

THE COLLEGE OF RICHARD COLLYER

MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BODY
held on Wednesday 11th December 2019 at 16.30

Present: Mr Karl Banister, Mrs Sally Bromley (Principal), Mr Tom Cox, Mrs Ann Donoghue, Mrs Barbara Hobday, Ms Lisa Karandeja, Mr Graham Lawrence, Ms Emily Leddy, Dr Grant Powell, Mrs Clare Ruaux, Dr David Skipp, Mr Hugh Stafford-Smith, Mr Dominic Wakefield, Mr Robert Yorke

In attendance: Mr Ian Dumbleton, Ms Andrea John, Mr Dan Lodge, Mr Steve Martell, Ms Nicola Whitehead (Clerk)

Apologies: Mr Paul Mittendorfer, Mrs Helen Smith

In the Chair: Dr David Skipp

The Chair explained that items 10 i and ii, and 14i and ii would, contrary to the agenda, be open for discussion to ensure effective scrutiny. Members were content with the remaining proposed consent items and emphasis on the key strategic items including the Principal's and Student Voice reports, QIP, and Report and Financial Statements, as illustrated by the indicative timings on the agenda.

1507) Declarations of interest: There were no declarations of interests.

1508) Minutes (Parts I and II) of the meeting held on 3rd October 2019 were approved.

1509) Matters arising

Item 1497: The Finance Director (FD) reported that the latest financial forecast suggested a **significant surplus in 2019/20**. Going forward the 2035 students enrolled would produce healthy lagged funding for 2020/21. Members thanked the Deputy Principal (DP) and Registrar in particular, for their contributions to the College's financial health through the growth in student numbers and complex submissions to the ESFA.

Item 1499: The Clerk stated that a check of the Trustees' governing document confirmed that it would not be a proper use of funds to contribute towards **staff events**. The Principal commented that the staff had however organised their own events that term with a good response.

The Principal confirmed that there had been **consultation with SMCG** concerning the staff survey results including any concerns about discrimination.

Item 1500: The Finance Director clarified that the budgeted net cost of the **Worthing bus service** was £30k once the cost of the service was discounted by the student contributions. Given the benefits of attracting additional students and associated funding, the SMT still considered this a valuable offer at the current time – and particularly so in having helped to address the recent demographic dip.

1510) Principal's Annual Report 2018/19

Paper: Principal's Annual Report 2018/19

The Principal introduced her first **annual (rather than termly) report** covering key activities and information for the academic year **18-19**. The report had been shared with parents and placed on the website. She hoped that in following a more traditional business report style,

it provided valuable information for all stakeholders in reflecting the health of the College, both financially and academically, but also in terms of the wider student support.

Members commented on the **value-added** graph on page 6, pending national results in January. They noted the potential change to legislation so that **outstanding colleges would come back into scope for Ofsted inspections from September 2020** (in addition to the current desk-top exercise). The shift in emphasis from data to behaviour made a visit more imperative in order to gain an accurate feel for each college. Chairs, Vice Chairs and other key governors could be expected to be invited to meet with inspectors. More information on the SMT's action plan and expectations would be covered at the governors' Learning Walk on 6th February 2020.

The Chair thanked the Principal for this valuable initiative, welcoming the comprehensive report which in turn could be shared as part of the new Principal's recruitment effort.

1511) Student Voice

Paper: Written report of 3rd December 2019

The student governors reported on their joint activities in the autumn term. They had been working with the RCU on a number of activities including:

- **Recruiting and integrating new members** through greater round-table discussion which had proved very effective in encouraging ideas and facilitating feedback;
- **Harvest Food Bank:** a competition – won by St. Leonard's House - as to which house/ tutor group could collect the most food. In total 78kg of food (equivalent to 188 meals) was donated to the homeless in Horsham and the surrounding areas;
- New **Travel Plan** (with suggestions made on e.g. electric car charging points);
- **Christmas event week** which started on the 9th of December with all profits going to **Chestnut Tree House**.

Both student governors had also attended the Collyer's Association/ Parents' Forum meeting contributing ideas on parent communications and the College's **Wellbeing week** in the New Year. Other forward plans included:

- Graham and Helen Lawrence's project to raise money for **St Catherine's Hospice** to include a **quiz at the College on 5th March as 6pm**. Teams of students, parents and staff very welcome as well as helpers on the night;
- **Collyer's second Pride event;**
- **Leaver's Event including Yearbook.**

In response to questions, the student governors confirmed that there had been College hustings prior to the election. **[Postscript:** The Epic Gamer Party won, narrowly beating the Lib Dems by 5 votes.]

The parent governor reported further on the **newly named Collyer's Parents' Forum's** interest in **student mental health** underpinning the support being offered for the Wellbeing week. The lottery fund-raiser had once more elicited little response reflecting the difficulty in engaging parents. However, the **new sponsorship scheme** would be launched in the Spring term and it was hoped to use the students as the channel to further involvement, for example in a possible park run.

Mr Lawrence thanked the students for their help in the organisation of the **March quiz** on which further information would be available shortly.

1512) Quality Assurance

Papers: College Self-assessment report (SAR) 2018-19 and Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) 2019-20

The Chair introduced the **College SAR and QIP** as significant documents - covered in some detail by the Quality and Curriculum (Q&C) Committee - for which the Vice Principal was to be congratulated. The VP explained this second iteration of the new template seeking to focus on top level information. The SAR summary presaged the areas of focus in the QIP to try to bring about further enhancements.

Looking at the key themes, the VP commented that the '**Raising Aspiration**' agenda had impacted well on A grade students but that further progress had yet to be made in improving the performance of B grade students. **Curriculum development** included a new – and very popular - Criminology course as well as 'T' levels. **Co-ordinated efforts across academic and pastoral support** had been well implemented with improved monitoring, attendance and student self-awareness. **Marketing and enrolment** had been widely successful with innovative approaches in attracting international students contributing to College funding. The VP also thanked those governors who had supported the preparatory faculty and cross college meetings looking at the more detailed self-assessments across the college, which underpinned the whole College SAR and QIP.

In response to questions, the VP explained:

- The challenges with the **B grade students** were thought to be multi causal. The students were engaged so not attracting targeted intervention but were not motivated at the highest level. **Collyer's Aspire** had helped them, for example, to recognise the potential of the Library, spurred on by the other students there. Unconditional offers also seemed to have had a particular impact on this group;
- The purpose and content of the '**Transition**' programme from **Level 2 to Level 3**, with the title reflecting the students' intention to be L3 students. The College's own assessment of need had usefully coincided with a DfE trial of a new 'Transition Offer' for which Collyer's had been accepted as a pilot college which also attracted some funding;
- **Haywards Heath campus**, as part of the Chichester (GFE) College would be **reopening in September 2020** with additional funding support for the first few years. The SMT thought that Collyer's might lose c.30 students choosing to stay locally but that Collyer's, with the help of the direct bus service, would continue to attract students from the east. The current area MP, Nicholas Soames, was expected to be succeeded by Mims Davies, a former Collyerian, who was due to visit the College on Friday 13th December after the election result.

Turning to the detail, members commented on:

- The College's readiness for any **Ofsted** inspection, albeit that work would continue even better to articulate Collyer's **curriculum intent and implementation**. This required demonstrating impact beyond results;
- The **trial 360/ 180 approach to staff development** (with input having been received from governors) – to be used in combination with learning walks and lesson observations;
- The extent to which the College was pursuing **environmental initiatives**. The student governors commented on the RCU's Green Week, the recent hustings' focus on climate, and a Clothes Swap planned for March. A green travel survey had just issued;

- Further development of **IT solutions**, both in the classroom and more widely. Work was underway on a **College App**, principally to facilitate parental access to college systems, complementing the work already done on the website. Members appreciated the need to keep track of **methods of communications** with, for example, notifications prompting interest or a response rather than reliance on parents accessing e-mails.

The Chair concluded that members appeared very content with the revised reports and thanked the VP once again for his comprehensive work on these and the wider team effort in producing a document to help drive development.

Resolved: The Governing Body approved:

- a. the College Self-Assessment Report (SAR) 2018-19; and**
- b. the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) 2019-20**

1513) Audit Committee Annual Report to the Governing Body 2018-19

Paper: Audit Committee Annual Report to the Governing Body 2018-19

The Committee Chair summarised the report's coverage of the activities of the Audit Committee in advising the Governing Body on **the adequacy of systems and controls in the College**. Most notable were the commitment and skills breadth of its relatively small membership, for example, in seeking **assurance across all three possible levels - internally, by governors and externally**. It was also noteworthy that the Committee continued to **look beyond traditional financial audit areas** to systems across the full breadth of the College's key activities such as safeguarding. In so doing, it relied in part on **a dynamic risk approach whilst not losing sight of the comprehensive audit potential**. The Committee had confidence in both the internal and external auditors.

The ESC Chair thanked the Clerk for the very impressive report. Members were content that the report reflected a very satisfactory position both in terms of the Committee's attention to its remit and the assurances provided by both internal monitoring and the services of internal and external audit firms.

Resolved: The Governing Body endorsed the Audit Committee Annual report.

1514) Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31st July 2019

Papers: Draft Audit Findings Report incl. Letters or Representation; Report and Financial Statements, Regularity Self-assessment

Members noted the discussions of the **Report and Financial Statements** by both the F&GP and Audit Committees and that it had been a **straightforward audit**. The Finance Director reported that the College had achieved a good operating surplus of c. £120k. After making a non-cash charge of £207k in relation to the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS), the deficit for the year had been £87k. The LGPS charge was however excluded from the ESFA's calculations which recognised the **College's financial health as 'Outstanding'**. The College had a cash balance of £4.9 million at the 31 July 2019. The College considered it prudent to retain the net cash reserves of c. £2.5m given forthcoming capital projects.

Resolved: The Governing Body approved:

- a. The Audit Findings Report**
- b. Signature by the Chair of the letters of representation**
- c. Approval of the Financial Statements and their signature**
- d. Signature by the Chair of the Regularity Self-assessment on behalf of the Governing Body**
- e. Signature by the Chair of the Statement of Corporate Governance and Internal Control.**

1515) Report from the Remuneration Committee

Papers: Minutes of the meeting of 7th November

Members received the minutes (see also 1525 below).

1516) Report from the Nominations Committee

Papers: Minutes of the meeting of 7th November; Governance Self-Assessment report (SAR) 2018-19 and Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) 2019-20

The Committee Chair drew attention to the key points in the minutes including the anticipated *ex officio* appointment of the new Rector of St. Mary's. Members noted the key elements of the **governance QIP** including:

- Greater **signposting of items** as being **strategy development, decision-making or monitoring** and **governor discussion of the monitoring required when any new strategy introduced**. *(Action: Clerk to amend top sheets accordingly);*
- Consideration of the **governors' role in relation to mental health issues**;
- Greater **reliance on online training and self-certification** to provide greater flexibility and take-up;
- More overt **distinction between governance and operational issues** with discussion to resolve any grey areas;
- Greater **risk-mapping to committees** to support the assurance framework;

Resolved: The Governing Body approved:

- a. the Governance Self-assessment review 2018-19**
- b. the Governance Quality Improvement Plan 2019-20**

1517) Report from the Finance and General Purposes Committee and Estates Sub-Committee

Paper: Minutes of the meetings of 4th (ESC) and 18th November (F&GP) 2019; Quarterly Management Accounts to 31st October 2019; Teachers' Tariff proposal; Policies: Health and Safety and Fire; Staff and Student Consultation procedures

The Committee Chair:

- i) Highlighted the minor changes to the **Health and Safety and Fire Safety Policies** largely reflecting staff changes and to the **staff and student consultation procedures**.

Resolved: The Governing Body approved the minor changes to the Health and Safety and Fire Safety Policies and Staff and Student consultation procedures.

- ii) Sought approval of the **Quarterly management accounts**. The ESC Chair questioned whether the budget relied upon a donation from the trustees and suggested this should be more clearly shown, not least to demonstrate its impact, whilst noting that this had not yet been formally requested or approved. He also proposed that the exceptional item of non-pay expenditure of £36k should be more clearly shown as such, so as to give a fairer view of operating costs. *(Action: FD to amend Management accounts as requested)*

Resolved: The Governing Body approved the first quarter management accounts (subject to the changes).

- iii) Reported on the complex discussions of the Principal's proposal that the **staff tariff used for the calculation of part-time staff's FTE and for remission for those with responsibilities** be brought more into line with that at other colleges from September 2020. The change would mean these calculations would be based on 24 hours rather than 26 hours which would however remain the tariff. The difference had been raised on numerous occasions by Unions and staff as an equality issue. The additional cost was

anticipated to be c. £100k (c. £50k for the part-time staff and £45k for those with additional responsibilities).

Members asked questions about any impact on holiday accrual, the risk of a claim for back pay and the contractual implications (noting a letter of variation would be issued) as well as confirming the change had been factored into the budget. **The Principal anticipated staff welcoming the change** since they were already carrying out workshops and seeing students out of lessons which, though now to be contractually required, would be recognised in pay. In response to a student governor's question, the Principal confirmed that internally staff would be paid for **cover of lessons**, from day one if known about in advance or usually from Day 4 if an ad hoc occurrence. Alternatively, agency staff might be brought in.

Resolved: The Governing Body approved the change in the staff tariff for the purposes proposed by the Principal

- iv) **Resolved: The Clerk confirmed that the written resolutions covering agreement to a CIF bid for phase 1b of the College's property Masterplan and College contribution of up to £250k had passed on 4th December with all 14 eligible governors having voted in favour. Similarly, 16 (of a possible 16) had signed the written resolution agreeing that GB2 would be named the Shelley Building and the Graham Baird Building be known, in shorthand at least, as the Baird Building.**

1518) Report from the Audit Committee

Paper: Minutes of the meeting of 20th November 2019

Further to the annual report from the Audit Committee (*see also item 1513 above*), members noted the summary and minutes of the recent Audit Committee meeting. The Chair reported on:

- i) The Mercers' Company's current consideration of a new **Philanthropy Strategy** for Young People and Education from which Collyer's could expect to benefit;
- ii) The **final 2018/19 internal audit report** which had offered substantial assurance on the effectiveness of the College's **website**. The suggestions from an IT specialist audit had been taken into account in the recent updating of the site. The Committee also had confidence from the GDPR audit and follow-up action plan that the College was on track and was to be congratulated for its response to the new requirements;
- iii) The **forward Audit plan**, which for **2019/20** would cover one direct finance issue through **the ILR**, with the remaining reviews on systems related to **staff succession planning, insurance content and safeguarding**. Members noted that a **further two-year forward plan**, taking account of ongoing risk assessment, was in preparation and would be recommended to the Governing Body at a subsequent meeting.

Resolved: The Governing Body approved the internal audit plan for 2019/20

- iv) The Committee's **recommendation to reappoint the internal auditor** for a further two years. There had been some hiatus following staff changes but the company had sought to cover the gap effectively and continued to provide effective reports. The Committee would however be looking for greater consistency in client liaison going forward.

Resolved: The Governing Body approved the reappointment of MHA MacIntyre Hudson for a further two years to summer 2022;

- v) **Updates to Risk assessments** with a revised top 10, most notably **reflecting ongoing pay negotiations;**

- vi) Informal discussion of the performance of the external auditor pending the next meeting. The Committee were overall pleased with RSM's forensic approach.

In conclusion the Chair commented on the rewarding nature of the Audit Committee in gaining an effective oversight of the College.

1519) Report from the Quality & Curriculum Committee

Paper: Minutes of the meeting of 27th November 2019

Members received the minutes reflecting discussion of the College SAR and QIP (see 1512 above). The Chair drew attention to the productive examinations review, informative KPI health checks and trends in attendance. The Committee had requested a further report in March on the few underperforming subjects. It had also approved a revised RCU Constitution and recommended the minor changes to the **Student Voice Policy** to the Governing Body.

Resolved: The Governing Body approved the updated Student Voice Policy

1520) Chair's report

The Chair reported that:

- i) **Attendance** at the **Autumn Term** Governing Body meetings gave an overall figure to-date of 84%. Committee attendance in the **Autumn term** had been high at 94%, giving a combined figure of **89%**. It was also worth noting that **link governors had attended all of the faculty SAR meetings as well as those on Safeguarding and Careers that term. Furthermore 9 of 16 governors attended the Planning day meeting the min 50% target;**
- ii) A governor panel had been offered on 10th January to consider an **appeal against exclusion** by a 1A student.

1521) Trustees' report

The Chair reported on the meeting of the Trustees of the Collyer Endowment of 27th November 2019 which had covered areas familiar to governors from the current meeting e.g. on property issues as well as:

- Prizes agreed totalling £4,350 (£3,800 in 2018). Naturally the Trustees had been pleased with the College's results;
- Healthy cash balances which meant the Trustees would be willing to provide £400k – and possibly up to £450k - towards capital project(s) - rounded from the £397k previously discussed – but, as yet, not formally committed;
- The performance of the new investment manager where it was considered early days and difficult market conditions but slightly disappointing in terms of investment fund growth below the composite benchmark. The Trustees expected to be just under the minimum £60k income target by the year end;
- Straightforward accounts subject to resolving the treatment of a recoupment fund being assimilated into General Fund through a Charities Commission Order;
- Recognition in the revised risk register of the need, in due course, to ensure the new Principal understands the Trustees and relationship with the College following the current Principal's excellent rapport at the current time - as with The Mercers' Company;
- Re-election of Chris Clementi and Peter Lane as the Chair and Deputy Chair for 2020.

1522) **Any other business:** None

1523) **Governance Quality Framework**

Paper: Governance Self-assessment

Members were content that the meeting had focussed on the appropriate priorities and in the remaining item afforded a timely opportunity to consider the recruitment of a new Principal. The annual report was much appreciated.

1524) **Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 27th March 2019 at 10.45 a.m. at Mercers' Hall in London (with Special Governing Body on Friday 20th March re recruitment).**

[18.10 the Principal and other SMT members left the meeting]

1525) **Principal's recruitment**

Papers: New Principal Advertisement - text and media proposal, Covering letter from Chair, Job description, Person specification,

The Clerk explained that the recent Planning Day had allowed for some previous discussion of the proposals. That said, she was concerned that the changes made to the text of the advertisement had inadvertently given the wrong impression of the nature of the College and its relationship with The Mercers' Company. Governors therefore agreed further amendments. They were content with the remaining documents and proposals for the Selection Panel in keeping with the Instruments and Articles as well as the additional potential flexibility proposed on membership.

The Clerk thanked the other governors present who had expressed a willingness to be involved, and particularly those who remained 'first reserves' owing to their potential availability. She flagged that the whole Governing Body would be invited to an early evening reception during the assessment centre in March to meet with the shortlisted candidates. **[Postscript: the evening of Thursday 19th March was provisionally mentioned but the Selection panel agreed at their first meeting on 10th January that this would instead be on Wednesday 18th March in advance of the formal assessment].**

Resolved: The Governing Body approved:

i) The following governors as the members of the Selection Panel:

Dr David Skipp	Chair
Mrs Ann Donoghue	Vice Chair
Mrs Barbara Hobday	Mercer governor
Mr Graham Lawrence	Governor
Mr Hugh Stafford-Smith	Mercer governor

ii) Delegation of the appointment of any additional governors to the Selection Panel to the Chair of the Governing Body in the event that a) the selection process required a further member(s) or b) one of the above members was indisposed.

The meeting closed at 19.03

Chair

Date

NCW 14/12/2019