

## THE COLLEGE OF RICHARD COLLYER

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BODY held on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> October 2021 at 16.30

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

The Chair welcomed all present to this first meeting in person for some time – and particularly Susan Martineau, Beverley Valley (parent governor), Will Power (staff governor), Dan and Hari (student governors and co-optee Dom Valente for whom this was their first ever face to face meeting. He hoped that all the co-optees present would enjoy the opportunity to attend this inaugural meeting of the year which helped all start the year with a common understanding ahead of the detailed discussions by both the Governing Body and committees.

1615. **Declarations of interest:** None

1616. **Minutes (Parts I and II) of the meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2021 were approved.**

1617. **Matters arising:**

Item 1601: The Principal confirmed that the Deputy Principal (in his absence on sick leave) had informed the staff meeting of the **Governor's appreciation of the previous year's achievements in spite of the Covid challenges.**

Item 1603iv: **Budget variance** carried forward to next budget approval

Item 1605: **Pay Policy:** The Principal explained the proposal put forward to clarify exceptions to starting pay and the subsequent approval of the amendment received from the F&GP Committee by written resolution.

Item 1614: The Chair confirmed that the action in the Part II minute with regard to **pay processes** had been taken forward with the Principal to be resolved by the Audit Committee.

1618. **Presentation from the Principal including:**  
*Papers: Examination results and Budget outturn 20/21*

The Principal explained the College had started the academic year a strong and confident community with excellent results, a safe and successful enrolment period and outstanding finances. Staff survey results reflected a positive culture of fairness and respect and freedom to try new ideas. There was clear leadership and an understanding of the College's strategies and goals.

i) **Examination Results**

Members noted the strong exam results. Questions were raised on whether students had chosen to defer university entry and the potential risk of a non-inflationary approach to teacher-assessed grades (TAGs) meant they lost out in gaining university places. In response, it was confirmed that 90% of Collyer's students had gained their first choice with number of deferrals to be advised (**Action: Principal**). There was indeed evidence that some institutions had inflated grades but

there would be a recalibration of which could cause them difficulties. It was felt Collyer's was a trusted institution and it was not in students' interests to undermine this.

ii) **Curriculum**

The Principal summarised the College offer with 34 A levels, 18 vocational courses at L3, 2 T levels, 10 L2 transition courses and 4 'other' varied courses. Members noted the phasing out of the Sport Triple BTEC and the difficulty nationally in recruiting for the Digital T level whilst the Education and Childcare T level was working well. The GCSE results of the College entry meant that fewer students were taking L2 transition courses and the loss, at least in the short term, of L2 Sport and Health and Social care. The Advanced Diploma in Criminology was continuing to be very popular and the new Engineering single BTEC had also received strong interest though with a relatively small proportion of female students which was being addressed through links with the partner schools.

iii) **Enrolment**

Members noted the continued growth in the number of students based on the College's strong reputation.

iv) **Covid safety and College continuity**

The Principal reported on a more settled College community managing to live with the pandemic. Trips and visits were restarting though not abroad. Masks were not mandated but strongly encouraged in crowded areas, one-way systems remained and the College continued to benefit from additional social spaces such as that provided by the canopy. The growth in number of cases in Horsham (above the national average) was being seen more in the schools than at Collyer's but suggested caution with a limit too on gatherings of more than 50 people. As such the new parents' evenings were being addressed through recorded videos. A recent visit from HSE had produced a clean bill of health.

v) **HR update**

Following lower than even the usual modest turnover in staff in 2020, the College had seen an increase at the start of this academic year largely owing to retirements. Members shared similar experiences in terms of increasing challenges in recruitment.

vi) **Estates/Property Strategy update**

Planning continued on the three proposed capital projects - the Shelley Building, Café and perimeter fence pending decisions at the December meeting. The complex tender documentation for **Shelley** was in preparation reflecting the desire for a good efficiency rating and ten classrooms of which six would be computer rooms. Subjects to be accommodated included Education and Childcare, and Criminology.

Whilst the shortage of **social space** at the College had been manageable during blended learning with only 50% of students on-site, extra facilities were now evidently much needed. The proposed Café would be multiuse comprising servery, study and performance areas with an adjacent RCU office.

Members noted the challenging timeframes necessitated by the current construction market with advice received that contractors were honouring fees for just a month. As such the deadline for bids would be end January, with a month for review and approvals, prior to placing of the contract at the end of February for a 1 April start. The volatility in supply costs also made budgeting challenging with additional contingency therefore allowed and efforts in train to identify the extra funding.

Members commented on the need for a clear and agile risk profile for the projects to inform future thorough discussion. The Principal explained cost and timescales were the principal risks but that the project manager had been given a clear remit to refine the current risk register and seek to ensure a watertight contract. In response to a question on the 'walkaway criteria', the Principal acknowledged this potential solution whilst highlighting the potential cost of doing so in terms of reduced growth, increased competition and loss of funding and economies of scale.

Images were shared of the proposed new entry gates to the College.

*[Rev'd Lisa Barnett left the meeting]*

vii) **Budget outturn 2020/21**

The Finance Director explained that the external auditors were in the process of finalising the year-end figures with the pension re-evaluation the only likely change. Changes in accounting treatments had reduced the surplus by c. £95k but this was still ahead of budget. Income was down by c.£75k overall largely owing to a (Covid-related) reduction in canteen income. However both pay and non-pay expenditure were also down though not sustainable going forward.

viii) **Sector update incl. funding**

The Principal reported on the new DfE Ministerial team. The outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) on 27<sup>th</sup> October (w.e.f. April 22) was awaited but, given the pressures from Covid, there was no expectation of funding increases in spite of rising inflation and higher staff costs. The **Skills for Jobs Bill** (currently in the House of Lords) would increase the expectation on colleges to collaborate to address local skill gaps identified by employer bodies. Collyer's was currently part of a pan-Sussex Strategic Development Fund project with an environmental focus.

ix) **News and events including Quincentenary planning**

Members noted the strong Collyer's presence in the regional press, for example, in terms of results. The College website included broad **news** coverage as well as an increased emphasis on **Heritage** and **Sustainability**. The latter reflected the College's commitment to becoming a leading college for sustainability by 2023 by adopting the climate action roadmap agreed by the Climate Commission for UK Higher and Further Education in June 2020 and the activities to that end.

It was hoped to move towards some hybridity in **college events** with the November Open evenings in person on site but without the collective gatherings for addresses. Similarly Planning Day – looking at mission, vision and values – would combine both Zoom all staff meetings and smaller workshops, with governors warmly invited as always. Plans were in hand for a Christmas concert and Prizegiving to be reviewed nearer the time.

**Quincentenary** planning was also underway to allow good time to be inclusive of the wider community and reflect the College's values in the events. Milestones would include the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Old Collyerians' Association (OCA) in 2022, the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Collyer's as a Sixth form college (SFC) in 2026 leading up to 2032. The Chair of the Governing Body was expected to chair a new committee/ steering group with a termly report to the Governing Body on its ideas.

1619. **Education Inspection Framework 2021-22**

The VP (Curriculum) updated governors and co-optees on the expectation that the College would soon receive an Ofsted Full Inspection is imminent, commenting that the college was in a strong position, with a steady and sustained increase in results since summer 2017.

1620. **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**

*Paper: Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy*

The VP (Pastoral) reminded members that the yearly review and update of the Safeguarding Policy was usually completed in the Summer Q&C but that this increasingly pre-dated the latest DfE guidance on Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE). Members agreed therefore that the timing of the College policy approval should be kept under review to secure the best outcome in terms of readiness for the new academic year whilst being as up-to-date as possible.

Members were aware that this year the KCSiE included significant amendments and developments in light of the Ofsted Review of Harmful Sexual Behaviours. This substantial statutory guidance therefore needed full and timely consideration to inform College procedures. The update under discussion recognised the current September 21 version of

KCSiE, but it was intended to further develop and amend the policy and procedures in the autumn term in the light of emerging guidance and training from safeguarding specialists and external services (for example the WSCC Safeguarding in Education Team). Members were content with this proposal.

In the meantime, the VP (Pastoral) explained that there was a continuing strong focus on appropriate guidance. The Safeguarding and wider Pastoral Team had delivered a day of training for staff in July on Harmful Sexual Behaviours in follow-up to the Ofsted Report published in May 21. A further safeguarding update for staff, including coverage of the key changes to the KCSiE guidance, had been delivered by Helen Mayer-Dean during enrolment (**Action: Clerk to share with governors**). Follow-up training for staff on the use of CPOMS and tutorial delivery of HSB topics was planned for November.

Members noted that the September 21 update of KCSiE placed increased emphasis on the role of the Governing Body in the oversight of safeguarding, to include approval of any derogations from the usual conditions that all core staff and governors are familiar with the whole KCSiE document and that all other teaching and support staff read at least Part 1.

Following discussion, and on the recommendation of the VP(Pastoral) and Safeguarding link governor who had met previously, it was agreed that there be some very limited allowance for a small number of the Estates team 'who do not work directly with children' to digest the shorter Annex A, (but not those in the Security Team, the Estates Manager and Cleaning Supervisor who do work directly with students).

In response to questions, the VP (Pastoral) assured governors that safeguarding issues were reflected in the College Lettings Policy and practice. She agreed the particular challenge of addressing online abuse especially off-site with the intention to review the overarching principles and expand procedures. The overall review would need to take account of different practices and agencies across county borders. Meanwhile, the policy was fit for purpose.

**Resolved: The Governing Body approved the interim Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and the proposals for staff familiarity with the latest KCSiE guidance.**

#### 1621. **Chair's report**

The Chair reported that:

- The Clerk was in the process of updating the link governor scheme;
- In the meantime, e.g. faculty links would continue unchanged with SAR/QIP Faculty meetings with governors to take place in early November;
- Notable dates for the remainder of the term in addition to the formal meetings (and subject to confirmation) were:
  - Planning Day – 30<sup>th</sup> November focussing on an intention to look at the College's Mission, Vision and Values - of interest to all governors;
  - Christmas Concert – 2<sup>nd</sup> December;
  - Prizegiving – 14<sup>th</sup> December.

#### 1622. **Clerk recruitment and selection panel**

The Chair of the Remuneration Committee reported on the Clerk's wish to retire by the end of the Spring term 2022. As such planning for her replacement was being progressed in good time. Initially a matter for the Remuneration Committee (Rems) but with much read-across to the governance remit of the Nominations Committee (Noms), the recommendation was for a selection panel comprising the membership of the Rems Committee plus the additional Noms members of the Principal and Vice Chair, Graham Lawrence. It was proposed that the Selection panel would take forward work on the advert, job spec and recruitment process with three of the five to be chosen for the interview panel itself with safeguards in two reserves. This would allow a good breadth of skills and experience of the College, governance and HR.

The intention was to advertise the post immediately after the October half term in time for appointment by the whole Governing Body – ideally at their 7<sup>th</sup> December meeting - allowing for a potential three-month notice period of the successful candidate.

**Resolved: The Governing Body approved the selection panel of the Chair and two Vice Chairs of the Governing Body, the Chair of the Remuneration (and Nominations) Committee and the Principal.**

1623. **AoB** None

1624. **Meeting assessment**

Members greatly welcomed the return to a face-to-face meeting allowing in particular for the more effective introduction of the new governors and co-optees. This early meeting had proved itself invaluable in starting the academic year on a clear and joint understanding of the College's achievements and future priorities.

1625. **Date of next meeting: Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2021 at 16:30 at Collyer's**

The meeting closed at 19.05.

Chair.....

Date.....

NCW 28/11/2021