

WQE & Regent College Group

Search Committee
Minutes of a Meeting held at University Road
30 October 2019, commencing at 4.00 pm

Present:

Joyce Black (Chair), Stuart Dawkins, Neil McGhee, Amrik Singh & Paul Wilson

In attendance:

Dawn Haywood (minutes)

Apologies for absence

Peter Butcher, Philip Parkinson

The Chair welcomed members, noting that there was no official agenda for this meeting but that the Corporation required feedback on three items which needed discussion.

1. Updates on the appointments of Support Staff and Student Governors

a) Support Staff Governor

The Principal reported that there were two nominees for the vacancy. The Clerk had planned to organise an election in the week commencing 21 October using a digital voting system but had experienced some challenges around this. Shortly thereafter he had been signed off work again. The two nominees had been informed that voting would be delayed. The Principal confirmed that a paper-based election could be progressed, however an independent scrutineer would need to be sought to facilitate this. This would likely be a Clerk from another educational establishment or a Local Authority civil servant.

The Committee agreed that this matter needed to be progressed and the Chair asked the Principal to approach some Clerks and offer a small fee. It was requested that the election should take place before the next Corporation meeting if possible. Peter Butcher to be kept informed of actions and progress, for information.

Agreed that the Corporation be **alerted** to this matter.

b) Student Governor

The Principal reported that the model the College is using is to appoint a student on a one-year course to one of the positions and a student from the Student Executive to the other. It is the one-year student who needs appointing now. The process can be done internally; applications will be invited by email from all students on one-year courses and the Chair of this Committee will review these and make a recommendation to the Corporation.

The Committee agreed that this matter should be progressed and the Chair asked the Principal to arrange this. It was requested that this be done before the next Corporation meeting if possible. Peter Butcher to be kept informed of actions and progress, for information.

Agreed that the Corporation be **alerted** to this matter.

2. Discussion around the search and recruitment of External Governors

Members were reminded that, at the last round of recruitment, the board had been extended due to there being two exceptional candidates. Following Simon Catchpole's resignation the board was, therefore, back to its original number at the time of the merger. The latest Skills Audit showed no gaps, however the Audit Committee had recently lost a number of members, either temporarily or permanently, and consideration therefore needed to be given as to whether recruitment of further External Governors was necessary.

The Audit Committee's situation was discussed: Simon Catchpole had resigned; Sarah Fox had requested a leave of absence for the remainder of the academic year; Wayne Allsopp had requested a leave of absence to the end of the calendar year (at the earliest). That therefore left just two members in the Audit Committee: the quorum is three. Jimmy Zachariah had expressed potential interest in joining the Committee and Stuart had recently confirmed with him that he did wish to join, however this still left the Committee in a precarious position if not all members could attend all meetings. Joyce Black, being aware of audit requirements, offered to join the Committee on a short-term basis to the end of this academic year. Amrik Singh also offered his services on the same terms. This would bring membership numbers up to five and thus mitigate the risks of inquoracy at meetings.

Given the proposals above, it was the Committee's view that the Corporation should not recruit further External Governors at this time. It was agreed that a job description would be written and circulated to all Governors, and if it was later decided to make a new appointment members would be advised so that they could let their networks know. It was noted that any job description/person spec/advert should be designed so as to appeal to women as much as men.

It was noted that Wayne Allsopp's leave of absence would also create a gap on the QED Board in relation to business/finance expertise. Expressions of interest in filling this role temporarily would therefore be sought at the Corporation meeting immediately following this Committee meeting, to be notified to Joyce Black or Stuart Dawkins by 13 November 2019.

Agreed that the Corporation be **alerted** to the temporary vacancy on QED and asked to approve:

- Leave of absence for Sarah Fox from the Audit Committee to the end of this academic year.
- Leave of absence for Wayne Allsopp from the Audit Committee to the end of this calendar year, at the earliest.
- The permanent appointment of Jimmy Zachariah to the Audit Committee.
- The temporary appointments of Joyce Black and Amrik Singh to the Audit Committee to the end of this academic year.

3. Informal discussion around contingency plans in relation to Peter Butcher's absence

The Committee discussed potential contingency plans in the event that Peter Butcher was unable to return to work as anticipated towards the end of November. This included the possibility of temporary cover and/or other interim arrangements in order to ensure Corporation requirements were met and to minimise stress for Peter on his return. The Principal was asked to consider potential options in order to be ready to act if necessary.

4. Date of next meeting

4.00 pm, Wednesday 22 January 2020 at Regent Road.

The meeting closed at 4.50 pm

Signed:.....
Chair

Date:.....