

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SEARCH COMMITTEE held at Bicton College
on Monday 13 July 2009**

- PRESENT:** Mrs J Wymer - Chairman
Ms J Bashford
Mr C Harvey
Cllr A Liverton
Mr J Lowe - Staff Governor
- IN ATTENDANCE:** Mr G R Copper - Clerk to the Board of Governors
- APOLOGIES:** Mr D Henley

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

- Agreed that no further action be taken to fill the vacancy arising on the Board until the outcome of the proposed federation arrangements were clear.
- Recommended that the Board co-opt an additional member to the Finance and Policy Committee with financial expertise.
- Recommended that the Board extend the current term of office of the Staff Governor to 31 March 2010 pending the outcome of federation arrangements

1. MINUTES

1.1 The Minutes of the Meeting held on 10 March 2009 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

1.2 Matters Arising

Minute 2.1

Jenny Bashford had offered to continue in her current term of office until 31 March 2010, when it was anticipated that the federation with Exeter College would take effect. It was agreed that the offer be accepted to maintain continuity. Noted that Carolyn Bourne was standing down on 31 July 2009 and agreed that no action would be taken regarding a replacement until the new Board composition arrangements were clear from the federation process.

2. REVIEW OF GOVERNANCE

2.1 The Clerk reported on the Review of Governance survey. Four Governors including the Committee Chairman and Vice Chairman of Governors had been invited to complete the new questionnaire, which had been prepared using suitable examples available from other Colleges and adapted for the Review. Overall the

responses indicated general satisfaction with the work of the Board and highlighted a particular strength in actively debating and approving the College Self Assessment Report and monitoring the implementation of the Quality Improvement Plan. There were some concerns over whether the management team had been providing a clear sense of direction, but it was recognised that the management structure was changing following the appointment of the new Principal.

A key weakness in ensuring financial and other resources were deployed effectively was noted. This was in line with comments in the Ofsted inspection report and the FMCE audit report.

2.2 The Clerk commented on the responses to each section of the questionnaire and invited comments. Some areas for improvement in were noted.

- Communication to Governors outside of Board meetings
- Need to improve performance monitoring in areas where College was underperforming such as developing new business
- Increase use of indicators for the financial and academic performance of the College
- Ensure the accountability of the Principal for management actions to meet strategic objectives.
- Complaints, Every Child Matters, and equality and diversity reports to be considered for circulation to all Governors.
- Closer monitoring of learner applications for courses by all Governors.

2.3 The responses on the section covering financial governance reflected the weakness identified by Ofsted and the FMCE audit. This was fully discussed under the following agenda item.

2.4 It was agreed that the Clerk would incorporate the findings in the College Self Assessment report and prepare an action plan to be presented to the Board of Governors and incorporated in the Quality Improvement Plan.

3. OFSTED INSPECTION REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 The Chairman reported that recommendations had been made in both the Ofsted inspection report and FMCE audit report that the Board should strengthen financial governance. There was a discussion of the reasons which had led to the present financial problems. Given the history of the financial situation, the Committee considered that including another Governor on the Board with financial expertise would have had a limited impact without substantial improvements to the quality and reliability of financial information provided to the Board.

3.2 The Committee accepted that it was the Board of Governors responsibility to ensure the solvency of the College and that it must respond to the recommendations made in the Ofsted and FMCE reports. In view of the federation process it was not considered an appropriate time to seek to appoint a new Governor for what was expected to be a short term of office, and co-opting an additional member to the Finance and Policy Committee would be more appropriate to support the Chairman of the Committee.

3.3 There was a discussion on the profile and background of the member required. While financial expertise was essential, the Committee considered that the performance of the College in developing new business was weak and additional skills in business development or marketing were desirable. It was agreed that the Committee would recommend the co-option of an additional member of the Finance and Policy Committee to the Board and subject to Board approval commence the search process. The Clerk would circulate the latest list of potential Governors.

4. BOARD MEMBERSHIP

4.1 The Clerk reported that Darren Watson, Student Governor had accepted a place on a higher education course at the College and would therefore be eligible to complete his term of office. An election for the second Student Governor was due to be held at the start of the next academic year.

4.2 The Clerk also reported that the Staff Governor would reach the end of his two year appointment. It was noted that the Board had originally introduced the two year appointment following poor attendance by some previous Staff Governors. The current Staff Governor however had good attendance. In view of the timescale for federation and for holding an election, and also taking into account the current restructuring process, it was agreed to recommend to the Board the present Staff Governor continue in office until 31 March 2009. The requirements for the new Board would be reviewed once the composition had been agreed.

5. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

5.1 To be advised.

Signed _____
Chairman

Date _____

**SEARCH COMMITTEE
ACTION ITEMS ARISING FROM THE MEETING**

MINUTE	ACTION	BY	WHEN
2.4	The Clerk to incorporate the findings of the Review of Governance in the College Self Assessment Report and prepare an action plan to be presented to the Board of Governors and incorporated in the Quality Improvement Plan.	Clerk	31.8.10
3.3	The Clerk would circulate the latest list of potential Governors.	Clerk	20.7.09