



## Minutes of the Search Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 18 June 2024 at 10am via Teams

**Present:** Janet Gater (*Principal*)  
Mick Martin (*Foundation Governor*)  
Helen Stevenson (*Foundation Governor*)

**In attendance:** Ruth Potter (*Clerk*)

*The Clerk opened the meeting in prayer.*

### **1. ELECTION**

#### **1.1 Election of Chair of Search Committee from 18 June 2024 to 17 June 2026** (previously circulated)

Following the resignation of the previous Committee Chair, Tracy Mawson, the Clerk had notified members in advance of the need to elect a new Chair. The sole nomination for the role was Helen Stevenson. The Committee unanimously **agreed to appoint** Helen Stevenson as Chair of Search Committee for a two-year period with immediate effect.

For practical reasons, however, it was agreed that Mick Martin would chair the remainder of the current meeting.

*Mick Martin chaired the meeting from this point.*

### **2. ROUTINE AND STANDING ITEMS**

#### **2.1 Declarations of interest**

Attendees were invited to declare whether they had any direct or indirect personal, prejudicial or pecuniary interest or conflict of interest in any matter which formed part of the agenda for this meeting or was likely to be discussed at this meeting. No interests other than those already declared and recorded on the Register of Interests were noted.

#### **2.2 Apologies for absence**

All members were present. The meeting was declared quorate.

#### **2.3 Items to be included under any other business**

No items of additional business had been submitted for consideration prior to the meeting.

#### **2.4 Minutes of the Search Committee meeting held on 4 March 2024 (previously circulated)**

The minutes were approved as a correct record and would be signed by the Chair in accordance with Article 12 (3) of the Articles of Government. The publication of the minutes was authorised in accordance with Article 13.

#### **2.5 Matters arising from the minutes (previously circulated)**

Committee members noted the action log prepared by the Clerk.

## Action 2 – Student Governor membership of Quality & Standards Committee

Discussion ensued regarding the appropriateness of retaining the Student Governor as a member of the Quality and Standards Committee given the potential for confidential staff issues to arise. Governors reflected on the extent to which membership of this committee was an effective vehicle through which to secure meaningful input from the Student Governor. The time commitment for an Upper Sixth student – in a challenging final year at College – was referenced given that attendance was also required at four face-to-face full Governing Body meetings. The opportunity to develop key personal skills was a benefit of the role and all agreed that it was also important to keep this at the heart of any alternative proposal. Members suggested an alternative way of engaging the Student Governor – and potentially other members of the Student Council – through student focus group sessions aligned with Link Governor visits, for example. Consultation with the incoming Student Governor and Student Council Tutor would be required in order to seek their views.

The Clerk clarified that the current terms of reference for the Quality and Standards Committee required the Student Governor to be a member, so any amendment to remove this requirement would require the approval of the Governing Body.

Following further discussion, Committee members agreed the following next steps:

- Principal and Clerk to meet with incoming Student Governor and Student Council Tutor to get feedback on proposal
- present new proposal to Governing Body for consideration and approval at its next meeting.

**ACTION – (a) meet Student Governor and Student Council Tutor to get feedback on proposal  
(b) FGB agenda item**

### **3. GOVERNING BODY REVIEW**

#### **3.1 Membership and Succession Planning** *(previously circulated)*

The Chair referred members to the Clerk's report from which the following points were highlighted:

#### Vacancies

Two Foundation Governor vacancies and one Co-opted Governor vacancy remained. Since the last meeting, the Clerk indicated that advertisements had also been placed on the Institute for Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW) volunteer platform and the Governors for Schools vacancy platform. Targeted skills and experience were: finance/audit, HR and legal.

- Foundation Governors – One expression of interest had been received from a former Carmel student for the role of Foundation Governor. The individual in question was currently working in the British Embassy in China and the logistics of their attendance at meetings (both online and face-to-face) had already been subject to discussion with the Chair of Governors. Advice had also been taken from the Eversheds Governance service. Following discussion, members agreed to pursue this expression of interest further and invite the individual to submit an application form. Ultimate discretion for such an appointment would, however, remain with the Archdiocese of Liverpool as the appointing authority for Foundation Governors.

- Co-opted Governor – This was the only current vacancy that did not have the parallel requirement for the individual to be a practising Catholic, therefore discussion ensued on the need to ensure appropriate professional skills were targeted to address gaps on the Governing Body. The Clerk updated members on the actions taken thus far to advertise the vacancy and target required skills; these had not yet yielded any applications. A new cohort of students in September would provide a further opportunity to circulate the vacancy notice amongst the parent community and potentially attract someone with the requisite skills and experience. In the meantime, the Clerk referenced the FE Governor Recruitment Service – funded by the Department for Education (DfE) and delivered by Peridot – which the Governing Body could apply to access. Members agreed that exploring the potential of the new parent community was the first priority, following which further consideration could then be given to the DfE funded service.

#### Student Governor

The existing Student Governor's term of office would come to an end on 3 July and the Clerk updated members on the outcome of recent Student Council elections. Alyssa Snowden-Leak was the Student Governor elect. The Clerk provided some background information to members and confirmed an initial introductory meeting had been arranged with the Principal and Clerk.

The Committee **recommended approval** of the appointment of Alyssa Snowden-leak as Student Governor from 8 July 2024 to 7 July 2025 to the full Governing Body.

#### Link Governor Scheme Annual Report

The Clerk confirmed that all link governors had completed their Summer Term visits and an annual report on the link governor scheme would be presented to the full Governing Body for consideration at its next meeting. The impact of the scheme on the governance of the College would be a key question for governors to consider. Discussion ensued and members agreed that it was important for the schedule of termly link governor visits to flow into the next cycle of committee and board meetings so that there was an early opportunity to feedback any arising issues. It was agreed that this point would be reflected in the annual report.

The Committee **noted** the membership and succession planning update and **agreed** the following actions:

- ACTION – (a) Advertise governor vacancies to parents of new cohort in September 2024**  
**(b) FGB agenda item – Student Governor appointment**  
**(c) Link Governor Annual Report – include reference to strategic scheduling of link governor visits**

## **4. GOVERNANCE DEVELOPMENT**

### **4.1 External Governance Review – update (previously circulated)**

The Clerk reported that the draft external governance review report was awaited. Once received, the draft report would be reviewed by the Chair, Principal and Clerk and any comments fed back to the reviewer. The final report would then be presented to the Governing Body in person by the external reviewer at the meeting on 8 July 2024.

The Committee **noted** the update on the external governance review.

#### 4.2 **Governance Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) – progress report** (*previously circulated*)

The Clerk presented this report and referred members to the QIP progress update and RAG rated action log. It was noted that 12 actions had been closed out. Discussion ensued on the outstanding actions, one of which was RAG rated red (Action 1[b], Recruit Foundation Governor to fill vacancies). The challenges faced in successfully closing out this action had already been subject to discussion under item 3.1. In addition, five actions were RAG rated amber and it was noted that four of these would be completed by the end of the academic year and one would be carried forward to 2024-25.

Members discussed the plans for next year's governance self-assessment report (SAR) and associated QIP. It was agreed that the recommendations arising from the external governance review would form the basis of the improvement plan for the year ahead. The timeline for the SAR process was discussed and it was noted that final documentation would be presented to the Governing Body for approval in Autumn Term 2 in line with the rest of the College's SAR process.

The Committee:

- **noted** the QIP progress report
- **confirmed** the timeline for the 2024-25 governance SAR process.

#### 4.3 **Governing Body Code of Conduct** (*previously circulated*)

The Clerk referred members to the Governing Body Code of Conduct which had been reviewed and revised following Evershed's publication of an updated template. A summary of the key changes was provided. The Clerk indicated that the Code was issued to all governors over the summer period as part of the annual collation of governance documentation in readiness for the new academic year.

Following approval, the updated Code would be included in the key document appendices to the Governing Body Handbook.

The Committee **recommended approval** of the updated Governing Body Code of Conduct to the full Governing Body.

#### **ACTION – FGB agenda item**

#### 4.4 **Standing Orders** (*previously circulated*)

The Clerk reported on her recent consultation with the Eversheds Governance service, explaining the rationale behind the following proposed amendments to the Standing Orders:

- Clause 2.1 – new clause to expressly provide for meetings by video-conference
- Clause 10.2 – amendment to clarify that governing body travel expenses to attend meetings must be incurred within the UK
- Clause 10.4 – amendment to clarify that governing body travel expenses for attending training must be incurred within the UK

Following discussion, the Committee **recommended approval** of the amended Standing Orders to the full Governing Body.

#### **ACTION – FGB agenda item**

4.5 **Governing Body Handbook 2024-25** (*previously circulated*)

The Clerk referred governors to the updated Handbook and explained that it had been presented for approval earlier in the cycle to ensure that it was finalised in time for the start of the new academic year. Minor amendments to the document were proposed to reflect changes in T Level provision, the publication of the College Financial Handbook and updated link governor information. In addition, it was noted that the appendices had been split so that all key governance documents and policies were grouped in the 'Key Documents Appendices' and all other documents (such as cycles of business, meeting calendar) were grouped in 'Additional Appendices'. It was confirmed that Governing Body approval would be required for any amendments to the Handbook itself and the Key Document Appendices.

In addition, it was noted that following the discussion around Student Governor membership of the Quality and Standards Committee a further proposed amendment to the terms and reference of this committee may be presented to the Governing Body for approval.

Following discussion, the Committee **recommended approval** of the updated Governing Body Handbook and Key Document Appendices to the full Governing Body.

**ACTION – FGB agenda item**

5. **OTHER MATTERS**

5.1 **Governor Training**

Members were invited to update the Clerk on any training activities they had completed since the last meeting. No further activities were reported.

5.2 **Any Other Business**

None

5.3 **Date of next meeting**

Monday 21 October 2024 at 3pm

The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and contribution at the meeting. There being no further business to address, the Chair closed the meeting at 3.45pm.

Signed by the Chair  \_\_\_\_\_

On this day \_\_\_\_\_ 23 October 2024 \_\_\_\_\_