

Minutes of the Meeting of the Corporation [CORP0708-4]**held on Monday 17 March 2008 in Room H201****Action****Present:**

Guy Adams	Chair, Foundation Member	Peter Avery	Principal
David Wood	Foundation Member	Jef Collingwood JP	
Tim Davison	Foundation Member	Ann Helsby	
Paul Grant	Parent Member	Hollie King	
Sara McDiamond	Student Member	Gill Turner	
Mary Tighe	To 6.50 pm	John Rudge	
Penny James	From 5.50 pm	Alison Mackenzie	Staff Member
John Lockwood		Garry Charles	
Mayor of Taunton Deane		Rob Setchell	Staff Member

In Attendance:

James Staniforth	Vice Principal 16-19 Studies to 6.27 pm	Matt Mears	Proposed new Student member of the Corporation
Jane Scott	Clerk to the Corporation	John Peart	Proposed new Student member of the Corporation

The meeting opened at 5.40 pm and was quorate throughout.

PART 1 : MEETING FORMALITIES**1. Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Dominic Lynch and Rosie Viant.

2. Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of personal or financial interest in the business of the current meeting.

3. Minutes of the Meetings held on 10 December 2007 (CORP0708-2) and the annual Strategy Meeting held on 25 January 2008 (CORP0708-3)

The Minutes of the meeting held on 10 December 2007 (CORP0708-2) were agreed as a correct record and signed.

The Minutes of the meeting held on 25 January 2008 were agreed as a correct record and signed.

4. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising which are not dealt with under the agenda for the current meeting.

PART II: ISSUES FOR THE CURRENT MEETING

1. College Self Assessment: Teaching and Learning

Members noted a number of key points in relation to how the College carries out its own assessment of teaching and learning. In particular, it was noted that teaching and learning assessment is a continuous process, with assessment taking place through a number of mechanisms such as course team meetings and cross-College fora. Inherent in the self assessment process is the overriding ethos of quality improvement - the process is used to ensure that there is a constant impetus for improvement.

An annual cycle of lesson observations forms an intrinsic element of the self assessment and improvement process. The focus is not the assessment grade, but how teaching can be improved. A core team of trained observers has now been increased to include all staff, thus empowering staff to be more reflective in the lesson observation process and drive quality forwards.

There has been considerable refinement of the self assessment process through lesson observation as a result of practical work in the period post 2005-06. At that time, the College Self Assessment grading had not been comparable with its achievement of Minimum Target Grade (MTG). Work carried out with OFSTED and Hereford Sixth Form College acted as a standards checking process, with the result that the Teaching and Learning Self Assessment grade improved.

The College does not currently include one-to-one tutorial work in its lesson observations cycle of business. However, it is appreciated that effective practice in tutorial work could be shared amongst staff. Similarly, shared resources and information need to be continually developed to ensure that best practice and improvement is achieved across all areas of teaching and learning.

In discussion, members explored whether there is any role for governor participation in the lesson observation process. Whilst it was appreciated that it would not be acceptable practice for members to have a role in the lesson observation process itself, there was consensus that teaching staff would welcome more informal contact with members and that this would help underpin governor understanding of the work of the College. It was agreed that any member interested in developing this kind of contact should arrange it through the Clerk to the Corporation and the Principal.

2. Items for Approval

(a) Appointment and Re-appointment of Members

Members were fully appreciative of the input and expertise which Tim Davison gives to the work of the Corporation. Mary Tighe proposed the re-appointment of Tim Davison. This was seconded by Jef Collingwood and agreed *nem con*.

Rob Setchell had received the majority vote in the recent election for a Staff Governor. Jef Collingwood proposed the appointment of Rob Setchell. This was seconded by John Rudge and agreed *nem con*.

The two recently elected Student Governors were in attendance at the meeting. Members noted the new requirement for two Student Members of the Corporation (see (g) below). David Wood proposed the formal appointment of both John Peart and Matt Mears. This was seconded by Guy Adams, and agreed *nem con*.

(b) The Mid Year Income and Expenditure Budget

Members noted the highlighted variances with the original Income and Expenditure budget. There had been a number of fluctuations, but with minimal change to the overall budget. Cash flow closely matches the predicted profile. John Rudge proposed the approval of the Mid Year Income and Expenditure budget. This was seconded by Tim Davison, and agreed *nem con*.

(c) Financial Regulations

Although there will be substantive review of the Financial Regulations once a new Director of Finance is in post, there had been a number of revisions to the Financial Regulations prompted by the revised Instrument and Articles of Government, effective 1 January 2008. John Rudge, seconded by Mary Tighe, proposed approval of the revised Financial Regulations. This was agreed *nem con*.

(d) The Accessibility Statement

There were no proposed amendments to the Accessibility Statement. Gill Turner proposed approval of the Accessibility Statement. This was seconded by Tim Davison and agreed *nem con*.

(e) The Quality Policy

Members noted that the new Instruments and Articles of Government effective 1 January 2008 stipulate that the Corporation must approve the Quality Strategy of the College. Although there has been a Quality Policy for some time, the content of it had recently been reviewed by the Academic Planning and Quality Committee. Tim Davison proposed approval of the Quality Policy, seconded by John Rudge and agreed *nem con*.

(f) The Personnel Policy

There had been no substantive change to the Policy. Mary Tighe proposed approval of the Policy. This was seconded by Ann Helsby and agreed *nem con*.

(g) Determination of Membership of the Corporation

Members noted that the Instruments and Articles of Government effective 1 January 2008 had necessitated an increase from one to two members in respect of student membership of the Corporation. David Wood proposed that the determination of the membership continue at twenty members, with two Student members, four Foundation members, two Parent members, two Staff Members, the Principal, and up to nine other members. This was seconded by John Rudge and agreed *nem con*. Transitional arrangements apply for the *inter regnum* until the Corporation can achieve its determined membership profile.

Members noted their warmest appreciation of the contribution which Sara McDiamond has made to the work of the Corporation during her period of office.

(h) The Standing Orders of the Corporation

The Standing Orders of the Corporation had been revised in response to the new Instruments and Articles of Government effective 1 January 2008 and circulated at Committee level. There were no further issues arising in discussion. Mary Tighe proposed approval of the Standing Orders of the Corporation. This was seconded by Jef Collingwood, and agreed *nem con*.

(i) Code on Appointments to the Corporation

The Code on Appointments to the Corporation had been subject to review in response to practical application of the Code during the recent appointment process, and in response to the new Instruments and Articles of Government effective 1 January 2008. The Code had worked well during its recent practical application. Members noted that the appointment of the Staff Member made during the current meeting had been as a result of an electronic ballot of all staff at the College. Electronic ballots of staff/students are able to take place in a confidential and secure manner. Tim Davison proposed approval of the Code on Appointments. This was seconded by John Rudge, and agreed *nem con*.

3. Reports from Committees**Academic Planning and Quality Committee**

Members noted College participation in the Framework for Excellence pilot being undertaken during the current year. Although the College had successfully piloted an on-line learner survey as part of the Framework, it is understood that the learner survey may

be discontinued once the Framework becomes operational.

Members noted with great interest the detail included as part of the final destinations information. In general terms, members noted that final destinations of students reflect the mission statement of the College. In more specific terms, members noted that numbers of students who might progress to courses in mathematics/physics/chemistry are hidden in the numbers of students undertaking courses in biochemistry, veterinary science, engineering, etc. Members were interested to know more about destinations one year after starting university, but this information is not currently collected.

Audit Committee

Members noted that Jef Collingwood is acting as temporary chair of the Committee pending a more permanent nomination for this position. Jef already has considerable experience of working on the Audit Committee and the issues with which it deals.

It was noted that in a recent disaster recovery exercise related to key system data backups, the College had effected a rapid and successful full recovery. Additionally, a number of measures had been identified which reinforce current operating systems and negate the need for further exercises of this kind through creation of a remote virtual servers. Additionally, there will be budgetary savings achieved.

Personnel Committee

The Committee had noted the requirements of the new Instruments and Articles of Government effective 1 January 2008 in relation to dismissal and appeal procedures. The Personnel Director will present appropriate policies to the Committee as soon as practically possible.

Completion rates of Professional Review and Development (PRAD) have not matched target. It is recognised that some further effort is required to ensure that completed paperwork and interviews/conversations fully reflect the constructive process which PRAD should be. The matter will continue to be monitored through the Personnel Committee.

Search Committee

The Committee has been proactive in ensuring that all aspects of the work of the Corporation meet the requirements of the new Instruments and Articles of Government effective 1 January 2008. A number of matters have come to the current meeting as a result of meeting the new requirements of the Instruments and Articles of Government. Members noted, however, that there are still some issues to be addressed, including the publication of the Corporation policy relating to access to Corporation business and approval of Student Council matters. These matters will be brought to the Corporation as soon as practically possible.

The Richard Huish College Foundation

The recent retirement of Jill Lisk had necessitated the appointment of a new Co-opted Trustee; Tim Davison had recently been appointed.

There is a new requirement for all charities to satisfy a Public Benefit requirement. Foundation Trustees consider that the Richard Huish College Foundation satisfies all the requirements.

The investments portfolio is subject to the effects of the prevailing economic conditions and there has been a dip in recent performance. A number of gap year awards were approved by the Trustees.

Finance and General Purposes Committee

The current meeting had approved the Mid Year Income and Expenditure budget. The Principal's Report to the Corporation for the current meeting addresses a number of the issues relating to the overall financial position and the College position in the local community.

4. Principal's Report

Members noted the recent appointment to the post of Finance Director. Stephanie Blake will take up appointment in time to allow a full handover of business from the current Finance Manager. The new Director of Finance has no previous experience of estates management work, but the current Assistant Estates Manager has been providing a high level of support in estates matters generally. The Vice Principal: Resources will oversee the current capital bid for capital funding and completion of the associated project.

The College has been working with Taunton Deane planning department in relation to developing plans for the capital bid. It is hoped that the close working partnership will reap rewards in the longer term, with fewer planning issues/alterations required.

The recent jazz/folk evening had been an outstanding success.

5. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

6. Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting is 19 May 2008.

7. Closed Business

The meeting considered the business of the Remuneration Committee.

Signed as a correct record.....

Date.....