

THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF GODALMING COLLEGE

Minutes of the meeting of the full Board of Trustees of Godalming College
held virtually on Monday, 13th December 2020 at 4.30pm

Present:

Peter Aitken (PA)	Hamish Cameron Blackie (HCB)	Rachel Gray (RG)
Geoff Howes (GH)	Peg Hulse (PH)	Justin Knight (JK)
Jeremy Pattison (JP) Chair	Dawn Reves (DR)	Nigel Roberts (NR)
Ed Sylvester (ES)	Helen Warren (HW)	Emma Young, Principal (ELY)

Apologies:

Shirley Price (SP)	Stuart Hibbert (SH)	
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In attendance:

Sarah Baudains, Finance Director (SB)	Christian Brunton, SU President (CB)
Ken Kehoe, Clerk (SH)	Oliver Stevens, Deputy Principal (ODS)
Grace McCarthy-Holland (GMH)	

1.	Apologies for Absence
	Apologies for absence were received from Shirley Price and Stuart Hibbert.
2.	Declarations of Interest
	There were no declarations of interest.
3.	Minutes of the meeting held on 20th September 2021
	The minutes of the last meeting on 20 th September 2021 were approved by the Board as an accurate record.
4.	Matters Arising from the previous minutes
	The Board agreed that the new Staff Trustees, Ed Sylvester and Stuart Hibbert, should sit on Curriculum and Quality, and Governance and HR, respectively. The new Parent Trustee, when the appointment process had been completed, should sit on the Audit Committee.
5.	Chair's Update
	<p>The Chair had provided the Board with an overview of activities since the last meeting; he highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SFCR Regional meeting that had included discussion of the need for external reviews of governance. • The Parent Trustee ballot that had closed earlier that day, yielding a clear winner, who would be appointed as Parent Trustee, subject to completion of the normal checks. • The ongoing debate about the future of BTECS and T levels, noting that some S7 Colleges were trialling the latter but were not convinced.

6.	Principal's Update
	<p>The Principal reported to the Board on College activities, highlighting the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COVID had not dominated the term as much as the previous year but there had been rising cases over the last weeks. As of that day, 7 students had tested positive for COVID and 1 member of staff. There were a further 20 suspected cases among students. There had been no need to implement the outbreak contingency plan but the wearing of face coverings in indoor communal areas had been re-introduced and RONA rangers employed to encourage compliance, which was improving. The Christmas productions were still going ahead as allowed by the Department of Education and Surrey Council guidance, albeit with additional mitigation measures. • The College was ready to move to blended or online learning, if required by the Government. Students would be required to take lateral flow tests before the new term. In response to questioning by Trustees, the Principal confirmed that FE Colleges did not have to carry out the Lateral Flow Tests onsite, unlike secondary schools. • The College had drawn up contingency plans for Teacher Assessed Grades in 2022 in line with Government guidance. • The College continued to support the Protect Student Choice campaign. The Government had announced that the removal of BTEC funding had been delayed until 2024 and that this would be evidence-based. In response to questions from Trustees about what more they could do, the Principal referred Trustees to the petition to support student choice and asked that if Trustees were aware of examples of the benefits of BTECs then these should be shared with the SFCA. • Following the spending review, it appears that post 16 provision will be funded for an additional week but it is not yet clear what this means in practice. It was hoped that the Government would provide more detail by the end of term. The Government had also said that they would cover the additional Employers' National Insurance contributions for Academies, such as Godalming, but not for 6th Form Colleges. • The College had been awarded the Platinum Arts Mark by the Arts Council. This was a fantastic achievement and a credit to the staff involved. Of the 545 institutions that had received the Arts Mark only 35 had achieved the Platinum award and only two 6th Form Colleges had achieved that level of award. In response to questions, the Principal confirmed that the Award covered the Performing Arts. The Board congratulated the staff on their work to secure the award. <p>The Deputy Principal briefed the Board on student and educational developments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Literacy Support programme would provide 80 students with 45 minutes of extra support per week. The College was also looking at providing extra study skills support. • For the Upper 6th, 30 students were identified as significantly underperforming and they would be given additional support. • The College was taking part in an External Quality Review. Some 60 Colleges were involved and external reviewers will come in to look at the Maths department and to review our pastoral and disciplinary systems. The internal reviews would look at retention over the medium term and departmental workshops. He thanked the Trustees that had taken part in the Departmental Self-Assessment Review process. • 99% of Lower 6th students took part in some form of enrichment activity. 75% of students were taking at least one Explore course. He highlighted that the College was at the top of most sports leagues in Surrey, had enjoyed an excellent College production of Rent and were looking forward to the Music Christmas Concert on the 15th December. • There had been an increase in the number of students requiring mental health support.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The College had launched a new Website which was being used to process applicants as part of the Course Advice Sessions. <p>The Board thanked the Principal and Deputy Principal for their briefings.</p>
7.	Committee Reports
	<p><u>Curriculum and Quality</u></p> <p>Jeremy Pattison reported on the meeting of the Curriculum and Quality Committee on Monday, 8th November. The following points from the meeting were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oliver Stevens, Deputy Principal, provided an update on the arrangements for public examinations in 2022 and on the situation with regard to the developing policy on BTECs. Trustees noted the long-stranding attitude of Russell Group universities towards BTECS. Carol Horlock, Assistant Principal, provided the Committee with a briefing on pressures on student services, following the rising demand from students because of safeguarding and mental well-being needs. The Committee reviewed and approved the College’s Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy for recommendation to the Full Board for approval. The Terms of Reference for C&Q Committee were reviewed and updated and recommended to Full Board for approval. <p><u>Governance and HR</u></p> <p>Nigel Roberts reported on the meeting of the Governance and HR committee on Monday, 15th November. The following discussions and actions from the meeting were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussed training for Trustees and asked that Trustees should contact the Clerk with any feedback on the SFCA Webinar series. The IT Department would be providing email accounts for Trustees and a Trustee portal for key documentation. Reviewed and approved updated Terms of Reference for the Governance and HR Committee for recommendation to the Full Board for approval. Reviewed Skills Audit and Self-Assessment report. One outcome was that training on charity law and governance would be covered at the Trustees’ annual conference. <p><u>Finance and Estates</u></p> <p>Justin Knight reported on the meeting of the Finance and Estates Committee on Monday, 22nd November. The following discussions and actions from the meeting were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An excellent briefing from the Estates Manager, John Erasmus. Reviewed and approved the College’s Annual Report and Financial Statements to 31st August 2021 for recommendation to the Full Board for approval. Reviewed and approved the Management Accounts and Student Union annual accounts to year end 31st August 2021. Reviewed and approved the Terms of Reference for the F&E Committee for recommendation to the Full Board for approval. <p><u>Audit</u></p> <p>Geoff Howes reported on the meeting of the Audit Committee on Monday, 29th November. The following discussions and actions from the meeting were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewed and approved the College’s Annual Report and Financial Statements to 31st August 2021 for recommendation to the Full Board for approval.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Received feedback from Auditors and reviewed Auditors’ Findings Report. No material issues were raised. The Audit process went smoothly. Approved the Audit Findings Report for recommendation to the Full Board for approval. Reviewed and approved the Risk Management Policy for recommendation to the Full Board for approval. Reviewed the Risk Register and agreed that the Committee will carry out deep dives into significant individual risks. Reviewed and approved the Terms of Reference for the Audit Committee for recommendation to the Full Board for approval. <p><u>Chairs’ Forum</u></p> <p>Jeremy Pattison reported on the meeting of the Chairs’ Forum on Thursday, 6th December. The following discussions and actions from the meeting were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion focused on need to codify the policy on executive pay. The Terms of Reference for Chairs’ Forum were reviewed and approved for recommendation to the Full Board.
8.	<p><u>Documents for approval from the Committee Meetings</u></p> <p><u>Report and Financial Statements to 31st August 2021</u></p> <p>The Board reviewed the College Report and Financial Statements to 31st August 2021. It was noted this document had been reviewed and approved at both Audit Committee and F&E Committee.</p> <p>The Report and Financial Statements to 31st August 2021 were approved by the Board of Trustees.</p> <p><u>Regularity Letter of Representation</u></p> <p>The Board reviewed the Regularity Letter of Representation.</p> <p>The Board of Trustees approved the Regularity Letter of Representation.</p> <p><u>Audit of Financial Statements Letter of Representation</u></p> <p>The Board reviewed the Audit of Financial Statements Letter of Representation.</p> <p>The Board of Trustees approved the Audit of Financial Statements Letter of Representation.</p> <p><u>External Auditors’ Report 2020-21</u></p> <p>The Board reviewed the External Auditors’ Report.</p> <p>The Board of Trustees took note of the External Auditors’ Annual Report.</p> <p><u>Risk Management Policy</u></p> <p>The Board reviewed the College’s Risk Management Policy. It was noted the policy had been reviewed and approved by the Audit Committee.</p> <p>The Board of Trustees approved the Risk Management Policy</p> <p><u>Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy</u></p> <p>The Board reviewed the College’s Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. In discussion the Board agreed that “using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language” should not be described as a low level concern (page 9). They further agreed that the term “low level” should be deleted.</p>

	<p>The Board agreed that the Prevent Duty arises from section 26 of the 2015 Counter-Terrorism and Security Act. No new duty had been imposed in 2021 so the reference to “The Prevent Duty for England and Wales (2021)” should be amended.</p> <p>The Board of Trustees approved the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, subject to the amendments agreed.</p> <p><u>Terms of Reference</u></p> <p>The Board reviewed the Terms of Reference for the Board of Trustees and for each of its committees. It was noted all of the Terms of References had been reviewed and approved at each of the respective committees.</p> <p>The Board of Trustees approved all the following Terms of Reference.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Terms of Reference for the Full Board of Trustees – Terms of Reference for the Audit committee – Terms of Reference for the Chairs’ Forum – Terms of Reference for the Curriculum and Quality Committee. – Terms of Reference for the Finance and Estates Committee. – Terms of Reference for the Governance and HR Committee.
9.	College Self-Assessment and Development Plan
	<p>The Principal introduced the draft College Self-Assessment and Development Plan. Trustees made the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did the -4 for DfE Student Progression score compare with other establishments? The Principal explained that it was better than local schools and that other S7 are below or at the average level for progression. The College would be investigating what the data behind the score. • Are the numbers going to Higher Education going down? Yes but collecting destination data is notoriously difficult, particularly when it comes to gap years. The College would be making follow-up calls after Christmas to try and gather more data on student destinations, including speaking to parents. • The success of Godalming Students at third level, with 91.4% achieving First or Second Class honours, was a great achievement. <p>The Board of Trustees approved the College Self-Assessment and Development Plan, subject to the amendment of typographical error on page 11.</p>
10.	The Board Self-Assessment
	<p>The Board considered the results of the Skills Audit. The Chair highlighted that the areas for development included charity law and governance and property development. The Board agreed that the Skills Audit should be updated after the new Trustees had joined.</p> <p>The Board considered the Governance Self-Assessment and Development Plan. The Trustees agreed that this was a much improved document that would assist the Committees to prioritise their work.</p> <p>The Board of Trustees approved the Governance Self-Assessment and Development Plan.</p>
11.	Management Accounts to 31st October 2021

	<p>The Board reviewed the Management Accounts to 31st October 2021. The Finance Director briefed the Board that the budgeted overspend had now reduced to £140k, following lower than budgeted pay awards and other changes. She confirmed, in response to Trustee questions, that that the budgeted overspend was in line with previous years and largely reflected capital expenditure and it should be seen against the background of the College’s cash reserves. She highlighted the strong performance of the new in-house catering operation.</p> <p>The Board confirmed it is satisfied with the Management Accounts to 31st October 2021.</p>
12.	Risk Register
	<p>The Principal presented the updated Risk Register to the Board. In response to questioning about the response to Risk 11, the Finance Director confirmed that the capital expenditure on the Firewall involved the most spending but it was not the sole response to the cyber threat risk.</p> <p>The Board of Trustees approved the College Risk Register.</p>
13.	Reports from Link Trustees
	<p>The Board took note of the reports of the Safeguarding and EDI Link Trustees.</p> <p>The Board also considered the future use of the Link Trustees and agreed that the Board should only retain a Safeguarding LINK Trustee. Other areas of focus such as the provision for Special Educational Needs, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, and Student Progression should be covered by committees as standing items. The Board agreed that the importance of these issues to the Board should be reflected in the work of the committees and in communication with stakeholders. Jeremy Pattison undertook to speak to the former Staff Trustee who was the EDI lead within the College.</p>
14.	Strategy Update
	<p>The Principal began by outlining the Mission, Vision and Values of the College and describing composition of the student body, highlighting that they came from c.120 different educational establishments and that they took a range of courses, from solely A levels, through mixed A-Level/BTEC programmes , to Level 2 Access programmes and a small number of 14-16 year old programmes. The breadth and diversity of the College’s offering was an important asset.</p> <p>The Chair briefed on the outcome of the collaborative work tool that the Trustees had been using since the last meeting. The key weaknesses identified included the uptake of staff development, the need to be more strategic, the lean management of the College and the poor transport links because of the location of the College. The College did not get feedback the Local Economic Partnership (LEP) on the requirements of the local labour market. Trustees agreed that the results of the collaborative tool should be mapped onto the Risk Register.</p> <p>The key issues /priorities were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The future of BTEC/T Levels. ● Funding. ● Competition and demographics. ● Mental Health and well-being. ● The provision for learning, both online and on campus. How would the College respond to a larger cohort? Was there a threat or opportunity in the development of online educational establishments?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainability. <p>The Board agreed that this was the right list of priorities and that they should be looked at by the Committees. The Board invited the Chair to allocate priorities to each Committee for consideration, with support from other Committees if necessary. Each Committee should look at its priorities next term with a view to the Board returning to the subject at its next meeting.</p>
15.	AOB
	<p>There were two items of other business:</p> <p>The Safeguarding LINK Trustee reminded all Trustees that they needed to complete the required Safeguarding Training.</p> <p>Trustees asked the Clerk to confirm that all contact details and email distribution lists were updated.</p>
16.	Dates of future meetings
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monday, 28th March 2022 at 4.30pm • Monday, 11th July 2022 at 4.30pm
17.	Confidential Item
	None

The meeting closed at 6.54 pm

Signed Date.....