



MidKent College

GOVERNING BODY

Minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body held on Wednesday 14 October 2020 at 17.00hrs via Zoom.

Present: (100% attendance)

Mr M Cook	Chair	Mrs B Jossi	Staff Governor	Mr A Start	
Mrs P Baxter		Ms A Orhiere		Mr J White	Student Governor
Mr M Blanning	Vice Chair	Mr C Reeves		Mr J Williams	
Mr N Baveystock	MKCTS Chair	Mr C Reynolds		Mrs A Woodhouse	
Mr S Cook	Principal CEO	Mrs C Richardson		Mrs M Woolston	
Ms A Currie		Prof E Sallis			

In attendance:

Ms C Burkin	Clerk to the Governing Body
Mr C Hare	Executive Director of Employers & Corporate Services
Mr M Peat	Executive Director of Finance and Estates
Mrs J Watt	Executive Director for Curriculum & Quality

1 Declaration of Interests

Mr M Cook declared an interest as a Lay member of Council UKC, Trustee Turner Contemporary Margate and NED Intreactiveme. *Mr S Cook* declared an interest as a Director of MKCTS, Trustee of Rivermead Inclusive Trust, Trustee of REVETT (Royal Engineers Vocational Ed & Training Trust), Chairman of Medway Place Board, Kent & Medway Economic Partnership, Member of SELP Accountability Board and Member AOC Employment Policy Group. *Miss A Currie* declared an interest as Director of her own company and Director of Plan International, Alison Currie Ltd, Governor of Mereworth Primary School and Member CIMA. *Mrs A Orhiere* declared an interest a shareholder in AO Financial Services. *Mr M Peat* declared an interest as the Company Secretary for MKCTS and Lower Lines Trust. *Mr C Reynolds* declared an interest as a Trustee of the Sir John Hawkins Trust and a co-opted member of the South Eastern Veteran Advice and Pensions Committee MOD. *Mr C Reeves* declared an interest as a Trustee for the Hackney Free and Parochial Schools Educational

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Trust, Trustee of Hackney Lighthouse and Non-Executive Director of MKCTS. *Mr M Garrod* declared an interest as a shareholder in British Security and Defence contractor, Foundation Trust Member of Frimley Park Hospital/ Member of Royal Aeronautical Society and he is married to the FD at QinetQ Group. *Mrs C Richardson* declared an interest as holding a share in Trinity People Limited and working for The Council for Licensed Conveyancers. *Prof Ed Sallis* declared an interest as Education and Training Foundation T level Professional Development External Assurance Group, Trustee of the Education Support Partnership, the Association of Accounting Technicians Licensing and Monitoring Group and currently being consulted by the DfE as part of their review of Level 2 qualifications, particularly in relationship to qualifications in childcare. *Mr A Start* as CEO of Capita who are involved in the education sector and defence training. *Mr J Williams* declared an interest as the Director of Public Health a Medway Council, Kent & Medway Clinical Commissioning Group Governing Body and Chair of Medway Youth Justice Board. *Mrs A Woodhouse* is employed by Maidstone Borough Council & declared membership of the Society of Local Authority Chief Executive. *Mrs M Woolston*, North West Kent Alternative Provision Service - Head Teacher.

2 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Mike Garrod.

The Chair welcomed Alison Currie and Ade Orhiere to the meeting and members **ratified** their appointment to the Board.

3 Chairman Succession

Andy Start introduced Martin Cook as the new Chair of the Governing Body and formally handed over the Chairmanship to him. M Cook thanked A Start and explained his vision for the Board. He thanked members for the opportunity he'd had to speak to them all individually to help shape the way forward. He was pleased to inform the Board that A Start will remain a Governor until July 2021.

4 Minutes of the Meetings held on 15 July 2020 and interim meeting on 26 August 2020 - Paper SGB20/151 (a) and SGB20/1552

The Minutes of the meetings held on 15 July 2020 and 26 August 2020 were accepted as a true record and signed with his digitally signature by Andy Start.

5 Matters Arising Document – Paper SGB20/1553

The outstanding matters were:

1. All Governors were encouraged to visit classes and engage with their link areas until the end of term. The College is open for Governor Visits in whatever platform the Governor is comfortable with. Observations of Zoom lessons can be arranged via J Watt and Clerk. **Ongoing.**
2. MKC/MKCTS Relationship – to be part of the Strategic discussion. **Ongoing.**
3. Stakeholder Research - to be part of the Strategic discussion. **Ongoing.**



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4. GSAR - **Complete**
5. Reputation Study - to be part of the Strategic discussion. **Ongoing**
6. Covid Update – **Complete**
7. Financial Regulations – on hold as part of the Strategic discussion. **Ongoing**
8. Risk Appetite - on hold as part of the Strategic discussion. BF R&A February 2021. **Ongoing**
9. Policies – **Complete.**
10. Calendar of Business – **Complete.**
11. Standing Orders – **Complete.**
12. Note of thanks to Peridot Partners – **Complete.**
13. Introductions to Governors – **Complete.**
14. MKCTS financial delegation - on hold as part of the Strategic discussion. **Ongoing**
15. Capital Plan for 2020/21 – **Complete.**

STRATEGIC QUESTION

6 Principal's Report & Start of Term - Paper SGB20/1554

Simon Cook Principal/CEO presented his report to members for strategic discussion and agreement. It was agreed that items 6 and 7 would be discussed at the same time.

S Cook highlighted the need for a strategic discussion regarding the future plans for the College reflecting the opportunities and threats of the current landscape and policy changes. Members were reminded of the delayed FE Reform White Paper and the eight areas that were likely to be included:

1. Need for national post-16 strategy, supported by place-based collaborative plans
2. Devolution on skills training should be to colleges, not to intermediaries
3. Colleges to be vital anchor institutions and system leaders
4. Employers need more skilled people, particularly at higher technical levels/ subjects
5. Colleges are the place for L3,4,5 growth
6. Competition in FE has not worked, need more collaborative environment
7. Specialised employer hubs can help advise, stimulate demand and drive productivity
8. Regulation, accountability & funding all need streamlining and simplifying

A discussion took place aided by the presentation, which included policy and financial position. The College has received additional income in year to support students during the pandemic but members are mindful that, although the College is currently in a good position, future funding is less certain. Covid-19 has had an impact on enrolments and attendance across the sector and at MidKent College.

Members discussed the strategic opportunities for the College such as adult training but also working in collaboration with employers to find out what they need in respect to reskilling and training. Members were informed that labour market information is used to inform curriculum design. They agreed it is crucial for College strategy to address the local communities need. The Executive recognise the need for a long term vision and not short term reactions. It was agreed it would be useful for Governors to have an oversight of the labour market information when making strategic decisions.

Action: S Cook to share

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The College continues to work closely with the Local Authorities of Medway and Maidstone and James Williams and Angela Woodhouse agreed to share their authorities' local strategy when available.

Action: J Williams/A Woodhouse

Members noted and briefly discussed the shift to digital and that the pandemic had accelerated this. The College must recognise the needs of employers in this regard and move forward with a digital strategy.

It was noted that collaborative working with other educational establishments continues to be a challenge but existing partnerships are progressing well.

Members noted opportunities in higher technical areas and adult skills which can be the equivalent to degree level although not taught in a traditional way. It was noted that the different levels can confuse stakeholders. Members stated that an overview of the current relationship with different stakeholders would be useful to inform future thinking regarding strategy. This should include all stakeholder arrangements and their individual needs. This would be useful pre-away day reading.

Action: S Cook

7 Journey to Excellence – Paper SGB20/1554a

The discussion continued with a presentation by Simon Cook regarding the Journey to Excellence (Appendix 1).

Members considered:

“What is MidKent College known for?”

“What do the local community think the College does?”

Members noted the three current Pillars in the Strategy: Education; Community and Economy. The ambition was to be outstanding or excellent in respect of all three. S Cook explained to members that different stakeholders had different views about what excellent means and how the College has to try and meet these different versions of excellent. Members were mindful not to spread resource too thinly and be more strategic in approach, finding common threads within the current stakeholder's views. They recognised the need for further debate at the Strategic Away Day but also the need to be able to react to the changing landscape in a timely manner so as not to miss opportunities.

Members were conscious of ensuring College staff are on the same journey to excellence. They were also mindful of the language used as outstanding can mean something different to staff due to its use in the Ofsted inspection framework. Governors were mindful not to put additional pressure on staff at, what is already a uniquely demanding time.

Members looked forward to further debate at the Strategic Away Day in January 2021 and the confirmation of the relationships with each stakeholder and how the College can improve.



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Governing Body members thanked Simon and **accepted** the report.

Break

8 Quality, Teaching and Learning Committee (QTL) - Paper SGB20/1555

Michael Blanning introduced the note of the QTL Calls held on 17 September 2020. The following was noted:

English and maths - Members discussed the number of students who still had a result unknown for Functional/Basic Skills. The criteria set by the awarding body for maths did not enable the College to claim for a large number of students. A significant number of these will continue into the new academic year. The College are delivering GCSEs remotely with students able to access one to one support whilst in College. Functional skills is being delivered on site.

Enrolment - Enrolment had been primarily completed on line and is comparable to last year. To date Level 1 courses have seen lower enrolments in contrast to an increase in Level 3. Health & Social Care (H&SC), Business and ICT have seen a decrease in numbers however Travel and Tourism has not been impacted and has met its plan. The College continues to enrol and is working with Medway Council to starting planning provision for NEETS (Not in Employment or Training). Members discussed the risks around students starting higher level courses based on GCSE results. The College are monitoring this and will be continuously reviewing student achievement and progress throughout the year to ensure 'right student right course'.

Members noted the continued need to improve their knowledge of what it is like to be a student at MidKent College. They agreed this can be achieved by visiting the College and lessons (GIV). It was noted that this can be accommodated via attendance to Zoom lessons as well as physical lessons. Governors were encourage to organise this through the Clerk and feedback to the Board.

Action All Governors

M Blanning informed members that QIP/SAR Panels are where the Executive and Department Heads/Staff review the departments Self-assessment Report (SAR) and Quality Improvement plans (QIP) through robust discussions and constructive challenge. Observing these Panels is an excellent way to further Governor knowledge regarding the specific department and the wider College offer. It was noted that all Link Governors are attending their relevant Panels and all other Governors are invited to attend. The Panels are scheduled in November and details will be shared.

Action: Clerk ✓

Members discussed the progress with blended learning and how the College is adapting to the needs of students. They noted that some of the vocational courses have moved to a more physical timetable as attendance at the Zoom lessons had been affected with less engagement from students. Attendance improves with face to face practical lessons.

The next call is scheduled for 22 October when the Committee will look at the first six weeks



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data and receive a presentation from the Head of Department of Health & Social Care. All Governors are invited to the call.

Action: All Governors

Members **accepted** the notes.

SCRUTINY

9 HR Annual Report – Paper SGB20/1556

Chris Hare introduced the paper which had been scrutinised by the F&GP Committee. The paper informed the Governing Body of the latest workforce information and provided an update of progress against HR levels of performance. He highlighted the following key points and took questions:

- The report highlights that turnover is currently 17.77% down from 25.54% when last reported.
- Voluntary turnover is 14.59%.
- The average days lost to illness etc. has decreased from 7.83 days per person to 6.90.
- If leavers were removed, days lost would improve to 6.11 days per person.
- Exit interview responses have improved by 8% and remain above our target of 70% at 83.16%.
- Employment Policy Updates – Temporary, have been reviewed and updated in accordance with decisions taken at Business Continuity Group Meetings.
- The last remaining Employment Tribunal case has now been officially 'struck-out'.

C Hare informed members of updated information since the report was written. The College staff turnover is below regional benchmark. Members were encouraged as this has been high in the past. Members noted the current environment could be affecting this but also that the College has launched a recruitment campaign aimed at the trade areas to encourage retraining to teach. Engagement with the specific helpline for this has been encouraging.

Members requested an update re staff wellbeing and were assured about what is being done to support staff in this challenging time. Flexible working requests are considered with many approved and staff encouraged to take regular leave. The workload of the Mental Health first aiders has increased but is an encouraging sign that the service is valuable.

It was recognised by members that the College is a safe place and the Business Continuity Group are monitoring and responding where necessary. Members asked how the College is ensuring stakeholders are aware of this. They were assured that there had been some media interest in the use of ex-students to support and encourage existing students to follow the Covid rules, but the College is also mindful of managing anxieties and perceptions.

Members thanked the Executive and College staff for the excellent management of the current situation. They asked that this message is fed back to staff.

Action: S Cook

Members thanked C Hare for the update and **accepted** the report.

10 Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee Meetings held on 28 September 2020 and confidential minutes - Paper SGB20/1557.



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Chris Reeves introduced the minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

This item was minuted as confidential.

Governing Body members **accepted** the minutes

11 Minutes of the Risk & Audit Committee Meeting held on 29 September 2020 - Paper SGB20/1558

Chris Reynolds introduced the minutes and highlighted the following points from the minutes:

- The College Risk Management report was presented and discussed. The key changes to the previous risks in terms of narrative and scores were agreed. The College has currently three high level risks which were discussed and agreed.
- It was agreed to hold a separate meeting in order for the Committee to give the Executive a steer as to future development of the register and reporting.
- The Committee agreed to review the College and Group risk appetite after the January Strategic Away Day and February Committee meeting.
- Scrutton Bland presented the internal audit reports on Subcontracting, which was evaluated as Significant Assurance.
- The Annual Internal Audit report was also presented and agreed, this detailed the various levels of assurance awarded to each of the areas covered in the year.
- The 2020/21 Internal Audit programme was agreed.
- It was noted that there were minor changes to the Audit Code of Practice (ACOP) and these were explained and accepted.
- Members considered the tendering process for internal and external auditors and agreed timescale.
- The Information Security Report was presented and accepted. The level and number of data breaches and near misses were presented and discussed. As a result it was agreed that GDPR would be the topic for a Deep Dive for the next committee meeting.

Governing Body members **accepted** the minutes.

12 Safeguarding Update – paper SGB20/1560

Pim Baxter introduced the report and highlighted that:

- 400 Looked-After Children (LACs) – 300 at Medway and 100 at Maidstone. This is an increase of 100 compared to last year. Members noted the significant increase and associated risks.
- From the end of September 2020, the multi-agency Safeguarding Hub for Medway and Kent will be onsite supporting the College at Medway. The success of this partnership was challenged and will be monitored.
- There is currently no LADO referrals.
- GDPR protocols have been followed regarding information requests by external agencies.

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P Baxter informed members that Marie Woolston has agreed to take on the role of Safeguarding Governor after P Baxter has left the Board and a handover is being undertaken.

Members **noted** the update.

13 Policy for Approval – ICT Policy 2020/21 – paper SGB20/1560

Chris Reeves informed members that the FGP Committee had received a presentation from Paul Hogben and scrutinised the changes to the Policy. He recommended the Policy for approval by the Governing Body. Chris Hare added that the Policy had been amended to include the whole Group.

Members **approved** the Policy for publication:

Action: C Hare

GOVERNANCE

14 Update from Chair of MidKent College Training Services Ltd (MKCTS) - Paper SGB20/1561

Nick Baveystock introduced the update from the Chair of MKCTS Ltd. regarding the performance of MKCTS since the last meeting.

This item was minuted as confidential due to the commercial sensitivity.

Members noted the update and thanked MKCTS for the opportunity to tour the RSME. Governors had found it very useful.

The Chair updated members on the progress with the strategic relationship between the College and the Subsidiary Company. A paper will be brought to the December Governing Body meeting for scrutiny and discussion.

Action: M Cook/N Baveystock

Governing Body members **accepted** the report.

15 Minutes of the Search & Governance Committee meeting held on 29 September 2020 - Paper SGB20/1562.

Pim Baxter introduced the minutes of the Search and Governance Committee (S&G) meeting held on 29 September 2020. The Committee considered:-

- Update on recruitment – The new Governing Body Chair will consider any skills gaps on the Board before any further recruitment is pursued.
- Attendance in 2019/20 for Committee and Governing Body meeting – No concerns were raised as good attendance was noted.

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- Link Governors – Members were given an opportunity to volunteer to be Link Governors in areas of provision that are not currently covered. Clerk to circulate opportunities.
Action: Clerk ✓
- The Chair informed members that Andy Start had agreed to stay on the Board as a Governor until July 2021.
- The Chair informed members that Chris Reeves was prepared to continue on the Board for a two year term after his term of office comes to an end in March 2021. The usual process for approval will be followed.
- The following succession planning and membership was agreed:
 - Marie Woolston – Safeguarding Governor
 - Claire Richardson – Link Governor for Apprenticeships
 - Ade Orhiere will join F&GP Committee
 - Alison Currie will join F&GP Committee with a view to becoming Chair in 2021
- Terms of reference – the annual review was conducted and minor changes presented for **approval**.

Recommendations for approval by the Governing Body:

- Terms of Reference for **approval**

Members **accepted** the minutes and **approved** the Terms of Reference and recommendations above.

16 GB Improvement Plan for 2020/21 (Draft)

Andy Start reminded members that the GIP had been formatted following the Board Self-assessment in July 2020.

Members **agreed** the GIP to be taken forward. A Start and Clerk to finalise for periodic review by the S&G Committee.

Action: A Start/Clerk/S&G Committee ✓

17 Any Other Business

The events Calendar was presented to remind members of upcoming events (Paper SGB20/1564).

Martin Cook encouraged the Executive to seek the expertise of the Board members but asked that the relevant Committee Chair, Clerk or Board Chair are informed of any decisions to ensure an open and transparent dialogue.

18 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting would be held on **Wednesday 9 December 2020 at 17.00hrs via Zoom**.

19 Review of the meeting

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Members felt the meeting had worked well with Zoom and noted the 100% attendance. The Chair asked each member in turn for their feedback and all members agreed the order of the agenda had allow scrutiny and debate for the main items which they are looking forward to pursuing further. It was noted that all Governors can observe at Committee meetings to further their knowledge of the Board. Newer members thanked the Chair for extra explanation at certain points of the meeting to help them understand the context. All members agreed the Executive and College staff continue to give assurance that all is being done to keep staff and students safe and that usual business is continuing during this difficult time. Members welcomed any platform for further interaction either formally or informally while they are not able to physically meet but note the College is open for Governor and Link visits.

Staff and student Governors left the meeting.

Confidential Item

20 Remuneration Committee meeting held on 14 October 2020

Michael Blanning gave members a verbal update following the Remuneration Committee meeting held before the Governing Body.

The meeting closed at 20.22.

Chair



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