

The Henley College Board

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Board held on Monday 7 December 2020 at 18.00 via remote participation

BOARD: Trevor Watkins Emma Barklem Rebecca Chandler-Wilde Satwant Deol Brian Fennelly Lizzie Firth Vince Maltese James Lingard Dr Tim Lincoln Vince Maltese Chris Murray Justin Sutherland Charles Wiggin Alistair Wildman Andrea Wood	Independent Member/Chair Parent governor Independent Member Principal Independent Member Independent Member Independent Member Independent Member Independent Member Independent Member Parent governor Independent Member Independent Member Independent Member	STUDENT GOVERNORS: Abigail Kennedy CLERK: Jacky Gearey SLT BY INVITATION: Eric Burrow Eamonn Egan Kathryn Mogford Ashok Patel Carole Drury	Head of HR Interim Vice Principal (VP) Head of Student Services (HSS) Director of Finance (FD) External Observer - FEC
Agenda Item	Minutes	Action by	
2.1	Opening of Meeting and Welcome The Chair opened the meeting at 18.05 and welcomed the new student governor and parent governor. The Chair also explained that Carole Drury was attending as an external observer in relation to the information sent to the Board concerning recommendations made within the recent FEC report. The Principal advised that Alistair Wildman would be arriving late.		
2.2	Apologies for Absence Apologies had been received from: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Robyn Vitty - ill 2. Andrew Unsworth – ill 3. Roshelle Coppens Chavari 		
2.3	Declaration of Interests There were no declarations of interest not already noted.		
2.4	Minutes of Previous Meeting (i) Minutes of meeting of 21 October 2020 The Board approved the minutes of 21 October 2020 as an accurate record of the meeting to be signed by the Chair. Confidential minutes (i) Minutes of 12 October 2020 (ii) Minutes of 21 October 2020 The Board approved the confidential minutes of both the 12 and 21 October 2020 as an accurate record of the meetings to be signed by the Chair. Resolved that: (i) the Board agreed that the minutes of the 21 October 2020 were an accurate record of the meeting to be signed by the Chair. (ii) the Board agreed that the confidential minutes of both the 12 and 21 October 2020 were an accurate record of the meeting to be signed by the Chair.		
2.5	Matters Arising from the Minutes (unless covered by the agenda)		

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	<p>Item 5.11 - Link governor role – the QS Chair and Vice Chair to undertake a review of the report form and report back at the next QS meeting. The Board mentioned some confusion around the staff survey which the Principal advised would be covered under item 2.14.</p> <p>There were no other matters arising.</p>	
2.6	<p>Committee Reports and minutes The Chair stated that all documents for approval were to be taken as read and reassured the Board that they had all been thoroughly reviewed by their respective committees and were recommended to the Board for approval although if any Board member had any questions, they were encouraged to raise them at the time of the relevant approval.</p> <p>Audit Committee – covering:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Minutes of meeting 9 November 2020 - received and noted 2. Audit Committee Annual Report (Health & Safety Annual Report) for 2019-2020 - approved 3. Approval of External Audit <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Post Audit Management Report 2019/2020 - approved ii. Letter of Representation 2019/2020 - approved and for signature 4. Approval of the following policies: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Health & Safety Policy - approved ii. Health & Safety Statement - approved iii. Risk Management Policy - approved 5. Updated Risk Register - noted 6. Notification of the Chair - Brian Fennelly <p>Resolved that the following were received by the Board:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (i) The Audit minutes of 9 November 2020 (ii) The updated Risk Register (iii) Notification of the Chair of the Audit committee <p>Resolved that the following reports and policies were received and approved by the Board:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (iv) Audit Committee Annual Report (Health & Safety Annual Report) for 2019-2020 (v) Post Audit Management Report 2019/2020 (vi) Letter of Representation 2019/2020 (vii) Health & Safety Policy (viii) Health & Safety Statement (ix) Risk Management Policy <p>Finance & Resources Committee – covering:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approval of Report and Financial Statements 2019/2020 - approved and for signature by the Chair and Principal 2. Annual Report on the use of the College Seal - approved 3. Management Accounts for September 2020 – noted, the FD advised that there is currently a good three month position. 4. Finance Directors Report for December 2020 - noted 5. Notification of the Chair and Vice Chair – Charles Wiggin and Chis Murray (both accountants) <p>Resolved that the following were received and approved by the Board</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Report and Financial Statements 2019/2020 (ii) Annual Report on the use of the College Seal <p>Resolved that the following were received by the Board:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (iii) Management Accounts for September 2020 (iv) Finance Directors Report for December 2020 (v) Notification of the Chair and Vice Chair of the Finance & Resources committee <p>Quality & Standards Committee</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Minutes of 28 September 20 – noted 2. Notification of Chair and Vice Chair - Tim Lincoln and James Lingard <p>Resolved that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (i) the minutes of the QS meeting of 28 September 2020 were received by the Board Governance & Search (ii) Notification of the Chair and Vice Chair of the Quality & Standards committee 	

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	<p>Governance & Search committee:</p> <p>1. Standing Orders -- the following clause has been amended regarding Corporation members with special roles: approved</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Safeguarding and Prevent – this is now classified together, (ii) Removal of information security and health & safety <p>Resolved that the Standing Orders were received and approved by the Board</p>	
2..7	<p>Principal's Report</p> <p>The Principal asked that her report be taken as read but wanted to highlight the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DfE announced that exams will go ahead, and students will receive advanced knowledge of content. • Marketing team won an award • A newly constituted Equality, Diversity and Inclusion group has started with a remit to drive initiatives to improve understanding of these topics across the College and enhance the working environment for staff and students, making the College more representative of its population and to implement schemes. • College was going to go to online working for the last week of the autumn term and first week of the spring term and that the ESFA had been informed. • Started working with external partners e.g. Cisco • Receipt of recent external funding grant/donations from (i) the Henley Trust (to help vulnerable students) and (ii) Ealing Trailfinders (for gym equipment.) <p>Finally, the Principal wanted her thanks minuted for all the work that the staff both teaching and support had done in keeping the college open especially with the challenges of remote learning.</p> <p>Resolved that the Principal's Report was received by the Board.</p>	
2.8	<p>Update on Strategic KPIs</p> <p>Principal advised the Board that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Math and English GCSEs and A 'level tutorials are now being delivered online in order to lessen the number of students gathering from different courses on site. • The majority of the KPIs are on or above the target set with the exception of the attendance rate, which is currently 3% below the 2020/21 target of 88% due to the impact of Covid-19. • Student retention is at 100% against a target of 89% but will drop during the year. • Level 3 year 1 to year 2 retention is at 92%, equal to the target, and 4% above Sixth Form Colleges norm. • Student attendance is 85% against a target of 88% (this is the actual attendance and includes non-attendance due to Covid-19). <p>Board asked how the attendance rated compared with other colleges across the UK, i.e. all colleges had been similarly impacted by Covid and therefore was the lower attendance rate a function of the college itself as this had been highlighted in the FEC report. The VP further advised that current issues are Covid related especially operating within 'bubbles' although the recent English and Maths exams attendance was 98% but agree that the college did need to devise ways to increase student target and reducing trapped time.</p> <p>Charles Wiggin arrived at 18.28.</p> <p>Board appreciated that the problems were not unique to the college but wanted to know what interventions are being put in place and whether the targets are realistic. Board asked whether all other areas were above 88% and VP confirmed that they were above 90%. The Principal re-iterated as in previous meetings that the lower attendance rate in Maths and English GCSE dragged down the overall rate. VP said he would disaggregate the attendance figures for all subjects and advise the Board at the next meeting. Board felt that the overall average was unacceptable. Board Member FE said that this was not exceptional, and this is a generic national issue. Principal said that the SLT was still addressing this.</p> <p>Resolved that:</p> <p>(iii) the Update on Strategic KPIs was received by the Board</p>	

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	<p>(iv) VP to disaggregate the attendance figures for all subjects and present to the next board meeting</p>	
2.9	<p>Update on Away Day - Strategy Plan The Chair explained the planned strategy away day sessions and that it would be in three parts due to Covid restrictions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Session 1 - Board Effectiveness already commenced 4. Session 2 & 3 - separated into 2 hour blocks <p>Principal advised the Board of the aims and the intention to bring in an external speaker to talk about being an outstanding college and that ultimately it is for the governors to oversee and guide rather than implement strategy.</p> <p>A Board Member outlined the proposed process of running the workshops of the two sessions. The breakout into separate workshops using break out rooms and using templates for discussion topics. Principal said she would like to bring in a speaker to talk about what an outstanding college looks like and it was left that this was a good idea but to be done separately to the two sessions due to insufficient time. Principal to advise Board of the proposed date for this presentation. The Principal confirmed that the SLT will provide the strategy/information. Board asked about obtaining the reasons why students who did not come to the college and Principal confirmed that the impression of the college is also being canvassed and that evidence will be provided.</p> <p>Alistair Wildman joined the meeting 18.49.</p> <p>Chair confirmed that a merger will be discussed as an option. Chair briefly explained what had been discussed last year albeit some board members felt that last year's strategy session was not clear and that it was essential for the Board to see what the big questions ahead of the sessions.</p> <p>Resolved that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (i) the update on the strategic plan was received by the Board (ii) Principal to contact external speaker for presentation to the Board prior to strategy sessions. Board to be advised of date once confirmed. 	
2.10	<p>Student Governors' Report The student governor spoke about the transformation to online learning which was felt to be very good and now the return to a physical presence on site, all of which had worked well from the students' perspective.</p> <p>Chair asked if students would rather be in college and this was confirmed. Board asked about the alcohol abuse and why this was chosen. The Student governor advised the board that this was a current issue in the student world especially as this affected behaviour.</p> <p>Board asked if there were student challenges that the governors should be aware of with the response that it was the uncertainty of not knowing what is going to happen.</p> <p>HSS said that the current student body had been really engaged and had certain projects they were focussing on e.g. the environment and EDI. The Principal endorsed this comment saying that they had been very helpful and supportive. In addition, there is now an EDI group at the college to raise awareness. Board asked if there were any problems in this area and HSS said that there were none.</p> <p>Resolved that the Student Governors' Report was received by the Board</p>	
2.11	<p>Safeguarding and Prevent The Chair asked the safeguarding governor for any comments on the Annual Safeguarding Report, he confirmed that he had been through the document with the HSS and it was correct and compliant. The Report was approved by the Board.</p> <p>HSS said that that Student Services Department continues to be incredibly busy as the number of students with, in particular, significant mental health problems is higher this year including an increase in the number of students with social care involvement which was also substantially up compared to last academic year.</p>	

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	<p>Board asked about the mental wellbeing of students due to Covid? HSS reassured the Board about the use of Teams, exams, safeguarding and the significant increase of diagnosed mental health conditions and that these were not necessarily linked to Covid.</p> <p>Board asked about the number of students who came from Slough area as this was a Covid tier 3 risk area and the implications for the college – HSS advised that there were approximately 200-300 students with the Head of HR advising that education was outside of the tier restrictions and students attend educational establishments outside their home areas.</p> <p>The Safeguarding governor asked about the additional support that had been discussed previously to be given to student services – HSS said that the Counsellor’s hours had been increased but that she still had a waiting list in excess of 4 weeks. VP said that increasing the hours of the student services staff in line with student needs had been agreed and that additional workshops are going to be put in to help.</p> <p>Resolved that:</p> <p>(vi) the Safeguarding and Prevent Report was received by the Board</p> <p>(vii) the Annual Safeguarding Report was received and approved by the Board</p>	
2.12	<p>Draft College Self-Assessment Report</p> <p>The VP explained what the SAR was and its format for the new governors namely that the report follows the sections of the current Education Inspection Framework (EIF) and allows judgements to be aligned to the criteria and standards expressed in the EIF, as used by Ofsted. It also outlines the areas for improvement that have emerged from the 2019/20 Self-Assessment Report, that the College should focus on through the 2020/21 Quality Improvement Plan, in order to sustain improvement. The grade of “good” has been provisionally awarded to the following areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Overall Effectiveness Judgement 7. Quality of Education 8. Behaviours and Attitudes 9. Personal Development 10. Leadership and Management <p>The reason that the College came to that judgement was because:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Safety at the college – students confirm that they feel safe 2. Curriculum is relevant to students and external stakeholders – agreed by Ofsted 3. Teaching and learning assessment – students go onto positive destinations with good pastoral support. <p>The VP advised that there were 15 areas for improvement referred to in the Quality Improvement Plan but the Chair said that this was not the meeting to go through each of them but it was essential to improve how to stretch and challenge students.</p> <p>Board referred to sustain improvements to maintain Ofsted rating of good year on year and the journey from good to outstanding and the VP said that this would take time and certainly take more than one year to accomplish with each year generating another set of improvements.</p> <p>There were no further questions, the Chair advised that the SAR was discussed in detail at the recent QS meeting as endorsed by the Chair of QS and this committee recommended the SAR to the Board for approval. The Board so approved.</p> <p>Resolved that the Draft College Self-Assessment Report for 2019-2020 was received and approved by the Board</p>	
2.13	<p>FEC Report</p> <p>The Chair advised the Board that the majority of the recommendations from the previous FEC visit had been met and that the rest of the recommendations are improvements as highlighted in the Quality Improvement Plan and around Strategic Planning. However, he wanted to point out that the nature of the written report received was less positive than the verbal feedback. The Chair then provided the Board with his interpretation of what governors needed to focus on to ensure progress is made before the follow up FEC visit in the Spring term albeit that most actions fell on the SLT and the strategic planning away day sessions and these were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Governance - the governors' role and effectiveness - has been actioned by the FEC by arranging the governance review and it was for that reason that Ms Drury was attending the board meeting as an external observer. 2. Strategic plan - two away day sessions have been planned to review the current strategy, updating as necessary the standalone vs merger issue, how the governors can contribute to 	

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	<p>the drive from Good to Outstanding Ofsted grading at their next visit and quality improvement measures.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Interims in senior roles - action is underway and to be discussed under confidential. 4. Quality improvement plan and curriculum offer – this is monitored by the QS committee in detail. How does the college develop a curriculum to entice new students and their parents and meet industry needs? 5. Staff communications - further progress is needed to develop relations with staff but a number of measures have been implemented. 6. Estates - need for a costed estates plan for further developments. <p>Concern was expressed from the Board about why so many of the recommendations were still ongoing and in particular the live dashboard of KPIs. The FD explained that progress on this item was contingent on new investment in integrated systems which again is being costed as a proposal to F&R committee early in the new year. The other items were not easily capable of being completed quickly. Progress has been made but it is debatable whether more should have been achieved given the Covid led issues which continue to absorb management time. VP said that the college had accepted the FEC recommendations and that the college is working on them and that quality would be ongoing.</p> <p>The some of the Board observed that there seemed to be too much time spent on contesting what was in the report and that now was the time to address what needs to be done and that going forward more emphasis should be placed on the strategy and to obtain advice from external colleges who are outstanding.</p> <p>Chair said that he wanted to ensure that the Board had progressed on the 6 areas mentioned above and would send out a note to the Board on this.</p> <p>Resolved that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (i) the FEC update was received by the Board (ii) Chair to email Board to provide more clarity on the recommendations 	
2.14	<p>HR Update Covid</p> <p>The Head of HR advised the Board that the College has continued to follow all guidelines set by the DfE and Public Health England as well as reporting daily to the DfE on staff and student attendance. The government is keen for colleges and schools to remain open as far as possible. In line with a number of colleges, SLT is considering moving towards all online teaching from the 14 - 18 December, and again in the first week of next term. (4 - 8 January 2021). The Principal had previously advised on this. The potential exceptions will be those courses which require practical lessons or are in the final stages of preparation for examinations in January. Rates have already risen across the college. Chair asked if there was any help required from governors and the Principal advised that currently there was not with Head of HR reassuring the Board that the college infection rate is lower than many colleges. The Chair asked to be kept informed and Head of HR said he would provide via the Clerk who could disseminate the information.</p> <p>Staff Engagement Survey</p> <p>Head of HR advised that this went out to all staff w/c 16 November 2020 using the same questions for a comparator with replies back by 5 December 2020. A full analysis will be available for the Board's information at the meeting in February 2021. Currently the response from staff was 78% up from 56%.</p> <p>Board felt that it was a good response rate and much improved. EDI group is being re-established due to student desire to be set up.</p> <p>All members of the SLT left meeting 19.43 and the Principal.</p> <p>Resolved that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (x) the HR Updated was received by the Board (xi) Head of HR to provide details of the current Covid infection rates to Clerk for onward dissemination to the Board 	
2.16	Any Other Business	



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	The meeting then transferred to the confidential items at 19.36	
2.17	Items to be taken forward to next Board meeting:	
2.18	Date and Time of Next Meetings: 1) 1 February 2021 at 18.00 2) 24 March 2021 at 18.00 3) 28 June 2021 at 18.00	
	Close of Meeting The meeting closed at 20.21	
	MINUTES of the meeting held on 7 December 2020 were agreed and accepted as a true and accurate record and signed by the Chair on	