

**Tuesday 1st October 2024 at 5.30pm
Remote Online Meeting**

Minutes

Present:

Michael Belfourd – Chair of the Committee/Foundation Governor
Anna Mason – Staff Governor (support staff)
Sarah Medicoff - Foundation Governor
Nader Sheta – Chair of Governors/Foundation Governor
Graham Thompson – Principal

In attendance:

Clare Baskott - Clerk to Governors
Ciaran Graham – Associate Principal (Observer)
Margaret Searle - Director of Finance & Resources

The meeting was quorate throughout.

All Reports had been circulated prior to the meeting.

Item 1 Opening Prayer

The Principal opened the meeting in prayer at 5:33pm.

Item 2 Apologies for absence

There were no apologies, no-one was absent.

Item 3 Declarations of Interests

None.

Item 4 Minutes and confidential minutes of previous meeting, Tuesday 18th June 2024, for review and agreement for signing

The minutes and confidential minutes of the previous meeting, Tuesday 18th June 2024, were agreed to be an accurate record of the meeting.

Item 4.1 Matters Arising for this meeting not on the agenda

None.

Item 5 Premises and Accommodation – Graham Thompson

Item 5.1 Update on Wave 5 project completed summer 2024

The Principal gave an update and explained that the Wave 5 Capital T Level project had been completed during the summer break. The Principal gave an overview of the project, as outlined in the report.

The Principal reported that the project overall had progressed well. However, there had been a delay to the film studio, due to remedial work required to the floor. A snagging meeting had taken place on 1st October 2024.

Governor question: Is the remedial work impacting on the students?

Response: We have been able to work around it, as lots of students are currently undertaking filming outside as part of their course.

The Director of Finance and Resources reported that the college had been advised to re-submit Condition Improvement Funding Bids for fire safety and electrical improvement and for roof refurbishment, and the college was using a new consultant to assist with the bid. It was noted that the issue will be brought back to the committee as and when a proposal is ready. It was noted that funding budgets were tight due to on-going issues with RAAC in schools and colleges.

The Principal gave an overview of the annual programme of works. A new LRC Reception desk will be installed during October half term. The IT works had been completed and there had had to be a reallocation of funds, due to changing priorities because of the additional work required. The Director of Finance and Resources reported that the additional works were all within budget.

Governor question: Has the move to the new IT provider gone smoothly?

Response: Yes, we moved to the new provider on 1st August 2024 and two members of staff were TUP-ed to the new provider. There were some teething problems which the new provider has worked hard to resolve. A lot of work was needed on the infrastructure of the network which is now coming to fruition.

The Principal reported that the Health and Safety Officer had recently taken on the role of Compliance Lead for the college, and was the key point of contact for the new IT provider.

Governor question: Do RM provide service level reports each month?

Response. Yes, and the detail in the service level reports is very high.

Item 6 Financial – Margaret Searle/Michael Belfour

Item 6.1 Preliminary end of year position 2023-24 from Monthly Commentary, Accounts and Cashflow (Report)

Item 6.2 Funding – Financial update report. To include enrolment for 2024 and to consider any variation to the financial plan/CFFR

The Director of Finance and Resources gave an overview and reported that the college was in good financial health. It was noted that the accounts were subject to audit.

The Director gave an overview of the monthly commentary.

The main areas in the reconciliation of the budgeted deficit of £916,887 and the actual deficit of £220,265 had been covered in the commentary to the CFFR return

considered by the Full Governing Body on 2 July 2024. The Director of Finance and Resources explained that staffing costs remained a constant challenge, with potential increases to the budget when agency staff were required and provisions had been included in the budget to address this. The college ensured that staff were not kept on contracts unnecessarily. Although the college had received additional funding from the ESFA, it continued to exercise prudence in budgeting for unforeseen circumstances.

The Chair of the Committee acknowledged that the forecasts presented were reassuring.

The Director provided an overview of the college's bank accounts, reporting that an additional £59,000 in interest had been received. Payments for building works had been delayed while necessary rectifications were made. It was noted that further funding may be forthcoming.

Governor question: Did the college receive grants for equipment?

Response: Yes, this funding came in early, it is very specific and must be spent on exactly what was bid for. We also received £50k for the Health and Science course, which we are not running, so this will need to be returned.

The Director of Finance and Resources explained that the forecast for the next two financial years was as per the CFFR return.

The Principal explained that the college had increased the target number of students to 1,285 and there were currently 1,310 students on roll.

Governor question: Did enough students enrol on the Broadcast Media course?

Response: We have not recruited as many onto the course as we had hoped. We will look at growing the numbers for this course for the future. Last year we only recruited 10 students onto the Accounting course, and this year we recruited 20. We will have the film studio to market to this 2025 cohort, and the media centre will be showcased at the Open Day on 19th October 2024.

The Principal explained that a curriculum review was taking place, and some courses may not run next year due to lack of funding.

Item 6.3 ESFA/DfE: Updates: Letter dated 11th September 2024

The Chair of the Committee reported that the ESFA will cease to exist from March 2025.

The Chair of the Committee gave an overview of the changes at the ESFA.

A discussion took place about the last meeting with the ESFA. It was agreed that the Principal will forward the notes of the meeting with the Clerk, to circulate to the Committee. **Action: Principal/Clerk.**

Item 6.4 Staff pay awards update – Graham Thompson

Teaching Staff

The Principal reported that schools have been notified that they will receive additional funding to cover staff pay increases. However, this funding did not extend to Sixth Form Colleges. A similar situation had occurred with the previous changes to National Insurance.

A discussion took place regarding the future funding arrangements for Sixth Form Colleges.

The Principal reported that the unions had requested a 5.5% pay increase and had balloted members for potential strike action. While the NJC supported the 5.5% increase, government approval was still required for it to apply to Sixth Form Colleges. The college had budgeted for a 4.0% increase.

Support Staff

The Principal reported that Unison had recently submitted a claim for a public sector pay increase of approximately 5%. The NJC was scheduled to meet with the unions on Monday, 7th October 2024 to discuss the proposal. In addition to the pay increase, the unions were also requesting an extra day of leave. Negotiations were ongoing.

Governor Question: Do you anticipate any increases in funding?

Response: Last year, we received an additional 6.5% in funding. In the past, when pay increases were around 1-2%, we did not typically expect extra funding. However, College Teachers now expect pay increases to be in line with those of School Teachers

Item 6.5 Treasury Management: Monitoring Report

The Director of Finance and Resources provided an overview of the Treasury Management Report, noting that it was prepared before the September payroll had been paid.

An update was also given on the payment of grant funding.

The Director reviewed the college's relationship with Barclays Bank, highlighting the bank's responsiveness and good working relationship.

Governor question: Have students been impacted by the recent Cyber Attack on Transport for London?

Response: Yes, a lot of students have been impacted by the cyber-attack as TfL are not accepting new photos due to the cyber-attack. TfL were supposed to allow students to use their services, but this it is not always being honoured. TfL have indicated that students will be refunded for any additional costs, but students need to keep records for refunds. We could release money from the Bursary Fund for transport.

It was agreed that the Director of Finance and Resources and the Associate Principal (CG) will investigate the Bursary Fund for student travel. **Action: Director of Finance and Resources and the Associate Principal (CG)**

Item 7 SFX Corporate Services Ltd – Margaret Searle

The Committee noted that the SFX Corporate board meetings will take place on:

Tuesday 5th Nov 2024

Tuesday 25th Feb 2025

Tuesday 3rd June 2025

The Director of Finance and Resources reported an unaudited year-end surplus of £62,686 for 31st July 2024, which will be gift-aided back to the College.

The committee noted that Shah Ali had resigned as a director on 31 August 2024.

An overview of Corporate Services staffing was provided, including the appointment of a new staff member dedicated to Marketing, with the aim of generating more business for both the college and the nursery.

The Director gave an overview of the college's enhanced facilities.

The committee noted the report.

Item 8 Membership: Updates

It was agreed that the Clerk will contact the Diocese regarding Patrick Wong's Foundation Governor application. **Action: Clerk.**

Item 9 Committee review of effectiveness, membership and skills: online questionnaire for completion after the meeting

Action: Clerk.

Item 9.1 Has the Committee identified any new or heightened risks to be advised to the Audit Committee for the risk register?

None.

Item 10 Any Other Business

None.

Item 11 Identification of any confidential items

It was agreed that the Confidential minutes for the previous meeting could be made unrestricted.

Item 12 Dates of meetings for 2023-24 for note:

Tuesday 12th November 2024 at 6:30pm

Tuesday 4th March 2025 at 5:30pm

Tuesday 17th June 2025 at 5:30pm

Item 13 Close of meeting

The meeting closed at 6:32pm.

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____

