

Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College

Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of the College Corporation held on Thursday 25 June 2009 at 7.00 pm

Present: Mr C Wiper (Chairman)
Mrs S Barnes
Mrs H Barron
Mr D Bihari
Mr T Fisher
Mr T Haylett
Mr M Ithurralde
Mrs G Laws
Mrs L Lyle
Mr D Warman
Mr N Waterfall-Brown
Mr A Wilson

In Attendance: Mr G Barker
Mrs A Blackburn
Dr S D Hunnisett
Mr L Job
Mr T M Loftus
Mr G Brookes (Clerk)

09/23 Apologies

Apologies were received from and Mr P Davison, Cllr E Lister, Mr C McCain, Prof L Oglesby, Ms S Robinson and Mr M Shaw and were **accepted** by the Board.

09/24 Appointment of Two Student Members of the College Corporation

24.1 The Clerk stated that, as reported in the minutes of the Search Committee held on 4 June 2009, it was recommended that Mr Thoryn Haylett (President of the Student Association) and Mr Dale Bihari (Vice President) be appointed as Student Members of the College Corporation for the next year effective from today.

24.2 Mr Fisher outlined the backgrounds and attributes of both students and expressed his confidence that they would make positive contributions as Members of the Corporation.

24.3 At Mr Wiper's request Mr Haylett and Mr Bihari gave details of the courses they were taking and their aspirations for the future.

24.4 Mr Wiper endorsed the Search Committee's recommendation and proposed that the Board approve the appointment of Thoryn Haylett and Dale Bihari as Student Members of the College Corporation for the next year effective from today (25 June 2009).

The Board unanimously **approved** their appointments.

24.5 Mr Wiper expressed his gratitude to the previous President (Justin Ramsden) and Vice President (Jessica Grundy) and the Student Association Executive for the excellent contribution they had made to the College in the past year.

09/25 Minutes of the Meeting held on 19 March 2009

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 March 2009 were **accepted** as a true record by the Board and were signed by the Chairman.

09/26 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

09/27 Outstanding References

There were no outstanding references.

09/28 Urgent Business

No urgent business was raised.

09/29 Publications Distributed since the Last Meeting.

The Clerk referred to the following newsletters: QESFC Summer 209, DCSF Governors (Summer 2009) and SFCF No 47.

09/30 Governor Training – Transition Issues

30.1 Mrs Blackburn gave a presentation on the issues which arise when students progress to QE. Their attitudes, experience and outlooks vary a great deal depending on their backgrounds and the schools they attended previously. As a result, for some students the transition is seamless whilst others need much more guidance and support from QE staff. Transition issues are an ongoing priority of the College.

30.2 Points raised in discussion included:

- a. The position of the College may be perceived to be ‘sandwiched’ between school and university.
- b. The Student Members expressed the view that it is better to provide guidance and support to enhance their learning skills at the College rather than later at university where it would be more difficult to achieve.
- d. The College staff provide relevant support to those who need it and by the time they reach A2 level most are able to do more independently.

30.3 Mr Wiper thanked Mrs Blackburn for this interesting aspect of the work carried out by the College and the implications for the transition from school ->college -> university that need to be considered.

09/31 Committee Reports

31.1 Finance and Resources Committee

Mr Wiper referred to the minutes of the meetings held on 16 March 2009 (reported verbally at the last meeting) and 27 April 2009 and he reported verbally on the meeting held on 8 June 2009. Relevant items were to be covered later at this meeting.

The Board **accepted** the report and the minutes of the meetings held on 16 March 2009 and 27 April 2009.

31.2 Audit Committee

Mrs Lyle referred to the minutes of the meetings held on 5 March 2009 (reported verbally at the last meeting) and 21 May 2009. She pointed out in particular relevant aspects of the Internal Audit Methodology (ref 18/09) and its implications for the College and the Internal Auditor’s Report (ref 19/09).

The Board **accepted** the report and the minutes of the meetings held on 5 March 2009 and 21 May 2009.

31.3 Student Committee

In the absence of Mr Davison, Mr Fisher referred to the minutes of the meeting held on 30 April 2009 and in particular to the impressive presentation given by College students involved in the government-sponsored ‘Make Your Mark Enterprise

Challenge'. The College's work and contributions to enterprise were recognised by One North East with an award of £10,000 for encouraging and promoting the relevant skills amongst 16-19 year olds. Mr Fisher pointed out that the Student Association's report on the year, the Students' Activities report and Admissions 2010 were to be covered as separate items at today's meeting.

The Board **accepted** the report and the minutes of the meeting held on 30 April 2009.

31.4 Curriculum and Standards Committee

In the absence of Cllr Lister, Mr Fisher referred to the minutes of the meeting held on 7 May 2009 and in particular to the changes and Issues for 2009/10 (Ref 06/09) and to the Ofqual letter concerning the changes to A levels (Ref 08/09). The implications of the latter are not yet known and the situation is being closely monitored.

The Board **accepted** the report and the minutes of the meeting held on 7 May 2009.

31.5 Search Committee

Mr Wiper referred to the minutes of the Search Committee meeting held on 4 June 2009 and reported they relate to matters covered in Item 2 and item 18.

The Board **accepted** the report and the minutes of the meeting held on 4 June 2009.

09/32 Strategic Update - ASSET Memorandum of Understanding

Mr Fisher referred to the ASSET MOU (Aycliffe, Shildon Schools Education Trust – Memorandum of Understanding) which he had signed as approved at the last meeting of the Board. The MOU gave details of the aims and organisational structure of ASSET and Mr Fisher re-iterated the benefits of being involved in the scheme.

The Board **accepted** the Memorandum of Understanding.

09/33 College Performance Reports

33.1 Self Assessment 2009: Whole College Curriculum KPI Data.

33.1.1 Views of Year 1 Students

Mr Barker referred to the data provided from the questionnaires completed (3555) and in particular to:

- a. The whole college average score of 4.06 (out of a maximum of 5) and the grade 1 (outstanding) achieved.
- b. Grade 1 was achieved at all levels for 16-18 (except GCSE – grade 2) and adult/evening classes.
- c. The targets and actions for the coming year.

33.1.2 Retention and Attendance 2009

Mr Barker referred to the data provided and in particular to:

- a. The overall daytime retention (for 6161 enrolments) was 93.9% ie. above the target of 92.6% and given grade 1.
- b. The overall daytime attendance of 92.4% (0.6% above target) and given grade 1.
- c. Targets and actions for both retention and attendance for the coming year.

The Board **accepted** the two reports.

33.2 Self Assessment Reports 2009

33.2.1 Tutorial Views of Students.

- 33.2.1.1 Mr Barker referred to the report on the views of students (1582) in response to a questionnaire about their tutorial, guidance and support experiences at QE and pointed out in particular:
- The whole college average scores for yrs 2 and 4 were above 4.0 and awarded grade 1 (outstanding).
 - Yrs 1 and 3 were marginally below 4.0 and awarded grade 2 (Good). The overall score of 3.98 for the 1st year was disappointing and steps are being taken to improve the situation.
 - The Roles of Tutors and Mentors all achieved Grade 1.
 - The Personal Progress Interviews scores were relatively low and a further review on this aspect of tutorial guidance will be needed.
 - The targets and action plan for next year.

33.2.2 Tutorial Retention and Attendance

Mr Barker referred to the report on Tutorial Retention and Attendance 2009 and in particular to:

- The whole college retention rate (yrs 1 to 4) of 95% (Grade 1)
- The retention rate for Yr 4 (daytime adults) of 82% compared to the unusually high figure of 94% last year.
- The whole college attendance rate (Yrs 1 and 2) of 91% (Grade 1)
- The targets and action plans for next year.

The Board **accepted** the two reports.

09/34 Student Reports

34.1 Student Activities Report

Mr Job referred to the Student Activities Report and how it illustrated the very broad range and large numbers of events in which students participate in addition to their academic studies. The activities and the personal qualities and the social awareness displayed by the students are to be celebrated.

Mr Wiper stated that this is an excellent report well worth reading by anyone with an interest in the College and student involvement.

The Board **accepted** the report.

34.2 Student Association Successes 2008-09

Mr Fisher reported that the booklet on Student Association (SA) Success was the outcome of Mr Davison's (Chair of the Student Committee) suggestion that the SA should declare their aims and plans early in the academic year and report on their achievements.

The matters covered were:

- Better links with the Community
- Raising the profile of the SA
- Improving use of College facilities
- Increasing student participation in College events
- Frontier and QETV.

All agreed that it was an excellent and useful report which captured the positive approach of the outgoing Student Association.

The report will serve as a momento for current second year students and also as an example for others.

The Board **accepted** the report.

09/35 Admissions 2010

- 35.1 Mr Fisher referred to the paper on Admissions 2010 which contained recommendations for the Board to approve. In summary, the College is oversubscribed and numbers have to be managed. To do this it is proposed that:
- a. Arrangements with partner schools are unchanged.
 - b. Non-partner/non-Darlington applicants will be subject to a 'window' system – a hybrid of chronology and attainment.
 - c. Non-partner Darlington applicants will have preferential treatment – the same as partner schools but they must apply within the 'window'.
- 35.2 Mr Fisher and Mrs Blackburn referred to the recommendations in detail and pointed out that they would retain the spirit, culture and values of the College but would give more control over student numbers in a fair and consistent way.
- 35.3 Points raised in discussion included:
- a. Around 80% of student come from partner schools.
 - b. Approximately 150 places would be for non-partner /non-Darlington applicants.
 - c. The proposals would be given the broadest possible publicity.
 - d. A diverse mix of students would be maintained.

The Board **approved** the recommendations.

09/36 Personnel Reports

36.1 Personnel Report

Mr Fisher referred to the Personnel Report for 27 April 2009 which covered new appointments (8) and other staffing news. This was an interim report. A full report will be presented at the next meeting. **Action Mr Fisher**

The Board **accepted** the report.

36.2 Equality and Diversity Report - June 2009

Mr Job referred to the Equality and Diversity Report which summarised the main areas of activity for the past year and statistical data for 2007/08. Matters covered included:

- a. Background legislation.
- b. Developing awareness of equality and diversity.
- c. Procedures to monitor/develop appropriate strategies.
- d. Trends and benchmarks from the data for 2007-08, including external recruitment.

The Board **accepted** the report.

36.3 Child Protection Report

Mrs Blackburn referred to the Child Protection Report dated June 2009, the first to be presented to the Board. Reports will now be submitted annually. 164 staff (including some contractors) have participated in training since July 2008 and more training will be carried out.

Mrs Blackburn emphasised that the College takes its responsibilities seriously. Also, Ofsted will grade this aspect of education provision.

The Board **accepted** the report.

09/37 Premises Report

Mr Fisher referred to the Premises Report 2009 and in particular to:

- a. Activities have been concentrated mainly on redecoration and repair as a result of the uncertainty concerning the Capital project.
- b. As reported last year, the projected increase in student numbers for the coming year has once again necessitated the rental and refurbishment of further rooms in the Arts Centre.
- c. Since the report was prepared it has been agreed that the Local Authority will allow a proportion of the cost of refurbishment against rent for the first three years.
- d. The Finance and Resources Committee have been kept fully informed of the proposals and costings.

The Board **accepted** the report.

09/38 Capital Project.

38.1 Mr Fisher referred to the LSC letter 'The LSC FE Capital Programme' dated 1 June 2009 and pointed out that the prioritisation criteria means that it is unlikely that QE will receive support in the foreseeable future. However, it appears that the LSC philosophy may have changed and phased refurbishment may be encouraged.

38.2 Mr Fisher reported that, as agreed by the Finance and Resources Committee, AA Projects had completed a buildings survey in connection with alternative options to the current proposals for the Capital Project. The report and costings have just been received and will be considered in detail in the next few days and a meeting has been arranged with the local authority.

38.3 It was proposed that the Finance and Resources Committee carry on with this initiative and report to the next meeting of the Board.

The Board **approved** the proposal.

09/39 Finance Reports

39.1 Finance Report to 31 May 2009

Mr Loftus referred to the Finance report to 31 May 2009 and in particular to:

- Para 1.3 - the full year forecast surplus of £251k and cash and bank balance forecast of £1,591k.
- the College remains in a healthy financial position.

The Board **accepted** the report.

39.2 College Funding Allocation 2009-10

Mr Loftus referred to the LSC 16-18 Funding Allocations for 2009-10 dated 5 June 2009 and in particular to the funding of £8,709,331 based on 1859 students. However, there are expected to be 40 students for whom funding will not be provided. The funding for future years remains uncertain but is likely to be less favourable than in recent years.

The Board **accepted** the report.

39.3 Annual Budget 2009-10

39.3.1 Mr Loftus referred to the proposed budget for 2009-10 which had been considered by the Finance and Resources Committee on 8 June 2009 and recommended to the Board for approval.

- 39.3.2 Points raised in discussion included:
- a. Whilst the situation will be monitored carefully the College will be able to provide the staff and resources to fulfil its commitment to the students, including those for which LSC funding will not be received.
 - b. The situation for 2010-11 is likely to be difficult.
 - c. The proposed 2.5% increase to cover a potential pay settlement for staff.
 - d. A number of small items with favourable financial implications for the College.

The Board **approved** the budget.

39.4 Three Year Financial Forecast (2009-12)

39.4.1 Mr Loftus referred to the Three Year Financial Forecast 2009-2012, which had been considered by the Finance and Resources Committee on 8 June 2009 and recommended to the Board for approval, and in particular to:

- a. The forecast does not include any costs associated with the proposed Capital Project. Should the situation change the narrative and figures could be altered.
- b. The profile of the Operating Surplus predicted for the next few years.
- c. The Financial Plan data and the need for the Principal to sign the Cover Sheet.

39.4.2 Points raised in discussion included:

- a. Possible ways of increasing the surplus.
- b. The assumption that in future years funding will be provided for all students on the College roll.
- c. A sensitivity analysis on the effects of different levels of funding and staff salary increases is being prepared for the Finance and Resources Committee.

39.4.3 The Board **approved** the Three Year Financial Forecast 2009-12 and the narrative to be submitted to the LSC and that the Principal should sign the Cover Sheet. **Action Mr Fisher**

39.5 Risk Management

39.5.1 Mr Loftus referred to the Risk Register 2009 and explained the changes in the format and the introduction of a scoring scale. The likelihood of a risk factor occurring (A) and its impact (B) each have a scale of 1 to 5 and their product (AxB) indicates the significance of such an occurrence.

39.5.2 Points raised in discussion included:

- a. Factors with high significance ratings would need particular attention.
- b. The difficulty in assessing 'Risk Appetite' and 'Residual Risk'.

The Board **approved** the Risk Management Report.

39.6 Audit Needs Assessment and Periodic Plan 2009-10

39.6.1 Mr Loftus referred to the Bentley Jennison Strategy for Internal Audit – Update for 2009/10 which had been considered by the Audit Committee on 21 May 2009 and recommended to the Board for approval.

39.6.2 Mr Loftus pointed out in particular the Audit Plan for 2009/10 and the Strategy for Audit for 2009/10 to 2011/12 and the days involved.

39.7 Funding Assurance Review

39.7.1 Mr Loftus referred to Executive Summary of the 'Management Report Funding Review' dated March 2009 which had been carried out to provide assurance to the LSC on QE's systems of control regarding residual risks presented by learner ineligibility and non-existence.

39.7.2 The report was considered in detail by the Audit Committee on 21 May 2009 and it was agreed that the Executive Summary should be presented to the Board. Relevant action has been taken on the recommendations made.

The Board **accepted** the report.

09/40 Governance Issues.

40.1 Board Performance Report 2008-09

40.1.1 The Clerk referred to the Board Performance Report 2008-09. All the Performance Indicators and Terms of Reference had been met apart from the attendance figures for the Board and three committees which did not reach the target of 75%. However, attendance levels are still reasonably high (overall 76%) and the reasons for non-attendance were mainly because of work and other commitments and dates of two meetings being changed.

40.1.2 The report included questions concerning Members Views on whether the information provided at meetings enabled them to make sound, well-judged, decisions and if there were any other areas which should be covered. The Members were asked to inform the Clerk of any comments they may have. None were made at the meeting. **Action Members**

The Board **accepted** the report.

40.2 Proposed Dates for Meetings 2009-10.

The Clerk referred to the proposed dates of meetings to be held in 2009-10, and these were **approved** by the Board.

40.3 Appointment of Members

40.3.1 The Clerk referred to the minutes of the Search Committee held on 4 June 2009 and to the summary of the committee's recommendations (Annex A) included in the Board papers.

40.3.2 The Clerk proposed that category of Members previously called 'Business Members' and currently referred to as 'Members with Necessary Skills' be changed to 'Independent Members'.

The Board **approved** the change.

40.3.3 Parent Members

The terms of office of Mrs H Barron and Mr A Wilson end on 31 August 2009.

Mrs Barron remains eligible for re-appointment as a Parent Member and, taking in to account her contributions to the College, the Board and the Student Committee, and the Search Committee's recommendation, the Board **approved** her re-appointment as a Parent Member from 1 September 2009 for two years.

40.3.4 Independent Members

a. Mr Wilson is no longer eligible to be a Parent Member. However, a vacancy will arise for an Independent Member and taking into account his contributions to the College, the Board and the Finance and

Resources Committee, and the Search Committee's recommendation, the Board **approved** the appointment of Mr Wilson as an Independent Member from 1 September 2009 for a period of four years.

- b. The Terms of Office of Mr P Davison and Mr C McCain as Co-opted Members come to an end on 31 August 2009. The category of Co-opted Member is being phased out.

Mr Davison has expressed his willingness to be considered for appointment as an Independent Member. Taking into account his contributions to the College, the Board and the Student Committee, and the Search Committee's recommendations, the Board **approved** the re-appointment of Mr Davison as an Independent Member from 1 September 2009 for four years.

Mr McCain had informed the Clerk that he had enjoyed being a Member of the Corporation for the last 6 years but, because of his other commitments, he had decided not to seek re-appointment.

40.3.5 Student Members

As recorded in Ref 09/24 Mr Thoryn Haylett and Mr Dale Bihari were appointed as Student Members effective from 25 June 2009 for a year.

40.3.6 Vacancy

A vacancy for a Parent Member will occur after 31 August 2009 and Members are asked to inform the Chairman, Principal or the Clerk of any potential candidates they may wish to recommend. **Action Members**

40.4 Membership of the Corporation Committees

The Clerk referred to the list of Corporation Committees and the proposed membership of each one. The Search Committee had considered and agreed the proposal on 4 June 2009. It was noted that Mr Davison had kindly agreed to serve on the Audit Committee as well as the Student Committee.

The Board **approved** the Membership of the Corporation Committees for 2009-10.

40.5 Governor Training Events

The Clerk referred to two events arranged for the immediate future (Student Governors (Finance) on 7 July and Nolan Principles (Clerks) on 17 September).

09/41 Other Business Raised under Item 09/78

No urgent business was raised.

09/42 Confidentiality

The Personnel Report (Item 09/37.1) is confidential.

09/43 Date and Agenda for the Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 17 September 2009 at 7.00 pm.

- 09/44 Mr Wiper stated that it was unfortunate that Mr McCain was unable to attend today's meeting and expressed his gratitude for the contributions he had made to the College, the Board and the Audit Committee during his 6 years as a Member of the Corporation. This was endorsed by Members present.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.22 pm.