

**Minutes of the Search Committee Meeting held on Monday 2 November in Conference Room 2 in the Astral Centre at 5.45 pm**

**Members Present:**

Gwen Parsons: Principal  
Evelyn Hicks: Corporation Member  
Kevin Howes: Corporation Member  
Bob Mee: Chair/Corporation Member  
Richard Perkins: Vice-Chair of Corporation  
Sarah Smith: Corporation Member

**In attendance:**

Charles Reynolds: Clerk to the Corporation

**Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence had been received from Sheila Keenan who was still recovering from her broken ankle. The Clerk provided an update on her progress. Apologies for lateness had been received from Bob Mee who would get to the meeting as soon as he could. In his absence it was agreed that Richard Perkins would chair the meeting.

**1. Disclosures of Interest**

There were no disclosures of interest relevant to the agenda items.

**2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the Search Committee meeting held on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2009 were agreed to be a correct record and were signed by the Chair.

**3 Matters Arising from the Minutes and not Agenda Items**

The Clerk confirmed that Corporation had agreed with the nominations for membership as put forward by Search Committee.

**4 Membership Issues**

**4.1) Review of member attendance 2008/09**

The Clerk introduced this item by reminding members that at the Corporation meeting held on 19 October 2009 it had been agreed that Search Committee would review member's attendance and where necessary make recommendations for action.

Referring to the meeting papers members reviewed the attendance for both main board and committees against the agreed performance target of 80% overall.

Key concerns related to the attendance of those members whose performance fell well below the target figure. In each case recognition was given to attendance at events other than meetings. Also members considered whether there were any known

**Action**

reasons that could explain the poor attendance record and what steps should be taken to help improve the situation. The Clerk provided information on attendance from a national survey to aid the review.

The attendance of two members gave most concern. In the case of one member it was recognised that, because of the changing nature of the work that they do it was inappropriate to put them on a committee that met during the day, even though this had been part of their induction programme. It was agreed that they should be moved to Estates and Finance which met in the evenings. With reference to their general level of attendance it was agreed that the Chair would discuss the matter further with them.

**Chair**

With reference to the other member it was agreed that they were currently dealing with a significant number of crucial and strategically important issues which would impact on the time they could give to Corporation. However it was the clear view that their contribution and impact on strategic planning was such that it was important to keep them on board. It was however recognised that it would be counter productive to also expect them to attend committee meetings as well. To this end it was agreed to recommend that their focus be to attend Corporation Meetings.

At this point Bob Mee arrived at the meeting.

Picking up on the discussion Bob Mee advised that there was already a precedent for this with the student members. It was also relevant that this member notified apologies for all meetings where they had been unable to attend.

Having dealt with those members where attendance was a real concern it became apparent in discussion that in most cases when members present had not been able to attend meetings that there had been very valid reasons. To this end it was agreed that it could be helpful if the minutes of the relevant meeting provided reasons for apologies where these had been given.

**Clerk**

The Chair advised that with reference to Jane Hore, and in the light of discussions at the previous Corporation meeting, she was appreciative of the support of Corporation and seemed more positive. He believed she was now reflecting on the situation. She had been invited to come to the recent Governance SAR event and also the next Personnel Committee meeting which was due to be held shortly.

#### 4.2) Committee Membership 2009/2010

Again introduced by the Clerk who advised that Corporation had requested Search Committee to review the current committee membership and in the light of recent events to recommend changes to ensure the committees were appropriately supported.

The membership of each committee was reviewed and following discussions it was agreed to move David Matthews to Estates and Finance and Anne Swietlik to Remuneration. In order to boost membership of the Audit Committee members were advised that Sarah Smith had volunteered to join, which was welcomed. It was also suggested that the Clerk contact Sheila Keenan about joining. The Clerk confirmed that Alan Debenham would be joining Audit Committee and Alastair King the Personnel Committee as part of their Induction Programme.

**Clerk**

The Clerk was asked to recast the committee membership table and circulate to members for final confirmation prior to taking to Corporation for final approval.

**Clerk**

4.3) Corporation Vacancies – to determine an action plan.

The Clerk advised that currently there was one vacancy following the resignation of Bob Russell. Members were also advised that a replacement was being sought for Corrine Barry, HE student Member, who had been advised to concentrate on her degree studies. This search was already underway.

The Principal felt that it could be helpful to look to the local authority for possible candidates, especially those with an economic regeneration background. It was clarified that any approach would be made direct and not via the authority. In discussions possible names for consideration were Malcolm Perrins, Bruce Provin, Steven Archer or Paul Mobbs.

The Principal also suggested that because of the growing links with the Maritime section, and the importance locally, another possible candidate for consideration was Yvonne Mason from the Mason Trust. Members felt that it would be a superb addition to the Corporation if she would join, for a variety of reasons but especially because of her influence and knowledge of the maritime sector.

Finally the Chair advised that there was a new Chief Executive of Great Yarmouth and Waveney Primary Care Trust, Dr Sushil Jathanna. Members agreed that this should be explored further as well and it was agreed that the chair would take this contact further as an initial enquiry regarding membership.

**Chair**

With respect to the other names mentioned members preference was to start with Yvonne Mason and if this was not possible to focus on either Steven Archer or Paul Moss.

**Clerk**

**5 Any other Business**

5.1) Chair of Corporation

With respect to succession planning Bob Mee advised that in discussion with other members of Corporation the suggestion had been made that Corporation could search for a new chair externally as a specific appointment. He sought member's views on the idea.

Responding the Principal felt that to carry out the role properly Chairs of Corporation needed to have a good understanding of the FE sector and that it would be extremely difficult to bring this in. It was far better to develop from within the board. There were already a number of significant changes in the College to cope with as well as the need to appoint a new Principal and all this required good understanding as well as strong leadership. She did not therefore think that it was a good idea or indeed that it would be possible.

Sarah Smith believed it could be a good idea on paper but agreed with the Principal that in reality it was hardly likely to be possible.

Bob Mee also expressed concern that there could be a reputational issue if, by advertising, a wrong message was sent out that Corporation was leaderless, which was not the case. He believed that when appointed Corporation should assess the strengths of the new Principal and look to appoint a chair who had matching strengths. In the

meantime he was more than happy to continue as Chair of Corporation. He also observed that comparisons should not be made with the Health Service where similar searches were made as such posts carried significant payment. This was not the case in FE.

In conclusion members did not feel this to be appropriate. They did however feel that the issue of the Chair should be reviewed at future Search Committee meeting to ensure appropriate guidance could be given to Corporation when the time was right.

## **6 Date and time of next meeting**

To be advised.

DRAFT