



GOVERNING BODY

Minutes of Meeting on Thursday 7 March 2019

Present:	Mr J Kirk (<i>Chair</i>)	Chair of Governors	
	Mr J Bagley	Principal	
	Ms N Cuffy	Governor	
	Ms S Gohil	Student Governor	
	Mr C Gray	Governor (<i>from Item 2</i>)	
	Ms P Hamer	Staff Governor	
	Mr S Holderness	Vice-Chair of Governors	
	Mr S Lodhi	Staff Governor	
	Mr N Smith	Governor	
	Ms S Varghese	Student Governor	
	In Attendance:	Mr H Ravat	Vice-Principal
		Mr R Mansfield	Clerk

Ref.		Action
B/19/01	<p>Item 1 – Attendance and Membership Matters:</p> <p><i>1.1 Apologies for Absence</i> John Kirk welcomed Chris Gray to the meeting pending his proposed election as a governor. Chris Gray presented a short personal summary. All present briefly introduced themselves. Apologies for absence were received from Harnish Hadani, Jackie Rossa and Harshad Solanki. The meeting was declared quorate.</p> <p><i>1.2 Declarations of Interest in Agenda Items</i> There were no declarations of interest in agenda items.</p> <p><i>1.3 Governor Vacancies</i> Robert Mansfield reported that, following the resignation of Riyaz Laher, the strength of the Board had fallen to 12. The proposed election of Chris Gray would restore the number to 13, thus still leaving three vacancies. He explained that the term of office of Harshad Solanki had expired. The Search and Remuneration Committee had</p>	

however recommended that, subject to his being willing to continue to serve, he should be reappointed as an external governor. (Recent efforts to find a replacement Parent Governor had met with no response.) Harshad Solanki had indicated that he would be honoured to serve for a further term. The meeting appointed Harshad Solanki to serve for a further term of four years, ending 31 March 2023, as a member of the Board and of the Finance, Staffing & General Purposes Committee.

Robert Mansfield advised the meeting that the terms of office of John Kirk and Steve Holderness were due to expire on 31 March 2019.

John Kirk withdrew from the meeting and Steve Holderness took the chair.

Robert Mansfield advised the meeting that after due consideration of the skills, experience, attendance and commitment of John Kirk the Search and Remuneration Committee had recommended his reappointment. The meeting reappointed John Kirk to serve for a further period of four years ending 31 March 2023.

John Kirk re-joined the meeting and Steve Holderness withdrew.

Robert Mansfield advised the meeting that after due consideration of the skills, experience, attendance and commitment of Steve Holderness the Search and Remuneration Committee had recommended his reappointment. The meeting reappointed Steve Holderness to serve for a further period of four years ending 31 March 2023.

Steve Holderness re-joined the meeting and Chris Gray withdrew.

Robert Mansfield advised the meeting that the Search and Remuneration Committee had considered the skills and experience of Chris Gray, and the oral testimonials provided by Nicola Martin and James Bagley, and had recommended that he should be appointed as a College Governor and a member of the Standards & Quality and Finance, Staffing & General Purposes Committees. The meeting duly appointed Chris Gray to serve as recommended for a term of four years ending 31 March 2023.

The meeting made appointments as listed above.

B/19/02

Item 2 – Minutes of the Previous Meeting and Matters Arising:

2.1 Minutes of Meeting on 18 December 2018

The minutes of the meeting on 18 December 2018 were accepted as an accurate record and were duly signed by John Kirk.

2.2 Matters Arising from the Minutes

There were no matters arising from the minutes that were not covered by agenda items.

B/19/03

Item 3 – Curriculum and Quality Issues:

3.1 Minutes of the Standards & Quality Committee 31 January 2019

John Kirk presented the headlines of the minutes of the meeting of the Standards & Quality Committee on 31 January 2019. He highlighted the Committee's scrutiny of the CAP 2 data and the OfSTED Monitoring Visit Report. Nelista Cuffy was given assurances that staff had been congratulated on the progress they had made.

The meeting received the minutes of the Standards & Quality Committee.

3.2 Quality Improvement Plan – Progress Headlines

James Bagley presented the latest version of the Self-Assessment Report / Quality Improvement Plan. He was pleased to highlight the progress made between Common Assessment Points 1 and 2 and the excellent outcomes from the GCSE Mathematics and English re-sits. Some courses remained the subjects of close monitoring, and liaison had been arranged with external partners to help to improve performance. John Kirk asked how staff had reacted to this. James Bagley said that the College recognised that close monitoring caused additional stress. In Science and Mathematics the external help had been very well received, and all staff had engaged positively with it. Chris Gray asked whether plans were put in place following external visits. James Bagley confirmed that plans tailored to the identified needs of individual teachers were created. Chris Gray asked that if acronyms were to be used, they should be explained when first introduced.

The meeting received this report.

B/19/04

Item 4 – Student Issues:

4.1 Minutes of the Student Affairs Committee 21 January 2019

John Kirk presented the draft minutes of the meeting of the Student Affairs Committee on 21 January 2019. The Committee provided a most useful channel of communication with the student body and he had again been impressed by the quality of the preparation of the student representatives. It had been apparent that there was continuing discontent with the management of the impacts on students of staff absences. Steve Holderness advised that students needed be prepared for worse experiences in this respect at university.

John Kirk said that there were also continuing concerns about the state of some IT equipment. Sarah Varghese said she had discussed the matter with IT staff and as a result some computers were to be removed from the Mezz as a trial to encourage greater use of the facilities in the Learning Resource Centre.

The meeting received the minutes of the Student Affairs Committee.

4.2 Matters of Interest and Concern to Students

Simran Gohil and Sarah Varghese said that there were no matters to report that had not been addressed during the meeting of the Student Affairs Committee.

B/19/05

Item 5 – Estates, Finance and Staffing Issues:

5.1 Minutes of the Finance, Staffing & General Purposes Committee 22 January 2019

Steve Holderness presented the headlines of the draft minutes of the meeting of the Finance, Staffing & General Purposes Committee on 22 January 2019. The College was engaged in maintaining a delicate balance between making savings and sustaining quality and the credibility of the College. Nathan Smith asked how many Marketing staff were employed. James Bagley replied that there were very few. Nathan Smith urged that students should be used to promote the College via social media. James Bagley said that a newly appointed member of the team would focus on this. Sarah Varghese noted that there had been a large increase in the number of students interviewed and that applications were being received earlier. Shez Lodhi agreed that the number of early applications was encouraging and provided a good base for follow-up. Chris Gray urged that courses that were not recruiting well should be discontinued. Steve Holderness agreed, and said that this had largely been addressed. Nonetheless the College was seeking to expand. James Bagley explained that the curriculum review was primarily focused upon two questions: is the course economically viable, and is it strategically important? As funding became tighter, the bar had inevitably to be raised. Chris Gray asked how the time of under-employed teachers was being used. James Bagley gave various examples, including involvement in marketing efforts. Nelista Cuffy asked how successful the College had been in publicising its improved results. James Bagley explained that the College had been restricted by the

dates on which the data became public. Marketing had however been promoting the improvement in results.

The meeting received the minutes of the Finance, Staffing & General Purposes Committee.

5.2 Operating Results

Hamid Ravat presented the operating results to January 2019. The accounts showed a positive variance of £163K against a substantial deficit budget. Income was slightly above budget, pay expenditure £80K below budget (though most of this variance was expected to disappear once the national teachers' pay award had been determined and progression increments paid) and operating expenditure £64K below budget, largely for seasonal reasons. The cash balance, currently nearly £2.7 million, was expected to reduce to about £2.2 million by the end of the academic year.

The meeting received the operating results.

B/19/06 Item 6 – Admissions and Marketing Issues:

6.1 Marketing Update

James Bagley presented the highlights of the latest update of the Marketing Action Plan. Improved schools' liaison had resulted in a year-on-year increase of nearly 200 applications. A Marketing Assistant had just been appointed. Billboards had been placed at strategic locations around the city. There was continuing work on social media, on which it was critical to secure appropriate followers and the website. John Kirk said he had noted a marked improvement in the quality of the prospective recruits visiting the campus. Nathan Smith offered to speak to students at Beaumont Leys School. James Bagley thanked him and said he would discuss this as a matter of urgency with Jade Walsh. Sarah Varghese said she was sure other College students would be willing to do likewise. James Bagley said that it was not easy to find schools willing to allow the necessary access.

The meeting received the report.

JB

B/19/07 Item 7 – Governance Issues:

7.1 Complaints and Concerns Policy

James Bagley presented the complaints and concerns policy. This had been subject to minor contextual change only.

The meeting received the complaints and concerns policy.

7.2 Equality and Diversity Policy

James Bagley presented the equality and diversity policy. There had been no significant change to the policy

The meeting received the equality and diversity policy.

7.3 Annual Equalities Report 2017/2018

James Bagley presented the highlights of the annual equalities report 2017/2018. The report had been scrutinised by the Finance, Staffing & General Purposes Committee. There had been improvements in the identification of critical cohorts and no significant gaps in performance had been found.

The meeting received the annual equalities report.

7.4 Committee Terms of Reference

Robert Mansfield presented the terms of reference for the Standards & Quality Committee and the Finance, Staffing & General Purposes Committee for endorsement. The former had been slightly amended to reflect the fact that the Performance Improvement Group was not currently active. The latter were unchanged.

The meeting endorsed the terms of reference of the two committees.

B/19/08 Item 8 – Date and Time of Next Meeting:

The date and time of the next meeting were confirmed as Tuesday 9 April 2019 at 5.30 p.m. at the College, after the meeting of the SPA Steering Group.

B/19/09 Item 9 – Any Other Business:

9.1 Sixth Form Colleges Staff Pay Award

Hamid Ravat presented a briefing paper on the status of national pay negotiations for the current year for teachers and corporate staff. Although negotiations had still to be concluded, there appeared to be a reasonable possibility that awards for both groups would be settled at an average national cost of 1.6% (close to the 1.5% assumed in the College's budget). He asked for advance approval for the implementation of these awards, provided that they were in fact agreed, backdated to 1 September 2018.

Chris Gray expressed concerns about the possibility that staff facing the possibility of compulsory redundancy might argue against acceptance of such an award. James Bagley said that any compulsory redundancy would be preceded by a period of consultation, during which there could be requests for such action. Steve Holderness said that the College might also be faced with requests for later reinstatement. John Kirk said that staff had come on a difficult journey and it was important to keep faith with them. Nathan Smith stressed the importance of clear communication to staff of the rationale underlying decisions about the future of the College.

James Bagley said that he intended to forgo any increase in his own salary. Robert Mansfield advised the meeting that this

was a matter in the first instance for the Search & Remuneration Committee to consider.

The Board approved the implementation of national pay awards for staff, once agreed, of an average national cost of 1.6%, as described, backdated to 1 September 2018. Should the award for either group of staff exceed the figure above, fresh approval would be required.

B/19/10

Item 10 – Confidential Items:

10.1 Notes of Meeting of the SPA Steering Group 17 January 2019

10.2 Notes of meeting of the SPA Steering Group 18 February 2019

It was agreed that the notes of the two meetings should be considered concurrently. It was emphasised the identities of the prospective partners who had been invited to take part in the SPA process were given in strict commercial confidence, and must not be disclosed outside the meeting.

Steve Holderness said that in his opinion the College was not in fact seeking a partner, but a senior partner. James Bagley and John Kirk rejected this view, though accepted that some of those approached might well have that in mind as an objective. James Bagley advised the meeting that taking part in the SPA process was not optional, as the Education and Skills Funding Agency had recently made implementing the outcome a condition of funding. Hamid Ravat advised the meeting that the Board would need a very clear rationale for rejecting the recommendation from the SPA Steering Group. John Kirk said that the Board was fortunate in the advisors from the FE Commissioner's office, both of whom had a deep understanding and appreciation of the College.

The meeting received the notes of the meetings of the SPA Steering Group.

The Staff and Student Governors and Hamid Ravat then left the meeting prior to consideration of the minutes of the Search and Remuneration Committee.

10.3 Minutes of the Search & Remuneration Committee 17 January 2019

The meeting received the minutes of the Search & Remuneration Committee.