

Annual Report of the Search and Governance Committee 2023-24

1. Introduction

This report covers the academic year 2023-24 of Wilberforce Sixth Form College Corporation Search and Governance Committee. This annual report has taken a wide remit and cover the full role of the Search and Governance Committee and further to approval, will be published on the College's website and available by request to the Governance Professional.

2. Committee Function

The establishment of the Search and Governance Committee is outlined within the Articles of Government.

3. Powers of the Committee

The powers of the Committee are outlined within the Standing Orders clause 14(d).

4. Membership

Membership of the Committee is in accordance within the Standing Orders, clause 14(d). Members who served on the Search and Governance Committee during the 2023-24 academic year were:

Steve Cook

Independent Governor, Chair of Audit Committee, Member of Search and Governance Committee, Member of Remuneration Committee

Alan Foster

Independent Governor, Vice-Chair of Corporation, Chair of Finance and General Purposes Committee, Member of Quality and Standards Committee, Member of Search and Governance Committee, Member of Remuneration Committee

Diana Hoskins

Independent Governor, Chair of Quality and Standards Committee, Member of Search and Governance Committee, Member of Remuneration Committee

Patricia Mould (Chair)

Independent Governor, Chair of Corporation, Chair of Search and Governance Committee, Member of Finance and General Purposes Committee, Member of Quality and Standards Committee, Member of Remuneration Committee

Colin Peaks

Principal, Member of Finance and General Purposes Committee, Member of Quality and Standards Committee, Member of Search and Governance Committee

Cllr Denise Thompson

Independent Governor, Member of Audit Committee, Member of Search and Governance Committee, Member of Remuneration Committee (Chair for 2024-25)

5. Attendance

The Committee met three times over the course of the academic year (table 1). The average attendance for the committee (for all meetings) was 89%. Apologies were received by Counsellor Denise Thompson, who was unable to attend one meeting owing to work commitments, and from the Chair of the Committee. For the meeting of the 21st February 2024, the Vice Chair of the Corporation acted as Committee Chair.

Table 1 Attendance at Search and Governance Committee Meetings

	18 October 2023	21 February 2024	27 June 2024	Total	% Attendance
	Scheduled	Scheduled	Scheduled		
Steve Cook	✓	✓	✓	3/3	100%
Alan Foster	✓	✓	✓	3/3	100%
Diana Hoskins	✓	✓	✓	3/3	80%
Pat Mould	✓	x	✓	2/3	67%
Colin Peaks	✓	✓	✓	3/3	100%
Cllr Denise Thompson	✓	✓	x	2/3	67%
Committee Attendance	100%	83.3%	83.3%	16/18	89%

6. Committee Business

At the last meeting of the year a recommendation is made to the Corporation on the business of the committee for the forthcoming year. This annual review allows for self-reflection by the members on the work of the committee and consideration of any changes required for the forthcoming year. By setting the work of the committee out in advance, assurance is provided to the Corporation that it continues to meet its statutory duties. The workload of the committee is detailed within the Annual Cycle of Business but is also responsive to the needs of the committee within the year.

7. Corporation Recruitment, Re-appointment and Planning

Resignations

During 2023-24, the Corporation received one resignation from an independent governor at the end of the year on the 4 July 2024.

Recruitment

The Corporation values and promotes equality and diversity, and as such, all appointments are made on merit, taking account of the need to fill any identified skills gaps and areas of underrepresentation within the Corporation. All vacancies are advertised pro-actively on the College's website, to parents / carers via email, and directly to local employers and partners.

As per the Search Procedures, applications received for Independent Governors and Parent Governor vacancies are received by the Search and Governance Committee, who invite applicants to attend for an interview to assess their suitability and eligibility. Where more than one candidate is interviewed for a vacancy, the committee is required to make a recommendation on their judgment of suitability and will consider areas of underrepresentation on the board. Staff and Student Governors are elected by their peers as set out within the Instruments and Articles of Government, before appointment is made by the Corporation.

Applications and Interviews

During 2023-24 the Committee received one independent governor application, conducted one interview with one independent governor being successfully appointed:

18th October 2023

Quality and Standards Committee Vacancy: Successful interview and the candidate was recommended for appointment for a 2-year term of office. Approved by Corporation on the 13th December 2023.

In addition to the successful appointment above, the Corporation also approved the appointment of a Support Staff Governor on 12th October 2023 for a period of two years.

Vacancies

As of 31st July 2024, the Corporation has the following vacancies:

- 1 x Parent Governor vacancy
- 3 x Independent Governor vacancies
- 2 x Student Governor vacancies

Re-Appointments

During 2023-24, the committee considered the re-appointment of two independent governors, taking into account attendance at committee and Corporation meetings, performance at meetings, the committee structure and the skills and background survey results. The usual term of re-appointment for independent governors is four-years but is varied upon request or at the recommendation of the committee.

Name	Status	Re-appointment Outcome
Dr Geetha Karunanayake	Independent Governor	4 Years
Diana Hoskins	Independent Governor	2 Years (at request of member)

Succession Planning

Further to the External Review of Governance 2022/23, the Search and Governance Committee considered succession planning at the meeting on the 19th June 2023 and agreed that the Corporation has sufficient quality and experience from within its members to enable the approved succession plan if this were to be required. The next full review of the Corporation Chair Succession is due 2024-25.

8. Corporation and Committee Self-Assessment

The committee received the Committee Chair Appraisal Outcomes from 2022-23 at the meeting on the 18th October 2023 and made recommendations to the Corporation on the Corporation Self-Assessment activities for 2023-24:

- The Corporation self-assessment activity.
- The Committee self-assessment activities.
- Committee Chair appraisals.
- Corporation Chair / Vice Chair appraisal.

The Committee also received and recommended the following:

- Corporation Performance Indicators 2023/24
- Corporation Attendance Report 2023/24

9. Training and Development

On the 18th October 2023 the committee received the Corporation training records and skills audit and made the following recommendations to the Corporation;

- Governance Training and Development Plan for 2023-24
- Training and Development Policy & Mentoring Policy

10. Governance

Code of Governance

It is a requirement for all College Corporations to follow at minimum, one Code of Governance. Wilberforce College Corporation adopted the AoC Code of Good Governance for English Colleges and annually reviews its compliance against the adopted Code via its Excellence in Governance Plan.

With the publication of the revised AoC Code 'The Further Education Code of Governance' in 2023, the Search and Governance Committee made a full review of the revised Code and supported by the Governance Professional made a recommended to the Corporation to adopt the new Code from 1st January 2024. This recommendation was approved by the Corporation on the 13th December 2023 and reported as appropriate within the Members report for 2023-24.

External Review of Governance

The [Skills for jobs](#) white paper set out various reforms to strengthen governance. Under new funding agreement requirements from 2021-2022 onwards, FE corporations, sixth-form college corporations and designated institutions must:

1. have an external governance review every three years
2. have an annual governance self-assessment
3. share the results and associated actions with the department when so requested.

The Corporation recognised the importance of independent evaluation of governance effectiveness and commissioned Governance4FE to complete the review during the autumn term of 2022/23. A full report was received by the Corporation on the 25th January 2023 with a presentation by the reviewer. A summary of the outcomes of the review are published on the college website for perusal and compliance against this requirement was reported within

the Annual Members' Report and Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 July 2023. Further to the review, an action plan was agreed by the Corporation and integrated within the Excellence in Governance Plan in March 2023 and the committee monitors progress against the action plan.

Excellence in Governance Plan

The Corporation strives to maintain excellence in governance and the Search and Governance Committee annually reviews and the Excellence in Governance plan making recommendations to the Corporation on both short-term and longer-term planning. The last full review of the Excellence in Governance Plan was complete on the 21st February 2024 where the committee made recommendations to the Corporation for 2023-24 and beyond. The Excellence in Governance plan includes a review of compliance with the adopted governance code, and from 2022/23 onwards, the integrated action plan from the external review of governance. Recommendations approved from the excellence in governance plan have either been implemented in 2023-24 or included within the Annual Cycle of Business for 2024/25.

Corporation Equality and Diversity

The Corporation Equality and Diversity is monitored by the Search and Governance Committee annually, it is also considered in relation to the recruitment strategy for Corporation vacancies and at the time of making any recommendation for appointment.