

Minutes of a meeting of the Governing Body of Tresham Institute of Further and Higher Education held on Thursday 29 January 2009, at 16.00 hours in the Old Cytringanians Room, Windmill Avenue, Kettering.

Present: E Baines (Chair)
A P Blunt (Vice-Chair)
J Bews
I Bray
T Day
J Dickinson
D Hayes
C Isham
M Malin
A McGlynn
D Mills
M Silverman
Dr C Sworn
A P M Waterfield
G Wooldridge

In Attendance: S Kind (Director of Corporate Services)
A Stephens (Minute taker)
S Wesselby (Vice-Principal)

The Vice-Chair introduced Mr Ian Bray to members, noting that before qualifying as a surveyor, Ian had been a BTEC Construction student at Tresham. It was proposed by A P Blunt, seconded by M Malin and unanimously agreed *that Ian Bray be elected a Governor of Tresham institute for a period of four years.* The Chair introduced two other new governors, Mrs Chris Isham, newly elected staff governor, and Mr Tim Day a student governor. He welcomed all new governors to the Board.

01/09 Apologies

1 A Dicks
P Wardle
K White
M Lumsden
C Robinson (Clerk to the Governors)

02/09 Declaration of Interest

2 The Chair asked any member present to declare any interest they might have in items on the agenda. M Malin declared an interest in the St Mary's Road item and would take no part in any discussions or decisions.

03/09 10 Minute Topic

3 Learner Retention Strategy 2008/2009 – Katrina McCarthy
K McCarthy gave members a short presentation on the Institute's Learner Retention Strategy. It was noted that the Institute in the past had a variable record on retention with some areas falling below national benchmarks, consequently a learner retention strategy has been introduced to improve retention. The strategy is comprehensive and cross-college and involves the use of focus groups across five areas, each area having its own strategy. A key component of the strategy is to work with learners, early identification of retention problems and to reward good attendance. For example there have been progression review weeks resulting in a raffle. K McCarthy said that attendance is rigorously monitored every week at the College Leadership Group, the College Management Group, the Heads of Schools meeting and then filtered down to team meetings.

Another focus for the strategy is to address unauthorised absence and to get to the reasons why learners are not attending. The new College Reporting System has enabled a traffic light system to be introduced to identify those learners “at risk” and to give personal tutors relevant and up to date information. Concluding K McCarthy said that in 2008/2008 retention was 84% and we are aiming for the high eighties this year. Currently retention is satisfactory although a small drop in numbers is to be expected.

The Chair thanked K McCarthy for her presentation and observed that it was important that data supplied should be “live” and continuous.

04/09 Minutes of the meeting held on 4 December 2009

4 The minutes were agreed and signed

05/09 Matters Arising

85/08 Measures for Success

5 This item would be carried forward.

85/08 Rutland Young Peoples Learning Partnership

6 The Principal said that there had not been any further significant discussions concerning Rutland since the last meeting, there is however a meeting of all Governing Bodies concerned with the proposals and all members are invited. The meeting will be on Thursday 19 March 2009, Victoria Hall, Oakham at 6.00pm. The meeting will be run by Rutland County Council and the four College Principals, all members were welcome to attend. The Chair stated that no decisions would be made at the meeting.

86/08 Insurance Brokers

7 The Director of Finance reported that discussions were still ongoing.

06/09 Teaching and Learning and Achievement

- 8 Curriculum Strategy - Update

R Emery and A Hope gave a short presentation to update members on the Institute’s Curriculum Strategy. (Paper B) The curriculum needs to be regularly reviewed so that it is responsive to changes in the market or policy making. Members were told of the strategic priorities for the curriculum of the Institute and were shown the current curriculum offer for learners. The strategy has a firm belief in partnerships and collaborative working. The Government has introduced new initiatives to meet employer needs and incentives for employers to develop apprenticeship training; the college is actively responding to these initiatives. The Principal said the college was responsive to changes in policy making but a major focus would still be on its core business and the need to deliver high quality.

Members were then informed of developments in 14-19 provision where the College is a major player, the Institute is involved in five separate consortia and a strategic aim is to develop and maintain a responsive and collaborative curriculum in partnership with others.

Higher Education will continue to be developed and the Institute will seek to grow provision by engaging more effectively with our FE learners, school partners and local employers.

The curriculum risk analysis was discussed by members. The Principal explained that it enabled the Institute to monitor changes in provision and illustrated where we are and where we have to go. In response to questions from members A Hope said that the current document would shortly be historic as changes were happening across the college and the new document would be different. The Principal said that the analysis showed that quality is not where we want it to be and the action being taken to address the risk analysis would be presented to governors. He noted that staff were doing an excellent job in responding to changing curriculum demands because of current economic events and the need for flexibility in curriculum provision would be paramount in the future.

- 9 Key Performance Indicators - update

The Vice-Principal displayed the College Reporting System and updated members on KPI’s, reminding governors that in order to reach intended retention and success rate targets it is important to monitor attendance and retention on a regular basis. Last year the cross college attendance figure was 89% and a target has been set for a minimum of 90% attendance across all

courses this year. The college target for retention this year is 89% and current attendance is satisfactory. The Vice-Principal also illustrated the current applications for the academic year 2009/2010 saying it was important to monitor these to ensure the college meets key enrolment targets set by the LSC. At present figures are well up on last year, 933 to date compared to 600 this time last year. The Principal said that open evenings have been well attended but noted that the LSC would need to supply the necessary funding for the expected students, the Institute could not afford to enrol extra students that were unfunded.

- 10 First Impressions Survey

The Vice-Principal presented the First Impressions Survey, Paper C. He said the college had adopted a new approach to learner feedback this year and has used QDP, a national provider of learner surveys to the sector, to produce a First Impressions Survey. Using QDP allows the college to benchmark our learner responses against other colleges and allow over time to measure distance travelled. The survey revealed that the Institute's performance overall is in the upper quartile of benchmarked responses, there was however less favourable feedback from learners in Sport and Leisure, ICT and Business and Professional although there was very favourable feedback from Health and Social care, Essential Skills and Service Industries. The Vice-Principal said that managers have now been asked to produce action plans to address any areas that are below benchmarks and concluded by saying that it is planned to produce a mid year survey for all students and an end of year survey using the same format.

- 11 Teaching and Learning Profiles Report

The Vice-Principal updated members on the teaching and learning profiles from the teaching and learning observation process. He said that the lesson observation process has been rigorously reviewed and overhauled. He noted that outstanding observations are 4% above the 07/08 final outrun but the current figure of 6% inadequate observations is 3% above 07/08 figures, this may be due to the robustness of the observation process. C Isham said that staff felt that the observation process would have been fairer if the observer has remained for the whole lesson, the Vice-Principal replied that the college was using Ofsted criteria,

07/09 Estates Strategy

- 12 Capital Projects Update

The Director of Finance updated members on developments with the Capital Projects. members were told the Institute, along with other colleges, is facing a frustrating three month delay period as the LSC has deferred decisions on capital projects, this is because it is revising the exact level of financial exposure and commitment relating to capital projects nationally. It is hoped that some form of prioritisation will follow. Clearly this will have effects on our timetable and planning processes. There followed extensive discussions by members on the implications of the delay and the Chair asked for a strategy to lobby the case for the Institute. The Principal said that there had been a meeting with P Head, LSC National Director for capital projects and T Crompton Regional LSC Director to discuss the status and implications of the delays upon our capital projects. The Principal said that it had been a difficult meeting but the college needed to remain positive, we have a very good scheme and the Institute needed to be ready to progress whatever the outcomes of the LSC's review. It is likely that colleges will learn of any decisions between March and June. Governors considered the possible financial implications of the delay and in response to a question concerning fees, S Kind said that another £200K would be needed to cover all three projects. The Principal said we needed to be positive and the Institute is doing all it can to press its case; he noted we may well need to build over a longer period of time. After further discussion the Chair suggested inviting T Crompton to meet some governors for supper, to press the case and ask for his support.

- 13 St Mary's Road Report

S Kind updated the Board on the disposal of the St Mary's Road site. He informed members that Barrats have "walked away" from the site under the terms of the agreement because of the failure to remove the covenants. They have not ruled out the possibility of returning with another (reduced) offer. He said that he has spoken to the LSC and the bank and observed that in the

current economic climate we have to consider our options. The Chair observed that there was no pressure to sell; in response to questions from members S Kind said that Barclays are currently considering a request to defer repayment of the bridging loan to August 2010. Governors requested that they be given regular updates on progress including financial implications.

08/09 Corporate

- 14 Draft Strategic Plan –Update on Consultation and Progress

The Principal referred to the consultation feedback paper and said stakeholders including schools, local councils, and businesses had been consulted on the Draft Strategic plan. The response had been positive a more definitive plan would be produced in April.

- 15 Principal's Blog

The Principal asked members to note his blog which had been circulated earlier. The new college targets were listed.

- 16 Ofsted AAV Visit

In response to a request at the last Board meeting members were given a copy of the AAV Visit report from Ofsted. The Principal said that the inspectors had found the visit difficult as so much in the college had changed since their last visit and he felt encouraged by this. The report found that the college had made reasonable progress in all areas except for ICT. There followed a brief discussion on ICT and the Principal said the college was aware of the need to improve and these issues were being addressed. In response to questions from the student governors the Principal asked them to pass on any ideas to the Vice- Principal or G Wooldridge.

09/09 Financial

- 17 Financial Reports

The Director of Finance presented members with a revised forecast of the estimated out-turn position 2008/2009. He said there were no major alarm bells so far, there had been swings in activity, there was an issue with fees but there had been staff savings. Based on the latest available data, management are reasonably confident that the 2008/2009 LSC core targets will be met and the revised forecast for the year to 31 July 2009 depicts an operating surplus of £30k.

- 18 Management Accounts

The management accounts for the period to 31st December 2008 were presented to the Board. These were received and noted by the Board.

- 19 Audit Committee Minutes

The Audit Committee minutes of the 20 November 2008 were presented to the Board. The minutes were received and noted by the Board.

10/09 Any Other Business

- 20 Search and Governance Committee

A P Blunt reported on the last Search and Governance Committee meeting and for the benefit of new governors explained the role of the Committee. The Committee itself was undergoing change in that two serving members who had made a valuable contribution to the Institute were retiring. Two new members were under consideration and after the necessary interviews their names would be given to the Board for approval. A P Blunt said that attendance in the new year after four Board meetings was averaging just under 75% and reminded members that attendance was a contributory factor in Ofsted's judgement on Governance.

A training session for Governors would be arranged by the Clerk and members were asked for their preferences as to the date and time. After discussion a mid week evening in late March was suggested.

11/08 Date of Next Meeting – Thursday 5 March 2009 at 4.00pm.

