Principal), Mrs Catherine Brearey (Acting Principal)

At the start of the meeting and before any business there was a presentation to the Board by Mel Powell, High Needs Coordinator, and Pippa Denman, Head of Learning Support, who summarised their roles and gave an overview of the high needs learners at College for this year. Governors learned about the transition event giving familiarity with the College and the level of support provided before and after enrolment.

#### **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Ian Archer, Dr David Langley, Andrew Roberts, Sarah Woodall, Peter Cooper (5)

#### **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS AND GIFTS**

None.

#### **3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16 JUNE 2022**

The minutes were approved as an accurate record. It was noted that Sarah Woodall and Andrew Roberts had been granted leave of absence.

#### **4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

None

#### **5. CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS**

The Chair, conscious that he had been associated with the College as Governor, Director and now Governor again since 2009, indicated that his term of office was due to end on 31 March 2023. The Clerk pointed out that the current LGB came into existence as a new legal entity with the formation of the MAT on 1 April 2019.

The Chair went on to announce that Sarah Woodall in a recent email to the Chair had indicated her wish to step down as Governor.

The Chair asked Governors to bring the names of any possible new governors to the notice of the Chair or the Clerk.

In relation to safeguarding, the Chair confirmed that at the next meeting Governors would receive an update on changes to the safeguarding guidance and annual refresher training arrangements.

#### **6. CLERK'S REPORT**

Board strength stands at 11 following the resignation, including the Principal and 1 Student Governor, but 2 Governors remain on leave of absence. A new 1<sup>st</sup> Year Student Governor would be elected in early October.

The Clerk went on to outline the Board Attendance statistics for 2021/22. The aggregate attendance at HSFC full Board meetings, adjusted for leave of absence, was 75.6%, last year 91.3%. A schedule of individual attendance statistics was circulated. The Clerk was aware through the Clerks' Network that many colleges nationally had seen a downturn. The attendance of 4 HSFC Governors had been less than 60%. The Clerk indicated that the sensitivity was such that 5 or 6 more individual attendances from would have given 80% overall attendance. The Chair felt

that having employed, busy people as governors was still brought value to the College.

## 7. **PRINCIPAL'S REPORT**

The Acting Principal presented the report, and confirmed that it had been a bumper year for enrolment with 2266 on the roll and 15 late starters. Adding that enrolment would be dealt with fully later in the meeting. 19 students will be taking up places at Oxbridge and 6 to medical school. It was pleasing that more College students were securing degree apprenticeships with national and international companies.

The College had received the Aspire School of the Year Award for Student Social mobility at a ceremony on 21 July held in the House of Lords for making outstanding efforts to boost the career aspirations of students.

The new build project is going well and before the meeting Governors were had toured the site and seen the development. Premises work over the summer had included multiple office moves to accommodate the growth of tutorial provision. Media computer suite has been upgraded to accommodate more students and other electrical work is ongoing.

Turning to HSFC staff absence the Acting Principal indicated that the average number of days absent moved to 4.4 in 2021/22, from 2.2 in 2020/2, but the calculation included Covid-19 related absences where teachers had taught through absences remotely and 6 medium to long term teaching staff absences. Of the last group all had returned to work with the exception of one who is no longer at the College.

The report summarised all 24 new members of staff starting in September including 4 personal tutors. A new Teacher of Law starts in January. The report also summarised staff with role changes including internal promotions.

A copy of CEO's Trust Message for September had been circulated. CEO, Peter Cooper, wrote that colleges are facing surging inflation and possible pay increases while being a prisoner to allocated funding.

Calendars of fixtures and events for Music, Musical Theatre, Sports and Drama are available in the Governors' shared area, and the Acting Principal encouraged Governors to attend.

Governors **NOTED** the report.

## 8. **FINANCE REPORT**

The Acting Principal, in the absence of the Finance Director, presented a commentary prepared by the Finance Director covering:

The Summary Financial Results of the College for the year to 31 August 2022, already circulated, indicated that the results were prior to audit and pension scheme adjustments. The external auditors would begin work in October.

Net Surplus for HSFC, after MAT charge, was £138k against a budgeted £269k deficit with savings on pay and non-pay budgets. Earnings before Interest, Taxation, Depreciation and Amortisation (EBITDA) for HSFC looks very positive with a surplus well in excess of the £550k budget, helped by additional funding received during the year.

The SFCA is continuing to negotiate with the teaching unions on a national basis.

The Acting Principal explained some of the background to the 2022/23 financial position and spiralling costs particularly in relation to fuel and what the College is doing in mitigation. SMT are closely monitoring the situation but stressed that it is 'business as usual' with no intention to reduce the depth and breadth the College's

offer. The Chair felt that HSFC was in a much stronger position than many other colleges.

The Finance Director had included updates on the two current capital projects:

- Thornbury new build - Roof topping ceremony 8 Sept. Groundworks ongoing. Spend to date of £1,113k
- Aconbury roof improvements - 4 roofs to be replaced for completion w/c 19 Sept. Spend/valuation to 31 Aug of £144k.

The Finance Director commended the Estates Manager and his team for managing multiple contracts on a confined site in a challenging economy.

Governors **NOTED** the Summary Results for the year to August 2022, and the Commentary.

## 9. **CONSIDERATION OF 2022 COLLEGE RESULTS**

The Acting Principal confirmed that it had been an extremely difficult year to assess the data and assess a college's performance. The intake of a college impacts on the overall results and value added is normally used to assess results. This year the government is not publishing this information. Schedules of 2022 results for A level, Level 2 and GCSE had already been circulated, together with a commentary.

2022 A level grades had been inflated above 2019 levels so an improvement was expected. In order to assess how well a college has done the national picture needs to be considered. HSFC is an open access college and it is more challenging to achieve a high proportion of A\*s. A schedule of HSFC results compared to national average for A Level results indicated a pass rate of 99.1% overall, with 63.4% A\* to B, compared to 98.4% and 62.2% nationally.

Level 2 results were equally pleasing. The Acting Principal added that pass rates for GCSE and other Level 2 courses were also good. No national data has yet been published for applied courses.

The SFCA some value added data and the Chair of Governors had produced some ratio data for A Level subjects which were circulated. Both sets of data which disclosed patterns or areas of concern were discussed. In response to Governor's question, the Acting Principal said her overall view was that the College had performed very well and A Level and GCSE were very pleasing overall and especially English, History and Music, but no departments were complacent. There was still work to be done on some subjects.

The Acting Principal indicated that it would be 3 to 4 years before things got back to normal and comparatives became more meaningful.

Governors **NOTED** the report.

## 10. **CHANGES TO CURRICULUM AND COURSE MASTERFILE**

A Commentary by the Acting Principal had already been circulated noting that there were no major changes to Level 3 and Level 2 courses for 2022/23.

New courses for this year are Acting, History of Art (as a late start) and ICT and Film Studies have both been reintroduced at Level 2.

Governors **SUPPORTED** the changes.

## 11. **CLASS SIZE DATA**

The Acting Principal presented a schedule by course of group numbers and average group size for year 1 2022/23. The highest group sizes, in English Language, History and Sociology, were 1 student more than the presumptive maximum.

In response to a Governor's question, the Acting Principal confirmed that the College now had 21 Ukrainian students enrolled. The Staff Governor was working on the translation of text in College documents by using mobile phone apps to scan and translate. In response to a question about group sizes for laboratory-based subjects, the Acting Principal indicated that it was no restriction problem. Classroom changes around the new build were outlined.

Governors **NOTED** the report.

**12. RETENTION 2021/22**

The Acting Principal presented Retention statistics covering the 6 years to 2021/22, and noted that overall retention for 2021/22 was at its lowest level at 90.8% for Start to June and 94.2% from Nov to June, with last year 2020/21 93.4% and 96.1% respectively. The dip is thought partly to be a reaction to the change from remote learning. In response to a Governor's question, the Acting Principal there was no seasonal fluctuation. Governors agreed that face to face learning was the best.

**13. ANALYSIS OF ENROLMENTS**

The Vice Principal presented various schedules and briefly outlined enrolment statistics over the last few years. The breakdown of students by Programme of Study at 8 September indicated 2242 students on roll.

The College's analysis of Year 11 enrolment from Main Partner schools, yielding 45% of the year's combined cohort of 1080, was discussed. The latest actual was 1087. Visits to schools continue.

Overall numbers of New Students Enrolling at HSFC 1246 were up on last year at this stage, and demonstrated an application conversion rate of 84.4%, last year 86.1%.

The detailed Analysis of New Students Enrolling 2018-22 highlighted slightly reduced enrolment of 0.61% overall from partner schools, but slight increases in enrolments from Gloucestershire and Shropshire. The number of enrolments from schools in Wales increased by 25.3%. The Vice Principal was very happy with the position overall. Governors also received data on Pupils on roll by Year Group from the Summer School Census 2022 and ONS Projections of 16 year olds by local authority within the College's catchment area for the period to 2028.

The Chair thanked the Vice Principal and his team for achieving a very good result in very challenging circumstances.

The Vice Principal went on to make Governors aware of a particular transport issue which could well impact on student attendance. A change to the timetabling of trains from Church Stretton from December would mean that early morning services would arrive at Hereford either much too early or too late for college start times.

A second issue related to the lack of capacity on the Gloucester/Ross/Hereford bus services.

Governors supported the College in taking this up with the transport companies in the first instance.

Governors **NOTED** the report.

**14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

None

**15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Thursday 20 October 2022, at 6.00pm.