

THE COLLEGE OF RICHARD COLLYER
MINUTES OF
THE NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ON MONDAY 16th NOVEMBER 2018 at 08.33.

Present: Mrs Sally Bromley, Ms Ann Donoghue, Mrs Barbara Hobday, Mr Graham Lawrence, Dr David Skipp

Apologies received: n/a

In attendance: Ms Nicola Whitehead

In the Chair: Mrs Barbara Hobday

The Chair welcomed Mr Lawrence to his first meeting of the Nominations Committee.

1. Declaration of interests

There were no declarations of interests.

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 7th June 2018 were approved.

3. Matters arising

Item 3 ref Item 3: The **Principal** reported that she had received a negative response to an invitation for a **royal visit to Collyer's** as the only West Sussex Sixth Form College (as she had to an earlier invite to see environmental theatre production Pangolin). With a visit already having taken place on the Sussex Coast, there appeared little scope for a further visit in the near future.

Ref Item 4: The Clerk confirmed that she was pressing ahead with **circulating meeting summaries** to all governors and would renew efforts also to seek meeting feedback through this channel.

Item 5g: The Clerk confirmed that setting up **mentoring chats for new governors** was in hand with a couple possibly going ahead in the margins of Planning Day. The GB meeting on 12th December would provide the next clear opportunity with all due to be completed by end January.

[08.37 Mrs Donoghue joined the meeting]

Item 8: The Clerk reported that the bulk of the **governance action plan in relation to GDPR** had been completed. Members confirmed that they were content with the proposal for a new application form to encompass the necessary information from a CV given that this would be more consistent with the College Privacy Notice, that this would be signed and supplemented by the interview, enhanced pre-appointment information (e.g. through rejigged training pack) and the additional checks required through DBS and recent Charity regulations.

4. Governance Self-Assessment Report (SAR) 2017-18 and Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) 2018/19

Paper: Governance Self-Assessment Report 2017-18 and Quality Improvement Plan 2018/19, Self-Assessment questionnaire results, Governor Attendance and Wider Participation Reports 2017-18 incl. Governance KPIs, Governance Risk Register 2018-19 update; Strategic Plan referencing document

- a) The Clerk explained that the governance SAR/QIP reflected changes in the whole College approach with one rather than two separate documents and a greater focus on data. In addition to the usual documents underpinning the report's conclusions was a new *Strategic Plan referencing document* – an action point from a previous internal audit report. Members commented on the apparently different levels of understanding on strategic monitoring, agreeing that this new document should provide additional assurance and help highlight any possible changes required.

(Action: i) Members to inform the Clerk of any detailed thoughts on the reference document including reporting against the strategic aims; ii) Clerk to reflect latest changes to KPIs in the document).

- b) The evidence suggested Governance generally remained a strong feature at the College though **attendance** at formal meetings had fallen slightly below target. Members examined those members with the lowest attendance and agreed this should be pursued by the committee Chairs, with the mentoring chats providing an opportunity to do so. Whilst several of the governors were providing added value through wider participation in College meetings and events, and the difficulties of combining the voluntary role with work commitments was recognised, it was agreed that attendance at meetings was important. The committee agreed it would be preferable to open up opportunities for alternative governors, particularly those with local connections, if attendance were to continue to be a problem;
- c) Looking at the SAR and questionnaire, the Clerk commented that **training**, along with the broader membership of the Q&C Committee appeared to have had a positive impact in relation to finance, safeguarding, understanding the student experience, Ofsted requirements, admissions and understanding the national picture though there was still scope for further development most notably on the latter three. **(Action: Clerk to amend slightly the question on admissions for greater clarity);**
- d) Members also discussed the potential impact of student governors on the scores given that they had only a year to become accustomed to the role. On balance they agreed the comments in particular should be included as useful pointers and anonymity respected but that the Clerk would identify their scores in general 'student governor' terms where these were out of sync with other governors to help inform action planning. **(Action: Clerk)**
- e) Going forward, members noted the progress against the **governance risk register** and its close links to the SAR/QIP. The **QIP actions** were generally deemed sensible. The Clerk reported on discussions with the RCU Manager on student governor and RCU officer elections. The students had expressed a preference for full student body voting for each in separate elections following hustings. Earlier exam leave, the movable Easter break and the RCU Manager's intention to bring forward RCU President elections to the Spring Term presented some logistical challenges. The Principal suggested this be resolved through joint hustings and separate but concurrent voting. **(Action: Clerk to discuss arrangements further with RCU Manager);**
- f) Members focussed also on the proposed consideration of e-solutions, for example, to help attendance both at formal meetings and wider conversations. They had reservations about the impact of virtual attendance on effective discussion at committee meetings, particularly if by Chairs, but thought the whole Governing Body should be consulted. **(Action: Clerk to amend QIP to leave meeting methodology open).** They did however think that such avenues could be used for mentoring chats but ideally not for interviews. The Committee favoured the continuation of targeted e-mails to clarify any misunderstandings prior to meetings given that a 'chat room' approach might undermine effective governance through discussion prior to formal meetings and be difficult to manage in the limited time available between the issue of papers and the meeting.
- g) The Clerk reported that she was seeking to set up two meetings in the margins of Planning Day to further links with the governors from HE.

Recommendation: That the Governing Body should approve the Governance Self-assessment 2017-18/ Quality Improvement Plan 2018-19 at their next meeting (including the grading to be awarded to governance) and subject to the minor amendments identified.

5. Appointment and succession planning

Paper: Cover sheet, updated skills audit, CV of new committee member

Members noted:

- a) *Ex officio* governor, **Canon Guy Bridgewater** had left Horsham following his final service on 28th October for a post at Bath Abbey. A successor was unlikely to arrive in Horsham before Summer 2019 although an emergency Parish contact had been given;
- b) Mercer appointee, **Thom Hodson**, wished to stand down as soon as a successor were found. **(Action: Clerk to update Mercers' Company on skills needs)**. The priorities remained building and construction, special needs, pensions and investments as well as HR, law and industrial relations. Members noted the insights from the independent education sector had proved helpful, for example, in informing the College's request for exam reviews. They recognised however the difficulties in combining governorship with a teaching role. Members acknowledged the objective nature of the audit whilst remaining useful as a guide. The Clerk confirmed that she did pursue any surprising scores to address any potential errors;
- c) Recent exploration of an **ESC Co-optee** had concluded unsuccessfully on this occasion but a further introductory meeting was planned between the Chair of the Sub-Committee and a Chartered Building Surveyor with possible interest. If clear potential, a meeting with the Chair of the Nominations Committee would be sought;
- d) A similar meeting with a potential **Audit co-optee** was scheduled with a Kreston Reeves employee (in follow-up to Robert Yorke's approach) and the Committee Chair and Clerk for 21st November. The interested party was known to the College as she already volunteered to help with Challenge of Management;
- e) **Parent and Staff Governor elections** were also due **in 2019** (in addition to Student Governor elections – see paragraph 4e above) on a similar basis in line with good practice;
- f) The terms of office of **three further governors** were due for review in Summer 2019

In discussion of succession planning, members asked that the Clerk continue to pursue local interest in governance opportunities **(Action: Clerk to liaise with Employability Co-ordinator to inform trawl)**. It was noted that any potential candidates might be of interest to the Mercers' company if they were finding any difficulty in replacing Thom Hodson (or alternatively they might accept an existing governor, leaving a vacancy for a Governing Body appointment).

In addition members noted the strong positive response and clear majority agreement (by 15th November 2018) to the written resolution of 7th November proposing Graham Lawrence as a new member of the Nominations.

6. Governor Training and Development (T&D)

Paper: Governor T&D Policy and Programme 2018-2019

The Clerk welcomed comments on the proposed programme of training for governors and co-optees. This sought to address known issues to-date (relying on evidence from the Governance SAR/QIP, risk register and skills audit) whilst taking a realistic view as to what was feasible.

Members were content with the continued focus on **in-house training** and most notably the regular link events to include the new House contacts and topics such as curriculum strategy.

There would be an ongoing need for **induction** activity - more challengingly at different stages through the year following the anticipated recruitment of several new co-optees and governors. The Principal commented on the value of pre-meetings by Chairs prior to committees particularly for those new to role. Progress had been made in respect of access to training and information on-line though take-up of training continued to be challenging given time pressures. The Clerk explained the new **SFCA College Governance Network**, with a new suite of webinars potentially providing a practical offering. Members acknowledged the advantages in piggy-backing the existing governance handbook and Clerk training to provide well-focussed and cost-effective training subject to the Clerk checking on the timing and content of the final programme. **(Action: Clerk)**. The Chair commented that he had sought to sign up for the Chair's hub but would welcome a check on access **(Action: Clerk)**.

Resolved: The Nominations Committee approved the revised T&D Programme for 2018-19.

8. I&As and Rules and Byelaws

Paper: Excerpts from Eversheds annotated articles ref Article 12.

Members reiterated their agreement that national advertising of a vacancy for Principal should always be retained but agreed that it would be helpful to have flexibility with regard to any further SPH posts. Changing the Instrument and Articles to this effect could facilitate restructuring or internal recruitment if a strong field whilst not ruling out an external trawl. It was not intended however that senior/SMT posts would be earmarked for internal progression. It was agreed that agreement in principle should be sought from the next Governing Body meeting prior to discussion with the trade unions through the Principal's SMCG group. **(Action: Clerk)**

Going forward it would be essential to get the more detailed underlying framework and process right. The committee Chair sought assurances on the robustness of current appraisal processes and development plans to help with staff progression whilst recognising that timing could still be an issue even with the best succession planning. In discussion members agreed the usefulness of a clear deputy to the Principal although this need not be tied to a particular role. They also thought that, in clarifying processes for the new SPH framework, it would be helpful to include other SMT posts where it would be important to have a governor presence on the panel. This could however remain flexible, as at present, with regard to other upper managerial posts. The Principal commented that she would like to consult with the Recruitment Manager on the way forward. The Clerk proposed looking into the changes required to the Instrument and Articles (and possibly Rules and Byelaws) with a view to further consultation and agreement by the Summer Term (or earlier if needed). **(Action: Principal and Clerk)**.

9. Remuneration Committee

Papers: AoC Draft Senior Staff Remuneration Code, Proposed Committee structure and membership documents, F&GP, Nominations and Special Committee terms of reference

The Clerk explained that in the light of consultation on a new AoC Remuneration Code reflecting best practice (intended as a guide rather than for adoption) as well as the pressure on F&GP time, the Principal had proposed a separate Remuneration Committee to make recommendations on SPH (Principal and Deputy Principal) and Clerk's pay and appraisal. Following discussion with the Chair, it had been suggested that the Committee be established in time for pay discussions in the summer term.

The committee Chair commented that Remuneration Committees were usually small although it would be important to get the rights skills and knowledge on the group whilst remaining practical in adding an additional commitment to existing committees. It was proposed this might suggest the Nominations Committee itself although the Clerk expressed reservations concerning the key remit of the Committee being search and governance rather than staffing issues. Members recognised that F&GP had a particular interest given its remit for SPH recruitment, finance, staff pay in general and other HR issues. The Nominations Committee did have an interest in terms of the governance

framework in respect of these posts. In addressing pay and appraisal any new Remuneration Committee would need to have regard to these responsibilities as well as those of the Special Committee concerning dismissal. On balance it was agreed that the membership of the Remuneration Committee at its inception should be the Chair of the Governing Body (GB), Chair of F&GP (also GB Vice Chair) - given their respective responsibilities for SPH appraisal and e.g. general staff pay - as well as the Chair of the Nominations Committee given her HR experience (as had the Vice Chair). In practical terms this would mean a meeting could take place before the May F&GP (HR) meeting or failing that the June Nominations Committee.

Recommendation: That the Governing Body approve the change in principle at their next meeting.

(Action: Clerk to produce proposed terms of reference and associated changes to those of other committees affected prior to agreement, if necessary by written resolution, in the Spring Term.)

10. Any other business

None

11. Meeting assessment

The Committee welcomed the comprehensive reports and pragmatic and coherent approaches discussed.

12. Date of next meeting: Friday 7th June 2019 at 16.00. (To be confirmed in the light of clarification from the Chair as to his availability)

The meeting ended at 11.00 a.m.

Chair

Date

NCW 17/11/18