

THE COLLEGE OF RICHARD COLLYER

MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BODY held on Wednesday 14th July 2021 at 16.34

- Present:** Mr Karl Banister, Rev'd. Lisa Barnett, Mr Dan Brown, Mr Dan Lodge (Principal), Mrs Ann Donoghue, Ms Hari Gunturu, Mrs Barbara Hobday, Mr Graham Lawrence, Mrs Susan Martineau, Mr Paul Mittendorfer, Dr Grant Powell, Mr Will Power, Mrs Clare Ruaux, Dr David Skipp, Mrs Helen Smith, Mr Dominic Wakefield
- In attendance:** Mr Ian Dumbleton (Finance Director), Ms Andrea John (Vice Principal- Pastoral), Mr Rob Hussey (Vice Principal –Curriculum), Mr Steve Martell (Deputy Principal), Mrs Beverley Valley (Parent governor elect) Ms Nicola Whitehead (Clerk)
- Apologies:** Mr Hugh Stafford-Smith
- In the Chair:** Dr David Skipp

The Chair welcomed the two student governors to their first full Governing Body meeting.

*Members were generally content with the limited proposed **consent items** to allow sufficient time for discussion of more strategic items with one request however to discuss the Pay Policy.*

- 1597) Urgent Business:** The Chair sought **ratification of the appointment of the new parent governor**, Mrs Beverley Valley, prior to her joining the meeting as part of her induction to the role.

Resolved: The Governing Body ratified the appointment of Mrs Beverley Valley as parent governor for an appointment of two years w.e.f. 1st August 2021.

The Chair thanked Dominic Wakefield for his service as parent governor over the previous two years and welcomed his willingness to prolong his association with and support to the College.

[Mrs Valley joined the meeting.]

- 1598) Declarations of interest and eligibility:** There were no declarations of interest in relation to the business of the day. The Clerk confirmed that all the annually updated forms had been returned.

- 1599) Minutes** of the meeting held on 29th March 2021 were approved.

- 1600) Matters arising:**

1584: The VP (Pastoral) confirmed that the requests regarding the **next progression report** had been relayed to the lead member of staff.

1587: See F&GP report (min 1605 below) ref amends to **the Finance Strategy 2020-2032.**

- 1601) The Principal's Report**

Paper: Principal's Report to the Governing Body Summer Term 2021; KPIs Business and Education

The Principal commented that, in spite of the challenges of the past year, his report was keen to acknowledge the College's creativity, inclusivity and the richness of opportunities created. This had been demonstrated in his first sight of the *alumni* interviews for the quinqucentenary project in which the benefits of an education at Collyer's came through loud and clear.

The Chair spoke on behalf of the Governing Body in recognising that the Principal had much of which to be proud at the end of his first year of leadership. Huge thanks were due to him, the SMT and wider staff at the end of a difficult year in which their achievements were evident in the excellent and comprehensive report.

Members commented on the impressive achievements in spite of, and in response to, Covid and the Chair asked that the *Principal relay the **governors' appreciation to all staff.*** (**Action: Principal**)

In response to a suggestion for greater consistency in the **format and content** of the various reports, the Principal recognised the need for a common understanding across the college whilst not wishing to constrain the richness of content specific to different areas of the college. **Further review of this and committee reports was however ongoing with the Chair and Clerk** with particular attention to the recent new strategies.

Similar issues of consistency had arisen in terms of **common IT platforms for learning**. The VP (Curriculum) explained the emergence of Teams as the generally preferred platform for the majority of remote meetings and teaching - as well as SharePoint for materials, moving away from the VLE. SMT were seeking to secure as consistent an approach as possible whilst not constraining subjects unduly e.g. where alternative applications were more suitable as in the creative arts. The **forthcoming Inset Day was intended to identify a broad consensus going forward**, for both regular teaching and in case of further need for blended learning.

Turning to **the KPIs**, the Principal highlighted the discussions by the F&GP and Q&C committees with ideas for some further enhancements in the reports. On content, the **educational KPIs were largely very encouraging with confidence in both the students' performance and the College's assessment of it.** The College's **business interests e.g. lettings** had inevitably **suffered as a result of the Covid** lockdown.

1602) The Student Voice

Paper: Student Voice Report July 21

In referencing their written report, the student governors confirmed their **appreciation of the evolution of blended learning** over the past challenging year, confirming that Teams and SharePoint, and particularly the increased use of breakout rooms for small group activities, had helped to address the sense of **isolation during lockdown**. Following the absence of GCSE exams the previous year, **the transfer exams** - whilst daunting - had been most **beneficial**. They had also enjoyed some of the more **creative and extra-curricular elements** of their subject learning such as the Oral History project. The Principal thanked the students for this excellent contribution to the College's quincentenary planning.

The governors commented on the value of the report and hoped that as the governors continued to learn from the students, they hoped the students would also find the role instructive and rewarding.

1603) Two-year Financial Forecast

*Papers: Financial Forecast: Budget 2021-22, Financial Forecast 2022/23
Capital Budget 2021-22 and Financial Objectives and Commentary 2021-23*

- i) **Outturn 2020-21:** The Finance Director (FD) explained that the forecast **surplus** for the current year 20-21 at the year-end was now **c. £108k**, ahead of both the original budget and mid-year update. This more favourable outturn was owing to the additional support received in support of teachers' pension increases, savings on payroll and operational costs (e.g. utilities and canteen costs, cancelled events as well as a timing element with regard to grant expenditure).
- ii) **Budget 2021/22:** The budgeted surplus for 21-22 was c. £202k, albeit on the basis of a possible contribution from the Trustees.
- iii) **Forecast 2022/23:** A modest surplus of £19k was anticipated though based on further support being received to fund the employers' superannuation for teachers' pensions amounting to c. £300k. Without this a deficit of £281k could be envisaged.
- iv) **Financial health:** On this basis, the college's self-assessment was for **'outstanding'** in the current and next two years. In response to a question from the Vice Chair, the FD confirmed that there had been no major changes since the F&GP meeting with just additional

explanation of assumptions added in response to ESFA guidance. 2096 was confirmed as the correct student number figure for 21/22 taking account of lagged funding.

Subsequent to a question on the consistent budget figure for catering in 21/22 in spite of lockdown in 20/21, *governors requested in future an additional column showing the variance from budget in the previous year to help inform consideration of the new budget.* This would be particularly valuable if 21/22 proved to be another extraordinary year.

(Action: Finance Director).

The FD explained further the extent to which the **new budget** reflected an expectation of a return to normal or **further Covid impacts**. Key variations resulting from Covid included the:

- a) Lower number of **international students** (though offset by the anticipated fee increase and the expectation of some comeback) but with further volatility possible e.g. in response to prolonged travel restrictions;
 - b) Reduced **Adult Ed** activity though this had recovered well over the year;
 - c) Lower expectations on **lettings** (though less significant in impact).
- v) Members noted the increased **capital budget for 2021-22** of £1,405,322 which included a £1m towards the proposed Shelley Building and £122,000 for planned maintenance to the College estate. The IT budget of £130k had returned to previous levels following additional purchases of computer equipment for both staff and students in 20/21 to facilitate remote working.

Resolved: The Governing Body approved the:

- a) **Budget for the year ending 31st July 2022;**
- b) **Capital budget of £1,405,322 for the year ending 31st July 2022; and the**
- c) **Financial Forecast 2022/23.**

1604) Pastoral Strategy

Paper: Pastoral Strategy 2020-23

The Vice Principal (Pastoral) explained that this was a **new strategy** reflecting the relatively new structure of the pastoral team, particularly in relation to progression. Each director had been able to lay out their vision for what they wished to achieve in their respective areas (**Student Engagement, Student Support and Progression**) in response to key drivers. A fourth section sought to capture the **student experience** in terms of EDI, the enrichment and tutorial programme and Student Voice. This top view document would be developed in more detail in individual goal-setting within the SAR/ QIPs and operational plans.

In welcoming wholeheartedly this key and comprehensive strategy, members asked which element would be the most challenging to deliver in the context of college growth. The VP (Pastoral)'s response highlighted **the demands of Covid** which sapped time and energies from delivery of the core objectives. **With a strong team and a clear vision, the provision in place could readily be expanded to larger numbers of students** but the opportunity to do so was hampered by the challenges of track and trace, testing and self-isolation.

[The Rev'd Lisa Barnett left the meeting.]

The safeguarding link governor expressed **appreciation of the coherence of the efforts to enhance engagement through the tutor and house system and the extensive work on student wellbeing**, as well as the **allocation of extra resource during Covid**. The latter had allowed the College to engage Relate to expand the counselling service as well as additional temporary support on student wellbeing but the increase could not be afforded in the long term. Continuation of the **support from the Mercers' Company on mental health issues** would be much appreciated. Members noted the **20-month waiting time for local CAMHS** services which diverted College resources from their more natural area of expertise in preventative, wellbeing education to supporting the most vulnerable students with more complex mental health issues. In view of this, and the more widespread nature of the issue,

the College was extending its liaison with local schools, WSCC and health experts. The Chair expressed concern about cover during the holidays and a potential role for HDC.

In response to a further question on **parent engagement**, the VP (Pastoral) expressed a wish to develop further the College's communications strategy. The College had sought to encourage dialogue through wider use of MyStudent, increased messaging and surveys during Covid as well as an increased number - and flexibility in the format - of parents' evenings. Workshops on e.g. drug use were **designed to facilitate closer joint working better to support the student**. Consultation with students would further refine the right balance between independence and support.

Resolved: The Pastoral Strategy was approved.

1605) Report from the Finance & General Purposes Committee

Papers: Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meetings on 26th May and 29th June and Estates Sub-Committee of 14th June; Management Accounts to end May 2021; Policies: Pay and Appeals procedures (Staff); Digital Strategy 2020-23

The F&GP Committee Chair drew attention to the **key issues** arising from the two meetings held where not yet covered on the agenda including **approval of the Marketing Strategy, policies and financial regulations'** updates on procurement as well as the discussion of **progress against strategic aims 3 and 4** within the F&GP remit. The **ESC** Chair reported on the June meeting with particular reference to the **preparations for the Shelley Building**. These included appointment of the design team, an updated budget and encouraging feedback on the request to defer DfE funding with a decision expected before the end of the month. Representations were also being made to the Trustees and Mercers' Company for further funding support with the support of the **updated Finance Strategy**. A **feasibility study for a café** at an anticipated cost of £400-500k was also underway.

Members noted the healthy financial position in the **management accounts** and minor change to the **Appeals Procedures (Staff)**. A question was raised in connection with the **Pay Policy** to ask whether there needed to be more detail on the **criteria for flexibility on starting salaries**. Whilst it was considered reasonable to retain some discretion, the governance could usefully be strengthened through clarity on lead responsibility and process e.g. the use of external benchmarks and any other safeguards. Members agreed that, **following SMT discussion of the changes, approval could be delegated to the F&GP (HR) membership by written resolution early in the autumn term, reported in turn to the October Governing Body meeting. (Action: Principal)**

In considering the revised **Digital Strategy**, members supported the F&GP request that further consideration be given to **refinement of the performance indicators** over the course of the strategy.

Resolved: The Governing Body approved the:

- a) **Management Accounts to end May 2021;**
- b) **Appeals procedures(Staff)**
- c) **Digital Strategy**

1606) Report from the Nominations Committee

Paper: Minutes of the Nominations Committee of 11th June and 12th July 2021; Committee Chairs/membership proposal; Proposed Changes to the Rules and Byelaws and Scheme of Delegation

a. Succession Planning:

The Committee Chair explained that the Committee had met twice to ensure sufficient discussion of succession planning, committee design and the governance constitution. The Committee recognised that the College benefited from a **dedicated governance team with a strong mix of skills** which facilitated deployment. Members had been particularly mindful of

the **wish to maintain experience and stability whilst having due regard to best practice on terms served to retain independence**. Recommendations included an **additional Vice Chair** to support the Chair and the College and the engagement of additional skills through **co-optee appointments**.

Resolved: The Governing Body approved the:

- i) **Reappointment of Dr David Skipp and Hugh Stafford-Smith** for a third term of one year to 31st July 2022;
- ii) **Reappointment of Dr Skipp as Chair** for 2021-22;
- iii) **Reappointment of Ann Donoghue as Vice Chair and the appointment of Graham Lawrence as an additional Vice Chair for 2021-22.**
- iv) **Appointment of co-optees** for a four-year term w.e.f. 1 August 2021 as follows:
 - **Dominic Wakefield** to join the F&GP Committee and the ESC Sub-Committee
 - **Stephen Avery** to join the F&GP Committee
 - **Dom Valente** to join the Audit Committee
- v) **Proposals for committee membership for 2021/22** to include the continuation of Chairs and Deputies as at present with the exception of **a new Chair and Deputy for Q&C in Grant Powell and Helen Smith**
- vi) **Appointment of trustees** for a four-year term as follows:
 - **Graham Lawrence** w.e.f. 1st August 2021 (to fill the place vacated by Robert Yorke in March 2020);
 - **David Skipp** for a second term w.e.f. 1st November 2021

b. Review of Governance documentation

- i) Members noted that **no changes to the I&As** were currently needed. A number of possible changes had been the subject of recent sector discussion. One, arising from the **FE White Paper** and relating to the Principal's appointment panel, appeared to have been resolved (as it complied with current College practice to have an independent adviser rather than decision-making panel member) though **a change to the Rules and Byelaws and/or Staff Recruitment Policy might be necessary in due course**. That concerning the **ability of student governors to make financial decisions** remained the subject of legal advice to the DfE.
- ii) Some relatively **minor and best practice revisions** were proposed to the **Rules and Byelaws** to include an update of governors and co-optees and revisions to the Audit Committee ToRs following changes in the Audit Code of Practice (ACoP).
- iii) The **main text** of the **Scheme of Delegation** required only a **very minor amendment** to reflect the ESFA's latest funding agreement and the latest ACoP. **The annexed working document of policy delegations** and reporting requirements had been **updated** to reflect the cycle of business for the coming year as discussed with SMT;
- iv) An updated **Strategic Plan referencing document** had been prepared to take account of the latest College Strategic Plan. However in view of the ongoing review of reporting – see 1601 above - it was proposed to share this more widely with governors once completed.

Resolved: The Governing Body approved the proposed changes to the Rules and Byelaws and Scheme of Delegation.

1607) Report from the Audit Committee

Papers: [Pending: Minutes of the Audit Committee meeting of 22nd June]; Risk Management Report 20/21 (including re-opening risk assessment); Internal Audit plan 2019/24

The Clerk apologised for the late receipt of the minutes owing to the pressure of work from additional committee and Trustees' meetings. In the absence of the Committee Chair, the Vice Chair reported verbally on the meeting as follows:

- **Positive outcomes of the two internal audits this year of risk and the ILR** with both providing '**substantial**' assurance' and only two 'low' and no recommendations respectively. (More detail would be provided in the Committee's annual report in the autumn);
- Discussion of:
 - a) **the external audit plan** for the current year with continued emphasis anticipated on '**going concern**' and **pension liabilities** and changes in approach on **income recognition** with some useful pointers for governors and the F&GP Committee in particular; and
 - b) RSM's **useful emerging issues report** which explained some changes in the ESFA's approach and expectations with possibly more emerging from the **FE Skills White Paper** so **an area to watch**. Examples included the new **annual strategic conversation** between the College, ESFA and FE Commissioner's office, a need to **retender** for the external auditor every five years and for the **external auditor to present** its (post) **audit findings report to the whole Governing Body** prior to approval of the accounts. The Committee was also keeping a careful eye on **RSM's fees** to ensure any increase was justified. The Committee had also endorsed continuing to report against the **UK FRC Code of Governance for the 20/21 accounts** though with interest in exploring the revised AoC Code, once finalised, for 21/22;
- **Risk management (RM)** was the area of key interest for the Governing Body in underpinning progress against college strategy. The **Risk Management and Assurance Policy** had been supplemented to include risk appetite. In addition to the usual **updates on college-wide and key external risks**, the Principal's report also covered the latest 'reopening' risk assessment.
- The strategic **internal audit plan** covered a five-year cycle with a two-year retrospective as well as a forward look with plans in future years to be refined in the light of strategic developments and further risk reviews. In the meantime, Student Applications and Recruitment, Governance and an IT Health-check (including cyber security) were proposed for 2021/22. In the following year it was envisaged that reviews of progression and strategic planning would be undertaken by more specialised service providers.

Resolved: The Governing Body approved:

- i) **Continued reporting against the UK FRC Code of Governance for the 2020/21 accounts;**
- ii) **The revised Risk Management and Assurance Policy as well as RM Annual Report including the College-wide top risks and potential External Strategic Level Risks 2021/22;**
- iii) **MHA's Internal audit plan for 2021/22.**

1608) Report from the Quality & Curriculum Committee

Paper: [Pending: Minutes of the Quality & Curriculum Committee meeting of 22nd June];

The acting Chair of the recent Q&C meeting reported on the **largely pastoral focus** of the meeting with sobering **reports on safeguarding, wellbeing and SEND**. Committee members had been full of admiration for the support provided by the College. The College **SAR/QIP update had reflected good progress overall** with just the one initiative held over for 21/22 and continued **concern about the future of BTECs** against the background of slow growth in T levels uptake. Enrichment opportunities had been regrettably but inevitably

restricted during Covid measures. **Student and parent surveys** had provided generally positive feedback on the provision made with some polarisation of views.

The VP (Pastoral) commented on the subsequent (and later than usual) receipt of the DfE's **KCSiE guidance** to inform College policy and practice in relation to safeguarding. The 167-page document had been circulated to the safeguarding link governors and College team. Once digested, a **revised Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy** would be circulated *for approval by written resolution so as to be ready for use at the start of the autumn term.*
(Action: VP (Pastoral) and Clerk).

Members noted that the guidance, especially in relation to student peer relationships, had been influenced by the outcome of the **recent Ofsted review of safeguarding** to which the College had contributed. The **visit to the College had been a very positive one** with **encouraging feedback on students' sense of safety whilst at college** and the College's safeguarding support. The report did however reflect a **more troubling national picture about young people's safety**, particularly in social settings. Collyer's had carried out a **further survey** better to understand students' local experience, the **results** of which were due to be considered at the **forthcoming Inset Day**. It was clear that students were dealing with challenging sexual behaviours necessitating **effective systems for disclosure**. Whilst the College believed the level of reporting was good, it also wished to do more to demystify the process to address any possible nervousness or embarrassment about coming forward. The new CPOMS system would assist with a common **risk assessment and record** and the **RSHE programme** would be expanded further to address the topic. The College would be **consulting with the student governors, RCU and wider focus groups** to examine the issue further taking account of the lower response to the survey by male students. The student governors commented that the current provision was strong and appropriately developed for the College cohort following previous school coverage but the issue merited repetition.

The Principal commented that the **report on Applied General Qualifications** had issued that morning and its implications for the College provision would be considered in detail. The VP (Curriculum) explained that early headlines suggested the DfE wished still to progress a largely binary system (with A and T levels) but with **nothing defunded until 2024**. More detailed criteria were not yet available but it seemed likely that double/ triple BTECs (or a full single BTEC programme) would be seen as presenting greater competition with T levels whereas single BTECs in a mixed programme with A levels may yet be acceptable. Other colleges, with a larger proportion of BTECs, would be more adversely affected than Collyer's whose entry into T levels as well as forward planning would be advantageous. Further discussion would take place in the Q&C Committee.

1609) Report from the Remuneration Committee

See min. 1614 below and Part II minutes for the individual pay proposals.

1610) Chairman's Report

Paper: Proposed meeting dates for 2021/22

The Chair reported that governor **attendance** for the year was very good with 94% attendance at Governing Body meetings and 94 -100% at committees, well above the 80% target.

The **confidentiality review** had been undertaken and one item recommended for release as no longer commercially sensitive. That said the College was generally very transparent with few Part II confidential minutes.

Dates for the next academic year had been circulated taking account of the preferences expressed. One issue remained to be resolved concerning the early autumn meeting on 5th or 6th October. Once all governors had responded the best option would be chosen and all dates circulated.

Self-assessment questionnaires would be issued shortly to inform the **governance SAR/ QIP early next term**.

In summary, the Chair recognised that it had been a difficult and frustrating year for staff and students and commended them for their resilience.

1611) Trustees' Report

The Chair reported on the July meeting of Trustees. The **portfolio income** had reduced to c. £40,000 against a target of £60,000 owing to the general economic outlook. The Trustees had expressed themselves willing in principle to support the **Shelley Building** but needed clarity on their powers under charity law to provide a grant or loan. An additional meeting at the end of September would seek to resolve these concerns. The Mercers' Company were also being supportive in identifying possible funding for the project.

1612) Governance Quality Framework

Paper: Meeting assessment

The Clerk reported that the self-assessment questionnaires mentioned would help inform improvements in college governance. Any additional feedback by telephone or e-mail on the current meeting or those over the whole year was however welcome.

1613) Date of Next Meeting: 5th October (tbc) and 7th December 2021, at 16.30, both at Collyer's.)

[18.30 The Principal, SMT members, Clerk, staff and student governors left the meeting for discussion of agenda item 19]

[The staff and student governors and Mrs Valley left the meeting.]

1614) The pay and conditions of service of the Principal, Deputy Principal, Vice Principals, Finance Director and Clerk.

Paper: SMT and Clerk's Performance 2020/21 and Salary Reviews.

Prior to discussion of individual salaries, the Principal reported on discussion in the margins of the latest Remuneration Committee regarding a possible reward to staff in recognition of the challenges over the past year in addition to the extra staff wellbeing day. The £25 voucher proposed was affordable owing to savings from the cancellation of end of term staff events. Whilst a modest amount, it was envisaged the gesture would be welcomed. Members approved the budget of c. £6.5k excl. tax, advising a double-check on the presumption that this would be payable given the low sum involved for each individual.

Part II minutes ((Criterion a) Personal information relating to an individual)

The meeting closed at 20.00.

Chair.....

Date.....

NCW 22/08/2020