

**Minutes of the Search Committee Meeting  
of the Corporation held at the College at 5.00pm on  
Thursday 24 November 2016**

- Present:** Ms N Youern (Chair)  
Ms S Mbubaegbu  
Mr P Daneshvar
- Apologies:** Mr M Craft  
Mr J Rees-Evans
- In Attendance:** Ms K Hopkins, Corporate Support Officer

## **M i n u t e s**

### **Part 1 – Standing Items**

**566 Apologies for Absence**

Mr M Craft and Mr J Rees-Evans sent their apologies.

**567 Membership**

There were no membership issues.

**568 Declaration of Interest**

Ms Youern declared that she knew Richard Tonge and therefore didn't believe she should ask questions during the interview. The other members stated they believed it was ok for her to do so as she had declared she knows him.

**569 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 September 2016 were **Agreed** as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

**570 Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

### **Part 2 - Matters for Decision**

**571 Meeting with Potential Member: Mr Richard Tonge**

The Chair presented Paper 2246/16/Srch stating that she knew Richard Tonge and that he was interested in becoming a Governor.

Mr Tonge joined the meeting.

The Chair welcomed Mr Tonge to the meeting where Governors introduced themselves. The Chair then invited Mr Tonge to talk through his background.

Mr Tonge stated that he had been brought up in a family where they give back to the community. His father passed away when he was a young boy. His mum became a cook in the kitchens at Highbury, his sister had a brain tumour at a young age and family life was a struggle. This is how he learnt health and education were very important and realised he wanted to give back via these areas. Mr Tonge studied at Highbury Primary and completed his A Levels at Highbury College so being a Governor at Highbury felt appropriate due to his history.

He went on to become an accountant through chance. He could not complete a degree due to funding. He became an accountant as he is very good with numbers and can also communicate numbers. Charities wanted him to work as a strategic thinker. He stated he is not a jack of all trades but specialises in accounts, strategy and innovation. During his career he has worked for local government contracts where he has had to lose a third of his staff otherwise the company would go under. Mr Tonge went on to find a new service in which they could on and offer. This went on to be successful and led them to take on more staff than the ones they had lost. He went on to working with undergraduates to help them work with charities in which he has published a paper on. He stated he has had student work for the You Trust, where Ms Youern is CEO. This worked well as students gained experience and charities benefited from the help.

Mr Tonge was asked how he could serve Highbury College as an ambassador in the wider community. Mr Tonge stated that he can represent Highbury College at networking events. He described that he is very good at communicating and has the ability to engage with people. He is addicted to social media with over 2000 Linked In connections. He expressed that he can communicate face to face as well as via social media and can adapt to the audience he is presenting to.

The Committee went on to ask Mr Tonge his thoughts about the College. Mr Tonge stated that he believed Highbury was a place of opportunities. It turned his life around as Highbury was his second attempt at his A Levels after he failed at another college. Highbury offered education opportunities to his wife, himself and his sister, once she recovered from her brain tumour. He believed Highbury turned disappointment into positivity. Mr Tonge stated that people had reported to him that Highbury had political tension but he did not sense this and hoped people's views had moved on from this. He also stated that he didn't understand why Highbury spread itself over various locations but later understood that Highbury College went to students rather than waiting for students to come to them.

Mr Tonge was then asked if he thought people knew about Highbury. He believes they do but people feel there are too many further education institutes and that we need to ensure Highbury stays ahead of the other institutes in case circumstances changed.

Mr Tonge explained that he would most like to join the Finance or Audit Committee due to his career, stating that he had been a member of Rowans' Finance Committee. He then asked why these were separate Committees. The Committee explained that colleges are required to have an Audit Committee but not Finance which is why they are individual Committees.

Ms Youern asked Mr Tonge if he would be willing to take on the position of Chair. Mr Tonge has chaired many times before and would be willing to do so again.

Mr Youern also asked if Mr Tonge can commit to being a Governor due to the fact he lives in France and the Isle of Wight. Mr Tonge believes he can as he and his wife are very flexible and have both agreed to work with charities so has no problem with commitment. The Committee then asked Mr Tonge how he has fitted such a busy schedule into his life. Mr Tonge described that he had older children. When he graduated in the June he had a mortgage by September and went on to have children at 25. As family life happened early for himself it gave him more opportunities in later life. He stated that if you enjoy what you do, it's very easy to do what you have planned and what you want.

When Mr Tonge was asked if he had any conflicts of interest he stated that he believed he didn't. The Committee thanked Mr Tonge for coming and that they would be in touch very soon. Mr Tonge then left the meeting.

The Committee agreed that Mr Tonge had a lot of skill, they loved his link to Highbury College and the fact he mentions it a lot and believe he could bring a lot to the College. Ms Youern went on to say that she has seen him network in the past and he always mentions Highbury College and how it changed his life. She also stated that he is very bright and very passionate about what he talks about. The Committee **Agreed** to recommend Mr Tonge's membership to Corporation.

## **572 Governance Improvement Plan**

The Chair presented Paper 2247/16/Srch. The Committee reviewed the paper and appendices. They stated that training for Governors is easy to do. They also discussed reintroducing a Quality Committee which will include HR issues as Governors do not have much knowledge or involvement. The Principal explained how she could not see what value a Quality Committee would add at this time. The subjects discussed at Quality Committee are also covered in Corporation which means they would be covering the same areas twice. We also cannot afford to resource another Committee and are unsure Governors would want to attend another Committee.

The Committee discussed that they do not feel Corporation cover quality properly as there is not enough time due to the size of the agenda. It was questioned if we could slim down reports to allow more time. It was also suggested that Finance got into detail on narrow areas which means areas requiring more discussion are not receiving the time and discussion required. It was stated that financial monitoring is every Governors' responsibility. The Committee also agreed that they do not always feel satisfied after leaving Corporation or Finance Committee due to the fact the right areas are not

being discussed enough. It was also decided that delegation needs to be made clearer so that Governors can add value.

A survey completed by Governors showed that they believed Corporation was too big. The Committee then referred to introducing a Quality Committee again and how this can take away a bulk of Corporation as they can discuss these areas in more detail. Again, it was stated it is a big ask and expectation of Governors.

It was stated that they are not sure if everyone reads the papers in great detail and the idea of a Cover Page being part of each paper (Appendix E). This would provide a short summary of the paper which the Governors can then decide if they would like to read the full paper or not.

A member asked how many Governors we have and are there enough. It was stated we have 16 Governors and being quorate could become issue.

A member stated they were not sure how the cover paper would work and this could create more work for the paper owners. The Committee agreed some improvements should be made to the draft cover paper. They decided quality does not need to be included as it should have been done previously. Other implications are not needed as they should be covered in the report. They thought there should be tick boxes such as, is it linked to the risk register. The Committee then discussed how the Executive Summary should be a short summary of the main points and perhaps it should be called something else rather than Executive Summary. It should be short and straightforward.

The Committee agreed that the cover paper should define the purpose of the paper, the key issues and headings need to be changed to simpler titles. They also agreed not to reinstate a Quality Committee but Corporation should have focused papers with cover sheets. They all agreed hardcopies of presentations should always be supplied at the Committee. It was also agreed that the bulk of the packs should be issued in time but some papers will need to be 'to follow' papers as can only be completed after other Committees have taken place. They also agreed that there should be a comment on why it is a paper to follow paper so members are aware.

### **Part 3 - Matters for Discussion**

#### **573 Membership including Chair and Vice-Chair of Corporation**

The Chair presented Paper 2248/16Srch presenting Corporation and Committee Membership.

The Chair stated that Mrs Harrison-Sales was withdrawing as a Governor due to changes in her personal circumstances.

It was discussed that Audit Committee required a new co-opted member. Ms Youern stated that Mr Craft and herself knew possible candidates and would discuss this with them. Ms Youern also knew her Finance Director, now retired, may be interested but worried about her link with him. The Principal stated that as long as he declared the link it shouldn't be an issue.

Ms Youern went on to say that she would be willing to continue as Chair as long as the other Governors agree they are happy for her to continue and also happy with the contribution she brings. It was **Agreed** to recommend to Corporation that Ms Youern continue as Chair of Corporation for a further two year term of office.

**574 Register of Interest and Eligibility Statements**

The Chair and the Principal will review the Register of Interest and Eligibility Statements.

**Part 4 – Matters of Confidentiality**

There are no matters of confidentiality.

**Date of Next Meeting**

Monday 20 February 5.00pm