

Minutes of the Esher College Corporation
held on Tuesday 6th July 2010

* Present

* Mr Terry Price (Chair)

* Mr Keith Blackwell	* Mr David Lavarack
* Mr Michael Butlin	* Mr David Lowe
* Mrs Susan Effendowicz	* Mr Paul Monaghan
Mr James Smith	* Mrs Susanna Burleigh
Mrs Carole Ann Roycroft	* Mr Chris Johnson
* Mr Robin John	* Mrs Pam Whyman
* Mr David Irving	Dr Clarissa Wilks
Cllr Peter Hickman	* Mrs Jo Canessa
* Mr Michael Kemsley	* Ms Heidi Jagger

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

Part I

1. REGISTER OF INTERESTS

The Chair asked if anyone had any interests to declare with regard to the agenda of the meeting. None were declared.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Carole Ann Roycroft, James Smith, Clarissa Wilks, Peter Hickman.

3. CONSTITUTION

Re-appointment of External Governor

The Clerk advised that Mike Kemsley's first term of office would come to an end in the autumn. The Review/Search Committee had considered this vacancy at their meeting in May and recommended that Mike Kemsley be asked to serve a second term, and he had confirmed that he was willing to do so. The re-appointment of Mike Kemsley for a second term of office was unanimously approved.

Governor from Richmond

The Clerk explained that Michael Butlin is currently the Local Authority representative from Richmond Borough Council and that his term of office would come to an end on 21st September 2010. Keith Blackwell reminded the meeting that Local Authority appointments are made by way of nomination by the Local Authority concerned, and although under the current Instrument and Articles the College is no longer obliged to have Local Authority governors it is important for the College to have good local council links.

Terry Price advised that the College was currently in ongoing discussions with Richmond Council with a view to consolidating its relationship with Richmond schools, and this was likely to affect the Admissions policy for 2011/12. He proposed that the Corporation should postpone any decision on a new appointment until the outcome of these discussions was known, to ensure that the most appropriate person was appointed for this vacancy. This would be taken to the autumn meeting of Review/Search for consideration. This was unanimously agreed.

Action: Review/Search Committee to consider Local Authority vacancy at its autumn meeting, and make a recommendation to the December Corporation meeting.

Action: Additional Policy Committee meeting to be arranged in September to consider the Admissions Policy for 2011/12.

In the event that Michael Butlin was not re-appointed, Terry Price thanked him for his commitment and support over the four years that he had been a governor, and this was reiterated by all governors.

Parent Governor Update

The Clerk advised that so far six expressions of interest had been received from parents of prospective 2010 entrants and all of these people had received information about the role. They would be asked to confirm their interest by the second week of September when enrolments were certain.

4. **MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

These were agreed and signed as a true record.

5. **MATTERS ARISING**

Item 13 Reports Back from committees – Estates. The Clerk confirmed that although the problem with the road just outside the College had originally been discussed with Elmbridge Council, it was the responsibility of Surrey County Council and discussions were now taking place with them.

Item 16 Any Other Business The wording on the agenda and minutes has been changed to reflect the fact that staff and students are asked to leave the meeting before Part 2 items are discussed.

In addition, Terry Price advised that he had received a letter of thanks from Stella Halloran, the Clerk to Godalming College who had attended the Corporation meeting in March, saying that she had found it very useful for development purposes.

He also advised the College had been designated as a Sixth Form College from 1st April 2010, and that revisions to the current Instrument and Articles would be made in due course.

7. **PRINCIPAL'S REPORT**

Keith Blackwell reviewed his report page by page, highlighting the main points as follows.

Although under Staffing he had reported a full complement of staff for September, there had been one subsequent resignation. It was unlikely that there would be any decision on teachers and support staff pay until November. He confirmed that there were currently 200 members of staff

within the College with a teaching and support staff FTE of 137. He applauded the examinations team on the successful administration of large numbers of exam entries and the increased requirements for special arrangements.

Under Staff Development, he highlighted a number of training initiatives relating to safeguarding, and the successful Management Away Day which focused on Equality and Diversity, and Teaching and Learning. In terms of Applications and Funding 2010-11, the College had received confirmation of its funding for 2010/11 which showed an increase of £364,147 or 4.5%, and an indication that funding for any students enrolled above target would be consolidated in future years. The on-line applications process for 2011 was working well so far but the real test would be in September.

In terms of Progression and Guidance, the College had been re-assessed for the Investors in Careers Award and had passed with flying colours. It was pleasing to note that 150 first year students would be taking part in work experience during Wider Skills Week, having earlier had concerns at the difficulty in finding such placements. Adult Education and Lettings continued to expand.

There was a great deal of uncertainty in the area of Partnerships and Politics with the new Government appearing to have very different ideas about the future educational landscape. The introduction of academies and the scrapping of many diplomas may change the way in which partnerships work. The College continued to have meetings with Richmond Borough Council and schools to explore possible means of interaction. This would be considered in more detail by the new Management team, and by the Corporation in the autumn.

A number of sporting and dramatic successes were detailed under The Sweaties and Lovies and in terms of other Extra Curricular Activities. Keith Blackwell thanked Michael Butlin for arranging for Vincent Cable MP to come into the College to meet with management and talk to the students.

Unfortunately, progress with Accommodation and Estates plans had not been smooth. Planning permission for the temporary classrooms had been received. However, a formal objection had been lodged to the colour scheme for the tower block. It was hoped that the works could be started, with a grey film being applied to the yellow panels, and that this would be removed if the appeal against the objection was successful. Keith Blackwell confirmed that there would be a small cost associated with this, but a much greater cost if the College was required to replace the yellow panels.

Keith Blackwell concluded his last report as Principal by saying that he felt that the College was a fine example of what a sixth form college community should be, and wishing the new team every success in the future.

STUDENT COUNCIL REPORT

Heidi Jagger highlighted the main points of the Student Council Report, in particular the various fundraising events and the S7 Student Council Day.

6. FINANCE REPORTS

The minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on 29th June had been circulated to governors, and, as Chair of the committee, Mike Kemsley summarised the items that the committee had considered.

He advised that all of the papers considered were contained within the Finance section of the Report to the Corporation, and these comprised the following:-

- Budget summary and review to 31st May 2010
- Cash flow forecasts
- Provisional cash budget and 3 year forecasts to 31st July 2013
- Budget in the format in which it would be submitted to the LSC.

The committee had discussed in particular the fact that the College had had to draw up the budget without any LSC or other guidelines on the assumptions to be made in terms of funding and staffing costs. The committee had requested that a budget modelling exercise to provide a contingency plan should be carried out based on different funding scenarios, and it had been noted that this had also been suggested by the auditors. There was comfort in the fact that the Financial Health grade generated automatically by the LSC software was “good throughout the period of the forecast.

Mike Kemsley proposed approval of the Financial Reports which included the Budget for 2010/11. This was seconded by David Lowe and approved unanimously by the meeting.

7. QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Keith Blackwell led the review of the Quality Improvement Plan page by page and focused on those items which had not been fully achieved to date:-

- It was too early to report on targets 1-10, concerning exam results and these would be reported on at the September meeting.
- Target 11 concerning the Molenet project was now underway.
- The direction for the future vocational curriculum offer (target 14) had been delayed by changing government focus.
- It was too early to report on target 20 concerning the College finances but all financial indicators were positive.
- The planned maintenance programme referred to in target 24 had already begun, but further discussion was needed with Mike O’Hanlon to progress other areas.
- The review schedule for all policies (target 28) had been taken to the summer term meeting of the policy committee, and it was proposed to clear as many policies as possible in the first half of the autumn term. The meeting noted the importance of the Equality and Diversity impact assessments.
- The procurement policy was in its final stages and Robin John advised that this had been discussed at the Audit Committee meeting.
- Item 31 concerning the response to departmental surveys had been mostly achieved, with the handful of departments falling below 75% being chased up.

It was noted that the final Report would be brought to the December meeting of the Corporation.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT 2010

Dan Dean advised that the Risk Register was now taken to termly audit committee meetings, where it was considered in detail. It was a live document with risks being added or deleted, and risk ratings amended as appropriate. The meeting considered the document page and page and recommended that the first title “machinery of government” should be changed and suggested that “curriculum” be used instead of “provision”.

Action: Dan Dean to consider changing these two headings.
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There was a discussion about the responsibility for identification of risk within the College and the monitoring of it. It was agreed that it is the responsibility of the College to identify specific risks and of the Corporation to monitor the process for dealing with them. As confirmed above, the Audit Committee would review the Register on a termly basis but other committees should take into account identified risks where relevant to their discussions.

The Disaster Management Strategy was also considered. Michael Butlin felt that there should be more IT specific items within it but Dan Dean advised that the strategy was intended to be an overarching structure that encompassed all types of disaster. Robin John also advised that this was an area that the Audit Committee monitored closely.

David Lowe highlighted an anomaly in the site location map given at the end of the Disaster Management Strategy and it was agreed that the map should be updated.

Action: College to update site location map.

Subject to this, Robin John proposed approval of the Risk Management report. This was seconded by Chris Johnson and approved unanimously by the meeting.

9. TUITION FEES POLICY

The tuition fees policy was reviewed and approved unanimously.

10. REPORTS BACK FROM COMMITTEES

AUDIT

Further to the conversation under item 8 above, Robin John advised that data security was recognised to be most important and was considered on a regular basis at Audit Committee meetings. The College had recently successfully carried out a test restore of data.

The committee had considered the draft internal audit report in detail and Robin John reported that a number of small points had been made in terms of internal controls and that the recommendations made had been accepted by the College. The procurement policy had been discussed in some detail but there was no cause for concern in the areas identified for improvement by the auditors.

ESTATES

Paul Monaghan said that progress on estates matters had largely been discussed under the Principal's Report. Keith Blackwell confirmed that the temporary classrooms would be ready for use at the beginning of the autumn term.

FINANCE

Mike Kemsley advised that the main items considered had been discussed under Finance Reports above. He emphasised the uncertainty in terms of funding surrounding the budget forecasts and the fact that some re-forecasting might be necessary during the course of the year.

The Finance Committee had also recommended for approval the change in the bank mandate to remove Keith Blackwell and replace him with Dan Dean as Principal, and to add Emma Young as Deputy Principal. The remaining signatories, Geoff Bowley and Sally Paton Evans, would be unchanged. In

discussing the request for the change in mandate of cheque signatories, governors asked what the procedure was for the control of electronic transfers and payments, and it was agreed that this was an area that the audit committee should look at.

Action: Audit Committee to consider the controls on electronic transfers and payments at its next meeting.

It was resolved that the Authorised Signatories in the current Mandate, for the Accounts detailed in section 2 of the Change of Signing Authority Form, be changed in accordance with section 5, and the current Mandate will continue as amended.

POLICY

Terry Price advised that the committee had recommended the creation of terms of reference for nominated governors, and this would be done over the coming months.

The meeting had also discussed in depth the question of the optimum size of the College, and he outlined the main points of this and the conclusions reached. He reminded the meeting that, due to exceptional circumstances, firm offers had been made to more students than usual, and it had been agreed that the College had a moral duty to accept all firm applicants for September 2010 giving the College a predicted total of 1730 full time students compared with its funded level of 1618.

The committee had felt that this level of student numbers could not be sustained and should be reduced to approximately 1620, the reduction taking place over two years in order to ensure even year groups.

The meeting discussed this conclusion and were keen to establish that all possible avenues had been explored and that strategically this was the best option for the College. In the ensuing discussion it was confirmed that the views of the whole College community had been sought and that the overwhelming response was that even with the additional temporary classroom accommodation referred to above, the College was currently overcrowded, and would become more so in September, particularly in common and social areas. It was agreed that the College could not provide for increased numbers of students on a permanent basis without additional permanent accommodation. Given the uncertainty regarding future capital and revenue funding it would not be prudent to go down this route at this stage.

The meeting agreed that a reduction of student numbers over two years to a level of around 1620 was in the best interests of all stakeholders of the College.

REVIEW/SEARCH

Michael Butlin advised that most items considered by the committee at their summer meeting had already been discussed under various agenda items above. He confirmed that he had emailed Richmond Council concerning a new appointment but had not received any response.

He advised that the committee had considered the issue of governor training in some detail in making recommendations about governor training day, which had taken place successfully in June.

OTHER

There were no other reports.

11. MATTERS ARISING FROM ACADEMIC STAFF/STUDENTS

Neither staff nor student governors had any items to report.

12. DRAFT SCHEDULE FOR CORPORATION MEETINGS 2010-2011

The draft schedule for Corporation meetings was approved, noting in particular the change of date for the first Estates meeting and the proposed date for the governors INSET day.

13. GOVERNORS ATTENDANCE AT COLLEGE

- 29.03.10 James Smith at Assistant Principal interviews
- 30.03.10 Clarissa Wilks and Heidi Jagger a Assistant Principal interview
- 26.05.10 Management Away Day: Terry Price, Daniel Evans, Mike Kemsley, Robin John, Pam Whyman and Jo Canessa
- 07.06.10 Terry Price: Appraisal of Deputy Principal, Clerk and Deputy Clerk. Mike Kemsley for appraisal of Clerk
- 17.06.10 Terry Price for appraisal of Deputy Principal Designate
- 21.06.10 Governor Training Day: Susan Effendowicz, Daniel Evans, Peter Hickman, David Irving, Robin John, chris Johnson, Mike Kemsley, David Lowe, Paul Monaghan, terry Price, Carole Ann Roycroft, Jo Canessa and Pam Whyman
- 22.06.10 Principal’s Retirement Dinner: Michael Butlin, Susan Effendowicz, Peter Hickman, Chris Johnson, Mike Kemsley, David Lavarack, David Lowe, Paul Monaghan, Terry Price, Carole Ann Roycroft
- 28.06.10 Fashion & Art Exhibition: Daniel Evans and Susanna Burleigh.

14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None

15. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting is Tuesday 23rd September 2010

16. 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, members of the public, staff and students should be excluded from the meeting during the proceedings to which this resolution applies.

Chair

Date