

## THE COLLEGE OF RICHARD COLLYER

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BODY HELD ON Wednesday 10 July 2024 at 16.30

**Present:** Steve Allen, Teddy Bridges, Roisin Buckley, Ann Donoghue, Dan Griffin, Barbara Hobday, Dan Lodge (Principal), Susan Martineau, Paul Mittendorfer, Dr Grant Powell, Julian Rooney, Clare Ruaux, Helen Smith, Dom Valente, Bev Valley

**In attendance:** Members of SMT - Ian Dumbleton (FD), Rob Hussey (VP Curriculum), Andrea John (VP Pastoral), Steve Martell (DP)

Russha Sellings (Director of Governance/GD)

**In the Chair:** Ann Donoghue

#### 1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from the Chair and the meeting was chaired by the Deputy Chair in his absence. Apologies were also received and accepted from Governors as follows: Karl Banister, Rev'd Lisa Barnett and Will Power.

New Governor Julian Rooney and the newly appointed Student Governors, Roisin Buckley and Dan Griffin were officially welcomed to their first Governing Body meeting.

The Chair referred to the structure of the agenda and the time available for committee updates.

#### 2. Urgent Business

None to report.

#### 3. Declarations of Interest

None declared with respect of the items on the agenda.

#### 4. Minutes of the meeting 26 March 2024 and the Strategy Day 7 June 2024

The minutes of the previous meeting and those taken at the recent Strategy Day where Governing Body decisions were recorded were both approved without amendment.

#### 5. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising that were not already covered by the agenda.

#### 6. Written Resolutions

*Resolutions passed since the last meeting:*

(i) Student Governor ratification

**Resolved: the minutes record the approval of the resolutions taken by members of the Governing Body since the last meeting to confirm the appointments of Student Governors Roisin Buckley and Dan Griffin.**

(ii) Estates Masterplan

**Resolved: the minutes record the approval of the resolutions taken by relevant members of the Governing Body since the last meeting to confirm the appointment of the architect for the Estates Masterplan and an increase in initial budget for design costs from the previously agreed amount of £200,000 to £400,000.**

### (iii) Collyer Endowment Trustees

The Chair of the GS&R Committee informed members that the College appointed Trustee had been successfully inducted and attended a first meeting of Trustees last month. The application of the Mercer-appointed candidate recommended to the Governing Body would no longer proceed for reasons that would remain confidential to the Committee. This resolution was therefore withdrawn.

**Resolved: the minutes record the approval of the resolution taken by relevant members of the Governing Body since the last meeting to confirm the appointment of the new College appointed Trustee, Claudine Vickery, to the Collyer Endowment.**

## **7. Principal's Report**

*Paper: Principal's spring term report*

Governors heard from the Principal with additional headline commentary to his report, largely political since the outcome of the recent general election. The proposed VAT increases planned for the independent sector could lead to an increase in applications and it was noted attendees at the recent Welcome Day were around 14% higher than the previous year.

Implications on other key areas were currently unknown such as the review of Ofsted gradings, Post-16 curriculum reforms, teacher pay and capital funding. The Principal attended a recent CST conference which had proved insightful. There was a current 'pause' in academy conversion activity which included decisions taken at summer term Advisory Board meetings. It was confirmed following a Governor question, that since the change in policy, the academy conversion grants could be at risk where Advisory Board approval of the application wasn't likely to be reached before the deadline of September.

## **8. Ofsted Action Plan**

*Paper: Ofsted Action Plan (summer 2024)*

Governors queried whether the new Government's proposals on Ofsted single word judgements could impact the forthcoming inspection process. The VP (Curriculum) did not anticipate significant movement until September 2025. It was further confirmed that most of the substantial actions in the original post Ofsted action plan had been implemented since the last inspection. The consultant present at Strategy Day would return for the summer term INSET and further dates in the autumn term to provide additional support including to Governors (dates TBC).

Governors challenged the capacity in delivery of substantial actions, in particular review of the SAR/QIP format and the action which involved changes to data reporting and systems. They suggested a risk-based approach to the prioritisation of the action plan. The VP (Curriculum) confirmed his commitment to reviewing the quality assurance processes and this work had already begun as part of the QIP review. The action around data management would enhance the reporting, however did not involve changes to the current systems.

Governors also observed the importance of students being up to date with knowledge of local safeguarding risks. The VP (Pastoral) responded that this was covered within tutorial sessions where online safety and the contextual risks were also emphasised.

## **9. Student Voice Report**

*Paper: Termly report*

The Student Governors introduced their first report and were thanked for drafting it. There were no further questions.

## **10. Working Party updates**

*Papers: SWP minutes 20-05-24, AWP (Part II)*

i) \*Skills Agenda

The minutes record the submission of the Accountability Agreement (Part 2) following final agreement at the Strategy Day event attended by most Governors. The Chair of the working party was pleased that the process had highlighted strengths of the College's Careers and skills development programme. The Chair of the working party was thanked for all her work. It was agreed remit of the working party would continue fully through the Quality & Curriculum Committee from the next academic year now the main purposes had been fulfilled (reference Item 15 on the agenda).

ii) \*Academisation (confidential)

The Principal reported that the working party had met the day prior to the announcement of the general election and the majority of the current planning in particular around the stakeholder consultation was therefore on hold until further updates from the DfE. The working party would need to continue in its current form into the next academic year and would be reviewed again at the point an academy order was received.

## 11. Report - Finance & GP Committee

*Papers: Minutes x 2 22-05-24, 25-06-24, Management Accounts, Cash Flow, Balance Sheet, Capital Budget, Budget and Budget Forecast, Financial Commentary, extract of Financial Regs ref the [new College Financial Handbook 2024](#), Reserves Policy, Business KPIs, Pay Policy, Privacy Notice (SharePoint only)*

### a) \*Minutes

The Committee Chair referred to the minutes of the meetings and the number of financial reports required for Governing Body approval.

### b) Consider recommendations:

i) Management Accounts (end May)

There were no comments or questions raised on the accounts including the Cash Flow Forecast and Balance Sheet.

**Resolved: The Governing Body approved the Management Accounts for the period ending May 2024.**

ii) Cash Flow Forecast

**Resolved: The Governing Body approved the latest Cash Flow Forecast.**

iii) Balance Sheet

**Resolved: The Governing Body approved the Balance Sheet.**

iv) Capital Budget 2024-25

There were no further questions or comments.

**Resolved: The Governing Body approved the Capital Budget 2024-25.**

v) Budget 2024-25/Financial Forecasts

The FD reported to Governors that the budget format had been amended following feedback from the F&GP Committee. It was as finalised as it could be at this point and included in-year funding. There were no further questions or comments.

**Resolved: The Governing Body approved the Budget for 2024-25 and the latest forecasts.**

vi) Financial Commentary/Assumptions

It was queried why international students were omitted from the teacher-student ratios on page 5. The FD explained that this was due to the type of short course usually undertaken by the international cohort; they therefore did not need to be factored into the planning.

Payroll as a percentage of income was discussed and Governors questioned whether the target of 71% was achievable. The FD said that the College relied on ESFA guidance and relevant benchmarks including S7. There was a balance to be reached in setting a target that was aspirational and also ensured quality teaching.

vii) Financial Regs updates

The GD advised the Financial Regulations had been fully reviewed to comply with the new College Financial Handbook effective 1 August 2024, with changes throughout and in particular Document 10. Further changes had been considered by the F&GP Committee including more substantial changes to Annex I on non fixed asset allocation. The full version was uploaded to SharePoint and the pages which had been amended and reviewed by the Committee were included in the pack. There were no questions or comments on the proposed changes.

**Resolved: The Governing Body ratified the Financial Regulations.**

viii) Reserves Policy (new)

There were no further questions or comments on the new policy.

**Resolved: The Governing Body ratified the Reserves Policy.**

ix) \*Policies: Pay, Data Protection (Privacy Notice)

There were no further questions or comments on the policies for approval.

**Resolved: The Governing Body ratified the Pay Policy and the Data Protection Privacy Notice.**

x) Business KPIs

Governors received the KPIs. There were no further questions or comments.

## 12. Report – Estates Committee

*Papers: Minutes 10-06-24 Parts I & II, H&S annual report*

### a) \*Minutes inc Part II

The Committee Chair referred to the minutes of the meeting providing a brief summary of recent activity following on from the Strategy Day. Governors were aware of the importance of creating additional social areas as referenced in the Student Governors' report and it was confirmed work would continue over the summer break in readiness for the new academic year.

### b) Consider recommendations

i) H&S annual report

The report was presented in a new format at the Committee meeting. There were no further questions or comments.

**Resolved: The Governing Body approved the annual H&S report.**

## 13. Report – Audit & Risk Committee

*Papers: Minutes 12-06-24, external audit strategy, internal audit programme (SharePoint), Regulatory Self-Assessment Questionnaire*

### a) \*Minutes

The Committee Chair referred to the minutes and key meeting actions.

### b) Consider Recommendations:

i) External audit strategy

There were no further questions or comments.

**Resolved: The Governing Body approved the external audit strategy.**

ii) \*Internal audit programme

This was noted as a consent item, however the Chair wished to highlight the importance of regular cyber security reviews; this had been brought forward in the plan and would involve the new IT Manager. The option for the third review was still under consideration and may be impacted by the implementation of new finance software.

**Resolved: The Governing Body agreed the internal audit programme for 2024-25 with the third review TBC.**

iii) Regulatory Self-Assessment

The FD explained the latest position with senior management expenses which would be reflected in the final version prior to signing.

**Resolved: The Governing Body ratified the Regularity Self-Assessment subject to final expenses which would be signed by the Principal and the Chair of the Governing Body.**

#### **14. Report – Quality & Curriculum Committee**

*Papers: Minutes 17-06-24, Education KPIs, Safeguarding & Child Protection, Behaviour Policy & Appendices*

**a) \*Minutes**

The Committee Chair referred to the minutes.

**b) Consider Recommendations:**

i) Education KPIs

Governors received the KPIs. The Chair spoke of the key highlights notably the inclusion of high grades. English would specifically be monitored through the KPIs in respect of holding leaders to account on the outcomes of the EQR action plan. Progress of high needs students would be included in this data set due to increasing numbers. Performance of subjects with an ALPS grade 5 or lower would continue to be scrutinised and tracked. QIPs were reviewed and it was noted positively by the all that attendance continued to be strong against relevant benchmarks including the SFCA.

ii) Safeguarding update

The agreed reporting process would start from the next academic year utilising the SAR-QIP integrated into the annual report to Governors presented in the autumn term. The new Safeguarding Governor would closely monitor the position via a checklist and provide assurance to Q&C on a termly basis. The VP (Pastoral) advised Governors that while the risks around safeguarding were overall stabilising, there was still a high proportion of high-risk mental health cases which was concerning and managing staff capacity remained a high priority.

iii) \*Policies: Student Behaviour plus appendices, Safeguarding & CP

Governors heard that changes had been made to continue to reinforce the importance of conduct and behaviour focusing on early interventions and targeting low level behaviour before it escalated. This also linked to extra curricula engagement.

There were no further questions or comments on the policies for approval.

**Resolved: The Governing Body ratified the Student Behaviour Policy and the Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy.**

#### **15. Governance, Search & Remuneration Committee**

*Paper: Minutes 21-06-24, Pastoral Role Descriptions*

**a) \*Minutes**

The Committee Chair referred to the minutes of the meeting. This was the busiest period for the Committee and the agenda included several key matters, in particular around succession. The commitment and contributions of Governors and Co-optees was recognised and good attendance at meetings and events was acknowledged.

## **b) Consider Recommendations 24-25:**

### **i) Rules & Byelaws with -**

#### **- Chair and Deputy Chair roles 24-25**

No candidates had come forward for either role. The current Chair and Deputy Chair were proposed to continue and in doing so their terms would need to be extended by a further year. It was noted they both provided a significant level of support and strong guidance to the College and the Governing Body.

#### **- Appointments/Committee membership**

The changes were highlighted in the draft Rules & Byelaws. In particular, there were proposed new Chairs for the F&GP, Q&C and GS&R Committees as previously discussed at the last meeting. Handovers had taken place this term to ensure the respective Chairs were prepared for the new academic year. As discussed earlier in the meeting, the Skills working party would be disbanded and the Academisation Working Party would continue with a new Governor identified to be added to the membership.

#### **- New Governor (safeguarding linked)**

The Chair spoke of the extensive interview process which was imperative for the key role. The VP (Pastoral) was thanked for the recommendation and the Committee were pleased to recommend Lauren Smith who was a strong candidate with significant experience in NHS settings. It was requested a handover be arranged with the current Safeguarding Governor if time allowed.

#### **- Committee Terms of Reference**

Each Committee had reviewed their Terms of Reference at the summer term meetings and the recommendations highlighted were considered by GS&R.

### **Resolved: The Governing Body approved:**

- **The reappointment of the current Chair and Deputy Chair of the Governing Body for a further year and in doing so an extension to their terms for one further year.**
- **The updates to the Rules & Byelaws including the proposed Committee membership, Chair roles and ToR.**
- **The appointment of Lauren Smith as Independent Governor and Safeguarding Governor w.e.f 1 August 2024.**
- **The appointment of Paul Mittendorfer to the Academisation working party.**

### **ii) I&As (2019)**

Governors were alerted to the potential need to make some minor amendments early in the academic year pending the incorporation of the Collyer Endowment.

### **Resolved: The Governing Body ratified the current I&As 2019 and would review the position at the appropriate time.**

### **iii) Scheme of Delegation plus annex**

There were no further questions or comments on the policies for approval.

### **Resolved: The Governing Body ratified the Scheme of Delegation and annex.**

### **iv) Governor Link Programme**

It was proposed the links would be consolidated again for the forthcoming year, although it was agreed to keep this under review.

### **Resolved: The Governing Body agreed the links for 2024-25.**

### **v) Governor Training & Development**

The new programme had worked well over the previous year and it was proposed to continue. Thanks were noted to the Mercers' Company for providing access to The Key for Governors and the NGA Learning Link for a further year.

vi) \*Pastoral Role Descriptions (updated)

Updates confirmed following the review of safeguarding reporting. This was a consent item and there were no comments raised.

**16. Chair's Report**

i) Confidentiality review

In the absence of the Chair, the GD explained that it was agreed that she would prepare the report annually and consolidate the historical records. Some minutes would therefore remain confidential for perpetuity where they related to an individual's remuneration or appraisal or another specific confidential matter. The Chair of the Governing Body and the Principal had confirmed that no other Part II minutes would be released into the public domain at this time and no minutes were therefore put forward to the Governing Body for consideration. Governors supported this approach.

ii) Update from Trustees

The GD explained that the Trustees were close to registering the new CIO which would involve a new Constitution for the charity. It was hoped this would take place over the summer break and following this a transfer period between the old and new charities would commence. The portfolio continued to perform well under in Investment Manager's guidance and Trustees held their summer meeting at Waverton's offices.

**17. AOB**

The Acting Chair read out a statement from the Chair with respect to the retirement of two Mercer Governors. Dr Grant Powell had provided a great deal of support and leadership over two terms as a Governor and latterly as Chair of the Q&C Committee and Safeguarding Governor. Thanks were also expressed to Susan Martineau for her contributions following her term on the Audit & Risk Committee.

**18. Meeting Assessment**

The meeting was conducted in good time and thanks were noted to the Deputy Chair for standing in at short notice.

**19. Dates for Next Academic Year**

*Paper: Summer term dates schedule*

The GD highlighted changes to some of the Committee dates in the summer term 2025. Calendar invites would follow.

**20. Report – Governance, Search & Remuneration Committee (Part II)**

The pay and conditions of service of SMT.

SMT, Staff and Student Governors left at this point and the first part of the meeting concluded at 17.55.

The Principal and GD remained until their respective recommendations were discussed.

**Part II minutes: (Criterion a) Personal information related to an individual**

Chair .....

Date .....

RRS 30-08-24