



Shaping your future

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Corporation
held on Monday 14 March 2011
at 5.30 pm in Room C1**

Present:

Guy Adams	Chair	Present	Sue Popplewell	Staff Member	Present until 8.04 pm
Peter Avery	<i>Ex Officio</i> Member	Present Until 8.24 pm	Oliver Price	Student Member	Present until 7.15 pm
Garry Charles	Member	Present	John Rudge	Member	Apologies
Jo Gill	Parent Member	Present	Jane Scott	Clerk to Corporation	Present until 8.24 pm
Ann Helsby	Member	Present	Rob Setchell	Staff Member	Apologies
Harry Hodgkin	Parent Member	Present Until 8.24 pm	Gill Turner	Member	Present
Jill Jeffreys	Parent Member	Apologies	Mary Tighe	Member	Present until 8.24 pm
Hollie King	Member	Present	David Wood	Deputy Chair	Present
John Lockwood	Member	Present	Jonathan Langdon	Member	Present
Dominic Lynch	Member	Present	Lucy Yarde	Student Member	Present until 7.15 pm
John Abbott	Director: Curriculum and Quality	In attendance until 7.52 pm	Carole Melia	Director: Curriculum and Student Support	In attendance until 7.52 pm
Martyn Owen	Director: Curriculum and Operations	In attendance until 7.52 pm	Paul Smith	Director: Curriculum and Enrichment	In attendance until 7.52 pm
Paul Dampier	Director: Curriculum and Business Development	In attendance until 7.52 pm			

The meeting opened at 5.33 pm and was quorate throughout.

PART 1: MEETING FORMALITIES

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence are recorded above.

2. Declaration of Interests

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

3. Minutes of the Meetings Held on Monday 6 December 2010 and the Strategic Planning Meeting Held on Friday 21 January 2011

6 December 2010

Subject to the following changes, the minutes were agreed and signed:

- Reference CORP1011-2/II/1, the text was amended to read '...and that there is no change which will in any way prejudice any desired outcomes...'
- Reference CORP1011/2/II/4, the text was amended to read '...The College estimates that it has in excess of 150 students...'

21 January 2011

Subject to the inclusion of Ann Helsby and Tim Duffen in the list of those present, the minutes were agreed and signed.

4. Matters Arising

6 December 2010

Reference CORP1011-2/I/7, members asked that further consideration be given to the way in which meeting papers are disseminated/despached. Members noted their appreciation of the clearer designation/explanation of papers.

Reference CORP1011-2/II/2, members noted that review of the Standing Orders of the Corporation were an item of business for the current meeting.

PART 2: ITEMS OF PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION

1. The College Travel Plan

The College Travel Plan was presented to the Corporation in order for the Corporation to give approval in principle to a number of strategies aimed at ensuring that the College promotes sustainable travel in respect of its students' and employees' travel to work habits. The Principal will sign a charter demonstrating governor commitment to encouraging, educating and enforcing sustainable travel.

There are already a number of measures in place which help to underpin the overall ethos, including provision of a College car and bicycle for use on business journeys. The Travel Plan sets out the strong commitment on the part of the College to reduce the use of the car on single-occupancy journeys, whether by students or staff. Practical arrangements include car parking facilities which show preferential treatment for car sharers. In the longer term, car parking charges may be increased if staff/students do not voluntarily respond to the stimuli contained within the plan.

Approval of the Travel Plan was recommended by Mary Tighe, seconded by Gill Turner, and agreed *nem con*.

2. The Principal's Report to the Corporation

In highlighting the content of his report, the Principal noted the following points:

- The forthcoming strategic planning meeting for governors, scheduled for 1 April, will be an opportunity for governors to gain better understanding of all the implications contained within the Comprehensive Spending Review and which will supplement the information contained within the Principal's report.
- Two recent redundancy situations have been as a result of additional issues relating to retirement and capability. There may be a small number of other posts where skills do not match the requirements of a particular post, and at a time when there can be no tolerance of incorrect skills sets.
- Members noted their concern about the recently terminated *Little Gossip* social networking site. Whilst it was generally understood that the original concept associated with creation of the site had not been intended to be malicious, the net result had been some particularly worrying activity.
- Student governors noted their approval of the way in which the College had recently been writing to parents to inform them of a number of developments/issues, and that this style of communication could usefully be continued. The College will give consideration to the medium for communication, increasing use of parent email from September 2011 onwards.

- In respect of the key performance information routinely provided to the Corporation, it was agreed that Risk Management Action Plans associated with the work of Business and Professional Development would be confined to specific consideration by the Finance and General Purposes and Audit Committees. However, the Corporation requested that it continue to receive specific key performance information relating to Business and Professional Development activity as the income surplus generated by this activity is critical to the overall economic health of the College.
- The January modular examination results had not yet been subject to detailed analysis. It is not possible to make conjecture about overall achievement against target until the year end results have been received.
- The meeting noted the changes to the structure of IT services anticipated in response to the imminent retirement of the current IT Manager and other changes within the section. The College Information System and IT services will be integrated, with potential for some outsourcing of work with considerable cost saving and risk management implications.

3. Development Planning

In prefacing presentation of different aspects of development planning, the Principal noted that it is necessary for the College to manage the implications contained within the Comprehensive Spending Review, and at the same time continue to sustain improvement in recruitment/retention/achievement of all students.

Modelling the 16-19 Curriculum for 2011-12

The Director: Curriculum and Quality presented the meeting with a range of information relating to the need for the College to review the way in which it sustains levels of funding, manages student retention, and improves achievement against target in respect of all students. Data analysis highlights *inter alia* a requirement to improve retention in progression from AS to A2 level, and for additional volume of activity at A2 level.

Members noted that lower sixth students could potentially be presented with two options: studying for four AS levels, and undertaking a programme of enrichment, or taking two AS levels and supplementing the AS programme with a range of study skills and enrichment. Each of these options would have inherent benefits for the individual student and the College through improving results and maximising funding.

At upper sixth level there is a significant number of students not undertaking the volume of studies needed. A potential solution to address this would be a requirement for all upper sixth students to undertake the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) in the period immediately post-AS examination to December of the upper sixth year. Whilst the EPQ has historically been undertaken by higher-performing students, there is evidence to suggest that the qualification is of benefit to all students whether they aspire to university entrance or otherwise. AQA has expressed interest in working with the College to introduce the qualification. The meeting noted a number of caveats in respect of the EPQ qualification, particularly in relation to compromising an individual student's performance in other subjects, retention to the qualification and the staffing implications.

Tutorial Support

There have been a number of changes to the way in which tutorial support is instigated and how it will be sustained through a student's period of study at the College. Some of the changes have been at a fundamental level, ensuring that the application process has been strengthened to give the applicant, parent/carer and partner school involvement at a much earlier stage in the application/admission process. Practical arrangements for the *Welcome* and *Induction* period have been strengthened, trying to ensure that new students feel less vulnerable.

A number of changes to how financial information will be received and assessed will have significant positive impact on the individual student experience at the start of the academic year.

Estate Development

Despite uncertain economic times ahead, the College must continue to anticipate its market and to have a campus which will attract students. The recently constructed Juniper building had demonstrated how capital investment had resulted in approximately 12-15 students taking a course of study at the College and who would not otherwise have applied.

There is currently limited government capital funding available for which sixth form colleges can bid in order to improve the quality of their existing estates. The College has prepared a bid which takes account of upgrading provision in respect of the refurbishment of Beech Building - already included in budgetary and planning considerations. There are a number of restrictions associated with use of any award under the current capital scheme, notably the timescale for its use. Guy Adams recommended that the College proceed with a bid for £1.2m of capital funding. This was seconded by Harry Hodgkin and agreed *nem con*.

The Development Plan - summary

The governors' strategic planning meeting on 1 April will give its consideration to planning issues in the light of the 3% savings which it is necessary to secure during 2011-12. Forward planning for the next three years is a much more contentious issue in the absence of clear information and guidance from central government.

PART 3: ITEMS FOR APPROVAL

a) The Risk Management Policy

The revised Risk Management Policy reflects the changes to the management structure of the College

Mary Tighe recommended approval of the Risk Management Policy, seconded by Ann Helsby and agreed *nem con*.

b) The Mid Year Forecast

Members noted their appreciation of the change of format and the ease of understanding which it affords.

Jo Gill recommended approval of the Mid Year Forecast, seconded by David Wood and agreed *nem con*.

c) Terms of Reference for a Capital Build Projects Committee

Members noted their requirement that any project requiring the approval of the full Corporation should be subject to monitoring etc by a capital projects committee.

Garry Charles recommended approval of the terms of reference, seconded by Mary Tighe, and agreed *nem con*.

d) Financial Regulations

The revised Financial Regulations were recommended for approval by Garry Charles, seconded by Jonathan Langdon and agreed *nem con*.

e) Target Completion Rate for Professional Review and Development

The target completion rate of 85% was recommended for approval by Ann Helsby, seconded by David Wood and agreed *nem con*.

f) Code of Conduct

The Code of Conduct was recommended for approval by Mary Tighe, seconded by Jonathan Langdon and agreed *nem con*.

- g) Code on Access to Information
John Lockwood recommended approval of the Code on Access to Information, seconded by Ann Helsby and agreed *nem con*.
- h) Code on Appointments
The Code on Appointments was recommended for approval by Jo Gill, seconded by David Wood and agreed *nem con*.
- i) Standing Orders of the Corporation
The Standing Orders were recommended for approval by Ann Helsby, seconded by Mary Tighe and agreed *nem con*.

Members noted the content of the Reports from Committees.

Some members of the Search Committee will attend the Association of Colleges consultation event relating to the introduction of a Code of Governance.

Members' attention was drawn to the forthcoming charity quiz event and other events highlighted in the Principal's report.

The Strategy Meeting will take place on Friday 1 April at Taunton Rugby Club.

All directors, staff and student governors withdrew from the meeting

- j) Closed Business

Succession Planning

Members noted the recommendations set out in the Report from the Search Committee and considered them in the light of progress which had been achieved in respect of implementation of the management restructuring following the approval of the appointment to the five director posts. Members noted that it would be possible to give only limited consideration to the recommendations before the current meeting and that further consideration about succession planning/appointment of senior post holders would only be possible in the light of further professional advice. There was reference to the original discussion on succession planning and management restructuring which had taken place during meetings of the Corporation during 2009-10 when the Principal had been tasked with seeking formal independent advice in respect of the appointment of senior post holders. It was asked why formal independent advice had not been obtained and made available to the members. Two members requested that their concern be recorded that the current meeting was being asked to make a decision in respect of the redundancy of the post of vice principal with insufficient information/advice to hand. The same members requested that the minutes of the current meeting record a request for the Principal to seek advice from the Secretary of State at the earliest possible juncture about provision contained within the Instruments and Articles of Government relating to the appointment of senior post holders.

The Corporation agreed the following recommendations:

- Guy Adams proposed that the post of Vice Principal: Resources be redundant upon the retirement of the current incumbent. The recommendation was seconded by Mary Tighe and agreed by a majority vote.
- Guy Adams proposed that the title of the five director posts associated with Curriculum and Enrichment, Curriculum and Business Development, Curriculum and Operations; Curriculum and Quality, and Curriculum and Student Support be changed forthwith to Assistant Principal in respect of each post. This recommendation was seconded by Harry Hodgkin and agreed by a majority vote.

The Corporation deferred further discussion about succession planning and the appointment of any additional senior post holder/s until advice has been received and reviewed.

The Principal and the Clerk to the Corporation withdrew from the meeting

Business of the Remuneration Committee

The meeting was presented with a recommendation from the Remuneration Committee, which had subsequently been agreed by the Finance and General Purposes Committee. The recommendation was agreed.

The meeting closed at 8.41 pm.

The minutes were agreed and signed as a correct record

Chair.....

Date.....