

Minutes of Corporation meeting – Thursday 29th March 2012 at 6:30pm

Present

Mr J F Bingham (JFB) (Chairman), Cllr C Barron (CB), Dr R J G Bloomer (RJGB), Mr J F B Clark (JFBC), Mr D Fitzgerald (DF), Mrs R Hill (RS), Dr M A Khan (AK), Mrs W Meehan (WM), Mr Z Nazir (ZN), Dr J Stevens (JS), Mrs K Stevens (KS), Mr J C Wainwright (JCW), Dr P R Williams (RW)

In attendance

Mr T Dowling (TD), Mr M Patterson (MP), Mrs L Clark (LC) (Clerk)

Actions

1 Apologies for absence

Mrs J Bolton (JB), Mrs J Collier (JC), Mrs J Powell (JP), Mr D Suter (DS)

2 Declaration of interests

No interests were declared in respect of agenda items; however, members reserved the right to declare an interest at any stage of the meeting.

3 New Student Governors

JFB welcomed Zubair Nazir (ZN) and Daniel Suter (DS) to the TRC Corporation. DS was on a Geography field trip so had sent apologies for this meeting. JFB commented that in future years the timing of student governor elections should be such that there will be a student from each of the upper and lower sixth on the Board. This would require elections early in the L6 year with each student serving for a two year period. The result will be one person will be elected from L6 each year.

4 Minutes dated 12th December 2011

The minutes of the meeting held on 12th December 2011 were approved with no amendments.

5 Matters Arising

Members noted all action points had been resolved or were agenda items at this meeting.

6 Committee Reports

6.1 Foundation Fund (05/03/12) – items for full Corporation

6.1.1 Foundation Fund Portfolio – investment update

JFB summarised the activity of the Foundation Fund committee since the previous Corporation meeting. There had been two meetings of the committee (26th January and 5th March 2012). The first meeting had focussed on the portfolio of investments and it had received advice from Investec, who had sent a representative to address the committee. It had been agreed

subsequently to invest the fund entirely with Investec (and taking the monies out of COIF) in their balanced, medium risk portfolio. It was agreed to regard this as the zero base starting point for reviewing the return on capital so as to enable the committee to judge progress with the fund. At the second committee meeting the decisions were formally ratified.

6.2 Governance (05/03/12) – items for full Corporation

6.2.1 Succession Planning 2011 / 12 – 2015 / 16 – Potential Vacancies and filling them

JFB summarised key points from the recent committee meeting, commenting that the terms of office of a number of existing governors will be completed over the next two years. It was agreed that an election for two parent governors would be required in September 2012. There was also a need to start advertising for potential governors. The local Chambers of Commerce were identified as possible sources. JFB reiterated that it is important that people are aware that they would be applying to become a governor but they would not necessarily be appointed as it would depend on specific skill set requirements being matched with vacancies particular to the board.

JFBC suggested that the Foundation members be added to the succession planning document, along with the staff vacancy.

JFB also commented that the Governance committee had discussed the low attendance of one member and that he would be writing a letter to him informing him that he could no continue as a governor, but suggest looking at other ways he may wish to be involved with the college.

JFB / JCW /
LC

The Corporation noted the paper as presented.

6.3 Resources (05/03/12) – items for full Corporation

6.3.1 Accommodation Projects

1. New Minibus

MP referred to the paper distributed prior to the meeting and provided a background summary of this item. MP had conducted further investigation regarding the potential for a 'partnership' or joint venture in sharing a bus with an existing, local, coach operator and JP had indicated that companies may be interested in such an arrangement. MP is to investigate further and also liaise with the auditors as this arrangement is away from the 'norm' and it would need to be determined whether such an arrangement would be classed as a capital or revenue cost.

The government are currently reviewing the rules on what constitutes a mini bus and thereby categorise who can legally drive them. MP has also further researched into converted vans; the quality of which appears to be exactly the same as a minibus.

After a discussion JFB confirmed that the governors are happy for MP to continue to explore all options further and bring these back to the Resources committee for consideration.

MP

2. External Lights

Following the suggestion at the recent Resources meeting that Rotherham United Football Club be contacted regarding the lighting technology they were installing in their new stadium, MP reported they are not using LED lighting. MP commented that the technology for LED lighting is still under development, hence the inclusion in the capital budget for next year which after further consideration and possible approval by the Corporation any replacement installation can take place and if such is suitable. It was agreed that the existing security floodlights can be replaced with LED lighting during next summer.

The Corporation approved the inclusion of the lighting in the capital budget.

The Corporation noted the paper as presented.

6.3.2 Management Accounts February 2012 (inc departmental accounts)

MP referred to the paper distributed prior to the meeting highlighting that there were no major issues.

The Corporation approved the February 2012 Management Accounts and the departmental accounts as presented.

6.3.3 Proposed changes to Financial Regulations

MP referred to the paper distributed prior to the meeting which highlighted the minor changes. The Resources and Audit committee have recommended the changes to the Corporation for approval.

The Corporation approved the proposed changes to the Financial Regulations.

6.3.4 Teaching & Support Staff Pay Award 2011

RW stated that there is no change to the previous position and the SFCF is still not proposing any pay award. Teaching Unions are considering strike action against this recommendation which may affect TRC.

6.3.5 H&S Action Plan 2011/ 12 and UMAL Report (including accident report)

MP referred to the papers distributed prior to the meeting. There are two outstanding issues but these will be dealt with by the next meeting of the Health and Safety committee which meets after the Easter break.

The Corporation noted the paper as presented.

6.4 Quality and Standards (12/05/03) – items for full Corporation

DF stated that the recent meeting of the Q&S committee had not been quorate and therefore only 'notes' were made. The major area of discussion was the January results and the progress with the underperforming

departments. It was felt progress was being made although this 'felt' slow.

6.4.1 January Exam Results and progress with underperforming departments

RW referred to the papers distributed prior to the meeting summarising key points and making particular reference to departments graded 4 last year. Of these Law, which had achieved a very poor pass rate was the only one which has not made at least 'some minor' improvement. Results in Psychology were above last year's final pass rate but were still disappointing, although as there was no January exam last year it is difficult to compare. Other subjects have shown progress and one reason for this is believed to be the newly introduced entry requirements in the sciences - B grade in Additional Science if the students have taken double science (Core and Additional).

DF indicated that the Q&S committee has looked in depth at the results and plans for improvement and have been more challenging over the past year. What is important now is for the college to achieve more consistency with results as there is still a very mixed picture which is still not acceptable. There was also a discussion regarding January exams and questions asked as to why some subject areas do not enter students during this period.

The Corporation noted the paper as presented.

6.4.2 Annual Operational Plans Update

RW referred to the paper distributed prior to the meeting. Most of the actions are on course but much of the quantitative data will not be known until August. There was a query on section B1 – TD confirmed that the 'coaching' was a technique that staff can volunteer to be trained in.

The Corporation noted the paper as presented.

6.4.3 DfE Performance Tables

RW referred to the paper distributed prior to the meeting, summarising the performance tables. There was discussion surrounding General Studies, as the mass entry to this subject has a significant impact on overall achievement. There had been considerable discussion regarding General Studies at the recent Q&S committee meeting focussing on the financial and the educational points of view on General Studies, its impact on College statistics and reputation but also on student progression, as in some cases the points achieved for General Studies boosts individual students' university applications. Next year the college has decided that General Studies will not be available for new AS level students. In addition, the post-16 funding methodology may not be changing in the way originally believed and therefore a decision may need to be made about General Studies and what will be provided for students who are taking AS courses this year and will continue to A2 level. Also decisions will need to be made about what might be offered to next years Lower Sixth.

RW pointed out that inspectors did not seem to be allowing colleges to

disaggregate General Studies from other results when measuring overall success rates.

There was discussion regarding:

the cost of entry to the exam;

lecture time devoted to the subject;

how removal may not necessarily improve results in other subjects;

the impact nonetheless on overall success rates and Inspection grades;

that students could be given the option of the course;

that those students who are successful on the course tend to be those who have good GCSE results and would likewise be the students who would not rely on General Studies to boost their university application and would not therefore opt for it.

It was also reported that a 'fair' proportion of students who were entered did not bother to turn up for the exam. It was agreed that this was totally unacceptable. The SMT were asked to investigate ways by which anyone not turning up for an examination, without a doctors medical certificate, might be made to refund the examination fee.

Members agreed that at their next meeting the Q&S committee would discuss further and take on board the points raised by the Corporation, with a view to making a recommendation to the Corporation.

Q&S cttee

The Corporation noted the paper as presented.

6.4.4 Retention Rates

RW referred to the paper distributed prior to the meeting commenting that looking at the figures based on 1st March the overall retention looks reasonable.

The Corporation noted the paper as presented.

6.4.5 Customer Complaints

RW referred to the paper distributed prior to the meeting summarising the issues. JFB asked for the inclusion of timescales on the document.

The Corporation noted the paper as presented.

6.4.6 Possible new OFSTED Inspection Framework and Focus on three main areas

JFB referred to the papers distributed prior to the meeting. At the recent Governance Summit the likely new framework for OFSTED had been discussed which the Corporation should be aware of.

The Corporation noted the paper as presented.

6.5 Audit (12/05/03) – items for full Corporation

DF commented that the recent Audit committee meeting had not been quorate and therefore ‘notes’ were taken, but that there were no major issues to discuss.

6.5.1 Internal Audit Report 2011 /12

DF referred to the paper distributed prior to the meeting commenting that the college had received a good report and a clean audit.

The Corporation approved the Internal Audit Report.

7 Equality and Diversity Report

7.1 Equality data publication

RW introduced this item stating that the college now had a responsibility to publish equality data. The range of ‘protected characteristics’ has been widened and staff have been asked to complete a survey anonymously on this. The college still does not reflect the ethnic make-up of its student in its staffing but there is continued effort to promote diversity in job adverts etc. The gender gap in student achievement was also discussed. TD has formed a working group of staff to explore ways in which to narrow the gap

7.2 Equality Objectives

RW referred to the paper distributed prior to the meeting. These will be reviewed annually and focus on the gender gap and the new protected characteristics. It was agreed that further consideration will be given as to how and when students will also participate in the survey. RW to amend the Equality Objectives to reflect this.

RW

The Corporation approved the Equality Objectives with the above amendment.

8 Code of Governance

JFB provided a brief background to the Code. It will ensure that a minimum threshold standard will be met by all colleges. It was agreed that the Corporation would adopt the Code of Governance, and ensure the annual financial statements reflected this.

LC was requested to produce a document which looked at each paragraph in the Code and commented on how TRC matched each element and thereby enable the Corporation to highlight those areas of governance that will need to be addressed to ensure the Code is adhered with.

LC

RW asked which other sixth form colleges had adopted the Code. JFB to investigate.

The Corporation agreed to adopt the Code of Governance.

9 New Challenges, New Chances (and Colleges in their Communities)

JFB referred to the paper distributed prior to the meeting. These are the core documents that the sector is looking to at present, which give Governing bodies more freedom but in turn, also more responsibilities. JFB indicated that the Corporation needs to be aware of these papers and they needed to be reviewed in conjunction with the 2011 Education Act.

The Corporation noted the paper as presented.

10 Modification Order

JFB introduced this item, providing some background to the issue and referring to the papers distributed prior to the meeting. The original letter from YPLA dated 29th February 2012, asked for approval to the modification order by 20th March. It was clarified by YPLA that by not consenting by this date, the Corporation would in effect be approving by default. The issue in question is that TRC, a former voluntary aided college, needs permission from the Foundation to make changes to the Instrument and Articles of Association. There has been considerable discussion regarding what 'constitutes' the 'Foundation' in respect of the TRC Corporation.; i.e. is it the representatives of the Foundation who are appointed to the Corporation, or the Foundation (The Feoffees) itself?

Foundation
Fund

JFBC questioned who owned the college land. MP replied that he will research the land transfers and confirm, but is certain that it was all transferred to the Corporation at Incorporation. JFB concurred with this opinion. The Feoffees are scheduled to discuss these issues at the AGM (on 30th March) but the meeting as a whole give consent to the Modification order.

JFB concluded that although the Corporation has not had appropriate time to consider due to the timetable issued by the YPLA, the Corporation approve the modification order and look forward to the flexibility it will provide in the future.

LC

LC to contact YPLA to confirm our consent and to seek acknowledgment from them that we have consented.

The Corporation approved the Modification Order.

11 Foundation Issues

None were raised.

(Post meeting note – at the AGM of the Feoffees on 30th March the four existing representatives of the foundation, viz;

John F B Clark

R J Giles Bloomer

Jane Collier

Karen Stevens

were confirmed as representatives on the TRC Board from the Foundation.)

12 Any other business

None

13 Date of next meeting
 Monday 21st May at 6:30pm

14 Confidential Items (see Confidential agenda)
The detailed minutes and supporting papers are available from the Clerk to the Corporation.

Signed.....*J F Bingham*.....

Date.....*21st May 2012*.....

ACTIONS – Corporation meeting – Thursday 29th March 2012 at 6:30pm

Item	Action to be taken	By whom	By when
6.2.1	Succession Planning	JFB / JCW / LC	ongoing
6.3.1	Further investigation regarding minibus	MP	Next RES mtg
6.4.3	Discussions and decisions regarding General Studies	Q&S cttee	Next Q&S mtg
7.2	Amendment to the Equality Objectives	RW	Asap
8	Code of Governance – review	LC	Ongoing
10	Foundation Fund to discuss the Modification Order at the AGM on 30 th March.	Foundation Fund – Feoffees	Mtg on 30 th March
	Contact YPLA to consent to the Modification Order	LC	By 30 th March