

Present: Mr Fran Done, Marden Governor (Committee Vice Chair)
Mr David Bavaird, Governor Norham
Mr Jim Coltman, Governor John Spence
Mr Ian Gordon, Governor John Spence
Mr Jon Vincent, Principal TyneMet
Mrs Tracy Hush, Head Teacher Norham High School
Mr Neil Richards, Governor Marden
Mr Jim Stephenson, Head Teacher John Spence
Mrs Helen Bower, Associate Member
Mr Peter Smith, Associate Member
Mr Steve Watts, Associate Member
Ms Lydia Wysocki, Associate Member

In attendance: Mrs Rosamund Moore, Clerk to the Corporation
Mrs Denise Bolton, Head of Queen Alexandra Sixth Form College
Mr Steven Driver, TyneMet Teacher in History & Classical Civilisation (*from 5.30 to 6.00 pm*)
Mr Kyron Brady, QASFC Student (*from 5.30 to 6.00 pm*)
Mr Harry Smith, QASFC Student (*from 5.30 to 6.00 pm*)

[The meeting started at 5.30 pm]

ACTION**1. Appointment of Vice Chair of Committee**

The Committee agreed that Mr Fran Done should be the QASFC Committee's Vice Chair for the remainder of the 2014/15 academic year.

This would be reported through TyneMet's Governance, Performance & Search Committee to the Corporation Board on 25 March 2015.

RMM**2. Committee Membership**

Committee Vice Chair Mr Done welcomed everyone to the meeting, in particular new Committee members: Mr Neil Richards, Staff Governor from Marden High School, and Mr Steve Watts nominated by the University of Sunderland as an Associate Member.

It was noted that Mr David Bavaird had changed membership category from Associate Member to Governor of Norham High School. A vacancy existed for a second Norham Governor and Norham's governing body would make a nomination in time for the QASFC Committee's next meeting in June.

Introductions were made for the benefit of new Committee members.

3. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Prof Mary Dunning, Mr Tim Downing, Ms Sophia Puliassis, Mr Karl Ward, also from Mrs Ann-Marie Crozier and Mrs Audrey Kingham who were involved in a QAA Review for TyneMet College's Higher Education provision this week.

4. Declarations of interest and possible resolutions

Mr Done in respect of item 1.

5. Holocaust Memorial Presentation

Mr Driver introduced the presentation by explaining that each year A Level History students had the opportunity to go to Auschwitz as part of their studies. This year four students had been able to participate, two of whom were here to brief the Committee about the visit. They had made a similar presentation to year 11 pupils who were considering studying at the QA Sixth Form.

Mr Harry Smith and Mr Kyron Brady described their experience of visiting the concentration camps and the lasting memory they had taken away from this visit. Particularly because this was the seventieth anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, they had wanted to establish a permanent reminder of the Holocaust which could be appreciated by future students of the College. They had established a memorial garden at the QA campus and created a memorial plaque with the help of a local stone mason who had supported the project free of charge. The plaque had recently been unveiled by the Elected Mayor of North Tyneside, Norma Redfearn.

Following the visit, Alistair Hain, a member of the QA staff had been inspired to write a song on the subject in order to raise funds for the Holocaust Education Trust which supported such visits.

On behalf of the Committee, Mr Done thanked the students for their informative and moving presentation. It was a real tribute to them that they had left a legacy of their experience for future students.

Mr Driver, Mr Brady and Mr Smith left the meeting at 6 p.m.

6. Report from Head of Sixth Form

Mrs Bolton presented her report which summarised the overall performance of the Sixth Form and development in the period from November to March.

Mrs Bolton explained that for the March meeting she would normally include a Teaching, Learning & Assessment Review (TLAR) report, but that this year the College was taking a differentiated approach as the QA Sixth Form teaching staff had undergone two graded observations last year (including Ofsted inspection). The College would revert to the system of TLARs in 2015/16. The Quality Improvement team had produced a matrix of the strengths of teaching staff so that best practice could be shared. Learning Walks were now taking place and had recently focussed on English and maths to assess if improvement plans were having an impact.

Mrs Bolton highlighted the improvement in retention. She also drew attention to recruitment activities which included master classes, open evenings and the work of the school liaison and marketing teams and which were tailored to meet the needs of each of the QA partner schools. Student ambassadors also played a key role in recruitment by attending interviews, open evenings and making visits to partner school open events. Year 9 Science Expressways project assemblies were also planned.

Comparative information was provided about applications for September 2015 with details of each of the QA partner schools. The pattern of recruitment between the three partner schools varied and it was noted that greater numbers of Norham students went on to TyneMet's Coast Road campus to study vocational programmes than to the QA Sixth Form to study A levels. In response to Committee Members, Mrs Bolton highlighted the challenges around recruitment, one being the falling roll in year 11. It was also felt that Northumberland County Council's decision to change its transport policy was having an impact on recruitment, but the College was countering this by publicising the availability of

travel support for students of the College. The College was also undertaking more marketing aimed at students from schools other than the three QA partner schools as well as increasing promotional activity in general across the whole year. It was acknowledged that students were quite discerning and many attended open days at several colleges and schools with sixth forms and made multiple applications to sixth form. Two Committee Members gave positive feedback about the experience of their close relatives in relation to the QA Sixth Form (one being a current student and the other an applicant for next year).

Mrs Bolton drew attention to events which had taken place at the QA Sixth Form since November, explaining that the College did not have standard events and they were student-led. They had included a visit by the West End Refugee Project resulting in a collection of clothing and toiletries by the students and staff and a donation of food to the local food bank at Christmas. There was also an active Amnesty International Group and the A level students had given a presentation to the Access to HE students on the subject.

Commenting on the fact that Associate Member Ms Sophia Puliasis was participating in a residential event related to her university application, Mrs Bolton highlighted on her behalf key aspects of the Student Council report. The work of the Student Council included, amongst other things, a meeting with catering staff to explore menu options, promotion of, and participation in, a Christmas fun run in aid of the Teenage Cancer Trust, discussions about next year's timetable and planning for an end of year party.

On behalf of the Committee, Mr Done thanked Mrs Bolton for her report as Head of the QA Sixth Form.

7. Minutes and Matters Arising of the Meeting of 4 November 2014

The minutes were approved as a true record and duly signed by the Committee Vice Chair.

All matters had been taken forward as agreed.

8. Update from QASFC Executive

Mr Vincent provided information on the recent QASFC Executive meeting, accepting that it was sometimes challenging to find a common diary slot both for the QASFC Executive and the Curriculum Development Group. Fundamentally, Mr Vincent considered that the collaborative links were working fairly well, but the next Executive meeting would examine ways of maximising the value of the Curriculum Development Group.

The QASFC Executive had discussed improving engagement with parents of potential QA Sixth Form students and promoting the travel support available to students from Northumberland as highlighted by Mrs Bolton. Mr Vincent also commented on the challenges in recruiting from the North West part of the borough due to poor transport links.

The QASFC Executive had also discussed ways in which Modern Foreign Languages could be re-established through links with a number of local schools.

Mr Vincent made the Committee aware that Mrs Bolton would be retiring at the end of this academic year and the recruitment process had started internally. It was anticipated that the process would mirror that used when Mrs Bolton had been appointed and would involve the QA Head Teachers, with the Committee Members being invited to meet the shortlisted candidates, probably sometime in May.

Lastly, Mr Vincent observed that TyneMet's Chair of Governors would welcome an opportunity to meet the Chairs of the QA partner schools on an informal basis. The Head Teachers were asked to inform their respective Chairs that such a meeting would be arranged once the position of Chair of Governors at Norham High School had been confirmed.

Head
Teachers
JV

9. Any Other Business

Ms Wysocki highlighted two opportunities which might be of interest to the QA partners:

- A full-day workshop for Year 9 students in June in Newcastle University's library (topic: archive of a First World War soldier from North Shields).
- Invitation to staff to attend the Newcastle University Learning and Teaching Conference on Wednesday, 25 March, particularly the 1.30 – 2.30 pm session on 'student transitions to university study'.

Ms Wysocki indicated she would forward the link to Mrs Moore for circulation to the Committee.

LW
RMM

Mrs Bower also offered the support of the admissions team at Northumbria University should this be felt to be helpful for QA Sixth Form students progressing to university and commented that universities experienced similar challenges to the College regarding local recruitment and could provide advice, if desired. Depending on whether or not Labour won the forthcoming general election, students might decide to defer going to university until 2016 because of Labour's promise to reduce tuition fees and this might become an issue for universities in 2015.

Mrs Hush indicated that she had recently participated in a Learning Walk and wished to express her thanks to Mrs Bolton for making this a really interesting and valuable experience.

9. Any items to be designated as non-confidential or no longer exempted following this meeting and conversely any items to be designated as exempted/confidential

None.

Next meeting: Tuesday, 23 June 2015, 5:30pm

The meeting closed at 6.30 pm.