

Minutes of the Corporation Meeting

held on 25 March 2020

Present Louise Jones (*Chair*), Helene Jones (*Vice Chair*), David Williams (*Principal*), Amanda Allen, David Allen, Lewis Callary, Joanne Chilton, Peter Coley, Lance Hanson, Tiffany Harvey-Pallent, Mark Johnson

In attendance Joanne Williams (*Deputy Principal, Director of Learning and Teaching*)
Jacquie Carman (*Vice Principal, Director of Finance and Corporate Services*)
Jennifer Sunter (*Clerk to the Corporation*)

Meeting held by use of Microsoft Teams for all attendees.

It was agreed that agenda item 4.1 be taken at the end of the meeting.

1 Apologies

There were none.

2 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

3 Minutes

3.1 Minutes of the Corporation Meeting held 27 November 2019

The minutes of the Corporation Meeting held 27 November 2019 were approved as a correct record.

3.2 Minutes of the Corporation Meeting held 24 January 2020

The minutes of the Corporation Meeting held 24 January 2020 were approved as a correct record.

3.3 Minute of the Corporation Special Meeting held 26 February 2020

The minutes of the Corporation Special Meeting held 26 February 2020 were approved as a correct record.

3.4 Matters Arising

Under the Corporation Meeting 25 September 2019

Item 7.3a Letter to Corporation Chairs on Bournville College from CEO ESFA and College Assurance Report

Members noted that progress against actions, and risk identified through the ESFA instruction or recommendation was provided to the Audit Committee meeting in November 2019.

There were no other matters arising.

3.5 Confidential Minutes of the Corporation Meeting held 27 November 2019

Confidential Minutes of the Corporation Meeting held 27 November 2019 were approved as a correct record.

3.6 Confidential Minutes of the Corporation Meeting held 24 January 2020

Confidential Minutes of the Corporation Meeting held 24 January 2020 were approved as a correct record.

5 Strategic Overview

5.1 Principal's Report

David Williams outlined the actions that the College had taken to address a rapidly changing situation responding to the Covid-19 crisis. Focus was placed on student and staff support and welfare and acting under advice and then directives from the Government.

The College had taken guidance from Public Health England in addressing closure and cleansing of the Nursery, following a confirmed case of Covid-19. The College had also moved swiftly to supporting learners online, and had remained open, with reduced staff, to support both vulnerable learners and students of parents who are key workers. However, the offer of support had not been taken up and the College had then closed completely.

It was noted that vulnerable students were being contacted and monitored, including those on the Safeguarding list and those with Education Health Care Plans.

David Williams outlined how the College was providing work on electronic learning platforms for students and that a number of students with no provision at home had been provided with laptops and internet access.

Members noted the work in progress to monitor online learning.

Members asked about impact on student qualifications and progression, and it was noted that the College was awaiting guidance from the ESFA and DfE.

It was also noted that homeworking guidance had been issued to staff and that messages on wellbeing were being circulated.

Key risks identified included the position on funding from the ESFA, and doubt over Apprenticeship funding, however, the West Midlands Combined Authority appeared committed to honour the current year contract for 19 plus learners.

It was also noted that at this time the College retained its current pay commitments. Members discussed the College position in changing to inhouse payroll in April. Jacquie Carman confirmed that the exercise shadowing payroll had provided assurance, and that staff were addressing any problems arising. Members further discussed the College's position with regard to government subsidies. Jacquie Carman responded that where this was appropriate, working with the AoC would be a sensible response.

Members were informed that the College had not yet received clear guidance on current estate capital developments, however, work remained ongoing at the time of

reporting. The College was also in communication with the Local Enterprise Partnership and Walsall Council with regard to capital projects.

Members also asked about the College coach scheme and Jacquie Carman outlined the agreement reached.

Members recorded their thanks to the Principal, the College Leadership Team and staff for their efforts in responding to the current crisis.

6 Search and Governance

6.1 Review of Standing Orders and Instrument of Government

The Clerk outlined the amendment proposed for Corporation Standing Orders, and the Instrument of Government, primarily to address the introduction of the use of written resolutions.

Members discussed the changes with a strong consensus that the documents should be strengthened, to provide maximum flexibility to support Corporation effectiveness in conducting business.

The Clerk noted the immediate changes proposed by members, to increase clarity of purpose and which it was agreed would be implemented directly.

Action 6.1a

It was further agreed that additional work be undertaken to Standing Orders, which would be provided for the College solicitors for review, before being returned to the Corporation for approval.

The Corporation approved the revisions to Standing Orders, subject to the amendments highlighted at the meeting.

The Corporation approved the following addition to the Instrument of Government:

11(4) Written resolutions, where deemed necessary will be undertaken in accordance with Standing Orders.

Members further considered an addendum report on Corporation operations and agreed to maintain the current calendar of business for the remainder of the year, albeit with reduced reports.

Further supportive information was noted.

The Corporation approved that a reduced quorum of a minimum of three, to include two external members, may be instigated where extreme circumstances dictate.

The Corporation approved a contingency member to act as Chair, should the Chair and Vice Chair become incapacitated.

6.2 Governor Additional Roles

While the Search and Governance Committee had discussed the review of additional roles undertaken by governors, with regard to understanding and supporting the core business of the College, the members noted and considered the need to approve members undertaking specific roles in relation to Safeguarding, Equality and Diversity, Health and Safety and Careers.

The Corporation approved that

- **Joanne Chilton take on the role of named Safeguarding Governor, for the purposes of attending College meetings and meeting College procedures.**
- **Helene Jones take on the role of named Careers Governor to both support and meet the requirements of the College.**

6.3 FE Commissioner Annual Report and covering letter

Members noted the FE Commissioner's Annual Report as received.

7 Students, Curriculum and Quality

7.1 Update on Students, Curriculum and Quality

Joanne Williams provided an update for members, incorporating the planned for work under the Quality Improvement Plan and how this had changed under the current College remote working arrangements.

Members noted that A Level retention remained an identified headline issue, with planned action to address this.

Joanne Williams explained that under the changed working arrangements, the College would be looking at grade predictions with managers. Particularly maintaining integrity and seeking assurance through monitoring, that students are working well remotely. Current feedback was showing variable responsiveness, with some students more engaged than others, with a minority of students disengaged.

Members asked a range of questions about qualifications. Joanne Williams responded that there were a range of opportunities, such as mock exams and course work requirements which would assist both with assessment and motivating learners to keep working. However, it was recognised that some practical vocational subjects, such as hairdressing, were more complex and the College was awaiting guidance from the awarding bodies.

Mark Johnson left the meeting.

8 Audit

8.1 Anti-Fraud Suite of Policies

Members noted that the suite of policies had been addressed by the Audit Committee.

There were no further questions from the Corporation.

On recommendation of the Audit Committee, the Corporation approved the updated Anti-Bribery Policy, Anti-Fraud Policy and Anti-Money Laundering, Terrorist Financing and Proceeds of Crime Policy.

9 Finance

9.1 Review of Current Revenue Budget (2)

Members noted that the budget report provided was correct at the time of consideration by the Finance and General Purposes Committee and while the College and sector were facing changes and uncertainties, the College was retaining a resilient financial position.

Jacque Carman confirmed that the financial strength of the College was supportive, however, it was timely to return to the risk rating and consider the risks and uncertainties, not least regarding income, and to report to the Finance and General Purposes Committee in the first instance.

Members sought further assurance with regard to current capital works. Jacquie Carman explained that Block 4 work was in progress and if required, it was anticipated that work could be halted at a suitable point. Block 5 work was not yet in contract stage. The College would be contacting the Black Country Consortium, and remained positive regarding completion of both phases of work, within the March 2021 deadline.

Members asked about exam board fees and Jacquie Carman explained that an imminent view was needed, however, it was suitable for sector questions to be raised through the AoC.

On the recommendation of the Finance and General Purposes Committee the Corporation approved the College Budget Review dated 12 February 2020.

10 Monthly Performance Information

10.1 College Targets 2019/2020

While it had not been possible to supply the monthly target report, members noted that retention focus had been addressed by Joanne Williams and that financial targets were addressed in the Management Accounts provided.

10.2 Finance - Management Accounts

Jacque Carman reported that at time of being drawn the accounts reflected a stable position with some small areas of curriculum overspend, to be addressed in measures being taken for the next academic year.

The Management Accounts were received.

11 Committee Minutes and Reports

11.1 Minutes of the Search and Governance Committee held 29 January 2020

The minutes were received.

11.2 Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held 12 February 2020

The minutes were received.

11.3 Minutes of the Audit and Assurance Committee held 11 March 2020

The minutes were received.

The following agenda items from committees were provided for information and nothing was raised for further discussion.

12	Items from the Finance and General Purposes Committee held 12 February 2020 12.1 Budgeting Policy 2020/2021 12.2 Tuition Fees Policy 2020/2021 12.3 Review of Digital Strategy 12.4 Revised Halesowen College Enterprises Ltd Business Plan 12.5 ESFA Funding Update and Impact on 2021 Financial Model 12.6 Minutes of the Estates and Health and Safety Group 12.7 Updating of the Health and Safety Policies
	Items 12.1 to 12.7 were received for information.
13	Items from the Audit Committee held 11 March 2020 13.1 Assessment of Performance Indicators for 2018/19 and indicators for 2019/2020 13.2 Internal Audit Report: Systems of internal control, governance and transparency 13.3 Internal Audit Report: HR Review of system for recruitment and selection 13.4 Progress Report on Internal Audit Action Plans 13.5 Audit Plan 2019/2020 Mid-Year Update 13.6 Risk Management Mid-Year Update 2019/20 13.7 Anti-Fraud Self-Assessment Checklist
	Items 13.1 to 13.7 were received for information.

14 Any Other Business

Nursery Fees

Members asked about the position of the Nursery and were informed that the College was offering current users a refund or a credit note.

College Campus

Members noted that the Principal would be liaising with organisations with regard to empty campus buildings being repurposed, to assist in addressing need under the current Covid -19 crisis.

15 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 8 July 2020.

With reference to Standing Orders on withdrawing from a meeting, David Williams, Joanne Williams and Jacquie Carman left the meeting.

With reference to Standing Orders and Resolution on withdrawal of staff and student members, David Allen and Lewis Callary left the meeting.

4 Principal Recruitment

The Chair outlined the work of the panel to date, which had taken the recruitment process as far as it could at the current time. Members noted that it had been necessary to postpone interviews until the new academic year.

It was further noted that the Corporation would formally appoint the Interim Principal in due course.

The meeting closed at: 7.55pm

Actions from Meetings		
Corporation Meeting 25 March 2020		
6.1	Review of Standing Orders and Instrument of Government	JSu
6.1a	It was further agreed that additional work be undertaken to Standing Orders, which would be provided for the College solicitors for review, before being returned to the Corporation for approval.	