

BRIGHTON HOVE & SUSSEX SIXTH FORM COLLEGE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CORPORATION HELD ON TUESDAY 22ND MARCH 2022 AT 6.00 P.M. HELD IN ROOM 20, MAIN BUILDING, BHASVIC

Present: William Baldwin (Principal), Jo Davis (Governor), Julia Holgate-Turner (Governor – Support Staff), Kathryn MacVarish (Governor – Teaching Staff), Mick McLean (Governor), Neil Perry (Vice-Chair of Governors), Chris Piper (Governor), Simon Porges (Governor – Parent), Sandra Prail (Chair of Governors), Jo Redfern (Governor), Tom Wolfenden (Vice-Chair of Governors), Andrew Wright (Governor)

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

The meeting was quorate.

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

The Meeting commenced with a 15-minute Governance Quiz lead by Andrew Wright

SECTION 1: ROUTINE AND STANDING ITEMS

1.1 Apologies and Welcomes

Apologies: Philip Anderson (Governor) Gillian Hampden-Thompson (Governor), Jiayue Liang (Student Governor), Chris Newson (Governor), Marcus Palmer (Governor), Louise Serpell (Governor – Parent), Roxy Toyne (Student Governor)

1.2 Membership Matters

The following appointments/reappointments were endorsed by the Corporation and reference was made to the recommendations made at the Search and Governance Committee meeting held earlier this term, as recorded in the circulated draft confidential minutes. Neil Perry Chair, as S & G Committee Chair, presented the item.

- a) Appoint Deputy Committee Chair – Resources Committee Chair – Chris Newson
- b) End of Term of office – Philip Anderson who will be retiring as a Governor when his current term comes to an end on 31st March 2022. Thanks were recorded to him for his service and support over the last three years
- c) Chair Succession Planning – reference was made to the draft S & G Committee minutes which recorded the discussions and recommendations held at the meeting.
- d) Vice-Chair Review – refer above – as c) and noting that the vice-chair review would take place at the same time as recruiting a new Vice-Chair/Chair Designate.
- e) Audit Committee – co-opted Member – vacancy – to be carried forward.
- f) Student Governor election process – outcome awaited – thanks were recorded to the outgoing Student Governors, Jiayue Liang and Roxy Toyne, noting that this would have been their last meeting.
- g) Staff Governor – Support category – last meeting in the current term of office for Julia Holgate Turner and she was thanked for her service over the last 3 years. It was noted that no nominations for the role had been received by the deadline and that the process would be repeated.

Referring to item c) above, Neil Perry also provided further information regarding the proposed recruitment process for the Governor vacancy (and co-opted Audit Committee Member), including the proposed discussions with HR, together with plans to issue an advertisement, noting that within the advert, the intention would be to encourage applications from diverse backgrounds and also focusing upon chairing abilities, as the Corporation was also looking ahead with the need to appoint a new Chair of Governors, next Summer. Other skills and experience being sought, were finance, audit, accountancy as evidenced in latest skills assessment.

Existing Governors were encouraged to apply for the Chair Designate role, and also to share the advertisement, once finalised, with anyone suitable within the respective Governors' networks. **ACTION: Deputy Chairs/Governors**

Sandra Prail highlighted the FEC's rationale regarding length of service of Governors and Chairs, and that after 8 years (in exceptional circumstances 1 additional term of 4 years), Governors were expected to stand down and Governing Bodies to seek a successor. However, she did confirm that she would be happy to remain in post until the Corporation finds a suitable successor.

The Governing body endorsed the proposals as recommended by S & G Committee and approved the external recruitment campaign for a new Governor/s, plus co-opted Member, taking into account the need to

focus on both finance/accountancy/audit skill set, together with Chair/leadership qualities and experience with a view to taking over the Chair role in due course. **ACTION: Deputy Chairs/HR/LEP**

Neil Perry also referred to the draft minutes and paper relating to the Corporation Meeting papers' item, and summarised the recommendations, noting that Corporation would be invited to approve the recommendations under the Consent Agenda section of the meeting.

1.3 Minutes of the Meeting held on 6th December 2021.

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 reviewed the actions as recorded in the draft minutes, noting those which had been completed, would be completed in due course, or were included on the meeting agenda.

1.5 Declaration of Interest

No declarations were made other than those already included within the Governors' register of interest declarations.

1.6 Principal's Report

The contents of the Principal's Report were noted by the Corporation and the Principal added the following items:

- Ofsted research visit in connection with the catch-up tuition fund (£47K) spending by the College, took place recently, led by the HMI Lead who had recently led the Collyers Ofsted Inspection. The additional funding provides support needed for those Students with lower level GCSE Maths and English and for those living within areas of social deprivation as classified via post code. The additional funding was very welcome, although disproportionate to the amount of management time needed to devise and oversee a tuition scheme. The Deputy Principal reported that the Ofsted visit had been positive and although no judgements were made, the Inspector had appeared satisfied with the visit.
- SLT is in process of considering whether to continue with the contingency arrangements in respect of Teacher Assessment Grades (TAGs) should examinations be cancelled. The Education Select Committee discussed the matter this week and the Schools Minister said that Schools and Colleges do not need to collect further evidence, so long as they already have sufficient evidence, so uncertainty regarding Summer examinations remains. The Principal confirmed that planned assessment schedules were issued in the autumn term, and that the College could repeat an assessment process after Easter, having only done this once so far for A2 Mocks; also noting that the process would require an 8 day period, thereby taking this time away from teaching Students. At this point, he advised that SLT were not minded to repeat the process and that they would await further clarity, whilst focusing upon preparing Students for examinations and any assessments required in respect of final outcomes.
- Absence continues to remain higher than normal (pre-Covid) in respect of Staff and Students, with 25 Staff absences today (highest Staff absence on any one day this term has been 40); Student absences have been higher than normal this term, but in recent days have started recovering.
- Ladies Football Team has reached the semi-finals of the National Cup, to be played tomorrow.
- Risk – reference was made to the fact that the Q & C Risk paper including in the pack, had been included in error and that owing to the fact that there had not been an Audit Committee this term, there wasn't a separate risk report on this occasion, but references to risk, including the risk assurance map have been included in the Principal's Report as usual. The Principal also explained that fewer risks have been listed reflecting Covid mitigation measures, combined with the updated Risk management policy which has resulted in a refinement in the spread of risks, as calculated, taking into account impact and likelihood. **At this point Governors questioned whether the scale was sufficient as there appeared to be no low risk issues. In response the Principal reported that the risk spectrum had been discussed at SLT with the aim of removing the lower risks from the Risk Register, having assessed likelihood and impact. SLT intend to work with the new process for a period to see how this works and will report back to Governors via the usual Committee risk reporting.** Corporation also noted that risks relating to increase in energy costs and loan interest rates, would be reported via the Resources Committee and at this point Jutta Knapp advised that the College had fixed its energy costs until 2023 and that regarding variable interest on loans, this only impacted a £1.5M loan, calculated as a low impact, but with a higher likelihood.
- **The matter of sustainability was also raised by Governors, referencing the Carbon Trust Report which went to the Resources Committee. The Principal confirmed that the Carbon Trust was at the second phase of its work - preparing a Net Zero action plan, which followed the footprint baseline first phase.** Reference was made to the proposal to replace the College's gas boilers and associated costs, life expectation of existing boilers/due date for replacing these anyway and completing a feasibility study for introducing heat pumps instead, particularly in respect of cost, efficiency and workability within the College's

Edwardian buildings. The Principal also highlighted the second action, namely offsetting carbon emissions as this will be partly dependant upon the National Grid which is not expected to be fully de-carbonised until the 2035. Hence the College would still need to consider means to offset approximately 200 tons of carbon emissions, taking into account the costs, appetite from the stakeholders and Board to fully offset; a consultation process will be implemented to assess this and to build parameters around offsetting targets and expectations. At this point the Governing Body was reminded that the Principal was the national sustainability lead for the AoC.

- **Governors queried the Staff sickness numbers and whether this related solely to Covid 19, or other reasons. In response the Principal confirmed that it was higher owing to Covid. He also reported that with regard to emotional health and wellbeing, the employee survey, which was delayed from last year owing to Covid, would be issued in June this year and the analysis from this, would be presented to Corporation. Furthermore, regarding the reference the College's record of Staff appraisals/performance reviews, he confirmed that all last year's reviews had been completed and that the delay, reported to Governors recently via Committee, was in respect of uploading the outcomes to the HR system by the deadline. The delay relating to general workload during the busy pandemic period, together with moving the College's systems from the network to the cloud base.**
- **Corporation also questioned the higher than expected Staff turnover and the Principal confirmed that it was unusual for Teachers particularly, to give notice to leave at Easter, , but explained that the reasons for notice in these instances were a mixture, including affordability of living in Brighton, job opportunities for progression elsewhere, ill health etc. He informed Governors that the College had not had difficulty recruiting replacement Staff. Governors also questioned whether SLT had set a threshold for introducing contingency arrangements, reflecting a revised risk. The Deputy Principal explained that LT were monitoring each Department's staffing closely, and that was varied over time and Department, but that as on the whole, these were short-lived absences, Departments were managing to provide cover and other solutions as appropriate. It was also noted that with long term illness, the College was able to put in place cover after 10 days of a Teacher's absence, which did not have an impact in respect of Covid as ad hoc and shorter term cover was not a practical option. In some instances, classes were provided with set work which suited some Students in terms of their ability to work independently, but not all. At this point the Staff Governor reported that the additional work pressures and challenges had taken its toll on Staff, particularly in the last Autumn Term and taking into account remote working etc and the consequential impact upon Students' progress and wellbeing, compared to previous cohorts. Governors also queried Student attendance and adjustments made for Students who had to travel from outside the area, particularly if they had only 1 or 2 lessons on a particular day, or a long gap in between lessons and whether expectations regarding expectations were set, taking this factor into account. The Principal confirmed that the expectation was that Students should be on site and that concessioned lessons were not a preferable option unless there were exceptional circumstances, also noting that it was not possible to accommodate all Students preferences and practicalities in terms of travel and timetabling. It was reported that in addition to the daily attendance checks/reports to Students/Parents etc regarding any unauthorised absences, Tutors also monitored Student absences, which were checked half termly in order to monitor any issues and take appropriate action as soon as possible.**
- **Regarding the change in guidance from 1st April regarding covid testing, the Principal reiterated that the College's message had been carefully drafted with a view to getting the balance right between Student absence if they are genuinely too ill to attend College and those who may have a propensity for absence.**

1.7 Student Governors' Report

In the absence of both Student Governors, they had submitted issues for discussion:

- The need for more silent Study Space Silent study space would be useful for Students and in response it was noted that part of the Hall and other study spaces around college would be made available for this shortly.
- Mental health outlets for Students – a programme of anxiety management workshops will be offered to Students before and after Easter.

SECTION 2: STRATEGIC ITEMS

All items included within the Consent Agenda on this occasion.

SECTION 3: CURRICULUM AND GUIDANCE ITEMS – INCLUDED IN CONSENT AGENDA

SECTION 4: RESOURCES/AUDIT/INTERNAL ASSURANCE ITEMS

4.1 Management Accounts for 6 Months to 31/1/2022

[Link to Cover Sheet](#)

Link to Accounts

In the absence of the Committee Chair, Jutta Knapp highlighted the main aspects and also referred Governors to the discussions held at the Resources Committee, as recorded in the draft Committee Minutes. There was good feedback from Governors on the revised format, reflecting the incorporation of some aspects of the new Good Practice Guide, particularly the additional graphical presentation and the red/green indicators, highlighting the areas which Governors should focus upon. ***In response to a point raised by a Governor, the Principal confirmed that SLT would review whether to incorporate parts of the latest management accounts with information already included in the Principal's Report and would also review the financial dashboard information and review how to take aspects from the good practice guide more widely within SLT reporting to Corporation. ACTION: William Baldwin***

A Governor also questioned the movement on the cash days in hand since October and in response it was reported that this related to the ESFA's funding schedule which was at its lowest in March. It was also suggested that the presentation of this information could be reviewed to improve clarity for Governors, by including the up/down indicator next to each figure/percentage. ACTION: Jutta Knapp

Regarding the College's energy supply and costs, it was confirmed that the current contract which had increased in 2018, had been fixed for 5 years at that time.

There were no other questions from Governors, and the Corporation had been provided with assurance based on the contents of the management accounts.

4.2 Risk Management

Risk Register (risk Assurance Map included in the Principal's report)

The Principal reported that as the Audit Committee had not met this term, this item would be deferred until next term and he apologised for the inclusion of the Q & C Committee risk paper in the Corporation meeting papers, which was an error.

The Corporation queried the current Student applications and the Deputy Principal confirmed that applications had dipped overall, mainly as a result in a reduction of Category 3 applications, possibly owing to some impact from the Haywards Heath new sixth form provision. However, Governors were also reminded that the applications had been higher last year and combined with Category 1 applications remaining level, this is actually assisting the College in managing its intake as there was very little room for growth with no further space on site, since the completion of the Elms Building. SLT are confident in offering place to two-thirds of Cat 3 applicants this year. SLT will continue to monitor applications very carefully. as it was also noted that demographics in the area continue to increase and therefore likely to reduce the number of future Cat 3 applicants we are likely to take.

SECTION 5: GOVERNANCE ITEMS

Refer Search and Governance Committee item 1.2, Consent Agenda and Confidential Paper and minutes

SECTION 6: CONSENT AGENDA

It was noted that no points or questions had been raised with the Chair in advance of the meeting and therefore there would be no requirement to discuss any of the items in any detail.

All the documents listed below, were approved by the Corporation.

POLICIES AND OTHER DOCUMENTS

6.1 POLICIES - papers provided via Links

The policies and other documents listed below were approved by Corporation as recommended by the respective Committees.

- a) Student Charges Schedule
- b) College Development Plan – Spring Update (front sheet and paper)
- c) Draft Social Mobility Strategy (front sheet and paper)
- d) 40 Guided Learning Hours (GLH) Study Progress (front sheet and paper)

- e) Admissions Policy (front sheet and paper)
- f) Governor Recruitment and Succession Planning Policy
- g) Net Zero Action Plan (front sheet and action plan)
- h) Corporation Meeting Papers – pack size
- i) Sustainability Link Governor and Careers Link Governor Role Description

COMMITTEE MINUTES AND OTHER MATTERS FOR NOTING

The Committee chairs gave a brief summary of the key aspects of their meetings and reference was also made to the draft minutes which were taken as read and any recommendations therein were approved.

6.2 Quality and Curriculum Committee 2nd March 2022 – Draft Minutes

Committee Business/papers:

Principal's Update

Annual Report 2020/2021 – link included in Principal's Report

Termly Update – Student Governors' Perspective – Oral Report – refer draft minutes

EDI SARAP (inc. EDIMS and HR aspects)

Risk Assurance

Reference was made to the work being taken forward by the Chair and Principal regarding the College's Engagement Strategy and that in order to increase engagement the next Accord (BHASVIC, Varndean and GBMet) meeting, would include both Chairs and Principals. Secondly, Governors were reminded about the e-mailed invitation to share their connections with the Chair for inclusion in the employers' list attached to the Strategy. **ACTION: Governors**

6.3 Resources Committee 9th March 2022 – Draft Minutes

Committee Business:

Termly Update on HR and Related Matters – oral report - refer draft minutes

Premises Update – oral report – refer draft minutes

Digital Termly Update including Dashboard and Cyber Security

Risk Assurance

6.4 Search and Governance Committee 14th March 2022 – Draft Minutes – refer confidential section below

Committee Business:

Membership Matters – refer item 1.2 above and draft minutes

AoC Code of Good Governance – Progress Report – refer minutes

6.5 Audit Committee – The Corporation was reminded that no Spring Term meeting had been held as there was nothing urgent for the Committee to discuss, combined with the fact that the agenda was also very light anyway. It had been agreed by the Committee chair with the SLT lead (and after notification to the internal auditors), that any business would be carried forward to the Summer Term Meeting.

SECTION 7: OTHER MATTERS

7.1 Any Other Business – None.

7.2 **Date of Next Meeting** – The Corporation agreed that in line with the proposals made at the recent S & G Committee meeting (Corporation meeting papers pack item), that the next meeting, currently scheduled for Monday 4th July 2022, should be delayed by 1 week to **MONDAY 11TH JULY 2022 AT 6.00 P.M.**

SECTION 8: CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS - refer separate confidential record/minutes

8.1 CONFIDENTIAL MEETING MINUTES

a) Committees:

1. **Search and Governance Committee** – referring to item 1.2 and the recommendations within the minutes were endorsed by the Corporation.

2. **Quality and Curriculum Committee** – noted including the Termly Safeguarding Report provided by Andrew Wright
3. **Resources Committee** – noted – including the Adult Education and Skills: Potential Additional Income Generation paper which was transferred to confidential business

CHAIR.....

Date.....