

**Orchard Hill College Committee meeting
Tuesday 16th June 2020 at 5.00pm (Held virtually)**

Present: David Hobday, Chair (DH)
Michele Humphreys, Vice-Chair (MH)
Kelly Phillips, Principal (KP)
Ric Adams (RA)
* Akansha Arya (AA)
*Iain Chadwick (IC)
Neil Mears (NM)

In attendance: Sue Curran, Management Accountant (SC)
Tracey Goodsell (Clerk)
Kirtsy Cottrell (Assistant Principal)
Andy Bunker (Regional Lead)

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Melissa Shepherd. AA and IC did not attend.

2. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations made.

3. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 10th March 2020 were agreed as an accurate record.

4. Matters arising

The following matters arising were updated:

Minute	Action	Resolution
Minute 5	TG to contact all committee members to see whether a 4pm start would suit everybody.	Agreed to move meet a 4pm start
Minute 6v)	TG to send out further details of the course to DH and MH	Course was cancelled due to Pandemic
Minute 6vii)	KP to check the Lomond figures (sickness data)	Data to be included in next term's dashboard

Minute 6vii)	KC to send out a staff survey to ask staff how they have benefited from the various measures that have been put in place to support staff well-being.	KC to update next term
Minute 7	TG to invite Peter Lauener to the next meeting	To be postponed to the Autumn term Meeting

5. Principal's Report

KP highlighted the following headlines in her report:

Covid has been managed well across the College. This week, there have been approximately 68 students in college, out of a possible 243. There is a robust risk assessment in place (appendix 1), with a reduced timetable, splitting the week into two sections. On-line teaching continues for students remaining at home. All students, parents and carers have received a FAQ one sheet (Appendix 2).

Staff development has continued during the pandemic, although inevitably some planned development has had to be postponed and will be included in the strategic planning for 20/21. Staff have been undertaking training on Educare (online CPD). All LSAs are on track to achieve Level 2 Understanding Autism qualification by July 2020. 16 staff are enrolled on the CPD and IAP accredited Diploma in SEND.

Student numbers for 20/21 are good, with an intake of 257 expected. LA funding has already been received for 111 students.

KC updated governors on safeguarding this term. The college has had to adapt its safeguarding practices and be reactive and flexible in its approach. The safeguarding and well-being offer has been updated to demonstrate how the offer has evolved with changes in guidance, legislation and practice during the pandemic. Food parcels have been delivered to students who need support/are shielding. Virtual sessions, including therapy, have been delivered.

There has been an increase in referrals. There has been regular contact with families and social services to ensure that the students' needs are being safely met at home or identifying appropriate respite where appropriate. This is a national issue. Anxiety levels are high amongst some students which can trigger behavioural issues.

DH asked how the College is picking up domestic violence issues which are on the increase during this period. KC said Social Services have been very responsive.

Families have also been good at notifying the College of any issues as it is often the students themselves that are being physically challenging.

With regard to premises and resources, KP said that due to the pandemic, there have been some issues resulting in limited supply or access to resources which has impacted on the delivery of some projects. To mitigate the risk, contingency plans are being sourced to limit the impact on the students.

Governors were very impressed with the quality of the risk assessments. RA commented that he had spoken to Ollie Connolly from the WorkStart team who had explained the work that has been going on at VPC during this time. He said that college is going 'above and beyond' to ensure the safety and continued education of the students and he asked for his gratitude to be noted.

Governors asked about the food parcel deliveries and why this responsibility has fallen to the College. KP explained that the College receives a bursary for students whose family income falls below a certain wage bracket. A lot of the families are shielding and can't get out to get their own shopping so the bursary money is being used for this. Food banks have also been set up in the College centres.

In response to a question about funding from LAs, KP said that LAs were given advice to continue funding which has meant that no staff have been furloughed. However, there is a potential risk to funding from September as some parents are asking about the timetabling and suggesting they may defer their child's place for a year. However, some parents are asking for a fourth year as their child has missed so much education this year so this may balance out the risk.

DH asked how the physical space is being managed. KP said it is difficult, as many of the college buildings do not lend themselves to social distancing. Also, many of the students are not able to social distance so there are only two students in each classroom. Many students need physical re-assurance, so the college isn't operating a 'no touch' policy.

DH also asked how managers are managing to keep an overview of the centres. KP said this has been her biggest challenge as she prefers to be 'visible' at all the centres. However, in line with government guidance, as of 9.6.20, she is visiting one centre per week and then self-isolating for 7 days. KC is staying at Beaconsfield.

At this point, Andy Bunker, the new Regional Lead, was welcomed to his first governors' meeting and introductions were made. AB thanked everybody for the welcome and gave governors a brief resume of his previous experience.

NM asked how the College has managed with the PPE. KP said it had been very difficult at the start of the pandemic but the college had managed to source a supplier and PPE was brought from them in bulk. Stephen Goodsell, the Head of Health and Safety, has also been pro-active in sourcing PPE. DH asked whether being part of the academy structure had helped. KP confirmed that Bedelsford school had provided some equipment. LAs had been sending PPA direct to schools, but had ignored Colleges, so this was helpful.

Governors congratulated all the staff. DH said it had been an extraordinary achievement to stay open and deliver quality services at such a challenging time.

KP thanked governors for their kind comments. She said that the success had been largely down to partnership working and team effort.

Governors **RECEIVED** the Principal's report.

6. Portfolio Visits

It was acknowledged that governors had not been able to carry out their normal programme of portfolio visits this term because of the pandemic.

DH said that he had met online with KP last week to receive an overview on how the college was managing.

MH asked who her lead will be now that David Thomas has moved to Chart Wood School. KP confirmed that David is on secondment at Chart Wood for a year. His post will not be replaced, instead the current SLT will be strengthened. Mel Shepherd will be MH's point of contact for her portfolio going forward.

Action: TG to put MS in touch with MH for her next portfolio visit.

NM said that he hopes to have a phone catch up with KC before the end of term to discuss plans for the summer holiday period, September and beyond.

7. Finance and Funding

i) Management Accounts

SC presented the April Management Accounts.

The forecast is for a surplus of £500k. Year to date, the surplus is £630k. The college is hoping to spend more over this term as Covid has prevented some essential spends. There has been areas of saving including agency staff, where long term bookings have continued to be paid even if staff are not working but this is unlikely to be the case longer term. Other areas of saving including David Thomas' secondment to Chart Wood (as well as Joanne Yarlett). These positions will not be filled during their secondment. There have also been savings in the training budget and student consumables. In answer to a question from DH, SC said that the only real additional costs incurred because of Covid was the PPE, which was a relatively small expenditure.

Governors asked whether the savings would be carried forward. KP confirmed that this is not the case. However, she hopes to invest the surplus in people carriers, and capacity for September (i.e. modular units) but there is a tight timeline for this. There will also be more expenditure on digital learning i.e. webcams and laptops for staff.

SC said that the surplus will be put into the reserves, in agreement with the budget panel. The College is required to have a balanced budget. .

SC said that with regard to the balance sheet there is planned capital expenditure and there will be investment in the buildings and refurbishment of centres. Even with this expenditure the forecast is still to finish the year with £3.6m of general reserves carried forward.

There is a healthy cash balance, the forecast is £4m at year end. The OHC Board have asked for a focus on developing an investment plan with commissioned specialist advisers.

A plan has been undertaken to pay off some of the LGPS deficit by using the reserves. This will benefit the Income and Expenditure sheet.

DH said that he recognised that it is difficult to budget set in these unpredictable times and it will be an evolving issues.

Governors **RECEIVED** the management accounts

ii) Budget 20/21

The budget is showing a surplus of £3k. Income is based on 256 students and 15 WorkStart students. The basic assumption is that there won't be a financial impact but there will be a need to be vigilant and alert to LAs not paying. However, the fact that 111 student places have already paid is positive outcome at this stage in the year.

There has been confirmed funding from the Adult Education programme but the assumption is that this will not all be utilised (£800k out of £1.2m) based on a realistic projection and last years' experience.

Recharge costs from OHCAT are in line with last year's.

Staffing will be tailored to meet student need and this is constantly re-evaluated.

Other costs include an additional site in Southwark (Camberwell Rd) which will provide provision for four more classrooms, with three being utilised in the first instance.

Wyvern costs have increased and the lease is due for renewal in February 2022, the discount had been frontloaded

A cost of living increase of 2% has been assumed under wages costs, as well as factoring in staff moving up a salary point.

The LGPS deficit is assumed as 17.1% pension contributions, and 7% increase in Teacher Pensions Scheme which is currently being funded by the ESFA. It has been assumed that they won't rebate all the costs next year. This may not be an issue if

good STAs are used to act up to vacant lecturer positions, as they are not part of the teachers' pension scheme.

With regard to the balance sheet, the budget closing position is £2.5m general reserves after investing £1.1m in fixed assets and the LGPS deficit. The reserves are gradually being drawn down to make the centres more suitable for students' needs.

The budgeted cash position is healthy at just under £2.9m at the end of next year. There are 65 cash days (target is between 60 and 90). Reserves days are at 57 (target is between 45 and 60).

Governors **RECEIVED** the budget.

8. Policies and Procedures

Governors noted the policies and procedures approved by the OHC&AT Board in the Spring term.

9. Dates of Future Meetings

The following dates were agreed and noted:

- Tuesday 10th November 2020 **at 4pm**
- Tuesday 12th March 2021 **at 4pm**
- Tuesday 15th June 2021 **at 4pm**

The meeting closed at 6.05pm.

CHAIR: _____ **DATE:** _____