

BRIGHTON HOVE & SUSSEX SIXTH FORM COLLEGE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CORPORATION HELD ON MONDAY 22ND MARCH 2021 AT 6.00 P.M. VIRTUAL MEETING VIA M. TEAMS

Present: Philip Anderson (Governor), William Baldwin (Principal), Jo Davis (Governor), Gillian Hampden-Thompson (Governor), Julia Holgate-Turner (Governor – Support Staff), Neil Jones (Governor – Teaching Staff), Ana MacEvilly (Governor – Student), Mick McLean (Governor), Chris Newson (Governor), Marcus Palmer (Governor), Neil Perry (Vice-Chair of Governors), Chris Piper (Governor), Simon Porges (Governor – Parent), Sandra Prail (Chair of Governors), Jo Redfern (Governor), Louise Serpell (Governor – Parent), 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.*

SECTION 1: ROUTINE AND STANDING ITEMS

1.1 Apologies and Welcomes

Apologies: Lucas Watkin – owing to work deadlines for tomorrow.

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 immediately prior to the Corporation meeting.

- a) Appoint Andrew Wright as Designated Lead Safeguarding Governor with effect from the Summer Term and that he should also join the Governors' EIF Group (Education Inspection Framework). Thanks were recorded to Andrew Wright for accepting the role and also to Neil Perry for acting as interim Designated Safeguarding Lead Governor since Lynn O'Meara's retirement.
- b) Appoint Deputy Committee Chairs – noted that this was in progress.
- c) Appoint New Student Governors – deadline for outcome of election process is 31st March 2021 – details to be advised once the results have been declared **ACTION: Louise Pennington.**
- d) Appoint New Governor (Teaching Staff) – Kathryn MacVarish (History Teacher) with effect from 1st April 2021 until 31st March 2024 and that she should also join the Quality and Curriculum Committee for the same period. Thanks were recorded to Neil Jones (existing Teaching Staff Governor) for his long service.

1.3 Minutes of the Meeting held on 26th January 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 or would be completed in due course.

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 including:

- a) Covid 19 Update (post Committees)

William Baldwin referred to his report and the following points were noted:

- Update since the Principal's Report was written and issued last week: The majority of Staff and Students seem delighted to be back on site. The first 2 days for the Principal have been dedicated to talking to Staff and Students. 8th and 9th of March 2021 were onsite Covid testing days and progress was also reported to the various Governance Committees, over the last 3 weeks. The difficult logistical testing exercise was noted and that over 7,000 tests had been carried out, only 2 of which were positive cases. 89% of Students have had their first test and 75% have had their second test. The numbers in respect of the third test have yet to be declared, after which Students will then move to home testing (2,000 test kits have been issued to date). He reported that the Students have been very compliant to date with regard to testing and continued social distancing and he recorded his thanks to them for this.
- Governors were reminded that the Principal had circulated via e mail, the grade awarding update, for information. ***In response to a question from Governors, the Principal explained that most Colleges were implementing a combination system based upon course work achieved to date, together with some end point assessments, which would enable more meaningful and sufficient data to be included. He explained that some Students preferred to work towards an end stage assessment and that the latter proviso would assist such Students. It was noted that various assessment options had been put in place as SMT wanted to ensure that all Students were able to maximise the opportunities to succeed and do their best.*** Owing to the various options provided in the Government guidelines, Colleges remain concerned about potential appeals, should Students, not achieve their desired grades. Consequently, Colleges are having to prepare plans and ensure systems are in place, to deal with potential complaints and appeals during the Summer.
- Student Satisfaction Survey – this has been reissued and the information from this will be benchmarked against the Autumn Term Survey.
- The Guidance section of the Principal's Report is a new addition to the information provided for Governors, with the aim of providing further assurance to Governors.
- The Finance section of the Report – attention was drawn to the fact that the Chair had met with the FE Commissioner, Sir Richard Atkins, last week to discuss SFCs concerns regarding the pay ratio benchmark (copy included in the Resources Committee meeting papers and available to all Governors via the VLE) It was explained that the target figure set by the FEC's Office had not included Colleges which had academised, which meant that the SFC figure was based on only approximately 50 SFCs. Going forward, the Principal reported that the College would be liaising with other Colleges including S7 Colleges with the aim of completing some benchmarking analysis in order to establish a reasonable target figure, noting also the impact upon quality, should Staff numbers be reduced.
- ***Governors queried the plans for returning post-Easter in terms of onsite/remote working and the Principal advised that this was being reviewed. He emphasised that the 2/3 model was working well, but informed Governors that a number of S7 Colleges were intending to return to full onsite provision from the beginning of the Summer Term (including Varndean, Esher, Godalming and Reigate), However, SFCs are able to continue with blended onsite/remote learning next term.***

b) Skills for Jobs White Paper Summary

- Noting the links in the Agenda, to the FE White Paper and Summary, the Principal summarised the aspects relating to SFCs, noting that further information and guidance was awaited. The main focus for BHASVIC and other FE Colleges will be based upon meeting local skills needs, whether directly into the community or via a Higher Education route. The Chair had initiated a series of meetings as convener of the Coastal Sussex Chairs' Forum, which culminated in a meeting 2 weeks ago which was attended by the Skills Minister, Gillian Keegan. The opportunities for Colleges to lead on and to collaborate in the local area, were discussed and will be progressed, particularly if a collaborative project was seen to be worth pursuing.
- The Strategic Plan reflects the White Paper and includes references to a potential diversification into Level 3 Adult skills and this has been set as a mid-term priority within the Plan.
- Regarding the various governance implications in the White Paper, Search and Governance Committee had considered the broad details and discussed the key implications, but noted that further information and guidance was needed and that this was expected in the next few months. However, the proposal that an independent external governance review every 3 years, would be a requirement, was highlighted and could prove to be useful, but there will be a cost element to take into account.

OTHER QUESTIONS FROM GOVERNORS ARISING FROM ITEMS a) AND b) above:

- ***Further feedback was requested regarding the views of Students on the return post Easter to the 2/3 model compared to a fully on site attendance and it was recorded that Students hadn't yet been consulted on this. The Student Governor said that for some it would be good to return to a normal attendance of 3 lessons per subject per week, bearing in mind that the A2 Students' time at the College would be ending soon and***

particularly so for those subjects where it can be difficult to work alone at home. From a Staff perspective, the Staff Governor, Neil Jones, stated that Teachers would welcome Students back on site and that it may be a good way, particularly for A2 Students, to finish their year by returning full time on site, subject to it being safe and the necessary mitigating actions being introduced in class rooms from a Covid perspective etc. Louise Serpell, added, that from a Parent's perspective, her daughter found online lessons easy to interact with, although she wasn't sure whether this applied to others.

- The Governors questioned how the assessment methods for final Grade Awarding would be determined and whether other SFCs would be consulted, noting that Parents and Students would be interested to understanding the strategic decision making involved in this process. The Principal advised that Colleges were discussing the assessment options and that there were a wide range of outcomes, with some Colleges preferring to instigate exam-like end point assessments in sports hall venues. The Deputy Principal provided some additional feedback, advising that the majority of Colleges were very unlikely to have sufficient Student assessment data owing to remote learning, without carrying out further assessments, noting that there had been no mock or progression examinations. James Moncrieff confirmed that the College's Curriculum and Quality Team has the responsibility for finding the most appropriate solution so that all Students are able to perform at their best and at the same time take into account pressure placed upon Students including their mental health and anxiety. James Moncrieff explained the consultation process which had taken place prior to finalising arrangements to consider the various options and challenges to find the best solution for BHASVIC. Students and Parents will be informed of the final details shortly and had already been kept informed about the timing for issuing this information to ensure that they are kept up to date, which the Parent Governor advised was appreciated by Parents. It was noted that having liaised with other SFCs, there was no one solution to suit all and that Colleges were taking different approaches as allowed in the guidelines, which best suits their Students. BHASVIC's solution will be based on a combination of many different elements in order to cater for the fact that Students have different ways of working and preferences for assessment, along with chosen subjects. Hence Departments may also make use of different assessment options depending on their particular Student cohort. Regarding the consultation process, it was reported that on the whole Students were content with the arrangements which are being considered.
- Governors queried the data provided on page 16 of the Principal's Report relating to application numbers for the next academic year and agreed that the numbers were looking promising and had increased compared to last year. In response to a specific question regarding the impact of numbers arising from demographic lift, the Principal advised that despite a demographic rise in 16 year olds in the city, category 1 applicants (those from the city) remained stable and the largest increase in applications was from those outside the city where the demographic uplift is less pronounced. The College was unsure why this is the case, but it confirms our popularity in the wider Sussex area. However, it was noted that, families were moving from London to the South Coast which was also probably having an impact. The problems generated by potential over-subscription were also highlighted including accommodation, staffing and course allocation. SMT will be planning for potential over-subscription over the Easter break.
- Regarding a question about re-opening next term on the 2/3 model rather than fully opening, the Corporation discussed the various issues in reaching this decision, including the serious pandemic issues across Europe which had influenced SMT in not rushing into making a quick decision. The Principal report that this would be kept under review in line with Government's roadmap milestones (12th April, 19th April etc), However, SMT was thinking about returning to College post Easter on the 2/3 model for 1 week, after which a full return on site could follow for some Students subject to the infection rate being fairly stable. Furthermore, it was likely that the College would return fully on site probably around the beginning of May which would provide A2 Students with a few weeks on site. SMT also agreed that at next week's Student Forum, a straw poll would be initiated to determine Students' support for returning on site. It was also appreciated that a short notice change from 2/3 model to fully onsite, would place additional pressure on Teachers who had lessons planned for remote teaching; however, with a week's notice, this should be manageable.

2.2 STUDENT GOVERNORS' REPORT

In the absence of Lucas Watkin, Ana MacEvilly gave the Student Governor's report, stating that the majority of Students were pleased to be back on site, but that some Students had been apprehensive about returning after so long, but that the benefits were face to face lessons and being able to see friends and class mates in person. She explained that on the whole Students were enthusiastic about learning and were enjoying collaborating with their classmates and learning face to face. She also thought that Students were being cautious and Covid compliant and were following the guidelines

Regarding the examination arrangements, Ana MacEvilly advised that from feedback she had received, Students were fairly happy about the arrangements in place per subject although it had been noticed that some subject assessment

arrangements appeared to be more generous than others. She also reported that Teachers had been very helpful to Students regarding the assessment processes and how to get organised for these.

2.3 STRATEGIC PLAN

a) Strategic Plan

The final draft of the Strategic Plan document which had been reviewed by all Committees and also subject to a consultation process with Staff and Students, was approved by the Corporation and there were no further questions.

Thanks were recorded to all those involved in the review process.

b) Update on Consultation on Resourcing Student Services and Guidance

The Principal reported to Governors on the above matter, following from the consultation meeting held earlier today, noting that it was an important part of the College's strategy going forward whereby staffing issues fit with the College's strategic direction and provide Governors with the appropriate assurances. He informed Governors about the process for review of the Student Services and Guidance areas, including HR Department completing interviews with all Staff within these areas. HR has received good responses to date, with no unexpected issues having been identified. A paper summarising the input received is being prepared and proposals will be presented to SMT tomorrow. The aim will be to make any recommended and agreed changes in time for the next academic year, in order to achieve a balance in the provision in respect of Guidance, compared to the College's academic provision. This would better ensure that the Students mental health and welling issues, together with the College's statutory duties (Safeguarding, Careers and Employability, Enrichment etc), continued to be met to a reasonable level. Regarding the latter, Alison Cousens reported on the increasing resourcing need to cater for the heavy demand for Student support aspects.

Governors endorsed SMT's decision to improving resourcing in Student Services and Guidance bearing in mind the ever increasing demand for the College's services and agreed that the operational aspects reflected the Corporation's Strategy. Alison Cousens recorded her thanks to Andrew Wright for his input regarding the Safeguarding aspects, during their meeting held last week and noting that he agreed that the College was making the right decision to address the resourcing issues now, despite the pandemic.

The Principal confirmed that further details regarding the proposals would be presented to Governors, including the additional costs of providing the recommended additional resources via the 2021-22 budget. **ACTION: William Baldwin**

2.4 College Development Plan 2020/2021 – sections 1-4

The contents of the CDP were noted by Corporation and reference was also made to the front sheet Executive Summary included with the CDP paper which went to Q & C Committee and to which all Governors had had access via the Governors' VLE, Q & C folder and that much of that information had also been incorporated into the Principal's Report above.

2.5 BHASVIC Annual Report 2019/2020

The contents of the Annual Report which had been uploaded to the website, was praised by the Corporation and thanks were recorded to the Principal for producing the document.

SECTION 3: CURRICULUM AND GUIDANCE ITEMS

Items included in section 2 above

SECTION 4: RESOURCES/AUDIT/INTERNAL ASSURANCE ITEMS

4.1 Management Accounts for 6 Months to 31st January 2021 (available via the Resources Committee folder on the Governors' VLE)

Marcus Palmer (Chair of Resources Committee) and Jutta Knapp drew attention to the discussions held at the recent Resources Committee meeting as referenced in the draft minutes (included in the meeting papers) and the contents were noted by Governors.

4.2 Risk Management

Papers: Risk Register (note – Risk Assurance Map included in Principal’s Report) – approved and noting the discussions held at the Audit Committee as recorded in the draft minutes, included within the meeting papers.

4.3 Internal Auditor – Appointment and Remuneration

Jutta Knapp summarised the appointment process agreed by the Audit Committee (refer past minutes), including the problems of not being able to follow the usual tender process. It was noted that a local South East firm, MacIntyre Hudson had been approached to provide a proposal for the College’s internal audit work and that this would be based on audit visits, rather than remote working (subject to the pandemic) which she thought was essential to manage the work effectively and efficiently. She also advised that other S7 Colleges also used this Audit firm and were satisfied with their work and the associated costs. The proposal is awaited (due on 1st April 2021), after which an interview process will be established involving both the Audit Committee Chair and another Committee member. Subject to the outcome of the interview process together with the fee proposal being in line with the expected fee structure MacIntyre Hudson will be recommended as the new Internal Auditors.

The Corporation approved the process detailed above, noting the reasons for not being able to follow the usual tender process, as set out in the financial regulations and noting that the final recommendation and remuneration details would be brought to Governors at the next meeting for consideration and approval. **ACTION: Jutta Knapp**

4.4 Reappointment of Financial Statement Auditors

Governors were reminded that RSM UK were the College’s External (financial statements) auditors and that the Audit Committee had reviewed the performance indicators etc and were happy to recommend their reappointment, which was agreed by the Corporation. **ACTION: Jutta Knapp**

SECTION 5: GOVERNANCE ITEMS

Refer Search and Governance Committee below.

SECTION 6: CONSENT AGENDA

It was noted that no points or questions had been raised with the Chair in advance of the meeting.

POLICIES AND OTHER DOCUMENTS

6.1

- a) **Student Charges’ Policy (incorporating the Student Charges Schedule)** – Link – approved.
- b) **EDI Policy** – Link – approved.
- c) **Performance Indicators for External Auditors** – Link – approved.
- d) **Governor Links’ Policy** – refer S & G Committee matters and draft minutes and the revisions proposed to the Policy were endorsed.

COMMITTEE MINUTES AND OTHER MATTERS FOR NOTING

The Committee chairs gave a brief summary of the key aspects of the meeting and reference was also made to the draft minutes where available.

6.2 Search and Governance Committee 22nd March 2021

Papers: FE White Paper – Governance Aspects
ETF Governance Development Training Programme

6.3 Quality & Curriculum Committee Draft Minutes 3rd March 2021 - noted

Papers: Q & C Briefing
Termly Update – Student Governors
EDI SARAP
Ofsted Update

Risk Assurance

At this point, the Chair of Governors, reminded those Governors who hadn't been at the Q & C Committee meeting on 3rd March 2021, to view the Safeguarding training video via the Governors' VLE and then confirm to Louise Pennington that they had completed the training so that the Governors' training records, could be updated. **ACTION: Governors**

6.4 Resources Committee Draft Minutes 9th March 2021 - noted

Papers: Termly Update on HR and related Matters

Premises Update

Digital Update

FE Commissioner's February 2021 Letter and new Financial Benchmarks

Risk Assurance

6.5 Audit Committee Draft Minutes 11th March 2021 – noted.

Papers: Update On Outstanding Audit Recommendations

Fraud Report (oral – refer minutes)

SECTION 7: OTHER MATTERS

7.1 Any Other Business

Thanks were recorded to Neil Jones for his long service and also to the Student Governors, Ana MacEvelly and Lucas Watkin, noting that this was their last governance meeting.

3.2 Date of Next Meeting – 5th July 2021 at 6.00 p.m.

SECTION 8: CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS – REFER SEPARATE CONFIDENTIAL RECORD

a) Corporation 26th January 2021 – None

b) Committees:

i) Search and Governance Committee 22nd March 2021 – to follow

ii) Resources Committee – 9th March 2021 – noted

iii) Quality and Curriculum Committee – 3rd March 2021 – noted

Papers: Safeguarding Report (Part 2)

ANY OTHER BUSINESS – refer confidential minutes

CHAIR.....

Date.....