



**WOKING COLLEGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES**  
**Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> March 2021 at 6.30pm**  
**Via Microsoft Teams**

Present:	Tim Stokes	Chair
	Rob Kemp	Vice Chair
	Jonathan Miles	
	Mike Mulheron	
	Cullum Mitchell	
	Ben Smith	
	Yasmin Aslam	
	Rosh Sellahewa	
	Anne Middleton	
	Alastair Macaulay	
	Sangida Khan	Observer
	Brett Freeman	Principal
In Attendance:	Nuweed Razaq	Deputy Principal
	Laura Cook	Assistant Principal
	Barbara Maude	Clerk to the Board of Trustees

Item	Agenda Description	Action
1.	<p><b>Apologies for Absence &amp; Declarations of Interest</b></p> <p>The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. There were no apologies as all Trustees were present.</p> <p>The Chair re-stated his declaration of interest as noted previously and as appeared on his Register of Interests form that he was employed by Woking Borough Council on a part time basis as an independent person. This was highlighted again as the involvement of Woking Borough Council in the development of the Old Woking Community Centre formed part of the discussions under item 5.</p> <p>No other Trustee or member of SLT declared any pecuniary or other direct or indirect personal interest whether that interest has previously been registered and declared or not.</p>	
2.	<p><b>Introduction</b></p> <p>The Principal confirmed that the strategic intent of the meeting was to review the progress of the College’s site development, approve the final version of the Strategic Plan and examine key elements of teaching and learning, which at this meeting focussed on the online student survey report and the continuous professional development update.</p>	

3.	<p><b>Minutes of the Previous Meeting</b></p> <p>The Board received the minutes of the previous meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2021 and the confidential minutes of the 9<sup>th</sup> December 2020. The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and approved for signature by the Chair.</p>													
4.	<p><b>Matters arising</b></p> <table border="1" data-bbox="196 445 1267 555"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="196 445 236 479"></th> <th data-bbox="236 445 791 479">Matter</th> <th data-bbox="791 445 1038 479">By Whom</th> <th data-bbox="1038 445 1267 479">Status</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="196 479 236 515">1</td> <td data-bbox="236 479 791 515">Strategic Plan – reflections/suggestions</td> <td data-bbox="791 479 1038 515">BFR</td> <td data-bbox="1038 479 1267 515">Ongoing</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="196 515 236 555">2</td> <td data-bbox="236 515 791 555">Options Paper – OWCC contribution costs</td> <td data-bbox="791 515 1038 555">BFR</td> <td data-bbox="1038 515 1267 555">Ongoing</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>It was noted that both matters arising were ongoing agenda items that were going to be further considered later in the meeting.</p> <p>The Chair highlighted that there was one other matter arising which was not specifically referenced under the two matters highlighted. In the previous meeting it had been proposed that the Principal would share with the Chair and Vice Chair the provisional site plans of the Old Woking Community Centre (OWCC) and these would then be circulated to all Trustees. It was noted that the ground floor and first floor site plans of the OWCC drawn up by Macallan Penfold had been circulated to all Trustees before the meeting.</p>		Matter	By Whom	Status	1	Strategic Plan – reflections/suggestions	BFR	Ongoing	2	Options Paper – OWCC contribution costs	BFR	Ongoing	
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1	Strategic Plan – reflections/suggestions	BFR	Ongoing											
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	<p><b>PRINCIPAL’S REPORT</b></p>													
5.	<p>The Board received the Principal’s Termly Report and the Principal introduced his report, highlighting key points.</p> <p>All KPIs were positive with attendance to date for all students standing at 99% compared to 97.8% in 2019 and 98.3% in 2018. Retention to date for all students stood at 98.4% compared to 96.5% in 2019 and 97% in 2018. Numbers of roll were also strong with applications slightly higher now than the figure of 1446 that appeared in the report.</p> <p>Over 1,300 student interviews had been conducted with approximately 70% of those being via Zoom. Places accepted up to today’s date were 928 which compared to 838 for the same time last year.</p> <p>It was also confirmed that the virtual Academic Tutoring Days had been very well received by both students and parents and the Principal said that it was important to recognise staff efforts in the success of these events.</p> <p>The Principal also highlighted relevant issues within the national and local context, together with updates on marketing and local schools and site and health and safety issues. The Principal had included a list of site team activities that had taken place to give a flavour of the range of activities that were going on behind the scenes. The report also set out details of the new cleaning and catering appointments and in terms of the new caterers, the positive addition of a Costa Coffee outlet that was due to be installed during the Easter vacation.</p> <p>Within his report, the Principal had briefed Trustees on the College’s approach to grading this summer. Heads of Department were satisfied that the process was clear and fair and that the grading of students would involve collating appropriate evidence and following a</p>													

<p>process that would produce a fair, robust and positive result for both the student and the College.</p> <p>Trustees were keen to explore this further and questioned management on the College's approach to this sensitive issue. The Principal responded that it was the College's aim to produce professional sets of judgements without having to go down the examination route. The College would look at the student's trajectory of learning at identified fixed points and review grades of students from across the two-year period. They would take two assessments from the 1<sup>st</sup> year; 3 assessments from the second year and then between 3 to 5 up to the 14<sup>th</sup> May.</p> <p>Each department would then follow the same process as in the summer of 2020 and rank each student. Once grades had been determined they would then be compared to the last 3 years' worth of grades to ensure that there was neither significant grade inflation nor grade reduction.</p> <p>The proposals had been fed back to Heads of Department, students and parents and the College had received no negative feedback regarding the approach to be taken.</p> <p>Trustees also challenged on whether the College's approach to the grading of exams was comparable to the approach to be taken by other Colleges. The Principal advised that in discussions within the S7 Principal's Forum and in particular his close working relationship with both Esher and Godalming Colleges then the approaches were broadly similar.</p> <p>Trustees acknowledged that the College was basing student grade assessments on a wide range of pieces of works and recognised that this extended practice would place an additional work load on teachers, Heads of Department and SLT. Following a detailed discussion on student grade assessments the Board were fully supportive of the College's approach.</p> <p>In terms of site development the Principal confirmed for the Board's information that the Pavilion was now in place and although currently not connected to power due to a delay by UK Power Networks it would be fully operational for September 2021.</p> <p>As to capital site developments then the 3 options remained under discussion.</p> <p>The issue of the four classroom temporary accommodation block was still very much under consideration and to ensure they were in position by September 2021 meant that the process to acquire them had to commence by the end of April 2021. The Principal advised that there was unfortunately a complication in terms of planning permission. Whilst planning permission had been granted and the College remained within the 3 year window, by the College submitting the subsequent CIF bid for growth meant, based on the advice of a consultant and the requirement of the respective planning permissions, that they could not effectively now have both options. Hence, if the temporary accommodation was purchased, and the CIF bid was ultimately successful then the temporary accommodation would have to be removed. Management were currently looking at the costings for leasing, rather than buying, the temporary accommodation or if purchased, the possible resale value.</p> <p>In terms of the resubmitted CIF bid for growth then it was possible that the result may be known by the end of May.</p>
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<p>In respect of the OWCC then this issue was due to be debated by Woking Borough Council tomorrow evening. The link to the report submitted to the Borough Council had been circulated to the Board and the report confirmed that the proposal was for the OWCC to grant an under-lease to the College for part of the centre until 28<sup>th</sup> September 2060 (which was one day before the end of the current ground lease term was due to expire). The development work proposed would substantially enhance the building and improve the facilities for both the College and the local community. The capital cost of enhancing the facilities were proposed to be drawn from Section 106, the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and a financial contribution from the College. This would mean that the work could be undertaken without any cost to the taxpayer.</p> <p>The Board questioned whether during a refurbishment it would be possible to use the OWCC. The Principal advised that this had been discussed and it would appear possible that at least some of the OWCC space would still be available during any such works.</p> <p>The Board queried the longevity of the proposed under lease and whilst official confirmation would need to be obtained, it was considered that 40 years would be seen as a lease significant enough to confirm ESFA approval. It was noted that the agreement was actually conditional upon the ESFA authorising the College to enter into the transaction.</p> <p>Trustees also challenged that the agreement under 5.5 currently identified the College's contribution but provided for the College making an additional contribution if the total costs were exceeded. This was clearly something that had to be clarified prior to any final agreement. In addition, the position with regard to VAT and what was recoverable would also need to be confirmed and the Principal advised that as to be expected, the College's solicitors would be reviewing and advising on key documents that would form part of the overall transaction.</p> <p><b>Proposed Link Trustee Scheme</b></p> <p>The Deputy Principal presented a draft Link Trustee Protocol for consideration. The wish to introduce a link scheme flowed from the last Trustee Quality Improvement Plan as a way of Trustees gaining a better insight and understanding of a particular department and familiarising themselves with the College's quality assurance framework through the Self-Assessment process. The protocol set out details of the role, the limitations of the scheme, (in terms of it not being any form of inspection or a tool for lobbying on behalf of a particular department); the proposed arrangements for visits and then a Link Trustee visit report form which would be completed at the end of the visit and shared with the Head of Department and then submitted to the Deputy Principal.</p> <p>It was proposed that ideally Trustees should make two visits to their linked department within an academic year. The departments also extended to some cross college areas such as Careers/Progression; Heads of Year/Pastoral Care and Learning Support. It was appreciated that not every department would have a link trustee as it was not feasible to achieve coverage across all areas but Trustees if they were able, were encouraged to link to a department that they were interested in.</p> <p>The Clerk would re-circulate the Link Trustee Protocol outside of the meeting and invite Trustees to get in touch with the department they would like to be linked to. The Deputy Principal in turn would then introduce each Trustee to their Head of Department on email.</p> <p>The Board <b>resolved:</b></p>	<p>BMA</p>
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	<b>To approve the Link Trustee Protocol and to support the scheme which would take effect after the Easter Break.</b>	
	<b>STRATEGIC ITEMS</b>	
6.	<p>The Board reviewed the revised draft Strategic Plan 2021-2025. The Principal thanked both the Chair and the Vice Chair for their contribution to the revised plan, which since the January Strategic Development Board meeting had been refined and was now presented to the Board for final approval.</p> <p>After discussion, the Board <b>resolved:</b>  <b>To approve the Strategic Plan 2021-2025.</b></p>	
	<b>TEACHING, LEARNING &amp; ASSESSMENT</b>	
7.	<p><b>Student Surveys Report – Online Learning 2021</b></p> <p>The Board received the Student Survey Report which summarised the feedback from students regarding their experiences of online learning since the January lockdown. Student levels of satisfaction with all aspects of online teaching, learning and assessment remained high with the key areas for consideration being progress, workload and feedback.</p> <p>Overall progress and workload were rated very similar to in previous years and in terms of feedback an overall average of 89% responded positively despite not having face to face teaching. Certain departments scored very highly in this area (for example Visual Arts scored 97%) with some areas scoring lower than average (Vocational Business (81%) and IT (81%).</p> <p>There was a broad spectrum of feedback from those that had found the remote learning experience superb to those that had found it more challenging due to the distractions of working from home. Overall, students rated their experience with remote learning on their courses as 3.61 out of 5.</p> <p>Trustees were delighted that the feedback for certain departments was so high, especially in those areas such as Performing Arts and Visual Arts which might have been perceived as being more difficult to teach remotely. SLT said that practical sessions had continued together with enrichment opportunities and SLT were very proud of all staff efforts.</p> <p>The Chair suggested that if possible, the positive student survey feedback on online learning should be used in future marketing activities. The Principal concurred and suggested that there was an opportunity to celebrate teaching across the whole of the borough not just limited to the excellent work of the College.</p> <p>Trustees also asked if there was anything coming out of the feedback results that staff would continue to do post lockdown. SLT felt that Teams had now been well embedded for use for homework submission and its functionality meant that certain activities were easy to undertake and these would definitely continue in the future. In addition, meetings with parents via Zoom had also proved very successful.</p>	

	<p>In response to the introduction of Lateral Flow Tests, Trustees asked about the arrangements for any student that tested positive. SLT confirmed that for those students online learning would continue during isolation and where possible students would remotely access the live lessons in the classroom.</p> <p><b>Continuing Professional Development</b> The Board reviewed the CPD undertaken by College staff since the start of term. CPD had continued to be conducted remotely and the focus was on the delivery of online learning. Examples were provided of activities undertaken on INSET days; the sharing of best practice; external CPD; and plans for future CPD.</p>	
	<p><b>FINANCE</b></p>	
<p>8.</p>	<p>The Acting Chair of the Finance and Audit Committee introduced the minutes of the Committee’s meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2021 and highlighted the key points arising from the meeting.</p> <p>The Committee had received a presentation from the Audit Manager of Wylie &amp; Bisset, the College’s recently appointed internal auditors on the Audit Needs Assessment which covered the period from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020 to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023. The report set out the areas identified for audit this academic year which were business continuity and the impact of COVID-19; free school meals and bursary funding. In addition, the report also set out those areas to be audited in 2021/22 and 2022/23 and the Acting Chair highlighted, that in accordance with one of the Committee’s previous recommendations, the issue of cyber security would form part of the planned IT systems audit in 2021/22.</p> <p>In terms of the January 2021 Management Accounts, whilst details of the Committee’s consideration of the accounts was set out in the minutes, the Acting Chair highlighted the drop in adult enrolment numbers and the complexity of High Needs Student funding which the Committee had discussed at some length.</p> <p>In headline terms, the Acting Chair advised the Board that the forecast operating surplus for the financial year, together with cash days in hand remained strong.</p> <p>In terms of the budget for 2021/22, the Committee had reviewed the budget and forecast assumptions and the Acting Chair indicated that he would be working with the Finance Director to present the sensitivity analysis in a slightly different format this year but one which he hoped the Board would find informative.</p> <p>The Acting Chair also advised the Board for information purposes that the Committee had discussed a Treasury Management Briefing paper prepared by the Finance Director to review whether the College’s cash reserves should continue to be held in one account that earned 0% interest. It was recognised that security took preference over interest and furthermore, there had to be a balance between financial risk and administrative burden but the Committee had suggested a few points which the Finance Director was going to explore and these would be further reviewed at the next meeting.</p> <p>Finally, on a procedural point, the Committee had recommended that the Board should delegate to the Acting Chair of the Finance and Audit Committee authority to sign off both the Budget Forecast Return outturn (BFRO) and 3 Year Budget Forecast Return (BFR3Y) as</p>	

	<p>the deadlines for both fell outside the normal sequencing of meetings.</p> <p>The Board <b>resolved:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>To receive the Minutes of Finance &amp; Audit Committee Meeting dated 10<sup>th</sup> March 2021.03.21;</b></li> <li>• <b>To approve the January 2021 Management Accounts;</b></li> <li>• <b>To approve the Audit Needs Assessment 2020/21 to 2022/23; and</b></li> <li>• <b>To delegate authority to Rob Kemp, Acting Chair of the Committee to sign off both the Budget Forecast Return Outturn (BFRO) &amp; 3 Year Budget Forecast Return (BFR3Y).</b></li> </ul>	
	<b>GOVERNANCE</b>	
9.	<p>The Clerk advised that the Trustee Succession Planning Working Group was scheduled to meet on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> April to review amongst other items, re-appointments, training and progress against the Trustee Quality Improvement Plan. As two Trustees who had previously been on the Working Group had stepped down it was proposed to invite Alastair Macaulay to join the group.</p> <p>The Board <b>resolved:</b>  <b>To note that Alastair Macaulay would join the Succession Planning Working Group.</b></p> <p>The Clerk also reminded those Trustees who had as yet not sent through photographs and biographies to please do so in order that the new Trustee section of the website could be finalised.</p>	
10.	<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p> <p>There were no other items of business although the Chair took the opportunity to endorse and recommend the SFCA Webinar programme to all Trustees. Whilst some Trustees had been able to take advantage of the webinar programme over the last year he felt that this was an excellent source of up to date information and guidance in a very accessible format.</p> <p>In addition, he also encouraged other Trustees to follow both the Principal and the College on Twitter and if inclined, to join the College via the Strava App to keep up to date with College developments. For example, the PE Department were currently running 27 miles in 27 days during March and had so far raised £12k for the charity, Mind.</p>	
11.	<p><b>Date &amp; Time of Next Meetings</b>  <b>The following dates were duly noted:</b>  Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> April 2021 - Succession Planning Working Group;  Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2021 at 6.30pm - Board Meeting  Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> July 2021 at 6.30pm – Board Meeting</p> <p>The meeting closed at 8.18pm</p>	