

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

HELD ON MONDAY 17 OCTOBER 2022 at 3.00 PM

Present:

Lynne Evans (Acting Chair)	Sara Russell (Principal)
Onkar Chiroma	Alan Sydney
Barry Neaves	Syamantak Bhattacharya
Anthea Palmer (online)	Tina Thorne
Norman Levy (part)	Joanna Townsend (part)
Robert Sykes	Michael Wesley
Benjamin Bahamonde Wastavino	

In Attendance:

Nick Allen	(Deputy Principal Quality)
Dave Cartwright	(Vice Principal)
Lucy Edevane	(Deputy Principal Welfare and Progression)
Irfan Khan	(Finance Director)
Vicky Owen	(Clerk)

Item		Action
1.	Apologies – Amanda Storey, Mia Palmer, Solomon Elliott, John White, David Williams and Scott Stemp.	
1.1	The Chair welcomed the Board to the new academic year. She particularly welcomed AP (remotely) to her final meeting and thanked her on behalf of the Board, SMT and wider College for her service since 2010. AP has served on committees including Personnel and C&Q, as well as acting as Link Governor for LDD. We are very grateful to her for her contribution over the years and wish her well for the future.	
2.	Minutes of the meeting held on 11 July 2022	
2.1	These were accepted as a correct record.	
3.	Matters arising	
3.1	Point 3.3 Action complete at Search	
3.2	Point 7.11 See item 9 below	
3.3	Point 7.11.4 Re whether the IT Conditions of Use Policy should refer to governors as well as staff, DC reported that this is pending discussion with the Head of IT Services and SMT. Carried forward to the next Board.	DC
3.4	Point 7.12.6 See item 14b below	
3.5	Point 12.3 Re the review of the Assessment Policy. NA reported that the review is continuing and is expected to be completed for the next Board.	NA
3.6	Question The Board asked about the reference to ‘how to deliver difficult material’ under item 12.4 in tutorials. LKE said that this refers to topics with sensitive content e.g. sexual material. The Board asked if tutorial attendance is good this year and LKE replied that it is too early to say. She further said that there is going to be a real focus this year on the tutorial programme.	

4.	<p>Presentation by Nick Allen, Deputy Principal (Quality) on headline results for 2021/22</p> <p>Due to the nature of this discussion, it is recorded as a separate confidential minute.</p>	
5.	<p>Principal's matters <i>Paper circulated: Principal's Matters September 2022</i></p> <p>5.1 SR highlighted that the report circulated is the one presented to P&R at its meeting on 26 September (draft P&R minutes refer) and therefore gave a brief summary of her report.</p> <p>5.2 Enrolment September 2022 – SR said that there has been a slight dip in the conversion rate from acceptance of an offer to enrolment. SMT and staff are doing work on that. Accommodation constraints meant that we were keen not to over-recruit at the potential expense of quality, but will soon have more capacity with the Carville building nearing completion. It is important to try to avoid big fluctuations in numbers from one year to the next.</p> <p>5.3 Exam Results – this was covered in NA's presentation.</p> <p>5.4 Government Policy Updates –</p> <p>5.4.1 There is a national focus on local skills needs which is not really our approach, so we are communicating that in national discussions. Ofsted is deploying inspectors with a particular skills focus, so we are monitoring that development closely.</p> <p>5.4.2 The SFCA is firming up its offer on external governance review; SR is on the SFCA policy group so is well informed. We do not intend to enter into a review this year.</p> <p>5.4.3 It is expected that we will be reclassified by the ONS but the implications are not yet clear.</p> <p>5.5 NJC Teachers' and Support Staff Pay – see item 14h below and recorded in a confidential minute.</p> <p>5.6 Harpur Trust v Brazel – the education and sixth form sector is reviewing how to respond to this Supreme Court decision on holiday pay for staff working part year.</p> <p>5.7 Question – the Board asked if there is concern about the government's focus on the development of local skills. SR replied that there are those in the sector who are concerned about it, but we have had some reassurances. She noted that it does not apply to academies.</p> <p>There were no further questions.</p>	

<p>6.</p> <p>6.1</p> <p>6.2</p> <p>6.3</p> <p>6.4</p> <p>6.5</p> <p>6.5.1</p> <p>6.5.2</p>	<p>Risk Register <i>Papers circulated: Risk Management Group Minutes 16 June 2022; Risk Register 2020 21 section 6 changes.</i></p> <p>DC reported that the Risk Management Group (RMG) met in June and reviewed sections 1 and 2 of the Risk Register with no significant changes. They also looked at the Prevent Risk Register. The amendments to section 6 were provided as they came up under matters arising.</p> <p>The RMG met again on 22 September but the minutes are not yet available. They reviewed section 3 which relates to Support. There were no major changes and DC will update the Board at the next meeting.</p> <p>They also carried out the annual Board Assurance Mapping exercise on the highest level risks and were happy that there were no changes.</p> <p>DC said that the RMG is close to finalising the new risk management approach arising from audit recommendations. This will ensure a more frequent check on the strategic risks.</p> <p>Questions from the Board</p> <p>The Board asked if the new approach will be ready for the December Board meeting and DC said that he hoped it would, along with the new Risk Management Policy.</p> <p>The Board noted the mention of the difficulty in recruiting Learning Support Assistants and asked if that was still an issue. LKE said that it is; we have interviews this week but, even if all candidates are successful, we will have a small shortfall. The Board asked why this might be and SR replied that it is an issue across the sector and one which is being discussed with other Principals. As in other areas of the economy, there is a labour shortage and it is hard for us to compete, particularly when recruiting for lower paid roles.</p>	<p>DC</p> <p>DC</p>
<p>7.</p> <p>7.1</p> <p>7.2</p> <p>7.3</p>	<p>Report from the Audit Committee <i>Papers circulated: Draft Audit Minutes 3 October 2022; Internal Audit Report 2021 22; Regularity Self-Assessment Questionnaire 2021 22; Data Protection Report 2021 22; Health & Safety Policy 2022</i></p> <p>MW reported that the committee had considered the Regularity SAR for 2021/22 and there are no significant issues arising.</p> <p>The committee received the Internal Audit Report for the year, which provided reassurance that the necessary controls and processes are in place. They also considered an audit on Educational Trips for which there was a 'reasonable' assurance finding.</p> <p>The committee also considered the internal audit plan for the coming year. There was a discussion about audits of learner numbers i.e. internal v</p>	

	external audit. The committee was satisfied as to the current approach of including this in the internal audit plan every other year, given that it is included in external audit.	
7.4	The committee recommended the appointment of TIAA as internal auditors for 2022/23.	
7.5	MW said that the committee received the annual Health & Safety Report and recommended the approval of the amendments to the Health & Safety Policy.	
7.6	The committee also received the General Data Protection Report. There were no points of concern.	
7.7	There were no incidents of fraud or whistleblowing.	
7.8	Questions from the Board	
7.8.1	The Board asked if there were any matters which had caused the committee concern. MW replied that there was nothing significant. The committee noted the auditors' general point that there could be an increased risk of crime related to the increased cost of living and agreed to review in a year's time whether that should be a focus. They also discussed the importance of audits in health & safety.	
7.8.2	The Board asked who decides what the auditors review. MW replied that NA meets with the auditors to formulate proposals which the committee discusses. Relevant factors include whether there are other reviews e.g. there has been an insurance company review in health & safety in the past year.	
7.9	Resolved: 1) the Board approved the Regularity Self-Assessment Questionnaire 2021 22 as circulated	
7.10	2) the Board approved the appointment of TIAA as internal auditors for 2022/23	
7.11	3) the Board approved the amendments to the Health & Safety Policy as circulated	
8.	Report from the Search & Governance Committee <i>Papers circulated: Draft Search Minutes 10 October 2022; Draft Terms of Reference Search & Governance 2022.</i>	
8.1	BN referred to the draft minutes and said that the committee had considered the annual report on governor attendance and options for a future different format.	
8.2	The self-assessment responses from members of the Board were discussed. They were mainly positive but the committee noted some training points for the future. They noted that the score for board collaboration was lower than other answers and thought that this could be because Covid had meant that it was difficult for governors to get together	

	in person. The committee felt that attending events such as concerts and services might help the team to bond.	
8.3	The committee members had carried out a SAR regarding its effectiveness and the points arising are set out in the minutes.	
8.4	The committee also reviewed its Terms of Reference and a number of changes were proposed which are set out in the minutes and the draft terms.	
8.5	The committee approved a draft Skills Audit which the Clerk will send out to all governors over the next few weeks.	Clerk
8.6	The committee also noted that there is a new DfE requirement for an annual return regarding the make up of the governing body. The Clerk explained that this is mandatory and that there is a short deadline. It is in two parts: the characteristics of individual members of the Board e.g. age band; the profile of the Board membership e.g. numbers and vacancies. The Clerk will send out a request for responses to this survey very soon and thanked governors in advance for their assistance.	Clerk
8.7	The Acting Chair of the Board also noted that the committee had recommended the reappointment of Barry Neaves as a governor and as Chair of C&QA.	
8.8	Resolved: 1) the Board approved the Terms of Reference for the Search & Governance Committee as per the draft circulated	
8.9	2) the Board approved the reappointment of Barry Neaves as a governor for a third term of 2 years commencing 15 December 2022;	
8.10	3) the Board approved the appointment of Barry Neaves as Chair of C&QA committee commencing 18 October 2022	
8.11	4) the Board approved the appointment of Joanna Townsend as Chair of Search committee commencing 18 October 2022	
12.	(This item was moved up the agenda as Joanna Townsend had to leave the meeting for another commitment.) Report from the Careers Link Governor <i>Paper circulated: Report from Careers Link Governor prepared by JT.</i>	
12.1	JT said that she meets regularly with members of the Careers team who she finds to be very dedicated, enthusiastic and professional. All have their particular specialities. They provide one to one care for specific students, but also a general Careers service.	
12.2	The department recently once again achieved the prestigious Investors in Careers award which shows that Careers support is embedded across the College, not just in the Careers team e.g. it is a focus for Senior Tutors and Teachers alike. JT suggested that may help explain the positive destination statistics that NA referred to in his presentation.	

<p>12.3</p> <p>12.4</p> <p>12.5</p> <p>12.6</p> <p>12.7</p>	<p>JT said that she really enjoys her Link Governor role and encouraged fellow Board members to consider a link post.</p> <p>JT said that the Careers team would be grateful for the support of governors with work experience placements in any sector, although IT is a particular area of need. If anyone can help with this, please notify the Clerk.</p> <p>JT also said that Careers and related staff really appreciate governors providing mock Oxbridge interviews. JT has done this herself and finds it very enjoyable. They are now conducted online, and you are provided with all the information you need. You do not need to be a subject specialist.</p> <p>The Board thanked JT for her report and asked what sort of support is given to students generally regarding university and other applications. LKE replied that all students are supported with UCAS applications e.g. help with personal statements. They are also given support before that stage in making decisions about their next steps, for instance whether university is the right destination and what alternatives there might be.</p> <p>The Acting Chair asked what is involved in being a Link Governor. JT answered that there is online training available. In terms of the contact with College staff, again that can be online although she is also invited to relevant events. It gives you the opportunity for you to understand more about a particular part of the College and also how the governors might be able to provide support in the area.</p> <p><i>JT left the meeting</i></p>	
<p>9.</p> <p>9.1</p> <p>9.2</p> <p>9.3</p> <p>9.3.1</p>	<p>Report from the Policy & Resources committee <i>Papers circulated: Draft P&R minutes 16 September 2022; Financial & Estates Report</i></p> <p>The Acting Chair of Board (LE) referred to the draft minutes and explained that she had been absent for this meeting which was chaired by AS.</p> <p>The committee received the Principal’s Matters September 2022 which was discussed under item 5 above.</p> <p>Year end 2021 – 22. Position for year ended 31 July 2022</p> <p>IK said that the main focus of the Report is where we finished last year which was in a much better position than had been expected, mainly due to improved Boarding related expenditure and some improvements in Catering. Another factor was the late delivery of some IT equipment after the year end; this is not a problem for 2022-23 as we have sufficient in the budget.</p>	

9.3.2	IK said that the cash flow summary is provided and again is in a good position. Projects have been completed within budget and ongoing projects are also forecast to do the same.	
9.4	Update to 2022 23 budget	
9.4.1	IK referred to the Harpur Trust v Brazel case referred to in Principal’s Matters above. We await further guidance on this and may need the help of a consultant to assess our situation and any potential financial implications. These are currently unclear.	
9.4.2	IK will bring updated figures for this year and a revised forecast to the next meeting.	IK
9.4.3	The Board asked if the financial situation in Catering is expected to improve. IK said that it is looking better so far this term, probably due to the changed timetable and the investment in the PW2 café. IK and the Catering Manager are hopeful that will continue. SR said that prices of supplies are going up and IK agreed, noting that this is a common issue across colleges. Some have outsourced their service, but this is not necessarily the solution.	
9.5	Estates	
9.5.1	IK said that the Lecture Theatre refurbishment is complete and recorded thanks to the Trustees for their contribution. Note from Clerk: Several governors, including a Trustee, have visited the Lecture Theatre to see the completed work.	
9.5.2	IK said that the portacabins outside Study Support were in place on time and various other small summer projects were achieved on schedule.	
9.5.3	IK reminded the Board that we made a fire safety bid last year but were unsuccessful. We have started work on another bid and there will be a paper coming to the Board for consideration and electronic approval ahead of the next meeting, given there is a very tight submission deadline of 7 December.	
9.5.5	Regarding the Carville building, there has been a little slippage against the schedule recently due to bad weather, but we hope that external works will be complete by the middle of November. The interior will be complete by the end of October. We will then await building regulations sign off and we hope that the site will be clear by the end of November.	
9.6	Sustainability	
9.6.1	IK said that we applied for a grant for the development of our Heat Decarbonisation Plan but were unsuccessful. We are working with a consultant whose report will come to the P&R committee. This will form the starting point from which we aim to reduce our carbon footprint.	

9.7	Questions from the Board	
9.7.1	The Board asked whether the furniture is ready for Carville. IK replied that we selected a supplier who is storing it for us; it can only be delivered when the external works are complete.	
9.7.2	The Board asked if the fact that Carville will not be ready straight after half term, as hoped, will cause problems. DC said that it will not as subjects are accommodated elsewhere.	
9.7.3	The Board asked the reason for the savings on the Carville build and if we will benefit from any savings in spend against the budget for the build. IK said that we had allowed for contingencies which we can now release and we will seek to maximise our claim on any other savings.	
9.8	Post 16 Capacity Fund Bid future bid	
9.8.1	IK reported that the DfE has opened the next and final bid round, with a November deadline and a maximum value of £4 million. We are preparing a bid for a new building on the site of Wyke Lodge. A paper will come to the Board.	
9.8.2	SR said that we need to manage our expectations in terms of the likelihood of success in this round. The pool of eligible applicants is bigger this time as it is open to school sixth forms as well as colleges, plus the fact that we were successful last time may be a factor. We think it is worth going for, but do not propose to invest a great deal of money in planning applications and other detailed preparation.	
9.8.3	The Board asked if this round is the same as the last in respect of the college's contribution. IK said that this time you are awarded more points if you contribute more.	
10.	Student governors' verbal report	
10.1	BBW said that the year has got off to a great start with the new timetable which he feels means that classes are going better.	
10.2	Developments include: good demand for an end of year event or prom; a loyalty scheme for the restaurant favourite of chicken and chips; plans for a Culture Day.	
10.3	The flagpole has gone up and is in use, receiving a positive response. The SU is working closely with the EDI staff lead.	
10.4	The student parliament is active and the SU is organising elections for Treasurer, Events, Secretary and EDI Officer.	

<p>10.5</p> <p>10.6</p>	<p>The Board asked what the Culture Day will involve and BBW said that people will be showing off aspects of their background cultures such as dress and food, with the aim of promoting understanding.</p> <p>SR thanked BBW and MP for joining her at the Memorial Service for Her Majesty the Queen at Winchester Cathedral on a Saturday evening, where they had been good representatives of the College. The Board also thanked the students for giving up that time.</p>	
<p>11.</p> <p>11.1</p> <p>11.2</p> <p>11.3</p> <p>11.4</p> <p>11.5</p> <p>11.6</p> <p>11.7</p> <p>11.7.1</p>	<p>Annual Safeguarding update from the Deputy Principal (Welfare & Progression) <i>Papers circulated: HSCP Safeguarding Audit July 2022; Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Policy</i></p> <p>LKE updated the Board on the membership of the Safeguarding Team and it was noted that Andy Milchard is working as Associate DoCS, covering for an absent DoCS. Also, the Deputy Student Services Manager (Liz Wilmott) will train as a DSL to support the Student Services Manager (Liz Crouch).</p> <p>The Board noted that LKE provided safeguarding updates to all staff. The main changes include the importance of staff knowing what to do if they feel that a student is at risk of suicide. There is also increased emphasis on this year's revision of the publication Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) on how to respond to allegations against staff. LKE talked through this and other changes in KCSIE.</p> <p>LKE reported that we have added new questions relating to safeguarding in employment recruitment interviews which have uncovered some assumptions which we need to work on.</p> <p>LKE said that there has been a lot of work done in College in the last year in increasing awareness of the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equality Act 2010. There have been many new groups set up for the promotion of EDI and additional training for staff, such as that from the Black Leadership Group.</p> <p>There has been a lot of work on the Public Sector Equality Duty, with Culture Day being a really good example of this. Staff and students are promoting this and initiating new ideas.</p> <p>LKE said that governors should ensure that they have done the ihasco EDI training in the past three years and, if they have not, contact the Clerk to organise new training. She also recommended that, this year, in addition to reading part 1 of KCSIE, they should also read part 2. KCSIE 2022</p> <p>Questions from the Board</p> <p>The Board asked about what happens if we contact the police and if we receive a good response. LKE said that the police will respond immediately if we have a student missing who is regarded as at risk of a suicide</p>	<p>Govs</p>

	attempt. She said that staff are obliged to report a suspected case of female genital mutilation, with SR explaining that we will support a staff member in making that call.	
11.7.2	The Board asked about the size of the LADO team and if they give good support. LKE said that there are two or three and that they are really available and very good, despite the fact that last year's introduction of the requirement to report low level concerns must have greatly added to their workload.	
11.7.3	The Board asked if cases involving staff tend to be that they are careless and do not pay sufficient attention to their conduct. LKE said yes, with advice being given. LKE said that the C&QA committee will soon receive a report on interaction with the LADO.	
11.7.4	The Board asked what constitutes a 'low level concern' under KCSIE. LKE said that it is behaviour that could be concerning given they work in education. The LADO is very good on advising us as to how to respond.	
11.8	Resolved: 1) the Board approved the Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Policy as circulated.	
11.9	2) the Board approved the HSCP Safeguarding Audit July 2022 as circulated.	
12.	Report from Careers Link Governor (see above)	
13.	Any other business	
13.1	a) Request for volunteers to assist with Oxbridge practice interviews: LE endorsed what JT said in item 12 above and encouraged governors to volunteer for this role.	
13.2	b) EDI (Equality, Diversity & Inclusion) and LDD (Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities) link governors: we have an existing vacancy for an EDI Link Governor and, with the departure of AP, a new one for LDD Link Governor. Please contact the Clerk if you would like to discuss either role.	
13.3	c) Surveys coming to governors i.e. FE Workforce Data Collection; Skills Audit: the Clerk explained that two surveys will shortly come to governors. The FE WDC is a new, mandatory return which we must provide to the DfE and responses are very important, with a clear deadline. The Skills Audit is an internal survey prepared by the Search Committee which will help us in our planning.	
13.4	d) Data protection – governors' personal email addresses: the Clerk asked if governors are content that their personal email addresses (apart from those of SR, BBW and MP who routinely use @psc email addresses) are used openly in communication with members of the Board and SMT. She asked members present to let her know in the next week if they do not consent.	
13.5	e) Audit Committee: Reminder that the Board is invited to attend the Audit committee meeting on Monday 21 November at 3 pm on Zoom	

<p>13.6</p> <p>13.7</p> <p>13.8</p> <p>13.9</p>	<p>to receive the management letter from the financial auditor with regard to the annual accounts: The Clerk will send a reminder a week before.</p> <p>f) Carol Service: Reminder that the Carol Service is to take place on Friday 9 December at 7.30 pm at the Cathedral: Please tell the Clerk if you are able to attend and we will reserve a seat for you.</p> <p>g) Music diary for 2022 – 23: Please tell the Clerk if you are able to attend and we will reserve a seat for you where appropriate.</p> <p>h) Portacabins: NL said that the portacabins outside Study Support were on the location previously set aside for staff to take a break and asked if there will be a new outside area for staff wellbeing. SR said that we are working on landscaping plans for a quiet garden which will soon be actioned and also that the Kelso lawn has benches in a relaxing setting which staff can use. DC said that the portacabins are a temporary solution and they will be removed.</p> <p><i>The staff and student governor left the meeting.</i></p> <p>Cost of living This is recorded in a separate confidential minute.</p> <p><i>SR and members of SMT left the meeting.</i></p>	<p>Clerk</p>
<p>14.</p>	<p>Private business (two items) – These are recorded in a separate confidential minute.</p>	
<p>15.</p>	<p>Date of next meeting – Monday 12 December 2022 at 3 pm There being no other business the meeting ended at 6.15 pm</p> <p>..... Date.....</p> <p>Amanda Storey Chair of Governors</p>	