

**WALSALL COLLEGE**  
**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SEARCH AND GOVERNANCE STANDARDS COMMITTEE**  
**HELD ON THURSDAY 7 OCTOBER 2021 AT 1000 HRS**  
**VENUE: VIA TEAMS**

**PRESENT:** Alan Woods Chair  
Jat Sharma Principal & Chief Executive  
Graham Ward  
Stuart Pedley-Smith (from  
1030 hrs)

**TOGETHER WITH:** Alison Buick Clerk to the Corporation

**APOLOGIES:** Allan Pinnegar

**01.22 CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS**

It was agreed that Alan Woods would chair the meeting in the absence of Allan Pinnegar. The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and welcomed all to the meeting. The change of start time and move to Teams was appreciated

**02.22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Allan Pinnegar.

**03.22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Alan Woods noted that his organisation, VTCT, had been selected to jointly deliver the T Level for Hair, Beauty and Aesthetics with NCFE from 2023. The college provision in this area was currently through City and Guilds, but this could change in 2023 depending on the outcome of the Government's Level 3 funding review, which could result in the defunding of some existing qualifications. The defunding list was expected to be published in November.

Governors were reminded that VTCT also held an existing small contract with the college for hairdressing.

**04.22 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 May 2021, having been circulated, were taken as read and approved.

**05.22 MATTERS ARISING**

The Action Points Record was reviewed and the following updates were noted:

Item 05.21

There was no progress to report on Governor testimonials but it was agreed that an update was needed.

Item 08.21

Governors were now starting to attend events and meetings in college after the pandemic restrictions had eased.

Item 09.21

Ethical governance section had been added to Governance at Walsall College.

Item 19.21

There had been no decision on inviting the FE Commissioner to a Governor Training event.

Item 21.21

The public benefit statement would be refreshed for the next set of accounts in the autumn term.

Item 29.21.1

New Student Governors would be recruited in the Autumn term.

Item 29.21.2

The skills audit summary had been circulated.

Item 29.21.3

Link roles for 2021/22 had been agreed.

**06.22 CORPORATION MEMBERSHIP**

The Clerk referred Governors to her written report and the following was discussed:

Succession Planning

There were currently two vacancies for External Governors and there would be a third when Allan Pinnegar's term of office ended in March 2022.

It was noted that Allan Pinnegar was currently absent due to ill health, although he had been in contact with the Vice Chair, Principal and Clerk. He had indicated a wish to return from 1 November if possible. However this was likely to be as a Governor and not as Chair. Corporation had been due to consider appointing a Chair Designate and Vice Chair Designate in preparation for March 2022, but circumstances now required this to be brought forward.

Alan Woods, current Vice Chair, had been acting as Chair since mid-August and was willing to be appointed as Chair. He had been supported by Charlotte Bosworth, who was willing to be appointed as Vice Chair. The Board of Trustees at VTCT was supportive of Alan Woods taking over as Corporation Chair.

The committee discussed the current position, the options available and the timing considerations. Allan Pinnegar's intention to return was welcomed and it was hoped that his health would permit this.

There was a potential impact in terms of additional workload for Charlotte Bosworth. Alan Woods would discuss this with her.

The Clerk noted the option to appoint two Vice Chairs. This would be considered.

The Principal commented on Alan Woods and Charlotte Bosworth having similar backgrounds in awarding bodies. Corporation needed to be mindful of Ofsted and ESFA views on make up of governing bodies. The Vice Chair felt that availability for the role was key and that as a general comment, Corporation needed more employers.

**Vice Chair**

It was agreed that Allan Pinnegar's intentions and how these should be relayed to Corporation should be clarified with him. There should be a short update to Corporation in October, with decisions made at that time if felt appropriate.

#### Terms of Office

Governors noted the Governor terms of office set out in the written report.

Stuart Pedley-Smith's term of office would expire on 21 October 2021 and he was willing to be re-appointed. Committee members considered that Stuart had made excellent contributions to the work of Corporation and it was **agreed** that he should be recommended to Corporation for appointment for a third three-year term of office.

The next term of office due to end would be Dave Wheeler in March 2022. This would be considered at the next Committee meeting in January.

#### Student Governors

There were currently no Student Governors in post. The elections for a new Student Union President were in progress and the result was due to be announced after half term. After this, the application process for a second Student Governor would be opened up.

#### External Governor Vacancies and Skills Audit

There were currently two vacancies for an External Governor.

The general recruitment processes for new Governors were discussed.

The Vice Chair expressed concern at the current 'open door' recruitment policy and felt that it needed to be further formalised, with input from the Principal from the outset.

The Clerk explained recent discussions with a specialist FE recruitment agent, which had given an indication of the costs and service that could be provided if the college wished to consider this. No commitment had been made, and if Governors decided to go ahead, three quotes would be needed to assess value for money in the procurement process.

Governors discussed the merits of using a recruitment agent and the need to have a robust, transparent process with a clear audit trail for decisions made. The need to improve the diversity of the Corporation in terms of ethnicity and age profile was agreed. More local community and employer representation was also needed. The Principal commented that Ofsted would expect this.

The Principal had several local contacts that he had been pursuing. The Chair wished to conclude these discussions promptly, and certainly before Christmas, so that other options could be considered if necessary. Interview panels would be set up for prospective candidates.

Stuart Pedley-Smith arrived at 1030 hrs and a brief re-cap of discussions so far was given.

### Associate Governors

Contact had been made with a prospective candidate to become an Associate of the Audit Committee during the summer. He had met with the Chair of the Audit Committee and Clerk, and his Governor Application form had been circulated with the papers for this meeting.

Governors discussed the candidate and his written application. Given the skills and experience that the individual brought, it was **unanimously agreed** to recommend his appointment for a one-year term of office to Corporation at its next meeting.

Governors **resolved** to **receive** the Corporation Membership report.

## **07.22 GOVERNOR TRAINING : POLICY, PLANS AND PROGRESS**

The Clerk introduced the paper, which noted the training that had taken place in 2020/21 and outlining the plans for 2021/22.

Governor training in 2020/21 had again been limited by the coronavirus pandemic. However, the AOC had supported a number of update webinars and other events for Governors. The College had also continued to hold termly Governor Training events, all of which were held virtually.

For 2021/22 the Clerk had enrolled for an ETF programme that allowed all Governors to access a range of training resources. Details of how to log in had been provided to all in July 2021.

The Governor Training Policy had been agreed as appropriate for review once every three years and therefore a full review had taken place in the summer. The revised draft had been expanded to be a Governor Recruitment and Training Policy.

Members discussed the details in the report and the updated policy.

Governors **resolved** to receive the Governor Training report and to **approve** the Governor Recruitment and Training Policy.

## **08.22 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOR THE WORK OF THE CORPORATION**

The Clerk introduced the item and explained that the supporting paper was an item for information.

Governors commented on the impact of virtual meetings on attendance. The mix of face to face and virtual meetings in year would be kept under review. The challenges of holding hybrid meetings were noted.

Governors **resolved** to accept the report and to note the performance indicators data.

## **09.22 GOVERNOR EXPENSES BUDGET**

The Clerk explained the budget for 2021/22 that had been agreed with the Director of Finance & MIS and noted the performance against the 2020/21 budget.

It was **resolved** that Governors **noted** the budget for 2021/22.

## 10.22 COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Clerk explained that all committee terms of reference had been reviewed in the summer as part of the agreed three-year review cycle. A small number of changes to wording were proposed and noted. Corporation would be asked to approve the updates to this and other committee terms of reference in November 2021. This would be after all other committees had opportunity to review their terms of reference this term.

The Chair commented on the updates to Student Voice and Remuneration Committees. It was explained that for Student Voice, the changes reflected areas already covered at Corporation. For Remuneration Committee, whilst the responsibility for approving the pay policy was within the remit of the Finance and Resources Committee, it was felt important for the Remuneration Committee to be mindful of the pay policy in the context of reviewing senior postholder terms and conditions.

Governors **resolved** to **recommend** the updated terms of reference for Search and Governance Standards Committee for Corporation approval.

## 11.22 GOVERNANCE SAR AND QIP

The Clerk gave an update on the current position for the Governance SAR and QIP. A date for validation was to be agreed with the Assistant Principal Quality and HE. The document had been drafted and passed to the Vice Chair for comment. His comments had been taken into account in the version presented.

Governors confirmed that they were happy with the format and content of the report. The intention to try to simplify the reporting style was welcomed. The inclusion of the table at the front summarising the Ofsted judgements was felt to be helpful.

The Chair asked that a final review be completed to ensure that all areas for improvement be included in the action plan.

It was **resolved** that Governors received the Governance Self-Assessment Report and Quality Improvement Plan update.

## 12.22 GOVERNANCE UPDATES

The Clerk referred to her report which covered:

- FE White Paper;
- English Colleges' Code of Good Governance Update;
- Governance at Walsall College.

The FE White Paper had now been published as the Skills for Jobs – Lifelong Learning for opportunity and Growth bill. It was currently being reviewed as part of the House of Lords parliamentary process.

The AOC had recently published its updated Code of Good Governance. Reporting against this would not be required until 2021/22.

Governance at Walsall College had been updated during the summer. Attempts had been made to reduce the content. The Vice Chair had a copy for review.

Clerk

Governors **resolved** to receive the Governance Updates.

**13.22 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

It was **resolved** that the next meeting would be held on Tuesday 25 January 2022 at 1000 hrs.

The meeting ended at 1115 hrs.

How Governors challenged management		Impact of meeting on College	
11.22	Requested final review of actions in Governance QIP.	06.22	Recommended re-appointment of an External Governor to Corporation.
		06.22	Recommended appointment of an Associate Governor to Corporation.
		07.22	Approved Governor Recruitment and Training Policy.
		11.22	Agreed Governance SAR and QIP