

## MINUTES OF THE CORPORATION MEETING

**HELD ON TUESDAY 11 May 2021**

**Present:**

Pat	Brennan Barrett	Principal	✓
Sharon	Bunker	Staff Governor	✓
Bill	Chalker	Governor	✓
Shannon	Clarke	Student Governor	
Robert	Davey	Governor (Chair)	✓
Tracey	Griffiths	Governor	✓
Philip	Hilton	Governor	✓
Ummahani	Mohammed	Student Governor	✓
Lorna	Papé	Governor	✓
Mark	Robbins	Governor	✓
Geraldine	Schofield	Governor	✓
Helen	Scott	Governor	✓
David	Smith	Governor	✓

The quorum for the meeting was six Members.

**In attendance:**

Steve Rankine	Deputy Principal - Finance and Corporate Affairs
Patrick Leavey	Deputy Principal
Phil O'Hara	Vice Principal – Curriculum and Student Progress
Jan Hutt	Vice Principal – HR and Student Services
Gary Brough	Vice Principal (Resources)
Julie Brasier	Clerk to the Corporation

The meeting was held via Microsoft Teams and started at 5.00pm.

1		<b>Welcome and Apologies</b>	<b>Action</b>
	1.1	<p>The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting to be conducted via Teams. It was agreed that in the event that the Clerk was unable to be part of the meeting for technical reasons, the meeting would be recorded.</p> <p>It was also agreed that microphones would be muted unless a person wished to speak.</p> <p>The Chair welcomed Lorna Papé to her first meeting. It would be Bill Chalker's last meeting as a Governor and the Corporation thanked him for his work for the Corporation.</p>	
2		<b>Declarations of Interest</b>	
	2.1	The Chair reminded Members to declare their interests as and when necessary on the agenda.	

3		<b>Minutes of the Corporation Meeting held on 9 March 2021</b>	
	3.1	The minutes of the meeting held on 9 March 2021 were agreed as a correct record and would be signed by the Chair.	
4		<b>Determination of Any Other Business</b>	
	4.1	There were 2 additional items.	
	4.2	Election of Chair – the Clerk outlined the process for the election of Chair in a virtual meeting. The Clerk would circulate this	Clerk
	4.3	<p>Second Vice Chair – it was agreed that the Corporation would continue to have a second Vice Chair and that an election would be held. The process for this in a virtual meeting was outlined and would be circulated by the Clerk.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED C[14/21] The Corporation resolved</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b><i>To agree the process for the election of Chair and Vice Chair in a virtual meeting</i></b></li> <li><b><i>That there would be an election for the second vice chair position</i></b></li> </ol>	Clerk
5		<b>Covid Update</b>	
	5.1	The Vice Principal – HR and Student Services gave an update. On site testing had been started in January and now home testing was being done. The College was aiming to have all students to be home testing by Easter. There had been a very low number of positive LDF tests in comparison to the education sector as a whole. There were mitigation measures in place for Adult students for home testing based on their circumstances.	
	5.2	If there is a positive LDF test this is followed up with a PCR test. Several LDF results had been overturned by a negative PCR test. There had been high engagement with testing from staff and the LA was happy with the level of testing in students.	
	5.3	As of 10 May, no staff were affected by Covid, one student had tested positive and two were isolating. There had been a very low number of students affected since the start of term.	
	5.4	A high proportion of staff had been vaccinated and evidence from Public Health England indicated that vaccination reduced transmission. The incidence of Covid in Northamptonshire was noted. The position in Bedford would continue to be monitored closely due to the emergence of the new variant.	
	5.5	The College continued to work with the LA, the police and other education providers in the area. Cases seemed more prevalent in the secondary schools. The College would continue to require the use of facemasks until the end of the academic year.	
	5.6	<p><i>Does the College have a position to require a person to be tested or vaccinated?</i></p> <p>Staff are embracing the vaccination programme and it is not felt necessary to push this matter further at the current time. The DfE have also advised that vaccination and testing cannot be enforced.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED C[15/21] The Corporation resolved to note the Covid Update</b></p>	
6		<b>Living Wage</b>	
	6.1	The Vice Principal – HR and Student Services presented her report. From 1 April 2021 the National Living Wage had increased to £8.91 per hour. The Real Living wage had increased to 9.50 per hour. The Real Living Wage is set by the Living Wage Foundation and the National Living Wage is set by the Government.	

	6.2	Paying the National Living Wage is mandatory; paying the Real Living Wage is not but it is accepted as good practice to do so if an employer can afford it. The report set out the financial impact of both increases and how current salary scales would be affected. The cost of implementing the Real Living Wage was £60,000 for 2021/22, including on costs.	
	6.3	In terms of income it was noted that 16 -18 funding had increased this year due to higher numbers and there would be a further increase in 2021/22. Adult and Apprenticeship funding was predicted to increase in 2021/22. The report recommended payment of the Real Living Wage.	
	6.4	<i>Is it known how the Real Living Wage might increase in the future, are there risks in linking pay to a non statutory index?</i> The intention is not to align salary scales to the Real Living Wage, but the College could implement each increase if at the time it was prudent to do so. Pay for apprentices would still sit below the Real Living Wage but this is governed by a different framework. <b>RESOLVED C[16/21] The Corporation resolved</b> <b>1. To implement the Real Living Wage as set at 1 April 2021</b> <b>2. The implementation of the Real Living Wage in the future would be kept under review and was not guaranteed</b> <b>3. The current College pay scales should remain in place.</b>	
<b>7</b>		<b>Learner Data Monitoring – Retention, Attendance and Progress</b>	
	7.1	The Deputy Principal presented his report. Retention last year was high and it was even higher this year. It was predicted that Retention would be at least as good as 2019/20 at the end of the year. The College continued its work to support and encourage students both during and after the end of lockdown. There was the additional pressure of Centre Assessed Grades for students and the deadlines for assessment and submission of data.	
	7.2	Attendance was stable. Weekly monitoring identified students in more need of support and this was in place. As was the case nationally, Covid had had an impact on attendance. Attendance had increased in Maths and English due to the assessments needing to be completed. These assessments would inform the final grade a student receives.	
	7.3	In terms of progress, comparing Key Assessment Point 4 last year with this was broadly similar. Concerted effort was taking place to ensure that students remained engaged in learning despite the challenges and difficulties of Covid.	
	7.4	<i>Is there any reason why some subjects may be lower?</i> It is important that Curriculum Managers are cautious on assessing progress due to the process to be followed this year for Centre Assessed grades.	
	7.5	<i>On line learning has been harder for students and staff. Will the level of on line learning next year be the same or will it reduce?</i> Planning was on the basis of full attendance, subject to any Covid restrictions.	
	7.6	<b>RESOLVED C[17/21] The Corporation resolved to note the Learner Data Monitoring Report – Retention, Attendance and Progress.</b>	
<b>8</b>		<b>Centre Assessment and Awarding Bodies</b>	
	8.1	The Deputy Principal presented his report. Following the cancellation of exams for summer 2021, OFQUAL had carried out a consultation on the assessment of grades to avoid the problems that had occurred in 2020. It had been decided that for 2021, assessment would be on the basis of teacher led grades. There would be no algorithms used. The College's approach would be Centre Assessed Grades based on a range of evidence indicators of student ability with a stringent quality control process in place.	

	8.2	Unlike 2020, where grades were awarded on the basis of prediction, this year it would be evidence based on learning to the end of the academic year. There would be low, medium and high value evidence, with the evidence in the third term being the highest value. Students would be assessed on the basis of what had been taught, not necessarily on the full syllabus. The College's Evidence Indicators are transparent and have been shared with students. Assessment materials have been made available by the Awarding Bodies for the testing of students. Marking will be done by staff. There will be internal quality assurance (IQA) procedures in place in the College as last year. There will also be an Appeals process for students unhappy with their grades.	
	8.3	Skills assessments will go ahead when it is safe to do so. This year approximately 75% of student outcomes will be based on Centre Assessed Grades. This will involve a significant amount of work for both staff and students. <i>Where students are assessed on what has been taught, rather than the syllabus will that create a knowledge debt for the next level and will that be a problem?</i> The College experienced this during the current year and it is a challenge. There will be gaps and measures will be put in place so that students can catch up on missed learning. There is a new school in the College to support this – The School of Academic and Vocational Support. Diagnostic assessments will be done early in the year so that interventions can be put in place. The whole curriculum will be delivered in the normal way.	
	8.4	All GCSEs would require a significant level of internal assessment before grades can be awarded. All data needed to be with the relevant awarding body by 18 June. Results would be announced earlier in August to allow for appeals. The logistics around this timeline meant more work for all education centres.	
	8.5	<i>Given this extra work, how are staff managing?</i> For GCSEs in English and Maths there would be three internal exams meaning there would be thousands of papers to mark. Students and staff were rising to the challenge.	
	8.6	<i>What is the position for skills based assessments if students have not been able to cover the practical work?</i> At the start of the current academic year, practical assessments were completed at the earliest opportunity. Since the end of lockdown on 8 March a huge effort had been made to get practical tasks completed in advance of the end assessments. The curriculum had been frontloaded with the practical sessions and theory being delivered during lockdown. The focus now was on any practical skills still to be addressed.	
	8.7	<i>What is the position on the resumption of apprenticeships?</i> Most end point assessments have resumed. Where students have been furloughed they have been kept in learning. If furlough has been extended, a break in learning has been put in place and this time will be added on when students return to work. Apprentices are returning to work gradually from furlough situations. <i>Can end point assessments be completed whilst furloughed?</i> It is unusual to be able to do this. <b>RESOLVED C[18/21] The Corporation resolved to note the Centre assessment and Awarding Bodies report.</b>	
9		<b>Principal's College Overview Report.</b>	
	9.1	The Principal presented her report on progress towards the College's Strategic Objectives.	

		<p><i>How is teaching, learning and assessment being monitored? Is learning happening regarding the impact of lockdown?</i></p> <p>Yes. In the past there were always graded observations for teaching and learning combined with learning walks. Routine graded assessments had been dropped because of Covid restrictions but new staff and staff causing concern still have graded observations. There has been remote monitoring of blended learning (where 50% of the students are in the classroom and 50% are off site) or where the whole group is remote learning.</p>	
	9.2	Feedback from this monitoring is that staff prefer full remote learning to the blended learning model which is not so clear. There has been a lot of good practice from teachers in the development of technology, building on what was learnt in lockdown last year. Development of staff skills in this area continued.	
	9.3	If a teacher is struggling then CPD would be arranged to support them. More information on remote and blended learning would be available in the Governor Bitesize session on the Digital Strategy.	
	9.4	The achievement of the College's overall financial plan may be impacted by the pandemic, because of the ESFA clawback on the Adult budget. The RAG rating was expected to be green by the end of the year due to other financial measures being taken.	
	9.5	<p>Developing the College's reputation was also shown as affected by Covid. The RAG rating is expected to be green at the end of the current academic year. There was good student feedback and strong recruitment.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED C[19/21] The Corporation resolved to note the Principal's College Overview Report.</b></p>	
<b>10</b>		<b>Management Accounts and Commentary for the period up to 31 March 2021</b>	
	10.1	The Deputy Principal (Finance and Corporate Affairs) presented his report. Year to date income does not reflect the year end position as payments are profiled. The prediction for the end of the year was that income would be slightly below budget. The pandemic had meant less students for some part time courses as adults were unable to attend College. There was more flexibility in the adult budget last year; this year the tolerance had been set at 90% by the ESFA compared to last year when it was 60%. The College was planning for some clawback. Apprenticeships were predicted to achieve budget.	
	10.2	Additional income had been received from the Tuition Fund – this had not been included in the budget. Because of the pandemic, catering income was less. Pay costs were below budget. Additional provision had been put in to mitigate the pandemic impact but this had not yet been needed. Non pay costs included the purchase of laptops for loan.	
	10.3	The EBITDA measure continued to be good, with the College retaining its overall judgement of outstanding financial health due to high cash levels and low borrowing. An operating surplus was forecast for the end of the year and the cash position remained and was forecasted to be robust.	
	10.4	<p><i>Is there an investment Plan for digital equipment?</i></p> <p>There has been significant investment to date to support remote learnings such as on line materials, laptops, upgrading the WIFI as well as infrastructure to enhance cyber security. The College would be buying more laptops and Chromebooks and the implementation of the Digital Strategy may require more resources. There has also been investment to enhance staff expertise and this will be covered in the Digital Strategy Bitesize session. The learning from the measures put in place because of Covid meant that significant</p>	

		<p>progress had been made in digital delivery and systems. The Ed Tech programme was also driving things forward. There was considerable investment as a result of the digital academy project.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED C[20/21] The Corporation resolved to note the Management Accounts up to 31 March 2021</b></p>	
<b>11</b>		<b>Fees and Charging Policy 2021/22</b>	
	11.1	<p>The Deputy Principal (Finance and Corporate Affairs) presented his report which showed the changes proposed. The deposit for a laptop will not be payable by bursary students. The funding rules are complex. The position on transfer to an unfunded programme had been clarified and this would be explained to students before any transfer occurred. The College has started some distance learning programmes, which will be fully funded. The Policy provides for a charge for non completion, to encourage student completion of these programmes.</p>	
	11.2	<p><i>Are there any plans to increase HE fees?</i></p> <p>No</p> <p><b>RESOLVED C[21/21] The Corporation resolved to approve the Fees and Charges Policy for 2021/22</b></p>	
<b>12</b>		<b>Financial Regulations</b>	
	12.1	<p>The Deputy Principal (Finance and Corporate Affairs) presented the updated Financial Regulations. Changes were needed because OJEU provisions no longer applied. The Government had brought in a finder tender service to replace those provisions. The regulations cover charitable donations. The College does not make cash donations but does donate equipment no longer needed provided it is below a certain figure. The Regulations were amended to reflect the position that the College no longer held or accepted cash.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED C[22/21] The Corporation resolved to approve the Financial Regulations</b></p>	
<b>13</b>		<b>Office for Students – Consumer Protection</b>	
	13.1	<p>The Deputy Principal (Finance and Corporate Affairs) presented his report. Nationally there had been some dissatisfaction from HE students due to the impact of the pandemic regarding tuition and accommodation. The Office for Students required all HE providers to carry out a review of provision and practice, in relation to consumer law</p>	
	13.2	<p>The College does not offer accommodation. There had been no reduction in teaching hours, albeit that some learning had been remote. Extra teaching hours had been put in where necessary. Student feedback had been taken. The report concluded that the College was compliant with the Office for Students requirements and no remedial action was necessary. Two actions for development had been identified.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED C[23/21] The Corporation resolved to note the Office for Students Consumer Protection Report</b></p>	
<b>14</b>		<b>Quality, Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee Report</b>	
	14.1	<p>The minutes of the meeting of the Quality, Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee held on 8 March 2021 had been circulated. There had been a verbal report at the previous meeting.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED C[24/21] The Corporation resolved to note the Quality, Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee Report.</b></p>	

15		<b>Governance Committee Report</b>	
	15.1	The minutes of the meeting of the Governance Committee held on 9 March 2021 had been circulated. There had been a verbal report at the previous meeting. <b>RESOLVED C[25/21] The Corporation resolved to note the Quality, Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee Report.</b>	
16		<b>Audit Committee Report</b>	
	16.1	The minutes of the meeting of the Governance Committee held on 16 March 2021 had been circulated. The College was looking for an appropriately qualified external expert to review its safeguarding processes in light of the national disclosures regarding student sexual abuse. The College took this matter very seriously and responded robustly to any allegations made.	
	16.2	The Committee was also looking at its approach to risk. The committee would be focus on areas of medium and higher risk. The six highest areas of risk will be reviewed in detail to get a better understanding and analysis of these areas. The committee was also looking at ways of assessing risk appetite.	
	16.3	There will be a more considered approach to risk management. There was a good report on cyber security. The College was working towards Cyber Security accreditation this year and Cyber Security Plus next year. <b>RESOLVED C[26/21] The Corporation noted the Audit Committee Report</b>	
17		<b>Appointment of Clerk</b>	
	17.1	There will be a further update at the next meeting – the recruitment process was ongoing.	Agenda
18		<b>Reappointment of Tracey Griffiths</b>	
	18.1	The Corporation agreed that Tracey Griffiths did not need to leave the meeting. <b>RESOLVED C[27/21] The Corporation agreed to reappoint Tracey Griffiths for a further 4 year term from 1 August 2021.</b>	
19		<b>Date and Time of Next meeting</b>	
	19.1	The next meeting would be held on Tuesday 22 June 2021 at 5.00pm  <i>The meeting finished at 18.49</i>	

Julie Brasier  
Clerk to the Corporation  
Northampton College

Signed by the Chair:	
Date:	

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Date:	