

MINUTES OF THE FEC BOARD OF GOVERNORS MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 12 MAY, 2010

Present: Kamraan Akhtar, Abdullah Al-Moshin, Nick Brown, Irene Howard, Richard Lee, Steve Lowe, Yvonne Memory, Gloria Oates (Chair), Mike Pitt, David Read, Lily Risby
In attendance: Bev Beaumont, Jayne Clarke, Peter Roberts, Mick Walsh, Kath Wrigley (Clerk)
Apologies: Madeleine Heap, Ian Hill, John Hodgkinson, Scott Jackson, Cllr. Kay Knox
Absent: Iftikhar Naweed, Peter Treadwell

In opening the meeting, the Chair extended a warm welcome to Kamraan Akhtar, the new Student Governor and President of the Student Association. At the same time the Chair also reminded members that it was AA-M's and LR's last meeting and, on behalf of the Board, thanked them for their excellent service as Board members. They had been outstanding successors to last year's Student Governors. The Chair also congratulated AA-M, who had recently been voted *Oldham Rotary Club's Student of the Year 2010*. Governors unanimously echoed these sentiments.

	<u>ACTION</u>
1. <u>Minutes of the last meeting held on 2 December 2009</u> The Minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record. <u>Confidential Minutes of the extra-ordinary meeting held on 10 March, 2010</u> The Minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record.	
2. <u>Matters arising</u> <u>Capital Project</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• YM declared a potential interest in the discussions under this item;• subsequent to the meeting, one amendment was proposed to the Minutes of 10 March, 2010, under Item 2 – Capital Project update. The Clerk agreed to make this amendment to the Minutes, which would remain <i>Confidential</i>; <u>Winstanley Board meeting: 24 May 2010</u> <p>Governors were reminded of the invitation to observe Winstanley College's Board meeting between 6.30 and 8.30 p.m. on Monday, 24 May. Anyone wishing to attend please notify the Clerk.</p> <u>Feedback on the Interview process for the new Principal</u> <p>GO reported that feedback had been given to the unsuccessful candidate, who had commented that the process had been both rigorous and thorough.</p>	
3. <u>Search Committee</u> <p>GO reported on the last meeting of the Committee, referring to Minutes which had been circulated previously. The following points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the Board agreed retrospectively to the re-election of PT to serve as an Independent Governor for a further four-year term with effect from 1 March, 2010;• subsequent to the meeting, Linda Newitt had tendered her resignation from the Board. In acknowledging this the Clerk had indicated that if, in the future, her personal circumstances allowed, the Board would consider her as a candidate should a suitable vacancy arise;• the Clerk reported that Sharon Lewis had left the Chamber of Commerce and therefore contact had not be possible. GO asked all Governors to inform the Clerk of anyone they felt could be approached with regard to joining the Board and any recommendation of potential candidates would be pursued via the Search Committee.	
4. <u>Election of Chair and Vice-Chair</u> <p>NB led this item inviting nominations for the positions of Chair and Vice-Chair of the Corporation. GO was unanimously elected as Chair of Governors for a further 12 month period, with SL unanimously elected as Vice-Chair for a further 12 month period. Both Governors accepted their nominations.</p>	
5. <u>Declaration of Interests</u> <p>None was declared.</p>	
6. <u>Correspondence</u> <p>There were three items of correspondence, as follows:</p> <u>Designation as a Sixth Form College</u> <p>A letter had been received from the DCSF confirming the College's designation as a Sixth Form College.</p> <u>Jackie Scholes</u> <p>The Chair read out a letter from former Parent Governor, Jackie Scholes, who had written to the Board thanking them for their gift and expressing her gratitude to the College for the "<i>excellent tutelage afforded to [her] two boys throughout their happy years attending Oldham Sixth Form College</i>". JS added that, when family commitments permitted, she would be happy to assist the Board in any way.</p>	

Scott Jackson

The Chair read out a letter from SJ, the Support Staff Governor, whose recent illness had prevented him from attending meetings, in which he had expressed his wish to step down from the Board. GO explained that SJ had now returned to almost full-time employment and his recovery was progressing well. Governors were grateful for the sentiments expressed in his letter and wished him well for the future.

7. **Clerk's business**Forms for completion

KW drew attention to the Declaration of Eligibility, Register of Interests and Skills Audit forms which had been tabled. Governors were asked to sign and return these forms before they left the meeting, if possible. Those members who were not present would receive the forms by post for signature and return as soon as possible.

Review of Governance update

Based on the particularly low response to the questionnaire sent out to all Governors, KW had concluded that the majority of Governors were satisfied with the current system of governance. There had been no formal report following the various consultation events that had taken place across the country, but interestingly a Seminar had already taken place to discuss the possible content of a *Code of Governance*, which was one of the recommendations of the review. KW would provide a regular update to Governors on any decisions taken.

8. **Chair's business**Membership of Committees

A paper detailing current membership of Committees had been circulated prior to the meeting. Governors were asked to confirm their continued interest in membership of their chosen Committees and an invitation was extended to a Student Governor to join the Quality Committee. PR added that the Committee would welcome student participation in the work of this Committee as much of the discussion was directly relevant to students.

It was noted that:

- LN and SJ had both resigned from the Board and membership of the Personnel and Audit Committees respectively;
- MH had joined both the Audit and Personnel Committees and YM had joined the Quality Committee ;
- JC would replace NB as a member of the Finance, Personnel, Quality and Search Committees from August 2010, when she took up her role as Principal.

Subsequent to the meeting, KA (Student Governor) agreed to join the Quality Committee.

Attendance statistics

Attendance statistics were tabled for the Board and Committee meetings over the last 12 months. There had been a slight improvement in attendance following the introduction of early morning meetings and it was agreed to continue with this arrangement for another year.

9. **Principal's business**

NB gave the following updates:

Recruitment for 2010

- SMT had considered the effect of the opening of Rochdale Sixth Form College and the competitive market in FE at the current time on the number of applications for September 2010 enrolment. A recent review of numbers had revealed that the number of applications received to date was the highest ever, with Application Packs being returned faster than ever before. One of the College's main ambitions had been to offer students in the Oldham area a platform to higher education, but other considerations in terms of overall provision across the Greater Manchester area had now been raised. The deciding issue was likely to be the Science Centre and already the College had received several appeals for places. The next two years would be critical, but if the College could maintain the current level of applications they would be consolidated into the overall number for subsequent years.

Science Centre

- NB gave a further update on progress towards the Science Centre, the Minutes of which were deemed to be confidential and withheld from publication.

Funding

- the LSC had been replaced by the YPLA who had assured the College that the ALS allocation would be received by 7 May. Unfortunately, this was still awaited.

10. **Committee business****Audit Committee**

In PT's absence, JC led this item referring to Minutes circulated prior to the meeting. The following points were noted:

- the Block 1 Audit Report had resulted in *Substantial assurance* in respect of Strategic Planning, Resource Utilisation and Key Financial Controls;
- *Adequate assurance* had been awarded following the IT Healthcheck, where it was noted that more recommendations than usual had been made. This was not a cause for concern as this was not only the fastest moving and most complex area in the College but also the least frequently audited. The main recommendation was to replace the water based sprinklers in the server and communications rooms with gas-based systems. Research was being carried out to find an alternative solution to this problem but, in the meantime, a kill switch had been installed in the server room to ensure the safety of workers in that area;
- the Joint Audit Code of Practice resulting from the Machinery of Government changes, proposed that Colleges should be audited once only, with Local Authorities placing reliance on the Auditors findings;
- an update on risk management had been provided and it was noted that a specific, Science Centre Risk Register had been drawn up.

Finance & General Purposes Committee

DR led this item referring to Minutes circulated prior to the meeting. The following points were noted:

- attention was drawn to the *Confidential Minutes* outlining progress on the Science Centre, on which NB had already provided an update;
- the Committee agreed that it was not necessary to go to Tender in respect of the Catering Contract and the Financial Regulations had been amended to enable renewal of Contracts where Tendering was felt to be unnecessary. In the meantime, the refurbishment of the café area was progressing well, mostly funded by Creelers;
- investment on charity bonds had produced the maximum interest available at the present time;
- travel allowances had again been reviewed and, on the advice of the Auditors, it had been decided to reimburse a specific amount per mile for fuel expenses, rather than use the previous complicated calculation. This amount was within the mileage rates allowed by the Inland Revenue office;
- no major issues to be reported in terms of financial statements.

Personnel Committee

RL led this item in the absence of the Chair of Personnel, referring to Minutes circulated prior to the meeting. The main item under discussion was the College's entry for the Best Companies Award for the third time in succession. The previous two years the College had achieved 2-star status but this year they had been awarded *Extraordinary* 3-star status, the only educational institution in the country to achieve this accreditation. The questionnaire had been sent out to staff at a particularly busy time in the College year, requesting feedback on a number of issues such as how they felt about how the College and how it was run. The result provided excellent publicity in terms of recruitment and the Committee had agreed it was worthwhile to enter again next year.

Quality Committee

RL led this item referring to Minutes circulated prior to the meeting, and a copy of updated Minutes was tabled, which included various amendments to the original document. The following points were noted:

- the main item for the Board's attention was retrospective approval of the Self Assessment Report (SAR) which the Committee regarded as an excellent, comprehensive document which accurately reflected the College's performance over the last 12 months. The Committee was satisfied that the College was taking all appropriate measures to ensure continual improvement;
- a booklet summarising the main points of the SAR was tabled;
- thanks were expressed to PR for his excellent work in driving the self-assessment process and collating all submissions into the final whole-College SAR;
- it was noted that the SAR would change next year following introduction of the new inspection framework.

11. **Updates****Monthly Management Accounts**

As BB had been unable to return to College in time due to the grounding of all flights, the Executive Summary cover sheet had not been included this month. All normal reports had been produced and circulated. There was nothing to which Governors' attention should be drawn and all normal reports would be produced next month. MP queried the fall in the value of assets from February to March which BB explained was due to the inclusion of depreciation in the accounts on a monthly basis.

Health and Safety

MW reported on two reported cases of TB during the year, the most recent 7 weeks ago. The College was working closely with the Pennine Trust to arrange for screening of all students who had been in close contact with those diagnosed. There was no immediate concern and the whole issue had been handled extremely well by the Pennine Trust.

KA asked what specific information could be fed back to the Student Association regarding this. MW responded that at the moment there was no further action to be taken but any students wishing further clarification could be asked to speak to MW directly. KA added that an official response on the subject could avoid panic amongst the students who may not have received accurate information and to avoid any misconceptions. GO remarked that students could be assured that any necessary action had been taken and those who needed to be had been informed.

Student Association

AA-M reported that the Student Association had held a Fashion Show two weeks ago, which was extremely successful.

Both students expressed their gratitude to members for the experience they had gained during their time as Governors and for being made so welcome. Both had learned a great deal and become more confident, whilst at the same time finding the experience most enjoyable.

GO referred to the Student Association Accounts, circulated prior to the meeting, which showed the amazing amounts of money raised by the Association on behalf of various charities. GO expressed thanks on behalf of the Board for all their efforts and wished them both well for the future.

NB added that New College, Oxford had recently carried out a research project on community cohesion and had gathered more evidence from this College than from anywhere else. Researchers were surprised at the ethos of harmony amongst the student population and as soon as the Report was available it would be brought back to the Board. The Student Association had made a major contribution to their project, representing the College in the same way that the College represented the town. Governors could be very proud of them as they were the future of the town - a happy, well-educated, cohesive society in the borough. KA commented that the outgoing Student Governors were a hard act to follow!

NB

RESOLVED:

that the Student Association Accounts were accepted by the Board.

12. **Any other business**

- JC informed the Board that Phil Brisk, a former Independent Governor, had been offered a permanent Contract at the College as a Tutor for English from August 2010;
- NB announced that there was a Dance performance in the Large Lecture Theatre that evening and two of the students had been offered a place at very prestigious *conservatoires*.

13. **Date of next meeting**

The next meeting was scheduled to take place on Wednesday, 7 July at 4.30 p.m. in Meeting Room 1.

All Staff, Staff & Student Governors left the meeting at this point.

12. **Remuneration Committee**

GO led the discussion of this item referring to the Minutes of the various discussions, which were tabled. The Minutes of this item were deemed to be confidential and would be withheld from publication.

13. **Items of confidentiality**

Governors agreed that the discussion of the Capital Project and the Remuneration Committee business were confidential. The record of discussion should be recorded separately and not included in the published Minutes.

The meeting closed at 6.30 p.m.

Submitted to Board for approval: 7 July, 2010

Signed: _____
Chair of the Corporation

Date: _____