

The Henley College Board

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Board held on Monday 9 October 2023 at 18.00 at D133, Deanfield Campus, Henley-on-Thames		
BOARD: Mike Ashton Rebecca Chandler- Wilde Satwant Deol Eva Dixon Jo-anne Elliott Lizzie Firth Asma Jahan Vince Maltese Jackie Wilcocks	Chair Independent Member Principal Independent Member Parent Governor Independent Member Staff governor Independent Member Parent Governor	STUDENT GOVERNORS: Eve Hoskins Rosie Burton DIRECTOR OF GOVERNANCE: Jacky Gearey SLT BY INVITATION: Paul Fagan - prospective governor Eamonn Egan - Vice Principal (VP) Mark Griggs – Finance & Resources Controller (FRC) Liz Guerin – Director of HR and Operational Change Suzanne Plaister – Assistant Principal - Quality
Item	Minutes	Action by
	Opening of Meeting and Welcome The Chair opened the meeting at 18.08 and welcomed the two new student governors Eve Hoskins and Rosie Burton to their first meeting. The Chair then advised the Board that both Andrew Unsworth and Chris Murray had stepped down from the Board due to personal circumstances and increased pressure of work and thanked them for their support and contributions to both the Board and the College.	
	Apologies for Absence Apologies had been received from: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Claire Bovill - work 2. Rena Rani - work 3. Brian Fennelly – funeral 4. James Lingard – work event 5. Charles Wiggan 	
	Declaration of Interests All declarations of interest for the attending governors were in the Register of Interests. No other declarations of interest were made.	
1.0	Appointment of Governor Mr Fagan was asked to leave the meeting at 18.17. The Chair advised the Board that Paul Fagan, currently a serving co-opted member of the audit committee had an extensive background in auditing and finance and had previously been interviewed by members of the Governance & Search committee, who were recommending his appointment to the Board. Board so approved the appointment. Resolved that Paul Fagan was ratified as a member of the Board	
1.1	Minutes of Previous Meeting (i) Minutes of meeting of 3 July 2023	

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	<p>The Board approved the minutes of 3 July 2023 as an accurate record of the meeting held</p> <p>Resolved that the Board approved the minutes of 3 July 2023 as an accurate record of the meeting held</p>	
1.2	<p>Matters Arising from the Minutes (unless covered by the agenda)</p> <p>Item 4.8 provide student numbers on each of the enrichment offers – to be provided at next board meeting. The VP advised that so far 506 students have taken the enrichment offer. The Student Governors commented that there could be more engagement with more marketing with better promotion. Action now closed</p> <p>All other matters had been closed off or covered under the agenda and there were no further matters arising.</p>	
1.3(i)	<p>Principal's Report</p> <p>It had been a very successful start to the Autumn term with record number of students and it is probable that the College may exceed target number of 1,970 enrolled students. Pass rates in 2022/23 were strong. While there was a slight dip of 1% in A-levels pass rates to 94.2%, which was part of a national trend, all other qualification types improved on the previous year, the overall achievement for students in 2023/24 was 81.2%, an increase of 1% on the previous year. Changes to the approach to delivering GCSE Maths in 2023/24 have now been implemented.</p> <p>There was extensive refurbishment work carried out during the summer in D5 to bring the learning spaces to industry standard included the new T-level engineering block which governors had just had a tour of. The Principal asked for thanks to be recorded to Ashok Patel for leading this project, and members of staff who had significant input to making this a success. Additionally the College has also been successful in landing an additional £1.5m Post-16 Capacity Fund from the ESFA, to develop the Deanfield campus with additional teaching and social space planned for summer 2024. For reassurance a survey completed over the summer confirmed there is no RAAC on site.</p> <p>The College's application to the Local Skills Improvement Fund has been submitted in collaboration with Activate Learning and Abingdon & Witney College. The outcome should be received in mid-October. If successful, the College will develop two 30-hour programmes for employees in local industry who are working to improve productivity in their companies and scale up their businesses. The two programmes are Cobots and Digital Twins. Please see item 1.5 for more detail.</p> <p>Finally the Principal shared some of the student success stories which the Chair and Board felt were a testament to the changes that had taken place. All felt that this was a narrative to share. The Chair thanked the Principal for an excellent and detailed summary report.</p> <p>Resolved that the Principal's Report was received and noted by the Board</p>	
1.3(ii)	<p>Student Governors Presentation</p> <p>The student governors' presentation covered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • role of students' union, • Working out what interest we have for a prom and the help required to find a suitable location and support from staff • Setting up new sports enrichments 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Running more SU events throughout the year • Helping at open evenings • Organising a mental health coffee morning <p>Focusing on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More events and structure for how we run these that can be passed on • More members from a diverse subject background • High engagement on social media, building a brand out of SU so people know who we are and what we can do for them • Using our office as a base for meetings between members with roles, and a place to centralise our SU work. <p>Our aim: To represent the student voice. We want to ensure the students feel heard.</p> <p>The Chair said that this would be really good for enrichments and building up leadership skills.</p> <p>Resolved that the Student Governors' Presentation was received and noted by the Board</p>	
1.4	<p>Financial Update - 2023-24 (including update on environmental sustainability)</p> <p>Management Accounts - The audit had just closed. The first management accounts will be presented to Finance and Resources Committee on 14 November 23. Following the one-off staff payment towards year end, a marginal surplus of £15k for 2022-23 was anticipated. The draft outturn presented to the auditors is currently showing a surplus of £152k due to a number of year-end adjustments. Additionally with the pension valuation at year end, it is expected that the balance sheet will show a stronger position and it is hoped that Financial Health will change from good to outstanding when reporting the final figures to the ESFA in December.</p> <p>Risk Register - nothing to report as the Risk Management Group has not met since the last Corporation meeting, but an update will be presented at the next Audit Committee. – FRC made reference to a possible addition of a new risk concerning a potential shortfall from high needs funding. The following risks had been removed as they had been actioned i.e appointment of external/internal auditors and loss of connectivity between campuses.</p> <p>Environmental Sustainability - The College's focus for the start of the academic year has been to set up a sustainability work group, review the DfE Climate Change Roadmap, set KPIs and identify the initiatives to be undertaken for the year. The working group is to be made up of a governor, FRC, students, teachers and support staff. As a start the FRC advised of a recent initiative for a wholesale replacement of traditional lighting units to LED lights, which will provide immediate financial savings as well as reduce the College's carbon emissions for lighting by 31.6 tCO₂e per year, equivalent to the carbon sequestration of circa 1,500 trees. The Chair and Board that this approach was very thorough with clear objectives and a positive step forward.</p> <p>Resolved that the update Financial Update - 2023-24 (including update on environmental sustainability) was received and noted by the Board</p>	

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1.5	<p>Strategic level KPIs and strategic initiatives tracker (to include update on Quality Improvement Plan)</p> <p>The VP presented an update on KPI performance now in its third year which covered:</p> <p>Strategic Aim 1: Students - Delivering an exceptional student experience</p> <p>Level 2 Student Rep Conference has been planned for 17 October (to talk about additional activities to take part in and the skills students need to learn) and a Level 2 Student Skills Masterclass in Maths for mid-November. Two specialists in Level 2 courses, events run by Unloc, the aim is to drive achievement and attendance in GCSE English and Maths ensuring excellence in teaching, learning and assessment.</p> <p>Strategic Aim 3: Stakeholders - Building partnerships with community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invested in new Customer Relationship Management software. 385 stakeholders are recorded on the database providing assurance T-level Industry Placements will be made available. • Relationships established with three digital companies (Cyphr, Vikaso and Navvis) offering industry placements to students and collaborating with the College on the Local Skills Improvement Fund bid. The two programmes are Cobots and Digital Twins. Board was concerned whether there was sufficient staffing for this. VP reassured the Board said the College was ready to go with this with staff in place using revenue funding for developing the programme and capital funding for the equipment next March. Board felt this was cutting edge technology and that using industry expertise to develop this was exactly what Ofsted had commented on. In discussing governance the Chair asked the VP to provide a robust due diligence governance process for selecting and checking partners which he agreed to do. <p>In summation the Chair said that this was really good update and urged everyone to read the strategic initiatives tracker which provided this qualitative data.</p> <p>Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) 2023-2024</p> <p>The AP for Quality updated the Board on the QIP saying that two items from the previous QIP 2022-2023 had also been added. The main areas for development for 2023-2024 include: L2 Provision; Teaching and learning within specific areas; Value Added with greater scrutiny on accountability in Curriculum Area Reviews; attendance; engagement within GCSE learning (which will include attendance and be a skills' based process); and enrichment with clear articulation on what enrichment is and how this links to the whole study programme.</p> <p>Value Proposition (VP)</p> <p>Head of HR provided an update on the HEART values and then explained that the value proposition (VP) originally agreed with SLT, and Marketing during Summer 2022 had been delayed due to the Ofsted inspection. A timeline was presented outlining actions to be completed including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree content and format of SLT, Middle Manager and all staff session (half term) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ SLT Session (content, what a VP is and why it matters, detail of the VP, how the VP fits within the Strategy Framework and generation of examples to bring it to life (November) ▪ CL/Middle Manager session covering the same content as SLT session (November) ▪ All staff session – for January staff training day. 	
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	<p>Launching the VP to all staff is also an opportunity to remind everyone about the values, update them on the vision and new strategy and explain how all elements of the Strategic Framework fit together. This will help to address one of the core areas of focus in response to the Staff Survey 2023 feedback.</p> <p>There were no comments.</p> <p>Resolved that Strategic level KPIs and strategic initiatives tracker were received and noted by the Board</p>	
1.6	<p>Strategic Plan Timescale</p> <p>The Principal advised that the College has not only successfully delivered strategic priorities for 2021- 24 but exceeded them in many cases referring to many of the successful outcomes despite , the fact that the strategy was produce prior to the unprecedented Covid-19 pandemic and the cyber-attack. The SLT was currently looking at the next strategic plan for 2025 to 2028 which will include developing a curriculum plan based on the demographic data available and incorporate an estates strategy. This will be presented to the governors at the away day in December 2023 for discussion and will include a presentation from Peter Marsh Consulting.</p> <p>Resolved that Strategic Plan Timescale was received and noted by the Board</p>	
1.7	<p>HR Updates</p> <p>Head of HR provided a brief update on several areas including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • introduction of new HEART recognition scheme aligned with the HEART values including refresher training on the HEART values • Improved onboarding process for new starters • 3-day staff training programme before the start of term • Teacher and support staff benchmarking 75% complete • Meeting with Chair of Black Leadership Group (BLG) to re-affirm the College's commitment to the BLG 10 Point Plan <p>Staff Survey</p> <p>The survey (with 25 of the 38 questions mapped closely to last year's survey) provided through Culture Amp had a 78% completion rate (7.4% improvement on last year) which was viewed by the provider as a strong score with an engagement score of 66% which was a good basis upon which to build. Three priority areas (low scores with most impact) were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Vision – hard question to answer. The leaders at THC have communicated a vision that motivates me at 52%. It is the longer – term vision which is felt to not be clear to all staff. ▪ Action - I believe action will take place as a result of this survey at 32%. Although positive changes and significant investment in people was made last year, the College has not been very good at linking action to the feedback to the survey which resulted in staff thinking that their feedback was not acted on. Improved communication with a regular newsletter and start of term all staff sessions has helped but the communication gap is at a more operational level and is being addressed with a clear action plan and regular updates to all staff on progress. ▪ Opportunity - I believe there are good career opportunities for me at THC at 36% - unable to do enough to make a significant difference and this will continue to impact engagement negatively. 	

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	<p>The Board further discussed reinforcement which was key to ensuring that action was being taken. The Chair said that this was a great improvement and reassured the Board that there was progress in delivering the provision to students.</p> <p>Resolved that the HR Updates covering the Staff Survey and HR Plan were received and noted by the Board.</p>	
1.9	<p>Safeguarding & Prevent</p> <p>The Section 157/175 Local Authority Annual Safeguarding Report for 2022/23, is an annual safeguarding audit which has to be ratified by the Governing body. The audit covered; leadership and key roles, induction and training, safeguarding Policy – confirmed reviewed annually, policies, procedures and guidance, record keeping, referrals and consultations, safer recruitment and support, ethics and equality and embedding a safeguarding culture. The DSL advised that there were three actions to come out of the audit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • further update higher agreements to meet audit stipulations (e.g. not to hire to extremist organisations) • relaunching the overarching College EDI committee , the lead for this is the Head of HR Manager • complete a neglect questionnaire with staff (i.e. how to address neglect and what it looks like within the College sector). The lead for this is the DSL. The Chair asked to see the feedback form once has gone live and commented that attendance can be a key indicator of neglect. <p>The DSL reassured the Board that the Local Authority had also completed a safeguarding audit on site last year with no issues.</p> <p>Resolved that Section 175/157 Local Authority Annual Safeguarding Report for 2022/23 was received and approved by the Board</p> <p>Safeguarding Policy</p> <p>The 2023-24 Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy maintains the same structure as before with only minor variations in content. The OSCB-issued template for this year had relatively few changes and the DSL confirmed that the College aligns itself as closely with the template as possible. Most of the changes highlight a shift in emphasis under KCSIE 2023 and involve slight changes in wording. The new introductions (covering sharing of safeguarding information for students over the age of 18 based on best interest, students under criminal investigations and to the role of the Governing Body), had been outlined to the Board at the safeguarding training session held just prior to this board meeting. The policy was approved by the Board.</p> <p>Resolved that the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy was received and approved by the Board</p>	
1.10	<p>Policies and Codes for approval</p> <p>The Standing Orders have been revised and amendments made to include the following all of which were highlighted in the document presented and covered: Proceedings of Meetings/Voting, Corporation members with special roles – SEND and the further addition of three clauses; Corporation Seal; Professional Advice and Liability and Indemnity Cover. Furthermore there was an amendment to clause 21.4 as the term of office is now four years, therefore the maximum a member can serve on a committee is now eight years. Finally the amendment to clause 26.1 stating that minutes are to be reviewed within 2 weeks after which time they will be taken as approved.</p>	

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	<p>The Chair asked for any questions on the above Standing Orders and there were none.</p> <p>Resolved that the revised Standing Orders were received and approved by the Board</p>	
1.11	<p>Board and Committee membership update Board and Committee membership – there was still one vacancy for an independent governor which was being actioned. Eva Dixon had now joined the audit committee. Staff governor election was underway. Senior Independent Governor is now Rebecca Chandler-Wilde and a replacement for the Governance & Search committee chair will be sought.</p> <p>The 2023 Chair's Performance Review was carried out by the Senior Independent Governor 28 June 2023 as required by THC governance policies and the following comment was made that feedback provided by Board members showed that it is widely felt that the Chair has had a very successful year and made a major contribution to the success of the College.</p> <p>Update on Link Governor Process – this was deferred until the next meeting. Register of Interests 2022-23 – this was presented for information and was available for external audit inspection.</p> <p>Resolved that the Board and Committee membership update and Register of Interests for 2022-23 were received and noted by the committee</p>	
1.12	<p>Committee Reports The Chair asked for the Chairs of the following committees for their feedback from their respective committee meetings: albeit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality & Standards – 2 Oct 23 - there had been robust discussion on the KPIs around quality and much had previously been covered under items 1.3, 1.5, and 1.9 • Governance & Search – 3 Oct 23 – covered under items 1.11 and 1.13 <p>Resolved that the QS and GS Committee Reports had been received and noted by the Board</p>	
1.13	<p>Board Self-assessment The KPI for the effectiveness of the Governing Body was measured through the annual board performance self-assessment, which all governors were asked to complete over the summer break. A target of 80% was set for governor satisfaction with the effectiveness of the Board. Overall satisfaction was recorded as 84%, the previous year it was 81.7%. The overall score was, however, again significantly influenced by the inclusion of the responsibility for environmental sustainability which governors were far from satisfied that they had discharged despite the discussion at the away day. The Chair advised that this would be discussed in much further detail at the board performance away day in December 2023.</p> <p>Overall attendance was 85.5%, compared with 90% in 2021-22. Average governor attendance at 101 FE and Sixth Form Colleges in England surveyed was 82.49% for 2021-22 and 82.68% for 2022-23. The Henley College was still above the national average.</p> <p>The Chair advised that the comments had been noted and action would be taken in the coming year.</p> <p>Resolved that Board Self-assessment was received and noted by the Board</p>	

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1.14.	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>The Chair raised the issue of the number of board meetings held in an academic year suggesting that they be reduced to 4 to ensure a more productive use of time. The meeting held in January/February was no longer required as historically it had been used to discuss the reports linked to the College SAR which was now covered by the QS committee in November for December approval by the Board. The Chair reassured the Board that ad hoc or extra ordinary meetings could still be held. The Board agreed the change to four meetings per year with the meeting in January/February to be cancelled.</p> <p>Resolved that the Board agreed that there would now be only four board meetings in an academic year and the meeting in January/February to be cancelled</p> <p>There was no other business.</p>	
1.15	<p>Board Conduct of Meeting</p> <p>The Board members provided overwhelmingly positive feedback for the meeting using HEART values highlighting the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The college had come along way 2. There was good teamwork and enterprise 3. The meetings were respectful, realistic, open and enterprising 4. Accountability was more clearly defined 5. There was clear student voice involved in wider discussion 	
1.16	<p>Items to be taken forward to next board meeting:</p> <p>None</p>	
	<p>Date and Time of Next Meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 December 2023 • 15 April 2024 • 1 July 2024 	
	<p>Close of Meeting</p> <p>The meeting closed at 20.15</p>	
	<p>MINUTES of the meeting held on 10 October July 2023 were agreed and accepted as a true and accurate record held</p>	