



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
BOARD OF GOVERNORS  
held on  
MONDAY 27 MARCH 2017  
in BOARD ROOM  
at the OSWESTRY CAMPUS**

<b>Present:</b>	<b>Mrs G Richards</b>	<b>GPR</b>	<b>Chair, Health &amp; Safety Lead Governor</b>
	<b>Mr G Casson</b>	<b>GBC</b>	
	<b>Mrs V Cox</b>	<b>HVC</b>	<b>Safeguarding &amp; Residential Lead Governor</b>
	<b>Mrs W Dakin</b>	<b>JWD</b>	<b>Equality &amp; Diversity Lead Governor</b>
	<b>Mr A Durnell</b>	<b>AD</b>	<b>Business Support Staff Governor</b>
	<b>Mrs F Flack</b>	<b>FF</b>	<b>Academic-Staff Governor</b>
	<b>Mr P Green</b>	<b>PG</b>	
	<b>Dr E Harrison</b>	<b>EH</b>	
	<b>Mr P McCann</b>	<b>PM</b>	<b>Interim Principal</b>
	<b>Ms E McQueen</b>	<b>EMcQ</b>	
	<b>Mr J Nicholls</b>	<b>JN</b>	<b>Lead Governor - Quality</b>
	<b>Mr P Polowyj</b>	<b>PP</b>	
	<b>Miss L Smith</b>	<b>LS</b>	<b>Student Governor</b>
	<b>Mr T Trickett</b>	<b>TT</b>	

*Attendance: 93.3%*

<b>In attendance:</b>	<b>Mr B Deed</b>	<b>BD</b>	<b>Interim Finance Director</b>
	<b>Ms K Roberts</b>	<b>KR</b>	<b>Assistant Principal Curriculum</b>
	<b>Ms S Shelston</b>	<b>SS</b>	<b>Assistant Principal Quality &amp; Student Services</b>
	<b>Mr M David</b>	<b>MD</b>	<b>Observer (Principal, Reaseheath College)</b>
	<b>Mr R Ratcliffe</b>	<b>RR</b>	<b>Observer (Chair of Governors, Reaseheath College)</b>
	<b>Ms J Vernon</b>	<b>JV</b>	<b>Observer (Lifelong Learning Manager, Shropshire Council)</b>
	<b>Mr R Aldis</b>	<b>RA</b>	<b>Farm Manager (part)</b>
	<b>Mr C Dilworth</b>	<b>CD</b>	<b>Project Manager (part)</b>
	<b>Ms B Jackson</b>	<b>BJ</b>	<b>Student Services Manager (part)</b>
	<b>Mrs C Thompson</b>	<b>CDT</b>	<b>Governance Advisor</b>

*The meeting opened at 17.30*

Item	Action
<p><b>1. Apologies for absence</b> Mr J Furber.</p>	
<p><b>2. Declarations of interest</b> Dr Harrison, Ms McQueen, Mr Nicholls and Mrs Richards were also governors at Reaseheath College. Mr Green was a consultant for Reaseheath College. Mr Casson was the Chair of Governors at Holy Trinity School. Mrs Flack and Mr Durnell declared an interest in items 4 and 8.</p>	
<p><b>3. Farm plan: presentation</b> The Chair welcomed Mr Aldis and thanked him for his extra work whilst there had been no herdsman. Mr Aldis presented a 5-year vision for the farm. There was a proposal for stock and machinery. Additional activities: community links and other income generation and experiences. Staffing was difficult: the person offered the herdsman role had declined. Conclusion: it would take three years to turn round the farm. It had been stabilised. Staffing issues; Buying group to reduce feed costs. Milk production up: target 12k litres each. The sheep flock had been rationalised and improved. Educational experiences would improve for students. The aim was to have stock that learners would admire. There would be genetic testing to identify the best stock. An application would be submitted for a Prince's Trust grant for a farm shop.</p>	
<p>Governors asked how achievable the targets were. They were challenging but achievable. Governors asked about the learning experience for students and what plans were in place to improve the learning experience. There were many plans which were explained. Governors asked about the rationale for going into beef. This was for the benefit of students.</p>	
<p>Recruiting good staff was a key barrier to improvement. An agency herdsman was being brought in. Governors agreed that it was important that Mr Aldis was supported. Governors asked for the detailed financial plan to be sent out to them.</p>	<p><b>RA/CDT</b> <b>Apr</b></p>
<p>Governors all agreed that Mr Aldis had turned the farm around, and that this was having a significant impact on student experience.</p>	
<p><i>Mr Aldis left the meeting.</i></p>	
<p><b>4 Staff terms &amp; conditions - Moved to Confidential</b></p>	
<p><i>Mr Dilworth left the meeting. Ms Jackson joined the meeting.</i></p>	
<p><b>5. Moved to Confidential</b></p>	
<p><i>Ms Jackson left the meeting.</i></p>	

**6. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 February 2017 were approved and signed by the Chair.

**7. Matters Arising**

**7.1 Nursery – market research**

A summary of the Ofsted grades of all other nurseries in the immediate area had been issued to governors.

**8. Principal's report**

The interim Principal summarised the measures being taken pre-merger to improve the financial situation. Terms & conditions review; increased class sizes; other savings; review non-pay expenditure; non-replacement of leavers; diversifying income streams and raising student numbers. Student applications for 2017/18 remained 60 behind the previous year: in response to a question management re-confirmed the actions taken to stimulate demand. Governors asked how internal progression was managed and if there were more potential learners staying on. Management said the progression system had been changed, in line with the new tutorial system, but would be completed by Easter. It was expected that there would be more internal applications

*Strategic medium term*

Options were listed, if the college were continuing as a standalone institution.

*Post-merger*

Actions to be taken to improve further the financial position, including further efficiencies and diversifying income streams. There remained the possibility of selling the land in Baschurch, but the ransom strip remained an issue.

Governors **resolved to receive and accept** the report.

**9. Data dashboard - KPIs**

The grade 2 received for the nursery from Ofsted and the QAA review of HE to “meets UK expectations” evidenced the improving processes and management of learning quality. The report listed key risks still facing the College. The interim Principal highlighted some key points in the report. Retention was better on higher-level courses. ALPS outcomes were above the GFE median for L3 provision in all areas except for A levels (now discontinued). 138 Learning Walks had taken place. A marked-work audit showed there had been significant progress. In the Adult Education Budget, as had been reported previously, there was a £500k shortfall. Numbers had not materialised on the Royal Mail apprenticeship programme as the College had been given to expect and Remedial action needed to be taken. Apprenticeships were coming through at around 20 per week. The interim Principal estimated this income stream would be

£150k short of target. Cashflow to 31 July could be managed within the package already agreed with the SFA (Skills Funding Agency). Staff sickness levels were high again: 2.24%. The figure was expected to decrease with long term sick staff returning. Room utilisation was low.

Governors raised concern about the drop since induction in those students who would recommend the College, and the implications of the result. They asked management to analyse the result. The Student Governor had not had any concerns raised with her other than catering which management had been working on with the contractors.

**SS - Apr**

The Board **resolved to receive and accept** the report.

## **10. Quality & Student Performance**

### **10.1 Footsteps Nursery: Ofsted re-inspection**

Grade 2 had been awarded at the re-inspection. Governors congratulated management, and acknowledged the work that had been done to achieve the outcome.

The Board **resolved to receive and accept** the report.

### **10.2 College QIP**

Governors noted that the QIP was scrutinised very closely at the Post Inspection Working Group meetings and there had been a lot of progress.

Governors **resolved to receive and accept** the report.

### **10.3 Maths & English – student-surveys**

The survey had not been targeted to have a 100% return rate. It was backed up by 1-1 surveys carried out by SLT and governors to triangulate the responses. Students knew their strengths and weaknesses and found the sessions better than their lessons at school. Governors questioned some of the results and the structure of the questions, and asked if the outcomes of the mock exams were reported: these would be embedded in the progress results.

Governors **resolved to receive and accept** the report.

### **10.4 Post-Inspection Working Group action notes**

Governors **resolved to note** the action notes from the meeting held on 7 and 28 February and 14 March 2017.

### **10.5 Student Governor report**

The Student Governor said that Access to HE students had raised concern about losing some tutorial hours. The Assistant Principal Quality & Student Services would investigate and report back to the Student Governor. The survey results would be brought to the next meeting.

**SS – imm.**

**LS – 2.5.17**

Governors **resolved to receive and accept** the report.

## **11. Finance**

### **11.1 Management accounts to February 2017 & cash flow**

The deficit forecast had deteriorated by £73k. At the Case conference the following week the College would request deferment of the £500k due to be repaid in the current year. The cash position would be close to zero at the end of July. In response to a question the interim Finance Director confirmed his meeting with bank had been positive.

Governors **resolved to receive and accept** the report.

### **11.2 Fees & Charges 2017-18**

The interim Finance Director had reviewed the policy and had changed it to a framework for setting fees and charges.

Governors **resolved to approve** the policy.

## **12. Audit & Risk Management Committee**

### **12.1 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 March 2017 were noted. The Committee Chair said that the internal auditors and the interim Finance Director had agreed that the original plan should not be amended as some topics had ceased to be a useful focus of audit. However RSM could not give an annual opinion if they had not carried out sufficient audit work. The Committee had discussed the options, and agreed that a revised internal audit plan should be agreed to enable the audit opinion. This had been done. The Board **approved** this approach.

### **12.2 Risk Register**

The College was on the register of apprenticeship providers therefore this risk had been removed. Governors asked a number of questions about the entries, and the grading. Given the financial position, they questioned if item S4 should be graded red. The interim Finance Director argued that it was about a deterioration from where the college was, rather than about not meeting budget. He would review the wording.

**BD – imm.**

Governors **resolved to receive and accept** the report.

## **13. Lead Governor: Safeguarding & Residential report**

Mrs Cox said she and the safeguarding team had gone through the internal auditor's (RSM's) report on HR procedures, and talked through the findings, and the actions taken. One of the 10 files sampled had not had a completed application form. Some contracts had not been signed by staff. New reissued contracts would resolve this issue. HR would have a focussed session for two weeks, with support, to resolve these housekeeping issues.

Action had been taken to ensure all staff had done safeguarding and Prevent training by a set deadline and disciplinary action would be taken

over failure to complete the training. New arrangements had been included in the staff induction to ensure the training was carried out by new staff promptly.

RSM had raised a concern over Data Protection: 5 of a sample of 20 files still had a copy of the DBS record retained, which RSM considered should have been destroyed. Mrs Cox said her view and that of management was that they should be kept as long as necessary. If there was an issue this needed to be put in a reference. The Assistant Principal Curriculum had carried out a further internal audit, checking for compliance.

Governors **resolved to receive and accept** the report.

**14. Policies**

The following were approved: Anti-fraud, Corruption and Bribery Policy; Risk Management Policy; HR Strategy; Health & Safety Policy. Governors asked about the vacancy at Shipley. There would be a new campus manager and a technician was being trained in fire wardening and in first aid training. Governors asked if sufficient resource had been put into, e.g. First Aid training. Management had this in the training calendar. All nursery staff were paediatric first-aid trained.

**KR/SS –**

**15. Any Other Business**

There were no items under Any Other Business.

**16. Date of next meeting**

The next meeting would be held on Tuesday 2 May 2017, at 5.30pm in the Board Room at Oswestry.

<b>Governor challenge and impact</b>	
3.	<b>Questioned and challenged</b> the plans for improvements to the farm in respect of the financial and student learning-experience. <b>Impact:</b> testing management’s plans, ensuring they are well thought-through. Increasing own understanding of the current position and the route-map to improvement.
8.	<b>Questioned</b> what was being done to stimulate demand and if more progression learners would be adding to the application/ enrolment figures for 2017/18 <b>Impact:</b> ensuring this remained a priority. Focus on financial improvements.
9.	<b>Asked</b> for further drill-down on the student survey results. <b>Impact:</b> obtaining clarification of an issue raised via learner voice. Challenging management to investigate and identify underlying causes for an area of concern.
10.3	<b>Questioned</b> learner voice data on maths and English provision. <b>Impact:</b> ensuring full understanding of the meaning of the report.
12.1	<b>Approved</b> the approach to amend the internal audit plan to allow for an audit opinion at year-end. <b>Impact:</b> Board-assurance on internal audit control maintained.
12.2	<b>Challenged</b> the grading on some of the risks on the register. <b>Impact:</b> ensuring that risks were correctly included and graded.
14.	<b>Approved</b> revised policies. <b>Impact:</b> policies kept under to review and up-to-date.

**Chair** ..... **Date** .....