

Governors Present: Gill Slater (Chair)
Matthew Adams
Paul Cumming
Angela Davis
Sean Devlin

Ed Senior
Phil Douce
Toby Hooper
Kat Bashar

In Attendance: Ruth Senior (Deputy Principal)
Barbara Clements (Finance Manager)
Jo Payne (PA to the Principal/Interim Clerk to the Governing Body)

(The Finance Manager gave notice that she needed to leave by 6.30pm).

1. New College Website

The Clerk demonstrated aspects of the College's new website further to its launch in October. The following points were highlighted:

- The website was created by one of the College's IT teachers who would continue to offer technical support and training;
- The website offered greater functionality, met accessibility criteria and was mobile optimised;
- Content could be updated immediately. This was particularly important as news items were being regularly added to show the extent of things that happen at College;
- It was intended that subject staff would have greater ownership of their subject page and would use this opportunity to market their subject to potential students;
- Video content could be easily uploaded to the website and consideration was being given to ways of increasing the quantity of video footage that was available;
- Whilst other utilities were available e.g. Dashboard, the pressures on the IT Support Manager had meant that Govweb was not currently available.

In response to questions, the Clerk reported that:

- The creation of the website had cost approximately £1,800 which was felt to be very good value for money;
- A member of the high school liaison team had produced an interactive tool for use at events which included video content which it was intended would also be used on the website. The Principal added that he was considering whether the College could afford to support the development of this tool, particularly as it involved covering one lesson currently taught by this member of staff.

The Governing Body **noted** the information provided.

2. Apologies and Appointments

Apologies: Apologies were received from Deborah Tiffany, Sheila Fallon, Sam Lifford, Sheena Payne-Lunn, Isabel Swift and Emily Furniss.

- (i) Appointments
The Governing Body **approved** the appointment of Kat Bashar as a Student Governor and a member of the Quality Committee for a period of 18 months.
The Governing Body **approved** the appointment of Isabel Swift as a Staff Governor and a member of the Quality Committee for a period of 2 years.
The Governing Body **approved** the re-appointment of Gill Slater as External Governor and a member of the Resources Committee for a period of four years.
The Governing Body **approved** the re-appointment of Paul Sampson as Independent Chair for a period of four years.

The Chair welcomed Kat to the meeting and introductions were made.

3. **Opening Standing Items**

- (i) Gill Slater declared that she were employed by a stakeholder, the University of Worcester.
Paul Cumming declared that he was a governor at partner high school, The Chantry.
Gill Slater, Toby Hooper and Phil Douce declared that they were Trustees on the Shadow MAT Board.
- (ii) Those parts of the agenda, which referred to individual students or members of staff, sensitive contracts or issues, were identified as confidential to the Governing Body. The Chair advised that there was a confidential matter that would be raised at the end of the meeting and that staff and student governors would need to withdraw from the meeting at that stage.
- (iii) There were no urgent matters requiring consideration.

4. **Minutes**

- (i) 26th September 2018
The minutes of the meeting were noted and approved as an accurate record.

The action points were updated and the following points noted:

- The Careers Strategy had been added to the website. Meetings had been convened to co-ordinate the College's approach to meeting the Gatsby benchmarks and to ensure that departments were aware of the implications for curriculum areas;
- Whilst it was desirable to introduce video content to the website, cafeteria staff were reluctant to appear. Recent work had been undertaken to record second year students giving advice to first year students and it was felt that this would be good content for the website. The videos which form part of the interactive tool could also be used on the website.

The Governing Body **noted** the information provided.

- (ii) Confidential Minute
The Confidential minute was noted and **approved** as an accurate record.

5. **Academisation**

(i) Response to Formal Consultation

The formal summary of responses to the consultation was received and the contents noted. The Principal reported that three responses in support of the proposal had been received from the Principal of a local FE College, the MP and the Chief Executive of the County Council. The summary of the consultation had been shared with the Shadow MAT Board.

(ii) Update from the Principal

The Principal updated the Governing Body on recent developments noting the following:

- Consideration of the legal support required for academisation and focusing on the need to avoid duplication had led to a saving of £3,000 in legal fees;
- The Shadow MAT Board had met again. The Chair added that she had reminded colleagues that the College had previously undertaken some work e.g. deciding on whether policies would be at Trust or Local Governing Body level, and this had been shared with the Clerk to the MAT;
- The Executive Group had met again. The Principal commented that he was pleased at the amount of energy and enthusiasm that had been invested in collaborative working;
- The Principal explained that he felt a duty to be an advocate for WSFC colleagues where assumptions were not accurately interpreted by the Executive Principal or Finance Director e.g. in relation to cafeteria expenditure;
- Jonathan Godfrey had been appointed as Clerk to the Trust. The Chair commented that the current working title for the Trust was the Mercia Academy Trust;
- As explained at Committee meetings, the College would adopt HSFC's MIS system irrespective of academisation. This was in response to unsustainable pressures on the IT Support Manager. Whilst the adoption of this system would be a huge undertaking, HSFC had offered support in migration and development. The Principal added that the new system would need to run alongside the existing system in September and that consideration would need to be given to managing tasks which had previously been automated. HSFC staff were demonstrating the new system to WSFC staff at the imminent staff meeting;
- The application had been delayed and would be considered by the Headteachers' Board on 13th December prior to financial review at the Transactions Unit meeting on 15th January.

The Governing Body **noted** the update and thanked the Principal for his cautious approach when liaising with MAT colleagues given the College's previous disappointment.

6. **Stakeholder Voice**

The Governing Body received the recent link visit reports. It was noted that:

- Sarah Turner had felt that the Quality Manager was coping well in his new role;
- Sheena Payne-Lunn's meeting with Geography/Geology staff and the Head of Humanities had resulted in valuable links being made and acted upon.

The Governing Body thanked those governors for visiting College. Governors were encouraged to contact the Clerk with a view to arranging a link visit.

7. Quality Assurance

(i) Quality Committee minutes: 14.11.18

In the absence of the Chair of the Quality Committee, the Clerk presented the minutes and the following points were raised:

- There had been detailed scrutiny of QIPs of subjects which were likely to be judged as inadequate at moderation. Governors had felt that the improvement plans were detailed, yet focused on a small number of achievable actions;
- Governor attendance had been slightly below benchmark which was disappointing given that there were fewer extraordinary meetings than in recent years, however, it was noted that some governors had been unable to attend meetings as had anticipated following the cycle prepared for meetings of the local governing body which had not come to fruition.

The information was noted. Governor targets for 2018-19 were **approved**.

(ii) Quality and Development Plan 2018-19 and Evening Class Action Plan

The Principal outlined key features of the action plan for evening class Maths and English GCSE which had been produced in response to the College falling below the ESFA's minimum standards. He added that this was frustrating given that the College's outcomes for these GCSE's were outstanding, yet retention had been an issue. Non-attendance was being chased and opportunities were being taken to keep students motivated. The Principal suggested that governors may wish to review whether the level of resource and distraction on evening classes was of benefit to the College if this continued to be an issue.

The Principal referred to updates on the Quality and Development Plan noting that:

- The College would offer Criminology next academic year as a vocational level 3 qualification. This would be in place of the existing Law BTEC. This subject offered some flexibility in terms of the staff who could deliver the content;
- Monitoring of students had been reviewed and consideration given to the accuracy of summary assessments last year. There was clear correlation between the percentage achieving expected grades and the subjects who had been best at indicating progress in year. Head of Year, Graham Williams, was taking the lead in getting departments to consider whether the nature of their assessments were appropriate;
- A focus on level 2 progression to level 3 programmes at College had been extremely successful and progression rates had increased from 30% to 50%;
- Improving high grades was a College wide focus this year and significant effort had been put into developing the Ambition programme. Numbers enrolled on the Ambition Programme had increased from 30 students two years ago to 70 last year and 80 this year. The Principal expressed his thanks to the Deputy Principal and the Head of English, Languages and Media Arts for their efforts;
- Student wellbeing was a particular concern with an unprecedented number of incidents of students making attempts on their lives or significant attempts of self-harm. The Principal noted his concern that the impact on the staff dealing with these matters and wished to bring it to governors attention. He added that local services were withdrawing their provision which placed greater burden on the College. The Deputy Principal added that the College was actively developing wellbeing initiatives e.g. hosting a 'Suicide Safer' conference in January.

In response to questions the Principal advised that:

- T Levels were a threat to the existing Applied General qualifications that the College offered. Work placements had been trialled with CPLD for two days a week and would be extended to Health and Social Care and possibly IT in future years;

- The message about the College's Ambition Programme and success in being selected as an HE+ Hub would be disseminated to local high schools with invitations to the launch event on 6th February. It was suggested that the Principal should write to the schools to promote the HE+ initiative.

The Governing Body **noted** the information provided. They commented that they were sensitive and supportive to the recent safeguarding incidents and added that the wellbeing of staff and students was paramount. The Governing Body **agreed** that, assuming that academisation was successful and there was no need for contingency planning, that safeguarding and wellbeing would be a valuable theme for the conference in February.

(iii) Audit Committee minutes: 28.11.18

a) Annual Risk Management Report

The Principal presented the Annual Risk Management Report which was **approved** by the Governing Body.

b) Draft Audit Findings Report

The Governing Body **received** the draft Audit Findings Report and the contents noted. The Finance Manager explained that there were three key points from the audit. The need for IT backup and purchase ledger invoice processes had already been implemented and the Assistant Management Accountant would review the fixed asset register over the course of the academic year.

The Principal commented that the sector updates at the back of the report were particularly useful to summarise key changes.

The regularity and financial statement letters were **approved** and were signed by the Chair.

c) Audit Committee notes: 28.11.18

The minutes of the Audit Committee were received and the main points noted.

The Chair referred to discussion about cuts and restrictions to local bus services which would undoubtedly have an impact on the College. The impact of the teachers' pay rise not being extended to sixth form colleges was also highlighted.

It was noted that the Committee had **recommended** approval of the annual report and accounts, Student Council accounts and the annual audit report.

8. Finance and Resources

(i) Resources Committee minutes: 21.11.18

a) Annual Report and Accounts 2017-18

The Finance Manager presented her report summarising the annual accounts. She referred to the College's staff pay as a percentage of income which was higher than other institutions, however, with non-staffing spend being reduced significantly this was not surprising.

Further to detailed scrutiny, the Governing Body **approved** the annual report and accounts and the Chair duly **signed** the required documentation.

b) Student Council Accounts 2017-18

The Governing Body **approved** the Student Council Accounts for 2017-18.

c) Resources Committee minutes: 21.11.18

The Chair presented the minutes of the Resources Committee meeting and the following points were raised:

- There had been discussions about the impact of changes to local bus services;
- Consideration was given to the resurfacing of the tennis courts and the cost versus the potential benefits of commercial letting;
- The Clerk was not satisfied that the SPH Grievance procedure was in line with the College's nationally agreed procedure, hence it was decided that a decision on implementation of this procedure would be deferred.

The Committee **noted** the information provided.

(ii) Finance

The Finance Manager presented her report and the latest accounts and advised that:

- The auditors had made the decision to release the LGPS top up into last year's accounts which put this year's budget in a relatively good position;
- The current full year forecast projected a surplus of £57,000 against budget of £9,000 although this came with the caveat that it was very early in the year to be confident about the final outcome;
- A higher proportion of students were in receipt of financial support and this would have an impact with the introduction of universal credit. The College would need to be cautious about the level of financial support it offered to prospective students on the basis of this.

The Governing Body **noted** the information provided.

(The Finance Manager left the meeting at 6.27pm).

(iii) Property Update

The Principal reported that he had approved the resurfacing of the netball/tennis courts and that this work would be completed during February half term. Additional funds would be needed to install adequate lighting and a changing facility which would then mean that the facilities could be commercially let. Although unlikely, a bid would be submitted to the Condition Improvement Fund to cover the cost of the works.

The information was **noted**.

Governors **noted** the information provided.

9. Closing Standing Items

(i) Chair's Action: The Governing Body **noted** the use of the Chair's action in relation to renewing the College's insurance cover. This had been agreed further to liaison with the Chair of the Resources Committee.

(ii) Health and Safety: None.

- (iii) Risk Management: No additional risk management issues were identified.
- (iv) Impact: The Governing Body noted that the decision to focus on student and staff wellbeing at the conference would be important.
- (v) Any Urgent Business: A confidential matter was raised.
- (vi) Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday, 10th April at 5.30pm (Conference on Saturday 2/2/19). It was noted that on the assumption that there was no slippage to the date of academisation, that an extraordinary meeting of the Governing Body would need to be convened prior to the scheduled meeting.

The Principal introduced an options paper for the Governing Body to discuss in relation to the management structure of the College next academic year. He outlined the consideration that governors would need to give to contingency planning should academisation not be successful and the need to confirm the roles of those staff who had taken on interim senior management roles. In addition, consideration should be given to the process for appointing a permanent Clerk.

The Principal and Clerk withdrew from the meeting.

The meeting closed at 7.19p.m.

Signed:
Gill Slater (Chair)

Date:

GB ACTION POINTS ARISING FROM MEETING ON 12TH DECEMBER 2018

Report Reference	Action Point	Person Responsible	Completion	Check
GB/12.12.18/7(ii)	Write to local schools to promote the College as an HE+ Hub.	EYS	January 2019	
GB/12.12.18/7(ii)	Safeguarding and wellbeing to be a focus of the conference and to be incorporated into the conference programme.	JJP	January 2019	

ACTION POINTS BROUGHT FORWARD

Report Reference	Action Point	Person Responsible	Completion	Check

ACTION POINTS COMPLETED

Report Reference	Action Point	Person Responsible	Completion	Check
GB/26.09.18/5(i)	Feedback to the Clerk on draft consultation documents.	GB	03/10/18	✓
GB/26.09.18/9(ii)	Publish the College's Careers Strategy on the website as required.	RJS/JJP	30/09/18	✓

* Denotes amended action point.