

**MINUTES OF THE
CORPORATION MEETING**

HELD ON WEDNESDAY 13th FEBRUARY 2019 AT 6.00 P.M.

MEETING 18/03

Present: Jane Alderton, Halima Begum, Ayas Fallon-Khan, Jane Farrell, Dawn Howard, Simon Lindfield, Cathy McDonnell, Billy McNally, Janice Robinson, Katharine Travis, Aldona Wheeler

In Attendance: Peter Bailey, Elaine French, Donna-Marie Janson, Louise Pennington

Apologies received: Randall Anderson, Philip Harland, Paul Herridge (new Parent Governor), Callan McEwan, Richard Seager, Simon Waters

In the Chair: Janice Robinson

1. Welcomes and Apologies for Absence

Welcomes – Dawn Howard (new Parent Governor)

Apologies – as recorded above.

It was noted that this was the last meeting for the current Student Governors in light of the fact that the Student Union election process and timings have been revised.

2. Declaration of Interest

None recorded.

3. Membership Matters:

The outcome of the Parent Governor election process was noted and that Dawn Howard and Paul Herridge had been elected as the two new Parent Governors. Their appointment as Parent Governors until 31st December 2020 was ratified.

4. Minutes of the Meeting on 5th December 2018 Part I

The minutes of the Meeting were approved by Corporation and the Chair was authorised to sign these as a correct record of the meeting. **ACTION: Louise Pennington**

5. Matters Arising and Action Points – Progress Report and Significant Risks Schedule

The following updates were recorded:

- Memorandum of Accord – agreement between BHASVIC, MET and Varndean College – this has been completed and signed by all parties (July 2019).
- Letter sent to Green Varndean – done and Janice Robinson advised that she would update Governors regarding further developments within the confidential business section.
- Communications regarding capital developments – details have been uploaded to the website for all interested parties to view.

- Finance Update Spring Term – on agenda.
- Financial regulations/business procedures – following a recommendation from Elaine French which Simon Lindfield (Chair of Finance Working Group) supported, it was resolved that the documents should be reviewed by the Finance Working Group (next meeting June 2019) prior to consideration and approval by Corporation. **ACTION: Elaine French**
- Self-Assessment Report – Pete Bailey confirmed that the final document had been submitted to the ESFA by the required January 2019 deadline.

It was noted that the action schedule would be updated to reflect any changes detailed above.
ACTION: Louise Pennington.

SIGNIFICANT RISKS 2018/2019– the Corporation noted the risks for 2018/2019.

6. Chair's Report

The contents of the Chair's report were noted by Governors and the following additional points were recorded:

a) Governor Links' Day

Despite only a few Governors being able to attend (noting date change), those who were present, were able to visit several areas including various curriculum areas, the library and additional support. Feedback from staff was received by the Chair who appreciated the interest shown by Governors in the work of the College and the challenges faced by staff and students.

b) Key Messages from SFCA Conference

Janice Robinson confirmed that she had attended the annual conference in January reporting that much of the discussion related to financial pressures in the sector and the new Ofsted framework. Ann Milton (Minister for Education) had recognised the problems experienced by Colleges and confirmed that the Department for Education would be making a submission regarding the future funding rate per student in time for consideration at the next spending review. However no firm commitments for funding rate improvement was given. No commitment was also given to resolving the inequitable treatment of staff in SFCs compared to the pay award being allotted to school teachers and Sixth Form academies.

On the finance front, the SFCA reported on their various campaigns to raise the funding rate with a proposed minimum target of £700 plus per student. There appears to be some support in Parliament for this combined with other proposals such as encouraging the expansion of SFCs and supporting the continuation of applied general qualifications, alongside academic and vocational qualifications.

Regarding the new Ofsted regime, Amanda Spielman (Chief Inspector of Ofsted) explained the intentions of the new system, emphasising the importance of moving away from the excessive focus on data, with a more subjective approach.

b) Other Matters

Governors and Staff have been informed by Philip Harland regarding his current health issues and absence and has been signed off work for 2 weeks. In the interim SLT Members and Janine Hatcher are managing any urgent work and Janice Robinson reported that she had had a meeting with SLT to discuss this and how it would be managed, together with any

issues. Parents and Students have not been informed at this point, but the matter will be reviewed should Philip Harland not be able to return to work after half term.

The Corporation recorded thanks to Janine Hatcher for the extra work carried out in Philip Harland's absence and also sent their best wishes to Philip Harland for a quick recovery.

7. Principal's Report

No report included on this occasion owing to Philip Harland's absence.

8. Student Governors' Report

Halima Begum gave her report, recording the following:

- This week the Student Union has organised the hustings for the new SU Presidents which took place in the Hall and had a good turnout compared to previous years. Halima Begum and Callan McEwan asked questions to the various candidates and voting will close on Friday 15th February. All candidates appear to be extremely promising so it's likely that the SU will be in good hands next year. To date there have also been more votes received compared to previous years.
- Thanks were recorded to Halima and Callan for their contributions to Corporation over the last year.

9. Curriculum and Standards – Student Outcomes

Donna-Marie Janson and Pete Bailey presented the papers to Corporation and the following points were noted:

a) Projected Student Numbers

Reference was made to the contents of the Report and the following additional points noted:

- Summary of applications highlights the upward trend and this is the case in most local areas including the Brighton and Hove Schools and East and West Sussex Schools
- Last year 1,670 students predicted and this was achieved on the census day.
- Conversion rate for year 1 Students shows a reducing trend and reflecting increasing competition, although this has been distorted last year owing to the additional Students recruited following the closure of Haywards Heath SF College.
- Intermediate Students who continue at Varndean, are recorded as year 1 Students.
- The College no longer records year 3 Students as should Students change course, they will be recorded as Year 1 or Year 2.
- Second table showing conversion rates presents a similar picture to last year. On the same basis as last year this would give Student numbers of 1,768, compared to a lower conversion rate of 1,696, giving a mid-point of 1,730. SLT's target is 1,735.
- The number of applicants has increased compared to last year with 1,300 to date (compared to 1,200 at the same time last year). However although the number of applicants has increased, the conversion rate has fallen slightly owing to competition.
- Assurance was given to Governors that if 1,720/1,730 Students be enrolled the College would have sufficient space to accommodate them, noting that some classroom space would be made available following the cessation of Access courses next year. Furthermore the set sizes would have to be adjusted as necessary too.

- In response to a question from Governors, Pete Bailey confirmed that the College's Student numbers were increasing, although it was hard to predict going forward owing to the competitive impact.
- Pete Bailey confirmed that the overall Student application figures included the projected International Students (currently at 50 Students).
- At this point the cessation by PACA of their Sixth Form provision for 2 years owing to very limited applications, was discussed.
- The proposed new Sixth Form College in Haywards Heath was also considered, but noting that it wouldn't be ready to recruit with effect from September 2019.

b) Student Destinations 2017-2018

Donna-Marie Janson introduced the paper, the contents of which were noted and the following points were recorded:

- All Students who have left the College are contacted more than once if necessary, to determine their destination (Higher Education or employment etc). Although in the past, this was a requirement for Colleges to record, currently the Department for Education provides this information for the sector, although the report is not available until later in the year.
- The number of Students progressing to Higher Education is being sustained, despite the downward national trend.
- A significant number of Students complete a gap year.
- NEET (not in employment, education or training) has reduced slightly compared to recent years and currently stands at approximately 2%.
- The number of unknown destinations has increased, partly reflecting the increase in Student numbers.
- At the last inspection, Ofsted were pleased with the College's destination analysis.
- SLT monitors trends in order to make adjustments to the College's careers advice etc
- In response to a question from Governors regarding the significant resource required from the College to obtain all the information, SLT agreed that now that the Department for Education had taken on the responsibility for producing the destination analysis, the College's resources will probably be re-assigned; this issue will be discussed with other Colleges at the next S7 Meeting.
- Governors queried the reason for the number of leavers being lower in 2016/2017 and SLT explained that this related to the fact that the year 1 recruitment had increased in that year, with a smaller year 2 figure, thereby distorting the leavers. Now that A levels have moved to linear examinations, there is unlikely to be a similar fluctuation going forward.
- The Governors queried the process involving Students who left their course before completion and it was noted that SLT met with all early leavers to review subject choices and reasons for leaving. The majority of those who leave early have not been able to access full time education owing to mental health, family or behavioural issues. Also a few Students leave once they've re-taken and passed their GCSE Maths, having no intention of completing their other courses. At this point Governors requested that SLT produce a short report for a future meeting, regarding early leavers. **ACTION: Donna-Marie Janson**

10. Financial Update

Elaine French presented the following papers to Corporation and drew Governors' attention to the key points detailed in the Executive Summary.

a) Dashboard 2018/2019; Management Accounts (period 5) and Executive Summary

- Executive summary – the accounts have been prepared to the end of December 2018 and a slight increase in the surplus to £18K and this assumes a 1% pay increase backed to September.
- Major variances – International Students' projected income for year is over budget by £60K. The College has a new International Manager and there will also be some additional expenditure this year with 2 overseas trips to China and Japan; it's intended that Philip Harland will accompany the new Manager on one of these trips, as he's new in post.
- There may be some additional income in respect of Summer Camps, but no provision has been included within income, until the final numbers are known.
- Expenditure – central services costs have increased by £7K (overseas trips for International Department – refer above). As International income has increase, so will the expenditure including agents' commission. £6K has also been allocated to reflect an accounting adjustment.
- Year end financial outcomes remain positive with the financial health score projected to be 190 points (last term – 180 points), reflecting the increased projected surplus.

b) Property Matters Update including Accommodation Working Group draft Minutes 22nd January 2019 (CONFIDENTIAL)

It was resolved to move this section of the minutes from Part I to Part II, owing to the sensitive nature of the discussion – refer Part II minutes.

c) Finance Update – Teachers' Pension Scheme

- No further update provided yet except to confirm that the employers' contribution will be increased from 16.4% to 23.6% next year (From September 2019)
- At the recent Association of Colleges (AoC) finance conference which Elaine French attended, Julian Gravatt advised that the AoC had been made aware by the Department for Education, that the additional contributions would be funded for the first year. Although no guarantee for funding has been given for future years' additional contributions, the AoC has indicated that it was unlikely that this would not continue to be funded and Colleges have been advised to allow for 80% additional contribution funding in their financial projections (with the balance resting with the College).

At this point Elaine French updated Governors regarding the staff accident and subsequent employers' liability claim for £25K. The investigation remains ongoing and the insurance company has assigned a loss adjuster who has visited the College. Although the College insurers were initially inclined to settle the claim, following further information regarding the incident provided by the College, the insurers have decided to complete further investigation before providing their concluding recommendations.

11. Policies and Other Documents

a) Annual Report from Principal on Changes to Policies/New Policies processed via SLT

The contents of the Report were noted and endorsed by the Corporation. Thanks were recorded to Janine Hatcher for preparing the report.

b) GDPR Policies

Elaine French introduced the new GDPR Policies, both of which were approved by the Corporation, subject to the points made below.

- i) **Data Retention** – the blank table was noted and that this would be completed by Elaine French once all the departmental details had been reviewed. **ACTION: Elaine French**
- ii) **Data Protection** - Policy based on AoC template issued by the solicitors' Irwin Mitchell.

In response to a question from the Corporation, Elaine French confirmed that the College had received one subject access request to date (in the Summer of 2018) which she had worked through in order to ensure that the College has the correct processes in place for future submissions, which would be dealt with by other staff in future.

It was agreed that reference to Governors should be incorporated into the Data Protection Policy (**ACTION: Elaine French**) and it was also noted that that last year Governors had been issued with GDPR information, protocols for Governors and a GDPR privacy notice for signing. Governors were reminded that should they hold any personal information had been asked to disclose this to Louise Pennington for the College records. **ACTION: Governors/Louise Pennington**

Elaine French advised that staff training would be provided at the next INSET training day.

12. Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 3rd April 2019 at 6.00 p.m.

13. Any Other Business

- a) Corporation Meetings 2019/2020: It was resolved that in future the Corporation would only hold one Corporation meeting in the Spring Term. **ACTION: Louise Pennington**
- b) Incident on Site: Donna-Marie Janson informed Governors about a "lock down" incident which had occurred earlier in the term. A security alert occurred approximately 2 weeks ago and the College instigated a lock down action, with the Police being called. Someone had come on to the College site with a knife (Parent of a young person assaulted outside the College estates by a non-Varndean Student. Whilst the College staff was administering first aid to the young person, his father entered the site wanting to find who had assaulted his son. The Police and staff dealt with the situation and Staff and Students remained in their classrooms. Since then the College has met with the Prevent South East Regional Officer in order to review and revise the College's procedures for such incidents and further staff training will be

provided. The openness and vulnerability of the College's site was also raised as a concern by Governors and SLT confirmed that investigations and risk assessments were underway to improve site security, but that it would focus on making the main building more secure rather than the whole site, following security expert advice received last Summer 2018. Governors also expressed concern about the safety of the separate classroom huts, away from the main building.

- c) 19th March 2019 – interview day for Students – Governors were invited to participate in this day and to let Donna-Marie Janson know if they would be free between 10 am and 2 p.m. **ACTION: Governors**
- d) Governors were reminded that there would be no strategic planning day on 13th March 2019. **ACTION: Governors**

There was no other business.

14. Confidential Business – refer Part II Minutes

a) Part II Corporation Minutes 5th December 2018

The meeting remained quorate.

Refer to the Part II Minutes.

Chair.....

Date.....

Louise Pennington 13/02/19