

**WALSALL COLLEGE**  
**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE STUDENT VOICE COMMITTEE**  
**HELD ON THURSDAY 11 MARCH 2021 AT 1230 HRS**  
**VENUE: VIA ZOOM**

**PRESENT:**

Charlotte Bosworth	Chair
Fiona Macmillan	Governor
Louise Miller	Student Governor
Jo Hughes	Tutorial Coordinator/Staff Governor
Aisling McGowan	Governor
Shelby Lintern	Student Governor

**TOGETHER WITH:**

Gail Lewis	Student Engagement Coordinator
Helen Griffiths	Student Engagement Officer
David Turner	Assistant Principal Quality and HE
Richard Brennan	Assistant Principal Curriculum
Alison Buick	Clerk to the Corporation

**STUDENTS** No students other than Student Governors attended.

**APOLOGIES:** Charlotte Lackey, Disabled Students' Officer, Thomas Durbin, Social Media Volunteer, Jayne Holt, Assistant Principal Workforce Development and Learning Services

**10.21 CHAIR'S WELCOME**

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and welcomed them to the meeting.

The Chair noted the challenges of the latest lockdown for everyone, but felt that it was important to keep in touch. It was good to see people, albeit virtually.

**11.21 MINUTES**

Minutes of last meeting held on 27 November 2020, having been circulated, were taken as read and approved.

**12.21 MATTERS ARISING**

The Action Points record was reviewed and the following were noted:

Item 11.20.1

It was noted that the college needed to rely heavily on communications via email and text message to students, but that this needed contact details to be up to date. Most student surveys had around 50% response rate.

The Chair noted that there were many surveys, and that students may be overwhelmed by the volume. The Assistant Principal Quality and HE confirmed that these were now coordinated via the Quality team.

Item 11.20.2

IT issues at Hawbush were under review and would be reported back to the next meeting.

Item 11.20.3

Social spaces on campus continued to be reviewed, and to provide socially distanced places for students. Options for additional outdoor covered areas at Green Lane and Portland Street were limited by space.

Item 11.20.4

The college was working to take forward its environmental strategy, and four working groups were being set up, one of which would involve students. The Director of Operations and Resources would be asked to report back to the next meeting.

Item 04.21.1

Covered at Item 11.20.1 above.

Item 04.21.2

The SU President would be invited to the Spring term E&D Committee.

Item 05.21

The Quality team now had oversight of survey issue and completion as agreed.

**13.21 STUDENT UNION PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

The Student Union President presented her report and the following were noted:

- Covid effects continued to impact on students and staff in a variety of ways. It was clear that many students were feeling pressure;
- Planning of and attendance at SU events had been affected. Despite weekly emails to students, engagement generally was low. It was felt that students were not checking their college emails as frequently as usual;
- The SU funds in reserve were healthy and being managed carefully. Two laptops had been purchased for use by the SU team;
- There was a focus on providing students with experiences outside of their curriculum area and to gain social and employability skills;
- The events organised were outlined, including a face mask competition, World Aids day events, a craft appeal for the Manor Hospital charity, Kindness by Post, LGBT History month and a Space, Wombles and Wisdom video that had been viewed over 200 times on YouTube;
- The SU Exec continued to meet regularly via Teams;
- Marketing were producing a student newsletter, and the SU was involved with this project;
- The Rotary Club had approached the college to be involved with a project they were running;
- Elections for a new President and Deputy would be held later in March;
- In March there were events planned for International Women's Day and Red Nose Day.

The Chair thanked the President for her very thorough report, commented on the impressive number of activities that were being organised and asked which ones students had engaged most in. The President responded that due to the virtual nature, it was not possible to have detailed feedback on engagement. The SU had worked hard to promote its events, but the feeling was that engagement was unfortunately fairly low.

The Assistant Principal Quality and HE added his thanks to the President for her report. College data showed over 2000 personal development activities had been recorded by students in the year to date, some of which were linked to topics covered by SU activities. This was the highest ever figure.

#### **14.21 STUDENT CONFERENCE**

The Tutorial Coordinator explained the plans for the next Student Conference, which would be on 28 April. There would be input from a range of cross college departments. The theme would be 'Past, Present and Future' and the activities proposed were as set out in the written report.

An important aspect would be to collate feedback after the event and to ensure that this was well utilised.

To maximise engagement, it was hoped that the conference could be made available through classroom activity on the day. This was currently being considered.

Invitations would be sent to Governors.

The Chair asked if the SU and other students had been asked to contribute to the agreed agenda, and it was confirmed that they had.

A Governor suggested that as a recurring theme at this committee was how best to communicate with students, that the conference could also explore this. The Tutorial Coordinator agreed, but was also aware of meetings planned with students and the Marketing team this month, and hoped that progress on this important issue could be made before the conference.

#### **15.21 STUDENT VOICE – MENTAL HEALTH AND RETURNING TO COLLEGE**

This was the first week of full re-opening. Student feedback would be collated from Student Reps. However, early indications were that students were engaging well with the lateral flow testing. There had been some questions about Covid procedures where positive cases were found.

Student Rep meetings were being held every six weeks for every campus. These included HE students. Extra meetings had been held where needed, to enable feedback to go out to students quickly. There was a Teams site set up for Student Reps and this was being well used by students supporting each other.

Chat with Jat continued every term.

Common queries were received about mental health support available once students were back on site. Mental health support resources were available to students in various ways and at various times.

Results of student satisfaction surveys continued to indicate positive responses. All responses were analysed via the Quality team. 'Seven Ways to have your say' continued to be promoted, and would be discussed at the student conference in April.

The student voice action plan had been included with the meeting papers for information.

The Chair asked Student Governors for their feedback on this important area.

Both Student Governors stated that about half of students seemed very pleased to be back in college, whereas the other half were anxious,

particularly about social distancing and travelling on public transport. There were a lot of concerns about catching Covid. Other concerns were about interacting with people again after such a long time. Many students had missed the social interactions but some were nervous about doing this again. The high level of support offered by the college was acknowledged by both students. No further suggestions for improvement were made.

The Student Union President felt it was important for students to be confident they had somewhere to seek help for mental health issues. There was much stigma about mental health and she wished to see it being better understood.

Support was available from college counsellors, mental health first aiders and through Kooth (which had chat rooms for students to access). There was also a group that students had set up themselves to support mental health. Several other suggestions were being discussed with the Head of Student Services and Wellbeing.

The Assistant Principal Quality and HE noted that in the induction survey, 17% of students had expressed concerns about distancing and wearing of masks in college. However, this was being enforced in line with Government guidelines. Mask wearing was generally good. Students that were anxious should be speaking to tutors.

The Assistant Principal Curriculum outlined the lateral flow testing process that was currently in place, including for taking action where a positive case was found. Over 2,500 tests had been completed to date and only four positive cases found. The system was well run and would provide assurance to staff and students. The Chair asked if this feedback was being provided to students, and it was agreed that it should be. The Assistant Principal Quality and HE would action this.

DfE guidance on face to face and remote delivery was being followed. The rough split was 51% face to face and 49% remote delivery, but this varied depending on the type of course.

The Assistant Principal Quality and HE provided some feedback on the teaching and learning survey currently in progress, notably:

- There were 632 responses to date;
- 98% of students would recommend the college;
- 91% were satisfied with the quality of remote education;
- 14% felt that their learning had not progressed;
- 10% were not happy with work experience opportunities.

Further analysis would be provided when the survey had closed.

The Chair thanked all for attending the meeting and for their invaluable inputs. Students were reminded of the ways support could be accessed if needed.

**16.21 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**  
Thursday 27 May 2021 at 1230 hrs.

**Assistant  
Principal Quality  
and HE**