PETER SYMONDS COLLEGE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS HELD ON MONDAY 11 MAY 2020 at 2:30PM via VIDEO CONFERENCE

Present:	Tim Rogerson (Chairma	an)	Sara Russell (Principal)
	Harmesh Bhambra		Amanda Storey
	Chris Edwards		Alan Sydney
	Lynne Evans		Rob Sykes
	Barry Neaves		Tina Thorne
	Anthea Palmer		Joanna Townsend
	Graham Rockett		Michael Wesley
			David Williams
In Attendance:	Nick Allen	(Deputy Princip	oal Quality)
	Lucy Edevane	(Deputy Princip	al Welfare and Progression)
	Irfan Khan	(Finance Directo	or)
	Hilary Walsh	(Clerk)	
	Debbie Mahoney	(for item 2 only	/)
	Alex Day	(for item 10 on	ly)

ltem		Action
1.	Apologies - Apologies received from Dave Cartwright, Roger Huxstep and Estella Hurlock.	
1.1	TR welcomed everyone to the first Board video conference meeting during the closure of the College due to Covid-19. He expressed thanks to SMT on behalf of the Board and congratulated them for managing the College over the past 6 – 8 weeks during this unprecedented time.	
2.	Presentation from Debbie Mahoney (Head of Careers)	
2.1	DM first highlighted the key element of the department's work with students which covers 1:1 career information, advice and guidance, lead, manage and support the UCAS process, manage and update careers resources, organise and deliver large career day events and research, manage and advertise job vacancies.	
2.2	Over 2000 students receive 1:1 career guidance each year of which the majority are self- referrals but some are referred from teachers or tutors. In addition, the department ensures a substantial number of UCAS forms are lodged in time – last year 1757. Careers Day and Progression Fair are large one day events each year which have proved very successful. In addition,	

	the department hosts a Gap year event, information evenings for parents and organises visiting speakers for lunch time talks and the Symonds lecture programme.	
2.3	DfE Careers Strategy and the Gatsby benchmarking – the Board noted that the DfE in 2017 published the Government's Career Strategy. This sets out a long-term plan for all young people to make good career choices and help student progression. The strategy encourages colleges to structure their guidance around the Gatsby Benchmarks to ensure not only quality of advice but also to meet the requirements of its funding agreement. The benchmarks should be in place by 2020.	
2.3.1	DM reported that the department already complied with several of the statutory requirements of the Careers Strategy i.e. a named Careers Lead whose details appear on the college website together with prescribed information on its career programme, a link governor in place (TT) and independent careers guidance to learners.	
2.3.2	There are 8 benchmarks and there is an online tool to check whether they have been met. To date, the department has achieved 5 out of the 8 benchmarks. DM then reported on the array of activities that the department undertakes to meet the benchmarks. This includes advertising to students the extent of the careers programme and how to access it via the tutorial and Symonds programme and also working with teaching staff to ensure the careers programme is embedded throughout the College.	
2.3.3	DM reported that there are action plans to ensure they meet the 3 outstanding benchmarks which mainly relate to workplace experience. This is a mammoth task as each student needs to achieve some work experience. The department is looking at ways to provide this other than in the workforce e.g. volunteering and virtual experience. The web services team are working in conjunction with Careers on a system to properly record students' work experience.	
2.3.4	LKE assured the Board that the action plans in place to address the outstanding benchmarks are excellent and Careers are working very hard and are currently in a very good place to meet them. She thanked DM and her team for all their hard work.	
2.3.5	SR reported that there is no expectation from the DfE that colleges would be in a position to meet all the benchmarks from the outset. They are a very demanding set of standards and the College is in a very strong position compared to others in the sector.	
2.4	Investors in Careers award – DM reported that the department wishes to apply for reaccreditation this year and will be seeking Board approval in support. The department has held this award since 2008. The Board noted that the Careers department is considered to be excellent in the sector and is referred to as a flagship of excellence in a recent Careers Enterprise literature.	

2.5	The students in a recent survey confirmed that the Careers department is easy to access, is welcoming and a useful resource. This reflects the excellent calibre of the staff in the department who are highly experienced and qualified.	
2.6	There were no questions and TR thanked DM for her very informative presentation. <i>DM left the meeting.</i>	
2.7	TT then presented her report on Careers which had been circulated to the Board. She acknowledged Careers as a very professional team who are well ahead of the game and in whom she has every confidence will meet the outstanding Gatsby benchmarks.	
2.8	TT's report confirms the work of the department outlined by DM and confirms that TT as link governor has participated in relevant webinar training.	
2.9	TT referred to the two recommendations to be made by the Board. The first relates to the Careers Strategy and that the Board note the Careers Programme on the College website and to this end TT encouraged all governors to access this.	
2.10	The second requests the Board to approve the work (e-portfolio) by Careers to retain the Investors in Careers accreditation.	
2.11	Resolved: the Board noted the Careers Programme on the College website.	
2.11 2.12		
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5.	Principal's matters	
	Paper circulated: Principal's matters April 2020	
	SR referred to her report to P&R at its meeting on 27 th April and recorded in the P&R minutes circulated to the Board. She then provided an update on the following issues raised in her paper.	
5.1.	College response to Covid-19. SR reported on the excellent and innovative way in which all staff have responded to this unprecedented time. Her paper sets out in detail the way in which students continue to be supported by both teaching and support staff. However, she wished to highlight in particular the support in place for vulnerable learners.	
5.1.1	The Government made it clear that this group of students should be a priority. Sarah Gibson, Head of Study Support, and her team have done an excellent job but have faced an additional demand on an already heavy and pressurised workload. This relates to an extra administrative layer imposed by HCC. The College is therefore looking at ways to support the department.	
5.1.2	AP as LLDD governor confirmed she had recently had a conversation with the Head of Study Support and can endorse the fantastic job they are doing but the department is under pressure.	
5.1.3	SR was pleased to report that the Product Design department has produced PPE. Last week they completed 500 vizors and have material to produce 300 more. VO is working with the local Rotary to seek funding for further future production.	
5.2	Teachers' Pay update – SR provided an update since her report to P&R. The NEU, the largest teaching union, has accepted the 1-year offer outlined in SR's paper. However, final agreement is pending the decision of the NASUWT union although SR is confident that the agreement will go ahead as the NEU is the larger of the two and therefore has greater representation on the NJC.	
5.2.1	The support staff UNISON has yet to formally agree the NJC pay award of 1.5%. However, SR is confident that it will be accepted and therefore it is very likely that governors will be asked to approve the pay awards by way of a written resolution by email in the next week or so.	
5.3	Ofqual Announcement - SR commended NA for all his work on the grading of exams this year not only for the College but also nationally. The College is very fortunate to have him. NA is currently modelling against previous years to ensure consistency.	
5.4	The Board noted that the DfE has announced that there is no clawback on devolved adult education budget this academic year.	
5.5	Questions – the Board raised the issue that the Government announcement the previous day had indicated that L6 students may be invited back to College in early June to have contact with teachers before	

	the end of term and what planning was in place.	
5.5.1	SR reported that SMT have been planning for a number of weeks regarding a possible reopening of the College before the end of term. This has involved discussions with JNCC (staff union representatives) and the College Safety committee in the preparation of action plans and to do lists.	
5.5.2	SR highlighted the enormity of the scale of the operation as any return will have to respect social distancing to protect both staff and students. This is not aided by the apparent lack of detail from Government and SR hopes that the fifty page document in support of the Government's latest announcement may shed more light.	
5.5.3	SR reported that she is to meet with Principals from the Wessex Group tomorrow and also with the Chief Executive of the AoC and Southern Principals to share good practice. She then intends to contact all staff with an update.	
5.5.4	Some of the areas that SMT are considering are the closure of some areas, introducing a one-way system, changes to the timetable models and managing staff sharing of offices and the introduction of protective screens.	
5.5.5	In addition, SMT are to survey staff, students and parents to canvas concerns and anxieties with the aim of assisting management in this period.	
5.5.6	LKE reported that she recently attended a Boarding Schools Association forum and most participants were concerned about reopening. However, the Head of Boarding at College is currently doing some fantastic work on plans on how social distancing could be introduced in boarding.	
5.5.7	SR highlighted that public transport is a big problem for the College as only one quarter of all students come from the Winchester area and most travel 10.2 km to get to College. Most of those students travel on public transport which is currently only running at 10% of its capacity.	
5.5.8	The Board asked if SR saw any possibility of the College opening over the summer holidays. SR did not see this as feasible as the unions are unlikely to agree since the teachers will have delivered their annual hours either in College or virtually. In addition, a number of support staff and SMT have not had leave since Christmas because of the increase in workload in adapting to the current situation.	
5.5.9	TR thanked SR and for the summary of what SMT have been planning, looking ahead.	
6.	Report from P&R committee	
	Papers circulated: Draft Minutes of meeting 27 th April 2020 and Financial Report for Policy and Resources Committee Meeting 27 th April 2020; Income/Expenditure up to 31 3 2020; Balance sheet as at 31 st March 2020	

6.1.	AJS referred to the draft minutes and confirmed that the main items discussed by the committee were Principal's matters referred to at item 5 and the financial report. AJS then invited IK to present his finance report to the Board.	
6.2	IK reminded the committee that the previous report to P&R was based on five-month actuals to the end of March. At that time the surplus was £75,000. He has based his paper on the potential impact of Covid -19 on the financial position for this year, update on 20/21 Budget and an update on the Capital Project	
6.2.1	Potential impact of Covid-19 on 19/20 and future years:	
	 The pay award for 19/20. Whilst the final award is still to be negotiated, IK is of the view that any increase to the 1.5% budgeted can be absorbed. This is because the 1.5% had been set on a high point and therefore there is some flex to absorb another 1.25% for the proposed teachers' award. The College's LGPS contribution is fixed for 3 years (to April 2023) and includes a 0.9% adjustment for the McCloud impact. The increase in teacher pension contributions commencing September 2019 is fixed for 4 years. However, TPS grant is fixed until March 2021 only. Recent events may prompt actuaries to increase reporting liabilities for LGPS in the College accounts for the year end 2020. Accounts and audit will be very different for all colleges this year with the result that there are no expected changes to the College Audit Direction or Audit Code of Practice. RSM are currently progressing, remotely, the Teacher Pension audit. IK is working with Frances Millar on the audit plan and uploading documents via RSM's secure portal. This will be taken to the Audit committee in June. Internal audit visits scheduled for March and April have been cancelled and will be rescheduled once the situation improves. 	
6.2.2	Impact of Covid -19 on 2019/20 forecast:	
	 ESFA will continue to make 16-18 profile payments for the last 4 months of the academic year. As reported by SR at point 5 above, there will be no claw-back on the non-devolved adult education budget provided criteria is met. Similarly, HE fees will be paid by the Student Loan Company for May so long as the reporting requirements are made by the end of April. IK assured the committee that AD is currently working on this. High needs funding is secure for 2020 and together with funding from HCC for EHCP students. 	
6.2.3	Whilst the four areas outlined above protect the majority of College income, there are a few areas such as catering, boarding and commercial	

	leisure courses at AHED that will make a loss in 19/20.	
6.2.4	Since IK reported to P&R, SMT have approved some areas to be furloughed. VO is currently going through the HR procedures and finalise the relevant staff. The agreement of those to be furloughed is required before a claim can be made. The College UNISON representative has been consulted and he is supportive of the course of action.	
6.2.5	SR reported that the College will top-up the salaries to 100% of those that are furloughed so they are not adversely affected.	
6.2.6	IK then took the Board through the 3 case scenarios for future forecast changes. All show an increase in income of £325k for in-year growth	
6.2.7	The first scenario is the position based on College closure up to end of the Easter break which shows loss of income for 2 weeks in catering and boarding. The increase surplus from the actual March position was noted.	
6.2.8	The second scenario is the worst case and covers the two weeks before the end of the Easter break and closure for the rest of the summer term and assumes that there is no compensation for boarding or AHED commercial courses or furloughing showing a substantial deficit.	
6.2.9	The third scenario has the same loss of income as case 2 but anticipates compensation for boarding and loss of income at AHED making a balanced budget. The Board noted that it is difficult to put actual figures to savings e.g. exams but the expectation is that there is a balanced budget.	
6.2.10	Due to the current uncertainty. IK does not recommend a change to the forecast at present.	
6.3	Balance Sheet to 31 st March 2020	
6.3.1	The Board noted that the Balance sheet and cash flow are both strong	
6.4	Update on 20/21 Budget	
6.4.1	One of the challenges in completing the IFMC return had been to determine the income for 20/21. However, the final allocation for 20/21 has now been confirmed and is secure. It is better than predicted primarily due to an increase of 15 more students. IK referred to the table in his paper setting out a comparison of the IFMC return and actual allocation.	
6.4.2	The March 2020 Budget confirmed an allocation of £1.5 billion over 5 years to ensure all further education college estates are in good condition. However, the Board agreed with IK that this may change in the next Spending Review and cannot be relied upon. The same applies to other areas for spending mentioned in the Budget namely T levels and Local Growth Fund.	
6.5	Insurance – The College is part of the Wessex Group consortium. After a tender process in 2017, the consortium entered an agreement with FE Protect for 3 years with the option to roll-over for a further 2 years from	

	this August.	
6.5.1	IK reported that most of the members of the consortium intend to enter another 3 plus 2-year option this August, which reflects the competitive rate and good service provided. P&R approved IK renewing the agreement with FE Protect on a new 3 plus 2-year option as the premium will not increase.	
6.5.2	IK reported that his own research confirmed that the agreement with FE Protect is much better than that offered by the DfE.	
6.6	Update on Capital Projects - IK reported that following the Board's approval to appoint Chawton Hill to project manage the repairs to AHED's roof and to replace the conservatory at College Centre, the contractors have confirmed their costs and have been appointed. Work has commenced on the AHED roof.	
6.6.1	IK confirmed that the planning application for the replacement conservatory at College Centre had been approved.	
6.6.2	IK reported that the outcome of the CIF bid keeps being delayed and it is now expected late May. He remains confident that the College will be successful.	
6.6.3	The Board had no questions for IK. TR thanked him for all his work on this report and the effect of Covid-19 on the finances.	
6.7	Energy renewal – AJS reported that IK had updated P&R on the renewal of the energy contract. She reminded the Board that IK had delegated authority under the Financial Regulations & Procedures to review the College energy contracts to ensure value for money.	
6.8	The details of the new energy contracts are detailed in the P&R minutes. The committee endorsed IK's decision to renew the framework of energy with EDF and Corona through TEC commencing 1/10/20.	
7.	Confirmation of Written Resolutions Paper circulated: Details of electronic voting for Written Resolutions made since the last Board meeting on 24 February 2020 prepared by the Clerk	
7.1	The Clerk had prepared the paper to confirm the written resolutions approved by the Board electronically since the last Board meeting in relation to Estate projects and the Covid-19 annex to the Safeguarding Policy. For the record, the resolution relating to the Estate projects is as follows:	
	 The appointment of Chawton Hill as consultants and project manager The appointment of two building contractors from those referred to in the appendices attached to a report from Irfan Khan to carry out the work on replacing the conservatory at College Centre and repairs to the roof at 	

	 AHED and circulated to the Board by the Clerk via email on 6th April 2020 The cost of replacing the conservatory at College Centre at £157,646.49 (including Chawton Hill's fee, building contractor, VAT and a contingency of £5000) The cost of repairs to the roof at AHED at £305,176.90 (including Chawton Hill's fee, building contractor, VAT and a contingency of £7,500) To approve the additional contingency if required in line with table C in IK's report referred to above and circulated to the Board from the Clerk on 6th April 2020 Post meeting note: the Board had also unanimously approved electronically the Governance Policy during Pandemic Coronavirus (Covid-19) as per the revised draft circulated by email on 6th April 2020 	
8.	Risk Management	
8.1	The Risk Management Group has not met since the College closure due to Covid-19. However, it is due to meet at the end of May when it will focus on the operational, reputational and financial risks attached to the pandemic and what the College is doing in mitigation. SR reported that there is a dynamic response to new risks identified e.g. the annex to the Safeguarding Policy and the Governance Policy during Covid -19.	
8.2	NA reported that at the last Risk Management Group meeting the risks relating to Prevent were incorporated in the Risk Register.	
9.	Report from the Curriculum & QA committee Papers circulated: Draft minutes of the meeting 2 nd March 2020, the Social Media Policy , Assessment Policy and the Terms of Reference of the Committee (amendments in red).	
9.1	RS referred to the draft minutes of the meeting on 2 nd March. The committee had received from NA a summary of the College experience of the Ofsted inspection. This was a very honest and transparent report and contained mainly positive comments from Ofsted, However, there are a few areas for improvement and the committee noted these are being actioned.	
9.2	The committee also considered the review of AHED and this is to be separately reported to the Board under agenda item 9.	
9.3	The committee received mid-year reports of the operational plan and the College Development plan. None of the outstanding areas were of concern to the committee and were either no longer relevant or had been deferred for good reason.	

9.4	The Board noted from the minutes the excellent outcome of the student	
	survey on induction and the review by staff on the change to the timetable.	
	In addition, the excellent work of the Hub was noted.	
9.5	The Board referred to point 9.5 of the minutes and the follow up work to	
9.5	be done with those students who reported in the student induction survey	
	that they did not feel safe at College. NA confirmed this is ongoing and will	
	be resumed once the College reopens.	
9.6	The committee recommended 2 policies: Social Media and Assessment.	
	The first is a new policy and is guidance to support the existing Code of	
	Conduct for IT use and the second has a minor update amendment.	
9.7	The committee also reviewed its Terms of Reference and the suggested	
5.7	amendments are updates to reflect changes to the I&A, the reporting	
	procedure to the OfS and that the committee now shares with Search &	
	Governance the review of the Strategic Objectives.	
9.8	Resolved: The Board approved the amendments to the Terms of	
	Reference of the committee as per the copy circulated with the agenda and the Social Media Policy and the Assessment Policy as per the copies	
	circulated with the agenda. All in favour.	
10.	Review of AHED	
	Paper circulated: AHED Curriculum Statement and Strategy 2020-2025 prepared by AD Director of AHED.	
	prepared by AD Director of ARED.	
	AD joined the meeting to answer questions on this item.	
10.1	SR presented the paper to the Board. AD with SR,DC and NA had worked on	
	the review before Christmas and completed it in early January just before	
	the Ofsted inspection.	
10.2	AD sets out in the report a very helpful history, the key drivers and	
-	rationale behind the current curriculum offer. Page 2 of the report sets out	
	how the different strands of curriculum at AHED fits into the College's	
	Strategic Objectives.	
10.2	The different strends of the survisulum at AUCD are often annex and the	
10.3	The different strands of the curriculum at AHED can often appear complex and difficult but is broken down clearly in the report by way of key statistics	
	for each strand namely enrolment, income generation and contribution to	
	AHED overheads. HE and FE courses lead the way producing most income	
	and contributing most to overheads. Apprenticeships have the least	
	number of enrolments and contributes least to income.	
10.4		
10.4	The report then considers each curriculum strand as to whether there is a	
	need, the quality of the offer, progression and whether it can it be effectively delivered.	
10.5	The review concludes that Hair Beauty and Complementary Therapy and	

	Sports Massage should be retained but reviewed next year to monitor enrolment and success rates particularly hairdressing. Early years should continue but is to be monitored to see the impact of T levels in that subject.	
10.6	AD commented that recruitment for September is very strong for the T level qualification and stands at 25 which is good considering there has been no active campaigning by the DfE regarding this qualification.	
10.7	Apprenticeships in early years learning are to be phased out over the next year as there are small number enrolled as HCC have now brought this type of apprenticeship in house. In addition, the Board and its committees have been aware of quality issues and compliance with stringent regulations poses a high risk.	
10.8	The HE provision will be expanded where appropriate and where new courses meet the College's needs analysis.	
10.9	Access to HE will continue to monitor the 2 year programme success rates and review in 2021.	
10.10	Recruitment to English and Maths Functional Skills will cease in 2020. The rationale behind the decision is that due to the small need for this course in the Winchester area, the current curriculum is provided by 'nesting' various qualifications to make it viable. The conclusion is that the provision does not serve the small cohort well and it can be offered at other institutions.	
10.11	The Board congratulated AD for producing a comprehensive and very helpful and clear paper. It effectively breaks down the various strands of curriculum offer and helps make sense of its previous complexity.	
10.12	However, the Board cautioned that the offer still remains a diverse mix with an associated complexity of management. It would therefore be wise to only grow organically the current mix rather than seek new strands. AD acknowledged this but stated that in the future it may become financially expedient to seek new strands.	
10.13	NA reported that the reduction in the complexity of the offer at AHED was a positive as each category has a different set of rules/ compliance. Apprenticeships will reduce the risk to the College regarding quality compliance which required a monthly MIS return.	
10.14	SR reported that phase 2 of the Strategy for AHED is a review of the management structure due to the loss of some of the provision.	
10.15	SR thanked AD,DC and NA for all their hard work on the review. TR thanked AD for attending the meeting and for producing such a helpful summary.	
	AD left the meeting.	

11. 11.1	 Report from the Search and Governance committee Papers circulated: Draft minutes of the meeting dated 27th April 2020 and Board and committee dates for 20/21. TT referred to the draft minutes and reported that any update on e-governance and rolling out the Governorhub had been superseded by events. However, the most appropriate platform will be reviewed as the outcome of the current use of e-governance is considered. 	
11.2	The appointment of a Staff teaching governor and a Mercer nominated governor have been delayed due to current events. However, the Search committee was pleased to report that CE has agreed to defer stepping down as a governor at the end of this academic year in recognition that current circumstances will make it difficult to find a successor.	
11.3	The committee had considered the issue of linked governors but concluded that it was not the right time to introduce these at the moment. The Clerk is to prepare a report for the committee at its next meeting on the current practice and how it may be usefully expanded.	
11.4	The committee approved the dates for committee and Board for 20/21 as per the copy circulated. TT highlighted that the Spring term Board meetings have been brought forward with the first one at the end of January to accommodate the need to prepare and for the Board to approve the news IFMC report by the end of January. The Clerk will amend the typing error regarding reference to 2019 and not 2020 in the dates and recirculate to the Board.	Clerk
11.5	The Board noted the reasoning behind the committee's decision to benchmark against the AoC Code of Good Governance for this year's Governor SAR.	
11.6	TT reported that IK had raised a very sensible query as to the issue of double reporting of the finance report and Principal's matters to P&R and the Board. The committee concluded that the Principal had a statutory duty to report to the Board at each meeting and the Finance report is so important as reflected in the guidance under the Insolvency Regime, that it should be reported to both P&R and the Board.	
11.7	The Board asked whether any of the issues to be covered in the Governor Training day in March should be rescheduled. It was agreed the Search committee will consider which of the issues need to be presented to the Board as a priority and how they can be factored in to Board agendas.	Clerk
12.	 Any other business The Awards Evening is scheduled to take place on 3rd September at 6.30pm although this is subject to change due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Former student governor and BAFTA nominee Chance 	

	 Perdermo has agreed to be the speaker. TR reminded the Board that nominations for Chairman and Vice-Chairman should be received by the Clerk by 15th June . He reminded the Board that the Chairman and Vice-Chairman now normally serve three years and therefore with the Board's approval TR will have one more year to serve from October. TR is pleased to report that LE has agreed to put herself forward to be nominated as Vice Chairman this time next year. TT, as Chairman of Search confirmed that it was excellent news that LE had agreed. 	
13.	Date of next meeting – Monday 29 th June at 3 pm There being no other business the meeting ended at 4.35 pm 	