



SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE AND STROUD COLLEGE
FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION

SEARCH COMMITTEE

Approved minutes of a meeting
Held on Thursday 11 November 2021 at 10.00am
Conducted via Microsoft Teams

Present:

Laura Boutle	(Chair)
Louise Bright	(Corporation Member)
Sophie Chester-Glyn	(Corporation Member)
Sophie Green	(Corporation Member)
David Hagg	(Chair of the Corporation)
Kevin Hamblin	(CEO & Executive Principal)

In attendance: Sharon Glover Clerk

1. **Apologies for Absence**

There were no apologies received.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

As a former employee of the College, Kevin Hamblin's interest was noted in the CV for a prospective Corporation Member (agenda item 8).

3. **Items of Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business received.

4. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held 9 September 2021 were approved, ready for signing as a correct record.

5. **Matters Arising From Those Minutes**

a) Corporation approval of the following was noted:

- (i) The re-appointments of Louise Bright and Rick Sturge at the end of their first-year term of office, for a further 3-years to complete their first 4-year term of office.
- (ii) The appointment of Irene Molodtsov for an initial 1-year term of office, with effect from 1 November 2021.

- (iii) The appointment of Douglas Blackstock for an initial 1-year term of office, with effect from 1 January 2022.
- (iv) The appointment of Gareth Reynolds as a Corporation appointed Trustee on the Board of SGS Academy Trust, with effect from 1 November 2021.

b) Actions on the action log were monitored and confirmation received that all actions had been completed.

6. **Succession Planning**

The Clerk presented the Succession Planning Report and the Chair invited discussion on future governor recruitment and the varying approaches that could be taken.

Governor Recruitment

Members discussed whether to create a “holding list” of prospective candidates via an ongoing search – or whether to only seek candidates when an opportunity arises. Members were not in favour of a holding list approach, especially when a position on the Corporation cannot be guaranteed. GDPR considerations were also raised, in terms of holding personal details for a period of time.

Further, Members felt that an active search would be difficult if the specific skills/experience needs of Corporation at any given time are unknown. Therefore, to assist with future succession planning, the Committee suggested that Corporation Members are reminded that if they intend to step-down, they should inform the Clerk 12 months in advance, where possible.

However, it was felt that efforts to attract a diverse pool of candidates through proactive engagement with networks and communities should continue and, to recognise that “life” skills/experience are just as important as professional skills. Should an application be received that adds value to the collective competencies of Corporation, then an opportunity to join Corporation may be offered. The option to temporarily increase Corporation membership was discussed, should this be needed. The Clerk confirmed that under the Instrument and Articles this would be permissible, subject to Corporation approval, but there is a maximum limit to be mindful of.

In order to continue efforts to diversify Corporation, it was suggested that the initial contacts referenced in Appendix 2 should be re-approached to maintain awareness of the College in readiness for future governor vacancies. Members commented that actions should be planned over the longer-term and that patience needed to be exercised.

Options for engaging with the different networks and communities were discussed and it was suggested that a 1-page brief is prepared of the type of candidates sought. The Clerk was, therefore, asked to circulate the latest

Search advert and invite feedback from the Committee and also members of the Corporation on the type of candidates sought. Consideration can then be given to the best means to attract a more diverse pool of candidates. The use of Ujima radio was raised.

The Clerk mentioned that the Assistant Principal of Apprenticeships is looking at how the College can advertise apprenticeship vacancies to under-represented groups and have several new platforms and organisations they are working with. The Clerk was asked to share Appendix 2 with the Assistant Principal and arrange a meeting with him, the College Principal, Head of HR, the Chair of the Search Committee and Clerk to discuss further.

One member agreed to make further contact with her networks but raised the need to be mindful of the number of prospective candidates secured from the same Corporation member as this could present conflicts of interests.

Members felt that there may be a fear factor stopping individuals from applying as they may be unsure what they can bring to the Corporation. To overcome this, it was suggested that potential candidates could be invited to attend Corporation meetings to experience what they are like and be reassured. The Clerk raised that there is a public access policy in place for members of the public to attend Corporation meetings.

The Clerk suggested consideration of a governance open day event, akin to the College open days. The CEO & Executive Principal suggested that governance could be a topic discussed with a stakeholder group of employers.

Members discussed College recruitment processes and of the use of job fayres attended by the College to promote the work of the Corporation and target more diverse communities. The suggestion of a governor also attending these events was raised.

Committee Membership

Members received an update on committee membership and with the future resignation of Carly Dyson there will be a need for a Corporation Member to be appointed as a SGSCSL Director to replace her on their Board. The Chair of the Corporation advised that Carly is keen to continue as a Director of SGSCSL and there is a possibility that she will continue her engagement with the College.

Summary Outcomes & Actions

The Chair summarised the outcome of discussions:

- Vacancy-led - there is to be no 'holding list' but search activities will be undertaken when vacancies arise and once skills/experience gaps are known. Corporation members should also be reminded to raise with the

Clerk 12 months in advance, where possible, of their intent to step down to assist forward planning.

- Equal opportunity - to encourage greater diversity on the Corporation, there will be a continued focus on providing equal opportunity for all to access Governor opportunities. If interest is received from suitable candidates, then consideration can be given to a temporary increase in the size of the Corporation.
- Outreach – embed the College into communities and networks to give everyone the chance to engage with the College.
- Discussion Forum - hold a forum and invite Community/Stakeholder representatives to attend. The Clerk raised that an action on the governance action plan was for the Principal to develop a network of industry advisors coaching on specific developments in the region which may impact on curriculum development and suggested that the Committee may wish to link into this forum. It was agreed that the Chair and Clerk should arrange to meet with Principal, Assistant Principal and Head of HR to discuss how to take forward.
- Direct approaches and CVs – when these are received, they are to be circulated to the Search Committee and reviewed at Search Committee meetings having regard to the skills, experience and/or expertise that they can bring to the Corporation to meet the needs of the Corporation at the relevant time.

The report was noted.

Action: Chair & Clerk.

7. **Re-appointment of Corporation Members**

The Committee were invited to consider the re-appointment of Dave Merrett at the end of his first 4-year term of office.

Before doing so, the Chair questioned whether there was sufficient challenge by the Committee in relation to governor re-appointments in terms of whether other potential candidates could bring a different skillset to the Corporation to meet specific needs at the time.

Members discussed whether to formalise the current approach to re-appointment in order that re-appointment considerations are not subjective. Members suggested that a matrix is developed by the Chair and the Clerk, for circulation to the Search Committee. The following measures should be included commitment (attendance); contribution (committee membership/other roles performed); quality of contribution; and completion of mandatory training. The Clerk questioned how the quality of contribution would be measured and it was suggested that this is picked up via Chair/Governor 1-1s. Members agreed that if any governor is not performing this should have been raised in advance of any Search Committee re-appointment deliberation.

Members discussed the skills analysis and agreed that this would be picked up via succession planning reporting and the importance of having a diversity of intellect was raised. Attendance versus contribution was another area raised for consideration. The Clerk reminded members that as part of the Procedure for the Appointment, Re-appointment and Induction of Corporation Members there is the option for the Search Committee to re-interview Members as part of the re-appointment process. It was agreed that the Corporation should be updated on the Search Committee's approach to re-appointment considerations.

The discussion turned back to the re-appointment of Dave Merrett. The Clerk shared positive feedback received from some of the other members of the Corporation and confirmed that Dave had met the Corporation's target attendance and, as a Director of SGSCSL, his attendance was 100%. The Clerk confirmed that, following re-assessment, no changes to his skills form were made.

It was agreed that Dave was making a quality contribution and brings a different perspective as a vocational businessman to the work of the Corporation and should be recommended to Corporation for re-appointment for a further 4-year term of office.

It was resolved:

To recommend Corporation approval of the re-appointment of Dave Merrett for a further 4-year term of office, at the end of his current term of office.

Action: Chair and Clerk.

8. **Prospective Corporation Member**

Members were informed that the Clerk had been approached directly by an individual who had expressed interested in Corporation membership. Kevin Hamblin declared his interest as the candidate was known to him, as an ex-employee of the College, and did not participate in the discussion.

The Clerk explained that this individual had recently retired which had prompted her expression of interest. The CV was discussed in the light of the earlier discussion where it was agreed that only in exceptional circumstances would a candidate be accepted onto Corporation when no vacancies existed. Following consideration of the CV it was agreed that the skills offered by the individual were already represented on Corporation and that the individual should be thanked for her expression of interest but told that this would not be taken forward.

9. **Unconscious Bias Training**

The Chair invited members' views on whether the Search Committee should be leading on Unconscious Bias Training for Governors or whether the need for this type of training should be driven by Corporation.

The CEO & Executive Principal advised that this topic had been included as part of the recent Staff Development Day, which had been very well attended. Firstly, it was clarified that the discussion should only relate to members of the Corporation as, operationally, it was for the CEO & Executive Principal and College Principal to determine staff training needs. It was raised that the Corporation should consider a review of the College's strategy on diversity of culture, with a suggestion that a consultant is engaged to provide a critical reflection and make recommendations to the Corporation.

All agreed that Unconscious Bias is a highly important matter and some form of training should be provided for. A detailed discussion ensued with various views voiced, in particular whether this training for Governors should be mandatory or not. Members also discussed the various ways in which training could be provided, with on-line training being the favoured route. It was suggested that Advance HE or the ETF may have suitable online training available. Contact with the member of staff leading on professional development was suggested. Members felt that participation in training should also form part of the governor reviews with the Chair of the Corporation and could also be one of the considerations for re-appointment.

Members concurred that the views of Corporation should be invited on Unconscious Bias Training.

10. **Any Other Business**

There was no other business raised.

11. **Date of Next Meeting**

Thursday 13 January 2022, 3.00pm, via Microsoft TEAMS.

The Chair advised that she will be commencing a new job in the New Year and is hoping that she will be available to attend the next meeting.

The meeting commenced at 10.03am

Louise Bright joined the meeting at 11.06am (during item 7)

The meeting closed at 11.55am

The meeting was quorate.