

ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE

MINUTES

A meeting of **GOVERNING BODY** was held on Wednesday 24th April 2013 at 2 p.m. in the Senior Common Room.

Present: The President, Dr. J.C.G. Pitcher, Professor K. P. Tod, Dr. I. J. Sobey, Professor S.J. Whittaker, Professor A. Grafen, Dr. A. R. Weidberg, Professor A. J. Parker, Professor S.J. Elston, Dr. C. Whistler, Professor P.P. Craig, Dr. M. Cannon, Professor K. Nation, Professor J. Ouaknine, Professor L.M. McDowell, Professor P. Maini, Dr. C. A. Larrington, Dr. R.M. Harding, Dr. H. Bouman, Professor N. P. Harberd, Dr. A. Wright, Dr. T. Burt de Perera, Dr. J.G.C. Snicker, Dr. M-S. Omri, Dr. H. Skoda, Dr. N. Lübecker, Dr. P. Hayes, Dr. K. Doornik, Professor C. Newton, Professor G. Gottlob, Dr. R. Ekins, Dr. J. Obloj, Dr. G. Kantor, Dr. B. Murnane, Dr. J. Stanyek, Mr S. Tiley (College Librarian, in attendance for item 2).

Apologies Dr. P. K. Dresch, Professor F.A. Armstrong, The Revd. Dr. W. Whyte, Dr. A. Starinets.

ACTION

AGENDA 'B'

1. Bursarial Review

The President thanked the Bursarial Review Panel and expressed her gratitude to Sir Michael Perry for his expert input to the review process.

The President summarised the Review Panel's report, which shows that the Bursary is functioning well under Prof Parker's direction but which raises concerns about the need to modernise the college's accounting systems and to streamline the handling of legal, personnel and human resources issues relating to employment within the college. The Panel recommended that two new posts (Bursary Manager and College Accountant) be created, and made detailed recommendations concerning the operation of the Finance Committee, the Finance Office, the Domestic Office and the Estates Office. Governing Body's discussion of the report centred on the recommendations concerning these two new posts.

Governing Body expressed concerns about aspects of the proposed Bursary Manager post, in particular whether the post would introduce unnecessary additional management structure and the extent of its oversight of job performance within college. Members of the Review Panel clarified that the Bursary Manager would work under the direction of the Principal Bursar, and that the post would serve the purpose of clarifying management structure in order to improve the running of the Bursary. It was noted that the extent of the Principal Bursar's current responsibilities made the creation of this post unavoidable if the Principal Bursar is to remain an academic and also that a previous review of the Bursary had recommended the creation of a similar post.

There was broad agreement within the Governing Body that the capability of a Bursary Manager to provide in-house advice on employment law would be very valuable. It was suggested that the creation of a Company Secretary focusing on legal responsibilities might be preferable to the Bursary Manager post proposed by the Review Panel, but this was rejected due to the need for more general administrative duties to be performed under the direction of the Principal Bursar.

It was thought that, by providing regular updates on the college's accounts, the proposed College Accountant would greatly assist financial planning. The post would also provide essential support for the ongoing modernisation the college's accounting systems, in particular by integrating the reporting of all financial transactions within college to higher level accounting systems.

The Governing Body **accepted** the Review Panel's recommendations and suggested a 3-year probationary period for the recommended new posts, as well as the continued implementation of a 3-year Bursarial Review process.

A report on the operations of the Finance Office will be brought to Governing Body at the meeting on 22nd May.

2. Library

The Principal Bursar summarised the Report of the Library Working Group and explained that the Group's findings were motivated by consideration of three main questions: (i) does the college need new library or study space; (ii) are the college's options limited by its resources; (iii) if the college were to construct new library space, should this be physically connected to the existing library building.

In answer to (i), it was suggested that the changing patterns of study activity amongst students (specifically increased use of electronic resources and social spaces for informal study) call for additional, easily reconfigurable study space within the college, as recommended under Option B of the report. In respect of (ii), the Bursar discussed the likely costs of the library extension outlined in Option B and gave the opinion that the college's recent and imminent financial transactions would cover these costs. To answer (iii) the Bursar suggested that an extension attached to the college library would be desirable since the development of other spaces within college would make management more difficult and would also detract from the historic college library.

There was broad support for Option B among the Governing Body, but concerns were raised that planning consent may be difficult to obtain and that college resources might be better spent on supporting students, for example through graduate student scholarships. In support of Option B it was suggested that fundraising could provide a significant input financing the building costs, and that this could be done without making an impact on arrangements for supporting students financially. Furthermore library support provided by departments was perceived to be shrinking and it was also noted that the current arrangement of the college library space dates back to a time when the college's student population was considerably smaller than today.

Governing body **recommended** that the refurbishment and extension described under Option B should be taken forward to the detailed planning stage, but without a commitment to proceeding with its construction.