

VARNDEAN COLLEGE
MINUTES OF
THE SEARCH & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 16th MARCH 2021 AT 10.30 A.M. VIRTUAL MEETING
VIA GOOGLE MEETS

Present: Donna-Marie Janson, Simon Lindfield, Janice Robinson, 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 held on 24th November 2020**

The minutes of the meeting were approved and the Chair authorised to sign them.

4) **Matters Arising – Action Point**

The Committee considered the various actions within Appendix 1 and noted those items which had been completed or carried forward.

5. Corporation and Committee Membership Review.

a) Forthcoming Retirements/End of Terms of Office/Reappointment

- Ayas Fallon Khan term of office is due to end in December 2021. The Committee agreed that he should be contacted to determine whether he'd be willing to serve another 4 year term of office. **ACTION: Louise Pennington**
- **Student governors** – elections: It was noted that the outcome of the Student Union election process would be available on 26th March 2021 and that the new Student Governors would be invited to the Corporation meeting on 31st March 2021. **ACTION: Louise Pennington**
- **Staff Governor** – the deadline for receipt of nominations for the Support Staff Governor vacancy is 19th March 2021.

- b) **Vacancy on Finance Working Group** – The Committee reviewed the Group membership and it was agreed that it would be useful to have another Member who had some finance knowledge and understanding. It was resolved that in the first instance, Jill Arnold (retired Deputy Principal at Varndean College), who had expressed an interest in becoming a Governor last year (refer previous S & G Committee meeting minutes), to see if she'd be interested in becoming a co-opted FWG Member. With her knowledge, experience and expertise of the FE sector, it was thought that she'd be a very useful member of the Group. If she accepts the invitation, the Committee was reminded that should she also be employed by the College from time to time, in a consultancy role or otherwise, then appropriate processes should be put in place to avoid any conflicts of interest (noting that Jill Arnold had provided assistance along with other recent retirees, for the College's enrolment process) and to ensure such disclosures were also recorded. **ACTION: Janice Robinson/Donna-Marie Janson/Louise Pennington**

The Committee was reminded that it reviewed the overall skills and experience of all Governors during its Autumn Term Meeting, once the annual skills audit returns had been completed by Governors.

Janice Robinson also agreed to raise the matter of Committee Membership with each Governor at her 1:1 meetings in the Summer Term, to gain reassurance that Governors were allocated to the best Committee to reflect their skill set.

The Committee also agreed that the membership of each Committee should be reviewed regularly.

c) New IB Link Governor and approve Role Description

The Committee noted the IB Link Governor role description and also the record of the online meeting held recently with Lee Findlay-Gray (IB Lead), Ayas Fallon Khan (IB Link Governor) and Louise Pennington.

The Committee discussed the role and agreed that it should be made clear to all Governors that any link role should be carried out on the understanding that there should be no involvement in operational issues and that the link roles are purely to act as intermediaries to understand a particular area of the College's business, with a view to communicate and inform Governors. Janice Robinson agreed to reiterate the governance protocols and boundaries for Link Governors at the Corporation meeting to ensure that these were clear to all Governors.

The IB role description was recommended to Corporation for approval, subject to revising the references to "he/she" to read "the Governor". **ACTION: Louise Pennington**

d) Chair of Governors' Succession

It was confirmed that Janice Robinson was currently in the middle of a for a 4 year term as Chair until July 2024, but that she had indicated that she would consider stepping down in the 2021/2022 year, subject to a successor being available at that time. As noted above, she will be asking Governors at the Summer Term 1:1s to identify those who would be interested in the Chair role. It was agreed that the Chair role description should be reviewed and also an estimation of time required for the job, should be made. **ACTION: Janice Robinson/Louise Pennington**

The Committee discussed possible candidates for the Chair role and Janice Robinson agreed to liaise with all Governors to determine interest in the role at the forthcoming 1:1s in the Summer Term. **ACTION: Janice Robinson**

6. Governance Self-Assessment

a) Individual Governor Annual Self-Assessment Returns

The contents of the summary schedule were considered by the Committee and the following points recorded:

- Noting some responses “to some extent” which was open to interpretation if explanatory comments weren’t included in the response/s.
- The various training points were noted and that some of these would be covered via the various training on offer, including the SFCA webinars and the ETF Governance Programme – refer below.
- Interest in becoming a Chair – limited response.
- Some Governors had identified that they had no training needs and it was assumed that this was in respect of some of the longer term serving Governors, but wouldn’t rule out on-going development training.
- Janice Robinson agreed to question Governors at her 1:1s regarding training needs and interest and suitability in taking on the Chair role at some point. **ACTION: Janice Robinson**
- The Committee referred to the ETF Governance Development Programme included on the agenda and agreed that this would for a very reasonable cost, provide Governors with a flexible option to training and development.

b) Chair 1:1s with Governors – Summer Term

Refer above.

c) Review Corporation SAR’s Quality Improvement Plan

The QIP content was noted and in response to a question from the Committee regarding the planned action listed in respect of the regular monitoring of the new data dashboard and to alert items to potential “issues”, it was noted that this was reported by the Principal’s Report at Corporation.

Regarding the planned action item regarding the Chair’s performance review, it was agreed that the date references should be removed. **ACTION: Louise Pennington**

The Committee was also reminded that the Governance SAR format would be reviewed as agreed last term – refer minutes. **ACTION: Louise Pennington**

7. Governor Training Including the New Education and Training Foundation (ETF) Governor Development Programme and a review of the SFCA Governance Webinar Programme

Reference was made to the discussions held earlier under item 6 a) and the training programme details were also noted.

The existing SFCA webinar programme for Governors was also discussed and although the training records, included only a few Governors as attending some of the webinars, it was thought that others had been attending, but had just not informed LEP/JH of their attendance.

The College has signed up to the ETF programme at a cost of £200 for 1 year for all Governors as it was thought this was good value, but before sending the information on to Governors, it was agreed that the Chair should promote this and encourage Governors to sign up to this at the Corporation meeting on 31st March 2021, prior to sharing the information provided, noting that it may be more appealing to newer Governors. **ACTION: Janice Robinson**

8. Date of Next Meeting – Tuesday 22nd June 2021 at 10.30 a.m.

9. Any Other Business - None.

In response to a question from the Committee, Donna-Marie Janson gave an update of the Student testing programme at the College and thanks were also recorded to Brendan Ward (Governor) for helping with the test centre logistics, in light of his NHS employment experience.

Chair.....

Date.....

Janice Robinson 16/03/21