



ST MARY'S COLLEGE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BODY (PART A) HELD ON THURSDAY 17TH DECEMBER 2019

Present: Mrs S. Beecroft
Mrs E. Best (Interim Principal)
Mr M. Conboy (Chair 20/21 – voted in after Part A)
Mrs A. Francis
Mr J. Hargreaves
Mr M. Harkin (Student Governor)
Ms P. Lightbown (Staff Governor)
Mr P. Moore
Mr M Wright (Acting Chair – Part A only and item 1 & 2 of Part B only)
Ftr N. Wynn (Vice Chair)

In attendance: Mr S. Jones (Head of Intervention (ESFA))

Staff: Mrs K. Hollern (Head of Finance)
Mr M. Makda (Asisstant Principal (Quality))
Mrs L. Farnhill (Clerk to the Board)

Apologies: Mr M. Vizzard
Mr C Beesley (Interim Chair)
Mr F. Dowling (Provincial Education Deputy (Society of Mary))
Mr A Kherakar

Absent: None

Open and welcome

The meeting was opened by the clerk requesting nominations from foundation governors to act as meeting chair in the absence of the Interim Chair. MC as Vice Chair explained that in his capacity as Audit Chair presenting the Audit report and annual accounts for approval made it inappropriate for him to act as Chair until this was completed, adding that he would be presenting himself for the position of Board Chair in Part B once items relating to Audit were concluded.

Foundation Governor Mike Wright self-nominated for the position, this was seconded by Fthr Noel Wynn and unanimously approved

Resolved – That Mike Wright would act as Board Chair for this meeting until the conclusion of items relating to the Audit and the signing of the accounts.

ITEM 1 – TRAINING

Due to the amended meeting dates the clerk confirmed that this had been deferred at the request of the Chair and Interim Principal to ensure sufficient time for the Quality Committee to review and recommend the SAR and QIP for approval

Item 1 – deferred.

ITEM 2 – OPENING PRAYER AND WELCOME

Acting Chair MW welcomed members and attendees to the meeting with special thanks to new members P. Moore and J. Hargreaves

Fthr N. Wynn was asked to open the meeting in prayer.

Item 2 – resolved.

ITEM 3 – RATIFICATION OF ELECTRONIC DECISIONS:

- a. Chair - approved
- b. Date changes - approved
- c. Updated committee membership - approved
- d. Extraordinary meeting minutes (confidential)
- e. TOR for the quality committee - Approved

Item 3 – Resolved: The Board ratified the decisions. Approval for C.Beasley as interim Chair; the updated meeting schedule; committee membership and minutes of the extraordinary meeting were all approved.

ITEM 4 – Apologies for Absence

Reasons for absence were presented to the Board with approval given.

Item 4 – Resolved: consent to absences was given

ITEM – 5 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

EB declared an interest in any decisions relating to the pay award (part B) on the basis of her Husband as an employee of SMC. SB declared an interest based on her role at LHU.

Item 5 – Resolved: declarations of interest were noted

ITEM 6 - MINUTES OF THE MEETIGN OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS HELD ON 25TH SEPTEMBER 2019

The minutes were reviewed and signed by the acting Chair as a true record.

Item 6 – Approved: The minutes were approved and signed

ITEM 7 – MATTERS ARISING/ ACTIONS FROM SEPTEMBER

The report and associated actions were reviewed and noted.

Item 7 – Resolved: Details of the updates were noted

ITEM 8 - COMMITTEE REPORT – AUDIT COMMITTEE

Audit Chair, MC provided a verbal report on the activities of the Committee since the last meeting of the board. MC confirmed that due to the deferment of the external audit report, the meeting on 21st November, had focused on the Internal Audit Strategy and was followed up by an extraordinary meeting of the Audit Committee on 16th December to receive the recommendations of the external auditors and consider recommending the accounts to be signed. These would be covered in detail in Part B.

Item 8.1 MC recommended the Data Protection Policy for Board approval. This was unanimously approved.

Item 8.1 – Approved- the policy is approved for immediate implementation

Item 8.2 MC confirmed that the recommendations within the internal audit reports were reviewed in detail by the committee with subsequent actions to streamline the feedback process to allow for more timely reactions by the committee.

Item 8.2 – Noted - Details of the internal audit reports were noted

Item 8.3 – Deferred – This would be reviewed under Part B Item 2

Item 8.4 – Noted Details of the internal audit report on health and safety were noted

ITEM 9 - COMMITTEE REPORT – RESOURCES COMMITTEE

SB, Chair of the committee confirmed that she had reviewed and approved the minutes for circulation to the Board which were a comprehensive account of the business reviewed.

SB highlighted the following items of particular relevance to the Board:

- Final HE numbers including the financial boost relating to SMC fee weighting.
- LHU project to include recruitment support for SMC
- Reformed Nursery report – with improved reporting schedule. SB noted nothing of concern relating to the nurseries although the finances of the Park would be closely monitored.
- Nursery Safeguarding policy was recommended for approval, with Board members advised that in addition, there was an additional ‘easy to use’ guide for new staff providing additional reassurance that this was accessible and effective best practice.
- Marketing strategy – the committee were very impressed by work of the team and quality and detail within the report

Governor question - Are the concerns relating to the park due to the national funding structure. **Answer (SB)** In part, yes, but this is compounded by newly implemented parking restrictions. Nursery staff are working with the council to find a resolution to this. A ‘watch and wait’ approach is being undertaken

Item 9.1a: Approved – Nursery Safeguarding Policy be approved for immediate implementation

Item 9.1 b: Deferred - Staff pay award to be deferred for discussion within Part B

Item 9.2 a: Noted – The board noted the content of the Marketing strategy and report

Item 9.2 b: - Deferred - Management accounts to be deferred for discussion within Part B

Item 9.2 c: Noted – Minutes of the meeting of 14th November 2019 be noted by the Board

ITEM 10 - COMMITTEE REPORT – QUALITY AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Quality Committee Chair AMF gave a summary of the business reviewed by the committee, advising that there had been two meetings, the first held on 4th November, the second had been held immediately prior to the Board meeting. AMF asked the Board to note and approve items as detailed below:

- The first meeting reviewed the priorities of the Committee, including an annual workplan reflecting the quality cycle of the College and the TOR already circulated
- OfS regulatory requirements will be a standing item. Recent regulatory breaches were reviewed
- Retention targets were analysed and recommended for approval then updated by committee level electronic ratification when superseded by updated data the next day. The notable dip was considered to be a result of the linear programme
- The annual Safeguarding report provided assurance of effective practice

- Validated the SAR and QIP which the committee would like to bring to the Board for approval.
- The Committee recommended the inclusion of some additional supportive data and was happy to recommend the SAR and QIP to the Board for approval on this basis
- Supportive commentary to contextualise the grades validated in the meeting:
 - Effectiveness: - reflecting on 18/19, recommending a judgement of RI in terms of overall effectiveness and leadership and management. Student experience, conduct, positive progression are all good but the committee feels that on balance, due to the higher proportion of higher A level during the 18/19 year and turbulence within the leadership and management both are RI. With the need to recognise the different experience and quality of the vocational students, a split grading for quality as a 2/3.
 - It is felt by the committee that the QIP gives assurance that we have grounds to improve to a solid grade 2. The committee has the confidence that should we receive a visit, the team could positively talk around these experiences.

Governor question – Did the process incorporate student voice, have students been given the chance for input? **Answer (AMF)** – This filtered through the departmental SRS, where we heard lots of positive talk in learner reflection, including a feeling of being safe and happy, it just did not transpire to outcomes. (**Q directed to the student governor**) Do you agree? **Answer (MH)**: Yes.

With no further questions or comments, the Board was asked to consider the recommendation of the Quality Committee to approve the SAR and QIP on the basis of minor amendments to include additional data where necessary to support the judgements made

Item 10.1 a – Approved – The Board approved the Quality and Assurance Committee terms of reference.

Item 10.1 b – Approved – The Board approved the retention targets recommended by the Quality and Standards Committee.

Item 10.2 a – Approved – The Board approved the SAR with a grading of:

- Quality of education: Split grade – Vocational subjects – 2 A Levels – 3
- Behaviour and attitudes – 2
- Personal Development – 2
- Leadership and management – 3
- Overall Effectiveness – 3

Item 10.3 – Approved – The Board approved the QIP

ITEM 11 - COMMITTEE REPORT – BOARD MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Committee Chair, Fthr NW advised the Board that they had not held a formal meeting due to quoracy issues, but had convened for an informal review meeting.

The Board were asked to note or approve the following:

- TOR – following the BMAC in September, where it recommended that the TOR be updated to include SPH the amended TOR are presented to the Board for approval.
- The committee members had reviewed and discussed the SPH appraisal process. This decision will need to be reviewed and approved by a quorate meeting, but the consensus was in favour of using the process introduced by CMC as this was in alignment with the whole staff process introduced last year
- Due to quoracy, the committee could not recommend co-opted applications for approval, but had reviewed them and were asking the Board to make this decision to prevent further delay in member appointment. The committee provided the following summary:
 - existing committee members NW, and EB had reviewed the two applications and Vice Chair MC, who is being appointed to the Committee had met and interviewed PC.
 - All were in agreement that one application (PC) was stronger and suggested that the Board review this and consider approving this application as a co-opted member.
 - It was noted that MC had been very impressed by PC, bringing a different set of skills much needed by the Board. As a former pupil PC had put himself forward to support the college as he felt that with his extensive business experience, he could add something back.
 - Experience included change management and project management, with the Board reminded that they now have considerable strengths in education, but limited skills from other sectors and these skills would complement those already held by the Board.

Governor question – Was PC unperturbed by the financial position of the College?

Answer (MC) The situation was explained in full and he was happy to proceed with the application and support the College.

- NW summarised that whilst this was not a recommendation of the Committee, it was proposed that the Board directly review and approve co-opted membership to prevent further delay.
- It was proposed that the 2nd candidate did not have the skills and experience required at this time.
- NW added that the need to continue to recruit members with relevant experience remained a responsibility of the whole Board, with a particular need to replace

MC on the Audit committee if the Board go on to appoint him as Chair of the Board.

Governor suggestion - SB – recommended speaking to a colleague with the relevant skills and experience who may be able to commit Co-opted membership of the Audit Committee.

Clarity around options regarding committee only membership without full commitment to the board were held, including discussions around options for short term support whilst attempts to find permanent replacements for resignations continue.

Item 11 – Noted. The details of the informal meeting were noted with the following:

Item 11a – approved: As an item previously reviewed by the committee – the TOR were approved presented and approved by the Board

Item 11b – approved: Co-opted applications were presented directly to the Board for approval without recommendation from the Committee. The application of PC was approved. The other application will be placed on file with the applicant informed

Item 11c – approved: Composition of the Committees as previously distributed and agreed electronically was ratified by the Board

Item 11d – deferred: SPH Appraisal process will be deferred until a quorate BMAC

Item 11e – approved: The interim position of C. Beesley has been ratified with a decision to appoint M. Conboy once the Audit items are concluded in Part B

Item 11.2 – Noted: The Board is asked to note the Minutes of the BMAC meeting held on 25th September 2019

ITEM 12 - PRINCIPAL'S REPORT PART A

Governors were asked to receive and note the content of the KPI dashboard which summarised the College's current position. EB gave an overview of each section, including supportive actions undertaken and noting where information had been scrutinised at committee level.

EB invited questions on any of the information presented.

Q - In response to the learning walk and deep dive process, EB was asked to explain the new process and changes with the introduction of the EIF.

A – EB explained the process including timeframe and support for staff in detail.

Q – In relation to work experience, were students expected to complete a minimum number of hours or days?

A – (EB)It needs to be sufficient enough to track and demonstrate value, whilst not prescriptive; it should be at least a few days.

Q – In relation to retention - Does this reflect the national picture now?

A – (EB) – The National picture showed a decline, it was much higher previously due to modular assessment, this is now a more true reflection. Next year will be some modular still included but much less. This is an aspirational target.

Item 12: Resolved: Governors noted the KPI data

ITEM 13. STUDENT RECRUITMENT 19/20

PL advised that early data remains the same for years 2 and 3 as reported in September, adding that no students had withdrawn any since enrolment. PL stated that there had been a dip in enrolment but this was not significant overall. PL advised the Board that the Resources Committee had reviewed the report in detail. No further questions or comments were received

Item 13: Resolved: Governors noted the HE recruitment data

ITEM 14. RISK MANAGEMENT REPORT

EB advised the Board that a new process, which had been outlined to the Resources and Audit Committees, had been put into place. This involved regular review at executive level with subsequent reporting. As there had not yet been the opportunity to review the register put in place, this was deferred.

Item 14: Deferred – The report would be presented to the Audit and Resources Committees in January

ITEM 15 - Documents for information

KH asked the Board if there were any questions relating to the documents included for information – all of which were financial in nature. None were received.

KH confirmed that the IFMC would need Board approval and would be presented initially to Resources Committee in January and they would recommend this to the Board ahead of the February deadline.

Item 15: Resolved: Governors noted the information within the documents

ITEM 16 – AOB

The clerk advised that meeting dates would need to be amended to incorporate the IFMC, with the January meetings no longer required as the SAR and QIP had already been approved. The proposed dates were approved.

Move January Board meeting to approve the IFMC (by 28.2.20)

- Resources 30.1.20 (no change)
- Audit 6.2.20 (one week earlier)
- Board, BMAC and Quality 13.2.20

Item 16 – approved: The new dates were approved

Part A concluded at 7.15pm with thanks given to members and attendees with members declaring special thanks to MW for agreeing to Chair at short notice.

