

CORPORATION BOARD

Minutes of a meeting held on Tuesday 12th October 2021 at 5pm



Present

Gavin Maitland-Smith, Chair
Jacqui Canton, Principal
Fay Croft, Vice Chair
Adam Mumford
Sean Wellington
Howard Dodd

Vicky Field
Ed Collett, Staff Governor
Kathryn Schutterlin, Staff Governor
Nicholas Pages (from 5.30pm)
Ali Kennedy (attended via Teams)
Sam Wolfe (attended via Teams)

In attendance

Jenny Craig, Deputy Principal
Jo Milsom, Vice Principal
Mark Lay, Finance Director
Olivier Cognard, Vice Principal
Victoria Hazel, Assistant to the Board

Governor questions are represented with bullet points, management responses are italicized.

1. Opening Comments Apologies, new declarations of interest, matters to be raised under Any Other Business

Apologies were received from Nick Handy and Roger File. The meeting was quorate.

Howard Dodd declared that he is liaising with the college regarding electricity supply to Common Leys campus that runs over his land.

No matters to be raised under Any Other Business.

The Chair proposed that item 5.2 Development of New Strategic Plan be moved to the end of the meeting.

2. Minutes of previous meetings

2.1 Public minutes

- Under item 6.3 governors offering time for mentoring, should this be an action? *Yes.*

Action	By Whom	Deadline
Governors to let Principal know if they are able to offer mentoring	Independent Governors	As soon as possible.
Check if minutes of Board meetings held virtually during 2020 -2021 have all be signed by Chair	Clerk	Once Clerk appointed.

The minutes were approved.

3. Matters arising, written resolutions & action points

All actions have been completed. No written resolutions. No comments raised.

4. Power BI Presentation

Oliver Cognard gave a presentation on Power BI, a new data reporting system being used within the college.

- Are we good at capturing the data that goes into the system? *At this time of year there is some settling in whilst registers are clarified and all students are fully enrolled onto all elements of their programme.*
- Who has access to this data? Has GDPR been considered? *All managers currently but the aim is to roll out further. Access is linked to job role so only relevant and necessary data can be viewed. The information input comes from existing data sources already used by the college.*
- How straightforward is it to view trends? *This is an area being worked on currently. Automated email triggers can be set if a trend emerges in the data.*
- It will be important that reports are properly validated if this is used for data submission. *Only for internal data use. It is a new tool so is being tested.*
- Does it show live data? Yes. Can you bring in past data to compare with current? *Yes for the last couple of years.*
- What personal data is collected? *No new data is collected, Power BI compiles existing data stored on different platforms and spreadsheets that the college already uses.*
- What extra does the Health and Safety report give us? H&S reporting is now being completed electronically rather than manually to feed straight into Power BI to provide the reports for us.
- Will Power BI contribute to reducing headcount? *In some instances. It has reduced the admin need for reporting OAL data and so we have been able to not replace some admin roles once they have become vacant.*

- Staff governors were asked if they could see the benefit of Power BI. *Too early for it to have full impact yet but in discussions with Olivier Cognard to review how data held locally in departments could be reported on by Power BI.*

The governors thanked Olivier for his presentation.

5. Principal's Update

5.1 Principal's update and 2020/21 Headline KPI update

The Principal presented the Principal's Update. Since the Update was written, the wider feeling within the sector regarding the lobbying for increased funding has become more pessimistic, but the outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review is not yet known.

- Please could you remind the Governors of the three newly appointed Heads of Faculty? Coral Ward in LICT, Jack Price in Creative Industries and Kai Barnes in TOBES.
- How is the Bicester centre embedding in the community? *Very positively, generating local interest, linking with local businesses to provide some equipment, sponsoring a local radio construction award and using the venue to host relevant events.*
- Is the Green Construction Centre going to plan? *Yes, construction is on track with the steel frame now up.*
- What is the mood within the LEP and how do we position ourselves for likely changes? *It looks possible that the LEP will continue in some form but without capital funding function. The college has begun some collaborative working with Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce. The date for review of the LEP is not yet known.*
- What is the plan for the vacant Vice Principal for Apprenticeships post? *On hold for the rest of this academic year and will be reviewed in May. The current number of SMT without this post is the same as has been for past five years.*
- On the organogram, who are the Development Team? *They work in the CIT department as report writers and developers.*

5.2 Development of a new Strategic Plan

This item will be discussed at the end of the meeting.

6. Curriculum Quality and Students

6.1 CQS Headline Report

The Deputy Principal Jenny Craig presented the CQS Headline Report, giving an early picture of this academic year. A recently published report of 2021 GCSE results places the college in the top quartile for 16-18 year olds, significantly outperforming the average of FE college results.

- Why have we got low numbers of enrolments for the digital T level? *The name doesn't help, we had tried to rename it as computing but were not allowed by DfE. Ali Kennedy fed back that nationally the uptake for IT courses in schools has dropped significantly and the issue runs across all stages of education.*
- The report mentions teachers not appropriately changing their approach in Functional Skills. *The FS syllabus has been revised and is now much more challenging. GCSE teachers were delivering the level two functional skills qualifications and did not always adapt their approach enough away from GCSE tuition. The group also had to sit physical exams which were unavailable during the period of national lockdown leaving less time to prepare.*
- Could we have more details on the HE enrolments being down on expected figures? *Many business students are taking the CMDA apprenticeship route with increased enrolment there. We have some competition from Hartpury College for equine courses. Our Early Years enrolments have been affected by pandemic uncertainty and reluctance to commit to two year programmes.*
- How are T Levels being received as a new innovation? *Varies depending who you are speaking to. Health and Early Years T Levels are viewed as positive and clear routes into job roles or further study. Students and college industry placement co-ordinators have struggled to get employer commitment for placements. This is related to Covid and competition from older students also requiring placements, particularly affecting the Health T Level.*

The report was noted and governors thanked the Deputy Principal.

6.2 Annual Report on Safeguarding and Prevent

The Vice Principal for Student Engagement Jo Milsom presented the Annual Report on Safeguarding and Prevent.

- How do we know the threshold for intervention is increasing? *It is becoming harder to get official involvement for cases that previously would have. All services are under budgetary and resource pressure.*
- Please give more details on the low uptake for lateral flow tests. *This was for the voluntary testing of students before term began. We still had several hundred students come in to take tests but not in the same volume as when it was mandatory. Students and staff are still strongly encouraged to home test twice weekly. We have run pop-up testing for trips and students have been required to show negative test result before certain activities.*
- Mental health cases are clearly hugely increased, what demand is this placing on the staff team and what are the knock on effects? *The central team can't manage this alone, support is being provided within curriculum teams. Training is being increased for staff.*
- Have we seen many Prevent cases within college and is there a theme to them? *Not a huge number but even one case can be extremely serious. Our role is to be aware of students being marginalised and vulnerable to extremism. Nationally there is an increase in right-wing and incel extremism.*

The report was approved.

6.3 Safeguarding Update

The Vice Principal for Student Engagement Jo Milsom presented the Safeguarding Update, highlighting the recently updated document Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE). All staff and governors must confirm that they have read the relevant part of this document.

Promoting welfare proactively and teaching students explicitly about safeguarding is now a part of the KCSIE document and so is likely to be looked as a part of any future inspections. We are compliant with all requirements in the document and have safeguarding leads within governance, SMT, CLT and have safeguarding officers within all campuses and provision areas.

Whisper is a new tool for students to report peer-on-peer abuse. We don't have a pattern of this recorded historically but have to take the assumption that it is going on and find ways to address it.

- Do we get references for staff at shortlisting before they are offered a position? *No usually after an offer is made due to time taken to receive references. We have increased the bank of safeguarding questions to be asked in interview to reflect the varied job roles on campuses.*
- How do we deal with contractors? *We have a process that the senior contractor must read and confirm understanding of policies, and communicate to their staff.*
- How is safeguarding implemented in OAL? *Students are shown a safeguarding presentation and a leaflet is given out either physically or electronically. Students are asked during learning walks if they know where to report safeguarding concerns.*
- Why is the governor lead for safeguarding not included on the poster? *As the poster is designed for students to know who to contact day-to-day for any concerns, but the governor can be added if the new version hasn't been printed yet.*

Action	By whom	Deadline
Governors are required to read the Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) document sent to them and confirm to the Clerk that they have read.	All governors who have not yet done so.	As soon as possible.
Check if new safeguarding leads poster has been printed yet and add governor lead if possible.	Jo Milsom	As soon as possible.

The report was noted and governors thanked the Vice Principal.

7. Finance and General Purposes

7.1 Report from the Committee Chair

As the Chair of the F&GP Committee was unable to attend, an F&GP Committee member gave a summary of the most recent committee meeting where Nick Handy was reappointed as Chair. We are substantially ahead of

forecast on cash and the budget is on track overall. As previously indicated a grading of “requires improvement” is likely in respect of the budget.

The report was noted.

7.1.1 Annual Report on Health and Safety

An F&GP Committee member presented the Annual Report on Health and Safety. As the report was for the 2020/21 academic year it does not include the RIDDOR incidents that occurred in September but these were discussed at the committee meeting.

- Why are recorded Near Misses so low? *This was discussed at the meeting and The Head of OSH is working to improve reporting of near misses.*
- Do we analyse Near Misses in terms of location, time of day etc? *We have a campus committee for H&S and a central committee with an overview, but data such as time is not currently analysed.*

The report was approved.

7.1.2 Annual HR Report

A member of the F&GP Committee presented the annual HR report.

- What is our approach to settlement agreements and payments? *Only to be used as a last report.*
- What strain is being put on HR by the large increase in casework? *A strain is being put on the team due to this, the level of resource required in the team is being monitored.*
- Why is there such a long list of non-completed DBS updates? *These refer to the requirement for staff to update their DBS declaration annually, not the check that is carried out when they join. These staff have all completed the update now.*

The report was approved.

7.1.3 Management Accounts and draft out-turn 2020/21

The Management Accounts and draft out-turn 2020/21 were examined at the F&GP Committee meeting. No further comments were raised.

The report was approved.

7.1.4 Update on 2021/22 Budget

No comments were raised.

The update was noted.

8. Audit

8.1 High Level Risk Register and Action Plan Review

The Finance Director presented the High Level Risk Register and Action Plan Review, noting that the Audit Committee have not met yet this year.

Item 2.3 on the register was considered the biggest risk. Potential changes to funding is likely to be included on the next version of the register.

Item 3.1 on the register relating to governance skill mix will need to be monitored as we recruit for vacant positions.

Action	By whom	Deadline
Add review of end dates of governors terms of office to cycle of business for start of each academic year.	Clerk	Once new clerk appointed.

The report was approved.

9. Nominations, Remuneration and Governance

9.1 Report from Committee Chair

The Chair of the NRG Committee Fay Croft presented a verbal report. The vacancy for a new Clerk is on track as planned to be advertised in October, interviews held in November and an appointment to begin in January.

The Assistant to the Board gave an update on the recruitment of Student Governors. Two expressions of interest have been received and one candidate has attended a discussion with the Assistant and Principal, with the other still to be confirmed.

The NRG committee are keen to progress exploring new contacts for vacant governor positions especially with the current focus on strategy development.

The committee have planned an action for the new Clerk once appointed to review the Terms of Reference and simplify the wording, highlighting which parts are relevant only to this committee and which are applicable to all committees.

The committee agreed that clarity was needed on the role of the committee and that this should be considered over the coming months, with the support of the new Clerk once appointed.

The Board noted the report.

9.1.1 Annual Report to the Board

The Chair of the NRG Committee Fay Croft presented the report. No comments were raised.

The Board approved the report.

9.1.2 Board Self Assessment Report

The Chair of the NRG Committee Fay Croft presented the report. No comments were raised.

The Board approved the report.

9.2 Appointment of Board Chair

The end of term of office for the Board Chair is in December 2021. There is warm support from the Board for the Chair to continue in a second term of office.

Action	By whom	Deadline
Add appointment of Board Chair to the agenda for the next Board meeting	Assistant to the Board	December Board meeting

10. Policies, minutes and other matters

10.1 Tuition Fees Policy 2022/23

The Finance Director updated the board on one amendment since the policy was reviewed by the F&GP committee to the ESOL part-funded hourly rate.

The policy was approved by the Board.

10.2 Chair approved committee minutes

10.2.1 Curriculum, Quality & Students Committee (16 June 2021) The minutes were approved by the Board.

10.2.2 Audit (16 June 2021) The minutes were approved by the Board.

10.2.3 Finance & General Purposes Committee – Public (30 June 2021) The minutes were approved by the Board.

10.2.4 Finance & General Purposes Committee – Confidential (30 June 2021) The minutes were approved by the Board.

As agreed in item 1, item 5.2 moved within agenda.

5.2 Development of a new Strategic Plan

The Chair gave a recap of the Strategy Day held on 6th October. The Principal clarified that we have a current Strategic Plan in place for this year, and will spend this academic year developing a new Plan to take forwards.

A project plan has been outlined for the development of the new plan including a further Strategy Development Day proposed for April 2022.

Action	By whom	Deadline
Book a suitable date for an April 2022 Strategy Development Day	Assistant to the Board	As soon as possible

Howard Dodd presented some more detailed analysis of the areas the project plan needs to investigate:

- How well is the college performing relevant to competitors?
- What is the market for future skills needed in the next 3-5 years and how do we meet these needs?
- What is the right college team and will collaborations be needed to meet strategic goals?
- What financial resources and estate and capital expenditure is required to support the strategy?
- What is the wider strategic landscape?

Governors discussed how to take forward the process of examining these areas and resourcing the time needed to progress the strategy development. Working groups proposed on project plan.

- What time commitment is required for contribution to a working group? *Will vary depending on the group, scope for meetings to be held on Teams.*

Action	By Whom	Deadline
Poll to be sent to governors to express preferences in which working group to join, outlining approximate expected time commitment.	Assistant to the Board.	By end of October.

11. Any Other Business

No matters were raised.

12. Future Business and Reflection

Governors acknowledged that there was a lot to cover in the timetable for developing the new strategic plan during this academic year, but that it would be important to develop a robust plan for the next five years.

13. Date of next meeting 14th December 2021, meeting to be held at Bicester campus.

The meeting ended at 8pm.

Approved for signature.....

Signature.....

Date.....