

Minutes of the College Governing Body Meeting held
on Monday 13 June 2022 at 5.30pm
in C6, Ground Floor Cedar Building, Richard Huish College
and via Microsoft Teams

Present: College Governing Body Members

David Griffin (Chair)
Barbara Barratt (Vice Chair)
Anna Gabriel
Ian Brown
Aaron Reid (*present on Teams*) - AR
Nikki Lewis (Staff Governor)
Matt Morgan (Staff Governor)
Tarsha Coleman (Schools Liaison Lead)
Hollie Wilkins (Student Governor)
Joel Fowler (Student Governor)

Senior Leadership Team

Emma Fielding – Principal
Paul Lonsdale – Chief Finance Officer
Steve Chattell – Chief People Officer
Becky Flower – Vice Principal: Student Support
Saffron Lee – Vice Principal: Curriculum & Quality (acting)

Clerk

In the absence of the Clerk the meeting was recorded, and the notes typed by the PA to the Principalship after the event.

Apologies: Moira Reynolds
Dave Tomaney
Mark Deakin (Governor to be appointed)

Not present: Nic Blunsum

Items marked with * had a paper previously circulated.
Item marked with + was a verbal update or presentation

MINUTES

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1 MEETING FORMALITIES – Welcome and Apologies

Actions

1.1 *CGB Membership Update and Appointment
RESOLVED: that Mark Deakin be appointed as a new governor.

1.2 Apologies for absence
Apologies received from Moira Reynolds and Dave Tomaney.

1.3 Declarations of Interest by Governors
There were no declarations of interest relating to items on the agenda.

1.4 * College Governing Body minutes 28 March 2022
RESOLVED: The minutes of the College Governing Body meeting held on 28 March 2022 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

1.5 *Matters Arising Report

The Principal confirmed that the Strategic Plan for 2019–22 will be closed down at the next CGB meeting following work carried out as an SMT and from feedback gathered from staff meetings.

The senior team will be visiting BHASVIC sixth form college this week and will be using some of their time off site to draft a Strategic Development Plan for governors to review.

Action: The Strategic Development Plan will be added to the next CGB meeting agenda.

Clerk

The Chair confirmed that Trust Directors had been invited to attend this meeting, but none were available. Governors asked for clarification on the regularity of meetings between the Chair/CEO/Principal. The Chair confirmed that the Chair/CEO/Principal are in regular discussion and suggested that he also attend at the end of one of the scheduled weekly CEO/Principal/CEO/CPO meetings. The Principal and Chair agreed that monthly meetings would be too frequent and that the Chair would join meetings twice per term.

The Vice Chair asked how the Chair proposed to report any relevant information to governors following these meetings. The Chair commented that the infrequency of CGB meetings is perhaps an issue but would be in favour of a 'round robin' amongst governors where emails and updates could be shared. The Chair also confirmed that he is in regular contact with the Vice Chair and the Finance Committee for finance related matters.

The Chair is keen to encourage interaction between this Board and the Trust Board to ensure that the two groups work alongside each other as opposed to separately.

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2 Strategic Development Overview

2.1 +Principal's update including Ofsted Inspection

The Principal referred to the Ofsted report shared with governors prior to the meeting and hoped that all had found the opportunity to read the reflections that matched the verbal feedback received by the Principal after the Inspection. The report has not yet been uploaded to the Ofsted website, but it is hoped that this will be done within the next week.

The Principal talked through the report and noted particular references to the college "setting particularly high expectations for our students, providing education, encouragement and a wide range of additional activities to develop knowledge, character, articulacy and ambition." The Principal was both moved and humbled by the comments and feels incredibly proud of both staff and students.

Reference to Huish 30 and independent learning absolutely shone through and the impact of this has been the culmination of work carried out over the last 3 – 4 years on independent learning. The fact that the college still maintained an Outstanding grading despite Covid disruptions felt absolutely fantastic.

The Principal also referred to work completed around teaching and learning by the VP: Curriculum & Quality and her team around teacher learning and development and the positive impact this has had on the classroom. Academic Tutoring was also referenced as having a really positive impact and this was especially pleasing with one of our QIP priorities being impactful interventions.

Professional development, safeguarding and safer recruitment were really strong which was fantastic from a leadership perspective, and it was really lovely to read that there was a view from Inspectors that senior management had carefully considered what staff and students are asked to do and that this is evidence based. With support from staff such as the Wellbeing Lead, decisions are made with care and the level of autonomy that staff have as a result in terms of professional respect within the organisation was noted. A huge amount of work has gone into where we are now over a really long period of time with the college having been

Outstanding for nearly 20 years. With the last 2 years being so challenging the grading has felt all the more special due to the collective effort of so many.

Areas for development are already being followed up particularly around ensuring that we expand our work experience and vocationalism with consistency across all of our vocational subjects with more employer engagement and employer led activities. The Principal commented that this would have been a difficult area to support given the last 2 years but investment will be put into this area. A new post is being recruited for within the careers team and these improvements are likely to be seen in next year's QIP.

Reference to independent learning within vocational courses to ensure that all students are achieving in this area has been noted and is being developed in courses where there is more assignment based work to help to develop these skills.

Governors were mentioned positively many times and the Principal extended her thanks to governors for helping us to move forward. Inspectors noted that governors were very well informed about safeguarding and the safety of students. Governors are also really effective in obtaining information from senior management about underperforming courses and therefore there was a real feeling that governors really helped to drive these areas forward.

The senior team have produced a video to announce the Outstanding grading and social media posts and press releases are ready to go once the report has been published by Ofsted officially.

The Chair asked if students are aware of the result. Student Governors confirmed that they are aware and the Principal commented that the college are unable to formally announce the result but are very much looking forward to sharing the news with students who it is hoped will feel very proud.

The Chair would like to formally record the fantastic achievement and huge progress that has been made and to thank everyone for their hard work and commitment to our students.

Academic Reports

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2.2 *Data Dashboard

The Principal noted that a discussion took place at the last CGB meeting around ensuring that papers are prepared and circulated in advance. The Principal apologised for the slight delay in circulating data but this was due to absence.

Governors agreed to go through the headings within the reports and pick up any points where further clarification is needed.

The Principal and VP: Curriculum & Quality presented a PowerPoint relating to data.

Attendance

Attendance in GCSE maths and English is always challenging between November resits and the date results are released with maths attendance historically being lower than English. The maths Course Manager is closely involved with benchmarking groups to try to address attendance issues, but it is worth noting that results for both maths and English GCSE are outstanding. The Vice Chair agreed that results are incredibly positive and that due to the small class sizes, one or two students leaving or not attending has a significant impact on data but that there is nothing concerning for governors within the data.

Retention

Retention is currently sitting at 94% and it is hoped that it will be positive again this year. The VP: Curriculum & Quality spoke about retention data being affected by students who change study programme or who move to a reduced programme. Whole college retention data is quite complex but is reviewed fortnightly by the Senior Curriculum Group and individual students by

the Pastoral Board who also meet fortnightly. If a student decides to leave college, the senior team are confident that everything that could have been done to support has been put in place with all avenues exhausted. Governors agreed that retention looks very positive.

The Principal referred to student numbers - after 42 days at the census date = 1928. Student numbers have now reduced to 1825. Mental health challenges have had a significant impact on retention as well as the impact of lockdowns. Data does suggest that as more advice and guidance has been given this year as we return to normality with students able to visit us and speak to staff members in person, visits to schools etc. that this has had an impact on ensuring that students are on the right study programme.

The Principal explained that retention has improved annually for the last 4 years so proportionately less students are leaving each year. Of the 115 students who left last year, 30% had mental health challenges that resulted in them being unable to complete their studies. Students who have withdrawn for medical reasons are able to return once they are fit to study mentally or physically.

Reporting categories have been updated to allow for more accurate data collection, for example there is now a category for transport difficulties if a student has withdrawn due to a genuine difficulty in getting to college.

Apprenticeships and AEB

There are currently still learners who are completing legacy qualifications (apprenticeships not being taken forward) so data presented at the meeting relates to current apprentices managed by the two remaining Programme Leads. Best case achievement rate is really positive at 71 – 86%.

Outgoing apprenticeships will be completed by August.

Ofsted comments relating to apprenticeships were very complementary around managed support and the positive experience reported by apprentices.

2.3 *College Quality Improvement Plan update

The VP: Curriculum & Quality reported that Course Managers and teams are currently in the process of reviewing their own QIPs and are considering themes that are important for next year. The VP: Curriculum & Quality fed back that although huge progress has been made in all aspects of the curriculum there are still some areas where further progress could be made, and work is ongoing in these areas.

The Principal confirmed that this QIP will be closed down in the September CGB meeting.

2.4 +Student Support

Admissions Update

The School Liaison Lead took up her current position in March as maternity cover, having previously held the role of Student Liaison Officer, working alongside the Progression Manager within the Careers Team.

The School Liaison Lead provided an overview of the work completed to date within her previous and presented a PowerPoint detailing the work that has been completed this academic year for both roles.

The School Liaison Officer is responsible for updating the destination report at the beginning of each year to establish progression routes and this entails contacting every student for an update on their progression plans. A poster is produced each year detailing the top 10 universities and employment based on student destinations and this data helps to form the work of the careers department going forwards. Destination data is presented to governors by the Progression Manager each March.

Working closely with Next Steps South West who focus on supporting disadvantaged students into higher education, the School Liaison Officer provided sessions for students and worked with them during Progress Review Week to support with both their UCAS applications and progression plans. The careers team held many UCAS support sessions for the wider college community and events were also held at Musgrove for our prospective medics.

As part of her new role the School Liaison Lead set up a Student Research Group last year involving Year 1 students who have now moved into Year 2 in order to explore how students would like to run their student voice. As result of these discussions the Student Executives Group is now operational. The VP: Student Support has also worked with the School Liaison Lead to provide training for the new group.

The leavers' event last year was really successful, despite last minute changes to plans due to Covid! This year the leavers' event will be on a larger scale and a Prom is also being held on Tuesday 5th July with lots of exciting activities planned around both events for our students.

The government run a period product scheme available to all state-maintained schools and 16 – 19 education providers in England and as such, the college has a generous budget to purchase period products for our students free of charge. These have been distributed to students and the government offer has this year also been extended to sustainable products. A bike day, charity cake sales and trips have also been held and the School Liaison Lead has been supporting students with the Student Newsletter this year.

The Schools Liaison Lead has been visiting schools to offer advice and guidance as well as careers events for Year 10 and 11 students. The Step into Huish event held last summer was incredibly popular due to the cancellation of Welcome to Huish but was primarily aimed at students requiring transition support. The event will be held again this year and the Welcome to Huish event will be run over two days on 6th and 7th July.

The VP: Student Support would like to formally thank the School Liaison Lead for the work she carried out in her previous role where she was truly exceptional. During the recent Ofsted Pilot event, the careers team were cited on numerous occasions for the support they offered to students around progression and for the hours they spent reading and advising on student's personal statements. The Chair added his thanks to the School Liaison Lead.

A new Student Liaison Officer will be recruited once the exam season has been completed as the role is primarily aimed at a recent graduate.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding data was circulated to the group prior to the meeting.

The Principal reported that mental health challenges have increased quite significantly and this is having a detrimental effect on retention. Alongside work with the SFCA, the uplift in funding has been used to really enhance the college's wellbeing services for next year focussing on triaging and recruiting Learning Mentors to support students with the transition from school to college and helping them to manage their study programme.

A RHC Psychology teacher holds a Masters in Positive Psychology, a proactive early mental wellbeing intervention and due to this experience, Positive Psychology is now being trialled via the tutorial system and will be implemented for all Year 1 students from September as part of the pastoral curriculum. Student feedback has been incredibly positive with even the most sceptical reporting positive results. Work has also been carried out to support staff as part of the college's wellbeing offer. A presentation on Positive Psychology can be given at a future meeting if governors would like more information.

Pastoral

The VP: Student Support provided an update on behalf of the Progression Manager who reported that 650 UCAS applications have been received this year, an increase on previous years. The Progression Manager is keen to emphasise how difficult it is for students to access top universities and that this has been far more challenging this year. Despite this, we have 2 students going into veterinary science, 5 into medicine and 7 into Oxbridge which is an incredibly positive result given the current climate.

The Chair asked for clarification on unconditional offers and whether universities are still offering places on this basis, as in previous years. The School Liaison Lead explained that in 2019 the government requested that universities cease to offer unconditional places to students who have listed their organisation as their first choice as this was felt to be quite exploitative requiring students to make decisions too soon and based only on the offers received and not on the actual university. Universities now offer an attainment unconditional offer whereby if a student achieves above a grade C they will receive an unconditional offer. Unconditional offers are very attractive to students but do run the risk of students accepting a place based on an offer and not on the grades they may achieve, especially with the challenges in accessing top universities.

Governors asked if data will be available with regard to university destinations. The VP: Student Support confirmed that a full report will be available by university, subject and category in the Autumn Term.

Governors were reminded that the EnRICH Day for all staff and students will take place on 28th June with all welcome to attend.

The Chair asked AR, in his capacity as a secondary Headteacher, for any feedback around mental health issues, as presumably challenges for students are evident across the whole educational system.

AR agreed that mental health issues are not limited to education and are well documented and a nationwide concern. AR explained that Haygrove are currently looking to implement changes to support student mental health and options being explored include a complete ban on mobile phones on campus. AR is mindful that living in an increasingly technological driven age and with little or no time allocated to switch off from devices, children are consistently spending many hours on screen and this is having a detrimental effect on their mental health and wellbeing. AR is keen to push this agenda forward for Haygrove as part of their duty of care in education and to help to protect children from the virtual world, including social media.

The Principal asked if any other schools are following suit and AR confirmed that many are moving in this direction with implementation plans being discussed. AR hopes that behaviour will become ingrained with children learning that the use of technology is not needed for all of their learning.

The Principal spoke about the challenges with phone usage within a post-16 setting where technology is used both for learning and to help bridge the gap between the adult world with university and employment. Students at Huish are encouraged to manage the use of technology in a healthy way. The Student Governors talked about how they use their phones for learning and that the majority of students use them responsibly at other times. Student Governors would not like to see an outright ban on campus.

The Principal spoke about the recent Ofsted report that praises the positive culture at Huish and how the external visitors observed a culture of independent study, a culture of hard work and a culture of high aspirations and that these areas will continue to be a focus.

The Chair thanked AR for his informative feedback and all for the useful discussion.

The School Liaison Lead left the meeting.

2.5 Student Executive Verbal Update

Student Governors updated governors on the work of the newly formed Student Executive Team, of which they are also a part.

The Student Executive Team are currently working on a video to introduce themselves and the work that they are doing and where they will be based, and this will be launched in tutorials. The video will also be presented to governors once complete.

The Student Executive Team comprise of 12 students who have split into forums of 2 – 3 to work on a separate focus area such as environmental, charity fundraising, enrichment day, social/support with transition and a miscellaneous forum where students can contact a member of the team about concerns that they do not wish to discuss with a teacher or peer. The group are keen to create other forums and clubs and are currently working on a CV workshop to support Year 1 students with UCAS applications and employment opportunities. The Student Executives will meet once or twice a month and have many ideas. The group is very diverse and although this happened organically it is incredibly positive for the team.

The group have already had an impact having suggested the importance of mixing seating in classes to enable students who would not ordinarily mix to do so. This was fed back to the VP: Student Support who subsequently fed back to curriculum staff who implemented new seating plans. Student Executives reported that this has had an immediate and positive impact in creating new friendships.

Office space for Student Executives is currently being worked on and the Principal will update once rooming for next year has been agreed. A dedicated email address to enable students to contact the group will also be set up together with a box for suggestions or concerns.

Student Executives will be involved with interview panels and are focussed on being accessible to students and to support with the transition from secondary to college that can be daunting with some students feeling very overwhelmed. Student Executives will be provided with sweatshirts to identify them during open events and charity events. The group are also working on a 'Battle of the Bands' charity event.

The VP: Student Support meets with the group regularly and commented on their positivity and enthusiasm and is sure that the group will go from strength to strength as it evolves.

Governors asked if the group have replaced the Student Ambassadors and Student Executives confirmed that they are a separate group. The VP: Student Support fed back that there are now 54 Student Executives with this being the largest group to date which is hugely positive. The Schools Liaison Lead will be supporting the Student Ambassadors as part of her role.

The Chair extended congratulations to the group and governors commented that they are really keen to hear about the work of the Student Executives and asked if an update can be given at each meeting.

CGB 72 3 Financial Matters and Arrangements for Internal Control

3.1 *Update on Oak House Lease Discussions – Confidential Item *Minutes for this item were kept separate*

CGB 73 4 Other Matters

4.1 Date of Meetings 2021/22

The next CGB meeting will take place on Monday 27th June at 5.30pm and governors noted that this will primarily be a finance meeting. The Chair will work on the agenda with the Principal and Chief People Officer in the Clerk's absence.

Agenda items will include:

- Risk Register
- Finance

- Strategic Development Plan.

The College Finance Committee will meet on Monday 20th June and the Chair will speak with Ian Brown about leading the meeting in the Chair's absence. The meeting will primarily be focussed on the budget.

4.2 Any Other Business

The Chair asked for an update on the Risk Register. The CPO confirmed that this has now been simplified to make it a more workable document and will be shared with governors at the next meeting.

A Staff Governor asked if the SFCA statement relating to the review being carried out to consider putting sixth form colleges back into the public sector affects RHC now that we have academised, or if the college is exempt from the same. The Principal confirmed that RHC is now in the public sector as a result of academisation and that the review will only affect non-academised sixth forms so there is no cause for concern.

Confidential Item – Community Governors Only

Minutes for this item were kept separate.

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These minutes were approved by the College Governing Body on 27 June 2022