



MINUTES OF TRC CORPORATION MEETING –

MONDAY 15th JULY 2013 AT 6.00PM

PRESENT:

Mr J C Wainwright (JCW)(Acting Chair); Dr R J G Bloomer (RJGB); Mr J F B Clark (JFBC); Ms J Collier (JC); Mr P Jagger (PJ); Dr M A Khan (AK); Mr S Kirk (SK); Mrs J Powell (JP); Mr D Suter (DS); Dr P R Williams (RW)

In Attendance:

Mr M Patterson (MP) Vice Principal Finance & Resources
Mr T Dowling (TD) Vice Principal Teaching & Learning
Ms A J Oaks (AO) Clerk to TRC Corporation
Mr N Candy (NC) Acting Clerk to TRC Corporation

1 Apologies for absence:

Mrs A Todd (AT); Mr R Stewart (RS); M Chaudhary(MC); Mrs R Hill (RH) Mr D Fitzgerald (DF)
(Meeting quorate)

ACTION

2 Declaration of interests

Members were reminded of the need to declare any interests and reserved the right to declare an interest at any stage of the meeting. PJ declared an interest in Item 6 in respect of his position as Vice President of the Rotherham and Barnsley Chamber of Commerce.

3 Minutes dated 20th May 2013

The minutes of the meeting held on 20th May 2013 were signed without amendment.

4 Matters arising (not covered by agenda items)

Members noted that all other 'action points' had either been resolved or were agenda items for the meeting.

5 Chair's report incl TRC Strategy paper

JCW referred to the paper distributed prior to the meeting which summarised activities the Chair had been involved with since the last meeting. Appended to the paper was a draft of the Governance Strategy, which Governors agreed was excellent and would inform debate going forwards.

PJ

6 Principal's activities since 20th May 2013

RW referred to the paper distributed prior to the meeting.

RJGB commented that the report was of great value to Governors, as it showed the range of activities the college was involved with, particularly the links with outstanding colleges, employers and alumni. The Principal remarked that in terms of student outcomes, the improved availability of national benchmarking data helped the college to identify colleges with outstanding practice more easily. The proposal to build an Alumni Association was considered excellent.

7 Committee Reports:

7.1 Resources (24/06/13) – the Minutes of the meeting were presented for information.

7.1.1 Accommodation Projects Update

MP referred to the paper which had been discussed in detail at the recent Resources Committee meeting [24/06/13] confirming progress was on target.

7.1.2 Management Accounts June 2013

MP referred to the paper distributed prior to the meeting confirming that forecast was in line with budget at the end of the month.

The Corporation approved the June 2013 Management Accounts as presented

7.1.3 Financial Plans 2013/14 – 2015/16

MP referred to the paper which had been discussed in detail at the recent Resources Committee meeting [24/06/13]. Specific aspects of the Plan were discussed. Cash balance was reported to be a healthy £1.5m. Governors noted that the budget for 2013/14 recorded a deficit of c£220k, moving to a small surplus in years 2 and 3 of the Plan. Discussion took place with regard to the affordability of a general pay award. MP advised that an increase of 1% had been budgeted in years 2 and 3 but that if for the coming academic year a pay award of up to 1% was proposed by the SFCA and agreed by the Unions and recommended, the college would like to honour this. It was proposed to make a pay award of 1.5% to staff earning less than the minimum living wage which would cost the college £1500. The Tribal benchmarking exercise had indicated some areas where further savings could be achieved and this would be considered once the position with regard to enrolment was confirmed. Governors noted that the financial health grade moved from Good in years 1 and 2 of the Plan to outstanding in year 3 due to there being no debts and a health cash balance.

The Corporation approved the 2013/14 – 2015/16 Financial Plans as presented.

7.1.4 Fees (i) Policy (ii) Course Fees 2013/14

(i) Policy: MP referred to the paper which had been discussed in detail at the recent Resources Committee meeting [24/06/13]. No changes had been made to the Policy which was in line with the new funding methodology.

(ii) Course Fees 2013/14

MP referred to the paper which had been discussed in detail at the recent Resources Committee meeting [24/06/13].

The Corporation approved the Fees Policy and the 2013/14 Course Fees as presented.

7.1.5 VFM (i) 2013/14 Action Plan (ii) 2012/13 Report

MP referred to the 3 key areas where it had been identified that the College could potentially achieve savings. Following a question from PJ regarding the IT Network upgrade, the Chair proposed that Governors' requirements be determined as soon as possible in order that MP could ensure accessibility for Governors going forward. The Clerk undertook to manage this process.

The Corporation approved the 2013/14 VFM Action Plan as presented and noted the 2012/13 VFM Report.

**AJO/
MP**

7.1.6 H&S Action Plan 2012/13

Recommendations and improvement actions were noted.

The Corporation noted the H&S 2012/13 Action Plan as presented

7.1.7 Safeguarding and Child Protection (i) Policy (ii) 2012/13 Report

RW referred to the papers which had been discussed in detail at the recent Resources Committee meeting [24/06/13]. References to CRB would be amended to DBS.

ii) Governors commented that the Report was comprehensive and clearly demonstrated the effectiveness of the procedures.

The Corporation approved the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy as presented and noted the 2012/13 Safeguarding and Child Protection report.

7.1.8 Whistleblowing Policy

RW referred to the paper which had been discussed in detail at the recent Resources Committee meeting [24/06/13]. An amendment had been made to include a reference to the www.pcaw.org website which provided advice for potential whistleblowers. PJ asked if the Policy had ever been invoked, to which RW said that it had not.

The Corporation approved the Whistleblowing Policy as presented.

7.2 Governance (24/06/13)

RJGB presented the Minutes of the meeting held on 24/6/13 for information and thanked RS and SK for attending as observers. Governors noted the business that had been conducted and of the action points for the future.

7.2.1 Current governors extension to term of office [DF] [JP]

JCW commented that the term of office in respect of both DF and JP had expired recently. He had discussed the position with both and they had agreed to a two year extension accordingly. The Chair proposed that they both be reappointed for a period of two years to provide some continuity but allowing for membership to be refreshed after that period.

The Corporation approved a two year extension [to 14th July 2015] in respect of DF and JP's term of office.

7.2.2 New Governor appointments [JE] [BO]

JCW commented that both these applicants had been interviewed by himself, RJGB, JC and RW on 1st July 2013 as representatives of the Governance Committee, with the Clerk in attendance. It had been unanimously agreed that both applicants would bring significant expertise to the Board, particularly from an 'educational' and business perspective. CVs had been circulated to Governors prior to the meeting.

The Corporation approved the appointment of Jonathan Ellis and Ben Owen as members of TRC Corporation for an initial period of four years [to 14th July 2017]

JCW provided an update on the position with regard to remaining candidates who had also been interviewed on 1 July 2013. The details of two had been retained for the future and two others had been informed their skills did not fully meet the criteria sought. RJGB was delighted with the response to the recruitment campaign in recent months, which had enabled the Corporation to appoint Governors with excellent skills and experience.

RGJB reassured members that whilst all recent appointments were male, they were appointed on merit and for the breadth of their skills and experience. He added that every effort was still being made to encourage expressions of interest from females to improve the gender balance. Governors acknowledged the efforts being made and agreed that it was essential to appoint the right individuals. JCW proposed the College launch a further advertising campaign in the autumn term to strengthen and refresh membership. Governors had been requested to inform the Clerk as to the efforts that had been made in recent months to improve the gender balance.

PJ/
AJO

7.2.3 2013 Skills Audit & Supplementary questions

All governors had responded to the survey. The analysis indicated a high level of professional skills amongst members of the Corporation. Referring to the increased emphasis on teaching and learning, RJGB commented that there was an increased expectation by Ofsted that Governors should be monitoring the performance of the College more efficiently and effectively and that an understanding of the curriculum and teaching, learning and attainment was required. With this in mind several additional questions had been suggested for consideration. Following discussion on their relevance and value to the skills audit, it was agreed that the questions could be reworded to enhance the analysis. RJGB emphasised that the need for training had been recognised and that the Clerk had been tasked with bringing a proposed training programme to the Corporation in the autumn term.

AJO

AJO

7.2.4 Designated Safeguarding Governor [SK]

RJGB commented that SK had kindly offered to volunteer as the designated Safeguarding Governor, given his experience in his role as Chief Executive of Rotherham MIND. He was thanked for his offer which was accepted accordingly.

The Corporation approved the appointment of SK as the designated Safeguarding Governor.

7.3 Audit (01/07/13) – items for full Corporation

1 July were presented by the Chair of the Committee, JC who proposed an amendment to paragraph 7. The last sentence was deleted and the amended Minutes would be presented for approval to the Audit Committee at its next meeting.

7.3.1 Cleanmail Solutions item

CONFIDENTIAL – recorded separately.

7.3.2 Risk Management Action Plan 2013/14

The Corporation approved the 2013/14 Risk Management Action Plan as presented.

7.4 Quality and Standards

The Minutes of the meeting held on 1 July 2013 were presented for information.

7.4.1 Letter from Improvement HMI Inspector

Members had received a copy of the letter following the last visit by the HMI on 11 June 2013. The letter referred to support and challenge arrangements and Governors had noted the importance of their monitoring role and appropriate training.

The Corporation noted the letter accordingly.

7.4.2 Lesson Observations report

TD explained that observations had been assessed in a different way this year to provide a grade for teaching, learning and assessment which had been a positive process. Governors noted the target was to achieve 85% good or better teaching.

The Corporation noted the paper as presented.

7.4.3 Operational Plan 2012/13 / PIAP

RW presented the report which was comprehensive and included detailed data that had been shared with the HMI at their last visit. Final evaluation would be forthcoming in the autumn once exam results were announced.

The Corporation noted the paper as presented.

7.4.4 Teaching, Learning and Assessment Improvement Strategy

The report covered 5 broad areas for improvement identified by Ofsted. Progress against the actions would be monitored through a user-friendly traffic light reporting format that would be presented to the Q&S Committee at each meeting. It was noted that the document provided essential evidence of the actions being taken by the College to address the areas for improvement and that it would be updated continually.

The Corporation approved the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Improvement Strategy as presented.

7.4.5 Retention Data

RW summarised the data within the report which indicated that retention of students had fallen in the small level 2 cohort, where there had been some issues around student enrolment using GCSE equivalences, which were not the best preparation for our level 2 programme, but risen at level 3. He added that retention by course enrolment at L3 had fallen slightly due to some students choosing not to re-sit January exams and being asked to drop those subjects where re-sitting was essential to have a chance of passing

The Corporation noted the paper as presented.

7.4.6 Learner Voice

Governors were informed that the response rate to the learner survey had been excellent and that the data provided good evidence for the self assessment process, where Heads of Departments were quoting strengths. The headline data would be presented to the next Q&S committee. DS was invited to comment, and agreed that the process was much easier and quicker this year. Governors stressed the importance of learner feedback in order to continually improve standards.

The Corporation thanked TD for his verbal report.

8 College Development Plan 2013 – 2015

RW referred to the paper distributed prior to the meeting, explaining that this was a first draft, with approval to the final version to follow in the Autumn. Reference was made to key points within the Plan, the position statement and aims and objectives of the College.

RW was pleased to report that students on TDOWL's initiative made a valued and significant input to proposed revisions to the Mission statement, which had then received further amendments from the staff and SMT. JCW stated that given the importance of the document it would be appropriate to consider at length at the autumn meeting. In the meantime Governors were asked to provide comments and observations to RW via the Clerk.

**RW/
AJO**

The Corporation noted the paper as presented.

9 Corporation Committees – proposed meeting dates 2013/14

The draft Calendar was presented and would be confirmed at the next meeting in September.

Following a comment from the Vice Chair regarding the importance of Governors being well informed on teaching, learning and assessment it was proposed consideration be given to ways in which the structure could be changed to engage all Governors and facilitate informed debate in key areas.

The Corporation agreed to consider ways in which Governors can engage more fully in respect to their monitoring role.

**AJO/
PJ**

10 Foundation Issues

JFBC reported that applications had been received for various scholarships which would be considered in August. MP confirmed that the transfer of the Funds to the Feoffees of Rotherham had been completed. MP was requested to write formally to the Feoffees to seek financial support by way of a grant, for future College Celebration evenings.

MP

11 Corporation Committee Annual Assessment

AO referred to the paper issued prior to the meeting and asked for completed forms to be returned to her by 31st July 2013 if possible.

12 Any other business

12.1 Last meetings

12.1.1 VA – Staff Governor

12.1.2 DS – Student Governor

12.1.3 NC – Acting Clerk to TRC Corporation

All the above were thanked for their contribution to the business of the Corporation.

Members wished them well in their future activities.

NC had agreed to return to the College as Acting Clerk in August 2012. He was thanked by the Chair for his help and support in what had been a challenging time for the College. NC was presented with a small gift as recognition of his service. On behalf of all the staff RW thanked NC for his help and support.

12.2 Resignation of Acting Chair

JCW confirmed his resignation as Chair of TRC Corporation with immediate effect.

thanked colleagues, with particular thanks to JFBC and RJGB and Chairs of

Committees for their support. Thanks were also conveyed to RW, MP, TD and SMT

who had worked hard over the last year with Governors to move the College forward.

JCW wished everyone well and hoped to see the College achieve a Grade of Outstanding in coming years. RW, on behalf of staff and JFBC, on behalf of Governors thanked JCW for his commitment and service to the College over the last 14 years, and commended him for his drive and foresight in steering the Corporation and College on a purposeful course.

12.3 Election of Corporation Chair

P J withdrew from the meeting.

AO confirmed that one nomination for the post of Chair had been received, from Paul Jagger (PJ) whose CV had been re-circulated to members for information. Statements of support for the nomination had been received from a number of governors. The nomination was proposed by JCW and seconded by JFBC and voting took place by show of hands.

The Corporation unanimously approved the appointment of PJ as Chair for an initial period of two years [to 14th July 2015].

PJ joined the meeting and was congratulated on the appointment. He thanked colleagues for their support, recognising the commitment of the Corporation to the challenges ahead and advised that he would meet informally with all Governors in due course.

The meeting closed at 8pm.

13 Date of next meeting

16 September 2013 at 6.00 pm

Signed: P Jagger MBE (Chair)

Date: 16 September 2013