



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ESHER SIXTH FORM COLLEGE ACADEMY TRUSTEES

Held by video conference
Wednesday, 8th July 2020, at 6.00 pm.

Present:

Tim Oliver (Chair)
Dan Dean
Paul Collyer
Evie Bennison
Ian Leigh
Faith Owiny

Declan Mason
Ruth Seabrook
Tom Webb
Fran Stewart
Mark Nelligan

Clarissa Wilks (Member)
David Lavarack (Member)

Terry Price (Member)

Andrew McVeigh (Prospective Trustee)

Helen Odhams, Deputy Principal
(Advising Officer)
Stephanie Wiles, Director of Finance and
Estates (Advising Officer)

Dan Hards, Assistant Principal (Advising
Officer)

Ken Kehoe (Clerk)

1. REGISTER OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of business interests.

2. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chair welcomed the Members of the Trust, who were attending as observers, and Andrew McVeigh, who was a prospective Trustee. Apologies for absence were received from Berzek Sanda.

3. CONSITUTION

Appointment pf Andrew McVeigh as Trustee

The Chair invited Andrew McVeigh to set out his experience and skills, and his reasons for wishing to become a Trustee. After his presentation, the Board considered Mr McVeigh's appointment and

unanimously agreed to recommend his appointment to the Members of the Trust. The Board also agreed that it was important to diversify recruitment to the Board of Trustees.

Action: The Clerk to prepare a Resolution for the Members of the Trust seeking their agreement to the appointment of Andrew McVeigh to the Board of Trustees.

Action: The Clerk to investigate possible options to diversify the recruitment of Trustees.

Student Trustees

The Principal informed the Board that Faith Owiny and Evie Bennison had been elected as President and Vice-President of the Student Union and had therefore joined the Board. The Chair welcomed the two new Student Trustees.

Business Interests

The Board were reminded that they would be asked, over the summer, to complete a return of their business interests and that Trustees' business interests would be published.

Schedule of Meeting dates 2020/21

The Board agreed the meeting dates for 2020/21.

Member's Annual General Meeting

The Chair invited Terry Price to update the meeting on the timing of the first AGM. Terry Price said that no date had yet been set but that Members were looking to have the meeting in December after the next meeting of Trustees. The Chair of Trustees and the Principal would attend.

4. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The Board approved the minutes of the Board of Trustee meeting of 25th March 2020.

5. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

6. PRINCIPALS'S REPORT

Update on College response to COVID 19

The Principal updated the Board on the College's response to the COVID 19 crisis. They had adopted a three-part approach focussing on priority students, ten curriculum pilots to inform planning for the new Academic Year and 1-to-1 Progress Review sessions.

Dan Hards informed the Board that initially 31 Vulnerable students (Looked After Children or those with an EHCP) had been offered the opportunity to attend the site but none had taken up the offer. When it had become possible they had extended the offer of on-site learning to 372 students comprising the vulnerable students, SEN students, and those where there were concerns about their academic progress. 167 students had attended either a morning or afternoon session.

He also noted that Nurses support had also been opened and that 39 students had attended for support/help between 9 and 26 June.

Helen Odhams updated the Board on the curriculum pilots. These had taken place across 3 Divisions for 2 weeks and covered a range of subjects including practical subjects. Some students had been in the class with the teacher and some at home. There had been lots of feedback and the students had been positive. For the staff, the issues were technical – where to best set up the camera in the class, how to ask and answer questions so that those present and those learning remotely could be engaged, and how to deal with screen sharing issues. Following on from the pilot, Dan Loughlin had delivered IT training for the staff on the INSET day; they were putting together top tips for the staff; and they were looking at the experience of other Colleges.

The Principal noted that, based on current guidance, to maintain COVID 19 security, they were assuming that they would have about half the students in at any one time in the next term, with the other half learning at home. It would be a mix of 6.1 and 6.2 students. But they would not be able to finalise plans until the end of the Summer.

The Director of Finance and Estates provided further information on the steps that would be taken to ensure COVID security. There would be a one-way system within the College, 50 hand sanitiser stations, Perspex screens and sealed bins for the disposal of masks. All classes were set up so that the students faced forwards and there was a 1 metre distance between them. The College had also engaged two new day cleaners to clean common surfaces during the day.

The Principal updated the Board on recruitment and enrolment of students. He noted that the recruitment drive had been a huge undertaking for the Marketing and IT Departments and had involved an online Introduction Day, live Q&A sessions, and curriculum videos. The results had been positive with 81% saying they were very likely to choose Esher and 93% saying that they were likely or very likely to choose the College. Turning to enrolment, he noted that this would be done in person and may therefore take longer than normal.

Turning to the exam arrangements for this year, the Principal noted that they might see several subject access requests as students sought to access their centre assessments. He also noted that, while students had the right to take exams in the autumn, they were, in general, advising against this.

Finally, the Principal informed the Board that, despite the crisis, the College would be fully staffed in the next Academic Year.

In discussion, Trustees:

- Asked what the College could do to minimise the impact of home conditions and insufficient access to IT equipment on the ability of students to engage with the College's offering? The Principal responded that they would seek to identify vulnerable students in the new cohort and that they could use bursary monies to fund the necessary IT equipment.
- Commended the Principal, the SLT and all staff on the actions that had been taken in response to the COVID crisis and the care and offering they had made to the students. It had been more varied, and engaged a greater number of students, than many other institutions.

Finance Reports and approval of 2020/21 Budget

The Director of Finance and Estates introduced the Finance Reports and the 2020/21 Budget. She noted that, because of lagged funding, the next year was solid. The year 2021/22 might be difficult if the COVID crisis hit student recruitment and the College did not get the TPS grant, but it had the reserves to cope. The 2022/23 budget would be back to normal if the crisis had abated.

The Board approved the Finance Reports and the 200/21 Budget.

Review of Quality Improvement Plan

The Deputy Principal took the Board through the outcome of the Plan, noting that the COVID 19 crisis had had an impact. On Target 4, there had been much work to increase the percentage of A* grades and this would affect the centre assessed grades. Targets 15 and 22 had now been Achieved. Targets 11, 12 and 13 would be carried forward into next year's plan. On Target 20, preparations for OFSTED, the Deputy Principal noted that much work had been done but that the COVID 19 crisis had intervened. She noted that the Inspections had been suspended until January 2021 but that OFSTED would be undertaking visits in the Autumn term including to Colleges.

In response to a question from a Trustee on Target 19, the Deputy Principal informed the Board that Sunbury Manor had been added to the list of key partner schools as the school met the necessary criteria.

The Board welcomed the excellent overview from the Deputy Principal.

Health and Safety Report

The Director of Finance and Estates introduced the Health and Safety Report. She noted that the review of the Health and Safety Policy had been missed because of the COVID 19 crisis but that it would be reviewed in the Autumn Term. The focus of the Health and Safety effort had been on safety while the College was closed and during its re-opening.

In response to a question about how a COVID secure catering service would be provided in September, the Director set out the background and explained that there will have to be a streamlined catering service and that she was in discussion with the contractor about how this would be achieved.

7. FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

The Director of Finance and Estates introduced the Financial Regulations. The Regulations had been considered by the Finance and Estates, and Audit, committees and had been recommended by those committees.

The Board agreed the Financial Regulations.

8. REPORT BACK FROM COMMITTEES

Audit

Ian Leigh informed the Board that the very comprehensive and clear draft minutes recorded a long and varied meeting. He highlighted two pieces of work. The committee had considered the Strategic and COVID Risk Registers and had been very impressed with the work that had gone into them. It had also looked at the Disaster Management Strategy. This was a very useful document, covering many issues relevant to the COVID 19 crisis.

Finance and Estates

Paul Collyer informed the Board that the committee had considered a range of issues including the Director of Finance and Estate's successful negotiation of the retention of the pro-rata underspend, the handling of the contracts for the Performing Arts building project and catering, and the impact of the COVID 19 crisis. Overall, the College looked in good shape.

Strategy and Policy

Tim Oliver noted that the main items from the Committee had been dealt with elsewhere on the agenda.

9. LINK GOVERNOR REPORTS

Dan Hards (Safeguarding) informed the Board that COVID 19 Annexes to the Safeguarding Policy had been adopted and that the Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020 would be incorporated into the policy by September 2020.

Ruth Seabrook (Equality and Diversity) highlighted the work that had been going on in the wake of the Black Lives Matter movement.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Wednesday 23 September 2020

*The meeting closed at 7.10pm
Attendance was 86%.*

Signed.....

Date.....

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

AT4-001	The Clerk to prepare a Resolution for the Members of the Trust seeking their agreement to the appointment of Andrew McVeigh to the Board of Trustees.
AT4-002	The Clerk to investigate possible options to diversify the recruitment of Trustees.

SUMMARY OF GOVERNOR CHALLENGE [C] / SUPPORT [S]

C/S	Minute	Topic
C	6	Asked what the College could do to minimise the impact of home conditions and insufficient access to IT equipment on the ability of students to engage with the College's offering?
S	6	Commended the Principal, the SLT and all staff on the actions that had been taken in response to the COVID crisis and the care and offering they had made to the students. It had been more varied, and engaged a greater number of students, than other institutions.
S	6	The Board welcomed the Deputy Principal's work on the Quality Improvement Plan.