

## THE COLLEGE OF RICHARD COLLYER

### MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BODY held on Tuesday, 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2011 at 10.30 a.m. at Mercers' Hall

Present: Mr G R Baird, Ms S Bridges, Revd. G Bridgewater, Mrs V Chaffin-Laird, Mr C P Clementi, Mr C J Eley, Mr M Hodgson, Dr J Johnston (Principal), Mr A R C Lane, Mr R Pope, Mr E I Tattersall, Mr A Vourexakis, Mr C J P Watney, Mrs C Watson

In attendance: Mr I F Dumbleton (Director of Finance), Mrs L MacLeman (Minuting Secretary), Mr S P Nicholls (Assistant Principal), Ms N Whitehead (Clerk), Mrs M. McGregor (Clerk to the Mercers' Company)

Apologies received: Prof C Behagg, Mr S van der Borgh, Dr Diana Cassell, Mr H Underwood

In the Chair: Mr G R Baird

*The meeting was preceded by a presentation (and paper) from the Principal and Vice Principal on the development of Adult Education and Apprenticeships at the college.*

*Mr Robert Yorke was welcomed to the meeting as an observer having recently been appointed as a co-optee to the Audit Committee.*

967. **Urgent Business**            There was no urgent business.

#### 968. **Declarations of interest**

The Clerk reported that *Declaration of Interest* forms had been sent to governors; she encouraged those few who had not yet returned their forms to do so. No interests were declared relating to the meeting.

#### 969. **Declarations of eligibility**

The Clerk reported that *Declaration of Eligibility* forms had been sent to governors; she encouraged those few who had not yet returned their forms to do so.

970. **Minutes** of the meetings held on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2010 were approved.

#### 971. **Matters arising**

**Item 952:** The Principal confirmed that no firm announcement had yet been made by the Government on the future for international students at Level 3. This uncertainty might be a contributing factor to the lack of deposits received by the college at this stage which was a matter for concern.

**Item 956:** Since the last meeting the pay offer of 0.75% had been re-presented to the Unions in the light of the anticipated funding settlement with an end of March deadline for a response. Members commented that many employees were facing pay cuts in the current economic climate.

**Item 959 iv):** Work continued on refining and establishing the SFBac. This included a reduction in the tariff by 100 guided learning hours (glh) for extra-curricular activities to reflect the cut in entitlement funding from 114 to 30 glh. The first cohort of Level 2 students would be eligible to receive the SFBac this summer with Level 3 students following next year.

972. **Strategic issues: Funding**

*Papers: Briefing points on funding in Sixth Form Colleges*

The Principal explained that the briefing paper had been prepared for a meeting with Francis Maude. The College had not yet received its final allocation for the coming year but the indications were that there would be a 12% cash cut over the next four years amounting to a 20% cut in real terms. In spite of being a frontline service and the continuing commitment to raising the participation age, 16-18 funding was not protected in the same way as for the 11-16 age group. Surrey and Sussex Chairs had written to Michael Gove to express their concern. Savings were being identified wherever possible but the importance for the college to maintain its high standards whilst continuing to grow by some 100 students so as to increase funding could not be underestimated. Marketing had been broadened to include media suitable for the student audience and reflected the college's ability to offer a wider choice of subject than schools. The Principal confirmed that the timetable change extending the day by 15 minutes had increased capacity without an impact on teaching hours and with no reduction in the contact time per subject. Tutor time would be focussed in one longer session per week. There was expected to be a limit of a 3% cut in cash terms in the coming year but uncertainty thereafter was exacerbated by a potential change in the funding methodology.

973. **Report from the Nominations Committee**

*Papers: Minutes of the Nominations Committee meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2011*

- a) **Appointment by the Court of Assistants:** The Chairman reported that the Court of Assistants had resolved that Mr Daniel Hodson be appointed to replace Mr Robert Pope, subject to a satisfactory meeting with the college. A former Master Mercer, Mr Hodson had a wealth of experience of both education and the financial sector and was currently a governor of St. Paul's Girls School as well as Chair of the Mercers' Company Audit Committee. Mr Watney had been appointed for a further period of two years in recognition of his very high level of commitment to the college and to help smooth the transition with the current large number of changes in the Governing Body.
- b) **Training and Development programme:** Members were invited to make any additions to the Governor Training and Development Programme drawn up by the Clerk in pursuit of the policy agreed in the Autumn term.

**Resolved: The Governing Body approved the Training and Development programme.**

- c) Members noted that this was the last governors meeting for both the parent and student governors for whose posts election procedures would commence shortly. The college would, from 1<sup>st</sup> April, have an outstanding vacancy for an HE professional to replace Mr Clive Behagg although a number of avenues were being pursued.

974. **Report from the Finance & General Purposes Committee**

*Papers: Minutes of the Premises Sub-Committee and Finance & General Purposes (F&GP) Committee meetings of 15<sup>th</sup> December 2010 and 1<sup>st</sup> March 2011; minutes of the Joint Staff-Governors' Consultative Group on 3rd February 2011*

**Part II minutes (Criterion h): Information considered to be commercially sensitive**

The Chair reported that progress had been made in addressing the snagging issues on the John Dew building and improving ventilation and fire escape routes. Work was also progressing well on the Food and Nutrition facility subject to the final stage in the summer.

- a) **Mid-year Update to Financial Statements 2010/2011**

*Paper: Updated Budget 2010-2011*

The Director of Finance explained that, at the mid-year, the forecast surplus was a very satisfactory £271k (ahead of the original budget by some £194k) owing largely to prudent budgeting in respect of 16-

18 numbers given uncertainty on growth and the possibility at the time of an in-year adjustment. It was hoped that this would provide a firm footing on which to face the increasing funding constraints in future years. Members congratulated him on the College's outstanding financial health in difficult circumstances.

**Resolved: The Governing Body approved the Mid-year Update to the Financial Statements 2010/2011.**

**b) Managing Change Policy**

*Paper: Managing Change Policy and Procedure 2011*

The Chair explained that, whilst it was hoped to avoid its use in terms of compulsory redundancy, it was considered important to have a comprehensive and robust policy to assist the college in managing change particularly in the face of considerable financial constraints in the coming years. The policy had now been considered by a number of Committees and the (sometimes contradictory) comments had been reconciled as fairly as possible within the current document. This was now being shared with the trade unions before its final submission for endorsement by the F&GP and approval by the Governing Body next term. Two points (in paragraphs 4.3 and 11.4) were identified as requiring further clarity but members were otherwise content with the proposed policy.

**c) Committee membership**

*Paper: Governor Membership of Committees and Other Groups 2011*

The Clerk explained the impact of the changes in the Governing Body on Committee membership. As per the College's Instrument and Articles, the new Vice Chair, Colin Eley, elected at the December meeting, would join the F&GP Committee. Given the turnover in membership of the Q&S Committee over the coming year (4 out of the 5 governors would be changing) it was also proposed that he would join that Committee given his experience of it as the former parent governor. The vacancy which would result on the Audit Committee would be filled by Robert Pope's replacement as soon as possible. It was however proposed that Robert Pope would remain on the Nominations Committee in his role as Chairman of Trustees. Further future changes in Committee membership, both potential and desirable, had been considered to help boost succession planning. Governors were invited to keep the Clerk informed should they have any wish to change Committee or take on additional responsibilities.

**Resolved: The Governing Body approved the membership of the Committees as set out in the paper.**

**975. Report from the Audit Committee**

*Paper: Minutes of the Audit Committee meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2011*

**a) Appointment and Remuneration of the Financial Statements Auditor**

As Chair of the recent meeting of the Audit Committee, Mrs Carolyn Watson explained the Committee's recommendation that the Financial Statements Auditor be reappointed for a further year given their continuing good service to the college. The Director of Finance reported that he had followed up the Audit Committee's recommendation on cost and secured the most favourable rate possible which, as proposed, constituted a more limited increase than RPI.

**Resolved: The Governing Body approved the re-appointment of Tenon Audit Ltd. as the Financial Statements Auditors for 2010/2011 and agreed that the remuneration should be at the same level as this year, plus 3% (+ VAT).**

Mrs Watson reported also that recent IAS reports had made only minor recommendations of a housekeeping nature but it was believed that this genuinely reflected a strong college performance and that the IAS did provide value for money. In the absence of a presentation there had been lively discussion of the wider context within which the college and Committee was operating.

976. **Report from the Quality & Standards Committee**

*Paper: Minutes of the Quality & Standards Committee meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2011*

**a) The College Quality Improvement Plan**

*Paper: College Quality Improvement Plan 2010 December 2009*

Given the outgoing Chair's anticipated absence at the Governing Body meeting, Mr Colin Eley reported that the recent Q&S meeting had started with the presentation of a gift and many thanks on behalf of all governors and the college for his very valuable 12 years of service.

Mr Eley explained that, thereafter, the meeting had focussed on the QIP which was considered a robust document. The Committee had identified the impact of the change in timetable as an area of interest to watch and requested also that in future there should be exception reporting to facilitate ongoing tracking of the most pressing areas for development.

**Resolved: The Governing Body approved the College Quality Improvement Plan 2011.**

The Committee had suggested a similar 'traffic light' approach in response to the annual report on equality and diversity, although as for the latest management report (covering performance, effort, attendance and retention), there were at present no significant areas of concern.

977. **The Principal's Report**

*Paper: Principal's Report to the Governing Body Spring Term 2011*

The Principal highlighted the impact of funding changes and cuts on the college's preparations for the new academic year as well as development of the work on Adult Education/Apprenticeships previously discussed.

**Part II minutes (Criterion h) : Information considered to be commercially sensitive**

In addition she reported on:

- i) The continuing work with the Institute for Education on Global Learning for Global Colleges, the Institute of Physics and the Collyer's Co-operative in assisting teachers and communities in The Gambia and Tanzania;
- ii) The development of the SFBac and associated celebration event with elements such as the EPQ, extension studies AS levels and the new TRAK course which will contribute to it on target to produce good outcomes;
- iii) The changing policy landscape and its impact on the college and its relationships with local organisations, within which context the new Strategic Plan would be drawn up with governors;
- iv) Student qualifications and destinations in the previous year and the prospects for students in the current year, including Oxbridge offers. The Staff Governor commented on the improved integration of past students in the college's efforts on UCAS applications and the Principal on the work in enhancing careers advice particularly for those not going on to HE. Mrs Watson commented on the possible demand for even more help, and even paid services, in considering university and career choices in addition to the existing resources and offer of mock interviews;
- v) The limited staffing changes including the particular efforts in English to ensure continuity in covering two instances of maternity leave, as well as encouraging performance on appraisal and lesson observations across the college.

Members thanked the Principal for her comprehensive report.

## 978. Chairman's Report

The Chair reported on:

- (a) **Provisional dates of meetings 2011-2012:** The Chair asked members to give comments on the proposed dates to the Clerk, particularly in relation to the number of F&GP meetings.
- (b) **Training attended:** the Chair and Vice Chair Elect had attended LSIS workshops on 'Preparation for Inspection'. Mr Eley commented on the diverse attendance and the very positive comments on the college SAR, as well as the possible triggers for an Ofsted inspection such as a change in funding, Principal or Chair or sub-contracting arrangements. Ofsted resources were clearly however going to be limited with a greater emphasis on desk-based research and colleges experiencing difficulties. There appeared to be very few examples of performance on E&D or Safeguarding having been a limiting grade as overall performance tended to be in line with that on these issues. Course information would be shared with the Vice Principal given his responsibilities for curriculum and quality.

In addition both they and the Clerk had attended an AoSEC Governors network meeting which had included presentations from the YPLA and SFA as well as the AoC on the Code of Governance.

## 979. Code of Governance

*Paper: The College Code of Governance: Indicative Scope and Contents*

The Chair explained that the Code had arisen out of the review of governance in the previous year and sought to secure additional freedom for colleges in identifying core principles and allowing governance to proceed on a 'comply or explain' basis. That said some quite specific recommendations were included e.g. on terms of office and governor appraisal. Members felt that formal appraisals were unnecessary but welcomed the recent introduction of 'catch-ups' with new governors and annual discussion with Chairs. An example of governance self-assessment including an opportunity for private discussion of the Chair (as with auditor assessments) was also cited.

## 980. Trustees' Report

The Chairman of the Trustees reported that the next Trustees meeting would take place in June with a report back to governors at the next Governing Body meeting. It was encouraging to note that the income targets from the endowment portfolio had been achieved.

**Action: The Chair of Trustees to consider how reports might best be communicated to governors if he were no longer a governor of the college.**

## 981. The 'Student Voice'

*Paper: College Council Meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> February 2011*

The Student Governor reported that:

- i) The prom had been moved from the Boat Charter on the Thames to South Lodge Hotel enabling a reduction in price;
- ii) There had been fund-raising activities during Red Nose Day for Comic Relief and Springboard and Cystic Fibrosis were being considered as the charities to be supported during Rag Week;
- iii) In recent Q&S discussions, the student governors had been supportive of the changes to tutor activities;
- iv) It was felt that the recent questionnaires on 'My Progress' had allowed a successful focus on UCAS and Student Finance. It was notable that fewer students would be taking a gap year to avoid the increase in HE fees in subsequent years, thus increasing the competition for places this year.

Members thanked the Student governor for his succinct but comprehensive report and both student governors for their service to the Governing Body over the past year.

**982. Governance Quality Framework**

*Paper: Quality Framework: Governance Self-assessment*

The meeting had been particularly valuable in considering the impact of funding on the college curriculum and the changes envisaged to respond to such cuts. The purpose of agenda items was clear and discussion open and frank.

**Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday, 12<sup>th</sup> July 2011 at 9.30 a.m. at Collyer's.**

*The Chair closed the meeting by thanking Mr Robert Pope for his many years of service to the College as a governor, and most particularly in recent years as Vice Chair of the Governing Body. The college was pleased that his association with Collyer's would be continued through the Trustees.*

The meeting closed at 12.55 p.m.

**Chairman .....**

**Date .....**

NCW/LM 23/03/2011