

PETER SYMONDS COLLEGE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

HELD ON MONDAY 12 OCTOBER 2020 at 3.00 PM via VIDEO CONFERENCE

Present:	Tim Rogerson (Chairman)	Sara Russell (Principal)
	Harmesh Bhambra	Amanda Storey
	Mehmet Colakaglo	Alan Sydney
	Chris Edwards	Rob Sykes
	Lynne Evans	Tina Thorne
	Estella Hurlock	Joanna Townsend
	Roger Huxstep	Richard Watney
	Barry Neaves	Michael Wesley
	Anthea Palmer	David Williams
	Graham Rockett	

In Attendance:	Dave Cartwright	(vice Principal)
	Nick Allen	(Deputy Principal Quality)
	Lucy Edevane	(Deputy Principal Welfare and Progression)
	Irfan Khan	(Finance Director)
	Hilary Walsh	(Clerk)

Item		Action
1.	Apologies - None.	
1.1	TR welcomed governors to the first Board meeting of the academic year. He reported that item 5 would be brought forward as the first item in the meeting and item 9 at the end of the meeting to accommodate the Student governors who would not attend for these items due to their confidential nature.	
5.	Presentation by Nick Allen Assistant Principal (Quality) on headline results for 2019/20 Due to the nature of this discussion, it is recorded in a separate confidential minute	
2.	Governor Appointment	
2.1	The Board approved the reappointment of Chris Edwards as a governor for another year to be effective from 12th October 2020. All in favour. The Search committee had recommended his appointment at its meeting on 5 th October 2020 (draft minutes of 5.10.20 refers, item 6.4).	
2.2	The Board ratified the appointment of Mehmet Colakaglo as a Student Governor for a term of one year to be effective from 12th October 2020. All in favour.	

3.	<p>Minutes of the meeting held on 29th June 2020 These were accepted as a correct record.</p>	
4.	<p>Matters arising</p> <p>4.1 Point 9.1 – LKE reported that the presentation on Prevent is rescheduled for the December Board meeting.</p> <p>4.2 Points 11.8 and 11.9 - LKE and AS confirmed that the amendments to the College Charter had been made and issued.</p> <p>4.3 Point 17 – TR reported that due to the government’s ‘rule of six’ guideline and lack of available space at the College, the Board and committee meetings continue for the time being to be virtual. He intends to attend the College in the near future in order to assure the Board that the College is safely fully operational.</p>	
6.	<p>Principal’s matters <i>Paper circulated: Principal’s matters 28th September 2020</i></p> <p>6.1 SR referred to her paper which covered enrolment 2020, Covid-19 Autumn Term arrangements, Autumn re-sit exams, Ofsted inspections, Centre Assessed grades and National Audit Office Report and asked if the Board had any questions.</p> <p>6.2 SR reported an update to her report that the DfE has now announced that exams are to take place next summer as reported more fully by NA under item 5.</p> <p>6.3 Questions from the Board</p> <p>6.3.1 The Board asked how many positive Covid cases there are among the student body. SR reported that there are currently 6 reported cases and the Board agreed this was very pleasing regarding the size of the student body.</p> <p>6.3.2 SR reported that she is in regular contact with Public Health England regarding the cases and they are happy with the arrangements in place at the College to mitigate the spread of the virus. The Board noted that the monitoring and tracking of each reported case is very time consuming process.</p> <p>6.3.3 SR explained to the Student Governor EH how the track and tracing at College worked in practice and reassured her of its effectiveness.</p> <p>6.3.4 The Board asked how the teaching of students self-isolating is managed. SR reported students have received information on how to access online teaching. In addition, over summer the College has invested both time and support to provide virtual teaching to include an alert to staff indicating which students are self-isolating and require virtual learning.</p> <p>6.3.5 The Board referred to the section in the report relating to Ofsted Inspections and asked if that would apply to the College given the full</p>	

	inspection in January. SR reported that Ofsted could make an interim visit, which is the modified type of inspection commenced in September in response to Covid-19.	
6.3.6	The Board referred to the enrolment figures for 2020. Whilst the increase in student numbers is welcomed, bearing in mind the earlier concerns of the effect of Covid on enrolment, it does have implications particularly on accommodation and facilities particularly as there is no prospect of funding for expansion of the estate.	
6.3.7	SR confirmed that the College is at capacity with no ability to grow further. DC reported that a way to control numbers for next year is to ensure that the applications are not greater than the number based on the past three-year conversion rates. As a result, there may be a need to offer a different message to students when they come for interview.	
6.3.8	DC reported that there was an unusual 3% hike in the conversion rate this year. However, there is sufficient accommodation to meet the needs at present although staging the Autumn resits has proved problematic.	
6.3.9	The Board was reminded that it had considered the impact of the increase in numbers 2-3 years ago when the curriculum offer was reduced from 4 to 3 A levels and at that time it had noted the change impacted positively on the available accommodation.	
6.3.10	The Board enquired why Ofqual are against the introduction of optionality in relation to next year's exams, which could be a sensible way forward bearing in mind the likely unplanned absences due to the rise in Covid-19 cases.	
6.3.11	NA reported that optionality has the effect of narrowing the curriculum and introduces the issue of 'skilled choosers' which adversely impacts some students. In addition, optionality makes the awarding scheme more difficult.	
6.3.12	The Board also asked if SR had received any positive response from Steve Brine in relation to the College being a high risk for Covid-19. SR reported that he had introduced her to the Director of the local Public Health England.	
7.	Report from P&R committee Papers circulated: <i>Draft Minutes of meeting 23rd September; Finance report– position for year ended 31st July 2020; Pension Consultations; ESFA returns, Update on 20/21 & 21/22 Budgets, Insurance Update, Estates Projects update and outcome of CIF bids and future developments and any future actions to be taken in the light of recent trespass by Travellers on sports field, Copy of the latest Coronavirus /Covid 19 Risk Assessment for the Period from September 2020.</i>	
7.1.	AJS referred to the draft minutes and confirmed that the main items discussed by the committee were Principal's matters referred to at item 6	

	and the financial report. AJS then invited IK to present his finance report to the Board.	
7.2	Year end 2019-20 - IK reported that Table 1 of his report is a summary of the year end position which shows a healthy surplus before adjustments for the LGPS. Table 2 is a comparison of 2019/20 LGPS liability compared with other years and confirms the substantial increase this year due mainly to a sharp reduction in the discount rate applied.	
7.2.1	The Board noted that the external audit of the financial accounts is well underway. All the deliverables have been uploaded to RSM's secure portal and they are to commence testing this week.	
7.2.2	IK highlighted that the impact of the McCloud case on LGPS and teachers' pension has been the subject of two consultations and the outcome is awaited. However, it is very likely that there will be an additional cost to the College which will also be backdated.	
7.2.3	The ESFA have introduced a new cashflow template which is annex 2 of the report. This is in line with the ESFAs drive to improve information to governors on the cash position of their respective college.	
7.3	Update to 20/21 and 21/22 budgets – IK reported there are no changes to the budget for 20/21 at this stage. The budget for 21/22 will be updated to reflect the better than anticipated enrolment.	
7.4	Insurance – IK reminded the Board that the College is entering the plus 2-year period from August 2020. The current insurers offered a new cost effective 3 plus 2 years deal instead of exercising the plus 2-year extension. Given the changing and increasing costs in 2021 onwards due to Covid, the College have taken up the new deal along with a number of other colleges in the Wessex group.	
7.5	Estates –	
7.5.1	AHED roof repair works and conservatory at College Centre - Both projects have been completed on time and within the approved budgets. A retention of £5732 will be retained for 12 months in case of any issues.	
7.5.2	Outcome of CIF bids – IK reported the outcome was disappointing. The paper outlines the process and relevant criteria. Table 5 sets out the College's score for both sets of work - a total of 51 against a threshold of 73. The feedback from the ESFA was also disappointing but was shared with the consultants Chawtonhill and an appeal has been lodged although IK considers there is little chance of it succeeding.	
7.5.3	Other summer projects – these are outlined in the report and noted by the Board	
7.5.4	Planned Preventative Maintenance (PPM) Plan – IK reported that he is in the process of developing a PPM which This will provide a long-term maintenance plan with supporting evidence that will both inform the budget and proactive planning.	

7.5.5	Trespass by Travellers on the outer field – the Board noted the report on this incident over the summer. The trespassers were removed after four days. IK has reviewed security arrangements with the insurers. As a result of the review additional measures are to be put in place as detailed in the report.	
7.6	Questions from the Board	
7.6.1	The Board expressed that it was very impressed with the yearend figures as the expectation was a break-even position. Thanks, were expressed to all involved in the achievement particularly with the added complications of Covid.	
7.6.2	The point was raised that as the College is incurring a substantial non-cash deficit (LGPS fund) whether this will this eventually impact on a significant cash surplus. IK reported that the College’s contribution is only payable if the College becomes insolvent. It was also pointed out that the reference to the LGPS deficit in the accounts is a paper exercise and it should be remembered there is a small chance that it could go down in future.	
7.6.3	IK reported that the greater concern is the College’s contribution rate to the LGPS as there is no guarantee that the contribution rate will be fixed triennially as present. IK will know more in November when he attends the Annual Employers meeting with the LGPs actuaries.	
7.6.4	The Board congratulated IK for the tight budget monitoring of the two estate projects that had been the subject of the CIF bid. The Board asked IK if the College had been happy with the work carried out by the consultants with regard to the bid. IK reminded the Board that the consultants had been appointed late in the process and whilst they had done a good job the College would instruct different consultants in any future bid. The new Planned Preventative Maintenance (PPM) Plan referred to above should result in the recording of better evidence to support any future CIF bids and therefore strengthen such bid.	
7.6.5	The Board referred to the boarding and catering contributions to income referred to in the report and whether the College considers that the income from catering is to improve and if not are there steps in place to reduce costs.	
7.6.6	IK reported that as the College started this term on a reduced timetable Catering income was less than expected. However, IK had factored this into the stress testing of the 20/21 budget produced in the June Board papers. The income from catering is improving and the plan is to erect another marque in front of PWC and to improve/ refurbish Varley café. Both projects should increase income. IK assured the Board that costs of catering are tightly controlled.	
7.7	AJS then referred to the remainder of P&R’s business. The ESFA confirmed that due to Covid-19 the date for submitting the annual accounts is extended to 31 st January 2021. However, as good progress is being made with regard to the external audit IK is still working to a deadline of 31 st December.	

<p>7.8</p> <p>7.9</p> <p>7.10</p> <p>7.11</p> <p>7.12</p> <p>7.13</p> <p>7.14</p> <p>7.15</p>	<p>The Board noted the Coronavirus/ Covid 19 Risk Assessment as a key document for governors as it confirms that day to day risks are assessed and the document is updated accordingly.</p> <p>AJS reported that the committee had received the annual Data Protection report from NA as Data Protection Officer. The report covered subject access requests, CCTV access requests, data protection training over the past 3 years and Freedom of information requests. The latter were mainly commercial enquiries.</p> <p>It also covers potential breaches and the Board noted that whilst none were sufficient to be reported to the Information Commissioners Office, they were brought to the attention of staff and advised of steps to prevent similar breaches happening again.</p> <p>The committee recommends that the amendments to the Data Protection Policy be approved by the Board. The amendments are minor and relate to the fact that the DPA 2018 is now in force.</p> <p>s17 of the Policy states that governors receive DPA training as part of their induction. It was agreed that NA and the Clerk will consider the best way to provide such training.</p> <p>It was noted that the key risk for governors regarding GDPR is UCAS statements of students attending practise Oxbridge interviews.</p> <p>Resolved: the Board approved the amendments to the Data Protection Policy as per the copy circulated with the agenda. All in favour.</p> <p>The committee also received the HSCP audit to which LKE will refer in agenda item 9.</p>	<p>NA/Clerk</p>
<p>8.</p> <p>8.1</p> <p>8.2</p>	<p>Risk Register - Papers circulated: copy of the minutes of the Risk Management Group meeting on 4th September and changes to section 4 of the Risk Register.</p> <p>DC reported that the Risk Management Group had reviewed section 4 of the Risk Register relating to Curriculum giving rise to few amendments as indicated on the copy circulated. However, most of the meeting had been dedicated to a discussion on steps taken to mitigate the risks arising from Coronavirus/ Covid 19 (classrooms, site and communication with parents/guardians).</p> <p>DC referred to the Coronavirus/ Covid 19 Risk Assessment referred to under item 7 and emphasised it is a living document to reflect changes in the College environment as they happen. He reported that both individual subject and support departments carry out individual risk assessments specific to their operation e.g. subjects such as Product design where equipment is shared.</p>	

<p>10.</p> <p>10.1</p> <p>10.2</p> <p>10.3</p> <p>10.4</p> <p>10.5</p> <p>10.6</p> <p>10.7</p>	<p>Update on Curriculum change</p> <p>DC reported that the recruitment numbers this year are very healthy and as reported by SR, the College is 170 above target which is an increase of 3% in the conversion rate.</p> <p>The vast majority of subjects have recruited very well including the relatively new subjects such as Criminology (20 groups over 2 years) and Medical Science and BTEC Law. However, numbers are down in Modern Foreign Languages except for French which remained the same as in previous years. This is disappointing as MFL are traditionally high performing subjects and therefore there will be some targeted marketing.</p> <p>DC reported that 16 have enrolled for the T level in Education & Childcare at AHED. All the BTEC courses are now on new specifications which require external assessment.</p> <p>The Board noted the Covid-19 adaptations to teaching and learning including a change to the timetable from 4 -5 timetable blocks to 3. This serves to reduce the number on site but maintaining 4-hour contact time per week per subject via 2, 2-hour sessions. DC reported that as the amount of contact time is less, staff stress to students the importance of them engaging in self-study.</p> <p>The College has introduced Google classroom as the main online teaching platform which provides a consistent strategic approach across the College. Staff have received appropriate training as have students as part of induction.</p> <p>Hygiene practices have been introduced to include hand sanitising, wiping down desks after a lesson, front facing desks and teachers keeping a 2m distance and if a one to one teaching staff wear a visor.</p> <p>Where staff are self-isolating but well then they deliver a lesson by live streaming and where a student or students are self-isolating they join the lesson by live streaming.</p>	
<p>11.</p> <p>11.1</p> <p>11.2</p>	<p>Report from the Audit committee</p> <p><i>Paper circulated: draft Minutes of the meeting 7th September, draft Regularity SAR audit 19/20 and Annex A and draft Internal Audit Plan 2020/21</i></p> <p>BN referred to the draft minutes of the meeting 7 September. The committee had raised the issue of the optimum time to retender for the external audit and agreed that it should be November 2021.</p> <p>The Internal Audit plan for 19/20 has been carried forward to this academic year. The committee sought reassurance from the internal auditor, Mazars, that the plan was still appropriate given that there had been no internal audit last year. Mazars confirmed that they consider it appropriate and</p>	

	<p>some of the risk issues arising from Covid-19 could form the basis of the audit in the areas planned.</p>	
11.3	<p>The committee had once again voiced its concern to Mazars that the Head of Internal Audit had not attended a meeting despite previous requests.</p>	
11.4	<p>The committee had considered the Regulatory audit SAR for 19/20 together with Annex A, which had been added this year due and relates to the impact of Covid-19. The Clerk explained that the areas highlighted in green are the new questions added to the template this year. In addition, the responses in blue are the suggested actions for the College arising from the self-assessment. The Audit committee recommends the draft circulated.</p>	
11.5	<p>Due to the absence of internal audit in 19/20, the committee considered the FMCE as part of the evidence to the committee of the annual assurance on the adequacy and effectiveness of the College's internal control. Further, work in this regard is to be undertaken and the Clerk assured the committee and the Board that this will be done in time for the Audit committee to provide its annual report to the Board.</p>	
11.6	<p>Resolved: the Board approved the internal audit plan for 2020/21 as per the copy circulated with the agenda to this meeting. All in favour.</p>	
11.7	<p>Resolved: the Board approved the Regularity Self-assessment questionnaire and Annex A as per the draft circulated but subject to the further amendments referred to above and once amended for SR and the Chairman of Governors to sign.</p>	
12.	<p>Report from the Search & Governance committee <i>Papers circulated: Draft minutes of the meeting dated 5th October 2020.</i></p>	
12.1	<p>TT referred to the draft minutes of the meeting 5th October and the main item of business was the review of how best to reduce the current pressure of workload of SMT and members of staff who report to the governors.</p>	
12.2	<p>The Clerk had produced details of the annual business of governance outlining essential statutory reporting and those items that could be deferred. The committee agreed that the way forward would be to review governance business term by term and to allow shorter written reporting or verbal reports.</p>	
12.3	<p>The committee had also considered the future of some committees to see if their business could be successfully merged with other committees which would again reduce workload for SMT and relevant staff. To this end the committee recommends that both the Personnel and Estates committees be disbanded and merge with Remuneration and P&R respectively. In this way the important business of these meetings is not lost but acts to reduce SMT and staff workload.</p>	

<p>12.4</p> <p>12.5</p> <p>12.6</p> <p>12.7</p> <p>12.8</p> <p>12.9</p> <p>12.10</p>	<p>The suggestion has a knock-on effect on membership of the committees and in particular P&R. However, it is hoped that it will free up time for governors to become Link governors or take part in College activities both of which will serve to improve an understanding of how the College operates.</p> <p>LE reported that as Chair of the Estates committee she supported the proposed merger of Estates with P&R and any steps to reduce work pressure during the current difficult period is to encouraged. However, it would be prudent to review the success of the proposed changes after an appropriate period of say 12 months. The Board agreed that this was sensible.</p> <p>AS, in his capacity as Chairman of the Trustees, voiced his unease about the suggestion that SR be the sole Trustee representative on the proposed restructured P&R. This was supported by RH. The Clerk reported that this issue is noted and will be considered by the Search & Governance committee when it reviews membership and the final model of the revised committees at its next meeting in January.</p> <p>Resolved: the Board approved in principal the proposed merging of the business of the Personnel committee with the Remuneration committee and the business of the Estates committee with the Policy & Resources committee and for the Search & Governance committee to finalise the model and membership at its next meeting. The new model once agreed to be reviewed after 12 months. All in favour.</p> <p>TT confirmed that the Clerk had presented her report on governor attendance over the past 12 months and this remained good with no issues.</p> <p>The Clerk is to investigate the feasibility of e-governance being delivered by Google in line with College strategy for a single online platform and will report back to the Search & Governance committee.</p> <p>The committee also considered succession planning and CE has kindly agreed to serve another year until his successor can be found. A skills audit is to be carried out at the end of the year to help inform the profile of governors to replace CE and TR.</p> <p><i>MG and EH then left the meeting.</i></p>	<p>Clerk</p>
<p>9.</p> <p>9.1.2</p> <p>9.1.2</p>	<p>Annual Safeguarding update <i>Papers circulated: Draft Safeguarding policy and copy of HCSP audit</i></p> <p>LKE reminded the Board of the membership of the Safeguarding team and it was noted that the new Head of Boarding has been added.</p> <p>The Board noted that LKE had provided Safeguarding updates to all staff and this included new procedures introduced to deal with safeguarding during Covid-19 and in particular issue relating to GDPR.</p>	

9.1.3	LKE outlined the major impact of Covid -19 with regard to safeguarding issues namely a quite profound impact on mental health issues (MH) as well as domestic abuse, financial hardship and concerns relating to the amount of time online.	
9.1.4	LKE reported on the updated advice in the KCSIE (Keeping Children Safe in Education) and Child Criminal Exploitation is now detailed in the guidance and may appear very similar to other forms of exploitation in that there is coercion, manipulation or deceit of a child into criminal activity.	
9.1.5	In addition, Mental Health has been added to the guidance which is long overdue. This does not affect the College's current practice in this area which is well versed in supporting students with MH issues but serves as a reminder that MH issues can be as sign of neglect or abuse, current or historic.	
9.1.6	Students with a social worker are now identified as a vulnerable group. This reflects the outcome of a six-year review by the DfE regarding the achievements of this group of students which, unsurprisingly, confirmed they have lower achievement rates compared to their peers regardless if they are at home or in social care. The review has resulted in a set of objectives to increase the visibility of this group and to raise their aspirations. This in turn impacts on the College's response to these objectives and includes increased support and encouragement and reporting to HCC if they are absent for 5 or more consecutive days.	
9.1.7	LKE then updated the Board on Prevent and reported on the work carried out in this regard - Prevent has been added to the Risk Register, review of tutorial programme material with the new Head of the Tutorial Programme and online updates from the Regional Manager to the Wessex support Managers' Group.	
9.1.8	In addition, an update on Prevent was part of the all staff training in September and training for governors will be provided at the next Board meeting.	
9.1.9	The Board noted that Black Lives Matter (BLM) continues to be on the agenda and includes both education and promoting community cohesion and celebrating diversity. LKE reported that the recent talk from Don John on 'A Black History of Southampton' had been well received by both students and staff.	
9.1.10	LKE reminded the Board that it is mandatory for all governors to read the updated KCSIE.	All
9.1.11	In addition, LKE flagged up the other documents and policies relating to safeguarding which all staff working with children should read.	
9.1.12	Finally, LKE reminded the Board of its role in safeguarding. LKE is to send to the Clerk the slides to her presentation to circulate to all governors to	LKE/

	remind them of their role together with a copy of KCSIE. LKE invited governors to contact her direct if they have any queries arising from the presentation or the updated KCSIE.	Clerk
9.1.13	The Board asked how support for students with MH issues is currently carried out and whether the Covid restrictions on social distancing had had an adverse impact. LKE reported that both the Hub and Counselling had adapted to allow face to face meetings although the Hub has adopted an appointment system to minimise drop-ins. Both the Hub and the Counsellors are very busy.	
9.1.14	The Board enquired if the Hub has sufficient resources. LKE responded by saying that she is keen to review the resource needs of the whole pastoral resource including HoFs and Study Support. SR reported that SMT are to meet to discuss the one item agenda looking at resources across the College to ensure they are not only the correct resource but they are at the right level.	
9.2	Safeguarding Policy – LKE reported that most of the updates are in appendix 1 and reflect the updates to KCSIE (Child Exploitation, County Lines, Domestic abuse) together with reference to the impact of Homelessness as a child protection issue and that a MH issue can also be a safeguarding issue.	
9.2.1	LKE highlighted that the most significant change to the Policy was at Page 12 relating to Prevent. The changes are by way of update and in line with practice.	
9.2.2	Further updates are in appendix 2 a separate section regarding allegations against support staff and adding volunteers and supply staff to the section relating to allegations against staff.	
9.2.3	LKE noted and amended several typing errors raised by the Board.	
9.2.4	Resolved: the Board approved the Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Young Adults Policy subject to minor amendments set out above. All in favour.	
9.3.1	LKE referred to the HSCP annual audit and reminded the Board that it is updated every year and the improvement plan is a helpful development tool.	
9.3.2	She reminded the committee that the audit relates to the previous academic year 2019/20 and then referred the committee to the required actions highlighted in blue which are summarised in the improvement plan at P16. Several of the actions are carried forward as they did not take place due to Covid-19.	
9.3.3	Resolved: the Board approved the HSCP audit 2019/20 and its improvement plan	

9.3.4	The minute of the discussion on the annual Child Protection report is in a separate confidential minute'	
13.	<p>Any other business</p> <p>The Clerk reported that the Oxbridge coordinator seeks volunteers to assist with the Oxbridge practice interviews which are to be conducted via video link this year. Students value this opportunity and governors are given help with suggested questions. The Clerk will send another reminder to all governors confirming the dates namely week beginning 16th and 23rd November.</p>	Clerk
14.	<p>Date of next meeting – Monday 14th December at 3 pm</p> <p>There being no other business the meeting ended at 5.50 pm</p> <p>..... Date.....</p> <p>Timothy Rogerson Chairman</p>	