

BRACKNELL AND WOKINGHAM COLLEGE

Minutes of a Meeting of the Corporation Wednesday 18th March 2009 held at Hayley Road Conference Room from 8.30am – 10.15am

Present:

Rev. N. Parish (Chair)
Mrs. H. Barnett
Mrs. J. Colbourne
Mr. R. Cops
Mr. S. Diegan
Mr. M. Dudson
Mrs. J. Gay
Mrs. D. Hayes
Mrs. E. Hodge
Mrs. J. Hughes
Mr. H O'Keeffe (Principal)
Mrs. L. Klassen-Brown
Mr. R. Knight
Mr. D. Scott
Mr. A. Stevens
Dr. D Stirling

In attendance

Mr. M. Adams (Deputy Principal – Curriculum)
Mr F Perry (Deputy Principal – Resources)
Mr. James Taylor (Director of Quality and Standards)
Mr C. Williams (Clerk)
Mr. M. Williams (Director of Information Services)

Apologies: Miss K. Galvin; Mr. P Wagstaff

Corporation Member Training & Development

Prior to the commencement of the meeting, as part of the Corporation Member Development Programme, Mr Mark Williams, Director of Information Services, gave a presentation on the College's CIX data and information sharing network. He demonstrated the extensive range of information that was held and was being used by departments. Lecturers were placing their notes on the system, which meant that if a lecturer was unavailable, another lecturer could take over his or her class with minimum disruption. He now wished to develop the system to meet Corporation Members' needs. He was asked about confidentiality and stated that the Corporation Members' section would be restricted to Corporation Members, the Management Team and the operating technician. Mr. Williams was thanked for a most interesting and informative presentation.

01/09 – Declaration of Eligibility and Register of Interests

Corporation Members had been sent the appropriate forms and were asked to complete them and return them to the Principal's PA.

02/09 – Membership

It was noted that Mr John Green had resigned as a Corporation Member on grounds of ill-health. The terms of office of Mr Cops, Dr Hardy and Dr Stirling had or were about to finish. Mr Cops and Dr Stirling had indicated that they would be prepared to serve for a further term. Dr Hardy remained very interested in the work of the College and would be joining Corporation Members in the tour of the new building, which would follow-on the meeting, but he had decided not to seek another term.

Mr Richard Knight had contemplated standing down owing to pressure of work but had been persuaded by the Principal to stay on until the end of his term in March 2010.

In view of Mr Green's departure, Mr Simon Diegan had kindly agreed to switch Committees from Resources to Audit.

At the Away-Day on 11th February, Corporation Members had come to the conclusion that the time was appropriate to appoint a parent Corporation Member.

A Search Committee would be held shortly to consider outstanding applications, including the Wokingham Borough Council nominee, Dr Jorgensen.

A membership list of the Corporation was included in the agenda. Including a parent Corporation Member, the present membership stood at 19.

- Resolved:**
- (1) That the Clerk write to Mr John Green and Dr Nick Hardy thanking them for their outstanding service.
 - (2) That Mr Robin Cops and Dr David Stirling be appointed to serve for a further term of 4 years.
 - (3) That the Corporation reserve a place for a parent Corporation Member and set in hand the machinery to make such an appointment.
 - (4) That Mr Diegan's switch of committees be noted.

03/09 - Declarations of Interest

No new declarations of interest were declared

04/09 – Minutes of Corporation Meeting held on 10th December 2008

The Minutes of the previous meeting of the Corporation were approved and signed by the Chair.

05/09 – Official Opening of New Building

The invitation to HM the Queen to officially open the new building in 2010 was now with her Private Secretary and a decision would be received in due course via the Lord Lieutenant of the Royal County, the Hon Mrs Bayliss JP.

06/09 – Minutes of Academic Board – 9th March 2009

The Minutes of the Academic Board were presented by the Principal. He said there were no matters he wished to report as the agenda at the Academic Board broadly covered the same matters as were considered by the Curriculum & Quality Committee.

Resolved: That the Minutes of the Academic Board be received.

07/09 – Minutes of the Audit Committee held on 24th February 2009

The Minutes were presented by Mr. Cops in the absence of Mr Wagstaff.

He drew attention to Minute 5/09 (Internal Audit Assignment Report). The College was not meeting three of its four financial objectives. This was largely due to the impact of the new building but was clearly an area, which the Corporation would have to keep under close scrutiny.

The Minute also referred to the interesting position over VAT. There was a possibility that the College would be able to reclaim VAT on the new College building, though it seemed unlikely that the LSC or its successor would not want to reclaim most of it.

Resolved: That the minutes of the Audit Committee be received.

08/09 – Minutes of Curriculum and Quality Committee – 25th February 2009

The Minutes were presented by Dr. Stirling. He said that employers' engagement (Minute 03/09 (45/08)) was a major issue and Colleges were proposing to form a Company to tackle it. After initial pump-priming, the Company would be self-funded.

An application for increased funding for an estimated additional 149 learners had been discussed (Minute 04/09).

The Committee has also considered Performance Indicators (Minute 08/09). It showed that the College was consistently performing well above average. Even in areas where no College does well, this College still performs better than the rest.

Resolved; That the Minutes of the Curriculum and Quality Committee be received.

09/09 – Minutes of Resources Committee – 3rd March 2009

The Minutes were presented by Mr. Dudson.

Under Budget Monitoring (Minute 04/09), the Committee had considered the over all financial position of the College. The College was at present £1m down on revenue. Three factors were at play. The first was the financing of the new College building, where some of the reduction was due to phased payments of grant. Secondly there were the effects of the recession estimated at around £100K and thirdly there were deficits in some areas. Overall some £150K loss of income was causing the College real problems.

The Committee had also considered the substantial increase in full-time applications.

Resolved: That the Minutes of the Resources Committee be received.

10/09 – College Course Fees 2009/2010

The Principal presented a schedule of suggested course fees for 2009/2010.

Resolved: That the Schedule of suggested course fees for 2009/2010 be approved.

11/09 – Social Event

The Principal suggested that this year's social event be delayed until September, enabling it to be held in the new building. This was agreed.

12/09 – Public Art

The Principal stated a group had been set up, including himself, Mrs Barnett, the College Marketing Officer and a consultant Ms Jeni Walwin to get the project underway. Ms Nicky Hurst had been appointed as the artist and would be submitting her proposal to the Group on 26 March, following which it would be subject to wider consultation with the Corporation and staff and students.

It was proposed to affix the work to the glass panel along the front of the building, enabling it to be seen from both inside and outside the building.

For Information

13/09 – Student Members' Update

The Report on Student's Union activities was given by Mrs Hodge as Miss Galvin was unwell. The Christmas party had raised £200 and Red Nose day had also been very successful, raising £450. Muscular Dystrophy, Naomi House and the Thames Valley Air Ambulance had benefited. A lunchtime quiz was proving popular and a group was going to New York.

Regarding mature students, there had been a potential problem over closing hours at Wick Hill but that had now been resolved. The main problem arose from the fact that both Reading University and Royal Holloway were closing their social work courses. The College tutors had been brilliant at this very difficult time and it now looked as though the College social work students could transfer to Bucks University, though travelling to High Wycombe would be difficult for students with young children.

For Information

14/09 – Staff Liaison Committee

Mrs Gay presented a Report to the Corporation from the Staff Liaison Committee, which had been formed on 27th March 2007. The Committee was meeting twice a term and Corporation Members were welcome to attend. Since it commenced meeting 89 action points had been agreed, of which 87% had since been settled.

For Information

15/09 – Corporation Attendance

The Clerk presented a Report. The ‘alternate Corporation Member’ system was working well, thanks to Mr Stevens and Dr Stirling, who between them had attended an extra 5 meetings. As a result attendance was well above the 70% target set by the Corporation and in the case of several committees had been 100%. This was a good performance verging on outstanding.

Noted

16/09 - Budget Monitoring Report to January 2009

The Deputy Principal (Resources) said that he had been asked by the Chair of Resources to expand on the key issues outlined in the Report.

The first was the College new build. It had always been known that performance against financial objectives would decline during the course of the project and that the College would then have to get back in the black as quickly as possible after completion. That was still the fundamental goal. In fact the cash flow position had been better than anticipated, which was helpful.

Secondly the funding system had been subject to further changes and not all the details had been worked out. The College was now funded from different funding streams and there was no virement between them. So if the College overspent on one heading and underspent on another, if different funding streams were involved, the overspending could not be set off against the underspending. This made life difficult.

Thirdly there was the effect of the recession. The College were receiving mixed messages. The College were losing income in some areas but demand for courses was increasing elsewhere. Hopefully at the end of the year there would be no significant variations from budget.

For Information

17/09 – Principal’s Report

The Principal stated that the LSC had run short of capital funds. Church Road was not affected but many other Colleges had had their projects frozen at the eleventh hour.

There was a feeling that the LSC had mis-managed the situation, encouraging Colleges to proceed with preparatory work on their projects at great expense, when they must have known problems were looming. It was clear that money would no longer be available for the Wokingham project from the LSC.

Applications to the College were now hugely up, as much as 60% compared to this time last year. – over 900 as compared to 550 a year ago. The College had had a good open day, resulting in another 100 applications.

There were staffing implications. On one site there would not need to be as many non-teaching staff as at present. The reduction would be achieved by natural wastage. With a large increase in students, there would need to be additional teaching staff but the increase would be at a lower rate than the increase in the numbers of students, thereby increasing class sizes to the sector norm without losing quality of teaching.

He had met Mr Andrew Taylor, the Managing Director of First Bus to argue the case for bus pass concessions for college students. He was still waiting for a reply. Slough Borough was helping students, and he hoped that Bracknell Forest Borough might be prepared to assist. Mrs Hayes agreed to help and would speak to the relevant Borough officer.

Under the Machinery of Government 14-19 year olds would be funded in future by LA's with a lead LA being involved, when College catchment areas spanned several local authority areas. It seemed very bureaucratic. Moreover, the sub-regional groups were not up and running and in any event had minimal college representation. However, he had been invited to a dinner by the Unitaries' Directors of Children's Services.

The Principal would also attend a parliamentary dinner with the county's MPs. He would raise funding issues, such as the fact that the College were still under-funded in comparison with schools.

Noted

18/09 – Date of next meeting

Wednesday 8th July 2009 at 8.30 am (venue to be confirmed).

CW/JHOK/BPW260309..