

VARNDEAN COLLEGE
MINUTES OF
THE SEARCH & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ON MONDAY 19th NOVEMBER 2018

Present: Randall Anderson, Phil Harland, Janice Robinson and Richard Seager

In Attendance: Louise Pennington

Apologies received: None

In the Chair: Janice Robinson

1) Welcomes and Apologies for Absence

As above.

2) Declaration of Interests

None.

3) Minutes of Meeting on 6th March 2018

The minutes of the meeting were approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

The Committee was reminded that it had been decided not to have the Summer Term 2018 Search and Governance Committee.

4) Matters Arising – Action Point

The Committee considered the various actions within Appendix 1 and noted those items which had been completed. **ACTION:** Louise Pennington

5) Corporation and Committee Membership Review

The Committee reviewed the Membership list noting that there were no outstanding or forthcoming vacancies at the moment, but was reminded that once Jane Farrell's term of office as a Parent Governor finishes in December 2018, the Corporation has already approved her appointment as an external Governor. **ACTION: Louise Pennington**

The following additional points were made:

- Parent Governors – process has commenced to find two new Parent Governors, when the current Parent Governors' terms of office come to an end in December 2018.

- Student Governors – a proposal will be brought to Corporation seeking to change the election dates from the Spring/Summer Terms to the Autumn Term, for the Student Union executive members (including the Student Governors), taking into account the move to linear A levels and the examination revision schedule. The SU Constitution would need to be revised and approved by Corporation. **ACTION: Donna-Marie Janson/Louise Pennington**
- Term of office due to end in December 2018 – Jane Alderton. It was agreed that the Committee would like to invite Jane Alderton to serve another term of office and Louise Pennington agreed to liaise with her. **ACTION: Louise Pennington**
- The Committee had a discussion about potential future Governor vacancies and means to seek new appointments, including local contacts and advertising and noting those Governors who were due to retire in the next year.
- It was resolved to revise the Membership Terms of Office list based on expiry dates rather than alphabetical name order. **ACTION: Louise Pennington**

6) Corporation Annual Reports

The Committee considered the following annual reports.

a) Attendance 2017-2018

The contents of the analysis was noted and although the overall percentage attendance for Corporation remained with the benchmark target of 70%, there were a number of Governors who had only achieved 50% attendance or less. Regarding the latter, account was also taken of the fact that the College did have 6 Corporation meetings per year, compared to many Colleges which only had three.

The Committee considered the draft letter which the Chair had prepared bringing the meeting attendance to Governors' attention and where possible encouraging improvements in attendance for the current year, notwithstanding that Governors do occasionally have good reasons to send apologies for some meeting. It was noted that several meetings earlier in the year had become inquorate for Part II business, where there is a reliance on external Governors.

It was agreed that the letter should be circulated to Governors and that Janice Robinson would also mention attendance at the December Corporation Meeting. **ACTION: Janice Robinson**

b) Training 2017-2018

The Committee reviewed the training records and made the following comments and observations:

- It was noted that a number of Governors had completed various relevant training courses as part of their employment but that details of these were not requested/recorded by the College e.g. Safeguarding. It was agreed that further consideration should be given to whether this information should be collected.
- KCSiE – Keeping Children Safe in Education – it was noted that the latest document would be uploaded to the Governors' Induction and reference folder. **ACTION: Louise Pennington**

- Safeguarding Training on line course – it was resolved to re-circulate to Governors the access information to those who may be interested in doing the on-line course.
ACTION: Louise Pennington

c) Skills and Experience Audit 2017/2018

The Committee reviewed the latest details and agreed that future vacancies should be filled with candidates having business/entrepreneurial and private sector experience where possible.

It was noted that the overall skills/experience records were in complete as only 10 out of 17 Governors had responded (Staff and Student numbers were included in the calculation). It was agreed to revise the schedule next time to include information disclosed by Governors in the Corporation Profile for any skills audit form responses outstanding. **ACTION: Louise Pennington**

d) DBS Record for Existing Governors

The latest records were noted. In response to a question from the Committee, it was suggested that HR Department should be asked about auto-renewal and whether this might be worth considering for Governors going forward (and revise instructions for new Governors accordingly). **ACTION: Louise Pennington**

It was also suggested that the evidence check record should include a named individual rather than “HR Department” **ACTION: Louise Pennington**

7) Freedom of Information Review

a) FOI Publication Scheme

The FOI publication scheme as revised was recommended to Corporation for approval subject to revising the reference to “Masterplan” to read “project plans” in respect of the College’s Capital Projects. **ACTION: Louise Pennington**

a) Summary of FOI Requests

It was noted that Philip Harland as the FOI Officer had sight of all FOI requests made to the College. The list of requests and summary details were noted by the Committee.

8) Confidentiality Review of Corporation and Committee Meeting Minutes and Meeting Papers

The Committee reviewed and recommended the paper to Corporation, noting that the Remuneration Committee minutes/papers should also be retained as confidential. **ACTION: Louise Pennington**

9) Self-Assessment

a) Individual Governor Self-Assessment

The Committee noted the contents of the report and the various additional comments made by governors. The following additional points were recorded:

- Finance training request– refer to Elaine French. **ACTION :Louise Pennington**
- Curriculum Training request – refer below item d)
- Governors interested in becoming Chair – the details were noted and would kept under review in light of Janice Robinson’s likely retirement date in 2020. **ACTION: Janice Robinson**

b) Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Noted.

c) Governance SAR

The Committee reviewed the Governance SAR noting that it reflected Ofsted’s Common Inspection Framework questions relating to Leadership and Management and also following the format used by all other College Departments.

Reference was also made to the SFCA document recently issued to Colleges, entitled Guidance on Board Effectiveness to see whether consideration should be given to using this document for future Governance SAR returns.

The Committee was also reminded that the College had recently undergone a full Ofsted Inspection at which the Chair of Governors had met with the Lead Ofsted Inspection to discussion governance aspects, but noting that current inspections had a greater focus upon the teaching and learning in the classroom and safeguarding issues.

The Committee resolved to recommend the Governance SAR in the current form to Corporation for approval, noting that once the Ofsted Report had been issued, relevant comments would be included in SAR. The Committee also recommended that governance should be graded “2” – good. **ACTION: Louise Pennington**

Regarding the references to the College’s Accommodation Strategy within the document, Philip Harland explained the progress made to date and advised that Heads of School and Assistant Heads of School had been invited to submit proposals within their respective areas for future developments and needs including maintenance aspects, should capital funds become available. From this SLT will work with consultants to take forward the various proposals, should further capital grants become available. The Committee also noted that the College had a Masterplan document which included the various proposals which the College has discussed over recent years including the STEM Centre (planning now agreed), the replacement of the temporary huts in the Northern Quad, relocation of the Main Entrance to the East side of the estates, performance structure next to gym etc The Committee accepted that owing to financial constraints within the sector and very limited capital grants, it would not be necessary to develop a written accommodation strategy and that the Masterplan would probably suffice for the time-being. However it was suggested that

Corporation should have a further discussion regarding strategy should further capital funds become available to ensure that a structured plan is established which included clear priorities.

The Committee was also reminded that the Corporation had established an Accommodation Working Group to take forward Capital Development work and oversight, between Corporation Meetings.

The whole College SAR which will incorporate aspects of the Governance SAR will be uploaded to the website once approved. Louise Pennington confirmed that she had sent a copy to Pete Bailey.

ACTION: Louise Pennington

d) Report on Governors 1:1 with Chair

Janice Robinson introduced her paper and summarised the key aspects. The following points were highlighted:

- Some of the feedback reinforces commentary included within the Governance SAR above.
- Overall Governors have commented that they have sufficient opportunities to shape the College's strategic direction.
- Strategy and the Curriculum - Some Governors were uncertain about the College's strategy and how the Corporation monitors progress including targets. At this point it was recorded that the Strategy Planning day usually provided a focus for this, but that regular strategic reports were given by the Principal to Corporation. It was agreed that the induction process going forward should incorporate a meeting with the Chair/Principal to cover these aspects but also to arrange meetings with Pete Bailey/Donna-Marie Janson and Elaine French (Finance) so that new Governors are aware of the management areas and involvement with the Governing Body.

ACTION: Louise Pennington

- Taking into account the fact that a curriculum training request had been made via the individual Governor self-assessment form and referring to the induction sessions for new Governors with SLT detailed above, it was agreed that these sessions should ensure that the curriculum offer should be explained so that Governors are not uncertain about the courses available at the College. **ACTION: SLT**
- Finance –The Committee agreed that this area appeared to be very well managed by the College but they were aware that Governors relied heavily on one or two governors regarded as experts in finance. It has been suggested that more should be done regarding ensure that the College achieves value for money with all contracts signed. At this point it was also noted that the Audit Committee meeting held earlier in the day had also raised this issue and Management had referred to the College's financial regulations. Recognising that the internal audit work is limited in this area, it was agreed that to ensure that Governors are seen to be doing their job of checking that value for money is achieved on contracts arranged, a report should be prepared and presented to Governors via the Audit Committee, to enable Governors to challenge more effectively and to ensure that the value for money issue is evidenced before signing off the budget. **ACTION: Philip Harland/Elaine French**

- Governors have suggested that they would like more opportunities to praise and support staff and that this might be possible to do via presentations given to Governors before Corporation meetings or link day aspects. The Committee thought that the latter would be the better option as the Governing body meetings are already quite lengthy.
- Governors have also suggested that meetings should be more focused and time managed which the Chair agreed to lead on.

Guidance on Board Effectiveness document – see below.

e) SFCA Guidance on Board Effectiveness

It was resolved to circulate the SFCA document to all Governors for information, with the December Corporation meeting papers. **ACTION: Louise Pennington**

10) Governor Link Arrangements for 2018/2019 – Wednesday 16th January 2019

The arrangements as detailed in the paper were approved by the Committee. *Post meeting minute: Owing to a clash with a SFCA conference, the Links day has been revised to Tuesday 15th January 2019.*

11) Date of Next Meeting

Monday 4th March 2019

12) Any Other Business

Chair.....

Date.....

Louise Pennington 19/11/18