

Minutes of the Corporation meeting held on Tuesday 30 March 2021

[by Video Conference]



Meeting commenced: 18:00 Meeting closed: 19:52

Name	Attendance	Apologies	Time arrived (if different from above)	Time left (if different from above)
Business Members (3 Vacancies)				
John Egan (Chair)	√			
Joanne Beaumont	√		18:25	
Nigel Hainsworth	√			
Albert Podesta	√			
James Parker	√			
David Butcher	√			
Phillip Hunter	√			
Kerry Robinson	√			
Catherine O'Connor	√			
Grace Jeffrey	√			
Mohammed Hussain	√			
Staff Members				
Jonathan Curtis	√			19:50
Wendy Rowan	√			19:50
Student Members (1 Vacancy)				
Hibah Modak	√			19:50
Principal				
Nav Chohan	√			19:50
In Attendance				
Jeremy Stott - Clerk	√			
Susanna Butler - Minutes Secretary	√			19:50
Diana Bird - Vice Principal Curriculum	√			19:50
Steph Tinsley - observer	√			19:50
Peter Whittle - observer	√			19:50

The Chair welcomed Steph Tinsley and Peter Whittle to the meeting.

01/21 Disclosure of Financial and/or personal interest

18:02

There was no disclosure of financial or personal interest.

02/21 To agree the agenda and order of business as circulated

18:02

The agenda and order of business were agreed.

03/21 Search Committee: To consider any recommendations & proposals arising from the meeting held on 04 March 21

18:03

The Chair of the Search Committee highlighted the meeting and discussions held with prospective members.

Members endorsed the appointments of Peter Whittle and Steph Tinsley as Governors for a term of office to be determined by the Clerk.

Members were informed of the proposal for a Governance Review and asked for their endorsement.

Members agreed for a Governance Review to be carried out.

04/21 To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 15 December 2020

18:04

The proposed addition for accuracy to minute 46/20 was highlighted and accepted and the minutes were approved as a true record.

05/21 Matters arising

18:05

i) **40/20i)** The Chair highlighted that he has found a solution for governors to receive an alert in their personal email accounts to let them know new mail has arrived in their College account. This should remove the need for any correspondence to be copied to personal accounts. If anyone would like to action this, to contact J Egan for instructions.

ii) **51/20iii Individual Member Meetings with the Chair**

The Chair confirmed that it has been formally agreed for individual member meetings to take place and that this will commence from around May or June this year. Members will be contacted to arrange suitable dates in due course.

06/21 To consider reports and proposals from committees

18:08

a) **Curriculum & Quality: To consider any recommendations & proposals arising from the meeting held on 02/03/21**

The Chair of C&Q asked members to note:

- **Minute 07/21** - an update on the Theme for the Year - Blended Learning
- **Minute 05/21** on the gender pay gap report

ACTION: The Chair to send the Vice Principal Finance & Planning a signed version of the Gender Pay Gap Report for uploading to the College website.

- **Minute 11/21 i)** on recommendation to the Corporation the:
 - a) Safeguarding Policy & Procedure
 - b) Admissions Policy & Procedure
 - c) Quality Policy and Cycle
 - d) Maternity, Paternity, Adoption, Parental & Shared Leave Policy

The minutes were received.

b) Finance & Resources: To consider any recommendations & proposals arising from the meeting held on 23/03/21

The Chair of F&R asked members to note:

- **Minute 11/21 ii)** on recommendation to the Corporation the Fee Policy
- **Minute 11/21 ii)** on recommendation to the Corporation the Phased and Flexible Retirement Policy

The minutes were received.

07/21
18:13

Student Council: To receive a copy of the minutes and report from the meeting held on 23 March 2021

The Student Governor asked members to note the discussions and observations made around returning to on-site learning which has been positive. A new standing item will be brought to the agenda on health and wellbeing. Two students have expressed an interest in the role of Vice Chair and there will be a vote at the next meeting. Whoever is successful will become the second student governor. Also to note is the proposal for a leaver's hoodie so that students have a memento of the College. Funding has been requested for those unable to afford the full price and the Student Union Officers will be approached to see if they can help using some of the Union funds.

The minutes were received.

08/21
18:16

To approve the appointment of external Financial Statements Auditors on the recommendation of the Audit Committee

The Vice Principal Finance & Planning explained that, after discussion with the Audit Committee, it was decided to go to tender on fees. Noted is that there has been a reduction in the number of companies wanting to work with our sector. We therefore went back to Mazars for a new quote which came to £22,800 and also approached RSM whose quote was nearly £26k. Although a big increase on previous years, it is a reasonable fee considering the market and the proposal is

therefore to stay with Mazars.

Members approved the appointment of Mazars as external auditors.

09/21
18:19

To monitor

For background for new members, the Vice Principal Curriculum (VPC) explained that these are the plans that guide our actions during the academic year and she then talked through each of the plans.

a) The Quality Improvement Plan

The first two objectives are about achievement on courses and for apprenticeships and part time provision for accountancy we are looking to improve the quality of provision. The courses highlighted for improvement all have enhanced support provision in place to address any areas of concern. We expect all students on Level 2 Travel & Tourism to achieve. Objective 3 is to increase learner performance in exams but most have been cancelled for this year so those actions have become less of a priority. We have made use of the Tuition Fund for catch up support for those students who have missed out on parts of their learning and over 100 students are currently participating.

b) The Development Plan

This plan follows the strategic key objectives. We are on target to achieve the outputs for the Re:boot programme. This programme completes in October, but there is a new project, Gainshare, which we are currently applying for. We have been approved for funding for the Kickstart programme and though we have received limited applications to date, one person has been recently appointed as an Horticulture Assistant. A member asked if there may be some mixed messaging coming from Skills House around how to apply for this programme and if all referrals for vacancies must come through the DWP. P Hunter said he believes that is the case, but that he will seek clarification for us. There have been delays to the apprenticeship end point assessments which have been out of our control, but the good news is they are now starting to go through. Covid risks have kept us very busy this year putting all the risk assessments in place and cyber security is an ongoing risk. Another big focus this year is on health and wellbeing for both staff and students and we now have action plans in place.

10/21
18:31

To receive a report on:

i) Progress against the Strategic Drivers

The Principal explained that these are the main areas we have wanted to develop over a number of years but that we are also looking to rephrase them and will have a new set ready for the July Corporation meeting. This document marks up progress on our current drivers.

Progress on support for the regional economy is hard to assess due to Covid. Apprenticeships had been rising up to 17/18 and this year we have managed to maintain some activity despite the challenges. Employers are now being given large grants as incentives to take on apprentices. One particular area of difficulty

for us and other colleges is recruiting to computing apprenticeships. Employer based enrolments are difficult to track as learners enrol as individuals. A member added that recruitment to the IT industry generally has been difficult this last year with employers not wanting to take on people remotely.

Student achievement and progressions are reported in the SAR. Progress in English particularly is to be celebrated. There are opportunities for personal growth with the National Citizenship Services but again, this has been more difficult during Covid but should pick up again next year.

It was queried if we have any equality and diversity analysis on the profile of people engaged with extracurricular activity. The Vice Principal Curriculum confirmed that this is something we have been looking at to see how we can monitor it more closely, potentially with some new software to monitor participation. We should be able to move this forward soon.

Community centre enrolments have been hit hard by Covid. Of note is the ESOL course for pregnant women which was initially hard to get off the ground, but has flourished during lockdown delivering online courses via WhatsApp.

We have done well achieving a surplus over the last few years, building up cash reserves during austerity. This has helped us invest a lot into the estate.

ii) **Updating the Strategic Plan and Objectives (inc White Paper + Capital)**

The Principal talked through his presentation looking at developing new strategic drivers for the end of this year. These ideas will also be discussed at the next training event in May.

He highlighted that unemployment in Bradford is higher than other areas in West Yorkshire and doubled in March. Once the Job Retention Scheme comes to an end there will be even greater numbers looking for jobs. There are several economic recovery plans, but we have yet to see if they will materialise. The government aim is for higher skilled individuals, with a focus on technical jobs including health care, but they also want the recovery to be more inclusive.

There has been a dip in 16-18 recruitment this year with 50 fewer students which is important to the College. An issue for FE generally is the number of 50-70 year olds edging towards retirement and a lot of our workforce is in that bracket so we need to recruit new blood. A key issue for increasing recruitment is the number of rooms available making timetabling very difficult so we are looking at ways to address this and it may be that blended learning will provide us with more flexibility.

There is a government push to develop work experience which is particularly important for T Level students. A member highlighted the new Turing Scheme which can support shorter placements and targets students from disadvantaged backgrounds and where the funding is more flexible. **ACTION:** The Principal to look into the Turing Scheme for future years.

It was queried what the teaching staff feel about coming back to face to face teaching and the Principal said some are very eager to get back to the classroom, and there are others that would prefer to continue with remote teaching, so we

have enough interest to set up a blended learning experience.

Of note is a major new multi-million pound fund called the Community Renewal Fund which could be important for us.

On estates matters, the Towns Fund bid is for a new build in Saltaire to include a new social club building worth £5 million. A member highlighted that at a recent briefing they had attended, there was a big emphasis on enterprise - social or commercial, so there could be opportunities for us to move into that space.

We are the first college in the county to get involved in technical boot camps and we are delivering fiber optic courses every other week which are very popular. The government wants to encourage more higher level technical courses and their aim is to have an Institute of Technology in each area of the country. For the next few years our 16-18 enrolments are crucial and our main focus is to generate more work experience and to recruit and keep trainee teachers.

It was queried if we do any skills benchmarking of students on digital skills in terms of their capacity to engage with blended learning and about the sector pathways they are pursuing, particularly any digital skills that may be relevant. The VPC added that we are formalising what all the tutors are doing - some learners did not have digital skills and it has been part of their learning programme this year and is part of the induction process, though not formalised by way of a qualification. It was agreed to look at whether there is a benefit to formalising this.

ACTION - to look at how we can formalise digital skills development across full time programmes.

11/21
19:17

Chair's Report

The Chair highlighted that he has spent some time with the AoC and the feeling from Yorkshire and the Hunber is that we are doing better than some having heard about lots of success stories. He added that he has noticed we are getting a broader skills set on the board which will set us in good stead going forward. He feels the College is small and agile enough to adapt quickly to changing circumstances which is coming through from management reports.

12/21
19:19

Principal's Report

i) Principal's Update

The Principal presented his report highlighting the great success of a letter exchange project together with GCSE resit students at Waltham Forest College in London. Also of note is the World Skills competition to which staff governor W Rowan provided some background for the benefit of new members. The business development team are doing a great job to increase business during Covid and the new customer service package bespoke for the NHS is going very well and is a real success story.

ii) To receive the Termly Finance Report

The Principal reported the picture looks fairly positive, but the key uncertainty is around the Adult Education Budget. Last year a 68% tolerance was set but this year, it has been set at 90%. We only expect to achieve around 70% of our allocation which means we will lose a significant amount of money meaning our £403k surplus turns into a £50k surplus overnight. A letter has been sent to our local MP highlighting this issue and we expect there will be a lot of national kickback. It was queried if we are being penalised for good financial management and confirmed no; this applies to every college that hasn't delivered in full. Next year our position looks better where our income savings target is now £300k (down from £590k) and we might be able to achieve a small surplus.

The Termly Finance Report was received.

iii) To monitor the Corporations Key Performance Indicators

The Principal reported that the number of Observations where learners are making 'Positive Progress' remains exceptionally high at 95% and adult apprenticeship enrolments are very good. Staff from BME backgrounds have increased - previously a cause for concern, though still not reflective of the population in Bradford. A concern is the decrease in the average class size which has impacted this last year due to students having to stay in bubbles. To note is that sickness absence has increased, but those connected with stress are not due to work, but personal issues.

13/21
19:33

Governance Matters

i) To consider a review of the Corporation's Standing Orders

The Clerk presented the annual review of local rules and regulations asking for any comment. It was noted that the paper does not give the reason for the proposal to increase the term of office. The Clerk confirmed that the Instrument and Articles of Government have always given the ability for a 4 year term of office so the increase is to stay in line with this, though a member can of course resign at any point.

Members endorsed the updated Standing Orders.

ii) To receive an update on membership and consider filling vacancies on Committees

The Clerk was happy to report that, with recent appointments, we have nearly full membership on all committees. There just remains 1 vacancy on the Remuneration Committee, and 1 on the Student Council, to be filled by a student.

The update was received.

14/21
19:37

Any Other Business

i) Dates of Corporation Meetings scheduled to December 2021:

- 18 May 2021 - Strategic Planning & Training
- 13 July 2021
- 12 October 2021 - Strategic Planning & Training
- 14 December 2021

ii) Future Meetings

A member asked what the board felt about moving back to face to face meetings. With 3 new members on the Audit Committee, he would like the next Audit meeting in June to be held face to face. A discussion followed and it was agreed as a one off, if Audit members all agreed, then the next meeting could be held face to face. The feeling generally though is for meetings to continue on-line which has proven time efficient, but that we could also consider a mixed approach in the future.

iii) Climate Change Road Map

The student governor recently attended some governor training where they talked about the climate change road map and she asked if the College has a road map and any plans in place to meet the government's target for net zero emissions. The Principal thanked Hibah for raising this and confirmed that in 2017, Shipley was the first College in the world to sign the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Accord. We also have completed a Carbon Management Plan in the last five years. As yet we have not adopted a road map as a reporting mechanism so the Principal suggested we come back to the next meeting with a report on progress with sustainability. A meeting can also be arranged for Hibah with the Director of Physical Resources to talk about the road map and how she might want to see that implemented. The Vice Principal Curriculum added that this is on our Development Plan and we will be writing a report on how we are progressing against those goals.

ACTION: To report back to the next meeting on progress with sustainability.

iii) To consider recommendations from Committees to approve the:

a) Safeguarding Policy & Procedure

A member asked if there is a flowchart which can be added as an appendix to the policy to help staff see the process at a glance. The Vice Principal Curriculum agreed this would be useful and confirmed she will look at this with the Head of Student Services and then share with members.

With the addition of a flowchart, the Safeguarding Policy & Procedure was approved

b) Quality Policy & Quality Cycle

The Quality Policy & Cycle were approved

c) Admissions Policy

The Admissions Policy was approved

d) Maternity, Paternity, Adoption, Parental & Shared Leave Policy

The Maternity, Paternity, Adoption, Parental & Shared Leave Policy was approved

e) Fee & Remission Policy

The Fee & Remission Policy was approved

f) Phased & Flexible Retirement Policy

The Phased & Flexible Retirement Policy was approved

19:50

iii) CONFIDENTIAL ITEM

Staff, student members & observers withdrew at 19:50

a) To agree the confidential minute 52/20iii) of the Corporation meeting held on 15th December 2020

The remaining members approved confidential minute 52/20iii as a true record.