

QBRIGHTON HOVE & SUSSEX SIXTH FORM COLLEGE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CORPORATION HELD ON TUESDAY 8th DECEMBER 2020 AT 6.00 P.M. VIRTUAL MEETING VIA M. TEAMS

Present: Philip Anderson (Governor), Louise Askew (Governor – Parent), William Baldwin (Principal), Jo Davis (Governor), Gillian Hampden-Thompson (Governor), Neil Jones (Governor – Teaching Staff), Mick McLean (Governor), Chris Newson (Governor), Marcus Palmer (Governor), Neil Perry (Vice-Chair of Governors), Chris Piper (Governor), Jo Redfern (Governor), Lucas Watkin (Governor – Student), Tom Wolfenden (Vice-Chair of Governors)

In attendance: Alison Cousens (Assistant Principal), Jutta Knapp (Assistant Principal), James Moncrieff (Deputy Principal), Louise Pennington (Clerk)

The meeting was quorate.

It was noted and agreed that Tom Wolfenden would take the Chair in the absence of Sandra Prail who had submitted her apologies.

Regarding Teams, it was recorded that only 4 of those in the meeting had the “chat” facility working and it was suggested that everyone should check their Teams’ settings prior to any future meetings to ensure that the “chat” function had been selected.

Note: *Questions and Comments from Governors have been included in bold italics for ease of identification.*

SECTION 1: ROUTINE AND STANDING ITEMS

1.1 Apologies and Welcomes

Apologies: Amanda Law, Ana MacEvelly, Sandra Prail and Julia Holgate Turner

It was noted that Lucas Watkin would be leaving the meeting after his Student Governor report.

1.2 Membership Matters

The following appointments/reappointments were endorsed by the Corporation and reference was made to the previous discussions and recommendations made at previous Search and Governance Committee meetings.

a) External Governor Vacancy

Governors were informed that Lynn O’Meara had resigned as an external Governor and Designated Lead Safeguarding Governor and it was resolved that in the interim and as recommended by the Search and Governance Committee, that Neil Perry should be appointed as the Lead Safeguarding Governor, until a permanent appointment could be made. It was noted that the vacancy had been advertised and that the 2 candidates who had expressed interest in the role, would be interviewed by Sandra Prail, William Baldwin and Neil Perry, on Friday 11th December 2020, after which a recommendation would be made to Corporation.

The Corporation recorded its grateful thanks to Lynn O’Meara for her many years of service as a Governor and Safeguarding Lead.

b) Appointment of Interim Designated Safeguarding Lead Governor – as above.

c) Appoint Deputy Chair of Q & C Committee

As recommended by the Search and Governance Committee, Chris Piper was appointed as the Deputy Chair of the Q & C Committee and that consideration would be given by the Chairs of Audit and Resources Committees to seeking Deputy Committee Chairs with recommendations being provided by the end of the Spring Term 2021 if possible.

ACTION: Jo Davis/Marcus Palmer

d) Parent Governor Election – Governors were informed that having received 3 nominations, the College was in the process of carrying out an election.

- e) Reappointment of Governors and Co-opted Committee Member: Neil Perry, Chris Newson, Chris Piper and Sarah Bovill – approved by Corporation, with effect from 1st April 2021 for a further 3 year term of office.

At this point thanks were recorded to the two current Parent Governors – Louise Askew and Amanda Law for their help and support over the last 2 years.

1.3 Minutes of the Meeting held on 6th July 2020.

The minutes were approved by the Corporation and the Chair authorised to sign them as a correct record of the meetings. **ACTION: Louise Pennington**

1.4 Matters Arising

The Committee noted the items on the schedule which had been completed or would be completed in due course – there were no further updates regarding progress arising from SMT.

1.5 Declaration of Interest

No declarations were made other than those already included in the Governors' register of interest declarations – refer records.

SECTION 2: STRATEGIC ITEMS

2.1 Principal's Report and Covid Dashboard

The Principal presented his Report to Corporation which provided a summary of all key areas of the College's operations and highlighted the following key aspects:

- Latest Covid statistics were given to Governors, noting that December had been uneventful to date, with only 1 or 2 Student cases (totalling 39 overall since September) and 3 Staff cases. Reference was also made to the detailed updates given to each of the Corporation Committees earlier this term – refer minutes, but highlighting that 1/5 of Students and Staff had had 2 weeks' quarantine which had understandably impacted upon Teaching and Learning, combined with the impact of working on the basis of a 2/3 timetable.
- Update to Principal's Report – The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) Staff have contacted those Colleges operating a 50:50 model of Student attendance on site, owing to the impact of Students not receiving sufficient face to face teaching time and as a consequence Colleges will be encouraged to move away from this model to a higher no site presence, for the Spring Term onwards. BHASVIC intends to continue with its 2/3 model going forward.
- Examinations' Update – the Department for Education (DfE) has announced some provisions for the Summer Term A Level examinations including – start time for exams to be delayed by 3 weeks, some advanced notice of exam question topics in some subjects, aide memoire availability for some subjects and contingency papers for July to cater for Students who miss all their scheduled exams owing to Covid. There remain some unanswered questions such as how the impact of loss of learning in some areas compared to others will be covered and in this regard, a Committee has been commissioned to investigate this. In Scotland all Highers have been cancelled which will mean a return to Centre Assessment Grades (CAG). It's generally thought in English Colleges that examinations would be better for Students. It's anticipated that there will be grade leniency this year as there was in 2020, owing to the continued disruption this year.
- Future of BTECs – indications from the DfE regarding future plans, suggest that there will be significant changes, with a focus on the new T levels and that if BTECs are retained, they may only be allowed to continue in respect of certain subjects ie where there is no subject overlap with existing A Levels. This indicates that Health and Social Care may be secure for the future, but subjects like Law and Media may have a problem continuing. The Principal was in a meeting with Examination Boards yesterday to review the BTEC content with the aim of avoiding an overlap with A Levels. Some Colleges could be placed in a potentially serious situation should these changes come into effect, but this will have less of an impact at BHASVIC as BTECs only comprise 10% of the curriculum overall. The changes may also result in some Students enrolling on less suitable qualifications. The AoC and SFCA continue to lobby on behalf of Colleges and the consultation process is also on going.
- The Principal's Report has not included information from the College's recent Staff satisfaction survey, which covered 5 questions arising from Covid. In summary, overall 75% Staff satisfaction which reflects the significant increase in workload owing to remote learning. The Survey will be re-run each half term for comparison purposes and the analysis included in future Covid Dashboards. Student Surveys have also been

undertaken. In the Summer Term, SMT will review the decision whether to ask Staff to complete the standard end of year survey.

- The Principal reported to Governors on future developments regarding GBMet, noting that there has been an intervention from the FE Commissioner owing to the College's financial issues.
- ***Regarding the Quality dashboard, there were a few questions from Governors and in response the following was noted: items in red were due to be updated and reflected fact that new Student intake applications' deadline had been extended to 4th January 2021 (rather than December); figures for class sizes will be included once the CIS Department has completed the calculations. James Moncrieff reported that in light of the increasing demographics (over the next 2 years, followed by a reduction thereafter), SMT would be closely monitoring applications both in the City and further afield, noting that this year an additional 115 Students were recruited compared to the previous year, being approximately 100 Students over the target figure. He explained that the College would not have the capacity to take on a similar increase for next year, with the maximum capacity currently being in the region of 3,250/3,300; SMT are completing a detailed assessment before finalising the target for next year alongside the new Strategic Plan.***
- ***Governors also queried the potential impact from the FE Commissioner's intervention of GBMet and the Principal explained the possible options including a recovery plan, structure and prospects appraisal which may include merger/takeover options.***
- ***2 redundancies have been made in the Catering Department and following a question from Governors, it was noted that during the lockdown, advantage had been taken of the furloughing scheme, but that having reviewed the Catering provision, it was recognised that a restructuring was required anyway owing to under-utilisation in some areas and hence the need for redundancy. The latter were voluntary redundancies and alternative, same grade work options were offered but rejected by the 2 Staff concerned.***
- ***Staff PDR completion rates – noted that although PDRs were being completed in a timely manner, issues had arisen owing to the delay in uploading the PDR reports by the deadline required.***
- ***Governors asked for an explanation regarding the XYZ group of Students' terminology relating to the 2/3 model of Student attendance on site, which the Principal explained the process devised.***
- ***Parent Satisfaction Survey – in response to Governors' queries, the Principal explained that the standard annual questionnaire had been paused with a new questionnaire for Parents, based upon Covid related questions, which would be reissued over the rest of the year, to provide comparisons over time. At this point SMT hasn't made a decision regarding the questions to be included in the final Summer term Parents' survey.***

2.2 Student Governors' Report

In the absence of Ana MacEvilly, Lucas Watkin provided the following update to Governors:

- Following the suggestion from Q & C Committee at the last meeting, the Student Governors sought feedback on Teaching and Learning during the pandemic, from the A1 Students. Based upon feedback received, in summary the A1 Students said the following:
 - They like the 2/3 model which is better than the 50:50 at some other Colleges;
 - Major issue is the problem developing new friendships owing to the lack of interaction with fellow Students on site.
 - UCAS applications – Students have received a good level of support in processing their applications but Lucas Watkin noted that some had not yet submitted these for various reasons including Students not checking their e mails or liaising with their Tutors. Alison Cousens added that having liaised with Nicky Fabry (Guidance Manager) last week who is monitoring UCAS applications, the College is ahead with the number of applications submitted, compared to previous years. Following an observation from a Governor, it was noted that the earlier the application is submitted, the better for the Student and that UCAS were expecting a late surge of applications in January, compared to last year.
 - Students like the new Elms Building and the fact that there is now much more space for them.
 - Feedback from Students regarding Teachers' assessment of Students' progress to date, was good on the whole.
 - Although the question had not been asked by the Student Governors to the A1 Students, Lucas Watkin thought that despite the gap in Teaching during their GCSE Studies, he had not had any direct feedback regarding whether Students felt behind in their education.
 - Regarding the various support options available to A1 Students, it was noted that despite the publicity, not all A1 Students seemed fully informed of this and the SU had also publicised the support available to Students. Further work is being carried out by the SU to find the best way to communicate with Students. However, the new ambassador forums are working well regarding cross college messaging to Students.

Thanks were recorded to Lucas Watkin, after which he left the meeting.

2.3 New Strategic Plan

The Principal reminded Governors that the Strategic Plan had expired last year (2019/2020 academic year) and that a 1 year addendum had been prepared in the interim reflecting the impact of the pandemic on reviewing the College's strategy. SMT has held a Strategy morning the outcomes from which will be used to assist Governors in developing the new Strategic Plan, when they meet to discuss this. SMT has recommended that the 7 "Cs" model be retained and that key questions have been identified for discussion with Governors. At this point, the options for SMT and Governors to meet to discuss the future strategy was raised including an evening meeting or Saturday. However, it was noted that there was already at date in the diary for a Corporation meeting at 6.00 p.m. on 26th January 2021 which had been scheduled to approve the ESFA's IFMC document and that this was no longer required this year. It was agreed that this would be a suitable solution and the Principal agreed to take this action forward with the Chair of Governors. **ACTION: William Baldwin/Sandra Prail**

Regarding the Strategic discussion, it was suggested that these should focus, via sub-group meetings of Governors during the event, to look at the following: size and scope of College and how to develop this, commercialisation opportunities, supporting Students and Sustainability. It was also noted that there were two papers due to be issued within the Sector – the AoC's independent commissioned report on College of the Future (with the aim of feeding back to Government on the views and suggestions from the FE sector Colleges) and the FE White paper.

The outcomes from the Strategy event would then use to inform consultation with Staff and Students and the final draft could then be presented to Corporation at its March meeting for approval, with action following in the Summer Term 2021.

Mick McLean raised the issue of digital strategy and agreed to follow this up in his next meeting with the Digital Director, to ensure that this supports the main College Strategy. **ACTION: Mick McLean**

2.4 Draft Self-Assessment Report 2019-2020 and College Development Plan 2020-2021

William Baldwin and James Moncrieff presented the two documents to the Corporation and the following points were recorded:

COLLEGE SAR

- Reminder that this document reflects the assessment for the 2019/2020 academic year, most of which was pre-Covid.
- Some data outstanding and will be included as soon as it becomes available, which will be prior to submission deadline to the ESFA – 31st January 2021.
- Number of data sets around the national performance information – not running this year owing to the pandemic, but all information available will be included in the return to provide a comprehensive data set, despite this.
- **It was suggested that there could be a suspension of some self-assessment performance grading, subject to Corporation approval.**

Questions from Governors:

- 4 Headline Statements – (page 28, no. 4) – it was queried whether the data sets were in place to support the statements, in light of the fact that the College may undergo an Ofsted Inspection in 2021 and Inspectors would want to examine the support evidence. The Deputy Principal reported that the Statements were supported by data to some extent. However, he advised that under the new EIF (Education Inspection Framework) and from feedback received from Colleges who have already undergone inspections based on the new framework, Inspectors have spent little time examining data, preferring to focus upon meeting and talking to Students, Teachers and Middle Managers to view quality directly whilst on site. Inspectors will obviously study the College's SAR before Inspection.
- ***In response to a question regarding what other Colleges were doing in respect of suspension of grade setting for certain areas within the SAR (page 29 of papers - eg personal development) and in light of the impact of Covid, it was noted that SMT would liaise with the Area FE Skills Lead to get advice regarding this and to see what other Colleges. ACTION: William Baldwin***
- Page 47 ALPS (A Level Performance System) Data – the Deputy Principal drew Governors' attention to the BTEC results, comparing 2019 and 2020, noting that the number of Pass/Merit results had increased, whilst the Distinction/Distinction* outcomes had reduced correspondingly. This is a national trend and the Deputy Principal explained the lack of transparency and confusion surrounding Pearson's (examination board) ranking system for CAGs and their relationship to valued added outcomes, reminding Governors that the

College had appealed some of the results, but with limited success. SMT are focusing their attention on the Summer 2021 BTEC results and hope that new externally assessed elements bed-in nationally in order to avoid a repeat of this.

- *Regarding a question about Prevent risk assessment, Alison Cousens provided reassurance to Governors and summarised the College's work to date together with ongoing work via Tutorials. She confirmed that all outstanding work would be completed in the Spring term.*
- *In response to a question from Governors around ESOL provision, Alison Cousens explained the current projects which were underway to support asylum seekers and refugees, including the College's work with the Hummingbird Project. The College has obtained feedback from the ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) alumni in order to find the best ways to ensure inclusivity of ESOL students and the Head of ESOL, Jamal Salman is involved in this.*

CDP

- Noted that Q & C Committee had seen the final update for the previous year at its November meeting as referenced in the draft Committee minutes.
- Looking forward, Governors were reminded that some of the actions listed last year had been rolled forward to this year owing to the limitation in capacity to manage the workload, as a result of the additional pressures placed on staffing owing to the pandemic.
- Some additional tasks to those items which have been rolled over as referred to above, have been included, reflecting the likely direction of the new strategic plan.
- *Governors queried the dates proposed regarding the completion of various targets, noting that some were long term projects which would take in excess of 1 year, even though the CDP was for the current year. In response the Deputy Principal explained that some of the proposals required more than 1 year for completion, so these would roll over to the following year's CDP.*

Subject to the points made above, both the SAR and the CDP were approved by the Corporation.

SECTION 3: QUALITY AND CURRICULUM ITEMS

Included within item 2 above.

SECTION 4: RESOURCES/AUDIT/INTERNAL ASSURANCE ITEMS

4.1 **Audit Committee Annual Report** – approved.

4.2 **Audit Findings Report and Letters of Representation (Financial Statements and Regularity)**

Jo Davis and Jutta Knapp presented the Report to Corporation and highlighted the key issues reported, noting the unqualified report for both the financial statements and the regularity audit. Reference was also made to the discussions and questions raised as recorded in the draft Audit Committee minutes. Thanks were recorded to RSMUK and to the College's Finance Team particularly for their hard work in the context of completing the audit work remotely, within the time required.

Jo Davis also highlighted the discussions held at Committee regarding the risk items noting the debate held and that the Committee had been content with the assurances received.

The Corporation approved the documents. **ACTION: Jutta Knapp**

4.3 **Annual Report and Financial Statements**

- a) **Annual Accounts (amended) – front sheet**
- b) **Final Accounts**

Neil Perry and Jutta Knapp introduced the document, referred the Corporation to the draft Resources Committee minutes and invited questions.

There were no questions arising from the financial statements and the Corporation approved the documents.

ACTION: Jutta Knapp

4.4 Management Accounts

The contents of the paper were noted by the Corporation together with the discussions held at the Resources Committee meeting, when these accounts were first presented and considered.

At this point Jutta Knapp reported that one of the Department for Education's financial returns, the Integrated financial model for Colleges (IFMC) which was introduced last academic year, would not be required this year. The usual deadline for submission of the IFMC would have been 31st January (last year 28th February 2020, being the first year of submission) and that the Corporation meeting date of 26th January 2021 had been included in the diary specifically for approving this document. Jutta Knapp explained that for this year, the financial statements and the Finance Record (summary financial statements projected forward to the year end 2021 as set out in these Management Accounts).

The Corporation agreed that as the Financial Statements had been approved above, and the Management Accounts had also been considered, that delegated authority be given to the Principal, as accounting officer, to sign the Finance Record in January, based on the figures within the financial statements/management accounts so that this may be submitted to the ESFA by the due deadline. **ACTION: William Baldwin/Jutta Knapp**

It was agreed that should there be any changes to the figures, then these should be presented to Governors, prior to signing and submission. **ACTION: Jutta Knapp**

4.5 Appointment of Internal Auditors – process

Jutta Knapp reported on the discussions held at the Audit Committee regarding the process for seeking a new firm of Internal Auditors, following the resignation by the existing auditors, Mazars, who have withdrawn from the SFC education sector altogether. She explained the usual process for seeking a new appointment using a tender panel, but as there were very few companies offering this service, she advised that there were two options: - 1) appoint via the audit consortium framework (noting that such firms were not located nearby and hence for the time being only a remote service would be available) or 2) seek a local firm.

It was noted that Jutta Knapp had carried out an investigation and had consulted her colleagues within the S7 Group of Colleges. Based on recommendations, she recommended that the College invite a local audit firm, Macintyre Hudson, for interview which other local Colleges have used and also check value for money (via comparisons with Mazars and fees charged to other local Colleges by MacIntyre Hudson). The Audit Committee has endorsed this approach and the Corporation approved this recommendation. It was also agreed that the Chair of Audit Committee should also join the interview panel, along with Jutta Knapp and William Baldwin. **ACTION: Jutta Knapp**

4.6 – Noted that normally Risk matters would be included here on the agenda, but was included in the Consent Agenda item 6 in error.

- a) **Risk Register**
- b) **Risk Assurance Map (incl. Assurances from Committees)** -note was made to Risk Assurance Map details also included in the Principal's Report.

William Baldwin and Jutta Knapp introduced the documents to Governors, noting that discussions had been held at the April 2020 EGC meeting, together with the various Committees.

Both documents were approved by Corporation.

SECTION 5: GOVERNANCE ITEMS

Refer items within the Membership Matters item 1.2

5.1 Governance Self-Assessment Report

Louise Pennington gave a summary of progress in developing the Report and the discussions held at the Search and Governance Committee. As recommended by the Search and Governance Committee, the Governance SAR was approved, noting that some elements had been incorporated in to the whole College SAR.

SECTION 6: CONSENT AGENDA

The items listed within the consent agenda requiring approval were endorsed by the Corporation, noting that no issues had been raised by Governors prior to the meeting. No further issues were raised at the meeting, on the invitation of the Chair. The papers approved were as follows:

POLICIES AND OTHER DOCUMENTS

The following policies/procedures other documents and Committee recommendations were considered and approved by the Corporation, noting the recommendation within the various Committee minutes.

6.1

- a) **SU Constitution**
- b) **Pay Policy and Bullying and Harassment Policy**
- c) **Freedom of Information Scheme (FOI)**
- d) **SPH Professional Development Review Policy/Procedures and SPH Remuneration Policy**
- e) **Search and Governance and Remuneration Committees' Terms of Reference**

6.2 Risk Management: - refer item 4.6 above.

Risk Register

Risk Assurance Map

6.3 ESFA Conditions of Funding Agreement (significant changes only) – Noted.

6.4 Regularity Audit Framework Questionnaire

COMMITTEE MINUTES AND OTHER MATTERS - Noted

The Corporation noted the contents of the various Committee meeting minutes, detailed below and referred to matters already discussed or approved earlier in the meeting. There were no additional items identified by the respective Committee Chairs, to be brought to the Corporation's attention or further questions from Governors.

6.5 Remuneration Committee – refer confidential minutes

Papers provided to the Committee: Expenses (SPHs) and SPH Health Assessment (oral report).

6.6 Search and Governance – refer confidential minutes

Papers provided to the Committee:

Governing Body Self-Assessment (Committees, Individual Governors and SMT Feedback)

Governors – Attendance

Governors – Skills Audit

Governors' DBS Record

Governor Training (incl. SARAPS and events)

Annual Review of confidential Governing Body business

Corporation Expenses

Annual Report on College Policies delegated to the Principal

Risk Assurance

6.7 Quality and Curriculum Committee Draft Minutes

Papers noted by Committee:

Termly Update – Student Governors (oral report – refer minutes)

Covid 19 Update (oral report – refer minutes)

Digital Update (oral report – refer minutes)

College Development Plan (CDP) 2019/2020 Final

Risk Assurance

Confidential Reports – Safeguarding and Complaints – refer confidential section

6.8 Resources Committee Draft Minutes

Papers noted by Committee:

Termly Update on HR Issues – refer minutes and papers (Staff Wellbeing and Absence, Gender Pay Gap, TU Facility Time)
Premises Update
Risk Assurance
Lind Digital Governor Update (oral – refer minutes)

6.9 Audit Committee Draft Minutes

Papers note by Committee:

Update on Audit Recommendations
Fraud Report (oral – refer minutes)

SECTION 7: OTHER MATTERS

7.1 Any Other Business

Thanks were recorded by the Chair to the outgoing Parent Governors, Louise Askew and Amanda Law for their support for the Governing Body over the last 2 years.

Thanks were also recorded to Lynn O’Meara for her long service as a Governor and Lead Designated Safeguarding Governor.

Governors also confirmed that the inclusion of links to some of the papers, was useful and reduced the size of the meeting pack.

The Chair thanked SMT for their work during the pandemic in effectively leading the College and the Staff and Students for all their hard work.

Thanks were also recorded to Tom Wolfenden for chairing the meeting in the absence of Sandra Prail.

7.2 Date of Next Meeting

Referring to the discussion held earlier in the meeting, it was agreed that the **26th January 2021** meeting should be used for discussions regarding the new Strategic Plan. **ACTION: Chair/Principal**

SECTION 8: CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS - TRANSFERED TO SEPARATE CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES

CHAIR.....

Date.....