

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Search Committee
of the Corporation**

**Held at Highbury College, Portsmouth at 5.30pm on
Tuesday 27 September 2016**

- Present:** Mr P Daneshvar
Mr J Rees-Evans
Mrs N Youern (Chair)
- Apologies:** Mr M Craft and Mrs S Mbubaegbu
- In Attendance:** Ms P Schweitzer – Clerk to the Corporation

M i n u t e s

Part 1 – Standing Items

563 Apologies for Absence

Mr M Craft and Mrs S Mbubaegbu sent their apologies.

564 Declaration of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Part 2 – Items for Decision

565 Meeting with Potential member: Ms Sue Ward

The Chair presented Paper 2199/16/Srch stating that she had recently met with Ms Ward and that she was interested in becoming a Governor.

Ms Ward joined the meeting.

The Chair welcomed Ms Ward and invited her to talk through her background. Ms Ward stated that she had been in education for a long time and had a particular interest in special needs. She started her career with a Diploma in Physical Education and Health and initially worked with special needs pupils, this was followed by a three year 'Short Service Commission' with WRAC, HM Forces. She worked at Bournemouth and Poole College and Southampton City College before joining Highbury College as Curriculum Manager Health, Science and Care in 1998. Shortly after joining she became Learning Support & Enrichment Manager and from then on, continued to lead on learning support. After a short stint at Trelore College in Alton, she returned to Highbury College taking on various roles and responsibilities, culminating in Head of Centre Skills for Life and Work. As Head of Skills for Life she successfully took the

department from an unsatisfactory inspection to good and in the May 2011 Ofsted inspection, all areas within the Centre for Skills for Life and Work were graded 'outstanding'.

Since retiring from the College in 2014, Ms Ward had worked (through her small private company, Ward Projects and Training) with different organisations including speaking at the Welsh Colleges Annual LDD Conference 2016. When asked why she wanted to become a Governor, Ms Ward stated that Highbury College had always been a very important part of her life, she was very fond of it and its fantastic staff and she wanted it to do well - she felt it was time to contribute from a different perspective, at a more strategic level.

When asked to describe her strengths, Ms Ward stated that she was a good team player, she was observant and had ideas and enjoyed putting them into action. She stated that an innovative approach was required to take on the current changes in the education sector and noted that it was important to remember the morale of staff. She was not afraid to challenge in an appropriate fashion and noted that throughout her working life she had managed to avoid any sort of dispute, managing instead to put her views across constructively and bringing people with her.

One Governor stated that the governing body worked with the corporate leadership team and asked her to give an example of team working. Ms Ward outlined her role as Head of Skills for Life when she managed heads of department / learning support, all of whom had co-ordinators working under them. She instigated weekly 1:1s with her direct reports and every half term all centre staff would be brought together for an update on strategic developments, to map progress against the SAR as well as team building. The Governor stated that Governors took a more hands off approach contributing for example, to strategy development. As a practical person, the Governor wondered if Ms Ward would get frustrated. Ms Ward stated that it was possible, but that with maturity she had learnt to distance herself and had worked with the leadership team as well as government departments and agencies enough to understand the challenges and constraints.

In response to a question, Ms Ward stated that she had sufficient time to commit to the role of Governor. She was not interested in taking her company further forward as it had simply served as a vehicle to enable her take on various projects, whereas she had a vested interest in the College. She was an energetic lady and would be able to combine the role of grandmother and Governor! She did not believe there would be any conflict of interest between her role as Governor and her private company, and if anything felt her contacts and networks from her private work would enhance what she could offer as a Governor.

When asked about the importance of reputation and being an ambassador for the College, Ms Ward stated that that was exactly what she had been doing these last years. She believed she was respected within the College as well as outside and that she couldn't imagine not being a good ambassador.

Ms Ward was asked how she felt about having a different relationship in her role as Governor with the Principal and Senior Leadership Team, in particular the aspects of scrutiny and challenge. Ms Ward stated that she had reflected on this and had immediately understood that she would have to work in a very different way, in the correct way and to approach it from a different perspective. She was aware of how important Governors were to the standing of a college and was confident that she would be able to take on that role.

There was a brief discussion about the Committee structure and Ms Ward stated that she would prefer to sit on Audit (the Committee noted that she would be best suited to Quality Committee but that there was not one currently).

Ms Ward then asked a couple of questions, firstly asking about induction training. The Clerk responded that there was an induction programme for all new Governors comprising meetings with key staff as well as site visits and this would be tailored to her particular needs. Ms Ward also asked about the Governor Liaison Programme, and the Clerk outlined the termly meetings which provided an opportunity to get to know a department and triangulate information as well as to meet students.

Ms Ward reaffirmed her interest in becoming a Governor and thanked the Committee for their time. Ms Ward then left the meeting.

The Clerk stated she had conducted an online check on Ms Ward concerning Disqualified Directors (Companies House), Disqualified Trustees (Charity Commission), the Insolvency Register as well as a general Companies House and Google check, and that all was all clear.

The Committee concluded that Ms Ward was a very strong candidate and therefore **Agreed** to recommend her membership to Corporation, with the recommendation that she join Audit Committee.

Part 3 – Matters for Discussion

There were no Matters for Discussion

Part 4 – Matters of Confidentiality

There were no Matters of Confidentiality.

Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on 20 February 2017.
The meeting ended at 6pm.