

# **Askham Bryan College Corporation**

## **Corporation Meeting**

### **Minutes of the meeting held Monday 15 March 2021 – 1.30pm – 3.00pm via Microsoft Teams**

Prior to the Corporation meeting, the Corporation engaged in an Away Day focussing on the College Strategy. EB gave a presentation on the Impact of the new FEC benchmarks on the College.

#### **233. Appointment of Corporation Chair**

JC confirmed that one nomination was received by the deadline from Maureen Vevers for the role of Corporation Chair. As in line with the Corporation approved revision to the Election Process for Chair and Deputy Chair, if a candidate stands unopposed, a motion is put to Corporation to reappoint without a secret ballot.

**Resolved:** MV to continue in the role of Corporation Chair.

There was also a reminder that John Williams Term of Office had been extended to October 22, due to the exceptional circumstances the College finds itself in with Newton Rigg and to ensure continuity with the Task and Finish Group, but that succession planning is a key agenda.

#### **234. Attendees**

Declan Whelan (DW) – Non Academic Staff Governor, Mike Galloway (MG), Linda Haigh (LH), Annabel Jelley (AJ), David Lynch (DL), Martin Moorhouse (MM), James Mullen (JM) – Student Governor/SU President, Graeme Osborn (GO), Trevor Shaw (TS), Maureen Vevers (MV) - Corporation Chair, Tim Whitaker (TW) – Principal/Chief Executive Officer/Accounting Officer, Jordan Webster (JWe) – Student Governor/SU Vice President, Emma Wilkins (EW) and John Williams (JW) - Deputy Corporation Chair and Chris Moss (CM) – Co-optee.

**In attendance:** Emma Barbery (EB) – Chief Finance Officer, Sandra Burnhill (SB) – Vice Principal, Judith Clapham (JC) – Director of Governance, Sharon Sheppard (SS) – Vice Principal.

**Acceptance of apologies for absence:** Nick Lawton (NL) – Academic Staff Governor

With over seven members present, the meeting was confirmed as quorate. It was resolved that Maureen Vevers chair the meeting. Maureen Vevers accordingly took the chair and declared the meeting open. The Chair reported that proper notice of the meeting had been given.

#### **235. Declarations of Interest**

There were no changes to the Declarations of Interest as detailed in the register, none of which it was agreed amongst those present precluded anyone.

Those thought relevant are listed below:

- TW and GO as Directors of ABC College Co Ltd and ABC Enterprises Ltd.
- TW as a Landex Director.
- JW as a Governor at Kirklees College.
- MV as a University of York Court Member and University of York Archaeology Department Advisory Board Member
- MG as a University of York Court Member

- DL stated that Andrew Jackson acts for the Natwest Bank where DL is employed.

The Chair reminded the Members that the College was also an exempt charity and that all transactions must be compliant with all obligations under applicable charity law.

**236. Meetings of the minutes held 25 January 2021 and 8 February 2021**

**Resolved:** The minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record to be signed by MV as Chair

**237. Matters Arising/Action Schedule**

The Action Schedule was updated.

**238. Chair Report**

MV reported that she had attended an AoC Chairs event on the College for the Future and was surprised at the lack of engagement with this, plus she will be involved in the FEC visit later in the week.

**239. Chief Executive Report - Financial statements, covid management, recruitment, FEC visit, Bio Yorkshire**

Members agreed that aspects of minute 239 Chief Executive Report should be classified as confidential on the grounds of commercial sensitivity and reviewed in one year. The minutes and associated reports are therefore not available for circulation to the public, college staff or students (excluding senior post holders), along with any draft documents.

TW provided a verbal update on the following:

- As in line with DfE guidance the College reopened for the majority of students from 8 March. There is still an element of blended learning, but as many students as possible are back. Lateral Flow testing centres have been established. Thanks were expressed to all staff involved.
- The College has had delivery of 140 laptops for those in digital poverty and distributed on a loan basis.
- Staff have returned to College. Concerns are being dealt with on an individual basis. It is lovely to see the students and staff on the campus.
- The next FEC visit will take place 17 March.
- Financial statements were signed off at the end of January and are up on the College website.
- IoT project build phase has started.
- Capital Fund is being utilised with the heating system due to be replaced after Easter.
- Bio Yorkshire Event took place last week with local MPs present. Build Back Better Skills is a core part of this.
- TW has been called as a witness to the All Party Parliamentary Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee, 23 March, with two parts, part one looking at Agriculture Policy and the second part a case study for Cumbria, for which he is preparing.

A Governor asked about the Bio Yorkshire Launch Event and mechanism to attend such events as it would be a good event for Corporation members to attend. TW confirmed it was co-ordinated by the University and no Trustees from any of the partner organisations were involved, but he would feed back to them. **ACTION**

**240. Strategy**

Members agreed that aspects of minute 240 Strategy should be classified as confidential on the grounds of commercial sensitivity and reviewed in one year. The minutes and associated

reports are therefore not available for circulation to the public, college staff or students (excluding senior post holders), along with any draft documents.

### **College Strategy/Estate Strategy/Newton Rigg Update**

TW asked for approval of the Strategic Plan 2021-26 (Document 2), discussed as part of the Away Day, as the outward facing strategy document.

A Governor asked for more diverse images to be included before marketing. ACTION

**Resolved:** The Corporation unanimously approved the Strategic Plan 2021-26 (Document 2) with more diverse imagery.

### **241. Finance**

#### **Management Accounts/Financial Forecast**

Consideration was given to the Management Accounts for January 2021 (P6). It was noted that it includes the Q2 forecast, with a £40k improvement to the bottom line as a result of returning to College, with savings having been made in core services where possible, eg cleaning and a better cash position than expected at 38 days.

#### **1% pay rise**

EB reported that as considered by the Finance and General Purposes Committee a 1% pay recommendation was to be reconsidered at this Corporation meeting once the Q2 reforecast position was known.

**Resolved:** The Corporation approved a 1% pay increase across all pay points backdated to 1 February 2021.

### **242. Curriculum**

#### **KPIs**

Consideration was given to the FE KPI tracker. It was noted that attendance is below KPI (students like to be on site, doing small group support to help reengage), average group size is low and FE Funded recruitment is below comparator groups, plus T-Levels are below compliance, with actions put in place to address.

A Governor asked if we have any data to benchmark attendance. It was noted it is a national issue.

A Governor asked about looked after children. It was noted that this is a small co-hort for the College and they have a specific member of staff that looks after them.

Consideration was given to the HE KPI tracker with continuation highlighted as an area of risk. It was noted that HE students appear to perform quite well with blended learning and engagement has been better.

### **243. Student Union Verbal Report**

JM reported:

- that student mental health and wellbeing has been an issue during lockdown, particularly with a lack of social interaction which is hoped will reduce with a return to campus and the opening up of common spaces.
- With regard to Student Voice they have attended Student Council meetings. JW for FE, with a focus on sustainable practice and waste disposal. HE organised a litter pick.
- Student experience has been a struggle, but trying to do as many activities as possible within the guidelines. It was noted that it should be possible to run the Summer Ball.

- There has been some confusion around the lateral flow testing.
- What learned from this year to hand over to the next SU President, is that the main priority is lines of communications and maintaining trust and presence and connections with staff.
- Will be activities for Comic Relief.
- JW broken arm.

MV thanked JM for the report and welcomed the new structure.

A Governor asked about inclusion being a strength in the College and is that the student experience. It was noted that they are involved in the EDI Committee and involved in the Access and Participation Plan submission and do create save spaces for different groups.

#### **244. Audit Committee 1 March 2021**

Members agreed that aspects of minute 244 Audit Committee should be classified as confidential on the grounds of commercial sensitivity and reviewed in one year. The minutes and associated reports are therefore not available for circulation to the public, college staff or students (excluding senior post holders), along with any draft documents.

Consideration was given to the Audit Committee update and recommendations from 1 March 2021 which TS presented the following key messages to the Corporation.

#### **Messages to Corporation**

1. All Committee members were in attendance.
2. There were no apologies for absence.
3. There were no additional declarations of interest.
4. Representatives from PWC attended the meeting and presented the findings of the ESFA Funding Audit. The auditors confirmed that this was a good result. The committee asked that their congratulations be passed on to the team involved.
5. The minutes of the meeting held on 1st December 2020 were approved.
6. The minutes of the meeting held on 19th January 2021 were approved and the Actions Schedule reviewed and confirmed.
7. The Internal Audit Plan 2021 Progress Report and Follow Up Report were reviewed. Actual performance is slightly behind plan, but the Committee were content that this can be made up.
8. The report on the progress made on the implementation of Audit Recommendations was reviewed. The committee challenged the need for the extension of dates and while agreeing them put further checks in place to ensure the revised dates were met, but in general were content with the progress being made and the format of the report.
9. The Strategic Risk Register was reviewed with minor comments made for the executive to consider. The new reporting format was welcomed and the minutes of the Risk Management Committee were found helpful. There are some minor timing issues to resolve which affect the paper work and further work on Risk Appetite should be completed for the next meeting.
10. The report on Policies and Procedures was reviewed. Progress to date was noted and most of the older Red rated procedures should be completed for the next meeting. The Committee were content with the progress being made.
11. The report on GDPR and Cyber Essentials was reviewed. The Committee noted the level of progress being made and noted that the work on Cyber Essentials needs to be complete by the end of July and the work on Cyber Essentials Plus by July 2022. The committee expressed a level of discomfort about the amount of planning and work still to be carried out on Cyber Essential Plus. A more comprehensive report will be produced for the next meeting.
12. There had been no fraud or irregularities identified since the last meeting and no expenditure on overseas expenses.

EW left the meeting.

13. The report on External Audit Fees 2019/20 and 2020/21 was considered following input from both Grant Thornton and our own management team.

14. Date of Next Meeting agreed as 6<sup>th</sup> July 2021.

**Resolved:** The Corporation approved the additional External Audit Fee.

#### **245. Risk Register**

Consideration was given to the Risk Register as outlined above.

#### **246. Governor Activities**

It was noted that EW had attended:

- the Health and Safety Committee and had gained a high level of assurance that health and safety is at the forefront during covid. Improvements being made to the regular health and safety report to ensure its comprehensive and, in particular, covers aspects of fire safety. High levels of engagement with online health and safety training. Two H&S inspection reports received from Newton Rigg. Some concerns regarding Engineering and COSHH assessments, no planned preventative maintenance schedule in place for plant and machinery and risk assessments not being completed. However received reassurance at the meeting that remedial steps had been taken.
- EDI Committee: Pleasing to see new Access and Participation Coordinator post. Really positive to see work undertaken in the Marketing team to ensure inclusive language, imaging and materials. Will be looking at accessibility standards and how translate to teaching and learning materials. Discussed issues associated with Covid and noted that some LGBTQ students struggling at home and lack of social interaction impacting on mental health. Also, general loneliness amongst the student body. Student contribution at the meeting has been significantly enhanced. Still work to do on capturing and analysing student data but progress being made and finding it beneficial to look at student voice and induction survey analysis by protected characteristic. Lots to do in relation to ensuring an inclusive curriculum. No EDI data provided in relation to the last staff survey due to a technical difficulty so this remains an area of concern. Also questions raised about whether it is possible to proactively respond to survey feedback when undertaken 3 times a year; this is being reviewed.
- AoC Good Practice event; helpful to network with other members of governing bodies and to be reminded of EIF requirements especially around leadership and management. Of particular interest was presentation from Heather Smith, retired Principal of Sheffield College about her experience as an NHS Board member and reflections on reassurance versus assurance and how to ensure lean reporting for Board meetings.

MM and MG reported that they had spent half a day with Landex and MM had a stunning experience of seeing a Princes Trust session online.

#### **247. Confidential Items**

Members agreed that aspects of minutes 239, 240, 241, 244 should be classified as confidential on the grounds of commercial sensitivity and reviewed in one year. The minutes and associated reports are therefore not available for circulation to the public, college staff or students (excluding senior post holders), along with any draft documents.

#### **248. Any Other Business**

RH joined the meeting.

Consideration was given to the Gender Pay Gap (GPG) Report. RH reported that the Q4 graphic needs correcting, but the text in the wording is correct.

It was noted that the measures used for gender pay gap reporting continue to improve year-on-year. The key metrics at March 2020 are as follows with 2019 compactor figures in parentheses.

- Mean GPG: 6.5% (7.9%)
- Median GPG: 5.57% (5.57%)

The College's GPG remains significantly favourable when compared to the most recently-reported median figures for the economy as a whole (15.5%) and the FE sector (9.3%).

The only statistically-significant movement within the four pay quartile reports is that the proportion of women in the upper pay quartile has risen from 60.4% to 64.0% year-on-year.

Salary range minimum range to upper SPH salaries, which will be impacted by a change at Assistant Principal level.

The pay gap can be isolated to a specific group.

RH reported that LEAP is well embedded and RISE programme being implemented so the pipeline for development should be enhanced and maintained.

A Governor asked how much is a consequence of proactive decisions and a positive intent. RH stated that he thought the present environment attracted female candidates.

A Governor expressed an interest in understanding this area of the College more and the comparators with other sectors and within the context of the strategy and implementation plan. It was noted that this will be embedded within the People Plan. ACTION

A Governor asked about ethnic pay gap reporting. It was recognised that this is an issue in the land based sector, which needs to be looked at in different ways. It was noted that it is part of the Access and Participation Plan in relation to students. ACTION

Governors thought that staff needed to be more prominent in the 9 priority areas. It was noted that how HR matters are reported to the Governing body and via which committees is being re-evaluated. ACTION

**Resolved:** The Corporation approved the Gender Pay Gap Report with a change in Q4 graphic and for MV to sign later.

249. **Date of next meeting:**

**Resolved:** 17 May 2021. 19 July as a live meeting.

I certify that this is a true and accurate record of the meeting held 15 March 2021 and agree to them being made public on the Askham Bryan website.

Signed  
Chair

Date

Date Action Raised	Minute No	Action required	Action by	By when
<b>Current</b>				
15/03/21	239	Feedback to University regarding inviting Corporation members to future Bio Yorkshire events	TW	ASAP
15/03/21	240	Include more diverse imagery in the Strategic Plan 2021-26	TW	Before publication
15/03/21	248	Consider ways for AJ to be involved in EDI Committee, Q&S	AJ/JC	ASAP
15/03/21	248	Consider ways of increasing ethnic diversity across the organisation. TW to work with Landex too	All	ASAP
15/03/21	248	Make staff more prominent in the 9 priority areas	TW/JC	ASAP
15/03/21	248	Re-evaluate how HR matters are reported to the Corporation and via which committees	JC	ASAP
<b>Pending</b>				
15/10/20	196	Organise individual governor self assessments	JC	Autumn Term
20/7/20	174	Review confidential minutes	JC	ASAP
18/10/19	120	Include Moodle access as part of board portal project.	JC	ASAP
22/07/19	100	Corporation members to undertake cyber security training during the board portal process.	JC/Governors	ASAP
<b>Cleared</b>				
22/07/19	100	Arrange a presentation from marketing on how effective the function is. 18/10 in new year. 17/12 has taken place at Q&S Committee. 15/3 bring in to implementation plan	TW/JC	ASAP
18/5/20	166	Consider how Governor departmental visits can take place virtually and how Governors could input in the future. 20/7 It was noted that emails have been sent. If Governors have not already undertaken their visit, to be picked up next year.	TW/SB	ASAP
9/3/20	147	Context to mean and median outcome in Gender Pay Gap report to be provided in the report for next year.	TW/RH	March '21
9/3/20	147	Include lower quartile in pay strategy and include financial implications.	TW/RH	ASAP
9/3/20	148	Organise a training session for Governors on the IFM, financial health context and funding streams. 17/12 AoC Masterclasses offered.	JC/PM/EB	ASAP
9/3/20	149	Organise an EIF presentation for Corporation. 17/12 has taken place at Q&S Committee.	JC/SB	ASAP
17/12/20	207	Arrange twilight session for Governors on Estate Strategy	JC	01/21
15/10/20	196	Move to a change in structure of the College Companies, so operational, with reporting function to the Corporation	JC/EB	ASAP

15/10/20	196	Circulate Chair nomination forms	JC	Dec 20
25/01/21	220	Circulate the final External Audit Report	JC	ASAP
25/01/21	223	Complete the blank sections on the Risk Register	JP	ASAP

I certify that this is a true and accurate record of the meeting held 15 March 2021 and agree to them being made public on the Askham Bryan website.

Signed  
Chair

Date

CONFIDENTIAL DRAFT