

Draft

**North Hampshire
Education Alliance**

**NHEA Board of Trustees
- Board meeting**

**Minutes of a Meeting held on 20 May 2020 at 5.15pm
Meeting held using video conferencing via Microsoft TEAMS**

Trustees	Mr Jon Soar - Chair of Trustees Mrs Ali Foss – CEO, Principal of QMC Mr Steve Lutener Ms Julie McLatch Mr Mike O'Dwyer Dr Janice de Sousa Mr Pete Stagg – from 5.25pm Mrs Jean Thorpe	(8/9 quorate)
In Attendance:	Mr Mark Henderson, Deputy Principal Mrs Jane Coleman, Director of Finance Dr Toni Baldwin, Company Secretary	

48. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from John Wright.

[Secretary's note: Pete Stagg joined the meeting slightly late due to technical difficulties with the circulated connection route].

49. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

50. MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS BOARD MEETINGS

NHEA Board of Trustees Meeting – 9th April 2020

The Board approved the minutes from their meeting on 9th April 2020 as an accurate record for signature by the Chair (paper NHEA 45/19 circulated with the agenda).

Minute 39.2: Ali Foss reported that following encouragement from QMC staff a few more vulnerable QMC students were attending the face-to-face 16+ QMC/BCoT learning group based at Bishop Challoner Catholic Secondary School.

Minute 44.2: The Board noted that, following a number of questions on the format of the accounts at the last meeting, Pete Stagg and Jane Coleman had discussed and resolved these issues outside the meeting.

All other matters to be covered during the meeting.

**51.1 UPDATE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE
QMC Response to the Covid-19 Pandemic**

The Board noted the most recent update from the Principal on QMC's response to the Covid-19 Pandemic (paper NHEA 47/19 circulated prior to the meeting). Ali Foss reported that the College Management Team was in the process of planning

how the QMC site would reopen, in line with Government guidelines, on 1st June 2020 after half term. The Board discussed progress with each group of students in turn:

Vulnerable Students including those with EHCPs

- Learning Support staff remained in regular contact with all of the vulnerable students and QMC was required to report weekly to HCC on approximately 100 vulnerable learners.
- The small group of vulnerable QMC students who were being supported face-to-face by QMC staff using one of the buildings at Bishop Challoner Catholic Secondary School would be relocating back to the QMC site from 1st June.
- It was hoped that the majority of foundation learning students, who were less likely to benefit from online learning at home, would be able to return to learning face to face as soon as the QMC site reopened.
- Plans were also being discussed to enable some of the A level and BTEC students who were finding it difficult to work at home to use the QMC facilities for online learning after half term.

51.2 1st year students (year 12)

The Board noted that the government had asked that all year 12 students receive some face to face support following the wider opening of schools on 1st June. Ali Foss reminded the Board that, when the QMC site closed on 20th March, 1st year students had moved to on-line lessons using the same timetable whilst continuing to remain in their class groups. In the view of CMT, the majority of 1st year students were working well on-line and to bring them back on site with the required social distancing measures would require class groups, which were working well together, to be split up with the possibility of disrupting the students learning.

Ali Foss reported that the College Management Team had discussed a range of options for the wider opening of the College on 1st June and had concluded that the best approach would be for on-line lessons and assessments to continue for a four week block after half term. Then, during the final two weeks of term 1st year students (year 12s) would be invited onsite to have individual face to face sessions with their tutor and subject teachers – virtual sessions could be held where students or staff were clinically vulnerable or high risk. The Board noted that the face to face sessions would include an assessment of progress made since lockdown and the identification of any gaps in a students' knowledge for each subject as well as allowing each student to discuss with their tutor their UCAS/Careers intentions and re-enrol for September 2020.

Ali Foss also reported that CMT was currently considering different ways of working within the social distancing rules from September 2020 such as classes being split into groups with part of the class being taught on site and the remainder of the class joining in from home. Mark Henderson reported that he would like to keep classes together as, in his view, QMC had been successful with on-line learning because they had kept students in their original classes with the teachers and students that they had worked with since September 2019. The Board heard that some teachers had been particularly successful with on-line teaching and that the College would be holding a virtual inset day after half-term so that teachers could share their ideas and experiences and provide peer support.

51.3 2nd year students

Ali Foss reminded the Board that 2nd year students had received online lessons after the College site had closed to ensure that they had all completed the syllabus for each subject and understood the summer 2020 grading process. The Board

noted that the A-Level Results day would be on Thursday 13th August 2020 (as originally scheduled) but that, at the moment, it was unlikely that the students would be able to come into College on this day to collect their results.

Ali Foss reported that the different Exam Boards had provided a lot of guidance on submitting data for the grading process which was required by 31st May 2020. The data collection process had generally been straightforward for GCSEs and A-Levels but data was required for each separate BTEC/CTEC course unit making it more complicated and time consuming. The College had almost completed their data collection spreadsheets and was waiting on the final information on submitting grading data from the Exam Boards. Mark Henderson reported that he expected QMC's overall results to be similar to previous years as both years had had strong cohorts who had worked well. However, the Board also noted that as the submitted grades would be moderated by the Exam Boards they were unlikely to reflect any improvements within the College such as the college wide effort during 2019/20 to improve Maths teaching.

The Board discussed the process for grading and agreed that one of the Principal's regular communications to students and their parents should include a reminder that although the College provided the data it was the Exam Boards that awarded the grades in line with previous local and national data.

- 51.4 The Board discussed how different levels of education had responded to the Covid-19 pandemic. Jean Thorpe reported that schools across Hampshire had used a range of approaches but most had provided a mixture of on-line and virtual learning with teachers providing feedback to students and keeping in contact with more vulnerable students – in the main, students had adapted well and were working diligently. Secondary schools had mainly focused on providing teaching for years 7-10 and there was therefore a concern that year 11 students were no longer receiving education.

The Board noted that HCC had provided input into the Government's guidelines for the wider opening of schools and had also produced lots of documentation and support for Hampshire schools, for example, reviewing safety risk assessments. Schools had remained open throughout lockdown for small groups of vulnerable pupils and were now planning for wider opening after 1st June. The practicalities for wider opening of schools varied depending on the school context, the student cohort and the teachers and facilities available (mainly numbers of rooms and room sizes), however, Jean Thorpe reported that head teachers from Basingstoke schools were working well together on this issue in the best interests of their pupils.

Janice de Souza reported on the effect of the Covid-19 Pandemic on the University Sector. Higher education had successfully moved to on-line teaching in mid-march and for the majority of students this approach had worked well. Universities were currently planning for the new student intake in September 2020 and like colleges, keeping in regular contact with their prospective students. The Board noted that the Covid-19 pandemic had resulted in financial difficulties for the University sector. The demographic dip that had been moving through colleges over the last few years had now reached Higher education, reducing the number of potential students going to University and hence funding for universities. In addition, Universities had seen a reduction in income from student accommodation during 2019/20 due to the Covid-19 pandemic and there was the possibility of more students living at home during 2020/21 as well as a potential reduction in overseas students coming to study in the UK. The Board noted that the date for students to accept their UCAS offers had been delayed this year to the middle of June.

Universities were in the process of planning how the 2020/21 academic year would work in practice – it would be a different experience for students as large lectures were unlikely to be possible and it was expected that more students would live at home making it harder for universities to establish their communities.

51.5 Prospective students (year 11's)

The Board noted current application numbers by school as at 15th May (paper NHEA 46/19). Mark Henderson reported that numbers for September 2020 were looking similar to 2019 numbers. The Board heard that QMC had increased its interactions with prospective students. Students had been provided with videos and links as well as much more 'prepare for college' material than usual. Large numbers of prospective students had engaged with the year 11 activities.

Mark Henderson reported on the marketing approach for both year 11s and year 10s. The College was producing more videos, press releases and social media output than usual with the aim of keeping in touch with prospective students and reassuring them that the college would be a safe place to come to with the 'college experience' as normal as possible. The College was currently planning online open evenings mainly for year 10 students as well as a 'welcome day' event of some kind for year 11 students.

51.6 Considerations for re-opening the College site

Ali Foss reported on the work that the College Management Team were doing to ensure that the site was ready for re-opening. The Board noted that the Estates Manager had been on site throughout the pandemic and that the site was currently being prepared to support increased hygiene and social distancing with for example, one way systems, Perspex screens and cleaning stations. Ali Foss reported that CMT were considering which areas to open up first and support staff would gradually be coming back onto site, some teams would continue to work from home for the time being and other teams would return on a rota basis depending on their working environment. The Board noted that some members of staff were keen to be in college either because they could not access everything that they needed to work at home or because it was easier for them personally to work in college. Other members of staff were more nervous about returning to College and Human Resources were talking to members of staff individually.

Ali Foss reported that CMT was also looking forward to how teaching and learning might work in September 2020 as well as the practicalities of having more students back on site. The Board noted that specific issues such as how many students could work in one classroom or travel together on a college bus were yet to be resolved.

51.7 High Needs Employability Hub

The Board noted information on the HCC high needs employability hub that was being located at QMC (paper NHEA 49/19). Ali Foss reported that this initiative had been set up in response to the change in SEND regulations a few years ago that extended high needs students' involvement in education to the age of 25. HCC had been concerned that SEND students across the region could get 'stuck in education' repeating the same activities or level each year without progressing. The Board noted that the Hub built on a number of activities that already took place at QMC and would provide students with structured work experience, employability skills, job coaching and other support in order to encourage their progression into employment.

51.8 eM3 e-sports Collaboration

The Board noted information on the new BTEC in e-sports which was being supported by the eM3 LEP (paper NHEA 50/19). Ali Foss reported that a member of staff at QMC had been instrumental in developing and setting up the new BTEC with the Exam Board and that QMC was the first College to be offering this new qualification. The Board welcomed this new development noting that this new qualification contributed towards the industrial strategy for the LEP (digital and data technologies area) as well as fitting well into the local context - a number of game development companies and areas of high tech employment expertise are located in Basingstoke and the surrounding areas. The Board noted that the LEP was providing £228k of capital funding to enable QMC to refurbish the old English building and buy equipment in preparation for the new course and a number of local companies were also contributing finance, equipment and expertise towards the course.

52. **LOCAL GOVERNING BODY MEETINGS**

The Board noted the minutes of the most recent Local Governing Body meeting:

Local Governing Body – 5th May 2020

Julie McLatch reported that:

- It had been an interesting and productive meeting covering similar areas to this Board meeting but with different perspectives (staff, students, parents).
- A student governor had reported on their lockdown experience and the two parent governors had also reported on their children's experiences. It was obvious that lockdown had had a huge impact on this age group with usually well-adjusted students experiencing very high levels of anxiety. The LGB had made a number of useful suggestions as to what support and reassurance students would need as they returned to College.
- The LGB had noted the process for producing A Level/ BTEC grades without examinations. As part of the LGBs annual cycle of work, predicted grades had been presented to the LGB prior to the cancelling of summer examinations and it was noted that this data had formed the basis of the grades that would be submitted to the Exam Boards.
- Julie McLatch reported that she was looking to step down from the role of Chair of LGB but would remain in place for the time being should this not be the right time to make a change.

53. **REPORTS FROM COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

Search and Governance Committee – 12th May 2020

The Board noted that the Search and Governance Committee meeting scheduled for 12th May 2020 had been cancelled due to a lack of business.

54.1 **FINANCIAL ISSUES**

The Board noted the Management Accounts to the end of April 2020 along with an executive summary (papers NHEA 52/19 and 53/19 circulated with the agenda). Jane Coleman reported that the production of monthly management accounts from the new system was now much more efficient enabling the Finance Team to produce management accounts quickly after month end. The Board noted that as at the end of April expenditure was within budget. One of the Trustees questioned the overspend on premises costs and Jane Coleman reported that, in her view, the budget set for premises costs for 2019/20 had been too low. Work was now taking place to review all premises costs including proactive and reactive works and appropriate levels of compliance with the aim of setting a more realistic premises budget for 2020/21 onwards.

- 54.2 Jane Coleman highlighted a list of known savings and additional costs resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic (included in the Executive Summary paper). The Board noted that:
- With the Sports Centre closed there was be a reduction in commercial income, however, the majority of sports centre staff had now been furloughed under the Government job protection scheme.
 - There had been some savings in running costs for the College such as utilities and casual staff costs (mainly exam invigilators).
 - Caterlink had furloughed staff and were passing the savings onto the College, however, the bus company had also furloughed staff and had not yet passed on any savings to the College.
 - The College was incurring additional security costs with the site closed (CCTV and drive through security checks) and these were unlikely to be reimbursed under any of the government schemes.

The Board noted that these adjustments were likely to result in a small change to the end of year surplus and that this would be monitored each month as savings/additional costs were realised. Jane Coleman reported that the ESFA had cancelled its 2019/20 in-year forecasting exercise (BFRO: Budget Forecast Return Outturn).

- 54.3 The Board noted a paper setting out the National Joint Council agreed teacher's pay agreement for 2019/20 (paper NHEA 54/19), negotiated by the Sixth Form College's Association. Jane Coleman reported that the agreement consisted of a 1/5% increase from 1st September 2019 followed by a further 1.25% increase from 1st April 2020. The Board noted that these proposed increases, along with the support staff pay award, discussed at a previous Board meeting, would result in an increase to the overall pay budget of 2.02% against a budgeted increase of 2%. The Board reiterated their approach to keep staff pay in line with nationally SFCA negotiated levels.

Following discussion the Board **resolved to approve teaching and support staff pay awards as agreed by the National Joint Council (SFCA).**

55.1 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Board returned to their discussion of the current plans to re-open the College on 1st June following half term - the rationale for which had been discussed in detail earlier in the meeting (minute 51.6). Ali Foss drew the Board's attention to the Hazard and Risk Assessment for the College partial re-opening that set out the current guidelines for students, staff and visitors to the site working safely during the Covid-19 pandemic (circulated to the Board via GovernorHub).

Following discussion the Board **resolved to approve the limited re-opening of the College on 1st June as recommended by the College Management Team and in line with government guidelines.**

- 55.2 Ali Foss drew the Board's attention to the 'staying Covid-19 secure' poster, as circulated by the Health and Safety Executive to all employers, setting out five steps to safer working (circulated to the Board via GovernorHub). The Board noted the five statements:
- We have carried out a COVID-19 risk assessment and shared the results with the people who work here

- We have cleaning, handwashing and hygiene procedures in line with guidance
- We have taken all reasonable steps to help people work from home
- We have taken all reasonable steps to maintain a 2m distance in the workplace
- Where people cannot be 2m apart, we have done everything practical to manage transmission risk

Ali Foss confirmed each of the statements as CEO of NHEA/ Principal of QMC and the Board asked Jon Soar to sign the document on their behalf.

The Board put on record their complete confidence in the Principal and College Management Team and the way that they were clearly and carefully, leading and managing the College through the changes in working arising from the Covid-19 pandemic.

56. **DATES OF FUTURE BOARD MEETINGS**

Tuesday 7th July 2020 at 5.15 via TEAMS (was originally scheduled for 6pm)

Jon Soar thanked the Trustees and the meeting ended at 6.45.

Approved by the Board on 7th July 2020: Jon Soar (Chair of Trustees):

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SUMMARY OF ACTIONS	Timescale	Responsibility
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Toni Baldwin
Company Secretary, North Hampshire Education Alliance