

THE COLLEGE OF RICHARD COLLYER

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BODY HELD ON Tuesday 5 April 2022 at 10.30 at Mercers' Hall, London

Present: Mr Karl Banister, Mr Dan Brown, Mrs Ann Donoghue, Mrs Barbara Hobday, Miss Hari Gunturu, Mr Graham Lawrence, Mr Dan Lodge (Principal), Mrs Susan Martineau, Dr Grant Powell, Mr Will Power, Mrs Clare Ruaux, Dr David Skipp, Mrs Helen Smith, Mr Hugh Stafford-Smith, Mrs Beverley Valley

In attendance: Members of SMT - Mr Ian Dumbleton (FD), Mr Rob Hussey (VP Curriculum), Ms Andrea John (VP Pastoral), Mr Steve Martell (DP)

Ms Nicola Whitehead (Clerk), Mrs Russha Sellings (in-coming Clerk)

Ms Linda MacLeman (PA to the Principal), Mrs Sara Luxford (Admin Assistant to the PA)

Mr James Kewin (present during Item 16)

In the Chair: Dr David Skipp

The meeting opened slightly behind schedule and the Chair explained the focus would be on key strategic items.

1653) Apologies for Absence: received and accepted from Rev'd Canon Lisa Barnett and Mr Paul Mittendorfer; the meeting was quorate from the outset.

1654) Urgent Business: no matters raised.

1655) Agreement to consent Items: Governors were content with the proposed consent items.

1656) Declarations of Interest: none declared with respect of the items on the agenda.

1657) Minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2021 including confidential Part II and the minutes of the Special Meeting on **17 February 2022** were **approved** without amendment.

1658) Matters arising

1649: (17th February 2022) confirmed contract queries had been addressed via email.

1659) Principal's Report incl. KPIs

Paper: Principal's report

The Principal was delighted to welcome the Governing Body back to Mercers' Hall following a 3 year hiatus due to the pandemic. This was particularly auspicious as the College entered an important period of celebrating **key events in its history** as well as focusing on **present and future challenges**. It was a **pivotal year for students** who had not previously sat **formal examinations** and they were **being supported by curriculum and pastoral staff**. Governors were aware of the areas of development documented in the **Ofsted Action Plan** (updates under Item 10). The pastoral emphasis would continue with **enhancements to the curriculum** through the launch of Collyer's 360. The College was progressing with plans for **growth** against the backdrop of an increasingly **complex political landscape** within education.

Governors noted the contents of the written report with reference to staffing changes and departmental reports, progression (including UCAS and employability) and Business and Education KPIs. The Chair invited questions from Governors on the report.

The VP (Pastoral) responded to a Governor's question on acceptance rates v tariff groups explaining the structure and positive upward trajectory to higher and medium tariffs. Overall, there was also 15% increase in applicants. There was a related challenge from Governors on whether Collyer's students favoured universities in southern regions and if applicants should be encouraged to consider applying further afield. The VP (Pastoral) said it was common for students in other local colleges to have the same preference; however she stated there was a geographical spread of applications and the use of UniFROG was helpful in sign-posting nationwide destinations.

1660) Student Voice

Paper: Student Voice Report

Student Governors fully supported the launch of Collyer's 360 and agreed it would be a positive step in encouraging students to actively participate in **enrichment activities**.

There had been a particular emphasis on **student wellbeing week** driven by the RCU and Miss Gunturu was noted for her efforts in supporting this. The RCU had also been active in fundraising for the Ukraine effort.

Recent mock examinations had also provided an opportunity to prepare for final exams which had helped allay some anxieties.

This being their last meeting, the Student Governors concluded by expressing their thanks to the Governing Body for the opportunity and for the college in **supporting and encouraging all students to reach their aspirations**.

1661) Mid-year Update of the Financial Forecast for 2021-22

Paper: Mid-year Budget 2021-22 and updated forecast 2021-22

The FD made reference to the summary updates in the top sheet. Governors questioned the £26k unplanned costs for the portakabins. The FD advised this was not appreciated at the time of budget setting and was an in-year project cost (revenue expenditure) assigned to a separate cost centre. The Principal reassured the Governing Body of the **value engineering approach** with potential savings of circa £20k to be made thus far. It was also positive to report that the first aspects of pre-planning checks had not uncovered any areas of particular concern with regards to asbestos.

Governors noted the additional admin costs arising from Covid management and the FD confirmed the majority of this would be met by further **Government funding**.

It was also raised and discussed whether there may be some future allowance for furnishings of the RCU office within the new café project.

Governors sought assurances on pay awards, in particular the impact on staff retention strategies in what was an increasingly competitive market. The VP (Curriculum) said staffing remained stable, although there had been some impact on Support Staff largely attributed to other factors such as planned retirements. The Principal acknowledged there would be further pressures to come with inflation pushing towards 7-8%.

Resolved: The Governing Body approved the mid-year budget and updated forecast 2021-22

1662) Ofsted Action Plan

Paper: Ofsted Action Plan 2022

The VP (Curriculum) emphasised delivery of the plan was a shared responsibility amongst SMT positioned alongside the QIP. An update was provided on three key focus areas:

1. Adult Ed - significant progress was noted, and the Governing Body supported the option to retain in-house with **enhanced focus** on the provision, which aligned with development of **local community skills**. The intended move of Adult Ed under the jurisdiction of the VP (Curriculum) would ensure the same **quality assurance** as daytime learning with some minor aspects of safeguarding practice to be addressed by the VP (Pastoral).
2. Pastoral - **work experience and enrichment plans** had already been formulated the previous year with Collyer's 360 to be launched to staff early in Summer term. This would encourage students to get involved in **broader aspects of college life**. Student Governors suggested this be promoted in marketing material directly via the students involved in various activities and the VP (Curriculum) and VP (Pastoral) confirmed enrichment would be promoted at a Welcome Day event.
3. Curriculum – Staff Governors supported the 'open door policy' and hoped this would continue during the review process of **lesson observations and integration to the new appraisal system**. The VP (Curriculum) said there were many aspects of **good practice** to be retained with additional measures to enable **individual target setting**. Plans would be formalised swiftly to ensure **target setting was embedded and tracked**, leading to an **evidence base of engagement**.

Governors expressed their thanks to the VP (Curriculum) for the comprehensive plan and queried how the implementation would be monitored to ensure success. It was confirmed the plan had been drafted around the framework of the EIF and once embedded, **external verification would be sought through moderation and a progression EQR** which was scheduled for next Spring.

Governors reiterated the importance of **safeguarding** and would welcome future updates.

Resolved: The Governing Body approved latest version of the Ofsted Action Plan.

1663) Report from the Finance & General Purposes Committee:

Papers: Draft minutes F&GP 16-02-22 and 08-03-22 and ESC 14-02-22, Complaints Policy and Procedures including Appeals, Estates Masterplan and Systems Leadership briefing paper, Quarterly Management Accounts including balance sheet and cash flow.

The Committee Chair provided a brief update on key matters.

- i) Receive minutes, including those of the Estates Sub-Committee (ESC)
Minutes of the meetings were noted.
- ii) Complaints Policy and Appeal panel procedures
Recommended for approval.

Resolved: The Governing Body approved the Complaints Policy including the Appeal panel procedures.

- iii) Working groups update
Further discussions covered under Item 16.
- iv) **Management Accounts**

Resolved: The Governing Body approved the Quarterly Management Accounts for the period ending Feb 2022.

1664) Report from the Quality & Curriculum Committee

Papers: Draft minutes Q&C 15-03-22, Admissions Policy

The Committee Chair provided a brief update on the main discussion items and explained the robust challenge provided at the meeting with an emphasis on equality of education for all students.

- i) Receive minutes
Minutes of the meeting were noted.
- ii) Admissions Policy

Recommended for approval with the main amendment being the addition of two partner schools.

Resolved: The Governing Body approved the Admissions Policy.

1665) Report from the Audit Committee:

Papers: Draft minutes Audit 16-03-22, Report on Strategic Planning (Stephen Carville), paper on Code of Governance, Buzzacott external audit services proposal.

The Committee Chair provided an update on the activities this term.

i) Receive minutes

Minutes of the meeting were noted.

ii) Strategic Planning Review

The report from Stephen Carville was received and would inform future workstreams.

iii) **Code of Governance adoption**

The Clerk was thanked for keeping the Governing Body abreast of the latest guidance and presentation of options for consideration. The Audit Committee (and subsequently Nominations) had concluded that it would be prudent to adopt the **AoC Code of Good Governance** and proposed this commence from the 2022-23 accounts to allow time to embed good practice. It was understood that other colleges had or were in the process of adopting the code.

Resolved: The Governing Body approved adoption of the AoC Code from the point of the 2022-23 accounts.

iv) **Appointment (& Remuneration) of**

a) Financial Statements Auditor 2021/22

The Committee Chair spoke of the robust selection process. The current auditor's service had been strong to date, however members were cognisant of **ensuring VfM** with savings of up to £60k (inc. VAT) to be realised over the proposed contract period. Members also welcomed the approach of Buzzacott during the tender process and there would be benefit from gaining a fresh perspective. The Governing Body asked that feedback and thanks be passed back to the incumbent.

Resolved: The Governing Body approved appointment of Buzzacott as the new external auditor for a 4 year contract with the option to extend by one year.

b) Internal audit service 2022-23

In light of the change to the external auditor, agreement was sought for a one year extension to the current Internal Audit firm to ensure continuity over the next year during the transition to the new external auditors.

Resolved: The Governing Body approved the extension to the internal auditor contract by one year.

The Chair thanked the Audit Committee for all their efforts during this process.

1666) Report from the Nominations Committee

Papers: Top sheet

The Committee Chair informed the Governing Body of the additional Spring meeting which enabled advanced succession planning given terms of office for key members would be coming to an end. In accordance with good governance practice, the Governing Body were formally advised that the Chair of Governors would not stand again when his term ends on 31-07-22. The Committee Chair took the opportunity on behalf of the College and Governing Body to express sincere thanks to Dr Skipp for his significant contribution over many years' service. Dr Skipp would continue his term as a Trustee and also chair the newly formed Quincentenary Steering Group (QSG). Following analysis of the recent skills and roles survey, Mr Lawrence had been identified as a suitable successor for Chair and it was proposed the current Vice Chair remain in post to support.

Resolved: The Governing Body approved appointment of Mr Lawrence as Chair and Mrs Donoghue as Vice Chair for the next academic year 2022-23.

Thanks were also recorded to Mr Stafford-Smith who would also reach the maximum recommended number of terms on 31-07-22. Mr Stafford-Smith had chaired the Audit Committee and sincere thanks were expressed for his diligence and commitment.

A succession for Trustee Ms Carolyn Watson had been considered following her resignation in January and Co-optee Mr Stephen Avery was proposed as Trustee of the Collyer Endowment.

The Governing Body approved appointment of Mr Avery as member of the Trustees of the Collyer Endowment with immediate effect.

- i) Receive minutes
The draft minutes from the additional Spring meeting were not yet circulated.
- ii) Appointment of
 - a) the Chair and Vice Chair 2022-23
 - b) Trustee of the Collyer Endowment
 Recorded as above.

1667) Chair’s Report

There were no further matters to report other than the dates schedules for the remainder of meetings over the Summer term and the next academic year which were circulated to the Governing Body.

[Midday – Mr Kewin joined the meeting to present the next item on the agenda]

1668) Sector Update

Mr Kewin relayed positive news that campaigning for improved funding in 16-19 provision had come to fruition, although was still considered low in relative terms. Inflation levels would, however, present new challenges. Mr Kewin provided useful updates around capital funding; there were opportunities to access the £4 million post-16 Capacity Fund with bids of 95% for colleges who were ready to implement plans with immediate effect.

Mr Kewin supported Collyer’s judicious approach with regards to the introduction of T-levels, retaining BTECs in the interim. In terms of the recent Ofsted inspection, Mr Kewin’s view was there would be little material impact to the strength of Collyer’s and this appeared to be the approach under the new framework.

The Governing Body were alerted to the new Government White Paper and vision of full academisation by 2030 and Mr Kewin spoke of the systems leadership landscape in the post-16 sector. The FE model may also impact colleges as well as the skills for jobs agenda. A risk v benefits approach was advised with a focus on autonomy. Mr Kewin gave a brief update on MAT governance structures and locality of schools following questions from Governors.

[Mr Kewin was thanked for the useful updates and left the meeting]

1669) Governance Quality Framework: meeting assessment (owing to timing, not recorded).

1670) Date of next meeting: Tuesday 12 July 2022, 16.30

The Chair thanked the SMT and college staff for all their hard work in preparation for the meeting.

The meeting closed at 12.28

Chair

Date

RRS 14/04/2022