



GOVERNORS' MEETING **Minutes of the meeting** **on 21 October 2021 in College room R206**

Present: Mr Andy Clarke, Mr Peter Cooper, Mr James Miller (Chair), Prof David Langley, Mrs Vicky Orsmond, Mrs Danielle Thompson, Mrs Catriona Ward, Sarah Woodall, Mr Felix J Smithson, Miss Lois I V Knight (10)

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

The Chair introduced new Student Governor, Lois Knight, to the Board, and Governors **AGREED** her appointment.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Mr Adrian Allan, Mr Andrew Roberts, Rev Kina Robertshaw, Ms Beth Rudolf, Mr Phil Tranter (Vice Principal) (4)

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS AND GIFTS

None.

3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16 SEPTEMBER 2021

The minutes were approved as an accurate record.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

It was reported by a Governor that a protest by Anti-Vaxxers had taken place on Aylestone Hill. In response to a Governor's question, the Principal indicated that over 80% of HSFC students had been vaccinated.

The Principal confirmed that he had visited the Beacon College, Barr Court Special School.

5. CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

The Chair announced that Catriona Ward had indicated her willingness to join the Search Committee. Governors were in agreement.

The Chair, referring to the Principal's upcoming appraisal, asked that Governors email the Chair with any comments.

The Chair suggested that Governors have a tour of the College on 18 November before the next Board meeting. Governors agreed the tour at 5.30pm before the meeting at 6.00pm.

The Chair moved on to Governors' training, indicating that training for training's sake was not productive. The Chair felt that the Board had recruited the right people with appropriate skills, and enthusiasm, and in relation to training, much was done 'on the job'. The Chair considered that the structure of Board business over 12 months would give Governors the information and background they need, but asked that Governors contact him with any particular training requirements or topics.

The future use of hybrid meetings was discussed. Meetings had been virtual during Covid lockdown, and a Governor had suggested that future meetings, though hopefully face to face, could also be attended remotely by Governors, who otherwise might not be able to attend. The Clerk noted that this topic had been much discussed on the Clerks' Network, and had not worked satisfactorily, and been difficult to manage. On balance HSFC Governors present were not in favour unless in extreme circumstances.

The Chair raised the possibility of a contribution by the College to English Symphony

Orchestra and performances with the College's Academia Musica Choir including the Messiah at Leominster Priory. The Finance Director noted that as an exempt charity, the College has Restricted and Unrestricted Funds. The College would be making the donation out of our Unrestricted Funds. After a brief discussion Governors were in favour a contribution.

6. **CLERK'S REPORT**

The Clerk welcomed the new Student Governor, and confirmed Board strength now stands at 14, including the Principal, and two Student Governors.

The Clerk thanked all Governors for returning their Declarations forms.

7. **PRINCIPAL'S REPORT**

The Principal presented his report, and was pleased that the College is continuing to operate normal timetables. Attendance, currently running at 92%, is down from September's reported 95%. The College endeavours to provide a service for those students not able to present, although this does increase the workload. The previous evening's College Open Event had been by far the most attended event at the College, and should have a real impact.

The national picture regarding academisation is changing, with more incentives and pressure applied to schools to join Trusts. The local Council are also encouraging schools to academies, with an upcoming event organised in a local hotel.

The College was still waiting to hear the final decision on its bid, although signs were encouraging. The bid was for a 2-storey building, which can be delivered within the required timescale for spending. The College had also researched a 3-storey build, allowing additional classroom space elsewhere within the College, with the additional costs being funded from College reserves of £700k-900k. Governors were **in favour** of the 3-storey build. The Finance Director, agreeing that 3-storey is a better solution, confirmed that ESFA approval was necessary, and finalisation of costs and projections would be worked on. Planning permission had already been obtained for the 3-storey option. The Chair wished the Board's thanks to be passed on to the Vice Principal and Estates Manager for a good job.

Governors **NOTED** the report.

8. **FINANCE REPORT**

The Finance Director presented the Summary Financial Results for the month to 30 September 2021, stating that, being the first month of the year, there was little to be derived from the numbers at this stage. However, Earnings before Interest, Taxation, Depreciation and Amortisation (EBITDA) for HSFC at this stage, are well in excess of the £100k budget, helped by ESFA Bursary and Free Meals funding.

Last year's results were being audited at present.

The HSFC Balance Sheet remains strong with reserves of £3.769m. All final financial decisions go to the MAT Board, with the MAT having sufficient funds to cover HSFC's programme.

Governors **NOTED** the Summary Results for the month to September 2021.

9. **STUDENT HEALTH AND GENERAL WELFARE**

The Director of Studies (DOS) and Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) reported on student health and wellbeing, and began with a refresher training session for Governors. The Board should ensure a whole-college approach to safeguarding, which now includes mental and physical health in its definition.

All Governors and staff must read Parts 1 and Annex B of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021 (KCSiE). New specific items have been added to Annex B. It has emerged that Governors should also read Part 2.

The DSL went on to outline the themes and changes to KCSiE in September 2021, including domestic abuse and Peer on Peer abuse. The College's implementation for 2021 was outlined, and additional safeguarding measures around College. Safety of students when walking alone was highlighted, including use of mobile phone applications such as Hollie Guard. [Hollie Guard is one of a new generation of smartphone app that provides enhanced levels of protection. Hollie Guard covers the user, whether working alone, travelling to an unknown area or simply commuting around town. The user can set extra levels of protection from inside the App.]

Guidance for teaching personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education drawing on good practice was also updated in September. Changes to pastoral support and provision within the College facilitated improved delivery of PHSE utilising group tutorial sessions. [PSHE is a non-statutory subject allowing teachers the flexibility to deliver programmes of study according to the needs of their students.]

Governors asked several questions about:

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| The MAT setting the policy | - | HSFC and other colleges in the MAT need their own safeguarding policies and procedures. There is an overarching MAT policy. |
| Particular groups in College that are more vulnerable | - | The College logs cover all student concerns and are confidential. |
| Counselling of students | - | The College subscribes to local counselling services, and can recommend a suitable organisation depending on what is reported. |
| Reporting if worried about someone else | - | The culture of the College supports this. |
| Victim and perpetrator | - | College will look at concerns for both. |

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 2021*. Danielle Thompson is the Designated Governor with special responsibility for safeguarding children and young people's issues.

The College's Peer on Peer Abuse Policy was also presented and discussed. With more focus on this area of abuse, a specific policy is requested by the Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSCP).

After a brief discussion, Governors **APPROVED**:

- the College's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures 2021/22
- the College's Peer on Peer Abuse Policy 2021/22

It was also **AGREED** that Governors should read Parts 1 and 2 and Annex B of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021 (KCSiE).

The Chair praised the systems in place at College, with some exceptional staff involved, and 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 2021, 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 2021/22, 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 Register schedule had been compiled by reviewing and refreshing the previous version.

The high level risks were reviewed by Governors. In response to a Governor's question, the Principal confirmed that the Disaster Recovery Plan was tested on a regular basis.

Governors **NOTED** the report.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

A Governor recommended the SFCA webinar programme to fellow Governors as being very good.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 18 November 2021, at 6.00pm preceded by tour of College at 5.30pm.