



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

Wednesday, 8th December 2021, at 6.00 pm.

Present:

Tim Oliver (Chair)
Dan Dean
Paul Collyer
Fran Stewart
Ruth Seabrook
Natasha Meade

Declan Mason
Jane Duscherer
Ben Obese-Jecty
Pooja Singh
Emily Vanstone

Terry Price (Member)

David Irving (Member)

Helen Odhams, Deputy Principal
(Advising Officer)
Liz Bentley-Pattison, Assistant Principal
(Advising Officer)

Dan Hards, Assistant Principal (Advising
Officer)
Stephanie Wiles, Director of Finance and
Estates (Advising Officer)

Ken Kehoe (Clerk)

1. REGISTER OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of business interests.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Andy McVeigh, Mark Nelligan and Cindy Dawes.

3. WELCOME

The Chair welcomed Jane Duscherer, the new Parent Trustee, to her first meeting.

4. Constitution

The Chair thanked Tom Webb for his service as Staff Trustee and wished him well for the future. The Principal informed the Board that Kate Parsons had been elected as the new Staff Trustee.

The Chair thanked the Deputy Clerk, Sharon Kelly, for her work as the Returning officer for the Staff Trustee election.

6. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The Board approved the minutes of the Board of Trustees meeting of 22nd September 2021.

7. MATTERS ARISING

The actions from the last meeting had all been completed.

8. PRINCIPALS'S REPORT

The Principal began by noting that COVID had returned with a significant increase in absences, up from less than 1% to 2.8% in the previous week. One class had had over 5 cases and so the College had informed the Health Security Agency who had advised that the College should implement its Outbreak Plan; the College had done so. Large scale events were now being held online. The Principal advised that, because of the COVID pandemic, the College were in an ongoing dispute with an adventure company; the College may incur a loss.

The Principal advised on external developments:

- The campaigns to secure funding and protect student choice had made progress. On the former, the Government had announced that the real terms additional investment in Sixth Form Colleges had been protected. On the latter, the Government had announced that defunding of BTEC qualifications had been pushed back to 2024 and there seemed to be a recognition of the need for a continuing role for BTEC qualifications.
- Government policy was that examinations should take place in 2022 but the Government had put in place a contingency plan in case the public health situation did not allow this to happen. The Government guidance, issued on 11 November, called on establishments to carry out 3 assessments that could be used to inform possible Teacher Assessed Grades. The guidance was very prescriptive about how the assessments should be carried out. This caused several problems. First, the College had carried out assessments, prior to 11 November, and it was not clear whether these assessments would be acceptable. Second, the need to carry out extra assessments disrupted the preparations for the external examinations. Thirdly, the nature of the January assessments had changed from a diagnostic exercise to help students to prepare for their external examinations to an assessment point that might affect their grades; this was stressful for students and staff.

The Board welcomed the Principal's report.

The Student Trustees briefed the Board on the activities of the Student Union over the term, highlighting how College management had responded to the student voice by increasing the opening hours of the LRC, the Student Union work on tackling period poverty, environmental issues and marketing the Union to the student body.

The Board thanked the Student Trustees for their report and welcomed their work to engage and support their fellow students during a difficult time.

The Director of Finance and Estates briefed the Board on the management accounts and reports for periods to the end of July and the end of October. Regarding the latter, the Director noted that the budgeted surplus for this year would be achieved.

The Board approved the Management Accounts and Reports.

9. REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021 AND LETTER OF REPRESENTATION TOGETHER WITH AUDIT FINDINGS REPORT AND AUDIT COMMITTEE INTERNAL SCRUTINY REPORT

The Director of Finance and Estates introduced this item noting that the Audit Committee and the Finance and Estates Committee had seen these documents and recommended them to the Board. She noted that there were three minor changes to the Report and Financial Statements.

Report and Financial Statements – The Board approved the Report and Financial Statements.

Audit Findings Report and Letter of Representation – The Board approved the Letter of Representation that had been circulated in Appendix 1 of the Audit Findings Report.

Audit Committee Internal Scrutiny Report – The Board noted the Audit Committee Internal Scrutiny Report.

10. COLLEGE SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT

The Deputy Principal introduced the College Self-Assessment Report, noting that the Report had been considered by the Quality and Standards Committee and that the Report before the Board reflected the committee's comments. The Deputy Principal highlighted the destination data for students, the uncertainty over the targets for higher grades, the response to the OFSTED report on harmful sexual behaviour and the work on supporting socially disadvantaged students.

The Board made the following points in discussion:

- The higher education statistics were very impressive and staff should be very proud.
- An external trainer had been very complimentary about the College's work to support student progression. This was reflected in the high proportion of 6.1 students that were doing work-related learning.
- The College would be shifting from a focus on site development to a focus on maintaining the site after the completion of the last new builds.
- The text of Target 11 should be amended from "and" to "and/or". This was agreed.

The Board approved the College Self-Assessment Report, subject to the agreed amendment. The Board thanked the Deputy Principal for her work on the Report.

Action: Deputy Principal to amend Target 11 of College SAR.

11. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Audit Committee

In the absence of the Audit Committee Chair, Fran Stewart updated the Board on the Committee's work. She noted that the external auditor had commended the Director of Finance and Estates and her staff for their work which had made the conduct of the audit easier. The committee had also expressed its thanks to the Director of Finance and Estates.

Finance and Estates

Paul Collyer briefed the Board on the delay to the Student Support Building. The Director of Finance and Estates noted that there would be a site meeting the following day which should clarify the extent of the delay but she was not expecting the delay to impact the wider operation of the College. Paul Collyer also briefed the Board on the saving secured by the Director of Finance and Estates on the College's insurance.

Quality and Standards

Ruth Seabrook expressed the committee's thanks to the Deputy Principal and staff.

Strategy and Policy

Tim Oliver briefed the Board on the preparations for a possible OFSTED Inspection. He also highlighted the Committee's discussion of the appropriate size of the College, given rising demand.

12. LINK GOVERNOR REPORTS

Ben Obese-Jecty, as Safeguarding Trustee, briefed the Board on his meetings with the Safeguarding team. He highlighted that it was important that all Trustees should have up to date safeguarding training. The Board agreed that the Designated Safeguarding Lead should remind those Trustees that had not updated their training.

The Chair thanked Ben Obese-Jecty for taking on the role of Safeguarding Trustee.

Ruth Seabrook, as EDI Link Trustee, briefed the Board on her meetings with staff and the positive work that was being carried out. She noted that gender neutral toilets had been an issue; Dan Hards explained that the issue had now been resolved as the necessary signage was now in place.

Paul Collyer, as Link Trustee for Career Development, outlined his discussions with the Career Development lead. Her plans were very impressive. He had also attended an external training event that had been very interesting. He noted that resourcing may need to be looked at by the Board. A representative from the College would join the Surrey Skills and Employers' Forum.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Board agreed that its summer term meeting should be held on 6th July 2022 and asked that a revised meeting timetable be circulated.

Action: Clerks to amend meeting timetable and circulate to Trustees and Members.

Terry Price noted that the AGM was scheduled for 12th January 2022 at 5pm and that all Trustees were invited.

The Board expressed its thanks to the staff of the College for their work at a difficult time.

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting was scheduled for 6pm on 23rd March 2022.

*The meeting closed at 7.15pm
Attendance was 73.3%.*

Signed.....

Date.....

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

AT2-001	Deputy Principal to amend Target 11 of College SAR.
AT2-002	Clerks to amend meeting timetable and circulate to Trustees and Members.

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

C/S	Minute	Topic
S	10	College Self-Assessment Report The Board thanked the Deputy Principal for her work on the Report.
S	12	Link Trustee Reports The Progression Link Trustee briefed the Board on the impressive work undertaken by the student progression team at the College.