

Priestley College

Minutes of the Governance & Search Committee meeting
held at 8.00am on Thursday, 7 May 2015
in the Principal's Office

PRESENT	Mr J Monaghan	Chair
	Mr P Dyke	
	Mr M W Grant	
	Mr R Haslam	
	Mr P McMellon	Clerk

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mr J A Farquharson and Mrs D Stead.

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No Member declared any personal interest in any item.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 3 February 2015 were accepted as an accurate record and were signed by the Chair.

4. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising

5. INDIVIDUAL REVIEWS FOR GOVERNORS – PILOT INVOLVING CHAIRS UPDATE OF PROGRESS

Mr R Haslam reported that, as Chair of the Governing Body, he had now completed the individual reviews of all Committee chairs with the exception of Mr A Cannell (Chair of F&GP Committee). Arrangements for Mr Cannell's review were scheduled for later in the term.

Mr Haslam suggested that the reviews conducted so far had been productive and appreciated by all involved. Follow up action had been reported to the Clerk. The format of the reviews had followed the previously approved 'agenda' document, although the process had undoubtedly benefited from a degree of informality and latitude.

Mr Haslam asked the Committee to consider how the process might now be taken forward.

It was agreed that reviews on an annual basis should now become the norm, and that this should be extended so as to encompass all Governors. The Clerk was instructed to produce a schedule of meetings wherein Committee chairs would undertake the 'reviewer' role for members of their Committee, but taking into account the expectation that, for those Governors on more than one Committee, there would only be a single annual review.

RESOLVED : That the Governing Body is recommended to approve the extension of the Individual review process so that all Governors receive a review in 2015/16

6. NEW CODE OF GOOD GOVERNANCE FOR ENGLISH COLLEGES

The final version of the new Code of Good Governance had been received on 31 March 2015, and had been distributed in full with the agenda papers.

Committee members noted that the final version had not accepted the College's views (forwarded under the national consultation process) on the foreseeable detrimental effect of limitations on number of terms of office (Para 9.29).

The Principal reported that Senior Management had examined the Code and, although the relevance of some sections for sixth form colleges was questionable, had agreed that compliance with the Code could be broadly achieved. Some degrees of flexibility in interpretation would undoubtedly be called. The Committee then considered each of the sections where the Clerk had highlighted potential need for change to traditional practices.

It was noted that there was no clarity as to whether acceptance/adoption of the new Code elsewhere in the sector had ensued. The Committee nonetheless concluded that the time was right for adoption of the Code at Priestley College. However, having once again considered their serious reservations about terms of office limitations (and mindful of the 'normally' qualification), the Committee agreed that it would be appropriate to include an explicit 'caveat' covering section 9.29 ie., indicating that the College would continue to re-engage good governors beyond the 8 years limitation where to do so served the best interests of the College and the communities served.

RESOLVED : That the Governing Body is recommended to adopt the new Code of Good Governance for English Colleges on the understanding that compliance with section 9.29 (on terms of office limitations) may be the exception rather than the norm.

7. GOVERNING BODY MEMBERSHIP

(i) Progress in recruiting new Governors/Co-opted Members

The Committee noted how matters had proceeded with regard to LS, and it was agreed that this should now be in abeyance until the Autumn Term.

The Principal re-affirmed his belief that representation from Higher Education would be valuable to the governance of the College, and he reported on some of the possibilities which he was actively exploring. The Committee encouraged the Principal to continue with his efforts along such lines, and also to look for links with representatives from employment/industry.

The Principal suggested other possibilities, including links with local MPs.

(ii) Term of Office Expiry – Ms K Simcock

The Committee reflected upon the impending expiry of Ms Kelly Simcock's current term of office, not least in the context of the 'limitation' expectation of the new Code of Good Governance (see Item 6 above). Given Ms Simcock's excellent and continuing service to the governance of the College (her ongoing assistance on the Prevent agenda being one facet of this), this was a good example of where slavish compliance with the 'limitation' expectation would almost certainly work to the detriment of the College. The Committee considered how Ms Simcock would continue to contribute to the needs identified in the Skills Audit and also noted that she had indicated her preparedness to continue as a Governor if invited to do so.

RESOLVED : That the Governing Body is recommended to re-appoint Ms Kelly Simcock as a Governor for a further four year term of office from 1 June 2015 to 31 May 2019.

8. PREPARATION FOR INSPECTION

The Principal updated the Committee on the development of the next Framework for inspections which Ofsted expected to be using from September 2016. As yet, a final outcome was still awaited, but once the new Framework has been unveiled, the College would ensure that Governors are appropriately briefed.

The Principal then reported on recent reported outcomes from Ofsted inspections in the sector and specifically in sixth form colleges.

9. POLICY FOR REVIEW : PUBLIC ACCESS TO GOVERNING BODY

The Committee examined the proposed changes to the current Policy. The changes were minimal and it was

RESOLVED : That the Governing Body is recommended to approve the updated Access to Governing Body policy.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will take place at 8.00am on Tuesday, 23 June 2015 at 8.00am.

PMcMellon
7 May 2015

Accepted as accurate and signed by the Chair

Signature

Date