

**VARNDEAN COLLEGE**

**MINUTES OF THE RISK MANAGEMENT GROUP MEETING**

**HELD ON FRIDAY 5<sup>th</sup> MAY 2017 AT 9.00 A.M.**

Present: Randall Anderson, Jill Arnold, Ayas Fallon-Khan, Philip Harland,  
Elaine French

In Attendance: Louise Pennington

Apologies: None

In the Chair: Randall Anderson

**1. Apologies for Absence**

As given above.

**2. Declaration of Interests**

None.

**3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> October 2016**

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

**4. Matters Arising**

a) Action Points from last the last meeting

- 7/10/16 item 4 Commissioning IT Audit: The Group was informed that a mock phishing e mail had been sent to staff from the IT Department in order to identify staff general awareness. It was noted that a number of staff had opened the e mail and that some had also clicked on the link in the text. The Group was reminded that on line security would be included as a training session for staff at the July inset. Additionally Elaine French advised that she would be following up the internal auditors' action today to discuss progress with the IT Audit work. **ACTION: Elaine French**

b) Rolling Action Plan from Audit - progress was noted by the Group and the following additional points recorded:

- Financial Statements – no actions to date.
- Internal Audit –
  - Item 1 Update budget setting timetable etc – this is underway as part of the review of the Finance timetable/list of tasks for the year.
  - Item 2 Budget holders should be provided with annual refresher training on budgeting and financial issues etc – Elaine French explained that relevant training had been provided so far, to high level budget holders on an individual basis and that there was

an intention either in the Summer Term or next academic year, to provide a more broad financial training session, starting with the Heads of School, regarding capitation. **ACTION: Elaine French.** Philip Harland advised that regular financial updates on various general financial issues affecting the College and the FE Sector, were included within the weekly Staff briefing.

- There have been two internal audits since the last Risk Group Meeting and Mazars are undertaking the finance audit work this week. Following this, the auditors will meet with Elaine French to discuss the details and recommendations.
- Philip Harland also reported that SLT would be proposing at the forthcoming Finance Working Group (12<sup>th</sup> June), that there should be a greater emphasis on the budget holders managing their budget/budget planning with options to claw back any unused budget. The Group discussed the various pros and cons of various options in relation to this.

## **5. Latest Risk Management Action Plan 2016-2017**

Elaine French introduced the paper, the contents of which were noted and recommended to Audit Committee (and subsequently to Corporation) for approval, subject to the following comments:

- Risk HR1 Inability to fill key staff roles – Jill Arnold informed the Group that the College had recently advertised nationally four teaching staff roles (History, English, Biology, Maths) and had a good response, with interviews scheduled shortly; most of the applicants were local, including some interest generated as a result of the closure of Haywards Heath Sixth Form. The College has also recently appointed a Sports Teacher and one further post will be advertised too in respect of a 1 year sabbatical for a Film Studies Teacher. In response to a question from the Group, Jill Arnold advised that the College normally shortlisted 4 or 5 candidates and that the interview process comprised an interview with SLT, subject interview with Assistant Head of Schools, Lesson Observation and various other exercises/tests.
- Risk HR2 Staff Morale deteriorates as a consequence of heavy workload and restrictions on remuneration – Philip Harland referred the Group to the discussion regarding a proposal to investigate moving relevant staff to NSP9 (as reported at March 2017 Corporation) and he confirmed that he was now in the process of engaging with the Unions to discuss this formally; a report will be included in the next Staff Briefing (Monday 8<sup>th</sup> May), identifying options for this move for those postholders with existing management responsibilities/allowances by the same amount (£2,638). Existing postholders in this situation would have their salaries protected and if there were any staff members likely to lose out, the amounts were likely to be in the region of £125, this would be cash protected. The proposed change would give flexibility to SLT with reference to future staffing appointments and also in respect of rationalisation of management responsibilities, whereby a re-distribution may be proposed if staff have aggregated responsibilities. In response to a question from the Group, Philip Harland advised that this was unlikely to have an impact on risk HR2, as staff with existing management allowances would be cash protected. At this point the Group held a discussion about the likely SFCA national pay negotiations for next year and implications for the College's budget, particularly post 2017/2018. Philip Harland

advised that more information would be available after the next SFCA Conference in June 2017. **ACTION: Philip Harland**

The Group also discussed the welfare and appraisal process at the College, noting that the College compared well within the sector, regarding welfare options for staff, including free counselling services.

- Risk P1 – There are insufficient resources of the right type available to meet accommodation needs. This is particularly within the Science area (labs). Within the Planned Action column, it was recorded that the reference to the CIF bid submission in March 2017 should be updated, detailing the outcome and option to appeal. **ACTION: Elaine French.** Philip Harland updated the Group regarding the unsuccessful bid, and the reasons for appeal, noting that the College's bid had achieved a score of 66%, whilst 67% was required to gain approval.
- Risk F1 Financial instability resulting from uncertain efficiency gains required by Government. The Group discussed the various political manifestos in relation to Sixth form provision.
- Risk F2 Risk of not growing owing to competition and demand affecting financial viability. Regarding the Planned Action entry, it was noted that there was also the additional risk of exceeding its planned applications for 2017/2018.
- Risk C1 – it was resolved that the risk wording should be revised to read “Failure to improve value added on BTEC courses” – **ACTION: Elaine French**
- Risk C3 Inability to provide increased demand for specialist support services (including financial pressures) – noted action from last Group meeting completed as Risk moved to A Category Risk.

Regarding the B Category risks, these were reviewed and agreed that there were no requirements for change, although it was suggested that the risk classification of MA2 (College unable to retain sufficient staff at the required levels and quality) may be reviewed, owing to the fact that the risk has lessened over the last year.

Revise the Risk Management Action Plan (and also item 6) Risk Register, as recorded above and recommend to Audit Committee at its next meeting in June. **ACTION: Elaine French.**

## **6. Review of Risks – Risk Register and Emerging Risks**

The Group considered the risk register for 2016/2017, which was presented by Elaine French and reference was made to the various risks discussed as reported above, noting that any revisions to the Register following comments made in item 5, would be included in the final version going to the next Audit Committee in June. **ACTION: Elaine French**

No changes to the C and D risks within the Register were recommended.

Emerging Risks – The Group discussed terrorism and associated insurance options and Elaine French confirmed that following recent discussions on the Financial Directors' on line Forum regarding this issue, she would be liaising with the College's insurance to make initial enquiries regarding insurance coverage and associated premiums. The Group recognised that like most Schools and Colleges, Varndean's site was open to the public, but that options to improve security would be restricted owing to cost. It was also agreed that Elaine French should seek further information on this subject from the SFCA and AoC and Philip Harland

also advised that he would be speaking to Jo Lyons (Local Authority). **ACTION: Elaine French/Philip Harland**

The Group was also reminded that since there were now two meetings per year, the Risks had been reviewed and revised in October 2016 (refer minutes).

**7. Date of Next Meeting – to be agreed**

**8. Any Other Business**

It was resolved that the Group should continue to meet twice per year.

There was no other business.

CHAIR.....

DATE.....

Louise Pennington 05/05/2017