

Minutes of Academic Planning and Quality Committee Meeting

Monday 29 June 2020

Held Virtually using Microsoft Teams from 5.30pm

Governors Present: Mary Tighe (Chair), Barbara Barratt (Vice-chair), Yuqi Cao (Student Governor), Caitlin Shortland (Student Governor), David Griffin (RHC Chair of Governors), Jonathan Langdon (Chair F&GP), Nikki Lewis (Staff Governor and Health and Wellbeing Lead), Matt Morgan (Staff Governor), David Tomaney (Governor)

Also in attendance: John Abbott (Principal), Emma Fielding (Deputy Principal, Curriculum and Quality), Paul Lonsdale (VP-Finance), (Saffron Lee (Assistant Principal: Business and Creative Industries), Becky Flower (Assistant Principal: Humanities and Social Sciences), (Matt Nolan (DSL and Director of Student Services), Sarah Gardner (Clerk)

Apologies were received from Joe Bennett (Assistant Principal)

APQ 39 Declarations of Interest (agenda item 2)

No declarations of interest were received.

APQ 40 Minutes of the Previous Meeting (agenda item 3)

RESOLVED: that the Academic Planning and Quality Committee minutes dated 11 May 2020 be agreed as an accurate record and duly signed by the Chair.

Matters Arising Report 2019-20 – on agenda or deferred due to COVID-19 priorities

The Chair asked that the requirement for a Parent Governor within the AP&Q Committee be minuted.

APQ 41 RHC Budget 2020-21 Report (agenda item 4)

The Committee had been provided with a copy of the RHC Budget 2020-21 together with draft minutes from the F&GP meeting where this item was discussed in full.

The F&GP Chair reported that the budget had been discussed at the F&GP meeting and that the F&GP Committee were very grateful and pleased to see a revised budget and approach. The F&GP Chair explained that the F&GP Committee had asked for a budget of either a £50K or £100K surplus for next year. The base budget presented at the F&GP meeting had been for a surplus of £22K but with potential advantages identified that could mean that the College would be in a better position than is shown on the budget, particularly if there is additional money released for catch up funding, if the College is eligible for this additional funding.

The F&GP Chair noted that student numbers in Oak House could be improved as this was based on last year. There is a good argument for not including the rent on Oak House for the two bedrooms that are currently the subject of a professional indemnity claim due to not being fit for the purpose for the designated number of students. This could mean a reduction by two bed spaces of £9 – 10K per annum, plus the compensation due from not being able to use the beds as intended. The possibility of bringing catering in house next year could mean that there is a break even position in the budget, or even a small surplus but this is dependent upon how things stand in September in terms of the pandemic.

The F&GP Committee recommend to Corporation a £22K surplus. AP&Q need reassurance from SMT that they can deliver the appropriate level of education at this budget level. The Deputy Principal's paper on the educational aspect takes into account a £22K budget. The F&GP Chair stressed that this is just a budget but feels that it is the right approach to come back with a modest, but achievable budget with good trajectory to ensure that the challenges that the College will have over the next academic year are manageable. The F&GP Chair assured the AP&Q Committee that there was a good debate at F&GP level around the budget.

The Chair felt reassured by the Deputy Principal's paper and recommended putting the budget to Corporation and this was endorsed by the Committee. Following a conversation with the RHC Chair of Governors, RHC Principal and VP-Finance, the Deputy Principal feels reassured that from an educational view, a lot of investment is being put into the pastoral site so she is comfortable that teacher and student support needs will be met.

It was RESOLVED that the AP&Q Committee are in full support of the RHC Budget 2020-21 and recommend that this be put through to Corporation.

The VP-Finance left the meeting at this point.

APQ 42 Centre Assessment Grades (agenda item 5)

5.1 CAG process update (A level / Vocational) and next steps

The Deputy Principal prepared a paper on Centre Assessment Grades and this had been circulated prior to the meeting. The Chair thanked the Deputy Principal for clarifying the CAG process.

The Deputy Principal had hoped to be able to provide more information on Centre Assessment Grades but that at this time, further guidance is awaited from the DfE. Excellent support has been received from the SFCA and it is hoped that national guidance will be forthcoming.

- CAGs have been submitted to awarding bodies for all A Level qualifications.
- The Deputy Principal explained that not all exam boards have released their process for appeals and that each board may be quite different dependent upon qualification and length. This will require careful management.
- The Deputy Principal and Head of CIS and Exams have both been working with the SFCA around the CAG process and the Head of CIS and Exams has attended a course on how to manage the process. A pre-results report will be run and the Deputy Principal explained that the results that have been submitted are unlikely to be the same as those finally awarded. Although the ranking will not change, the grades will once national grades have gone through.
- On results day, students who require it will be given support on what will be a new and unprecedented process. Any difficulties are likely to be with students who have opted for medical or Oxbridge not attaining top grades. The Deputy Principal has prepared some materials to offer advice on the process on the day, although this cannot yet be finalised.

The RHC Chair asked about Sociology results and the Deputy Principal confirmed that the exam board has been changed in this subject. The Deputy Principal attended an SFCA conference and has prepared a lengthy paper about Sociology trajectory. Sociology results last year were discussed.

5.2 Results release, appeals and autumn exams

- The Deputy Principal explained that students who are unhappy with GCSE or A Level grades will be able to re-sit exams in the autumn. This will need to be added to the calendar once further information has been received. The Deputy Principal does not anticipate large numbers of students opting for re-sits but will need to work closely with partner schools for GCSE students.

The RHC Chair asked about provisions for external exam students. The Deputy Principal explained that there had been 25 students independently taking exams this summer. The vast majority were privately educated and self-studying or being tutored but this was very difficult to put into a CAG. One or two students could be entered if they were known to a member of College staff but the vast majority unfortunately were not and could not be entered. This is a situation that could not have been pre-empted but all external students have been offered advice and universities have been written to on their behalf by way of explanation.

The Chair asked if students will be given the opportunity to appeal their exam grades. The Deputy Principal is very mindful that young people have had a very difficult time and that CAG was the best solution for dealing with a very challenging situation. Students who remain on the borderline or one grade below would be looked at but there seems little point if their appeal is unlikely to be successful. Support and guidance will be in place for students affected.

The Chair asked how students would be accessing their results. The Deputy Principal confirmed that students will be able to access their results online. Usually, students would have received a letter informing them of how they can collect their results and it is hoped that during the next few weeks additional guidelines will be announced on social distancing to allow students to be on site. It has been very difficult for students who have not have any sort of celebration or been able to finish their study programmes at College.

The Deputy Principal is very confident that students will be supported in the very best way but students who will be sitting their exams next summer will also need support as soon as further government guidance has been received.

The F&GP Chair suggested that a letter could be prepared for students to present to prospective employers in the future explaining that the grade that they were awarded was due to the COVID situation. This could make a significant difference if grades achieved are not as hoped. As exam results are lifelong this could be really helpful for students in the future. The Deputy Principal agreed that this was a helpful reflection and that students would certainly be supported in any way necessary.

APQ Teaching, Learning and Assessment (agenda item 6)

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6.1 Expectations for this half term, including 1:1 Academic Tutorials

The AP for Business and Creative Industries presented a Teaching and Learning update that had been circulated to the Committee prior to the meeting and its contents were noted with the Chair commenting that it was an excellent summary paper.

- The AP for Business and Creative Industries described the response to blended learning and teaching online that has been developed over the lock down period and is now confident that excellent teaching has been produced that has far exceeded that produced by our competitors. Staff have embraced the new style of teaching and both students and staff have learnt together through a process of trial and error.
- Staff have been working within their subject teams and engagement with students has increased with more live lessons now taking place to enable students to both see their peers and their teacher. Engagement has increased as lessons have become more interactive.
- Students have been sent a survey asking for their thoughts on their study programme during lockdown and ways in which this could be improved or if there are additional resources that could be put in place. Results are currently being collated.
- Progress Tutors have been working hard to support students who aren't engaging and providing action plans for work over the summer. There are a number of students who are struggling but they have been identified and Course Managers are working closely with the Director of Student Services around this.

- Two days of CPD have been planned for staff to replace those missed in April and June. Staff have carried out a lot of independent CPD.

6.2 End of year RAG reviews

The AP for Humanities and Social Sciences reported that teachers are currently RAG rating students and it is hoped that two RAGs will merge with each other. Students who have been red ragged will be contacted and a support plan put in place for them. It is also hoped that students who have been identified as struggling will be able to come on site over the summer for catch up sessions. There are also plans to open the LC, staff volunteer permitting, so that students can access the facilities and be supported with their catch up studies.

6.3 Student experience, support and update on Progress Tutoring

The AP for Humanities and Social Sciences prepared a Pastoral Update that had been circulated to the Committee prior to the meeting.

The AP for Humanities and Social Sciences confirmed that from September, the second phase of the College tutorial model will be implemented. The new model has seen the recruitment of additional staff to support new Year 1 tutees as the existing Progress Tutors carry their students into Year 2. A member of teaching staff has been appointed to the role of Senior Tutor for the new Year 1 cohort and will be joined by two new and experienced external candidates.

Governors feel very encouraged that the team have excellent skills, including teaching experience which will be a real asset to the College. The addition of two Deputy Safeguarding Leads is also a really positive step for student wellbeing.

The AP for Humanities and Social Sciences has had a half day session with the Progress Teams who are all very positive and excited to be part of such a strong team.

The Chair asked for an update on Student Voice. The AP for Humanities and Social Sciences confirmed that she is working with some students and will do a focus group with them. The group are keen to do some work around Black Lives Matter and move forward with this next term.

APQ New Students (agenda item 7)

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7.1 Huish Headstart

The AP for Business and Creative Industries and the Deputy Principal presented a paper on Huish 'Headstart' that had been circulated to the Committee prior to the meeting.

- The Deputy Principal shared some background on Huish Headstart which involves a staged approach to engaging with new students this year. At the beginning of lock down a number of requests were received from current Year 11 students who had found that having finished their courses and with no exam revision to complete they had no work to do. Ideas for general study were put onto the website but many students fed back that they would like to do more academic work by way of preparation for their A levels. In response, it was decided that a three staged journey would be put together for students who are thinking of coming to us to really develop their passion for their chosen subjects. Huish Headstart was created and all materials can be accessed through the College website and dedicated Huish Headstart page. Huish Headstart has its own logo which will be added to all correspondence. Applicants have been sent links to the website and Admissions have been working with schools to ensure that our support for Year 11 is widely publicised.
- There are three stages to Huish Headstart.
 - o Stage 1 is an introductory booklet about setting goals, returning to study and preparing to succeed. This includes a research project to help students to develop a

- o real passion for the subjects they have chosen.
- o Stage 2 is a subject specific booklet with information and activities to inspire applicants. This is more extensive than the usual summer homework and has allowed Course Managers to communicate the breadth of courses more successfully.
- o Stage 3 will be from 6th July when Virtual Welcome to Huish launches on the website. Each subject has prepared a short video allowing students to see the Course Team, view the facilities and be given a reminder about the Headstart booklets. Further videos have been created to cover Student Support, Progress Tutors, Finance, Travel, Enrichment and a Virtual College Tour. On Wednesday 8th and Thursday 9th July (the advertised Welcome to Huish Days) applicants can attend Online Live sessions with subject staff, to have their questions about the course answered. The Deputy Principal and AP for Humanities and Social Sciences will be presenting online to parents in the evenings and will then be joined by the APs to host live Q&A sessions.

7.2 Admissions and marketing update (EFI)

An Admissions and Marketing update had been circulated prior to the meeting and the Deputy Principal reported on this.

- The Deputy Principal explained that since writing the Admissions and Marketing update paper, additional 'keep warm' strategies have been put in place, including making personalised phone calls to all applicants. Staff will be making a brief telephone call before they leave for the summer to check that applicants are ok and to answer any questions that they may have. This will be followed up in the days leading up to GCSE results day with a second telephone call to provide reassurance around exam results anxieties. It was felt that this would be a much more personal approach and would help students to feel secure.
- Active applicant figures are almost exactly in line with where they were last year with only 45 less withdrawals than in the previous year which is very positive. The Admissions Team have worked really hard on attracting new applicants and keeping in touch with those who are already holding offers.
- The Deputy Principal and Head of Admissions are working with schools in a more targeted way and numbers from both Cullompton and Uffculme have increased substantially. The Deputy Principal and Admissions Team are continuing to work with schools where there has been a drop in admission numbers.
- Applications from students who live in areas where there are other sixth forms are slightly down but this could be due to anxiety around travel arrangements. Similarly, transport for students who are travelling from out of county may be an issue due to COVID.
- Overseas student admission is slightly up on last year.
- Students who would usually have opted for an apprenticeship now cannot choose this route and all prospective applicants have been offered impartial advice and guidance regardless of whether or not they have opted to come to Huish.
- Parents have been included in all communication with new students. A Welcome to Huish parents' evening has been arranged and a newsletter will be sent out over the summer.

The Vice Chair asked how much prospective parents will take note of the press release league table which is an amazing piece of publicity and showcases Huish as being at the top of the league. The Deputy Principal agreed and will pick up on this and a banner on the front wall was also suggested.

The Deputy Principal thanked the Student Governors for their input in the Welcome to Huish event which has been invaluable.

7.3 International student update

An update on International Students had been shared with the Committee prior to the meeting and this was noted.

- The Assistant Principal: Humanities and Social Sciences met with the Lead House Parent on Friday. Oak House staff have done a lot of work around quarantine and how this can be implemented for returning students. A further meeting will take place the week following term end to finalise arrangements. Oak House staff will be moving into the building for a period of 14 days when they will be away from their families in order to support students through their quarantine period. The AP for Humanities and Social Sciences acknowledged that this was a huge ask and staff have been thanked for this. The Chair seconded this and also asked for Governors' thanks to be passed onto the International Student Coordinator.
- - o There are very specific guidelines from the FE. Staff have and will be wearing PPE.
 - o Students will be kept on their floors for a 7 day period. They will be able to mingle with other students on their floor after which time the whole house will be able to mix provided that no one has presented with symptoms.
 - o Students' temperatures will be checked morning and evening and if any student is symptomatic they will have to self-isolate in their room. Written procedures have been put in place in this event.
 - o A PowerPoint will be sent to parents and agents to let them know how quarantine will work and to provide reassurance. Links to a FAQs page and wellbeing and anxiety links will also be included.
 - o Most students will be arriving on the same day apart from one student who is still to confirm their arrival date.

APQ 45 Update on Safeguarding and Student Support (agenda item 8)

8.1 Safeguarding overview March – June 2020 (including My Concern report)

The Director of Student Services presented a safeguarding overview that had been shared with the Committee prior to the meeting and its contents noted.

- The number of referrals through MyConcern has drastically fallen due to the current pandemic. The majority of students have reported that they are safe and well due to being in lock down and any referrals have not been a cause for concern.
- The Student Support Team have continued to make weekly phone calls and virtual meetings with students who require support. As the restrictions have been lifted, a few students have asked for these meetings on site and these have taken place whilst abiding by the college procedures at this time. This has included students who have asked for counselling.

8.2 Supporting vulnerable learners

A report had been prepared and circulated by the Director of Student Services prior to the meeting and its contents noted.

- The Director of Student Services explained that of the students who are mentioned in the anonymised report, only two of the nine are now a concern which means that the vast majority have made real progress. The two students are being spoken to weekly and both have external agency support in place.
- Students who are more vulnerable and who need additional support have been receiving more calls. The two newly appointed Deputy Safeguarding Leads will be a huge support with this from September.
- The SENCO is continuing with some excellent transition work for new students and has been making virtual calls with all feeder schools in order to best support vulnerable students. Students who are anxious about returning or starting college will be supported and mechanisms have been put in place. The SENCO has also met with all students who have EHCPs.

- Students do not currently have the additional worry of mixing with their peers or with social media etc. so there have been some real positives in their mental health. However, there have been some students who have more serious mental health concerns that have come to the surface and they are being supported both by college and by outside agencies. Transition work remains massively important.
- The Student Support Team will be running summer transition events where new students can come on site, meet the Director of Student Services and have a tour of the college.

The Chair thanked the Director of Student Services and his team for their excellent work.

APQ Staff Wellbeing (agenda item 9)

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The Staff Wellbeing Lead gave a verbal update on staff wellbeing at the College.

- Staff have been offered flexibility around their work with the opportunity to work from home where possible. This has removed a lot of anxiety with staff not feeling pressurised to return to the College site and this has been an excellent approach and has been really welcomed.
- The Health & Wellbeing Committee have organised a weekly quiz night, a scavenger hunt and Bingo night. A Book and Film Club have also been set up as well as both virtual and face to face 'catch up cuppa and cake'.
- There are a number of staff who have been working on the College site throughout the closure which has been very much appreciated. To help to convey our thanks and acknowledgement of their efforts, the Staff Wellbeing Lead arranged lunch for these staff members.
- A survey has been sent out to staff with two questions asking what they would like from Staff Wellbeing moving forwards. Responses are currently being collated.
- The Staff Wellbeing Lead is working with two external people from very different backgrounds to help with staff wellbeing. One is ex-military and now a policeman and the other comes from a wellbeing and yoga background. They will be doing videos and newsletters for staff over the summer.
- The annual Staff Health and Wellbeing Day should be taking place on the last day of term but due to the current situation, has unfortunately been cancelled. Staff will instead be able to take part in activities virtually from a wellbeing perspective if they would like to. There will be an email detailing 'lessons learnt during lockdown' and the opportunity to speak via Zoom. There will also be a menopause training event next week that staff can access live or watch after the event.
- There are a small number of staff who are still feeling very anxious about returning to the site and they are being supported by the Staff Wellbeing Lead.

The Chair thanked the Staff Wellbeing Lead and the Health and Wellbeing Committee for their hard work around staff wellbeing.

APQ Calendar dates 2020-21 (agenda item 10)

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The RHC Calendar had been circulated for information and did not require any further discussion.

APQ Committee Calendar of Meetings for 2020-21 (agenda item 11)

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The Committee Calendar of Meetings for 2020-21 had been circulated prior to the meeting and did not require much discussion. The meeting dates proposed do not need to be moved and will be added to calendars as soon as possible.

- The F&GP Chair suggested that at Corporation level, Committee members should feed into a central point if they are going to be unavailable for any of the proposed meeting dates so that the Clerk can prepare in advance in meetings are not going to be quorate. The RHC Chair agreed that this was a good point and would follow up.

DG

- It would also be helpful to have a list of governors who would be happy to step in for quoracy purposes should a meeting not have the required number.
- It was noted that a few of the meetings are being held on Tuesday evenings rather than Monday evenings and to be mindful of this.
- The Chair asked for clarification on whether the COVID Risk Register would be used for the initial period at the start of the year and the Deputy Principal confirmed that it would.
- The Chair, Vice Chair and Deputy Principal will meet before the end of term for an agenda planning meeting.
- The Vice Chair noted that the Clerk had worked really hard at putting business planners together for Committee members but due to the COVID situation, some of the scheduled meetings had been deferred. The Chair and Vice Chair will look at this over the summer and will make recommendations with advice from SMT. The RHC Chair of Governors will mention this as an AoB at the Corporation meeting on Monday 6th July. **DG**
- The Chair will look at previous meetings to see what was covered and will keep an eye on this. The Deputy Principal will contact the Chair and Vice Chair and, given the unusual nature of next year, will draft something for them to look at. **MT/EFI**

APQ AoB
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- The Chair thanked the Committee for all of their contributions and hopes that the next AP&Q meeting can be conducted face to face and on site.
- The Deputy Principal will put together a summary of results for Governors' information. **EFI**
- Two agenda items have been deferred until next term just so that members are aware: Apprenticeship Audit Action Plan update and Careers Compliance Report.

With no further business the meeting concluded at 7.11pm.

Chair (signature)..... Date:.....