

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Corporation held on Monday 31st March 2014, 6.00pm,
The Conference Room, Prior Pursglove College**

The meeting was preceded at 5.00pm by a session on preparation for the Strategic Planning Conference covering the key themes of the challenge of external factors and new models of governance.

Present: Dr P Gavens (Chair), Ms R Bramley, Mrs J Burton, Mrs C Craster, Ms N Crombie, Mr G Downs, Mr J Kay, Dr G Lofthouse, Mr M Loftus, Mr K Mitchell, Mr J Parkins, Dr M Simpson, Cllr P Spencer

In Attendance: Mrs E Grove (Clerk), Mr R Grierson (Vice Principal), Ms A Shaffi (Assistant Principal, Curriculum and Skills), Mr J Zoryk (Assistant Principal, Resources)

Meeting quorate

77% attendance

1) **Apologies for Absence**

Dr D Dodds, Mr C Groves, Mr R Laverick, Mrs L White (Governors)
Mrs P Miller (Assistant Principal, Curriculum and Guidance), Mr T Stephenson (Assistant Principal, Finance)
Mrs Grove informed governors that Mr Bell, staff governor, had resigned for personal reasons.

Dr Gavens took the opportunity to remind governors that this was Miss Bramley and Mr Parkin's last meeting as student governors. Governors thanked them for their very helpful contributions to meetings. It was noted that they will be attending the Strategic Planning Conference together with the new student governors.

2) **Minutes of Meetings**

2.1) Ordinary meeting of 16th December 2013: With the addition of Mr Loftus to the list of those present, the minutes were agreed and signed as a true record.

2.2) Extraordinary meeting of 26th February 2014: The minutes were agreed and signed as a true record.

3) **Matters Arising**

3.1) Progress on action points: Progress was reviewed.

Mrs Burton confirmed that preliminary discussions on entry criteria had started.

Discussion with staff will take place after the main exams.

Ms Shaffi spoke to the trial exam report requested at the last meeting. A discussion followed. She was questioned about the support measures in place for students and the success of these actions. Governors asked for a report to be provided at the next meeting covering the impact of these measures on students with additional support against the Key Assessment Grade (KAG) 4 data. The report should also cover high grade support, overview of KAG3 to KAG4 distance travelled, attendance at support sessions. **Action (AS)**

Discussion moved on to the A2 measures which showed the trial exam success rate to be below target. Ms Shaffi was questioned about the actions being taken to address the shortfall and the likelihood of success. The number of students resitting AS exams in full or part was discussed and surprise was expressed at the number.

The student governors were asked if revision sessions had been helpful. Overall, they were considered to be of benefit but there were some difficulties with clashes and notification of timings. It was suggested that they take up the latter point with their teachers.

3.2) Any other matters arising: There were no other matters arising.

It was agreed to take agenda item 6.6 at this point. Dr Simpson arrived at 6.30pm part way through the following discussions.

6.6) Buildings and Estates, Thursday 16th March 2014

Mr Kay reported that the outcome of the bid for a BCIF grant in respect of the Coverdale project had been expected today but would now be known on 4th April. The impact of the delay on final approval of the project by governors was discussed. Governors were reminded that the scale of the project could be tailored to the level of grant received and there would be no call on reserves.

Mr Zoryk was asked to outline the project. He reminded governors that a bid had been made for £800k which would provide a student study area with adjacent staff offices, improved natural lighting, refurbishment of four classrooms and raising the floor level of two sunken classrooms with associated roof works. It was confirmed that planning permission would be needed for the roof works and this could take up to eight weeks.

The student governors considered that the study area was a priority.

The committee was requesting that, if a grant was awarded, 15% of it be released immediately to enable design work and planning permissions to be started.

A concern was raised about the potential disruption for students and staff. It was agreed that affected staff should be consulted and a robust plan for managing disruption was needed. Governors needed to be clear that the benefits of the works outweighed disruption. Mr Zoryk was asked to bring this to the May meeting. **Action (JZ).**

The financial risk of agreeing to release 15% of any grant in advance of the above plan was discussed.

It was proposed that approval be given in principle to release up to 15% of any grant offered for expenditure to be made on design works and associated costs of seeking planning permission, should it be needed, subject to a full review and sign off at the May meeting of the Corporation. This was agreed. It was also agreed that if any other actions were needed prior to the May meeting, governors should be notified and Dr Gavens should be delegated to determine how to proceed.

Mr Zoryk left the meeting at 6.41pm.

4) Principal's Report

4.1) Ofsted update: Mrs Burton drew attention to the draft reports from the Education Funding Agency (EFA) and Ofsted attached to her report which showed progress being made. She advised that the final reports will go to Mr Hancock, The Minister of State for Skills and Enterprise. Governors were informed that monthly case conferences were being held with the EFA, Ofsted and SFA. Ofsted had held a monitoring visit in March and the final report was expected soon. Further visits would take place in May and June. The support of an HMI leading on STEM had been received and taken up.

Mrs Burton informed governors that there had been no formal response to the two complaints made to Ofsted although she had been advised this would be received by 9th April.

Discussion moved to other areas of the Principal's report. The success of the recent open event activities was outlined.

The funding notification had been received and the college would be some £60-£70k better off than expected.

Mrs Burton was questioned about the financial impact of the SFA letter advising that the college could not take on further traineeships. It was noted that the college had already met its current year targets and will receive funding for these. The impact will be on next year's funding.

The Trust4learning and Freebrough Academy activities were noted. Mrs Burton advised that her term of office as a governor at Freebrough was due to end and she had been invited to stand again. Governors supported her in continuing in this role.

4.2) Post Inspection Action Plan (PIAP): Mrs Burton outlined the external support which had been received with the format of the plan. Mr Grierson took governors through the first pages of the plan, drawing attention to the key performance indicators, impact measures and milestones. The targets had been set at sixth form college benchmark for the current year and will be raised to above benchmark for 2015.

A discussion followed and it was considered that the plan needed to be mapped back to the Faculty plans. Governors also asked for the relationship between the activities for each objective and the KPI targets to be more clearly defined. They also considered that the measure of impact needed to be consistent with the evaluation method. The plan did not make it clear whether actions would be reviewed and changed if they were found not to be effective.

It was considered that the elements relating to the governors needed expanding and it was agreed that Dr Gavens, Mr Kay and Mrs Grove should work on these. **Action (PG/JK/EG)**

Governors recognised the amount of work which had gone into the revised plan but it had probably become too simplified making it difficult to monitor progress. They asked for the revised plan to be brought back to the May meeting. **Action (RAG/JAB)**

Ms Shaffi left the meeting at 7.26pm

4.3) Feedback from Governors on Faculty Visits: There was nothing further to report.

4.4) Principal's Questions and Answers: There were no further questions.

5) **Student Union Report**

Ms Bramley took governors through the report. The success of recent funding raising activities and the bigger role played by the SU in the open events was noted.

Consideration was given to the views of students on the drive to improve their punctual arrival at lessons. It was recognised that they may not have liked this but there had been a significant improvement.

The turnout at the recent SU elections was outlined and ways of improving this were being followed up.

Mr Parkins spoke to the paper setting out student views on the impending A level reforms. It was recognised that students were very concerned at the lack of information. It was noted that this uncertainty will be discussed at the Strategic Planning Conference.

6) **Reports from Chairs/Committees**

6.1) **Standards and Strategy, Wednesday 5th March 2014**: Dr Simpson spoke to the report. The committee had discussed the proposal to change the governance structure and advised that there was concern that the scrutiny of data should not be lost.

The committee had considered the headline targets and they needed to be more aspirational. The targets included within the PIAP were now set at sixth form college benchmarks. Progress with the strategic plan had been discussed.

The committee had discussed the Faculty Improvement Plans which were considered to be very powerful documents which will improve further as they are developed.

6.2) **Finance, Thursday 13th March 2014**: Dr Gavens spoke to the report. The monthly report to 28th February 2014 was taken as read. The cost of additional support activities had been built into the report. The need to breakeven this year was stressed. Mrs Burton confirmed that Mr Stephenson was working on the three year forecasts. Progress with a bid to the EFA to support the additional costs of the PIAP was raised and discussed.

6.3) **Audit, Monday 17th March 2014**: Mr Loftus spoke to the report and outlined the findings of the internal audit reports which were accepted. The discussion with the internal auditors about audit of curriculum processes was outlined. Mr Loftus drew attention to the postponement of the IT audit. The committee understood the reason for this happening but stressed that it must take place in time for a report to be made at the

next meeting of the audit committee. They still needed to be notified of the revised date.
Action (TS/RAG)

6.4) **Search and Governance, Tuesday 11th February 2014:** Mrs Grove spoke to the report in the absence of Mr Groves. A question was raised about a skills audit and Mrs Grove confirmed that a skills audit was in place and it had been provided to Ofsted and the EFA.

6.4.1) Committee remits: The proposal to amend the Audit Committee's terms of reference to reflect the requirements of the Joint Audit Code of Practice was agreed. It was also agreed to defer making amendments to other committee TORs until the discussions on the governance structure have been concluded.

6.4.2) Foundation Code: The proposal to adopt the Foundation Code of Governance was considered. It was agreed that a decision should be deferred pending deliberation by the audit committee and the production of an action plan to address areas where the college does not fully comply. **Action (EG)**

Miss Bramley and Mr Parkins left the meeting at 8.09pm

6.5) **Personnel and Remuneration, Tuesday 11th February 2014**

6.5.1) Senior post-holder review of Remuneration Guidelines: It was agreed to defer discussion of this item in the absence of Mr Groves.

6.5.2) Senior post-holder Capability Procedure: Mrs Crombie spoke to the item and the proposal to adopt the procedure was agreed.

6.6) **Buildings and Estates, Thursday 16th March 2014:** There was nothing to add to the earlier discussions.

6.7) **Safeguarding, Thursday 13th March 2014:** Cllr Spencer spoke to the report and drew attention to the fact that Ofsted had been positive about the college's safeguarding procedures. The committee proposal that governors should continue to be DBS checked was discussed. It was agreed that the latest legislation should be reviewed as it may now be illegal to undertake checks on governors. **Action (TS)**

7) **Date and Time of Next Meeting**

The dates and times were confirmed as Thursday, 15th May 2014, Monday 16th June 2014 starting at 6.00pm. Monday 14th July 2014, 6.00pm with a development session at 5.00pm on an aspect of teaching and learning.

The agenda for the May meeting was confirmed as PIAP and Ofsted follow up, Building Project and Governance changes.

8) **Any Other Business**

There was no other business.

9) **Publication of Documents**

It was agreed to publish all documents except those in draft (Appendix 1 and 2 of the Principal's Report, PIAP, senior post-holder remuneration guidelines). The Monthly Report to 28th February 2014 will be published with the audited accounts.

The meeting closed at 8.17pm.

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