



Full Corporation Meeting

4th October 2023

Time: 6.00 pm
Chair: Mr Nick Horsfall

Present:

Mark Rigby	Y	Carol Davies	Y	Nick Horsfall	Y
Andy Lythgoe	Y	Stuart Merrills	Y	Glenys Hughes	Y
Angus Hughes	A	Sam Jackson	A	Carole Swarbrick	Y
Susan Wright	Y	Rob Coyle	Y	Alison Oakley	Y
Bashir Shama	Y	Bilkis Ismail	A	Martyn Cox	Y
Alexandria Stones	Y				

In Attendance:

Lesley Hart Deputy Principal	Y	Sandra McManus Deputy Principal - Curriculum	Y	Sarah Ball Assistant Principal	Y
Tracy Tunstall Clerk	Y				

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Angus Hughes, Bilkis Ismail and Sam Jackson.

2. Appointment of Chair of Governors

The Clerk informed Governors that as one nomination for Chair of Governors had been received no further proposals could be made. A vote was taken and Nick Horsfall was **unanimously elected** as Chair of Governors for a one year term of office.

He took the Chair.

3. Appointment of Vice Chair of Governors

The Chair informed Governors that as one nomination for Vice Chair of Governors had been received no further proposals could be made. A vote was taken and Mark Rigby was **unanimously elected** as Vice Chair of Governors for a one year term of office.

4. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

5. Safeguarding Training for Governors

Darren McFarlane, Learning Support Manager and Safeguarding Lead delivered a detailed safeguarding training update to Governors. He highlighted the main changes of filtering and monitoring online safety as students use the internet. He reported that Smoothwall can identify if students are using a college or a personal device, but if using a personal device it will only monitor what is carried out in college.

Mr McFarlane informed Governors that he would circulate the presentation to them in order that they can undertake the Keeping Children Safe in Education training and asked that this is completed by the end of October.

A Governor asked if the Safeguarding Team is adequately resourced and **noted** that the office has been re-located to the middle of the College which is more easily accessible. Mr McFarlane informed Governors that the use of CPOMS gives access to information of students from primary school onwards and that the Safeguarding Team are aware of individual issues from the date of enrolment.

A Governor asked if students are aware that their use of devices is being monitored and **noted** that they are informed as part of the induction programme delivered during the first week of term.

Mr McFarlane left the meeting.

6. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 11th July 2023 were **agreed** as a true and accurate record.

7. Matters Arising from the Minutes

(a) Minute 5(b)(iv) - 360° Appraisal Process for Chair of Governors and process for annual meeting with individual members

The Vice Chair of Governors reported that the appraisal process of the Chair of Governors was now complete and that the outcomes would be discussed at the next Governance and Search Committee. He informed Governors that the Chair would begin the process of meeting with all governors on an individual basis to ensure that they have the right support and training to enable them to fulfil their role.

(b) Minute 5(e) - Minutes of the Finance and Personnel Committee

A Governor asked if any progress had been made on the works required to replace the roof and **noted** that there was nothing further to report. The bid would be re-submitted in December and attention would be paid to the comments made by the CIF Assessment Team Leader from her

informal feedback on the previously unsuccessful bid. The Deputy Principal highlighted that an increased college contribution will be required. Governors **noted** that around £20k has been spent recently on 'patching' areas of the roof and that it is likely that a further £20k will need to be spent over this academic year.

8. Appointment of Parent Governor

The Chair informed Governors that Mr Stephen Bamber is proposed as a Parent Governor. He highlighted the difficulties there have been in the past in attracting Parent Governors and reported that Mr Bamber's background would be an asset on the Full Corporation. A vote was taken and Stephen Bamber was **unanimously elected** as a Parent Governor for a four year term of office ending 3rd October 2027.

9. Minutes of the Governance and Search Committee

The Chair of the Committee informed Governors that the Terms of Reference had been considered and that it had been agreed that the number of meetings required throughout the year is reduced from six to three, although meetings will take place on an ad-hoc basis should the need arise.

10. Approval of Policies:

(a) Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

The Assistant Principal informed Governors that the Safeguarding and Child Protection policy had been updated and was presented for Governors' approval. She highlighted Appendix 18 and reported that all staff sign the Statement of Staff Commitment annually.

Governors **agreed to approve** the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

(b) Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

The Assistant Principal informed Governors that the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy had been updated and was presented for approval.

Governors **agreed to approve** the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

(c) Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) Policy 2023-24

The Assistant Principal informed Governors that the CEIAG Policy has been reviewed and is presented for formal approval. She drew attention to the National Careers Strategy ensuring that all students have access to a quality careers programme measured against the Gatsby Benchmarks.

Governors **agreed to approve** the Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) Policy for 2023-24.

(d) Careers Programme Brochure

The Careers Programme Brochure was presented for Governors' information. The brochure outlines the Careers Programme for both Years 12 and 13 and is available on the website. All Governors should have a good working knowledge of this programme.

Governors noted the Careers Programme.

11. Retention and Past Achievement Review 2023

The Deputy Principal – Curriculum reported on the headline data from this summer's examination results. She reminded Governors of the ALPS colour coding and reported that whilst ALPS is not overly reliable it is useful for staff to see areas of concern more easily.

The Deputy Principal – Curriculum informed Governors that whilst there were fantastic results there were also a number of areas of concern. The Science Department value added is of concern. Some concerns had been raised during the year in the English Department and highlighted that three teachers in the department were new to the College. There appear to be marking issues with the board and the Head of Department is currently seeking clarification as grade boundaries are different. Coursework needs to be improved and the English Team are keen to make big changes.

The Business Department have seen a slight dip in grades however there are three ECTs in the department. A meeting has taken place with staff and changes have been implemented. Computing had been a concern during the year and interventions put in place however grades had not been achieved sufficiently. Further actions are now being put in place this year.

Art courses in the main are below par and the Deputy Principal – Curriculum will be working with the team to resolve identifiable issues.

There is specific work to be done in key areas and a fuller report will be given to the next Curriculum and Quality Committee, however performance by subject and examination grade boundaries were not equitable across subjects for 2023.

The BTEC overall pass rate was maintained although there was an 8.3% drop in high grades in Extended Diplomas and 7.8% in Extended Certificates. The Quality Nominee is working with relevant Heads of Department and Course Leaders.

GCSE results in English were outstanding although Maths is not as good. Many students in this maths cohort began from a very low start point of grades 1 and 2. Published statistics show that the Sixth Form average for grade 4 is 17.5% , our results of 19.1% are above the national picture.

A Governor asked what had been put in place to give SMT the confidence that the strategies will work? The Deputy Principal reported that she and the Principal had met with every team, and considered each back-story. A Quality Improvement Plan has been developed for each Department and each Department now had a Teaching and Learning Coach.

Governors expressed concern that many interventions had already been put in place within the Science Department but the results had still not improved. The Deputy Principal – Curriculum informed Governors that staff need to buy in to the interventions and there is lack of cohesion in

the Department. A Governor stated that this was not acceptable. The Deputy Principal – Curriculum informed Governors that a Deep Dive exercise is being undertaken in the Science Department this week.

A Governor asked what management needed from Governors to make change and asked if the department has become too large and should the decision be made to reduce student numbers within the department?

A more detailed discussion would take place at the Curriculum and Quality Committee.

12. Principal's Report

The Principal spoke to his report. He informed Governors that the College currently has 1866 students on its register. The census date for reporting student numbers is the end of October and it is likely therefore, that numbers could still fall. There have been significant increases in some subject areas although declining numbers in Art. Student numbers in Sport have almost doubled.

Mrs S Wright left the meeting.

A Governor asked if some students had not been offered places on courses this year and the Principal reported that some students had changed their subject choice and we had not been able to offer them a place. The most popular courses are full and there is a waiting list for a place should one become available.

The Principal drew attention to the headline funding changes and reported that the funding rate per student had increased from £4,642 to £4,753. He also reported that the programme cost weightings had increased as some courses are more expensive to run.

The Principal informed Governors that the Local Skills Improvement Fund aims to plug local skills gaps and to assist people moving into jobs closer to home. Sixth Form Colleges and 16-19 academies are not allowed to lead bids but can benefit from the fund as delivery partners. A bid has been put forward in the digital skills area which is a joint bid with Wigan and Leigh College as the project lead. The DfE are due to announce the results of the bid in October 2023.

The Principal gave an update on pay negotiations and reported that the NEUs mandate to strike has now run out but the NASUWT has confirmed their members' intention to take continuous action short of strike action. For support staff, Unison is seeking a substantial increase on all salary scales and allowances of at least the rate of inflation and are still in negotiations.

The Principal reported that more FE Colleges are joining the SFCA and that the SFCA are currently undertaking a review/job evaluation of job roles.

Governors **noted** that the SFCA are having on-going discussions and pressing for policy change which would enable Regional Directors to approve empty MATs and populate them with schools. A Governor asked if there were any schools who are not currently in a MAT and **noted** that Ladybridge, Westhoughton and Turton schools are not. He asked if there was any reason to do this and the Principal reported that different funding streams are available, VAT and that there are better systems for capital bidding and funding.

It was **agreed** that this would be kept under review.

13. Review of Risk Register 2023/24

The Principal drew attention to the areas of concern and reported that Safer Recruitment modules have yet to be undertaken by some senior/middle management and other staff who may be involved in recruitment processes. He reported that there is a continual need to review vocational education in light of changes to BTEC and T Levels, and the proposal that T levels are to be replaced in 2033/34 with an English International Standard. The Principal highlighted that there are continuous problems with the roof and that the capital bid would be re-submitted within the required timeframe. He also drew attention to the increasing number of more sophisticated cyber attacks and informed Governors that the College has achieved the Cyber Security Plus Accreditation. Failure to recruit and retain staff is becoming increasingly more difficult.

Governors **noted** the Risk Register 2023/24.

14. Management Accounts as at 31st July 2023

The Deputy Principal informed Governors that the Management Accounts were based on the actual financial position as at 31st July 2023. She reported that the Auditors will be on site next week.

The Deputy Principal informed Governors that the Income and Expenditure account is discussed in detail at each Finance and Personnel Committee. She drew attention to the year end difference and reported that A Level Urdu has been offered in College for a number of years, however the numbers enrolling on the course have declined significantly and the course has now been withdrawn. A severance payment has been made to the long serving member of staff who taught Urdu. The Catering Subsidy has increased from £19k to £38k due to the shortfall incurred on the catering contract. Historically the contract was a 'nil subsidy' contract but this cannot be sustained. The contractor has not increased their tariff over the last 2 years however food prices have risen significantly. Governors **noted** that the Loan Interest Payable has increased significantly since the loan was drawn in January 2021 when base rate was 0.10%. Base rate currently stands at 5.25%. The Deputy Principal reported that surplus funds equating to the outstanding balance have been placed on a 12-month fixed deposit at 5.67% in order to maximise interest receivable and offset the increase in interest payable on the outstanding bank loan balance. The treasury deposit matures in July 2024 at which point the cost of repaying the loan will be assessed against the interest payable and interest receivable.

Governors **noted** the healthy surplus position of £693,366.

The Deputy Principal highlighted the Balance Sheet and outlined the budget variances in comparison to the original budget. She highlighted that the restricted cash balances have been shown separately as 'Long Term Assets'. These balances are restricted to the repayment of the bank loan and capital projects to improve the efficiency of the building.

The Balance Sheet recognises the value of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) surplus/deficit attributable to the College. The actuary carries out a valuation of the scheme every 3 years. The performance of the scheme during 2021/22 was such that the college's proportion was estimated to be a small surplus and as the valuation is an estimate, the auditors recommended that the liability be written off to zero. The valuation for the current year has not yet been carried out and will be adjusted once the valuation is completed.

The bank loan agreement includes a number of covenants. These are monitored monthly to ensure compliance as a breach may result in the bank requesting full repayment of the loan.

15. Financial Update: Budget 2023/24 and Forecast 2024/25

The Deputy Principal informed Governors that the financial update was for information purposes only. A detailed paper will be discussed at the next Finance and Personnel Committee in November. She informed Governors that the funding rate per student has been increased from £4,642 to £4,753 to support a pay award of 6.5%. Funding this year is based on 1781 students. A 5% pay award had been factored into the budget and therefore the impact of a 6.5% pay award on the budget is £53K.

Governors noted the report.

16. Committee Membership 2023/24

The Committee Membership for 2023/24 was noted.

17. Full Corporation Cycle of Business Plan

The Clerk informed Governors that she was creating a Cycle of Business for the Full Corporation and that of each Committee and explained the rationale behind this. A full review of the business of the Board and its Committee would be undertaken at the end of the academic year.

18. Any Other Business

- (a) The Clerk highlighted the SFCA Governance Webinar Programme for 2023/24 which she had circulated to all Governors and asked that they inform her of any sessions booked onto in order that a log can be developed of training undertaken.
- (b) The Clerk reminded Governors to send her a short pen portrait so that the Governance section of the website can be developed.

19. Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, 12th December 2023 at 6.00 pm.

All staff, with the exception of the Clerk, and the Student Governor left the meeting.

20. Approval of Senior Post Holder Professional Review and Development Policy

The Chair of Governors gave a detailed report on the rationale behind implementing a Senior Post Holder Professional Review and Development policy. He reported that this work had been carried

out in consultation with an external adviser, who is now preparing a Remuneration Policy for Senior Post Holders including the Clerk. Governors considered the SPH Professional Review and Development Policy in detail and subject to clarification on some matters **agreed to approve** the policy.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.45 pm.