



*“To promote lifelong learning for individuals and industry through the understanding and enjoyment of flowers, trees, plants and animals for career, business, educational and leisure purposes”*

**PERSONNEL COMMITTEE  
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON  
10<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2008**

**Members:** Huw Jones Owen (Chairman)  
Roger Abraham  
Sam Bell  
Ken Crowther (Vice Chairman)  
Steven Dowbiggin OBE  
Donald Gratton  
Vacancy

**Present:** Sue Adams, Clerk to Governors  
Janet Hughes Hallett – Finance Manager  
Nick Evans, Director of Estates and Buildings  
Simon O’Hear, Personnel Manager

Malcolm Parkinson, Chairman Designate and Vice Chairman of the Corporation attended the meeting as an observer in the absence of a Chairman of the Governing Body.

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Janet Hughes Hallett was delayed and joined the meeting at agenda item 5.

**2. MINUTES OF THE PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 16<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2008**

RECEIVED the minutes of the Personnel Committee Meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2008.

NOTED two amendments to the minutes:

- i. page 3, item 4.4 - the word “effected” in the first paragraph should read “affected”;
- ii. page 4, item 4.6 - the resolution should read “benefit fully from” and not “benefit fully for”

The amended minutes were approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

**3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 16<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2008**

RECEIVED paper 3, report of the Personnel Manager

NOTED the matters arising from the minutes of the Personnel Committee meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2008 were completed as detailed in the paper.

**4. REPORT OF THE PERSONNEL MANAGER**

RECEIVED paper 4, report of the Personnel Manager for decision

NOTED:

**4.1 “Manor Matters” (Appendix I to the report)**

- i. the production of the September 2008 edition of “Manor Matters”;

**4.2 Resignations, Appointments and Vacancies**

- i. the heading “resignations” had been amended to read “resignations and leavers” as resignations had not been received from all staff listed. A small number of staff had left the college’s employ for other reasons such as redundancy;
- ii. the retirement of Geoff Bylett, the longest serving member of staff. Geoff Bylett would be undertaking some part-time duties on an ad-hoc basis when required by the college to provide cover for caretakers;
- iii. information on staff turnover ratios would be included in the annual report on “Equal opportunities monitoring, recruitment and retention of staff” statistics;
- iv. the second stage interviews for the post of Finance Director had been held on the 31<sup>st</sup> October 2008. The college had received thirty-one applications for the post with eight applicants being long-listed. Applicants had been of a high calibre. The post had been offered to one candidate who had subsequently declined the offer as she had been offered promotion including a national role with her current employer. Two further applicants were being interviewed on the 25<sup>th</sup> November 2008;
- v. the post of Finance Director had been advertised using national newspapers and their on-line service (Guardian on-line and Times Educational Supplement on-line);
- vi. members were advised that it was now likely that there would be a break in cover when the post would become vacant and when a new Finance Director takes up their post. This could possibly be for the period January to March 2009 (depending on when an appointment is made and notice periods).

- vii. the CEO hoped that the period January to March could be covered and identified two options. The current Finance Manager had advised that she would provide a handover and some part-time support until a Finance Director was in post. The college had also used the services of a part-time consultant in the past (Christine Saddler) who has been approached to provide some support:

**RESOLVED that the Chairman writes to Geoff Bylett on behalf of the Committee to congratulate him on his retirement and thank him for his long standing service to the college.**

#### **4.3 Personnel Service Standards (Appendix II to the report)**

- i. revised personnel standards had been circulated to managers for comment and it was planned to discuss these at the next college Quality meeting on the 12<sup>th</sup> November 2008;
- ii. following agreement of the personnel standards, a customer satisfaction survey will be sent to managers (March 2009) so Personnel can identify strengths and weaknesses and create an improvement action plan.

**RESOLVED:**

- i. **to note the updated Personnel Service Standards (Appendix II to the report);**
- ii. **that the revised standards be discussed and agreed at the college Quality meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2008;**
- iii. **that any material changes made following the discussion with Managers at the college Quality meeting be reported to the next Personnel Committee.**

#### **4.4 HR Strategy (Appendix III to the report)**

- i. following consultation with managers, no significant changes were proposed. The Personnel Manager had revised the policy following suggestions from managers and included the suggestions made by members at the Personnel Committee meeting of the 16<sup>th</sup> June 2008;
- ii. once the HR Strategy was approved a one year action plan would be produced for consultation and agreement at the Managers' meeting on the 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2008.

**RESOLVED:**

- i. **to adopt the revised HR Strategy (Appendix III to the report);**
- ii. **that the revised strategy be discussed and agreed, along with a one year action plan, at the next Managers' meeting on the 10<sup>th</sup> December 2008;**

- iii. **the agreed action plan for 2009 be reported to the next meeting of the Personnel Committee**

**4.5 Inflationary increase for 2008-09 and national pay negotiations (Appendix IV to the report)**

- i. a 2.7% inflationary increase for all college staff was agreed by the Finance and General Purposes Committee in July 2008, effective from the 1<sup>st</sup> August 2008 based on the AoC's final offer to the Trade Unions at the National Joint Forum (NJF);
- ii. the AoC's final offer (19<sup>th</sup> June 2008) was for 3.2% on all salaries and allowances from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2008 which is equivalent to 2.66% across the year. On the 17<sup>th</sup> October 2008 the AoC confirmed that the joint trade unions agreed to accept the final pay recommendation or the sum of £550, whichever is the greater;
- iii. the college, through F&GP in the July 2009 meeting will consider realigning to the NJF pay scales from the 1<sup>st</sup> August 2009, increasing all staff by 0.5% or to ensure a £550 increase is achieved (subject to affordability).

**5. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

RECEIVED paper 5, report of the Personnel Manager for decision

**5.1 Requesting Flexible Working Arrangements Policy and Procedure (Appendix I to the report)**

NOTED that:

- i. under the Employment Act 2002 and the Work and Families Act 2006, employees who are parents of children aged six or of disabled children aged under 18 and employees who are carers of certain adults have a legal right to request to work flexibly;
- ii. a policy and procedure has been devised to allow eligible employees the opportunity to request a flexible working pattern and to ensure management considers these requests consistently and fairly in line with statutory provisions;
- iii. the policy and procedure can also be used as a framework to be followed by employees who do not have a legal right, but wish to request a change in their working pattern;
- iv. the statutory policy gives employees a legal right to be accompanied by a work colleague. The statutory legislation does not extend the right to employees to be accompanied by a trade union representative or "another person";

- v. the Personnel Manager was of the view that the statutory policy should not be amended but advised that a trade union representative could be a work place colleague. The college would continue to respond to reasonable requests on an individual basis (for example to support disabilities);
- vi. the Personnel Manager has assessed the policy through the equality impact assessment form and once the policy is approved the assessment will be verified by two other members of the equality impact team as part of the consultation process.

**RESOLVED:**

- i. **to adopt the Requesting Flexible Working Arrangements Policy and Procedure (Appendix I to the report);**
- ii. **that the new policy and procedure be circulated to all staff for consultation for two weeks. Staff to be advised that the procedure will be live during consultation;**
- iii. **any material changes arising following the consultation with staff and verification of equality impact is reported to the next Personnel Committee.**

**5.2 Harassment and Bullying Policy and Procedure (Appendix II to the report)**

**NOTED:**

- i. the policy has be revised to ensure that it complimented the revised grievance procedures for both staff and senior postholders;
- ii. the policy has been reviewed to ensure it is up-to-date in terms of legal definitions, is simpler to follow and works in tandem with the grievance procedure;
- iii. the Personnel Manager has assessed the policy through the equality impact assessment form and once the policy is approved the assessment will be verified by two other members of the equality impact team as part of the consultation process.

**RESOLVED:**

- i. **to adopt the updated Harassment and Bullying Policy and Procedure (Appendix II to the report);**
- ii. **the new staff procedure be circulated to all staff for consultation for two weeks. Staff to be advised that the procedure will be live during the consultation;**

- iii. **any material changes arising following the consultation with staff and verification of equality impact be reported to the next Personnel Committee.**

### **5.3 Code of Conduct for Staff (Appendix III to the report)**

NOTED:

- i. that the Code of Conduct has been significantly developed to covers a more comprehensive range of areas and circumstances;
- ii. that the revised policy (which is supported by the Senior Management Team) will help managers deal with unacceptable staff behaviour if and when the need arises;
- iii. some debate about the need to include the paragraph relating to the use of mobile phones while driving (as this was already a requirement under law). Officers felt this should be included to reinforce the legal requirement;
- iv. that Members felt the paragraph relating to the use of mobile phones while driving should be amended to read “all employers *must* not use hand held mobile phones for organisation use whiles driving” rather than “all employees *are expected not to...*” as this was a legal requirement;
- v. that the Personnel Manager has assessed the policy through the equality impact assessment form and once the policy is approved the assessment will be verified by two other members of the equality impact team as part of the consultation process.

**RESOLVED:**

- i. **to adopt the updated Code of Conduct (Appendix III to the report);**
- ii. **the new staff procedure be circulated to all staff for consultation for two weeks. Staff to be advised that the procedure will be live during the consultation.**
- iii. **that any material changes arising following the consultation with staff and verification of equality impact be reported to the next Personnel Committee.**

### **5.4 Sickness and Attendance Policy (Appendix IV to the report)**

NOTED:

- i. the college currently has two policies: Guidelines for Managing Sickness Absence and a Sickness Policy which have been combined for consistency and to enable absence to be monitored more closely. The revised policy will ensure staff are aware of higher absence levels and are supported by their line manager and through Occupational Health where appropriate.

- ii. a supplementary “Guidance for Managers and Guidance for Employees” has been included as part of the policy to help the college deal with many of the questions and concerns that may arise during the consultation on this policy with staff;
- iii. an additional policy on Employing People with Disabilities has also been written to allow the college to move to the latter stages/levels in either the Sickness and Attendance procedure or the Capability procedure so that redeployment or changes to the person’s job can be formally considered along with dismissal on grounds of ill-health/capability at the appropriate time;
- iv. the college has an average of 5.21 days sickness per year for staff which is considered good. However the revised policy will give managers support in consistently dealing with two types of absence: short-term frequent intermittent absence and long term absence;
- v. it was not proposed to apply the policy retrospectively in terms of a rolling twelve month period and that only absences that occur after the policy is approved and introduced will be considered;
- vi. the college would be dedicating a day’s very intensive training on managing sickness absence as part of the college’s management development programme as this is a complex and sensitive area;
- vii. the Personnel Manager has assessed the policy through the equality impact assessment form and once the policy is approved the assessment will be verified by two other members of the equality impact team as part of the consultation process.

**RESOLVED:**

- i. **to adopt the revised Sickness and Attendance Policy and Procedure (Appendix IV to the report);**
- ii. **the new staff policy and procedure be circulated to all staff for consultation for two weeks. Staff to be advised that the procedure will be live during the consultation;**
- iii. **any material changes arising following the consultation with staff and verification of equality impact be reported to the next Personnel Committee.**

**5.5 Policy on employing people with disabilities (Appendix V to the report)**

NOTED

- i. this was a new policy which supports the college’s Disability Equality in Employment Guidance and sets out what the basic requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act are and the college’s commitment as an employer to uphold and practice these;

- ii. the Personnel Manager has assessed the policy through the equality impact assessment form and once the policy is approved the assessment will be verified by two other members of the equality impact team as part of the consultation process.

**RESOLVED:**

- i. **to adopt the new Policy on Employing People with Disabilities (Appendix V to the report);**
- ii. **the new staff policy and procedure be circulated to all staff for consultation for two weeks. Staff to be advised that the procedure will be live during the consultation;**
- iii. **any material changes arising following the consultation with staff and verification of equality impact be reported to the next Personnel Committee.**

**5.6 Leave Policy (Appendix VI to the report)**

NOTED:

- i. the policy is intended to provide guidance to managers and staff on the college's provisions for different kinds of leave other than parental leave;
- ii. the policy draws together three related policies: Dependents Leave Policy, Holiday and Time Off in Lieu Arrangements and Short and Long Term Leave of Absence Policy;
- iii. all three policies have been reviewed by the Personnel Manager as part of the equality impact review and the assessments have been verified by two other members of the equality impact team. Some slight changes were made following this assessment (detailed in the report).

**RESOLVED:**

- i. **to adopt the new Leave Policy (Appendix VI to the report)**
- ii. **the new policy be sent out to all staff for consultation for two weeks. Staff to be advised that the procedure will be live during the consultation;**
- iii. **any material changes arising following the consultation with staff be reported to the next Personnel Committee.**

**5.7 General discussion**

NOTED that:

- i. Members would expect all the above procedures are introduced within the context of a thorough training programme:

- ii. the Personnel Manager advised that a number of days of management training for academic managers have been scheduled during this academic year on the 16<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> December 2008, 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009 and 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2009. Parallel courses will be provided in term-time for non-academic managers;
- ii. Members congratulated the Personnel Manager on the review and development of the above personnel policies and the work being undertaken to ensure all personnel policies and procedures are the subject of equality impact assessment.

**6. ALIGNMENT OF SCHOOLS' AND SECTIONS STAFFING BUDGET TO LEVELS OF FUNDED ACTIVITY BY THE SCHOOL/SECTION**

RECEIVED paper 6, report of the Personnel Manager for information.

NOTED:

- i. this paper was for information and had been presented to members to provide reassurance that the difficult problems facing the college as a result the reduction in funding provided to the college by the LSC under the new funding mechanisms and the ending of some project funding had been dealt with, and following through, in a fair and consistent way;
- ii. the process had been managed by the Personnel Manager and Head of College, supported by the Finance Manager;
- iii. that governors set the budget for the college for 2008/09 and officers are required to operate within that budget. To achieve this the college operates a system where funding for Schools which reflects activity within the School. This ensures that the level of funding achieved within a School can be used for staff expenditure within that School;
- iv. the exercise identified where specific savings by schools and departments needed to be made so that Schools/Sections' staffing costs would stay within their budget;
- v. the exercise provided a framework which would reward schools who achieved their targets or expanded their activities in priority areas;
- vi. Members supported the action taken by officers, and the transparent way it had been undertaken. They felt that the clear link between staff funding and performance had helped focus staff on key issues at a challenging time;
- vii. members congratulated the Personnel Manager in leading this initiative so well.

**8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Thursday 12 March 2009 at 4.00pm**