

**Minutes of a Virtual Meeting of
the RHC Corporation**

on Monday 18 May 2020 at 5.30pm using Microsoft Teams

Governors in Attendance: David Griffin (Chair), Barbara Barratt (Vice-chair), Jonathan Langdon (Vice-chair), John Abbott (Principal), Guy Adams (Foundation Governor), Yuqi Cao (Student Governor), Nikki Lewis (Staff Governor), Daniel Maycock, Matt Morgan (Staff Governor), Nicola Reid, Moira Reynolds (Parent Governor), Victoria Sadler, Caitlyn Shortland (Student Governor), Anthony Smith, Karuna Tharmananthar, Mary Tighe (Foundation Governor) and Dave Tomaney (Parent Governor).

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Also in Attendance: Xanne Blythe (Clerk), Emma Fielding (Deputy Principal) and Paul Lonsdale (VP-Finance).

The Chair introduced and welcomed Dan Maycock to his first Corporation meeting.

Min Apologies for Absence (agenda item 1.1)

COR 39 Apologies for absence were received from Governors Pat Flaherty and Sasha Burns.

COR 40 Declarations of Interest by Governors (agenda item 1.2)

Guy Adams, Jonathan Langdon, John Abbott and David Griffin having dual membership with both the College and the Trust declared an interest, as recorded in the register of interests.

COR 41 Minutes of the Previous Meeting and Matters Arising (agenda item 1.3)

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Corporation meeting dated 13 January 2020 be agreed and signed as an accurate record, with the confidential section to be withheld.

At this point in the meeting the Chair invited Student Governors to provide a brief overview of the challenges they faced during the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions. Student Governors stated that their workload was high, and at times, it was harder to be motivated with their studies when working from home online with no face-to-face interaction. Communication with teachers and support from the College was excellent, work was being set by their teachers. Student Governors expressed their concerns over the awarding of examination grades this summer.

The Deputy Principal provided an overview of the support in place for students in each year group, which included key workers being assigned to disadvantaged students. The Safeguarding referral and triage processes remained the same: staff made referrals via 'My Concern', and these referrals were triaged by safeguarding leads, and then tasks were sent to the Student Services team to deal with appropriately, with outside agencies contacted as required. The Staff Health and Wellbeing Lead provided the meeting with an update on the College Staff Wellbeing Group and the support and positive uplifting activities provided to staff, as well as signposting to professional organisations.

COR 42 RHC Strategy Day Discussion Paper for 12 June 2020 (agenda item 2.1)

Minutes for this item were kept confidential

COR COVID-19 Pandemic Risk Register for 2020-21 (agenda item 3.1)

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The COVID-19 Risk Register had been discussed at both the Audit and Finance and General Purposes Committees, additional risks had been added from discussion with Governors. An updated version of the risk register had been circulated to Governors and mitigating controls would continue to be updated and monitored by both SLT and Governors at each meeting.

In response to detailed questions and challenge, further information and clarification was provided on the following:

- the status of the mitigating controls was detailed in the register,
- apprenticeship start-ups for next year would be compromised, smaller businesses had furloughed their apprentices and if they failed to recover financially they could choose to make their apprentice roles redundant, funding and success levels would be adversely impacted,
- planning for potential future closures (Risk 10) required further work and would be brought back to Governors once complete,
- public transport plans for Somerset County Council were discussed for 16-19 students,
- in relation to risk 8 - Oak House was not closed, the College was still providing education virtually and had not furloughed staff. Refunding of Oak House fees would not be made as the facility had remained open. There had been one refund request and this had not been related to COVID-19. Applications for the next academic year were still being received, there was no risk currently with international recruitment. However, there were restrictions on the number of days students resided in Oak House,
- in completing the control measures a great deal of staff capacity had been utilised in dealing with COVID-19 restrictions, arranging things virtually took longer, the vice principal posts would add additional staffing capacity. Online meetings with national and regional agencies was time consuming, collaborative working across colleges was in place. Planning for COVID-19 was, on occasions, obsolete due to changing government guidance,
- the College's nine step Centre Assessed Grades guidance from SFCA, as discussed in detail at the previous Academic Planning and Quality Committee, had been reassuring and helpful,
- plans were being considered to provide students with the opportunity for face-to-face interaction with their teachers at College beyond 1 June 2020, in line with government guidance. Whilst progress had been made with online learning, it could not replace the benefits of personal interaction and there were concerns around the impact of social isolation on the long term mental health of young people, the College site constraints with the introduction of social distancing and public transport would be challenging,
- a staff voice group meeting was being held tomorrow to discuss the new government proposals with staff, some staff remained anxious while others wanted to return to work on site. Plans would be shared with staff, sensitives and difficulties faced by staff when returning to work would be appreciated, and the Principal iterated that staff would be fully supported if they were unable, for whatever reason, to return to work on the College campus. Protocols would be in place to support staff if they were shielding or protecting family members.

RESOLVED: that the COVID-19 2020-21 Risk Register be noted, the updated register would continue to be monitored regularly by Governors at their meetings.

PLO**COR RHC Management Accounts – March 2020 (agenda item 4.1)**

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The RHC management accounts report had been fully scrutinised by the Finance and General Purposes Committee on 5 May 2020 and had been circulated to all Governors. Based on current predictions the College was forecasting being just above 4% EBITDA, although this was not within the good financial health score category.

In response to detailed questions and challenge, further information and clarification was provided on the following:

- apprenticeship income had been reduced to reflect apprentices' Breaks in Learning (BIL), those furloughed by employers and no new recruitment. It had been assumed that there would be some achievement funding between now and the year end, awarding bodies and End-Point Assessment (EPA) providers were working on remote/online solutions to allow those apprentices that were ready to complete their EPA,
- the College had continued to incur unavoidable costs, particularly the rent of Oak House and the staffing costs of the House parents – staff had not been furloughed because they had been required to continue working to care for the remaining residents,
- the National Joint Council (NJC) had reached a one year pay agreement for teachers to take effect from 1st September 2019 with an additional increase from 1st April 2020. The NJC pay agreement was a 1.5% increase on all pay points with effect from 1st September 2019, and a 1.25% increase on all pay points with effect from 1st April 2020,
- the Redwood building capital project was back on track and ready for completion by September 2020,
- the furloughing of staff was not appropriate as the College's funding had not been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic,
- an update on the catering contract was provided.

RESOLVED: that the RHC management accounts for March 2020 be noted.

COR 45 RHC Chair of Corporation Appointment 2020-21 (agenda item 5.1)

The annual nomination process for a new RHC Chair had been followed electronically. All Governors had been included and had had the opportunity to nominate and second the nomination electronically. A single nominee, David Griffin, had been nominated and seconded. The period of office of the Chair was from 1 September 2020 to 31 August of the following year.

At this point the Vice-chair asked the nominee to withdraw from the virtual meeting to allow Governors the opportunity to make any comment.

RESOLVED: that David Griffin be unanimously appointed as RHC Chair of Governors from 1 September 2020 to 31 August 2021.

David Griffin was invited to return to the meeting and presided as Chair. Governors congratulated David Griffin as the unopposed and duly elected Chair of the Corporation for 2020-21. Governors noted that the RHC Chair of Corporation was an ex-officio Richard Huish Trust Member, in accordance with the RHT Articles of Association.

COR 46 RHC Vice-chair (s) of Corporation Appointment 2020-21 (agenda item 5.2)

The Chair of the Corporation informed the meeting that there had been two nominees for the two Vice-chair posts. Nominations had been proposed and seconded electronically. Governors endorsed and congratulated both Barbara Barratt and Jonathan Langdon as the unopposed and duly elected Vice-chairs of the Corporation for 2020-21.

RESOLVED:

1. that Barbara Barratt and Jonathan Langdon be appointed as Richard Huish College Corporation Vice-chairs, for one year, from 1 September 2020 to August 2021,
2. that Jonathan Langdon be the RHC Vice-chair to sit as the Richard Huish Trust ex-officio Member, in accordance with the current RHT Articles of Association.

COR 47 Summary of Key Points from Committee Meetings (agenda item 5.3)

Committee Chairs provided a verbal update on key issues from recent Committee meetings notably:

- the RHC Strategic Risks for each Committee as a standing agenda item, as discussed at the Audit Committee,

- the Finance Committee had discussed the Oak House facility and international students, the College was still providing education virtually and had not furloughed staff. Governors were in agreement that the College shouldn't be making refunds as the facility had remained open,
- the RHC base budget 2020-21 report, as discussed by the Finance Committee, had outlined current risks for the budget next year and the mitigating actions to reduce the impact. The Finance Committee had recommended that two surplus budget scenarios (£50K and £100K) be submitted to both the Finance and Academic Planning and Quality Committee in June. The revised 20-21 base budget report would detail a clear indication of what each budget scenario would mean for the College for 2020-21 and which student educational service would be impacted, with an indication of the College's associated financial health score for 2020-21. A 2020-21 budget recommendation would be brought to the Corporation meeting in July for final governor approval,
- thanks were extended to the College staff on their ability to continue providing a quality student experience during the COVID-19 pandemic lock down restrictions.

COR 48 Consent Agenda – Policies and Other Documents (agenda item 6.1-6.2)

Matters in this section were taken as a single agenda item with each proposal being agreed without introduction or discussion.

RESOLVED: that RHC 2020 Anti-Fraud Policy and Anti-Bribery and Corruption Policy be approved.

COR 49 Committee Minutes and Other Matters for Note (agenda item 6.3 -6.7)

The following matters in this section were noted:

- RHC Audit Committee minutes dated 20 April 2020
- RHC Finance and General Purposes Committee minutes dated 5 May 2020
- Lloyds Bank Facility Letter dated 24.3.20
- RHC Academic Planning & Quality Committee draft minutes dated 11 May 2020, to follow.
- The outcomes from electronic written resolutions UE24 to UE29.

The following information had been circulated since the 13 January 2020 Corporation Meeting: Senior Management Restructure, Personnel, S&G Committee minutes 24 Feb, FE Commissioner Ltr, Jan 20 Management Accts, SFCA webinars, NEU staff circular, Final SAR and QIP, Safeguarding Briefing, COVID-19 College closure and Principal's Note, AoC updates, FE Commissioner Ltr, ETF Governance Development Programme, numerous updates for Governors, VP Appointments and FE Week May 20 article.

COR 50 Any Other Business (agenda item 7.1 and 7.2)

The Chair of Governors informed the meeting that the previous Chair of Governors had resigned as a governor on 25 February 2020. He had served as a Governor for two terms of office and would be sent a letter of thanks for his tenure from the Chair on behalf of the Corporation.

In response to a governor's question further information was provided on the College catering contract.

The next Corporation meeting was scheduled for Monday 6 July 2020. With no further business the meeting concluded at 6.47pm

The minutes were agreed and signed:

Chair..... Date.....