

**Minutes of the College Governing Body Meeting held
on Monday 20th March 2023 at 5.30pm
in the Redwood Suite, Richard Huish College**

Present: College Governing Body Members:

Barbara Barratt (Chair)
Dave Tomaney (Vice Chair)
Anna Gabriel
Mark Deakin
Ian Brown
Gemma Lyons
Joel Fowler (Student Governor)
Hollie Wilkins (Student Governor)

In attendance:

John Abbott – Trust CEO
Dan Maycock – Trustee
Bryony Shaw
Sarah Marshall
Richard Hatcher – Parent Governor (pending Trust Board approval)
Jasmine Fowler
Lucy Halley
Helen Wells – Trust Governance Specialist

Senior Leadership Team:

Emma Fielding – Principal
Dan Mann – Vice Principal: Curriculum & Quality
Becky Flower – Vice Principal: Student Support

Clerk

Hannah Clunie

Apologies: Matt Nolan – Director of Student Support
Matt Morgan

Not present: Aaron Reid
Nic Blunsum

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

MINUTES

SECTION 1 – ROUTINE AND STANDING ITEMS

1.1 Welcome and apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Jasmine Fowler and Lucy Halley would be the new student governors from 1st April 2023 taking over Hollie Wilkins and Joel Fowler. Richard Hatcher was attending as an observer after applying for the role of parent governor.

Aaron Reid's role as a governor was due to end on 31st March 2023 and Moira Reynolds had resigned from her governor role. The College Governing Body wished to record their thanks to both Aaron and Moira for their commitment to their governor roles.

1.2 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made in connection to items on the agenda.

1.3 Minutes of previous CGB meeting held on *Monday 6th February 2023

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 6th February 2023 were approved as a true and accurate record.

1.4 Matters arising report*

- The governors wished to thank the student executives for sharing their video and for being so enthusiastic and committed to their role.
- Further information regarding funding bands would be shared with governors in the May meeting.
- Helen Wells has been working closely with the Principal to ensure that the Academy Handbook is relevant to post-16 education, including specific policies/guidance the College Governing Body need to monitor.
- Safeguarding and Prevent Quiz to be shared with all governors.

ACTION PRINCIPAL

SECTION 2 – ACADEMIC REPORTS

2.1 Positive Psychology update – Bryony Shaw*

Governors noted the report. Bryony gave a brief overview of positive psychology and invited governors to ask any questions.

- The College are considering of becoming a positive psychology establishment/organisation and were in the process of developing a long term strategy.
- Staff were undertaking training on a voluntary basis
- Studying what makes us 'thrive' and being proactive, focusing on strengths/gratitude/hope/optimism
- Tutors have enjoyed working with their tutees

Q: Are academic and pastoral tutors taking part?

A: Only pastoral tutors at present.

Q: Do you feel as though students are interested and engaging?

A: Yes, all 1st Year students are engaging.

Q: Is the process being recorded/monitored?

A: Yes, 1st Year progress tutors are capturing the data.

Governors commented it was a really positive way to encourage students to be work ready in line with the work readiness the college is already doing. Governors felt it was wide ranging it that it's interesting to see how it's being carried out and implemented across the college.

The Chair thanked Bryony for the thorough report and invited Bryony to attend a meeting next year to update the governors further.

2.2 Action research update – Sarah Marshall*

Governors noted the report. Sarah briefly gave an overview and invited governors to ask questions. Governors were shown the action research booklet. Interest was being generated from outside of the College with the action research team due to attend a conference in Birmingham whilst also

working alongside the Sixth Form College Association. Visitors from the University of West England would also be in attendance at Richard Huish College on the 5th June for the “Summer Market Place” event, governors were also invited to attend.

Governors felt this was a very exciting development for the College and questioned how staff feel about the action research. Sarah informed governors that they have spoken to some staff to gather feedback and that a survey was being put together for the end of the year.

The Chair thanked Sarah for the detailed report and for attending the meeting.

Bryony Shaw and Sarah Marshall left the meeting at 18.02pm.

2.3 Headline Data*

- Attendance – The College remains in a good position for attendance allowing for the transport strikes/teaching strikes and adverse weather conditions. Tutor attendance was currently 85% which was a significant indicator that students are attending, engaging and accessing the facilities available to them. The pastoral board were putting actions into place where attendance was lower than expected (80%) and students were being monitored and offered help where needed.

Q: What observations are being made on the impact of lack of attendance?

A: Further details will be shared with the Quality Committee including a lower 6th progress review. We are aware that there will be some significant gaps in learning for some students, including students who have studied from home.

- Retention – There was concern over the retention of previous lower 6th who did not return following the summer holidays into upper 6th. Mental health/not enjoying their course and not relevant anymore had been identified as the two main reasons for students not wishing to continue with their course. It was noted that these students had not had the same opportunities as upcoming students due to covid-19 which also included the ‘Welcome to Huish’ days. To support future students, the College will be conducting an internal progression event following the lower 6th mocks to discuss options with these students. Transport was still presenting as a significant challenge for some students, the Principal had been visiting Head teachers across the County to discuss the challenges they may face when they start their journey at Huish and the measures that could be put into place to support these students to ensure their transition is as successful as possible. Governors requested numbers on the retention table to gain a better understanding of the data.
- Student survey – The survey was targeted at lower 6th students. Changes were made to questions following input from students. 2000 responses were received.

Q: Were there any surprises in the responses?

A: We were expecting a less positive response to Q13 which was around work readiness and links with the curriculum and this is very much a work in progress and priority for this year. Q14/15 was positive around making friendships and relationships with peers.

Governors commented that it was a good opportunity to see what could be changed if necessary and to reflect on the positive things.

The Quality Committee would look further into the data at their next scheduled meeting.

2.4 Admissions

Applications were still being received, currently 200 up on previous year. Strategies were being discussed with Taunton Academy to work more closely with their students, including new subject masterclasses and some of the sessions previously provided for other schools such as Bishop Fox's. Noted the new mini prospectus for Y7/8/9.

The College hosted their first independent school event, as a result of not being allowed to go into these schools, with nearly 100 attendees. The initial feedback was that it was helpful and informative.

A governor questioned whether there was historical data to see the conversion rates from schools. Becky Flower would look into this and report back to governors.

ACTION BECKY FLOWER

Governors questioned the impact the increased numbers of pupils would have, including pupils with additional needs and what the College's plans were to manage this. The governors were advised that the College were strategizing how best to manage this by looking at:

- Academic tutoring and understanding difficulties around independent learning
- Access to exams
- Wellbeing and EHCP needs
- External speakers coming into College to talk to staff about learning culture, drug use and managing behaviours

All agreed it was important to acknowledge that the students who would be joining the College from 2023 have had 2 years of disrupted secondary education due to covid-19.

3.1 Principal's update

The College remained open during the national strikes on the 15th and 16th March, approximately 40-50 teachers took part. Alternative learning arrangements were made to prevent students from travelling long distances to the College, this included revision and lessons via Teams. An interim agreement had been made which consisted of a 5% pay award agreed by national joint council of Sixth Form Colleges and would be backdated due to the cost-of-living crisis. The Principal would keep governors updated with further news regarding industrial action.

Management Information Systems (MIS) – a lot of work is continuing to go into strengthening this area of the College. The team are in very experienced hands with Roz Abbott now leading the area, however whilst there has been some really good progress, they are likely to continue to face ongoing challenges for the next term or so as historic issues are resolved. There was currently 1 vacancy and a new administrator starting after the Easter half term. Jane Hardy Shakespeare (consultant) is currently working for the College two days a week and the MIS systems developers are working well. Governors commented the ongoing situation sounds more positive, the Principal would continue to update the governors at each meeting. Clerk to ensure MIS remains a standing item on the agenda.

ACTION CLERK

3.2 SEND Policy*

Governors approved the SEND Policy.

SECTION 4 – FINANCIAL MATTERS AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR INTERNAL CONTROL

4.1 Finance Committee update+

Dave Tomaney briefly summarised the recent Finance Committee meeting:

- The year to date surplus as of January 2023 was £82,111
- The College could manage a 5% increase in teacher pay but it was acknowledged the margins were small
- The 3G pitch was going ahead with work beginning in the Summer term
- The Finance Committee discussed with Paul Lonsdale, Chief Finance Officer and the Principal the continuation of the Finance Committee, DT was to draft a new Terms of Reference, and this would be shared with governors at the next College Governing Body meeting. It had been agreed that the Finance Committee would remain and likely meet less frequently throughout the year.

SECTION 5 – GOVERNANCE

5.1 Richard Huish Trust update+

(This item was brought forwards to the start of the agenda)

John Abbott and Daniel Maycock introduced themselves. John Abbott had prepared a presentation for the meeting which was shared with governors who were also invited to ask any questions they may have. The following were key points:

- Education benefits between Trust Schools and the College
- Senior Trust Team working together to ensure things are running smoothly
- The risks of not joining a Trust due to recent further education changes and the resilience and safety that comes with joining a Trust
- There had been interest from other schools to join the Trust
- The Trust was having ongoing discussions with the Regional Director regarding Taunton Academy as a result of their previous 'requires improvement' Ofsted rating. However, significant progress was being made with the appointment of a new Head teacher
- A CPD Quality Management event would be held for Head teachers from within the Trust with input from the College Principal. This will also potentially be rolled out to other schools across Somerset.
- The Trust recognise that continued ongoing conversations between the College and Trust are important and that it was important to discuss the way in which the Trust and College can move forwards and continue to develop their relationship.

Q: How are the conversations managed towards the Trust regarding representing the wishes and objectives of the College?

A: Strategy events are taking place across the Trust and going forwards governing bodies would also be invited to attend. Dan Maycock suggested that he would be happy to have an informal link role with the College Governing Body and to attend meetings a couple of times throughout the year. Governors felt this was a helpful suggestion and something that they would consider going forwards.

The CEO briefly discussed the role of Clerks and the appointment of the Trust Governance Specialist, Helen Wells. The Trust were working towards their second external review of governance in 2023-24.

The CEO reiterated that the relationship of the finance committee and its relationship with the Trust. The role of the finance committee was to oversee that the budget is being managed accordingly, this be done with a separate committee or could become a standing item for the College Governing Body. The proposal was for the finance committee to continue and share a brief update at governor meetings.

The Chair thanked John Abbott and Dan Maycock for attending the meeting and all governors felt it was a good opportunity.

John Abbott and Dan Maycock left the meeting at 18.35pm

5.2 Health and Safety update*

Governors noted the report.

Mark Deakin explained to governors his role as Health and Safety Lead governor and that he regularly attends health and safety meetings at the College. Another audit is due to take place with the last audit taking place in February 2021. A new Health and Safety Policy is currently being approved by Directors and will be shared with the College Governing Body in due course.

The Chair thanked Mark for his detailed report and for taking on the additional role.

5.3 Governor QIP monitoring*

Governors noted amendments and the Chair thanked everyone for their input and invited governors to give feedback which would be shared at the end of year meeting in July.

5.4 Governance update+

The Clerk advised that 3 community governor applications had been received. One application for parent governor had been received and the advert would be shared again in the hope of one more parent applying.

The Chair advised that Matt Morgan had taken a short sabbatical due to work commitments and would re-join at the July meeting.

Ian Brown had been approved by the Trust Board to transfer from parent to community governor.

Aaron Reid's term of office was due to end on the 31st March 2023, governors wished to pass on their thanks for his role as a governor.

The Chair wished to thank Joel Fowler and Hollie Wilkins for their commitment and contributions to the College Governing Body as student governors. All governors wished Hollie and Joel the best going forwards.

SECTION 6 – OTHER MATTERS

6.1 Any other business

The May meeting had been rearranged from the 8th to the 15th May due to the additional bank holiday.

Governors had been given a list of upcoming College events and were encouraged to attend where possible.

Meeting end 19.35pm

These minutes were approved by the College Governing Body on the 15th May 2023.