

Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College

Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of the College Corporation held on Thursday 17 September 2009 at 7.00 pm

Present: Mr C Wiper (Chairman)
Mr D Bihari
Mr P Davison
Mr T Fisher
Mr T Haylett
Mr M Ithurralde
Mrs L Lyle
Mr M Shaw
Mr N Waterfall-Brown

In Attendance: Mr G Barker
Dr S D Hunnisett
Mr T M Loftus
Mrs J Wilson
Mr G Brookes (Clerk)

09/45 Apologies

Apologies were received from Mrs S Barnes, Mrs H Barron, Mrs G Laws, Prof L Oglesby, Mr A Warman, Mr A Wilson, Mrs A Blackburn and Mr L Job and were **accepted** by the Board.

09/46 Minutes of the Meeting held on 25 June 2009

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 June 2009 were **accepted** as a true record by the Board and were signed by the Chairman.

09/47 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

09/48 Outstanding References

There were no outstanding references.

09/49 Urgent Business

No urgent business was raised.

09/50 Publications Distributed since the Last Meeting.

The Clerk referred to the SFCF News No 48 and to the Governor Training 2009/10 list to be covered in item 16.1.

09/51 Governor Training – Lesson Observation

51.1 Mr Barker gave a presentation on the College's lesson observation system which involved two tiers: observation of peers and subject-based grading. The aspects covered included:

- a. The reasons why lesson observations are important.
- b. Strengths and areas of improvement identified in recent Ofsted inspections.
- c. What constitutes a good lesson.
- d. The grid used when observing lessons. This defined the gradings used for various aspects of the lessons and specific areas of good practice. Areas to develop can also be recorded.
- e. The observation schedule to include further subjects in the system.

51.2 Points raised in discussion included:

- a. The sequence in which staff become involved in a particular subject area.
- b. The system will be reviewed as more feedback is collected and as it extends to include more staff.
- c. Similar systems adopted in other professions and the benefits they bring.

09/52 Committee Reports

52.1 Finance and Resources Committee

Mr Wiper referred to the minutes of the meeting held on 8 June 2009 (which had been reported on verbally at the last meeting) and had nothing to add. He also reported on the meeting held on 7 September 2009 and stated that relevant items were to be covered later at this meeting.

The Board **accepted** the report and the minutes of the meeting held on 8 June 2009.

52.2 Search Committee

52.2.1 Mr Wiper reported verbally that on 14 September 2009 the Search Committee had discussed the current vacancy for a Parent Member of the College Corporation and the expectation that there would be two vacancies for Independent Members by the end of 2009.

52.2.2 Ms S Robinson is likely to leave the Darlington area in the near future and Mr N Waterfall-Brown's term of office ends on 31 December 2009 and, because of other commitments, he has decided not to seek re-appointment.

52.2.3 The Committee agreed that the vacancies should be advertised in a College Newsletter and the College Website and, where appropriate, in the local press. Also, a Special Meeting of the Committee will be held on Monday 9 November to pursue the matter further.

52.2.4 Mr Wiper stated that Nigel Waterfall-Brown will not be able to attend the Board meeting on 3 December 2009 and, therefore, took this opportunity to thank him for his contributions to the Board and the Audit Committee during the past 8 years. Nigel had supported many College events and had been involved in the selection of Members of the College staff.

Nigel thanked the Chairman for his remarks and said that he had enjoyed being a Member of the Corporation and wished the College well for the future.

The Board **accepted** the report.

09/53 Strategic Update

53.1 Mr Fisher referred to the following documents which covered the Strategic Update report to the Board:

- a. SFCF Machinery of Government (MOG) Newsletter No 3
This paper provides news of recent developments in the MOG. The most significant area is the need for colleges to choose whether or not to adopt legal designation as a Sixth Form College. The paper also expresses concern that the power of the LSC to appoint one or two governors to the governing body will be transferred to local authorities.
- b. AoC Paper on Sixth Form College Designation
This paper provided an analysis to aid colleges in reaching a decision on the question of designation. It covered the implications, opportunities,

anxieties, unknowns and the timings involved. The answer to the crucial question is likely to be required by the end of December 2009.

- c. Aycliffe and Shildon Schools Education Trust (ASSET)
Mr Fisher confirmed that QESFC is now a member/partner of ASSET.

The Board **accepted** the report.

09/54 College Performance Reports

54.1 Examination Results 2009

Dr Hunnisett referred to the Summary of College Examination Results – Summer 2009 – and congratulated everyone on the splendid results.
The Board **accepted** the report.

54.2 Examination Results (Raw) 2008/09

Mr Barker referred to the Whole College Conclusions and Targets and stated that the value added results would be presented at the next meeting. He covered the 2009 Improvement Targets and the Action Plan
The Board **accepted** the report.

54.3 Student Enrolments by School 2009/2010

Mr Fisher referred to the Population Analysis by School for the 2009 intake and in particular to any significant changes from previous years.
The Board **accepted** the report.

54.4 Student Achievement Data 2009

Mr Barker referred to the Student Achievement Data 2009 which recorded all the relevant information for subjects at all levels.
The Board **accepted** the report.

09/55 Personnel Reports

55.1 Staff Changes 2009/10

Mr Fisher referred to the report on the staffing changes during 2008/09 which included staff leaving (22); external appointments (36); internal appointments/promotions (12); staff statistics (the total number of staff in regular service of (194); temporary staff not in regular service and volunteers. He emphasised that the current staffing levels would meet all the College's commitments for 2009/10.

The report also contained a 'Staff – Who's Who' – September 2009.
The Board **accepted** the report.

55.2 Staff Development Analysis 2009/10

Mrs Wilson referred to the report on Staff Development Analysis 2008-09 and in particular to:

- a. The total costs had increased and the number of person-days on external staff development had decreased. This reflected higher provider and travel costs.
- b. More activities were held in the College led by both external and internal trainers.
- c. The evaluations for activities held throughout the year and the steps taken to minimise costs and select the most appropriate training.

The Board **accepted** the report.

09/56 Premises Report

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

- a. The planned works in the Arts Centre had been completed on time and to budget.

- b. This had provided larger and more suitable spaces for Theatre and Performance Studies and the leasing arrangements had been favourably adjusted in acknowledgment of the expenses incurred.
- c. Various refurbishment and improvements had been carried out in the QE buildings.

The Board **accepted** the report.

09/57 Capital Project

- 57.1 Mr Fisher referred to the LSC letter 'Building Colleges for the Future Programme' dated 1 September 2009 which confirmed the LSC's difficult financial position. He reported that the Finance and Resources Committee had considered the matter and two options had emerged: either acquisition or leasing of facilities to meet the College's anticipated needs.
- 57.2 A meeting had been held with the Local Authority on 16 September 2009 (all the relevant local authority departments were present) at which various options, running costs, community use, approval procedures and timescales were considered
- 57.3 The local authority remains supportive but, in the light of the current financial and political climate, it is important that any decision to proceed further with the project be made as soon as possible
- 57.4 If the project is to move forward a feasibility study will be needed to establish detailed costings and plans. The estimated cost of such a study is £30k (which is unlikely to be re-imbursed by the LSC) and it was suggested that AA Projects be used to carry it out.
- 57.5 The Members considered the matter carefully and confirmed the need to continue with the project and expressed their confidence in AA Projects to carry out the feasibility study. The Board **approved** the continuation of the project as discussed.
- 57.6 Mr Wiper stated that more detailed proposals would be presented to the Board for approval on 3 December 2009.

09/58 Finance Reports

58.1 Finance Report for Year ending 31 July 2009.

Mr Loftus referred to the report for the 12 months to 31 July 2009 and in particular to:

- Para 1.1 - The Net Surplus of £505k compared to the £251k forecast and the reasons involved.
 - The College remains in a healthy financial position.
- Para 5.4 - The financial health score (new) of 380 which converts to Grade 1 – Outstanding.

The accounts are subject to confirmation by KPMG.

The Board **accepted** the report.

58.2 Teaching and Support Staff Salaries.

Mr Fisher reported that salary increases for Teaching and Support Staff were still subject to negotiation between the SFCF and the recognised unions. The College's budget for this year assumes an increase of 2.5% and the Board **approved** an increase for College staff of the level recommended by SFCF provided that it does not exceed the 2.5% already budgeted.

Action Mr Fisher

09/59 Operational Plan Evaluation 2009/10

Mr Barker referred to the colour-coded Operational Plan 2009 which covered Programme Area Actions, Actions from Whole College KPI Reports and Whole College Actions. He pointed out a number of specific KPIs and Key Questions to illustrate the use and value of the document.

The Board **accepted** the report.

09/60 Governance Issues.

60.1 Governor Training Events

The Clerk referred to the list of training events which included extracts of the LSIS Leadership Skills for Governance Programme Guide 2009/10; the SFCF Workshop (22 September) and three North East Governor Training Events to be held locally. Members were asked to contact the Clerk if they wished to attend any of the events or required further information.

Action Members

60.2 Membership Matters

60.2.1 As discussed at the Search Committee meeting on 14 September 2009 there is currently a vacancy for a Parent Member. Also, it is expected that there will be two vacancies for Independent Members by the end of this year:

- a. Mr Nigel Waterfall-Brown's term of office ends on 31 December 2009 and he has decided not to seek re-appointment.
- b. A vacancy will arise if it is confirmed that Ms Sarah Robinson will be leaving Darlington College.

60.2.2 The Search Committee agreed that the vacancies should be advertised in a College Newsletter and on the College Website and, where appropriate, in the local press. A Special Meeting of the Search Committee will be held on Monday 9 November 2009 to consider any candidates and Members were asked to let the Chairman, the Principal or the Clerk know of any potential candidates they may know.

Action All Members/Mr Brookes

60.3 Members' Declaration of Interests.

The Clerk requested that Members update their personal details and declaration of interests and return them to him.

Action Members

09/61 Urgent Business Raised under Item 09/49

No urgent business was raised.

09/62 Confidentiality

Personal details of staff given in Item 09/55.1 and matters raised in Item 09/57 (Capital Project) are confidential.

09/63 Date and Agenda for the next meeting.

The next meeting of the Board will be held on Thursday 3 December 2009 at 7.00 pm.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.17 pm.