



Minutes of the Search Committee (Via Video Conference)

Date: 5 October 2021

Present:	Nav Chohan (Principal) Jo Beaumont (Chair) John Egan David Butcher Kerry Robinson Paul Webley (External Co-option)
In attendance:	J Stott (Clerk)
Apologies:	-
Meeting commenced:	18:00
Meeting closed:	19:00

29/21 Disclosure of financial and/or personal interest

D Butcher and P Webley declared an interest at item 9 on the recommendation of the reappointment of members.

30/21 To agree the agenda and order of business as circulated

The agenda and order of business were agreed.

31/21 To approve the minutes of the meetings held on 28 September 2021

The minutes were approved as a true record.

32/21 Matters arising

The Principal confirmed that he had sent the College Operational Plan to R Hill so that he could update his governance review report.

33/21 Performance Review:

a) To consider the analysis from the 2021 Corporation Performance Review Questionnaire

The Clerk confirmed that the overall average scores have decreased in 2021 from 4.61 to 4.36. There was a drop in 21 questions, however, most scored above 4. Members discussed each question in turn to see if any actions are needed for improvement. It was queried how many governors did not complete the questionnaire and the Clerk said around 3 people*, but that he would check.

It was agreed it would assist in future for the Chair to lead on this and stress to members the importance of completing the questionnaire each year so that we can gather quality information from members.

A member highlighted that the population of the board changes most years and that it would be interesting to see whether the more critical comments are coming from new members, or a change in position from longer standing members.

The Principal added that the points coming through from this review may tie up with areas that R Hill has set out in his governance review. They do provide helpful indications of where things could improve, but that we should not focus too heavily on numbers.

At question 1, a suggestion had been made for a mid October Corporation meeting due to the gap between the July and December meetings. This had been raised in the past and it had been agreed that the October training and strategic development day was a way of bridging that gap. **ACTION:** The Clerk to approach this member to explain this rationale.

At question 10 on the diversity of membership, a member commented that diversity seems to have improved a lot since she joined 18 months ago with more females on the board and more diversity, so this seems to be moving forward. The Chair agreed and added that it is an ongoing area we need to continue to be mindful of and proactive in.

At question 13 there had been a suggestion that the submission of questions prior to meetings should now be dropped. This system was set up due to Covid and moving to on-line meetings, though going forward, a hybrid model will be put in place with a mix of face to face and online meetings. **ACTION:** The Clerk to contact each committee to ask which model they would like in place for the autumn meetings.

A discussion followed and it was agreed that, where a member needed further clarification in order to be able to contribute properly at the meeting, that this could be provided in advance, but that other questions or comments should be addressed in the meeting as it would aid debate and discussion.

Also discussed were the issues around on-line meetings where it is sometimes difficult to see everyone and with some having their cameras turned off. **ACTION:** The clerk to re-circulate his etiquette brief for attending on-line meetings.

A discussion followed on the added value sections and on members being more involved in the daily operations of the College and it was agreed this is more about getting involved in learner journeys and meeting students. In R Hill's report, there is a large emphasis on learners and learning and for boards to be more aware of the learner journey and process.

Of note is that we have members showing an interest in the positions of Chair which is encouraging to see for succession purposes.

* Footnote: 4 members did not complete the Corporation/Committee Performance Review Questionnaires.

b) To consider the analysis from the 2021 Committee Performance Review Questionnaire

The Clerk said there has been an overall slight reduction in each committee's scores, but they all still sit quite high in the mid 4s. It has been recommended that the reviews go back to each committee so that they can carry out an assessment. Comments made in the review questionnaires were highlighted as follows:

From the C&Q review, it was commented that the engagement of governors in discussions seems to have reduced recently. It was agreed more detail was required so this will be picked up at the next C&Q meeting. However, it was noted that there is a lot of presentational material in meetings leaving little time for debate which was an issue raised at a 1:1 meeting with the Chair. This could be in part due to on-line meetings making engagement more difficult and people feeling less comfortable expressing their opinions. The Principal added that it can be difficult for staff members to get the right balance of how much to say. SMT members will be attending other Colleges to see what they can learn from how they facilitate discussions at governors' meetings. A member felt that presenters should assume papers have been read in advance as they are received 7 days in advance and to agree with the Chair the key points they need to raise in the meeting which would then free up more time for debate.

From the Audit review, it was commented on a preference for timing each agenda item in order of importance as it had been noted how some items at the end have been squeezed in. The Clerk confirmed that members can request a re-order of agenda items at the start of the meeting when agreeing the order of business. The Chair added that she is not keen on timed agendas as it can be constraining, but that we do want to ensure we give justice to all items and prioritise where we can.

A discussion followed on the merits of a blended approach to meetings going forward after Xmas. Allowing some meetings to continue on-line will aid inclusion as sometimes travel time or travel conditions can make it difficult for some to attend face to face meetings. However, it was agreed face to face meetings to be the most productive. A suggestion that full Corporation Meetings meet in College with some/all Committee meetings online. **ACTION:** The Clerk to contact each Committee in advance to decide if they will meet face to face or on-line.

The next steps is for committees to build into their agendas to carry out a review on the outcome of their questionnaires and for chairs to encourage commenters to provide more detail.

34/21 To consider:

i) The outcome of the 2021 Skills Audit

The Clerk confirmed just one member had not submitted the skills return so he had taken last year's responses for completeness. On skills sets, he confirmed that we are equal to or better in all areas except for marketing. The Principal confirmed that, important for the College is marketing and special educational needs knowledge. As of this year, 1 in 6 learners will be high needs which is a large percentage. Finance is another key area. As we have 1 external vacancy left to fill, it was agreed to look at these 3 areas when recruiting to try and add more value and strength to the board.

ii) External Member Record of Mandatory Training

Just 1 member has not completed the mandatory training but has said they would complete by the end of this week. It was agreed that if training is not completed (unless due to accessibility issues) that there should be a follow up with the Chair as this was raised at interview as an expectation on members.

35/21 To consider the 2020/21 Individual Member Attendance Report

The Clerk highlighted that 14 members had 80% or over attendance throughout the year at Corporation and Committee meetings and 10 Members had a 100% attendance record.

The National percentage attendance for Corporation and Committee meetings (based on 99 Colleges) is 88% (84% in 2019/20). With a range of 73% to 96%. The percentage attendance for Corporation and Committee meetings at Shipley College is 95% (90% in 2019/20) above the National percentage attendance.

It was agreed the excellent attendance record has been helped by on-line meetings, though we have been over the national average for the past few years.

For the committee to note is that one member will be unable to attend meetings for at least 2 months due to a serious accident leaving him in hospital requiring surgery. The Chair asked that the Clerk pass on the Corporation's best wishes for a speedy and full recovery.

36/21 To review the Governance Risks, mitigation and levels of assurance within the Risk Register

The Clerk asked members for any comments on the RAG ratings.

At 12a) it was noted that this seems to relate heavily to the work we are going to do around a strategic plan and whether we should rate ourselves green knowing that we have a lot of work to do. The Principal added that for our mission and direction as a College we are solid and know where we are going. We just need a new format for the strategic plan to be established. Members agreed to retain a green rating, but to look again at the mitigations and linking everything into a strategic plan.

At 12f) it was noted that, going by the governance review report, we should not be rated green on diversity of the board. There has been mention of inclusion of younger members for example. It was acknowledged that, although not a fully diverse board, we are doing better and to keep a green rating but recognise the recommendations from the governance report on diversity.

37/21 To consider for recommendation to the Corporation the re-appointment of Members whose term of office expires during the academic year 2021/22

The Clerk highlighted members whose term of office is due to expire. P Webley and D Butcher to abstain from voting.

A discussion took place on the merits of keeping on long standing members who have a wealth of wisdom and experience versus maintaining a turnover of new members. It was agreed at the next recruitment round to look how innovative we can be in reaching out to bring in others from different backgrounds and to look at it again in the future so we have a position on this.

Members agreed to recommend to the Corporation the reappointments of David Butcher, James Parker, Grace Jeffrey, Mohammed Hussain and Paul Webley for a further term of office to be determined by the Clerk

ACTION: The Clerk to contact the above members to ask if they are prepared to stand for another term of office.

38/21 To receive a report on the update to the Code of Governance for Colleges

The Clerk confirmed the update to the Code had been published only recently on 30 September so there has not been chance to take a thorough look through as yet. There is no expectation to report on this until next summer. He therefore proposed that he liaise with SMT and this committee to go through the Code to check for compliance. It was also agreed to ask Ron Hill if he has any insights into the changes that he can share with us.

ACTION: To bring this back to a future meeting.

The report was received.

39/21 To review the Committee's Terms of Reference

The Clerk highlighted the minor changes including that the Committee shall comprise 6 Members of the Corporation including one co-opted external member.

The Terms of Reference were agreed

40/21 To review the composition and balance of the Corporation at September 2021

The Clerk talked through the data confirming we have a better balance than previously with 9 male and 7 female members. It was agreed we do need to think about our expectations on diversity and the community we serve - whether that is Bradford as a whole or the Aire Valley.

As the diversity information is not up to date, it was agreed to gather this information on a yearly basis.

ACTION: S Butler to set up a Google Form for circulation to members to submit by 12 October.

41/21 To receive, for information, the percentage turnover of members during 2020/21

The Clerk stated that the length of service of a couple of members had been raised by R Hill in his governance review. This year, the overall turnover for 20/21 was 22%: 2 were staff and students and 2 were external.

The breakdown of members and length of service is set out in the report. The board currently has two members who are serving longer than the recommended norm in the Code of Good Governance of two terms i.e. 8 years. However, we would not want to lose their expertise from the board and we want to retain longer serving members for a few more years so others have time to develop. As we do continue to have a turnover of members and as long as we continue to monitor this, it was agreed we are happy with this arrangement but it will be a Corporation decision. It was agreed to look at formal training opportunities for development and networking which may encourage others to put themselves forward for other positions.

The update was received.

42/21 Any other business

i) Date of next meeting

It was agreed to arrange the next meeting after the outcome of the Governance Review has been considered on the 12th October and for a meeting in February 2022 to look at compliance with the new Code of Governance and (hopefully) to interview a prospective new Governor.