

Minutes of the Meeting of the Corporation [CORP0708-5]**held on Monday 19 May 2008 in Room H201****Action****Present:**

Guy Adams	Chair, Foundation Member	Peter Avery	Principal from 5.56 pm
David Wood	Foundation Member	Ann Helsby	to 6.34 pm
Tim Davison	Foundation Member	Hollie King	
Paul Grant	Parent Member	Gill Turner	
John Peart	Student Member	John Rudge	
Mary Tighe		Alison Mackenzie	Staff Member
Penny James		Garry Charles	
John Lockwood		Rob Setchell	Staff Member
Rosemary Viant	from 5.52 pm		

In Attendance:

Bill Perry	IT Manager (for item 2 of the main agenda)	Jane Scott	Clerk to the Corporation
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The meeting opened at 5.37 pm and was quorate throughout.

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

Apologies for absence were received from Jef Collingwood JP; Penny James; Dominic Lynch; and Matt Mears (Student Governor).

2. Declaration of Interests

A member of the Corporation declared an interest in item 4(f) of the main agenda. The member did not vote on the appointment of the Internal and External Audit Service providers.

3. Minutes of the Meetings held on 17 March 2008 (CORP0708-4)

The Minutes of the meeting held on 17 March 2008 were agreed as a correct record and signed.

4. Matters Arising

Reference CORP0708-4/II/4, members noted that the original appointee for the post of Finance Director had ultimately decided to decline the appointment. The team originally convened to interview for the post of Finance Director was consulted about a further appointment and it was agreed that the second candidate should be offered the position. Marc Webb will take up appointment as Finance Manager on 23 June 2008 at a salary commensurate with his experience.

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

PART II: ISSUES FOR THE CURRENT MEETING

1. The College Capital Bid

Representatives of Lloyds TSB, the College bankers, had been invited to give a presentation to members of the Corporation on some of the financial and risk management aspects of the College bid for capital funding.

The presentation gave an outline appraisal of the current financial lending market and how this might impact on College borrowing over any lending period associated with the capital bid. It was highlighted that the key to any successful capital build project is the requirement for the College to assess and manage all risks, covering all 'what if?' scenarios. There was every encouragement for the College to seek fixed price tendering, particularly in view of the recent volatile economic market and a tripling of price margins. Lloyds TSB noted the need for the College to carry on business as usual during the period of capital build, and that the College should be proactive in seeking appropriate assistance to manage cash flow during this period.

The current economic situation *viz a vis* lending facilities may necessitate the College seeking guidance on its borrowing plan at an early juncture: the current restrictions on availability of credit could impact on timescales. Lloyds TSB currently has a policy of priority for existing customers, and advice is available relating to the hedging instruments which could most usefully be deployed by the College in treasury management. General discussion of lending options highlighted the need for the College to develop a strong dialogue with any potential lender and to review lending agreements on a regular and on-going basis to ensure optimal impact on the overall short and long-term financial position.

2. Moving towards more sustainable governance

Members received a presentation (appended to papers for the meeting) relating to how they might move to a more cohesive system of managing the paperwork associated with meetings and the business of the Corporation. Consideration had been given to a number of measures aimed at reducing the volume of paper and increasing security of data, such as use of usb memory sticks.

The current meeting noted that the tablet computer being demonstrated at the meeting had been trialled by a member of the Corporation in managing a set of meeting papers. The experience had been positive, and the hardware and software deployed had provided a good framework for document management and use in-meeting. There was some general discussion about the constraints of using a new electronic system, but these were largely overridden by the 'green' and security credentials of the proposed new system.

Governors agreed that further practical experimentation with the system is required before any decision to adopt an electronic system is made. The matter was referred to the next meeting of the Corporation for more detailed consideration.

Action: Clerk to arrange further practical testing of the system and further financial information. Matter to be referred to the July 2008 meeting of the Corporation.

Clerk

3. Raising Expectations: the implications for the College and the DCSF/DIUS Consultation

The Principal delivered a presentation highlighting the significant and fundamental changes currently taking place within the sector: machinery of government changes; funding methodology; and curriculum. All the changes will impact in some way on the College and other providers in the local area, prompting changes in a number of strands of College activity and a need for the College to be constantly alert to a changing local environment.

Huish Episcopi school still aspires to sixth form provision, and is awaiting the outcome of its appeal to be able to carry this out. It is anticipated that Saint Augustine's School and Ladymead School will merge to form a Church-sponsored academy, possibly with sixth form provision. The College will instigate a dialogue with the local diocese to explore the potential impact of plans.

Funding from the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) from September 2008 is based on 1818 students. The College had sought funding for 1850 students, and will be over target on

funded students. Funding per student will be at the reduced rate of £2822 per student, instead of £2860 per student. There will be no financial benefit from Train2Gain funding, but increased benefits from Modern Apprenticeships. A new A* grade at AS/A2 level could impact on the College, with students requesting to resit more examinations. Overall, the College is below the national median level for sixth form funding.

The funding mechanism for Key Skills provision has been changed, with funding now available only via the usual qualification route, rather than the guaranteed funding provided through Curriculum 2000. This will have a significant and unsustainable impact on the overall financial position of the College and it has been decided to implement the College Redundancy Procedure in respect of Key Skills staff. The statutory consultation period is underway and, where possible, members of staff will be redeployed within the College. The curtailment of Key Skills provision may have a long-term impact on the communication skills of individual students.

In respect of accommodation, it was considered that the College has a critical requirement to develop its site to provide optimal facilities for College activity, and that without the planned development, the College will not be well-placed to progress to the next phase of 14-19 provision within the local area.

4. Items for Approval

(a) Appointment of Foundation Trustees

It was noted that the term of appointment of Ray Stokes as a Foundation Trustee of the Richard Huish College Foundation will shortly be expiring, necessitating a further appointment to the Foundation. Mary Tighe proposed that Guy Adams be appointed as the First Nominated Trustee, and that Gill Turner be appointed as a Co-opted Trustee. This was seconded by John Rudge, and agreed *nem con*.

(b) Statement of Values and Code of Conduct for Members of the Corporation

The Statement of Values and Code of Conduct had been given full consideration by the Search Committee. There were no points raised in discussion and Tim Davison proposed approval of the document. This was seconded by David Wood and agreed *nem con*.

(c) Code on Access to Information About the Work of the Corporation

Members had noted all the proposed changes to the document. John Rudge, seconded by Tim Davison, proposed approval of the Code on Access to Information. This was agreed *nem con*.

(d) The Health and Safety Report

Members noted the content of the comprehensive report, and particularly welcomed some of the enhanced information provided. In respect of governor liability insurance, members noted that current provision is at £1m, with an additional £5m available in respect of legal expenses under public liability insurance. It was agreed that the figure of £1m should be reviewed at the time of the annual review of the policy.

Action: Clerk to Corporation to arrange appropriate review of governor liability insurance.

Clerk

(e) The College Fee Policy for 2008-09

Members noted that, due to a lack of up-to-date information from the LSC, the revised fees are based on an assumption of 3% uplift on the current levels of assumed fee elements. Fees have been pitched at a level which it is considered the local market can bear. The student deposit covers potential loss and non-return of books and damage to equipment or the College site.

Tim Davison proposed approval of the College fee policy for 2008-09. This was seconded by Paul Grant, and agreed *nem con*.

(f) The Appointment of Internal and External Auditors for 2008-09 onwards

The Audit Committee had given full consideration to the appointment of Internal and External Auditors for 2008-09 onwards after receiving full tender information and presentations from the tendering firms.

Garry Charles proposed acceptance of the Audit Committee recommendation in respect of the appointment of RSM Bentley Jennison as Internal Audit Service providers for the period 2008-09 onwards. This was seconded by Gill Turner and agreed *nem con*. John Lockwood abstained from discussion and voting during consideration of this item. Garry Charles proposed acceptance of the Audit Committee recommendation in respect of the appointment of Francis Clark Chartered Accountants as External Audit Service providers for the period 2008-09 onwards. This was seconded by Gill Turner and agreed *nem con*.

(g) The Job Description of the Clerk to the Corporation

Members noted that the job description of the Clerk had been amended in order to reflect the requirements of the new Instruments and Articles of Government, and in order for the duties of the Clerk to the Corporation and the Clerk to the Foundation to be separated. This would avoid any potential conflict of interests.

Gill Turner, seconded by John Rudge, proposed approval of the job descriptions. This was agreed *nem con*.

5. Reports from Committees

Audit Committee

Members noted the highlighted points in relation to the Risk Management Action Plan, and related discussion during the current meeting. Work is in hand to address current outstanding audit issues. The Committee will now also consider audited accounts of the Student Council on an annual basis at the time of consideration of the College Financial Statements.

Personnel Committee

Members noted that the Redundancy Procedure had recently been reviewed and that it had been invoked as part of the Key Skills redundancies.

The College is continuing its endeavours to try and bring the completion rates of Professional Review and Development interviews to an acceptable level.

Search Committee

The Committee approved the Code on Access to Information and the Statement of Values and Code of conduct for the Corporation during the current meeting. The job descriptions of the Clerk to the Corporation and the Clerk to the Foundation had been amended in order to separate the two roles, and the both documents approved by the current meeting.

Work is underway to re-draft the Student Council constitution which will take into account changes proposed by the Association of Colleges and the National Union of Students.

6. Principal's Report

Many of the issues contained in the report had been highlighted in discussion during the current meeting. It was noted that although it is the busy examination period, there continues to be significant activity within the College. Further appointments have been made for teachers in maths and economics; a further appointment to the estates team will be made shortly. There are still a number of events, including a College Open Evening on 14 July: this is a new departure and will replace the January open evening.

It is anticipated that value-added performance in the summer examinations will meet expectations.

7. Any Other Business

One member of the Corporation had taken the opportunity, with the agreement of a member of staff, to participate in a class. The experience had been informative and positive.

Members were advised that some of the papers for the current meeting had been delayed as a result of a number of converging factors. There are certain economies to be achieved by sending the papers in one mailing.

Members of the Student Council will deliver a presentation to the next scheduled meeting of the Corporation.

There was no other business.

8. Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting is 21 July 2008.

The meeting closed at 8.26 pm.

Signed as a correct record.....

Date.....