

Minutes of the Esher College Corporation
Meeting held on Tuesday 7th July 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 Philip White	* Mrs Susanna Burleigh (part)
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 Daniel Hill
Mr David Irving	

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

Part I

1. EXTENSION STUDIES by Emma Young (Assistant Principal)

Emma Young introduced her presentation by saying that the extension courses offered by the College were seen as a key strength in:-

- Developing skills
- Broadening understanding
- Providing new areas of interest
- Enhancing university and job applications.

In the first year, approximately eighty courses are on offer, and these are delivered in one period a week. An enrichment certificate is awarded on successful completion of the courses.

Much work had been done recently in looking at the provision for second year students where feedback had indicated that the offer was limited. This had now been broadened in terms of scope and choice and focused on developing skills alongside knowledge based courses. Second year course options now were of three types – AS skills and knowledge development, individual project work and subject specific extensions. She provided a handout showing some of the courses available under each of these headings.

She advised that a survey of students is carried out in the spring term so that student demand can be estimated and courses arranged accordingly. There is then an opportunity to try out choices on Back to Work day in June with final allocations being made in September.

The scheme is very successful overall but there is still an issue of student buy-in; these options do not form part of the university offer and sometimes affects students' enthusiasm in the later stages of the courses. The outcome will be reviewed when exam results are received in September to evaluate how the first year went.

There was a wide ranging discussion about the extended project which was one of the most popular options. Governors were keen to gain an insight into the diverse nature of projects undertaken and how these were assessed. Emma Young stressed that assessors largely acted as facilitators and that the emphasis for all these projects was on the process of research and gaining information. She confirmed that students were given generic guidance on how to structure and research their work.

Terry Price thanked Emma Young for her presentation and she left the meeting at this point.

Terry Price welcomed Susanna Burleigh to her first Corporation meeting as a parent governor.

2. REGISTER OF INTERESTS

The Chair asked if anyone had any interests to declare with regard to the agenda of the meeting. Clarissa Wilks advised that her son had been offered a conditional place at the College for 2010.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from David Irving, David Lavarack, Chris Johnson, Carole Ann Roycroft, Philip White and Paul Monaghan.

4. CONSTITUTION

External Governors

The Clerk advised that the term of office of three external governors will come to an end in the autumn term. These are Terry Price, Carole Ann Roycroft and David Lavarack. The Review/Search Committee had concluded that all of these governors had individual and particular skills which were valuable to the College and recommended to the Corporation that each of them be invited to serve a further term. They had all indicated their willingness to do so. The meeting confirmed the re-appointment of all three governors.

Local Authority Governors

The term of office of Peter Hickman will also come to an end in the autumn. The Review/Search Committee had considered this separately as he had originally been appointed as a Local Authority Governor by Surrey County Council. Under the January 2008 Instrument and Articles, colleges were no longer required to have Local Authority governors although they could opt to do so if they wished, and the Local Authority was still willing to make an appointment. In addition, sixth form colleges were due to come under the umbrella of local councils in 2010 and the committee had debated whether other options, such as requesting an appointment of an officer of the Council, should be explored. The Clerk had been charged with investigating these issues and she reported back that Surrey County Council appeared keen to maintain links with the College by appointing a councillor. However, they would not consider appointing an officer of the Council as they considered that this might give rise to a conflict of interest. It was agreed that

this should be fed back to the Review/Search Committee to consider their recommendation in the light of this information.

Action: Clerk to advise the Review/Search Committee of this information and seek a recommendation from them.

Chair

The Clerk reported that the Chair's term of office would expire in the autumn. He had indicated his willingness to serve a further term but nominations would be open to all and she would seek nominations prior to the next Corporation meeting.

Action: Clerk to seek nominations for the position of Chair to be put to the next Corporation meeting.

5. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting on 23rd March were agreed and signed as a true record, subject to the line "*resulting in an additional £400,000 for the College*" being deleted as incorrect.

6. MATTERS ARISING

Item 4 Constitution. A governor with responsibility for Health and Safety had been sought at the Estates Committee meeting, but without success. This would be discussed further under Item 11, Health and Safety Report.

Item 8 Governors Training Day Finance Training for governors had been discussed at the governors training day. The insurers had confirmed that they would be deliver a presentation, but had to pull out at the last minute due to illness. Two governors had reviewed the governor portal.

Item 10 Mental Health Policy Carole Ann Roycroft had forwarded details of the NSCCP to the College.

7. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

Keith Blackwell reported that the College was in a strong position to deal with the external uncertainties and challenges ahead. He highlighted the following parts of his detailed report. In terms of Staffing, he reported that the College was fully staffed in teaching terms for September. A replacement for the network manager was being sought with interviews taking place on 8th July.

He commended the achievement of Examinations staff in successfully organising an increased and complex schedule of examinations. In terms of Staff Development and Training, the S7 Staff Development day had been particularly successful. He drew attention to the enhanced Curriculum provision with the addition of A Level accounting next year, and AS Ancient History, and A Level 3D design in the following year.

He reported that there had been widespread outrage from both colleges and schools to the initial LSC 2009-10 Funding allocations, resulting in a revision of the calculations and full funding now being received.

Applications for 2010 had set an all time record with the applicant list for non Elmbridge applicants being closed at 6pm on the day after the prospectuses and application packs were sent out. The College continued to explore the

best way of dealing with this very high level of demand. There was a discussion about the difficulty of predicting numbers and the calculation of conversion rates from original applications. In terms of ways in which the system could be changed, Keith Blackwell said that he would be against using any kind of lottery system although there might be a possibility of looking at online/mobile phone applications. There was a need to review the admissions policy which would be done by the spring term. It was confirmed that there was no local council restriction on student numbers. There was a likelihood of an increased number of students in 2010, and he was looking at the structure of the day to accommodate this. Pam Whyman reminded everyone that this caused an impact in all areas, and not just in classrooms. Keith Blackwell would consult with staff on any proposed change in the timetabling of the day but this was essentially an operational decision. Various possible solutions to overcrowding were discussed. These included distance learning but it was agreed that it was better to avoid losing classroom contact time.

He briefly outlined the results of the LSC Quality Assessment, mentioning that no sixth form college had achieved better than a “good” for learner reviews. Under Progression and Guidance he noted the Wider Skills Week. The Adult Learning prospectus had been greeted very favourably. Many aspects of the area of Partnerships was still uncertain with the implications of coming under the SCC umbrella still unclear. In particular, there was concern about the funding system which was currently demand led being changed to a commissioning basis. There was little information forthcoming on developments in the local London Boroughs.

He drew governors’ attention to the “Braindead” production at the Edinburgh festival and the College’s sporting achievements. In terms of accommodation he advised that alternative proposals were being explored with the possibility of a phased approach being taken. He felt that it was imperative to address refurbishment issues.

Finally he reflected on the Leavers Day, which had been a great success, providing a fitting send-off to the 2008-09 academic year.

Student Council Report

A number of successful fundraising projects were noted in the Student Council Report, and of these, Daniel Hill highlighted the £2,000 which had been raised for the Esher College Africa Trust, and the school uniform/mufti day which had been held in collaboration with Esher High School. In addition to this, the Student Councils of the various S7 colleges were looking at organising a combined charity event. Finally he wished to thank Clive Crisford for all his work as the Student Council Co-ordinator.

8. FINANCE REPORTS

Budget summaries from 1st August to 31st May 2009

Dan Dean advised that most variances had already been reported, but in terms of income he drew attention to the highly successful performance of adult education, and the unsurprising substantial negative variance on bank interest received. Overall, however, total income was predicted to be as budgeted. In terms of expenditure, the cost of exam fees had increased significantly as a result of the increase in the number of entries. The capital account was complicated by the problems with the LSC’s property strategy. This had resulted in £85,000 of College funds which had been allocated to the

feasibility study being carried forward to the proposed new project in 2009/10. In addition £29,000 was owed by the LSC in respect of 50% of the expenditure to date and it was hoped that this would be received before the end of the financial year.

The overall cash balance at the end of the year is expected to be £10,890 with a net cumulative surplus of £1,892,037.

Provisional cash budget for the year to 31st July 2010

The Finance committee at its meeting the previous week had considered three different budgets reflecting three possible scenarios of capital expenditure – Full project (C1), B block and Tower refurbishment (C2) and B block refurbishment only (C3). The non capital elements were the same in each budget. After detailed discussions, the Finance committee had recommended to the Corporation the adoption of the most prudent of these plans (C3), which included B block refurbishment only. Some small changes had subsequently been made to this budget and Dan Dean tabled a revised version for the Corporation to discuss.

Mike Kemsley, as Chair of the Finance Committee, emphasised that this budget assumed that it was possible to borrow funds in the region of £850,000. If this were to prove not to be the case the budget would have to be reconsidered. He also said that this was simply approval to include an appropriate sum in the budget and did not indicate approval of the project itself.

Looking at the Revenue side of the budget, Dan Dean advised that in terms of funding, the LSC allocation for 2009/10 was known, but after that there was little indication of what the funding might be. A prudent increase of only 1% had been assumed, and it was noted that the College was not allowed to budget for an increase in student numbers. £10,500 had been included for access funds as an in/out figure and a cautious approach had been taken on the amount of interest receivable. A 2.3% across the board salary increase had been assumed for 2009/10 with 2% for the subsequent two years. 1% increases for non-staffing costs had been assumed in each of 2010-11 and 2011-12.

The costs included for the capital project were artificial to a certain extent as they assumed loan repayments would be made throughout 2009/10 which was unlikely to be the case. A prudent approach had been taken on project costs. The College was continuing to put £50,000 per year towards planned maintenance work.

After a discussion on the assumptions and figures outlined above, Michael Butlin proposed approval of the budget. This was seconded by Clarissa Wilks and agreed unanimously by the meeting.

9. QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Keith Blackwell ran through the Quality Improvement Plan page by page. He advised that the targets had mostly been achieved and therefore focused on those which had not, noting the following:-

- Points 1-14 would be reported on in September when the examination results were received.
- He identified a number of items which were annotated as “ongoing” were now of a procedural and operational nature and should probably be removed in future versions.

- Under Point 33, the importance of College input and leadership in Elmbridge initiatives were emphasised by David Lowe.
- Point 34 – revised capability and disciplinary procedures would be brought to governors for approval in the autumn term.
- Points 39 and 40 concerning self assessment were close to being achieved.
- There was a discussion about the difficulties inherent in achieving point 42 concerning minority groups. An impacts assessment structure and schedule had been agreed for the next academic year.

10. RISK MANAGEMENT AND DISASTER MANAGEMENT POLICIES 2009

Keith Blackwell advised that the Risk Management Policy had been re-written to be more relevant and related directly to the three year strategic analysis. It now focused on key issues with a risk register of net and gross risks. It would be updated and taken to the Audit Committee on a termly basis. The Audit Committee had considered it in detail at their meeting in June and had recommended some changes to the calculation of net and gross risks and these had been actioned.

The Disaster Management Policy had been updated, and the meeting considered it to be comprehensive. Clarissa Wilks proposed approval of the two policies. This was seconded by David Lowe and agreed unanimously by the meeting.

11. ANNUAL HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT

Keith Blackwell gave a brief overview of the College's Health and Safety Report confirming that the College currently had robust procedures in place and a good health and safety record. There was some discussion about the accident descriptors used which in some cases were unhelpfully worded. Keith Blackwell confirmed that these were part of the reporting software package used and were being reviewed to see if they could be made more meaningful.

It was noted that there was still a vacancy for a Health and Safety Governor following the departure of Robyn Ross in May, and Michael Butlin offered to take this on this role.

Michael Butlin proposed approval of the report. This was seconded by Clarissa Wilks and approved unanimously by the meeting.

12. SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Dan Dean advised that this policy had been examined in detail by the Policy Committee and their recommendations, concerning the inclusion of the definition of a child at the outset of the policy and the issue of proof of identity, had been adopted. He advised that the policy was an expanded version of the old Child Protection Policy and advised that it would need to be reviewed again when new guidance was issued by the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA).

Robin John proposed approval of the policy. This was seconded by Pam Whyman and approved unanimously by the meeting.

13. TUITION FEES POLICY

Keith Blackwell explained that this policy was required to be updated annually although the College had not had any overseas students for some years. The figures used were equal to those received from the LSC for a home student.

Anne Grant proposed approval of the policy. This was seconded by Clarissa Wilks and agreed unanimously by the meeting.

14. POLICY FOR ADDRESSING BULLYING AND HARRASSMENT

Dan Dean advised that this policy had generated considerable debate when considered by the Policy Committee, and he and Keith Blackwell had reviewed it with Bill McClelland in the light of that committee's comments and recommendations. The revised policy had been circulated to Policy Committee members who had been satisfied with it. They felt that it was now a solid policy which spelt out clearly the issues and steps involved. Anne Grant asked if it applied to staff as well as students and was advised that this was covered by the College's grievance procedure.

Anne Grant proposed approval of the policy. This was seconded by Clarissa Wilks and agreed unanimously by the meeting.

15. SUPPORTING ELMBRIDGE SCHOOLS TRUST

A paper concerning the "Voice" Trust Federation had been circulated prior to the meeting. Keith Blackwell outlined the main features of this emphasising that it was a charitable company limited by guarantee, with each member guaranteeing the debts of the company up to a nominal amount of £10. The Trust would comprise schools in the Primary sector as well as Esher College and he felt that it was a good opportunity to promote community cohesion and support the local community. The meeting approved the College's involvement in the Trust and it was agreed that a member of the Corporation should be identified as the College representative for it. A suitable person would be nominated at the September Corporation meeting when committee structures were reviewed.

16. TERMS OF REFERENCE – REMUNERATION COMMITTEE

The Clerk advised that the Remuneration Committee had recommended two changes to the existing terms of reference. The first was to remove the reference to business members. The second was to qualify Point 6 regarding quoracy, to the effect that every reasonable effort should be made to ensure that the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Corporation and the Chair of the Finance Committee are present at meetings.

17. REPORT BACK FROM COMMITTEES

Audit

In the absence of David Lavarack, Robin John reported back on the main findings of the draft internal audit report, which were that the standard of internal controls were good, with a small number of issues being identified for action, none of which were a cause for concern. He highlighted the issues of documenting reasons where competitive quotes were not obtained, the operation of purchase ordering system with a possible need for review of the £100 limit, and some issues concerning fixed assets.

The committee had questioned the rationale behind the materiality factor set at £190,000 and Dan Dean advised that it had been discovered in subsequent discussions with the auditors, that this figure had been incorrectly calculated and should have been £130,000.

Finally, in their review of the Risk Management Policy the Audit Committee had confirmed that it was not their duty to check the detail of Risk Management but to ensure that the process was in place.

Estates

In the absence of Paul Monaghan, Keith Blackwell advised that much of the meeting had been concerned with the future accommodation strategy and this had now been progressed. Student requests for water fountains and new office accommodation had been dealt with and it was thought that the new requests concerning a ramp in the motorcycle parking area and issues to do with bins would be addressed over the summer holidays.

Finance

Mike Kemsley advised that the budget and finance issues had been dealt with comprehensively above. He mentioned an issue with the cash flow forecast that had been provided at the meeting, and the need for updated information to be incorporated within this. Keith Blackwell confirmed that a meeting had been arranged to look at this.

Policy

Terry Price advised that the various policies considered by the committee had been brought to this meeting. It was noted that the committee had recommended that no bonus be paid to staff this year.

Review/Search

In the absence of Carole Ann Roycroft, Keith Blackwell advised that the main points discussed had been the reappointment of governors, and plans for the training day, which had now taken place. He confirmed that he had met with Susan Effendowicz to discuss her concerns about parental involvement and some compromises had been agreed.

18. MATTERS ARISING FROM STAFF/STUDENTS

None.

19. DRAFT SCHEDULE FOR CORPORATION MEETINGS

This was approved with the acknowledgement that it may be necessary to amend the date of the Remuneration Committee to ensure that all key members of the committee are able to attend.

20. GOVERNORS ATTENDANCE AT COLLEGE

31.03.09	Susanna Burleigh – induction meeting with Principal
23.04.09	Robyn Ross for Architect interviews
15.05.09	David Lowe, Mike Kemsley for meeting with ICT Development Director regarding the Governor Portal
20.05.09	Terry Price for meeting with Personnel Manager
02.06.09	Terry Price and Mike Kemsley for appraisal of Principal, Clerk and Deputy Clerk

- 09.06.09** Terry Price for appraisals of Deputy Principal and both Assistant Principals
- 05.06.09** Management Away Day: Terry Price, David Lavarack, Mike Kemsley, Pam Whyman, Robin John, Chris Johnson, Jo Canessa and Michael Butlin
- 15.06.09** Susan Effendowicz for meeting with Principal and Assistant Principal (Student Services)
- 22.06.09** Governor Training Day: Susanna Burleigh, Jo Canessa, Susan Effendowicz, Anne Grant, Peter Hickman, David Irving, Robin John, David Lavarack, David Lowe, Terry Price, Carole Ann Roycroft and Pam Whyman

21. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.

22. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting is Thursday 24th September 2009.

23. 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