

Minutes of the Audit Committee of Tresham Institute of Further and Higher Education held on Thursday 9 October 2008 at 14.30 hours in the Principal's office, Windmill Avenue, Kettering.

Present: M Lumsden (Chair)
P Wardle

In attendance: S Kind (Director of Finance)
M Beecroft (Health and Safety Manager)
N Crail (Grant Thornton)
Chris Robinson (Clerk to the Governors)

A31/08 Election of Chair

- 1 There being no other candidate M Lumsden was elected Chair.
The Chair welcomed N Crail of Grant Thornton to the meeting.

A32/08 Apologies

- 2 A McGlyn

A33/08 Minutes of meeting held on 19 June 2008

- 3 A25/08 5, S Kind in response to a query by the Chair said there was now good monitoring of Capital Projects.
A26/08 11, The Chair noted that the auditors had not consulted with the Audit Committee, however he would be liaising with N Crail to remedy this.
The minutes were approved and signed.

A34/08 Matters Arising – Future working of the Committee

- 4 The Chair referred to the copy of his e-mail of the 30 June 2008, (attached to minutes) saying that the Committee needed to be clear on its purpose and role. The role of the Committee is to report to the Board that the financial and other management systems are adequate. After discussion it was agreed that the most effective way of achieving this would be for members of the Committee to concentrate on a particular area of the Committee's remit: for example, Health and Safety, Risk Management, Internal/External Audit, the Chair said he would be happy to major on the audit side. The Committee also discussed ways in which documentation could be reduced to focus on the key role of the Committee, N Crail stated that Grant Thornton would try and smooth out their reports.

A35/08 Health and Safety

- 5 M Beecroft tabled the Health and Safety Monthly Feedback Report and the Occupational Health and Safety Action Plan 2008/2009 and updated the Committee developments. He said that many issues of Health and Safety concern accountability and the management of Health and Safety. The goal is to give ownership of Health and Safety to managers in the Institute and responsibility is devolved to Heads of Schools. He said he was unclear where the responsibility for Health and Safety lies noting that there was no committee structure. S Kind asked whether he had seen the Principal. M Beecroft drew the Committee's attention to the Action Plan and the KPI's for health and safety, he also asked whether the Committee was happy with the format of the monthly Feedback Report. The Committee discussed the Feedback Report and the Chair noted that it was a useful format. P Wardle asked for details of accidents to be recorded in the document. The Chair said that he would like in future meetings the Health and Safety Manager's judgement on progress in the implementation of health and safety in the Institute. The Committee was concerned that there appeared to be ambiguity surrounding the understanding of clear lines of responsibility in Health and Safety matters. The Chair sought clarification on where the Audit Committee raised any concerns it may have on Health and Safety matters.

A36/08 Review and Re-appointment of Internal Audit Service

- 6 It was noted that the review and re-appointment of the Internal Audit Service took place at the last meeting of the Committee but the Chair said he welcomed the presence of a new partner from Grant Thornton which addressed the 7 year rotation period raised at the meeting of 19 June 2008.

A37/08 **Internal Auditors (Grant Thornton)**

7 N Crail gave a short address to the Committee, briefly giving a resume of her professional background, noting that this included experience of Further Education. She said she noted the Chair's comments on reporting and would look at the format and logic of the reports given.

8 iii. Franchising/Partnerships Report, iv. CELCAT Timetabling Report
N Crail said that both reports expressed a clear opinion and were satisfactory, with Franchising there were some housekeeping issues; with CELCAT some forms were not always completed and accuracy of data was important.
S Kind noted that the LSC had requested that Franchising be kept in focus by auditors.

9 ii. Annual Report 2007/2008
N Crail presented the Annual Report 2007/2007 and said the format was slightly different to fit in with LSC compliance. The Report is a summary of work carried out during the year and she drew the Committee's attention to Annual Statement of Assurance, which was satisfactory.

10 i. Internal Audit Plan 2008/2009
The Internal Audit Plan was presented by N Crail. She said they had taken the opportunity to alter the format to meet new requirements, for example, Framework for Excellence requirements. Consequently the plan would be in a different format but N Crail stressed that the plan was not set in stone. After discussion by the Committee the Chair asked if the Internal Auditors needed more days, N Crail said given the size of the College and to undertake more things in depth, the answer was probably yes. The Chair reiterated his earlier comments concerning the necessity of the Committee being consulted and said he wanted to work in partnership with Grant Thornton. He wished to see concrete proposals and a demonstration of value for money. N Crail said they would be happy to speak to the Audit Committee before the preparation of the Audit Plan and S Kind said the Audit Plan should be brought along for every meeting. The Chair thanked N Crail for her presentations and concluded by reminding the auditors of the key objectives of the Institute, Teaching, Learning and Achievement and hoped this would be remembered when auditing.

A38/08 **Financial Statements Auditors (Baker Tilley)**

i. Audit Strategy Document – Year ended 31 July 2008
11 The Director of Finance introduced the document and said that an audit was being undertaken at the moment and requested that the document be considered at the next meeting. He asked members to note the timetable on page 7 (Paper F) and the Board would need to approve the accounts at the 4 December meeting.

A39/08 **Risk Management**

i. Annual Compliance Report to the Board for 2007/2008
12 S Kind presented the Annual Compliance Report to the Board and said the Report summarised the Risk Management activities that had occurred over the year. After discussion the Committee recommended that it be presented to the Board.

A40/08 **Any Other Business**

13 There was no other business.

A41/08 **Date of next meeting** – Thursday 20 November 2008 at 16.00 hours.

