

**PETER SYMONDS COLLEGE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

**HELD ON MONDAY 11 JULY 2023 at 3.00 PM**

**Present:**

Amanda Storey (Chair)	Onkar Chiroma (online)
Syamantak Bhattacharya	John White
Alan Sydney	Caroline Rand
Rob Sykes	Michael Wesley
Lynne Evans	Scott Stemp
Joanna Townsend	Barry Neaves
Lucy Walsh Waring	
Zac Hussain	

**In Attendance:**

Nick Allen	(Deputy Principal Quality)
Dave Cartwright	(Vice Principal)
Lucy Edevane	(Deputy Principal Welfare & Progression)
Irfan Khan	(Finance Director)
Vicky Owen	(Clerk)
Sam Jones	(Head of Enrichment) - for the presentation at item 4 only

Item		<i>Action</i>
<b>1.</b>	<b>Apologies</b> – Sara Russell (Principal), David Williams, Dave Stickland, Tina Thorne, Norman Levy, Jaanvi Singh	
<b>2.</b>	<b>Appointments</b>	
<b>2.1</b>	The Clerk and Vice Chair advised that the Mercers Company has nominated Lucy Walsh Waring as Board member, that Jaanvi Singh has been elected as Vice President of the SU, that the term of Zac Hussain (President) is up for renewal and that Amanda Storey’s second exceptional term is ending.	
<b>2.2</b>	<b>The Board duly approved: the appointment of Lucy Walsh Waring as Governor (Mercer nomination) for a term of three years commencing 10 July 2023; the appointment of Jaanvi Singh as Student Governor for a term of one year commencing 10 July 2023; the reappointment of Amanda Storey for a third exceptional term commencing 12 July 2023 and ending 31 August 2024; the extension of the appointment of Zac Hussain as Student Governor to 9 July 2024. All in favour.</b>	
<b>3.</b>	<b>Election of Chair and Vice Chair and approval of Chairs and the membership of committees from 1 September 2023</b> <i>Paper circulated: Committee membership 23-24 rev July 23</i>	
<b>3.1</b>	The Clerk reported that there had been one nomination for the position of Chair of Governors, namely Amanda Storey (proposed by Joanna Townsend)	

	and seconded by Scott Stemp). Accordingly, <b>Amanda Storey was appointed Chair of Governors</b> unopposed. All in Favour.	
<b>3.2</b>	The Clerk then reported that there had been one nomination received for the position of Vice Chair, namely Lynne Evans (proposed by Scott Stemp and seconded by Joanna Townsend). Accordingly, <b>Lynne Evans was appointed Vice Chair of Governors</b> unopposed. All in favour.	
<b>3.3</b>	<b>The Board approved the membership and Chairs of the committees set out in the paper circulated. All in favour.</b>	
<b>4.</b>	<b>Presentation</b> <i>Paper uploaded to Google Drive after the meeting: Enrichment Presentation</i>	
<b>4.1</b>	SJ showed a video about the enrichment offer at College and talked through her presentation. There were 189 different enrichment activities in 2022/23, including sports, hobbies, cultural and EDI groups. She explained that some are led by staff interests and others are student initiatives.	
<b>4.2</b>	SJ set out how the Enrichment Team feels that their work contributes to the strategic objectives of the College.	
<b>4.3</b>	SJ shared statistics about the sign up and attendance rates. She explained that all students are expected to participate in an enrichment activity.	
<b>4.4</b>	She outlined the highlights of the sporting year, including many team and individual achievements in terms of participation and attainment. The College sent the most students of any college to the AoC national championships and won the Wilkinson Sword for the biggest contribution to the South East.	
<b>4.5</b>	SJ also set out the various wider College events that the team had been involved in e.g. open evenings and anti-racist training. She explained that she is also on the EDI team, which helps build links to promote those events.	
<b>4.6</b>	Finally, SJ summarised the team's plans for the coming year, which include recruiting new team managers and additional assistant time.	
	<b>Questions from the Board</b>	
<b>4.7</b>	The Board asked whether every group has to have a member of staff leading it and how are staff allocated to the activities. SJ replied that there must be a staff member; in some cases that person proposes and runs the group because they have particular interest or expertise in the area and, if no one is available, the team ensures that someone is allocated.	
<b>4.8</b>	Referring to the sponsors, the Board asked who they are and what they give. SJ said that they mainly pay for sports team kit, although occasionally they help support students' attendance at events which are unaffordable	

	for some families. The current sponsors include a local coach hire company who provide most of the large group transport for the College, a plumbing/heating company and a roofer.	
<b>4.9</b>	The Board asked what the time requirement is that each student must give to enrichment. SJ said that it is one session (55 minutes) a week although many give more, particularly if they are involved in team sport.	
<b>4.10</b>	Referring to those who do not sign up or who drop out, the Board asked if the team looks into why this is. SJ said that they do a lot of work on this. Those who do not attend are also often those who have poor attendance in lessons. Some students say that they do not know about the programme, although it is well publicised. Others have said that they cannot get into the groups of their choice; the team is offering additional groups and operating waiting lists.	
<b>4.11</b>	The Board thanked SJ for her presentation. They said that they are very impressed by the range of activities and feel that students benefit tremendously in terms of building life skills and confidence which are valued by employers. The Board was keen that awareness of the programme be promoted outside the College. SMT commented that it is very unusual to have an enrichment programme of this size and that many providers have cut back in recent years.	
<b>5.</b>	<b>Minutes of the meeting dated 15 May 2023</b> These were accepted as a correct record.	
<b>6.</b> <b>6.1</b> <b>6.2</b> <b>6.3</b> <b>6.4</b> <b>6.5</b> <b>6.6</b>	<b>Matters arising</b> <b>Point 4.2</b> Re the IT Conditions of Use Policy. DC apologised for the delay and said that a draft will go to SMT tomorrow, for the committee and Board in the autumn. <b>Point 6.2</b> NA provided information to C&QA about students on applied qualifications, specifically progression to HE. The Board asked to view this. (Post meeting note: the Clerk circulated to Board.) Completed. <b>Point 8.3</b> the Clerk amended the SU Constitution. Completed. <b>Point 15.4</b> re barriers to staff users accessing the Google Drive documents. The Clerk and affected member of SMT have met. Completed. <b>Point 15.5</b> there is a link from the Google Drive to the location of College policies. Completed. <b>Point 16.12</b> LKE is considering the use of focus groups. Completed.	<b>DC</b>
<b>7.</b>	<b>Principal's matters</b> <i>Paper circulated: Principal's matters 26-6-23</i>  This is the version seen by P&R. There were no questions.	

<p><b>8.</b></p> <p><b>8.1</b></p> <p><b>8.2</b></p> <p><b>8.3</b></p> <p><b>8.4</b></p>	<p><b>Governors' Snapshot</b>  <i>Paper circulated: Governors Snapshot at 30-06-23 (v4)</i></p> <p>NA drew the Board's attention to Panel 4 which shows a small decline in attendance compared with previous years. He said that schools are reporting lower attendance in Year 11 and so College staff will want to establish high expectations with the incoming year group in September.</p> <p>NA said that all the Key Priorities have now gone green, following the receipt of a detailed draft EDI college action plan.</p> <p><b>Questions from the Board</b></p> <p>The Board asked if the reasons for the dip in Year 11 attendance are known. NA replied that school figures are divided into 'medical' and 'non-medical'; it is the latter that has doubled. There is a theory that the 'contract' between school and home has been disrupted by Covid, particularly where parents work from home. There may also be more anxiety among pupils. A study in Scotland showed significantly more absence on Fridays.</p> <p>The Board asked about Tutorial attendance and NA said that it has improved this year but capacity issues mean that tutor sessions have to be held at lunchtime, with some students saying that they do not wish to miss that social and eating time. NA said that, at present, there is no link between the subjects studied by tutees and those taught by their Tutor, meaning that they commonly only see each other for tutorial. This was introduced several years ago for reasons of Tutor workload because students from different subject areas tended to bring different levels of challenge to the Tutor. The subject link is now being introduced, with safeguards in place to address the workload concerns, in the hope that students will build a relationship with the Tutor in subject lessons and be more likely to attend tutorial.</p>	
<p><b>9.</b></p> <p><b>9.1</b></p>	<p><b>Report from the Search Committee</b>  <i>Papers circulated: Draft Search Minutes June 23; Draft Board and Committee dates 23-24; Search recommendation re EGR; Stone King EGR Proposal &amp; Quotation June 23</i></p> <p><b>Chair and VC succession</b> - JT said that the Committee has been discussing succession to these posts, looking at which governors will be eligible to serve in the appropriate periods given that a governor's maximum term is now nine years and the Chair and VC each serve for three years. Chairing a committee is a good preparation for the roles, but there are now fewer committees than before, so less of an opportunity to chair. For that reason, the Search Committee has decided to introduce vice chair roles for committees as appropriate.</p>	

<p><b>9.1.1</b></p> <p><b>9.1.2</b></p> <p><b>9.2</b></p> <p><b>9.3</b></p> <p><b>9.4</b></p> <p><b>9.5</b></p>	<p>JT said that AJS has provided a diary of her work over recent months to help potential Chairs understand what is involved. The Clerk has, on behalf of the Search Committee, previously approached those who would be eligible to gauge their interest and so will share the diary with them, along with discussing potential committee vice chair roles. It will be for the chair of each committee to work with the vice to decide how they might contribute.</p> <p>AJS said that the VC is also a busy role. In both positions there are scheduled commitments in addition to the committees and Board, plus the possibility of things arising at short notice.</p> <p><b>External Governance Review (EGR)</b> – JT drew the Board’s attention to the note of the Committee’s proposal to the Board to engage Stone King to conduct the EGR, their outline and quote. This would cost approximately £8k and take place in spring 2024. It will be for the Board to set the focus.</p> <p><b>Governor appointments</b> – the Committee also discussed and recommended appointments which were approved by the Board in item 2 above.</p> <p><b>Meetings 2023-24</b> – the Committee recommended the dates and times as circulated, with continuation of the existing format of committees online and Board in person. JT noted that the governors’ self-assessment included a question on meeting times, so this could change.</p> <p><b>Resolved: the Board approved 1) the proposed meeting dates and times; the continuation of committee meetings online and Board meetings in person; 2) the appointment of Stone King as provider for the External Governance Review as per the attached proposal and note. All in favour.</b></p>	<p><b>Clerk</b></p>
<p><b>10.</b></p> <p><b>10.1</b></p> <p><b>10.2</b></p> <p><b>10.3</b></p> <p><b>10.4</b></p>	<p><b>Report from the Curriculum &amp; QA Committee</b> <i>Papers circulated: Draft C &amp; QA Minutes June 23; Summary of Policies; Admissions Policy 2024_for review; sub-folder containing all the policies reviewed by C&amp;QA</i></p> <p><b>AHED</b> – BN said that DT had updated the Committee on matters including the end of the relationship with the University of Chichester and the government’s delay to the launch of some T levels.</p> <p><b>Boarding</b> - The Committee also discussed the Inspection Report and BN felt that SMT were disappointed that the grade was ‘good’ rather than ‘outstanding’.</p> <p>The Committee received a comprehensive and helpful report from the Link Governor for Study Support.</p> <p><b>Policies</b> - the Clerk said that the Committee reviewed nearly all of those which have come to Board; this is set out in the Summary document and</p>	

	<p>the policies are in the sub folder. The Admissions Policy is coming direct to the Board.</p> <p><b>Questions from the Board</b></p> <p><b>10.5</b> <b>Policies</b> - Referring to the Disciplinary Policy, the Board suggested that there needs to be more information in the Right to Search section 8 e.g. who should be present in a search. LKE replied that there is detailed Search Guidance which is referenced at the end of the DP.</p> <p><b>10.5.1</b> Referring to the Admissions Policy page 4 Fitness to Study para 3, the Board said that this duplicates section 8. DC will amend.</p> <p><b>10.6</b> <b>Boarding Inspection Report</b> – the Board asked whether SMT anticipates that the provision can attain ‘outstanding’ next time. SMT replied that no ‘outstanding’ has been given to any residential provision in FE in the last two years, whereas most had obtained it in the previous cycle. There appears to be a change of policy at Ofsted. SMT said that they had been disappointed and had said this to the inspectors at the time and to Ofsted on receipt of the formal report.</p> <p><b>10.6.1</b> SMT said that some of the points raised felt ‘weak’ but all are being addressed e.g. ‘supervision’ of all Houseparents, feedback to students on responses to their comments, amendment to the cycle for updating student policies.</p> <p><b>10.6.2</b> SMT said that the Boarding SAR will focus on the recommendations and that the Head of Boarding is working with another college with similar provision to share good practice.</p> <p><b>10.7</b> <b>Resolved: the Board approved the 1) policies as listed in the Summary and shared in the sub folder as per the copies circulated before the meeting; 2) Admissions Policy subject to the amendment above. All in favour.</b></p>	
	<p><b>11.</b> <b>Report from the Audit Committee</b>  <i>Papers circulated: Draft Audit minutes 19 06 23; Fraud, Theft and Bribery Policy Draft 2023; Fraud, Theft and Bribery Policy Annex Draft 2023; Anti fraud checklist review May 23; Whistleblowing Policy Draft 2023</i></p> <p><b>11.1</b> MW said that the Committee again discussed the external auditors’ proposed fee increase and helpful research conducted by IK which indicated that significant fee increases are widespread. Having previously felt it was advisable to bring forward the tender by a year, the Committee concluded that this would be unlikely to be beneficial and decided to revert to the previous schedule with a tender process in autumn 2024.</p> <p><b>11.2</b> MW said that the internal and external auditors presented to the Committee with their work to date and future plans.</p>	

<p><b>11.3</b></p> <p><b>11.4</b></p> <p><b>11.4.1</b></p> <p><b>11.4.2</b></p> <p><b>11.4.3</b></p> <p><b>11.5</b></p>	<p>The Committee also: received the report from SS as Link Governor for H&amp;S and Estates; reviewed the attached policies; had an update on the Risk Management Group; received assurance on GDPR, H&amp;S and Whistleblowing.</p> <p><b>Questions from the Board</b></p> <p><b>Cyber security</b> - The Board asked for an update on progress towards Cyber Essentials accreditation. DC said that this is in hand. It is a priority for the Head of IT Services, but work has been delayed due to staffing shortages in IT, Web Services and MIS. DC said that there is currently work to migrate from one system to another and replacement of a number of servers which will address some issues. NA said that the current IT Audit is looking at the use of mobile devices.</p> <p>The Board asked if there is a timed step plan to get the accreditation. SMT replied that the ESFA had stipulated this some time ago but had not renewed the requirement, although management are committed to achieving it.</p> <p>The Board sought reassurance that the College is adequately managing this risk. SMT replied that there had been an incident about 18 months ago and that SMT were pleased with the resilience demonstrated in our systems. The College has good insurance against the impact; the insurer has examined our processes and is satisfied with them.</p> <p>The Board expressed the expectation that cyber security work be prioritised.</p> <p><b>Resolved: the Board approved the 1) appointment of TIAA Ltd as internal auditors for the year 2023/24; 2) Whistleblowing Policy and the Fraud, Theft and Bribery (with annex and checklist) as circulated with the agenda. All in favour.</b></p>	
<p><b>12.</b></p> <p><b>12.1</b></p> <p><b>12.1.1</b></p>	<p><b>Report from the Policy &amp; Resources Committee</b>  <i>Papers circulated: Draft P&amp;R minutes 26 06 23; Financial Report 26 June 2023; CFFR &amp; Budget Forecast; Charging Policy &amp; Procedures 24-25; AHED Fee Principles 2024-25</i></p> <p>LE invited IK to present the Finance Report.</p> <p><b>Finance</b></p> <p><b>2022/23 Forecast Outturn Position</b> – IK said the figures are as scrutinised by P&amp;R and that there are few changes to the forecast overall or to those for Boarding and Catering. The cash flow position is strong.</p> <p>IK said that the impact of ONS reclassification is a current key issue, with the potential for the year end to be changed from July to March. This created considerable problems in Scotland where it had been introduced earlier - and in fact had to be changed back to July.</p>	

<p><b>12.2</b></p>	<p><b>Insurance</b> – IK said that he has an update regarding insurance which has come in since he wrote the paper. In 2017 the Wessex Group of Colleges issued a request for insurance tenders as a collective. It was extended after three years and a further extension is proposed. The cost increase is 3% which SMT feel is very reasonable in the current climate of high inflation, so they will accept. This is for Board information only as the decision comes under SMT’s remit. (See Post Meeting Note for October meeting of the Board.)</p> <p>There were no questions on Finance matters.</p> <p><b>Estates</b></p>	<p><b>Board to note</b></p>
<p><b>12.3</b></p>	<p>IK said that although recent bids had been unsuccessful, SMT are now working on the next CIF bid with the help of a consultant. This bid is mainly condition related, although there may be some scope for funds to meet growth. Meanwhile, other smaller projects continue.</p>	
<p><b>12.4</b></p>	<p><b>Sustainability</b> – the consultant has given a presentation to SMT and will work with them to try to identify potential grants for retrofitting green technology.</p> <p><b>Questions from the Board on Estates</b></p>	
<p><b>12.5</b></p>	<p>The Board asked if the sustainability consultant is recommending heat pumps ahead of other technology. IK replied that it depends on each building. The Board asked when grant applications can be made and IK said that guidance on that is expected quite soon.</p>	
<p><b>12.5.1</b></p>	<p>The Board commented that there may be difficult decisions to balance expenditure on sustainability projects with other real estate priorities.</p>	
<p><b>12.6</b></p>	<p>The Board asked if there is any news on further capital funding rounds. IK said that the recent Post 16 Capacity Fund round was the last although the SFCA is lobbying for another. CIF is every year.</p>	
<p><b>12.7</b></p>	<p>AHED Charging Policy – re the final sentence on page 6 ‘A refund...session.’ the Board requested that this be deleted as it contradicts the wording earlier in the section.</p>	
<p><b>12.8</b></p>	<p>The Board commented that the HE fees are set at an appropriate level compared with universities and cannot realistically go higher.</p>	
<p><b>12.9</b></p>	<p><b>Resolved: the Board 1) approved the 2022/23 forecast outturn and 2023/24 – 2024/25 budget forecasts with the assumptions outlined in the papers circulated and summarised in table 1 on page 3 for inclusion in CFFR model; 2) notes that the CFFR will be prepared on the basis of numbers outlined in the paper and it will be submitted to the ESFA before the deadline of 31 July 2023; 3) notes the risks identified throughout the paper and as summarised in section 6; 4) notes that the budget</b></p>	



	<p>assumptions used in the paper will be stress tested later in the year, subject to any unexpected changes between now and then; 5) approves the Charging Policy subject to the amendment above and the principles governing the setting of fees for adult courses 2024/25 as per the paper and memo circulated with the agenda for this meeting. All in favour.</p>	
<b>13.</b>	<p><b>Report from the Personnel section of the Remuneration &amp; Personnel Committee</b>  <i>Papers circulated: Personnel (in Remuneration &amp; Personnel) minutes July 23; Criminal Records and Disclosure Policy; Grievance Procedure 23</i></p>	
<b>13.1</b>	<p>LE said that the Committee considered the Gender Pay Gap Report. It is hard to interpret the statistics but there is a pay gap in that there are more women employed in the lower grades; there is good female representation at the higher grades. Benchmarking suggests that this is a profile seen in other colleges. There are policies to ensure fair salary assessment and progression.</p>	
<b>13.2</b>	<p>The Trade Union Facility Time Report showed little change from before.</p>	
<b>13.3</b>	<p>Regarding the Legal Update, LE said that the College already goes beyond what will be required in the legislation regarding carers' leave.</p>	
<b>13.4</b>	<p>LE said that SR reported on the Staff Forums which appear to be going well. The Committee heard that SMT are offering 1:1 meetings and expressed the hope that this would not be too onerous in terms of SMT time.</p> <p><b>Questions from the Board</b></p>	
<b>13.5</b>	<p>The Board welcomed the changes to the Grievance Procedure but, referring to para 5.9, requested clarification, changing 'may not make an immediate decision' to read 'need not'.</p>	
<b>13.6</b>	<p><b>Recruitment/Retention</b> - Referring to Personnel matters generally, the Board asked whether the College is experiencing difficulties recruiting and retaining staff. SMT replied that retention is good. Recruitment is more of an issue in support teams, especially those such as IT and Web Services where candidates could find better paid jobs in other sectors. Recruitment of Learning Support Assistants and Invigilators has also been particularly difficult this year.</p>	
<b>13.6.1</b>	<p>Regarding curriculum areas, SMT said that the College's reputation is attractive although there is some anecdotal evidence that Early Career Teachers are intimidated and reluctant to apply. Some subjects are hard to recruit to: Business, Economics, Computer Science, IT.</p>	
<b>13.6.2</b>	<p>The Board asked if the College gives a market supplement in hard to recruit areas. SMT replied that the Pay Policy allows it but this has not been done in recent years.</p>	

13.7	<p><b>Resolved: the Board approved the Grievance Procedure and the Criminal Records and Disclosure Policy as circulated with the agenda subject to the amendment above. All in favour</b></p>	
14.  14.1	<p><b>Risk Management</b> <i>Papers circulated: Strategic Risk Register 2022-23; Prevent Risk Register June 23; Annual Risk Management Report to Govs June 2023</i></p> <p>DC drew the attention of the Board to the Report which summarises the process and changes during the year.</p> <p>There were no questions.</p>	
15.  15.1  15.2  15.3	<p><b>Student Update</b></p> <p>ZH said that the Prom took place recently and went very well. It was sold out, with about 500 tickets.</p> <p>He also reported that SU officers have recently had training and will be meeting shortly to plan for the coming year. Recent events included one for Pride.</p> <p><b>Questions and Comments from the Board</b></p> <p>The Board congratulated ZH and the SU for their organisation of the Prom. They also asked who delivers the SU training. ZH said that it is an organisation called Unloc. They also do the Student Governor training and he has found them very good. LKE added that Unloc is a social enterprise organisation with which the College partners for a range of student courses.</p>	
16.  16.1	<p><b>Health &amp; Safety (standing item)</b></p> <p>IK said that there have been no RIDDOR reportable incidents and nothing else to report.</p>	
17.  17.1  17.1	<p><b>Review of confidential minutes over past year</b></p> <p>The Clerk summarised the content of confidential minutes over the past year which are dated 11 July 2022, 17 October 2022, 12 December 2022, 27 February 2023 and 15 May 2023.</p> <p>The Board agreed that they should all remain confidential as they either related to business sensitivity or a named person.</p>	

<p><b>18.</b></p> <p><b>18.1</b></p> <p><b>18.2</b></p> <p><b>18.3</b></p> <p><b>18.4</b></p> <p><b>18.5</b></p>	<p><b>Any other business</b></p> <p>The Awards Evening will take place on 14 September 2023 and all are invited. The Chair said that it is a great opportunity to see the diversity of the student body.</p> <p>The Clerk and Chair of Search encouraged all to do the online self-assessment if they have yet to do so.</p> <p>The Clerk referred to a new SFCA publication which is on the Google Drive and also to the launch of the SFCA training programme for 2023/24. Governors who had attended the recent Arts Festival said that it was exceptional and encouraged others to attend next year.</p> <p>The Chair thanked everyone for their contribution in 2022/23.</p> <p>Student and Staff Governors and SMT left the meeting.</p>	
<p><b>19.</b></p>	<p><b>Report from the Remuneration section of the Remuneration &amp; Personnel Committee</b></p> <p><i>Papers circulated: Remuneration (in Remuneration &amp; Personnel) minutes July 23</i></p> <p>This is recorded in a separate confidential minute.</p>	
<p><b>20.</b></p>	<p>Confidential minutes of the Board meetings on 15 May and 23 May 2023, both of which relate to the appointment of the Vice Principal.</p> <p>These were accepted as a correct record.</p>	
<p><b>21.</b></p>	<p><b>Private business</b></p> <p>This is recorded in a separate confidential minute.</p>	
<p><b>20.</b></p>	<p><b>Date of next meeting</b> – Monday 16 October 2023 at 3 pm  There being no other business the meeting ended at 6.18 pm</p> <p>..... Date.....</p> <p>Amanda Storey Chair of Governors</p>	