

**Minutes of the Esher College Corporation**  
**held on Thursday 10th December 2009**

\* Present

\* Mr Terry Price (Chair)

* Mr Keith Blackwell	* Mr David Lavarack
* Mr Michael Butlin	* Mr David Lowe
* Mrs Susan Effendowicz	* Mr Paul Monaghan
* Mr Daniel Hill	* Mrs Susanna Burleigh
* Mrs Carole Ann Roycroft	* Mr Chris Johnson
* Mr Robin John	* Mrs Pam Whyman
* Dr Anne Grant	* Dr Clarissa Wilks
* Cllr Peter Hickman	* Mrs Jo Canessa
* Mr Michael Kemsley	Mr Philip White
Mr David Irving	

In attendance:           Mrs Sue Gunter: Clerk to the Corporation  
                                  Mr Dan Dean: Deputy Principal (Advising Officer)

**Part I**

**1. REGISTER OF INTERESTS**

The Chair asked if anyone had any interests to declare with regard to the agenda of the meeting. Both he and Paul Monaghan declared an interest in Item 8 as they had children who would be applying for a place at the College in 2011.

**2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from David Irving and Philip White.

**3. CONSTITUTION**

The Clerk reported that the Review/Search Committee had discussed the external governor vacancy which would arise at the end of January. It was proposed to advertise this in the local press in the New Year.

It was noted that Student Council elections would take place just before the end of term.

**4. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

These were agreed and signed as a true record.

**5. MATTERS ARISING**

**Item 8 Governors SAR/QIP** – The clerk advised that the Cross College Assessments would be available on the governor portal before the end of term.

**Item 11 Matters arising from students** - Daniel Hill confirmed that various issues had been raised with the caterers and that this was ongoing. Keith Blackwell advised that work was planned to lower some of the speed bumps in the car park.

## 6. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

Keith Blackwell highlighted the main points of his Report. In the Introduction, he drew governors' attention to the fact that the Apprenticeship, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 will become law on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2010, although there is still much to be clarified in terms of the working relationship between Colleges and their Local Authorities. He outlined the main Staffing changes, advising that a good appointment had now been made for the English teacher vacancy. He confirmed that the increase in student numbers had resulted in small increases in part-time staff. Governors were interested to know what the Full Time Equivalent figure for part-time staff was and he agreed to include this in future reports.

**Action:** FTE figure for part-time staff to be provided in future reports.

Under Staff salaries, Keith Blackwell advised that support staff had reached an agreement for an overall increase of 1.85%. The teaching associations had been offered a similar package but had yet to respond.

In terms of the Curriculum, A level Accounting had been added, but there had been insufficient interest to offer a Computing qualification. The free twilight course in Critical Thinking for year 11 students from local secondary schools was being run successfully again this year. The meeting commended this contribution to the Elmbridge 14-19 partnership. Governors noted the very positive Examinations results both in terms of points per student and points per entry.

Enrolment for 2009 was well above target with a rise in the conversion rate meaning that 1,616 students were on roll at the first enumeration date compared with a target of 1549. Applications for 2010 closed in record time. In terms of Funding, the additional 67 students on roll were unfunded in the current year (to a value of approximately £230,000), but this amount should be consolidated in next year's funding.

Adult and Leisure activities are thriving with 2008-09 enrolment of 1007 part-time students providing c£100,000 of income. The College continues to be pro-active in Partnerships and although there were some frustrations within the Elmbridge 14-19 partnership, the relationship with Esher High School remained strong. Brooklands College has severe problems and will stop offering AS/A Level courses from the end of this academic year. The College had offered to absorb students from Brooklands where possible.

He went on to highlight the main Student Activities, and commended the outstanding Braindead performance at the Edinburgh fringe, which had also featured on BBC's The One Show and Channel Four's T4. Additional staffing has enabled an increase in the range of sports on offer this year.

Finally, he reported that ideas were being progressed to increase and improve College Accommodation.

He wished to thank and congratulate staff and students on their hard work this term, and Corporation members also asked for their thanks to be recorded.

### Student Council Report

Daniel Hill highlighted the main parts of the Student Council Report which focused particularly on the number of charity events which had taken place during the term. Governors were impressed by the range of activities undertaken and particularly pleased at the level of commitment demonstrated by the high numbers of blood donors, and the work being done on equality and diversity.

### Report and Financial Statements to 31.07.09

The Finance Committee had considered these in detail at their meeting in November, and recommended them for approval by the Corporation. Similarly, Robin John confirmed that the Audit Committee had reviewed the Audit Reports thereon and recommended them for approval.

After a brief discussion, Robin John proposed approval of the Report and Financial Statements. This was seconded by Mike Kemsley and approved unanimously by the meeting.

### Financial Budget summaries and updates

It was noted that the Cash Budget summary (Appendix B) for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> July 2009 contained the same figures as have been used in the Report and Financial Statements in an accruals format.

Dan Dean reported that the budget for 2009/10 (Appendix C) had been amended to reflect the revised estates plans. The budget now included £730,000 planned expenditure this year, and the provision for loans and interest thereon for major buildings works had been removed. Clarissa Wilks proposed approval of the revised budget. This was seconded by Carole Ann Roycroft and approved unanimously by the meeting.

Turning to the summary for the two months to September 2009 (Appendix D), he advised that there was little to report as it was so early in the year. The cash flow statement (Appendix D) was noted, but some members found it difficult to read in A4 format. It was noted that the funding profile may change once the College came under Local Authority control.

<b>Action:</b> Cash flow to be produced in A3 format for the Corporation in future.
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## **7. COLLEGE SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT**

Keith Blackwell began by thanking Dan Dean for all of this hard work in producing this report, which was a distillation of a vast quantity of cross college information. Dan Dean then introduced the College Self Assessment Report (SAR), which had been reviewed in detail at the Policy Committee meeting, with some small adjustments having been made to it as a result of this. He drew attention to the fact that the Report was in a new format and went through it page by page inviting comments.

In answer to questions from governors, he explained the process of "probation" referred to at the top of page 6. Pages 9-11 provided a headline summary of the strengths and areas for improvement of the College. He advised that a schedule of policies was being produced and would be linked to the Equality and Diversity impact assessments which were being produced on a rolling programme.

Each target in the QIP was colour coded, (red, amber, green), and Dan Dean went through each section of the QIP highlighting the most important areas of them. In answer to questions from governors, he confirmed that robust measures were in place to monitor progress and ensure that targets were achieved. Clarissa Wilks commended the process which she had experienced at first hand and considered to be exemplary.

Pam Whyman proposed approval of the Report. This was seconded by David Lavarack and agreed unanimously by the meeting.

## 8. ADMISSIONS POLICY 2011

Keith Blackwell advised the meeting that he had taken a discussion paper on admissions arrangements for 2011 to the Policy Committee and this had been discussed in detail. The policy was based on the recommendations made by the committee which he outlined as follows.

It was proposed to keep the same entry requirements as before and to continue to support the local Elmbridge community with guaranteed places for those who lived within the borough and those who attended any of its four state secondary schools. Guaranteed places would also be offered to siblings of current pupils and to children of staff. This last point had been agreed as part of the provision for work life balance.

He advised that the greatest difficulty within the policy was in how to deal most equitably with those who were not guaranteed places, due to the high level of demand for them. Although various alternatives to the current "first come first served" method had been explored, he felt that none of them was practical, and the Policy Committee had agreed with this. Instead it was proposed to amend the current procedure, and to deal with the two sets of applications separately. This would enable the College to have more control over the process and predict student numbers more accurately.

In time, the College would look to moving the process on-line. However, any such move would have to ensure equality for all and be consistent with the College's mission to maintain diverse access. There would be a significant number of operational issues to consider and resolve in any move to dealing with applications on-line. There was a brief discussion as to whether the Policy should give priority to Looked After Children in the same way that school policies do. However, it was noted that such students were often difficult to identify and it was considered that any students who did fall within this category could be dealt with under the provisions for extenuating circumstances at the end of the policy.

Chris Johnson proposed approval of the policy. This was seconded by Michael Butlin and agreed unanimously by the meeting.

## 9. UPDATED PERSONNEL PROCEDURES

Keith Blackwell advised that these procedures had been updated with reference to guidelines from the Sixth Form College Forum and ACAS. They had been considered in detail by the Policy Committee and recommended for approval by the Corporation. It was suggested that as a matter of routine, "next review" dates should be put on all policies and this was agreed. After a brief discussion, Michael Butlin proposed approval of the procedures. This was seconded by Clarissa Wilks and agreed unanimously by the meeting.

<b>Action:</b> Next review dates to be put on all College policies.
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## 10. STRESS MANAGEMENT POLICY

Again this policy had been considered in detail by the Policy Committee and the small changes suggested by that committee had been made. Susanna Burleigh proposed approval of the policy. This was seconded by Michael Butlin and agreed unanimously by the meeting.

## **11. STUDENT WITHDRAWALS 2008-09**

The information on student withdrawals was noted. It was agreed that this was not a big problem for the College and that most withdrawals could be categorised as due to lack of motivation.

## **12. SIXTH FORM COLLEGE DESIGNATION**

Keith Blackwell had drafted a paper explaining the background to this and advised that although there were some issues still to clarify in terms of transfer to local authority control, there was little to debate in terms of designation. He mentioned the possibility of the College being rebadged as "Esher Sixth Form College" but this was only a discussion point at this stage. David Lavarack proposed that the College should be designated as a Sixth Form College. This was seconded by Clarissa Wilks and agreed unanimously by the meeting.

## **13. TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE**

The Clerk advised that the Terms of Reference had been revised to:-

- Make the different reasons for convening a meeting clear.
- Change the way in which the committee was constituted so that it would be convened on a case by case basis. This would ensure that membership was appropriate for the issue under consideration.
- Reflect the revised personnel procedures.
- Include an appendix relating to appeals by students.

Clarissa Wilks proposed approval of the Terms of Reference. This was seconded by Carole Ann Roycroft and approved unanimously by the meeting.

## **14. REPORTS BACK FROM COMMITTEES**

### AUDIT

Robin John referred governors to the minutes of the last Audit Committee meeting and briefly outlined the main matters considered. Copies of the Internal Audit Report, Annual Report of the Audit committee and FMCE had been circulated with the agenda and the Audit Committee had recommended these for approval by the Corporation. After a brief discussion, Clarissa Wilks proposed these for approval. This was seconded by Chris Johnson and agreed unanimously by the meeting.

### ESTATES

Paul Monaghan reported that the main focus of the meeting had been to agree the accommodation strategy which he felt gave a clear set of priorities. The first phase of this had been discussed in detail and recommended for approval by the Estates committee. This comprised refurbishment of the windows in the Tower Block, increasing the size of the physics lab and providing an outdoor café facility. These works had an estimated cost of £730,000 which had been included in the revised budget approved above. In terms of the second phase, it had now been confirmed that it should be possible to build a further storey on the existing B block to provide additional accommodation. It was proposed to provide some temporary classrooms in the meantime.

FINANCE

Mike Kemsley advised that the committee had considered the financial impact of the Estates Committee proposals and recommended these for approval. This represented a financially cautious approach which would use existing reserves to carry out the proposed works. As discussed above, the budget has been amended to reflect this. Keith Blackwell advised that any future capital works requiring loans would need approval from the Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA).

POLICY

Terry Price advised that most items discussed at the Policy Committee meeting had been covered under separate agenda items. However, it had been proposed that the Corporation should nominate a link governor for Equality and Diversity. The nominated person would provide some basic oversight and advice and the role would tend to involve email/telephone discussions rather than formal meetings. Clarissa Wilks agreed to take on this role and this was approved unanimously.

REVIEW/SEARCH

Carole Ann Roycroft commented on the proposed advertisement for an external governor, saying that the committee felt that every effort should be made to encourage applicants from an ethnic minority.

REMUNERATION

This would be covered under Item 19 below.

**15. MATTERS ARISING FROM ACADEMIC STAFF/STUDENTS**

None.

*At this stage, Terry Price proposed to vary the order of the agenda so that the recruitment process for a new Principal was dealt with last, and this was agreed.*

**16. GOVERNORS ATTENDANCE AT COLLEGE**

It was agreed that a list of governor visits to College would be included in the minutes.

- 17.09.09** Terry Price meeting with Principal
- 06.10.09** Michael Butlin – Health & Safety Meeting
- 14.10.09** Clarissa Wilks – Joint Reviews
- 15.10.09** David Lavarack – Joint Reviews
- 16.10.09** Paul Monaghan meeting with Principal re Estates
- 16.10.09** Anne Grant – Joint Reviews
- 20.10.09** Carole Ann Roycroft – Environmental Group
- 05.11.09** Robin John, Carole Ann Roycroft – Joint Reviews
- 06.11.09** Terry Price, Mike Kemsley – Joint Reviews
- 11.11.09** Terry Price, Paul Monaghan meeting with Principal re Estates
- 07.12.09** Terry Price meeting with Principal re new Principal applications
- 09.12.09** Terry Price meeting with Deputy Clerk

**17. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Robin John raised the issue of the designation of the "Head of Internal Audit" as discussed at the Audit committee meeting. Dan Dean advised that Geoff Bowley had looked into this and would report back to the next committee meeting.

Daniel Hill asked about the new building in the quad area and was advised that it was a theatre store.

**18. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting is Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> March 2010. Terry Price noted that it was Anne Grant's last meeting and she was presented with a gift as a token of thanks for all of her hard work and commitment during her fourteen years of service to the College as a governor.

*Dan Dean left the meeting at this point.*

**19. RECRUITMENT PROCESS/TIMETABLE FOR PRINCIPAL**

Terry Price outlined the main points arising from two sets of minutes of the Remuneration committee and emails which had been sent out concerning the Recruitment process for a new Principal. He advised that there had been twelve applications, from which five candidates had been long-listed.

A proposed schedule for the final interview process on 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> January was tabled. It was hoped that as many governors as possible should be involved over the two days. It was agreed that there would be an additional Corporation meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> January 2009 to consider the short-listed candidates and approve the decision on appointment. This would take place after the final interviews at 1pm, assuming three short-listed candidates.

**20. CONFIDENTIAL RESOLUTION**

Terry Price proposed that in view of the confidential nature of information to be dealt with in Part II of the agenda that representatives of the press and members of the public should be excluded from the meeting during the proceedings to which this resolution applies.

**Chair** .....

**Date** .....