

## THE COLLEGE OF RICHARD COLLYER

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BODY HELD ON Tuesday 1 April 2025 at 10:45

- Present:** Steven Allen, Teddy Bridges, Roisin Buckley, Ann Donoghue, Dan Griffin, Barbara Hobday, Graham Lawrence, Dan Lodge (Principal), Paul Mittendorfer, Clare Ruaux, Julian Rooney, Lauren Smith
- In attendance:** Members of SMT – Ian Dumbleton (FD), Rob Hussey (VP Curriculum), Andrea John (VP Pastoral), Steve Martell (DP)
- George Dummer (Co-optee)
- Russha Sellings (Director of Governance/GD)  
Linda MacLeman (minuting Secretary)
- Observers:** Cliff Guest (Chairman of Governors) and Ian Straw (Headteacher) – The Forest School
- In the Chair:** Graham Lawrence

#### 1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Karl Banister, Rev'd Lisa Barnett, Helen Smith, Dom Valente, and Bev Valley. The meeting was recorded as quorate from the outset.

The Chair welcomed Cliff Guest and Ian Straw from The Forest School as observers to the meeting.

The Chair wished to record thanks to the Mercers' Company for hosting the meeting and for Governors and SMT taking a day out of their schedules to attend.

The Chair referred to the consent items in the committee updates which would be approved where there had been no comments in advance.

#### 2. Urgent Business

None to report.

#### 3. Declarations of Interest

None declared with respect of items on the agenda.

#### 4. Minutes of the meeting held on the 10 December 2024

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved without amendment.

#### 5. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising that were not already covered by the agenda.

#### 6. Written Resolutions

None to record.

#### 7. Principal's Report

*Paper: Spring term report*

The Principal introduced his report. It was pleasing to note the 'annus mirabilis' and to be able to celebrate a good start to the year. He reported we are outstanding for finance, student applications are up for the second consecutive year, we are the top state provider for A Levels in Sussex, and we

are graded outstanding by Ofsted which includes good for our Adult Education funded provision. Governors were thanked for their ongoing support, and particularly during Ofsted.

The Principal summarised the strategy section, including plans for growth, the masterplan, Tech Centre and ongoing academisation plans. Governors asked about how many would be affected by the decision on Adult Education funded provision and the VP (Curriculum) quantified the number, compared to the number of outcomes for 16-19 year olds. Governors asked if the current funded courses would all finish this year, which the VP (Curriculum) confirmed will be the case.

The Principal spoke of community relationships and the ongoing discussions between Collyer's and Forest as we work towards academising in September. We have a number of strong relationships, such as with S7, and we are forging new alliances in the region and nationally with other Trusts.

The Principal referred to the sector update section and how we look carefully at the landscape, new government and the overall political agenda. We watch as devolution proceeds and how it might affect us. He confirmed that it will not impact our Admissions Policy.

## **8. Ofsted Update**

The VP (Curriculum) reported that the inspection went very well, and the outcome is a fantastic achievement. The work undertaken as a response to the 2021 inspection has been immense. He reported that there is a new inspection framework coming in September and details have been shared via a webinar recently that he and the VP (Pastoral) attended. The VP (Pastoral) added her thanks for the support from Governors, particularly during these three years. The students are committed, enthusiastic, and very proud of the College. Those present gave a round of applause.

The Chair thanked the VPs for all they did, thanked Governors who were involved during the Inspection in interviews and meetings, along with the Deputy Chair for stepping in as Chair as he was unfortunately away during the inspection period.

## **9. Progress to academy conversion**

*Paper: Formal consultation report, AWP minutes 28-11-24*

The Principal confirmed that the summary in his report was part of a fast moving process. He stressed that there could be no better founding partners than Forest. He echoed the Chair's welcome to the Forest Chairman of Governors and Headteacher. He recorded thanks to the Director of Governance for her guidance and expertise in taking this work forward.

The Principal reported that a number of meetings have taken place on Finance, HR and land. A strategy morning is taking place in late April, which will look at the Mission, Vision and Values for the new Trust. This will form the Strategic Plan going forward.

The Chair outlined the structure of how the Board of Trustees and Members are formed, and each member institution will have a Local Governing Body (LGB). He explained that we have recently held a social event to allow members to get to know each other, and there have been two Shadow Board Meetings, the latest the previous evening. This looked at the new governance structures, their responsibilities, and how the LGB will interact with the Board and Executive.

The Chairman of Governors from Forest confirmed there have been open, honest and broad discussions throughout the process. It is important to get the preparations for conversion right and this will help for when new partners join. The focus is wholly around the children of Horsham. One Governor stressed that the LGB will have a lot to do with the standard of education and safeguarding in their respective institutions and it is a meeting of minds day to day.

The Principal drew attention to the consultation report in the papers. He outlined the process for the consultation and the timeline involved. The low number of responses was probably due to the excellent FAQs that were produced, and the consultations undertaken leading up to the decision to

academise. Of the 35 responses, 2/3rds were positive and there were a couple of questions received via email about detail. The respondents varied from members of the community, staff, students and parents.

The Headteacher from Forest thanked the Chair for hosting them at this meeting and reported that the Chair and Principal had attended their Governing Body meeting last Thursday at Forest. He reported that Forest have had a number of approaches over several years to join other Trusts, but he believes in the 'only for Horsham, from Horsham' philosophy. Forest received 8 responses to their consultation, and their results were 50:50.

A question was asked related to receiving enquiries to join the Trust from other schools going forward, which would be covered by a communications strategy and an open door philosophy for other schools interested in joining.

The Principal reported that the process has been very transparent throughout with networks both Collyer's and Forest are involved in. These include the local soft federation of secondary schools, along with the hard federation of primary schools.

The Headteacher from Forest outlined the details of a new initiative between Forest and their three closest primary schools which involves having a joint member of staff who is working on pupil attendance and who works with the families too. The Chair felt this was very powerful and benefitted both the child and their family.

The Student Governor asked what is being done to address the negative responses and why it could be that the conversion is not supported. The Principal felt it could be the project is disparate and there is a lack of awareness. There is the potential for further communications nearer to the time we convert. The Principal confirmed that the report will be published just after the Easter break and there could be an accompanying message published at this time.

### **Resolved: The Governing Body approved the Formal Consultation Report.**

The Chair reported that the AWP had last met in November and discussion had taken place on the way forward. It was agreed that the group had served its time. The Chair recorded his thanks to those involved on the AWP.

## **10. Student Governors**

*Paper: Spring term report*

The Student Governors commented on the recent RCU meeting that the Principal had attended to talk about the academisation consultation. The information was well received, and the conversion will not impact learning. Ballots are currently taking place for the new RCU Co-Presidents and Student Governors for the forthcoming term, with a good number of applicants interested. The changes to membership brought about by academisation has been explained to the prospective Student Governors.

The Student Governors thanked members for the opportunity to attend Q&C Committees and Governing Body meetings. The opportunity to be involved in Ofsted meetings was welcomed and the feedback from students who were involved felt it was a good experience, and they were able to share positive things about the college. One Governor asked how the students were selected to speak with Inspectors, and the Student Governor confirmed that it was a mixture of having an Inspector in a lesson, picking a group of students to speak to from the class, and also being put forward by staff.

The Student Governors were thanked for their report and for all they have contributed during their term of office.

## **11. Report – Estates Committee**

*Papers: Minutes Part II 19-12-24, Minutes Parts I and II 05-02-25, Masterplan Programme*

### **a) \*Minutes**

The Committee Chair referred to the minutes of the meetings.

### **b) Consider Recommendations:**

#### **i) RAAC project update**

The Committee Chair reported that the funding process remains challenging, and the lack of progress has resulted in the works not yet being signed off. Our original DfE caseworker has moved roles, and a new incumbent has been assigned to our project.

#### **ii) Masterplan programme**

The Committee Chair confirmed that the Quantity Surveyor has now been appointed for the Tech Centre project, and transport and site surveys have been undertaken. The footprint of the building has been agreed, and the internal planning is virtually complete, in consultation with the staff that will be moving to the building. The external design of the building is still to be agreed, which must be appropriate for the heritage of the site and the positioning of the building. The Chair thanked the Committee Chair for his work supporting the Masterplan work.

## **12. Report – Finance & GP Committee**

*Papers: Masterplan budget next phase, Adult Education proposal, Financial forecast for 2024-2025, Management Accounts inc Balance Sheet & Cashflow, Business KPIs, Admissions Policy, Student fees & charges, Complaints Policy, Appeals Procedure (non-staff), Data Protection, Use of Computer Policy, Publication Scheme (policies SharePoint only)*

### **a) \*Minutes**

The minutes will follow.

The Committee Chair reported that the meeting was the final one attended by Dominic Wakefield after six years as a Parent Governor and latterly Co-optee. His contribution to the Governing Body was noted. The HR Director had attended the meeting to update on the work undertaken on the People Strategy, and the progress made since the survey that was undertaken. We are working with Forest on this future working project.

### **b) Consider Recommendations:**

#### **i) Masterplan budget next phase**

The Committee Chair reported that the design of the building is still being discussed and that the costs can then be proposed. There will be an extra Governing Body meeting early in May to consider the design to take forward with the Design Team, and the related costs from the Quantity Surveyor. The RAAC work was covered by the Estates Committee report, but there will be additional costs for more Portakabins to accommodate the growth in numbers forecast for next academic year.

#### **ii) Adult Education proposal**

The VP (Curriculum) articulated the reasons for the decision that had been made to cease Adult Education funded programmes and focus on full cost recovery recreational courses from September. One Governor asked about the local impact and if there are other providers in the area. The VP (Curriculum) confirmed that we have links with other providers, and it is hoped they can step in.

#### **iii) Financial forecast for 2024-2025**

The Committee Chair confirmed that the College's outstanding financial health is hard won, and the Finance Director confirmed the end of year surplus is expected to be ahead of the original budget.

#### **iv) Management Accounts inc Balance Sheet & Cashflow**

There were no further comments.

v) Business KPIs

There were no further comments on the KPIs that were received for information.

vi) \*Policies: Admissions Policy, Student fees & charges, Complaints Policy, Appeals Procedure (non-staff), Data Protection, Use of Computer Policy, Publication Scheme  
Presented for approval, there were no comments.

**Resolved: The Governing Body approved the Financial Forecast 2024-2025 and Management Accounts inc Balance Sheet & Cashflow. The policies were also approved.**

**13. Report – Quality & Curriculum Committee**

*Papers: Minutes 11-03-25, Education KPI's, DfE Performance Data, Accountability Statement, Student CoC*

**a) \*Minutes**

The Deputy Committee Chair reported in the absence of the Committee Chair and referred to the minutes of the meeting.

**b) Consider Recommendations:**

i) Education KPIs

There were no further comments on the KPIs that were received for information.

ii) DfE Performance Data

The DfE Performance Data had been seen, discussed and understood.

iii) Accountability Statement

The link was available to the updated statutory guidance and the reviewed action plan will be presented at the next Committee, with a written resolution being required from the Governing Body.

iv) \*Policy: Student CoC

There were no comments on the policy other than to query the timing of when the changes proposed would come into force. The VP (Pastoral) confirmed this would be for the new academic year.

**Resolved: The Governing Body approved the Student CoC.**

**14. Report – Governance, Search & Remuneration Cttee**

*Papers: Minutes 24-02-25,*

**a) \*Minutes**

The Committee Chair referred to the minutes of the meeting.

**b) Consider Recommendations:**

i) Elected Governor roles

The Committee Chair updated the Governing Body on membership changes as we transition to academisation and progress with the Local Governing Body formation and membership.

ii) \*Governance AI Policy

Governors received the new Policy. The Committee Chair confirmed that AI had been used for a couple of recent meetings to create minutes. A Governor asked about how it was working. The DG reported her experience and confirmed the College was also developing its own AI Policy.

**15. Report – Audit & Risk Committee**

*Papers: Minutes 26-02-25, Internal Assurance, Risk Register Review*

**a) \*Minutes**

The Finance Director referred to the minutes in the absence of any Committee members being present.

**b) Updates:****i) Internal Assurance**

The Finance Director summarised the work undertaken on Internal Assurance related to the recent Cyber Security Audit that had taken place. The Performance Management Audit had just concluded prior to the Audit & Risk Committee meeting, and we await the report.

**ii) Risk Register review**

The Finance Director reported that the College-wide Risk Assessment and Controls had been reviewed, and the scores largely remained the same. The External Strategic Risks had also been reviewed at the meeting.

**16. Chair's Report**

The Chair reported on the current position with the Collyer Endowment land and buildings and the area that needs to be regularised and transferred. He reported that the Chair of the Trustees is stepping down in the autumn after 10 years as a Trustee and recorded thanks for his work over this time. A new Mercer Trustee is to be recruited.

The Chair has been attending external meetings at Forest, but it is no longer feel that these are external.

The Chair will be attending the Chairs of Associated Schools and Colleges meeting at Mercers' Hall at the end of the month, which meet three times a year and the participants come from a wide range of schools and colleges.

The Chair confirmed that there are still spaces available for the Mercers' Governor Conference on 29 April at Mercers' Hall. He is unfortunately unable to attend this year as the date clashes with the Annual Strategic Conversation with our DfE leads at the College.

**17. AOB**

Nothing to report.

**18. Meeting Assessment**

The Chair took the opportunity to thank Governors for all their hard work and support over the year.

**19. Date of Next Meeting**

There will be an extra Governing Body meeting on Tuesday 6 May 2025, 4.30pm in the Conference Room at the College.

Then the next meeting takes place on Tuesday 8 July 2025, 4.30pm in the Conference Room at the College.

The meeting closed at 12:40

Chair .....

Date .....

LM 07-04-2025