

Minutes of the meeting of the Northampton College Corporation held at 1700 hrs 23 June 2022.

Present	Pat Brennan Barrett (Principal)	Sharon Bunker	Rob Davey	Philip Hilton (Acting Chair)
	Mark Robbins	Helen Scott	Geraldine Schofield (Chair)(audio only)	Rod Wood
In Attendance	Julian Wood (DP(FCA))	Ralph Devereux (Clerk)	Thomas Goodrich (AP (A&V))(pre-meet only)	Jan Hutt (VP (HRSS))
	Phil O'Hara (VP(CSP))	Helen Janska (AP (A&V) (pre-meet		
Apologies	Becky Bradshaw	Tracey Griffiths	David Smith	Patrick Leavey (DP)

Clerk's Note

The meeting was controlled through Microsoft Teams with some associated technical difficulties, which were largely resolved although Tracey Griffiths was unable to join and her apologies were accepted. The Chair Geraldine Schofield attended with audio only and it was agreed that Philip Hilton should act as Chair for the meeting.

Bite Sized Briefing

Before the meeting opened, Helen and Thomas Assistant Principals (AP) from the School of Academic & Vocational Support delivered an electronic presentation on "Learning Support" (attached to the filed copy of these minutes). Following on from the brief considerations in the last meeting (47/21 the content explained how the negative effects associated with provision during the lockdowns ("lost learning") were being alleviated, generally mitigated and resolved; the presentation supplemented the papers, which had been circulated before the meeting. It was an excellent, interactive and well received briefing and Members took comfort from the content; the Chair thanked Helen and Thomas who then left.

54/21 OPENING

- a. The apologies were accepted. No notice had been received of any Member becoming ineligible to hold office, the meeting was quorate and there were no agenda related interests declared.
- b. Philip Hilton would chair the meeting (**Action 1 RD**). He thanked all for attending and apologies for the difficulties some members had experienced with joining the meeting. He also explained that some items would be taken out of agenda order for practical/operational convenience. (**Action 2 RD**)

The information was received.

Actions had been identified. (See Register 63/21 below.)

55/21 SAFEGUARDING & PREVENT

A safe and welcoming environment, where all are respected and valued, is at the heart of safeguarding and organised to actively prevents harm, harassment, bullying, abuse and neglect and when necessary, enable a safe, timely and effective response. Although the processes were controlled and guided by specialists, they remained the responsibility of everyone involved; general awareness is the best tool in the box. The Annual Report (2021.22) and associated Appendices updated, detailed and explained the cross-college engagement and consequent outcomes and achievements, including substantial "Prevent" (Extremism and Radicalisation). The arrangements for addressing the increasing levels of poor mental health, including anxiety, were particularly welcomed and these were closely considered and noted as

was increased cases of substance misuse. The recently upgraded software system was effective allowing far more speedy responses. The report was discussed at length, welcomed and approved (**Action 3 JH**); thanks were recorded for the clarity of the detail and the narrative.

Q	<i>Is any specialist training available for the increasing mental health issues?</i>
A	Yes indeed. Aquarius Mental Health, a well-established organisation provide exactly that and has a wide range of associated provision.
	<i>You mention anxiety level are also rising, why?</i>
	It is becoming clear that the mental health of young people has been disproportionately affected by the economic and social effects of the pandemic, the resumption of social interaction and formal examinations.

The information was received.

Actions had been identified. (See Register63/21 below.)

56/21 STANDING ITEMS

- a. The minutes of the last meeting (10.05.22) were confirmed for electronic signature (**Action 4 RD**)
- b. Matters Arising. There were no matters arising.
- c. Outstanding Actions. Actions from the previous meeting had been completed or were in progress.

See referenced minute for full action.		Resp
Action 1	42/21b. PH to Chair meeting.	Completed
Action 2	42/21b. Agenda change noted.	
Action 3	43/21. Sickness Absence Policy endorsed.	
Action 4	43/21. Thanks recorded to HR Department.	
Action 5	43/21. NC Special Statement to be initiated re above.	
Action 6	44/21. Last minutes (08.03.22) confirmed.	
Action 7	45/21c. AC (AC15/21) Recommendation approved.	
Action 8	49/21. Financial regulations approved.	
Action 9	49/21. Tuition Fees & Charging Policy approved	
Action 10	51/21a. calendar 2022/23 approved.	
Action 11	51/21b. DP appointed nominated Reserve AO.	
Action 12	52/21b. Next meeting attendance intention pass to Clerk	

- d. Urgent Business. There were no requests for Urgent Business.

The information was received.

Actions had been identified. (See Register 65/21 below.)

57/21 COMMITTEE MINUTES

The unconfirmed Committee Minutes were then considered led by the relevant Chair:

- a. Audit Committee. (AC). The unconfirmed minutes of the last AC meeting (08.06.22) were discussed. **re 24/21**. The External Audit Plan and associated fee had been recommended to the Corporation and they were both approved. (**Action 5 RD**)
- b. Quality Committee (QC). The unconfirmed minutes of the last Quality of Teaching and Learning Assurance (QTLA) meeting (20.06.22) were noted.

The information was received.

Actions had been identified. (See Register 65/21 below.)

58/21 PRINCIPALS REPORT

The Principal's Report included a verbal update on current issues together with a progressive colour coded table Blue, Red, Amber, Green (BRAG); blue coding was Covid related. The overall picture had again improved over the last report. Changes from the last report showed that 2.1 and 2.4 had both been promoted to Green. Examination results would be received in

October predictions showed were +2% lower than the previous year but were still above the national average (NA); the proportion of high grades was also expected to fall. The EAM delivery reorganisation, to be dispersed and contextualised into core subjects had been discussed by the QTLA Committee and was noted.

The information was received and noted.

59/21 COVID

The Covid rate was generally rising evidenced in College with the absence of 10 infected colleagues and some daily testing was still being completed. Consequently, the College Staff Conference would go ahead as planned but would be completed in teams. Looking to next term the prudent and cautious approach would continue with full attention given to the regular national advice updates.

The information was received.

60/21 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS

- a. The management accounts up to 30 April 2022 (P9) were explained and discussed; changes from the previous period were individually detailed. The comprehensive report comprised a narrative informed by graphical and tabulated detail, which was explained and considered; a summary of the forecast had been tabulated and was noted. The forecast annual surplus was c£2.8m. Income was forecast at £30.2m, a c£712k increase on the budget, the variances were fully explained in the report. Year-end pay costs were forecast to be c£880k and non-pay c£560k below budget, again all variances were detailed in the Report. This result would result in an EBITDA ratio of 13.2% against the target of 8% and a staff cost ratio of 62.4% of turnover (target 65%). Cash was c£15.7m although about to be reduced by the repayment of the loan (45/21c refers); post repayment cash days and the current ratio would continue above sector benchmarks. The financial health would remain "outstanding" for the year.
- b. Financial Plan. The draft Budget and 3-year financial plan was attached for consideration and comment. The full plan had been prepared in accordance with Governance Policies and the full detail was supplemented by a clear and comprehensive briefing.
 - (i) the Budget 2022.23 comprised the Income and Expenditure (I&E) which was compared with the 2022.22 year-end, the Budget Balance Sheet and Cashflow and the Capital Plan;
 - (ii) the Financial Plan comprised the Statement of Comprehensive Income (SOC), Balance Sheet and Cashflow supplemented by essential Ratios and Sensitivities.

The plan for 2022.23 forecast an EBITDA of £2.1m (7%) and an operating 4.6% surplus of £1.4m. The 2% income growth was overtaken by rising pay costs of 5% and significant non-pay increases of 21%. These issues had combined to reduce the EBITDA from the current forecast outturn for the current year. All budgetary detail was fully examined by item in the comprehensive report supplemented by graphical and comparative data. The detail was underpinned by the growth in 16-19 funding despite the lagged funding reduction in the current year and adult funding and apprenticeships were expected to recover. The numbers included provision for a 3% pay rise. Risks were clearly identified in the narrative and financial objectives had been tabulated. The Budget and Financial Plan and the Commentary were approved (including an increased pay award of 4% see Action 7 below).
(Action 6 JW)

- c. Pay Award. Consideration of the Budget had highlighted the issue of whether the included 3% pay award was sufficient. Events had rapidly moved on since the assumptions for derivation of this budget. If the award level was raised to 4% it could endanger the "outstanding" financial health assessment however between 3-4% would not. The discussions then considered whether there was sufficient headroom to allow for the full 4% notwithstanding the prejudice to financial health; the guide was each 1% increase would cost £200k. The AoC had recommended a consolidated 2.5% increase together with an undisclosed lump sum for lower paid elements of the workforce. It was agreed that the

discussion on this issue would better be considered after full enrolment numbers were known. However, the need for a content and capable staff was unavoidable and it was unanimously agreed to include 4% in next year's budget (**Action 7JW**); the staff would be informed during the staff development day. The issue would also form part of the considerations at the planned Corporation strategy session, when it was probable that a "pay strategy group" would be formed

<i>Are the previously notified pay related difficulties with recruitment of lecturers for vocational provision continuing?</i>
Yes certainly. The shortage of skilled workers had prompted increased wages and associated benefits across the spectrum.
<i>Are other Colleges experiencing similar difficulties with recruitment?</i>
We are actually well placed comparatively to meet these challenges. Many colleges particularly those smaller, accordingly with less financial flexibility are in trouble.

The information was received and noted.

Actions had been identified. (See Register 65/21 below.)

61/21 LEARNING DATA MONITORING

The Report examined current levels of Retention, Attendance and Progress. Retention and Attendance data had been tabulated and compared with the previous year.

- a. Retention was at similar levels as in the previous year, although 16-18 was slightly lower; the overall figure, reduced by .7% from the last report, was now 95.7%. The significant effect of Covid, particularly in the first quarter this year, had been challenging; and
- b. Attendance remained lower than for the previous year and significant efforts had been made to keep students engaged in readiness for their first full summer examinations for 3 years. Most students continued in the examination room for the full allotted time. Numbers were monitored and reported each week and focus had been on preparation of students. There were 2975 students with 85%+, 2235 at 90%+ and 1243 at 95+ attendance. 1199 students sat 3 scheduled maths exams and 866 took the 2 English exams.

Weekly opportunities to support students in the recovery of "missed learning" remained available.

- c. Progress. Key Assessment 4 (KA5) taken at the start of May and comparisons with the previous year had been separately tabulated by School and by Level, there had been a significant reduction of 12% of students working to target and a higher proportion of Amber ratings. These data reflected the continuing challenges associated with "missed learning" across L1 to L3, examination outcomes for this cohort were relatively optimistic although numbers of high grades were expected to reduce.

The information was received and noted.

62/21 GOVERNANCE

- a. Corporation Business Plan 2022/23. The draft Corporation working plan for the coming year was approved. (**Action 8 RD**)
- b. Attendance 2021/22. Attendance at Corporation events throughout the year had been individually tabulated and was noted.
- a. Members' Terms of Office. Three Members were drawing to the end of their terms of office:
 - (i) Sharon Bunker the elected staff member would complete on 31.07.22, she was invited and accepted to continue until an election could be held earl in the next academic year; (**Action 9**)
 - (ii) Rod Wood would complete on 31.07.22 he was invited and accepted, a further term of office; (**Action 10**) and

- (iii) Rod Davey and Mark Hall would complete on 31.07.22 and they declined offers to continue. Both were thanked for their sterling service to the Corporation and the College, Rod, particularly for his tenure as Corporation Chair and Mark as AC Chair. **(Action 11)**

The information was received and noted.

Actions had been identified. (See Register 65/21 below.)

63/21 STRATEGY EVENT

There would be Strategy Planning Event at starting at 1400 on 29 June 2022, with hybrid attendance; Members were asked to confirm with the Clerk which option they planned.

The information was received.

64/21 URGENT BUSINESS AND NEXT MEETING

- a. There had been no urgent business requested.
- b. The next meeting would be hybrid attendance at 1700 on 6 October 2022. Members were requested to advise attendance intention to the Clerk in advance. **(Action 10 All)**

The information was received.

Actions had been identified. (See Register 65/21 below.)

65/21 ACTION REGISTER

ACTION REGISTER		Resp	By
See referenced minute for full action.			
Action 1	54/21b. PH to Chair meeting.	Clerk	wie
Action 2	54/21b. Agenda change noted.		
Action 3	55/21. Safeguarding Report approved	VPHRSS	
Action 4	56/21a. Last minutes (10.5.22) confirmed for signature.	Clerk	
Action 5	57/21a. External Audit Plan and fee approved.		
Action 6	60/21b. Budget & Financial Plan approved.	DPF&CA	9/22
Action 7	60/21c. Pay Award increase to be included in 22/23 Budget.		
Action 8	62/21a. Corporation workplan 2022/23 approved.	Clerk	wie
Action 9	62/21c. Sharon Bunker to continue membership.		
Action 10	62/21c. Rod Wood extended in office,		
Action 11	62/21c. Rod Davey and Mark Hall terms end 31.7.22.		
Action 12	64/21. Members to confirm attendance in future.	All	







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Final Audit Report

2022-10-11

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-  Document created by Ralph Devereux (office.mpe@btinternet.com)
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-  Signer Jill Derby (jill.derby@northamptoncollege.ac.uk) entered name at signing as Ralph Devereux for Geraldine Schofield(Chair)
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