

Minutes of the meeting of the Northampton College Corporation held at 1700 hrs 11 May 2023.

<b>Present</b>	Becky Bradshaw	David Bailey	Pat Brennan Barrett (Principal)	Anne-Marie Kilday (until 46/22)
	Philip Hilton	Paul Nutter	Molly Allen	Mark Robbins
	Helen Scott (Chair)	David Smith	Michael Watkins	Rod Wood
<b>In Attendance</b>	Ralph Devereux (Clerk)	Patrick Leavey (DP)	Rachel Robson (Stone King)	Julian Wood (DP(FCA))
<b>Apologies</b>	Mim Ansell	Sharon Bunker	Geraldine Schofield	Jane Deery (VP) (attendee)

IT Arrangements. Tom Bissett and Andy Seymour from the IT Department explained that Mobile Device Management (MDM) would be introduced in the near future. MDM would facilitate IT to automate, control, and secure laptops, smartphones, tablets, or any other device connected to the College network. All members would receive a link when they log on to the network and, once downloaded work would be able to proceed as usual. Some older machines may be incompatible with MDM and in this case IT would help. Members were assured that there was no risk to personal data, which would remain confidential to the owner.

#### 40/22 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. The Chair welcomed Rachel Robson from Stone King, who would observe the meeting as part of the external governance review.

**The information was received.**

#### 41/22 MINUTES

- a. re 33/22. The Members' questions table final comment was amended, 'aimed at 20%' was changed to 'and a 20%'; the minutes of the last meeting held on 9 March 2023 (Parts 1&2) were then confirmed for electronic signature. **(Action 1RD)**
- 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.		Status
<b>Action 1</b>	27/22b. HS unanimously elected as Corporation Chair.	<b>Complete</b>
<b>Action 2</b>	27/22c. A-MK unanimously appointed to Board.	
<b>Action 3</b>	28/22a. Last minutes (15.12.22) confirmed.	
<b>Action 4</b>	28/22d. Agenda Item 5 to be a Part 2 meeting.	
<b>Action 5</b>	29/22a. SC Recommendation completed. (27/22c)	
<b>Action 6</b>	29/22c(i). Members to complete on-line training.	<b>Continuing</b>
<b>Action 7</b>	29/22c(iii). Potential Cttee members contact.	<b>Complete</b>
<b>Action 8</b>	29/22(iv). SoD & SAR on May agenda.	

re Action 8. Members were again reminded of the need to complete the on-line training.  
**(Action 2 All)**

d. Urgent Business. There were 2 items of urgent business agreed. **(Action 3RD)**

**The information was received.**

**Actions had been identified.** (See Register 49/22 below.)

#### **42/22 COMMITTEE MINUTES**

The unconfirmed Audit Committee (AC)(23.03.22) were then considered, received and the recommendation for approval of the Treasury Management Policy (TMP)(Minute 21/23b) was noted to inform agenda Item 6. Particular attention was given to this item as the AC meeting had been unavoidably inquorate as explained in the minutes.

**The information was received.**

**Actions had been identified.** (See Register 49/22 below.)

#### **43/22 PRINCIPAL'S UPDATE**

The reporting process was linked to the Strategic Plan and led to a full and detailed analysis at year end; the Report was then considered, informed by a verbal update with reference to a progressive colour coded table Blue (Covid related), Red, Amber, Green (BRAG) leading to the expected outcome. General attendance and retention continued to improve. The majority of gradings were Green, however exceptions included, the English and Maths (EAM) continuing at Amber, but some improvements were noted, Members welcomed the provision of the improved diagnostic processes and the additional "Master classes"; attendance at 83% showed an improvement of c5%. 1300 students were scheduled for the GCSE summer examinations, the results were not expected to equal the November 2022 results which had been a selective cohort. Finance also remained Amber, although the outcome to be considered at Item 4, was more positive than expected. Improvements in operational efficiency were also becoming apparent. There was nothing further to bring to the meeting's attention but during general discussion, it was confirmed that closer collaboration with the University of Northampton (UoN) continued. External consultants were analysing the Level 2 (L2) and L3 curriculum in relation to the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP).

<b>Q</b>	<i>Are we making progress with the previously reported challenges with work placements?</i>
<b>A</b>	Not really, sourcing and completion remains difficult, but focus continues, some funding clawback appears likely.

**The information was received.**

#### **44/22 FINANCE REPORT**

a. Management Accounts. The management accounts up to March 2023 (R08) were then fully explained and discussed; the comprehensive document comprised a narrative informed by graphical and tabulated detail. The overall picture had improved since the last report and the EBITDA (earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortization) at 8.8% resulting in an operating surplus of £626k above budget, largely resulting from out of budget additional student numbers grant funding. Key Performance Indicators (KPI) had been tabulated and variances were explained, the continuing prudent approach to potential energy costs was noted. Income was again above budget and pay costs were £294k below, although the changed holiday entitlement and pay (Brazell v Harper) had yet to be finally resolved into the national arrangements and consequently the budget remained unchanged. The current operating surplus at £1,666k, above budget of £1,035k and the Financial Health Grade remained "Outstanding". Members welcomed the positive update and possible plans for increased financial position were discussed. **(See Part 2 Minutes)**. Cash remained strong and the effect of paying off the bank loan had now recovered; possibilities for focussed use included replacement of equipment, particularly IT, building maintenance and investment to facilitate the introduction of "T Level". The Report was noted and received.

b. Tuition Fees and Charging Policy (TFCP). The TFCP required annual updating, scrutiny, and approval. The Policy was considered and discussed and was agreed as inclusive, fair,

and well balanced; individual cases for easement were considered on their merits and accordingly there were no general reservations. The Policy was approved. **(Action 4 JW)**

- c. Treasury Management Policy (TMP). The TMP required annual updating, scrutiny, and approval; the AC had carefully considered the document and had recommended it for approval. The recommendation was accepted and the TMP was approved. **(Action 5JW)**

**The information was received and noted.**

**Actions had been identified.** (See Register 49/22 below.)

#### **45/22 LEARNER DATA MONITORING**

The Learner Data Monitoring information comprised 4 comprehensive data tables considering Retention and Attendance rates and BRAG rated comparison tables. Data was collected 5 times throughout the year and had been tabulated by school and by level. The information had been clearly explained in the notes accompanying the data. All students had been diagnostically assessed and BRAG rated, the adverse effect of the pandemic had been clearly evidenced; and those with Red/Amber assessments received targeted support. This in parallel with the return to full pre-Covid awarding assessment criteria presented a challenging scenario. Comparisons with past performance had been realistically based on data from 2021/22 and were generally positive. For example, current overall retention stood at 95.9% slightly down from the previous year (96.4) but nevertheless strong and was expected to be c95% at year-end (2021/22 94.2%). A week of workshops delivered by the "Loudspeaker" agency focused on confidence, self-esteem, and resilience to help prepare students for the coming examinations had been well received by students and staff. Attendance had improved on the previous year with English and Maths particularly heartening, up by c4% each. The countdown to the summer exams continued with 1,300 entries for maths and 1,000 for English. Nine initiatives to prepare students for the examinations were noted in the Report and were individually explained; all were welcomed. National data re retention, pass and achievement rates for 2021/22 had now become available and had facilitated an internal benchmarking of performance against the 200+ colleges in the sector; the result, the first post pandemic, which would be validated with the release of the official National Achievement Rate Tables (NART) expected in May, showed Northampton in 7<sup>th</sup> position (2018/19 also 7<sup>th</sup>). Members took comfort from the information and recorded thanks for the clear and informative Report.

**The information was received and noted.**

#### **46/22 ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT (AS)**

The accountability agreement is the outcome of funding and accountability reforms initiated in the Skills for Jobs White Paper and then through 2 funding and accountability consultations; College Corporations are now required to take a strategic lead in the area and attached is the AS for academic year 2023/24, (required by 31May 2023) to justify the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) funding. The detail had been informed through close liaison with the local Chamber of Commerce (CC) and the South-East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership (SEMLEP) together with the draft Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) which provides an agreed set of local actionable priorities that employers, providers, and stakeholders can follow. There were several areas still under discussion and a meeting held on the previous day had highlighted some in particular. The LSIP remained in draft and was unlikely to be finalised before the AS submission date however there would be a further meeting which would provide additional information. Submission of the AS would be held until the deadline to allow final amendment and that was agreed; the comprehensive and clear document was noted. **(Action 6 PBB)**

**The information was received.**

**Actions had been identified.** (See Register 49/22 below.)

**Anne-Marie Kilday left the meeting**

#### **47/22 GOVERNANCE**

There were 3 Governance items for consideration;

- a. Scheme of Delegation (SoD) and the Corporation Self-Assessment Report (SAR). The SoD and SAR had been considered and recommended for approval by the Governance Committee (29/22c(iv) refers); the attached draft SAR was not the latest version and that would be circulated electronically for comment; the SAR was provisionally approved. **(Action 7RD)** There were some amendments required to the SoD and with those incorporated the document was approved. **(Action 8RD)** The amended document would also be circulated electronically.
- b. Business Plan. The Corporation Business Plan 2022/23 was on-track and confirmed for the remainder of the year.
- c. Calendar. The Corporation calendar did not include dates for the strategic planning afternoons: these were discussed and the first would be on the 5 October leading into the Corporation meeting at 1700 and the second on a date yet to be agreed. The Calendar was noted.

**The information was received and noted.**

**Actions had been identified (Register at 49/22 below)**

#### **48/22 URGENT BUSINESS AND NEXT MEETING**

- a. Urgent Business:
  - (i) the Principal would attend a 4-day conference in Denmark arranged by the Gatsby Charitable Foundation, the trip was externally funded with no costs implications for the College; the information was noted. **(Action 9RD)**;
  - (ii) Helen Scott had accepted the post of Corporation Chair at short notice and would not have capacity to continue as Chair of the Quality, Teaching Learning & Assessment (QTLA) Committee, accordingly that was now vacant. Members interested to fill the vacancy were asked to contact the Clerk as soon as possible. **(Action 10RD)**
- b. The next Corporation meeting would be at 1700 on 20 June 2023.

**The information was received.**

#### **49/22 ACTION REGISTER**

See referenced minute for full action.		Resp	By
Action 1	41/22a. Last minutes 9.3.23 (Part 1&2) confirmed for signature.	Clerk	wie
Action 2	41/22c. Members reminded to complete on-line CPD.	All	
Action 3	41/22d. Urgent Business (2 items) agreed.	Clerk	
Action 4	44/22b. TFCP approved.	DPFCA	
Action 5	44/22c. TMP approved.		
Action 6	46/22. AS noted.	PBB	
Action 7	47/22a. SAR provisionally approved.	Clerk	
Action 8	47/22a. SoD approved.		
Action 9	48/22a(i). Overseas trip (PBB) noted.		
Action 10	48/22a(ii). QTLA Chair vacancy to be filled.		

*Ralph Devereux for Helen Scott(Chair)*







# Corp Minutes Pt1. 11.5.23RDPBBHS

Final Audit Report

2023-07-17

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