

**MINUTES OF THE
CORPORATION MEETING**

HELD ON WEDNESDAY 6th DECEMBER 2017 AT 6.00 P.M.

MEETING 17/02

Present: Jane Alderton (until 7.00 p.m.), Randall Anderson, Robert Bridges, Jane Farrell, Philip Harland, Simon Lindfield, Anton Pruden, Janice Robinson, Richard Seager, Katharine Travis, Zenobia Thomas-Atkin, Aldona Wheeler

In Attendance: Jill Arnold, Peter Bailey, Elaine French, Louise Pennington

Apologies received: Cathy McDonnell, Billy McInally and Simon Waters, Ramy Danial and Ayas Fallon-Khan were also absent.

In the Chair: Janice Robinson

1. Welcomes and Apologies for Absence

Apologies – as recorded above.

2. Declaration of Interest

None recorded.

3. Minutes of the Meeting on 11th October 2017 Part I

The minutes of the Part I minutes were approved by Corporation and the Chair authorised to sign these as a correct record of the meeting.

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

The contents of the action points' schedule were considered and the actions completed were noted, including those which were on this meeting's agenda. The following additional updates were recorded.

Item 8 Strategic Plan:

- CDP to Governors and termly thereafter – Governors were reminded that information has been included in the SAR.
- Developing a card with the Strategic Aims – underway but not yet finalised.

ACTION: Philip Harland

The action schedule will be updated to reflect any changes accordingly for the next meeting.

ACTION: Louise Pennington.

SIGNIFICANT RISKS 2017/2018– the risks for 2017/2018 were reviewed and would be taken into account, where appropriate when considering various items on the agenda.

5. Chair's Report

Janice Robinson advised that there were no specific items to include within her Report on this occasion and that she would update Governors regarding her confidential report from the last meeting, within item 14 below.

6. Principal's Report

Philip Harland gave his report to Governors on the following items:

- **SFCA National Pay Negotiations:** At this time of year the SFCA national pay negotiations are underway with the Unions, to review and resolve the annual 'cost of living' pay award. To date, on the Support Staff side, agreement has been reached with a 1% pay award, whilst discussions are continuing on the Teachers' side. As the SFCA has no remit from the SFCs to go beyond a 1% pay rise, any on-going discussions will focus upon other aspects, for example offering a slightly higher percentage to lower paid Teachers etc.
- **£600 Grant iro Maths Students:** Government announcement to offer mathematician students, additional £600 grant funding to continue their studies.
- **Additional funding for Technical Qualifications:** funding would be awarded iro work experience options provided by Colleges, for students studying for a technical qualification. In this regard Varndean currently has 260 students who would fall into this proviso. However the work experience organised, is required to meet certain Government set criteria. The College has applied for this additional funding which is estimated to result in approximately £70,000, subject to the criteria being met and the College may opt to recruit an additional part time work experience co-ordinator to assist this process. Final details should be confirmed within the College's funding statement due to be issued in March 2018.
- **Bid for DfE Capital Investment Funding:** The College has applied for funding annually for this but has been unsuccessful in recent years, with last year's application being very close to achieving funding; the feedback received, suggested that the project did not meet value for money criteria and also included VAT (SFCs are not exempt, unless stand -alone build) which was not expected to be included. SLT has revised the STEM centre specifications, based on guidance from the College's consultants, with a significant cost reduction per square metre and removal of the VAT element. The project itself remains largely the same with 4 laboratories and 6 teaching rooms etc. but with an increased footprint and cost will be in the region of £2.8M. The deadline for submission is Thursday 14th December. Subject to approval for submission of the bid, the Principal would return to Corporation to seek agreement to take forward the capital project with associated financial arrangements, which as explained earlier in the year, would include £200,000 of the College's own money combined with a £125,000 loan over 5 years, the latter equating to about £23,000 repayment per year.

At this point Philip Harland requested approval in principle from Corporation to take the revised capital project bid proposals forward and submit the application by the deadline which was endorsed. **ACTION: Philip Harland** However regarding the costings, in response to a request from the Corporation, it was resolved that a financial analysis validation exercise should be completed to determine the impact of

costings on the College's financial forecasts which would also clarify any potential impact on the projected financial health grades. It was agreed that this should be done and considered in the first instance by the Chair of Finance Working Group before the 14th December submission date, but would also be brought to the next Meeting on February 7th 2018, before final approval to take the project forward, would be granted by Governors. **ACTION: Elaine French/Simon Lindfield**

Following a question regarding the removal of the old air raid shelters in the courtyard area at the rear of the main building which affected the College's initial proposals to place temporary accommodation here, it was confirmed that this would not affect the STEM capital bid proposals and all costs to remove the shelters have been included within the revised application.

- **Student Numbers – applications for September 2018:** The student application process has changed from paper based to on-line applications this year and this does not seem to have affected application numbers detrimentally. To date the College has 1,069 completed and processed applications which compares to 930 applications received by January for September 2017 entry. Additionally there have been a further 166 applications which are in process of being considered, so the final number of applications may increase. With the change to the new electronic system, a few issues have been identified and this includes approximately 30 applications which had been submitted twice. For assurance purposes, the College will also check that no prospective students have applied to both BHASVIC and Varndean College, although the on-line system does not facilitate this.
- **Jill Arnold, Deputy Principal Retirement – end of 2017/2018 academic year:** Philip Harland informed Governors of the process underway to find a successor, noting that a consultation process with certain staff and management had taken place. Following this, SLT has decided to advertise the vacancy externally at a Vice-Principal level with a main focus upon Student Services. Other aspects of Jill Arnold's role will be re-distributed amongst other senior staff, including the management of the curriculum being allocated to Peter Bailey, whose role will move from Director level to Vice-Principal level. Other Heads of Schools' current issues and potential changes were noted. The Vice-Principal (Student Services) advert is likely to be announced at the beginning of February to ensure sufficient time is made available. The Corporation gave its support to the Principal's proposals.

7. Student Governors' Report

Zenobia Thomas-Atkin gave the Student Governors' Report noting the following:

- Two Student Council Meetings have been held since the last Corporation meeting with three key items to record:
 - a) Both Student Governors attended a Governor Induction Course in London last week and had time to network with other Student Governors from London and the South East, which was very useful.
 - b) Events have been organised for the last week of Term: Christmas Movie to be shown in the Student Common Room on Tuesday and Thursday lunchtimes; Friday – invited Students to take part in the Christmas Jumper campaign which will also encourage Students to donate £1 each for Save the Children; a meeting

has been scheduled with Canteen Staff to feedback Student issues and concerns regarding the facilities provided.

8. Curriculum and Standards

i) Quality of Teaching and Learning

a) College SAR (Self-Assessment Report) and Quality Improvement Plan

Jill Arnold presented the paper to the Corporation reporting on the following key points:

- The SAR represents the over-arching document for the College's annual self-assessment process but each department (Teaching and Support areas) prepares a detailed self-assessment report and action plan/Quality Improvement Plan (QIP), based on the CIF (College Inspection Framework) which is taken into account in preparing the whole College document. Regarding the support areas, there will be some revisions to the format to improve the process. Once the QIPs have been prepared all team reviews are moderated by the appropriate SLT Manager. For the first time this year, the College has taken advantage of its S7 (Surrey and Sussex Colleges) membership and has compared its self-assessment process with Collyers.
- The 2 page paper front sheet to the SAR and QIP, provides a further summary for Governors, highlighting key aspects from the document. The overall effectiveness based on the College SAR process, has been graded as "good" based on the CIF criteria. Contributory grades are Leadership and Management – good; Outcomes – good; Teaching, Learning and Assessment– outstanding; Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare – outstanding. The Corporation was informed that based on the last inspection and the annual self-assessment work, SLT thought that the College was close to achieving overall "outstanding" status.
- SLT has added additional comparator information as requested by Governors last year together with strategic aims. Also on request from Governors last year, the Report now includes further breakdown information in respect of the BTECs and A Level qualifications/results etc. This shows that BTEC outcomes have improved compared to last year, following a number of initiatives imposed to ensure improvements in this area. Furthermore a more detailed grade breakdown has been incorporated to assist Governors' understanding.
- Cross College (Support areas) grades which historically have been more difficult to establish owing to the fact that there are no obvious "results" type analysis, but two areas have been classified as outstanding – Library and Additional Support/Well-being. Most Cross College areas have been graded as "good".
- Core studies (Tutor time) – having received feedback from Students via the Student Survey last year, revisions have been made to this area and graded accordingly, although any improvements in the revised provision, won't be recognised until next year's SAR process.

- Jill Arnold reported on progress on last year's objectives and the key priorities for the coming year. Following a discussion on work experience options, it was suggested that if Governors had work experience options available to College Students, to contact Jill Arnold in the first instance. **ACTION: Governors**
- Following a question from Corporation regarding comparative achievement analysis for different groups of Students, it was noted that further analysis was being done in this area by Philip Harland.

The Corporation recorded its thanks to Jill Arnold for co-ordinating the Self-Assessment process and to the staff and students for the good results, particularly noting the improvement in BTEC.

9. Audit Committee Matters

Randall Anderson presented the various papers to the Corporation and referred Governors to the matters discussed at the Audit Committee (draft Audit Committee's refer). The following documents were approved by the Corporation and where applicable the Chair and Principal authorised to sign these:

- Annual Report of the Audit Committee (including terms of reference)**
- Annual Report and Financial Statements to 31/7/17**
- Audit Completion Report**
- Letters of Representation: Financial Statements and Regularity Audit**
- Regularity Audit Self-Assessment Questionnaire**
- Internal Assurance Performance Review Indicators (Mazars)**
- Risk Management Annual Report (and Action Plan)**
- Risk Assurance Map Update**
- Risk Register**
- Risk Management Policy**
- Audit Committee Draft Minutes of Meeting held on 20th November 2017**
- Risk Group meeting Draft Minutes from Meeting held on 3rd October 2017**

10. Finance

Elaine French introduced the Finance Report and the following points were recorded.

- Financial Update: Executive Summary and Dashboard**

The key aspects of the Executive Summary were highlighted, noting that Governors had seen an earlier version of this at the October 2017 meeting and there had been a revision to the figures in respect of additional Staff costs to cater for the additional Students. This had impacted the scoring slightly with a reduction in the Ebitdar (Earnings before Interest, Tax, Depreciation, amortisation and restructuring/rent) score, by 10 points iro the overall costs.

Referring to the dashboard schedule it was verified that the predicted surplus was based upon income and expenditure and that no account within this figure had been taken of pension adjustments. Elaine French confirmed that following an earlier request from

Governors, she was in the process of preparing a summary to explain the adjustment process to Governors which should be ready for the next meeting. **ACTION: Elaine French**

Pay awards – 1.5% allocation has been included within this year's budget and the intention is to pay the award to staff within month 12 as previously agreed. Historically once the pay award has been formally agreed nationally, it was usually paid to Teaching and Support Staff at the same time and should the final agreement for Teaching Staff be higher than the 1% on the table, Governors would be consulted prior to any payment being implemented.

b) **Property Matters/Update**

Jane Alderton left the meeting.

Elaine French reported that the conversion of the 3 existing small maths classrooms into a laboratory space for Students was progressing well and that it would be ready for handover at the beginning of the New Year as scheduled.

SLT were also in the process of reviewing options to increase additional female bathroom space.

At this point in the meeting, reference was made to the Peter Lauener's (outgoing Chief Executive of the ESFA (Education and Skills Funding Agency)) letter and it was agreed that no further action should be taken

c) **ESFA Assessment of College's Financial Plan 2016-2018**

The annual notification from the ESFA has not yet been received so will be advised to Governors at the next Corporation Meeting. However Philip Harland said that it was unlikely that there would be any significant issues arising, as the ESFA main College contact had already commented that there were unlikely to be any issues arising from the College's 3 year plan. **ACTION: Elaine French**

11. Search and Governance

Janice Robinson reported on the discussions and recommendations from the recent Search and Governance Committee meeting and referring to the draft Committee minutes, the following documents a, b and c, were approved.

- a) **Self-Assessment (Governance SAR)**
- b) **FOI Publication Scheme**
- c) **Confidentiality Report**
- d) **Governor Training Needs**
- e) **Draft Minutes of Meeting held on 20th November 2017**

Governor Training Needs: Thanks were recorded to Governors for the high level of responses which the Committee had reviewed. In conclusion the most popular training/development choices would be taken forward as follows:

- Policy updates – Philip Harland would continue to report termly on various Government and sector initiatives to ensure that Governors were kept informed.

- Curriculum Matters and Ofsted – SLT members will provide training in this area and a mid-term (Spring 2018) seminar will be organised to explain the Curriculum Offer and associated issues, including how the curriculum may have changed in recent years. Ofsted training will be given either before an Ofsted visit or if/when Ofsted criteria change. **ACTION: Peter Bailey/Jill Arnold**
- Safeguarding – on-line training session is available for interested Governors and Louise Pennington will be writing to Governors about this in January. At this point Jill Arnold advised that she or Sue Hirshler (Designated Leader Safeguarding Staff Member) would be happy to provide 1:1 training to Governors on request. **ACTION: Louise Pennington**
- Finance and Audit Matters – Elaine French has kindly offered to provide 1:1 training to Governors on request and again details regarding this will be included in the January Letter to Governors. **ACTION: Louise Pennington/Elaine French**

Membership Matters: The Committee's recommendations were endorsed, namely that in respect of Anton Pruden's retirement as a Governor (January 2018), Jane Farrell has agreed to be appointed as an external Governor with effect from December 2018 (when her existing term as a Parent Governor is due to cease). She will also be appointed to the SPH Remuneration Committee. To replace Anton Pruden as Chair of SPH Remuneration Committee, Jane Alderton will be appointed with effect from January 2018. The Committee will continue to review the vacancy on the Finance Working Group and bring back a recommendation to the next Corporation Meeting in March 2018.

Governance SAR: In response to a question from the Corporation, it was confirmed that the self-assessment process was an internal one and the limitations regarding benchmarking data were noted. It was suggested that should the Corporation be interested in pursuing this further, the S7 organisation may be able to provide a moderation SAR service.

11. Date of Next Meeting - Wednesday 7th February 2018 at 6.00 p.m

Reminder of other dates for Spring Term:

Governor Links Day – 15th January 2018

Strategic Planning Conference 14th March 2018 12 p.m. – 4.00 p.m.

12. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

13. Confidential Business

Refer to separate Part II Minutes.

Chair.....

Date.....

Louise Pennington 6/12/17