



*“To promote lifelong learning 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  
16<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2008**

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

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

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Sam Bell, Ken Crowther and Madeline Hall (representing the college at a conference on training standards).

**2. MINUTES OF THE PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 6<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2008**

RECEIVED the minutes of the Personnel Committee Meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2008

The 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 18<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2007**

RECEIVED paper 3, report of the Personnel Manager

NOTED the matters arising from the minutes of the Personnel Committee meeting held on 18<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”**

- i. the production of the May 2008 edition of “Manor Matters”;
- ii. to avoid potential embarrassment it may be more appropriate not to announce that staff are starting until the appointment process has been completed;

##### **4.2 Resignations, Appointments and Vacancies**

- i. the reduction in the number of vacancies from the previous meeting of the Personnel Committee;
- ii. the Director of Estates and Buildings advised that the number of hours being undertaken by his PA at the present time (20 hours per week) was proving sufficient to meet his needs;

##### **4.3 Sickness Monitoring**

- i. That the average number of days absence per employee had increased to 5.21 days for the period 1.4.07 – 31.3.08 (although this remains lower than the 6.4 days average of 04/05);
- ii. comparison with national absence surveys show that absence levels for the college are below national averages;
- iii. for internal purposes members felt it would be helpful to extract long term sickness from absence statistics. The Personnel Manager advised that although long-term sickness absence is included in the total days lost through sickness (Appendix II), periods on long term sickness are noted separately. For comparison purposes it was felt important to include these in the statistics because the national absence statistics used as a benchmark include long-term sickness;
- iv. The Personnel Manager advised that periods of sickness absence over ten days were normally considered long term periods of sickness;
- v. The Personnel team is proactive in supporting staff when they return to work following certificated long term sickness absence. Advice and support is available from the Occupational Health Service and the service is well used;
- vi. staff receive Statutory Sick Pay and Occupational Sick Pay depending on length of service, for example a member of staff with over five year's service would receive 6 month's full pay and 6 month's half pay;

- vii. absence cover is provided from within Schools/Sections or by additional support from casual staff. Heads of School can access the Personnel Contingency budget, administered by the Personnel Manager, to fund such cover once a member of staff has been absent for three weeks.

#### **4.4 First increment after probation**

The Chief Executive took this item as the Personnel Manager was still within his probationary period and would be effected by the governors' decision.

The Personnel Manager offered to leave the meeting for this agenda item but members did not feel this was necessary.

- i. This issue had been raised by a new member of staff (not the Personnel Manager)
- ii. under the current system a new member of staff could have to wait 18 months for their first incremental increase, depending on their start date at the college. It was SMT's view that this arrangement could be open to challenge;
- iii. the proposal to instigate a system which ensured that no new starter (either new to Capel or in a new post within Capel) had to wait for more than a year for their first increment.

**RESOLVED that the proposal detailed below is adopted and that applicable staff currently in their probationary period receive their first increment in line with the proposal and that future probationers receive their first increment in line with the proposal, effective immediately.**

- **Anyone starting between August and January does not get their first increment until the next 1<sup>st</sup> of August and then every 1<sup>st</sup> August thereafter until they reach the top of their scale.**
- **Anyone starting between February and July gets their first increment after their 6 month probation (the first increment will be effective from the 1<sup>st</sup> of the following month) and then every 1<sup>st</sup> of August thereafter until they reach the top of their scale.**

#### **4.5 Calculating daily rates of pay**

- i. Personnel have reviewed how they calculate daily rates of pay for administrative purposes following a challenge from an ex-employee owed a payment in lieu of 6 days annual leave;
- ii. guidance was sought from the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development whose view was also that the current methodology could be challenged because it appears to disadvantage employees unfairly;

- iii. once this advice had been received SMT agreed to use the calculations recommended by the Association of Colleges and to pay the difference to the ex-employee who had made the challenge;

**RESOLVED to retrospectively approve SMT's action in:**

- i. **paying the additional amount to the ex-employee**
- ii. **approving the practice detailed below for all future actions:**
  - **For full-time employees: the daily rate is based on their annual salary (including London Weighting) divided by 260 days (based on 52 weeks (365 days) – 104 days for weekends = 261 – discount the odd day – leaves 260).**
  - **For fractional staff: the calculation would be based on the number of days per week worked, for example the calculation for an employee working 3 days per week would be  $3 \times 52 \text{ weeks} = 156$  so it would be annual salary divided by 156 = daily rate.**
  - **For term time staff the calculation changes according to the number of weeks (including holiday they are contracted for ), for example for a 3 day per week employee who works 39 weeks (including 3 weeks holiday) the calculation would be  $3 \times 39 = 107$  – so the daily rate is 1/107 of their annual salary.**
  - **For hourly paid staff it is based on their hourly rate multiplied by the number of hours owed or needing reduction so a daily rate based on the number of days worked in the year is not required.**

#### **4.6 Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP and Childcare Vouchers)**

- i. an issue has been identified by the Personnel Manager relating to the level of SMP an employee would receive in the first six weeks of their SMP if they have sacrificed part of their pay for childcare vouchers;
- ii. the Senior Management Team was unanimous in its opinion that the college should base its 90% payment in the first 6 weeks of SMP on the member of staff's full salary prior to any sacrifice. This would result in a shortfall of approximately £300 per eligible employee;

**RESOLVED that a policy is adopted to fund any shortfall so that an employee can benefit fully for the college's family friendly benefits for any future situations where this arises.**

#### **4.7 Overlapping incremental salary points for Business Support Staff**

- i. where a member of Business Support Staff is promoted from scale 2 to scale 3 or scale 3 to scale 4 and was previously at the top point of their former scale, they do not currently receive any increase as the incremental point is the same;

**RESOLVED:**

- i. to retrospectively agree the action taken by SMT to place a promoted member of Business Support Staff on the second point of Scale 4;**
- ii. to agree the proposal to start employees on the next available point where staff are appointed to overlapping pay scales.**

**4.8 Personnel Service Standards**

- i. The Personnel Team was involved in a revision of its service standards and were developing a much more comprehensive and detailed set of standards for the team;
- ii. once the service standards are finalised they will be circulated to managers for comment. It was anticipated the final draft version would be presented to the next meeting of the Personnel Committee (as agreed at the previous meeting).

**4.9 Local Government Pension Scheme**

- i. the Local Government Pension Scheme has moved into the new look scheme whereby employees' contribution to the Scheme is based on annual salary.

**RESOLVED that changes to employees' contributions should be made whenever pay changes to ensure the college is not liable to any shortfall that may arise.**

**4.10 Review of Risk Management**

- i. the Risk Review Schedule identifies risk within the area of Human Resources;
- ii. if the gross risk score is greater than 12 a more detailed risk analysis is undertaken to identify existing controls, monitoring and early warning mechanisms to ensure existing controls are adequate or whether any action needs to be initiated to further mitigate the risk. This detailed evaluation would form part of the Risk Management Action Plan which is reviewed and approved by the Governing Body annually;
- iii. a risk analysis has been undertaken in respect risk areas HR1 (ensuring the college has sufficient staff at the required grade/quality) and HR5 (ensuring the college complies with relevant HR related legislation);
- iv. both risk areas HR1 and HR5 are judged to remain high risk due to the challenges faced by the college to continue to employ sufficient staff at the required grade/quality and responding to and ensuring compliance with the continuing changes in employment legislation;

- v. the Internal Auditors (MacIntrye Hudson LLP) had complimented the college on the operation of its Risk Management Scheme and felt the Scheme was proving robust even when responding to rapid changes such as changes to the funding methodology.

## 5. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

RECEIVED paper 5, report of the Personnel Manager for decision

NOTED:

- i. following recent use of the staff policy and as part of Equality Impact Assessments, the Personnel Manager had reviewed the grievance procedures for both staff and senior postholders;
- ii. The Personnel Manager had revised the two policies to ensure they were consistent in their approach. The option for aggrieved employees to be able to bring witnesses to the first formal grievance hearing has been removed from the staff policy and this now aligns it with the ACAS Code of Practice. In addition a number of amendments have been made to provide greater clarity and practical flexibility where required. Other key details previously in the procedures remain.
- iii. the college's Harassment Procedure will be updated in due course to ensure it is consistent with the grievance procedure.

**RESOLVED to adopt the updated Grievance Procedures (Appendix 1 and II to the report). The new staff procedure will be sent out to all staff for consultation for two weeks. Staff to be advised that the procedure will be live during consultation. Any proposed material changes as part of the consultation with staff will be reported to the next Personnel Committee.**

## 6. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES MONITORING, RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF STAFF (1<sup>st</sup> January 2007 – 31<sup>st</sup> December 2007)

RECEIVED paper 6, report of the Personnel Manager for information

NOTED:

- i. this report was produced annually for the Personnel Committee;
- ii. the reduction in 2007 in the number of appointments of staff from an ethnic background was disappointing although the number of applications being received from ethnic minority groups has again been significant and has increased by 0.5% from last year.
- iii. The statistics have been discussed by the Senior Management Team who continue to support the college's current rigorous recruitment process to ensure appointments are based on the suitability of applicants to the post (based on skills, qualifications and experience) and not racial or any other bias;

- iv. vacancies are advertised in local papers and therefore applications should reflect the diversity of the local community. Members felt it would be an interesting exercise to look at the ethnicity profile of administrative staff compared to the ethnicity profile of North London, Hertfordshire and Essex;
- v. the ethnicity profile at centres was discussed. Members felt this could be the key to improving ethnicity statistics;
- vi. advertisements were placed in local papers for individual centres. The Personnel Manager reported that advertising in ethnic minority publications had been tried but had not proved successful. The cost of advertising in such papers and national papers can be prohibitive. Advertisements are also placed on the “Fish for Jobs” website;
- vii. Members were reassured that this continues to be a “live” issue and would continue to be monitored.
- viii. The college has made two appointments from disabled applicants. The Disability Focus Group and Personnel will continue to look at ways of attracting more disabled applicants.
- ix. Of the 19 staff leaving the college’s employ during 2007, 13 were Business Support Staff. A number of staff leaving the college’s employ during 2007 were longer serving members of staff either retiring or taking advantage of early retirement. Other leavers had left to further their career as, being a relatively small organisation with many long serving members of staff, career progression at the college is often limited.

## **7. REVISED HR STRATEGY**

RECEIVED paper 7, report of the Personnel Manager for information

NOTED:

- i. the Personnel Manager had reviewed the college’s HR Strategy and the associated action plan;
- ii. Members were invited to comment on the draft strategy prior to it being circulated to managers (to facilitate a consultation process with their staff). It was anticipated a final strategy would be proposed to the November meeting of the Personnel Committee;
- iii. Members congratulated the Personnel Manager on producing such a comprehensive and detailed HR Strategy;

- iv. It was acknowledged that for such an HR strategy to be successful the engagement of Governors, Managers and Staff would be crucial. Managers would also need to be provided with appropriate training to enable them to fulfil the enhanced role envisaged for them. The Personnel Manager reported that compulsory supervisory/management training for managers was being introduced and that this strategy had been well received by managers;
- v. an assessment-centre approach to staff recruitment involved undertaking skills assessments as part of the interview process such as in-tray exercises. The benefits of psychometric testing were discussed. The Personnel Manager is qualified to undertake such testing although the use of such tests as part of the recruitment process is rare;
- vi. to facilitate a more competence-based approach to recruiting people with strong transferable skills, the Personnel Manager was in the process of developing a set of competences;
- vii. the following amendments/additions were suggested by members:
  - inclusion of a statement that Senior Postholders are appraised by governors under the section “Performance Management”
  - the Objective 3 heading “Reward Management” should be modified to include to pay and benefits to make it clear that this does not relate to performance related pay but seeks to reflect the whole range of benefits and rewards offered by the college.

**8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Provisionally 10<sup>th</sup> November 2008 at 5.00pm**