



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

Held by video conference
Wednesday, 7th July 2021, at 6.00 pm.

Present:

Tim Oliver (Chair)	Declan Mason
Dan Dean	Natasha Meade
Paul Collyer	Ruth Seabrook
Berzek Sanda	Ben Obese-Jecty
Pooja Singh	Emily Vanstone
Terry Price (Member)	
David Lavarack (Member)	
Helen Odhams, Deputy Principal (Advising Officer)	Stephanie Wiles (Advising Officer)
Ken Kehoe (Clerk)	

1. REGISTER OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interests.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Tom Webb, Mark Nelligan, Fran Stewart, Cindy Dawes, and Andy McVeigh . Clarissa Wilks and David Irving (Members) had also sent their apologies.

3. CONSITUTION

External Trustees

The Chair welcomed Natasha Meade and Ben Obese-Jecty following their appointment as External Trustees.

Re-appointment of Fran Stewart

The Board agreed that Fran Stewart's appointment as external Trustee should be extended for a further two years, following the completion of her second term of office in September.

Student Trustees

The Chair welcomed Pooja Singh and Emily Vanstone to their first Board meeting as the new Student Trustees.

Chairs of Committees and Committee Memberships

Ruth Seabrook and Mark Nelligan had agreed to take on the roles of Chairs of the Quality and Standards, and Audit Committees respectively; the Board agreed their appointments.

The Board also agreed that Mark Nelligan should move from Quality and Standards Committee to the Audit Committee.

The Board agreed that, in amending the Committee Memberships, the Clerk should take account of the need to allow Trustees to experience different committees.

ACTION: Clerks to amend committee memberships.

Schedule of Meetings 2021/22

The Board agreed the schedule, subject to the Clerks confirming some dates.

ACTION: Clerks to confirm dates on schedule.

4. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The Board approved the minutes of the Board of Trustee meeting of Wednesday 24th March 2021.

5. MATTERS ARISING

The Board reviewed the matters arising:

AT3-001 The Clerk to circulate a Written Resolution to existing Members to appoint Paul Collyer and David Irving as new Members. **Done.**

AT3-002 The Director of Finance and Estates to inform the Chair of the Finance and Estates committee when the results of the new build bid were known. **Done.**

AT3-003 The Principal to provide an update on teacher recruitment at the July meeting. **This was covered in the Principal's update.**

AT3-004 The Chair of the Board of Trustees to raise the definition of step sibling with the Director of Children's Services at Surrey County Council. **Done**

AT3-005 Clerk to add individual, oral updates from LINK Trustees to future Board Agenda. **This was covered later in the agenda.**

AT3-006 Clerk to circulate a note to Trustees inviting volunteers for the role of Safeguarding Link Trustee. **Done.**

AT3-007 The Principal and the Director of Finance and Estates should consider options and develop a proposal for an additional payment to staff. **Done.**

AT3-008 Chair and Chair of Finance and Estates to use powers delegated by the Board to make a decision on the proposal. **Done. The payment was made to staff at the end of June.**

AT3-009 The Trustees to reflect on the operation of the Board over the last 12 months and to let the Clerk know of their conclusions. **This was covered later in the agenda.**

AT3- 010 The Clerk to draw up a paper, in light of Trustee conclusions, on lessons learned from the COVID crisis for Board and committee operations for discussion at future Board meeting. **This was covered later in the agenda.**

6. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

The Principal informed the Board of the death of a 6.1 Student at the weekend. The College's procedures had been activated and teachers had been informed before the start of lessons. He expressed his thanks to the welfare staff for supporting students and staff at this difficult time.

The Principal updated the Board on the impact of COVID, noting that there had been an increase in infections over the last week. Over the previous three days, there had been 1 staff member positive with 11 isolating, and 10 students positive with 80 isolating. He noted that there had been new Government guidance issued for next term; there would be no masks, no distancing and no self-isolation but there was an expectation that the College would test all students at the start of term.

The session for prospective students had been held online, with a live Q&A session; this had been in line with other Sixth Form Colleges. There was inevitable uncertainty over enrolment, but there remained over 2000 live applications, 100 more than at this point last year.

The Principal was pleased to inform the Board that the College was fully staffed for next year.

The Deputy Principal updated the Board on the preparations to support current year 11 students joining the College and the students moving up to 6.2. She noted that Subject Study Guides had again been produced and that induction tasks were being prepared. The staff were also looking at how to run diagnostic assessments to identify the starting points of incoming students, given the diversity of their experiences over the past 18 months. There would be support for students that needed it in lessons and outside. The Deputy Principal noted that there had been a survey of 6.1 students to inform preparations for next year and that there had been over 700 responses. Each Department had the results for each subject.

The Deputy Principal also informed the Board that with OFSTED beginning inspections again from September, there would be a renewed focus on this in the new year.

The Principal also updated the Board on the process for awarding Teacher Assessed Grades, noting that the procedure for appealing results would be published the following day. He also highlighted the fantastic extension work that was being carried out across the College and particularly the Scholars' Programme, noting that Bath University had agreed to take this into account in their offers.

The Board thanked the Principal and Deputy Principal for their report.

7. STUDENT UNION REPORT

The President and Vice President of the Student Union introduced their report, noting the work that the students had done on green issues, student welfare and equality, diversity and inclusion.

The Chair thanked the Student Trustees for their Report, and for their work to support the health and well-being of students.

8. FINANCE REPORTS AND RATIFICATION OF BUDGET 2021/22

The Director of Finance and Estates introduced the Management Accounts and Reports for April and May, noting that the Accounts had been considered and approved by the Finance and Estates Committee. In response to questions regarding the new construction projects, the Director informed the Board that:

- The groundworks for the new builds would commence over the summer, and that the scheduled completion date was Easter 2022. The new buildings were not scheduled to be opened, however, until Autumn 2022 so any delays would not have an impact;
- If the College caused delays, there would be costs but otherwise the projects were fixed price contracts;
- The new buildings would complete the Property Strategy and afterwards the College would move to a maintain and repair phase.

Turning to the Budget for 2021/22, the Director noted that this also had been considered by the Finance and Estates Committee and recommended to the Board for ratification. EBITDA was positive but declining across the period, reflecting increased inflationary pressures against uncertainty over funding levels. There was a new sensitivity table showing the impact of different assumptions on the budget position; this suggested the College's position was robust across the period.

The Board ratified the April and May Management Accounts and Reports, and the Budget for 2021/22.

9. REVIEW OF QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The Deputy Principal highlighted two key points from the QIP:

- Over 800 students had engaged over 3 days with online work-related learning; this was a fantastic result reflecting the hard work of the staff involved. The College had achieved the Gatsby benchmark of having more than 80% of students engage with job-related training;
- The work that had happened on staff development and the maintenance of staff well-being through INSET days, staff voice meetings and amendments to the timetable to allow space for the completion of the TAG process.

The Board thanked the Deputy Principal for her review.

10. HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT

The Board noted the Health and Safety Report.

11. DfE SCHOOL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL CHECKLIST

The Director of Finance and Estates introduced the College's responses to the questions posed by the DfE resource management self-assessment tool kit, noting that the replies had had to be submitted in mid-April. There had been three minor items to be actioned and these would be completed as soon as workload scheduling allowed. Next year's responses would be put to the March Board.

The Board ratified the College's response and agreed that next year's responses should be considered at the March Board meeting.

ACTION: The Clerks and Director of Finance and Estates to schedule the 2022 DfE School Resource Management self-assessment checklist for March 2022 Board meeting.

12. LINK TRUSTEE REPORTS

The Board agreed that Ben Obese-Jecty would become the Safeguarding Link Trustee.

Ruth Seabrook, EDI Link Trustee, updated the Board on the work that had been carried out to enhance equality, diversity and inclusion. This ranged from dialogue with an examination board about diversifying the reading lists, through training on unconscious bias, an active anti-racism group, to a Pizza Pride party that 30 students had attended.

The Chair thanked all the staff and students for the work that they were doing.

13. FUTURE OPERATIONS FOLLOWING COVID EXPERIENCE

The Board discussed how the experience of Board and committee operations over the past 18 months should inform future operations. Trustees recognised that remote working made participation easier, while onsite meetings encouraged more collective working. It was also noted that hybrid working with some onsite and some Trustees working remotely could lead to the latter feeling excluded.

The Board agreed that, from September, Board meetings would be held onsite but that the Committee Chairs would have the discretion to hold meetings online if they judged that to be most helpful.

14. REPORT BACK FROM COMMITTEES

Audit – With the departure of the Chair of Audit, Ian Leigh, the Deputy Principal and the Director of Finance and Estates updated the Board on the work of the committee. The Deputy Principal noted that the committee had agreed the Strategic Risk Register for ratification by the Board.

The Board ratified the Strategic Risk Register and agreed that it should be put to Members at their AGM.

ACTION: Clerks to add the Strategic Risk Register to the agenda for the AGM.

The Director of Finance and Estates updated the Board on the results of the Internal Audit on Procurement and Purchasing, and GDPR Compliance.

The Advising Officers also highlighted the policies that had been approved by the Committee.

Finance and Estates - The Chair noted that the Finance Reports and Budget had been considered earlier but he drew the Board's attention to the costs of COVID to the College (£216k), the decision to commit funding for the new construction projects (£1.68m) and the extra unexpected expenditure required for roof repairs (£41.5k).

The Board ratified the expenditure decisions.

Quality and Standards – With the departure of the Chair of Quality and Standards, the Deputy Principal noted that the committee had focussed on how quality processes had adapted over the past year to reflect the different ways of working over the period. It had also considered the assessment processes, in particular given the need to develop Teacher Assessed Grades.

Strategy and Policy – The Chair noted that the key issues had already been covered elsewhere on the agenda.

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

In response to a question, the Principal outlined the work that the College had undertaken to take lessons from its operations during COVID.

The Chair thanked the Principal, the Senior Leadership Team and all the staff for their work and resilience over the past eighteen months. It had been a phenomenal effort. The Board concurred.

16. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting would be Wednesday 22nd September.

*The meeting closed at 7.25pm
Attendance was 67%.*

Signed.....

Date.....

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

AT4-001	Clerks to amend committee memberships.
AT4-002	Clerks to confirm dates on schedule.
AT4-003	The Clerks and Director of Finance and Estates to schedule the 2022 DfE School Resource Management self-assessment checklist for March 2022 Board meeting.
AT4-004	Clerks to add the Strategic Risk Register to the agenda for the AGM.

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

C/S	Minute	Topic
S	12	<p>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion</p> <p>The Board welcomed the work of staff and students to support equality, diversity and inclusion within the College.</p>
S	15	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>The Board welcomed the phenomenal work of the Principal, Senior Leadership Team and staff in dealing with the COVID crisis.</p>