

Corporation Meeting

**Minutes of the meeting held
Monday 20 May 2024 – 3.00pm – 5.30pm
Committee Room, Askham Bryan College, York, YO23 3FR**

The pack of meeting papers was circulated in advance of the meeting for Governors to read.

58 Present

Linda Haigh (LH) via Teams
Annabel Jelley (AJ)
Dominique Lendhill (DLe) – Staff Governor
David Lynch (DL)
Martin Moorhouse (MM) – Chair of Finance and General Purposes Committee
Graeme Osborn (GO) – Corporation Vice Chair/Chair of Quality and Standards Committee
Trevor Shaw (TS) – Chair of Audit Committee
Maureen Vevers (MV) – Chair of Corporation and meeting
Tim Whitaker (TW) – Principal/Chief Executive Officer/Accounting Officer
Rhys Holding (RH) – Student Governor
Matthew Parkin (MP)

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.

In attendance

Emma Barbery (EB) – Chief Finance Officer,
Laura Black (LB) – Vice Principal,
Stephanie Burrell (SBu) – Boardroom Apprentice,
Judith Clapham (JC) – Director of Governance/Clerk to the Corporation,
Sharon Sheppard (SS) - Vice Principal
Shaun Broadbent (SB)
James Sadler (JS)

Clare Williams – Vice Principal was not in attendance.

59 Apologies

Acceptance of apologies for absence.
Tazambal Ali (TA) – Staff Governor
Tracy Lightfoot (TL)

60 Declarations of Interest

Consideration was given to the Declarations of Interest Register and members asked for any new declarations.

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

Those thought relevant are listed below:

- TW, GO and MM as Directors of ABC College Co Ltd and ABC Enterprises Ltd.
- TW as a Landex Director and Director of National Land-based College.
- AJ as a consultant in the sector and Project Manager for the Strategic Development Fund which the College is part of, work on behalf of Hambleton District Council relating to the new educational facility at Northallerton (campus@northallerton), work for Higher York (college is a member) on the York Skills Strategy implementation and for the West and North Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce in preparation for the Local Skills Improvement Plan and also work in relation to the Local Skills Improvement Fund. AJ additionally stated she is doing some work with York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority.
- MM as an Elvington Parish Councillor.
- LH as Finance and Procurement Director at South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service with possible links to the College from public service training, Princes Trust.

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.

Members agreed that aspects of the minute 63 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.

61 Minutes from the Last Meeting (14 March 2024)

Resolved: The minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record.

Matters Arising from the minutes/Actions schedule

The Action Schedule was updated.

62 Chair's Report

The Chair of Corporation stated that she had been involved in the ESFA Strategic Conversation, which she had found to be an open meeting, with a good understanding of the College and nature and complexity of the College, with genuine conversation and a number of actions that the College are pursuing, such as expanding the curriculum.

It was noted that the 75th anniversary dinner took place and there was an enthusiasm for the College. TW described it as a fantastic event which has led to a number of opportunities to explore, including doing an annual event.

The FEC Spring Newsletter 2024 was noted.

63 Chief Executive's Report

Consideration was given to the Chief Executive's Report, which TW provided an overview of content with input from the Executive, with detail as in the report.

The Chief Executive highlighted:

- It had been a busy term.
- That he had been on a Leadership Course at Windsor Castle.
- The financial position of the College remains a challenge, with a need to grow income, balanced with driving efficiency.
- Student recruitment is looking positive. T-Levels are running from September.
- Areas of focus include student retention and improving achievement and positive progression, getting staffing right, delivering adult income.
- F&GP Committee will be consulted regarding capital expenditure and any revisions.
- It was noted that the College is working with Santander regarding the covenant position for which there is a breach.
- Annual Accountability is coming to this meeting.
- HE Poster Day happened last week.
- The Access and Participation Plan is the Special Focus Topic.
- Looking to recruit a new Curriculum Area Manager to focus on curriculum planning.
- The Vice Principal for Students, continues to be absent, whilst having treatment, with oversight of her areas of work having been distributed. Well wishes were extended to Clare by the Corporation.
- There is pressure on the student wellbeing team, due to a limitation for external referrals, which is a real concern and doing all can.
- The new Head of Marketing has started and an appointment has been made to a Director of People and Organisational Development. The importance of marketing in student recruitment was recognised.
- Colleague Engagement Week happens at the end of June.

An independent Governor stated she was confused regarding the student numbers in the report and on the dashboard. It was noted this would be covered in the key corporate measures section.

The Vice Chair asked about T-Levels and the awarding body as there appears to be a lot of negative press. It was noted that the political messaging that they could turn into something else is not helping, but they have been approved and funded specifications have been released. It was noted that the specifications regarding agriculture staffing requirements is quite harsh, which has been reported to the DfE. It was noted that in other Further Education subjects, they have run in to work placement difficulties, but here the College is strong on this.

An Independent Governor stated that it's frustrating that T Level programmes are being delayed and income risked further (through no fault of our own) and asked how much income is at risk on T levels and can the Corporation do anything to raise our concerns/to seek resolution. It was noted that the T-Levels are now progressing as planned and recruitment is looking strong.

64 Student Union Update

The Residential Services Manager reported that there have been some applications for the SU President.

The Spring Ball had taken place, seating 120 in the Conference Centre, which was successful. HE students had a drag queen night.

A new Student Experience Leader had started to work with the centres in developing their student experience, in addition to the current staff member focussing on the residential student experience.

65 Staff Update

The Residential Services Manager proposed that there be staff representatives for each area (similar to student representatives) that focus on a specific topic and then use this session at Corporation meetings to highlight any outcomes from such sessions.

The Chair of Corporation asked Corporation members to think about topics they would like to consult staff on for example hers was Wellbeing. ACTION a programme to be developed for the new academic year.

66 Strategy Update – New Key Corporate Measures and targets Update

Consideration was given to the updated Key Corporate Measures and targets, which will also go to Committees.

It was noted that the RAG rating will be against the minimum level of performance in future.

The plan is to bring it to the meeting as a dashboard and show tracking over time.

From a quality point of view, attendance and retention are of concern and benchmarking across the sector.

Overall satisfaction and inclusivity is tracking, teaching on course will get from NSS. Measures under theme 3 are tracking and under theme 4 staff and energy will be at the end of the year.

The Vice Principal for FE Curriculum provided an update on the Student Recruitment Dashboard and stated that based on the current FE position for “ALL” applicants (including new starts as well as internal and returner applicants) there has been an improvement since the report with applicants now +2%, applications now +8%, offers now +9% and accepts now +15% ahead compared to the same point last year. This increase has mainly been due to the timing of the processing of applications from internal students, but also due to a continued increase in accepted offers from new starts (applicants that are not already enrolled on a course at the college). The current position for ‘New starts’ only accepts +14% ahead compared to the same point last year.

An Independent Governor asked what the numbers were like for the year before, which were shared to show the percentage increases above.

An Independent Governor asked if there is generally a decline in the students attending landbased Colleges and if so why? The Chair of Corporation stated that as a sector, eg through Landex, she thought there needed to be a promotion of the messaging about careers in the sector to change perceptions. The Staff Governor stated that there is a job of work to do with Careers Advisors in schools understanding and promoting the courses offered by the College.

The Chair of Audit Committee asked if there is any more could do with the Careers Advisers on our story. The Chief Executive stated that the College runs Careers Adviser Days for them to learn about the College and making sure there are effective relationships. Whilst significant strides have been made in this area and progress was recognised by Governors, it was noted that it will continue to be a key area of focus for marketing.

An Independent Governor asked about HE recruitment. It was noted that applications are down, but more are being converted and are 4% ahead, with some applicants still to make a decision. The Vice Principal stated that there is a 90% retention target, but the aim is to retain more.

The Chair of Finance and General Purposes Committee asked about the risk with the Gateshead provision. It was noted that when the report was written there was a concern that would not reach the minimum numbers to run the provision from the centre, but based on current applications it will be running.

67 Special Focus Topic – relevant for Corporation/questions

The Assistant Principal for HE/Academic Registrar joined the meeting and presented to the Corporation regarding the Access and Participation Plan (APP).

It was noted that the current plan, which focussed on access/recruitment targets in under represented postcodes and care experience with some progress for increasing male and BAME students, finishes in 24/25.

The new plan is expected to have a broader focus on full life-cycle of students (Access, On-course and Progression).

An APP Steering Group has been formed to monitor current plan activity and develop the new plan.

The Assistant Principal for HE and Academic Registrar outlined the risks and risk indicators and target groups – socio-economically disadvantaged, declared disability and minority ethnic groups, with detail in the presentation and more information in the detailed table about the areas aiming to cover in the new plan (improve access for minority ethnic students and male students from IMD Q1 and 2, maintain overall access for students from IMD Q1 and 2 areas and care experienced students, improve continuation rates for FSM eligible students and mature students, improve completion and attainment rates for disabled students, continue to monitor the progression outcomes of our graduating students, to support positive attainment outcomes for under 16s within the local area, with four intervention strategies in collaborative outreach, ABC Aspire Mentoring Programme, Academic Skills Support and Life Coaching Support. The Draft Investment Summary was shared, showing working to cost neutral, so the cost is the same as it is now and growth is based on any student growth and shared the next steps for approval, with an update of the plan to be given to the Q&S Committee, 20 June and the final plan due to be signed off at 11 July Corporation meeting and be with the OfS due to be submitted by 1 October 2024. It is expected that there will be a number of iterations before final approval and once approved will be online.

The Chair of Corporation stated that it was a very comprehensive presentation and obvious that a lot of work has gone in to it.

An Independent Governor asked about the rest of the College Strategy. It was noted that the EDI Committee is working on the Widening Participation College Strategy of which the APP is one area. It was noted this is one of the benefits of this version in that it has been collaborative throughout the College and that EDI data is more available for students.

An Independent Governor stated that he thought it was a good piece of work and asked for each group who decides what % and is it taken in to account what numbers are for land based and is it realistic. It was noted

that undertaking benchmark within the sector, regionally and nationally and will show the rationale and proportion of students.

The Vice Chair asked about the comparator data for landbased HE and not general HE. It was noted that it is for HE more generally as the data does not exist for just land based, but will try to explain the context in the narrative.

Governors were shown the new gown hood colours for Foundation Degrees and L4 without gold.

The Assistant Principal for HE/Academic Registrar left the meeting.

**68 Finance and General Purposes Committee and Management
Accounts, CDOG, Capital Expenditure Update**

It was noted that there had not been a formal meeting, but that there had been a twilight session to keep the Committee updated on the ongoing financial position, which was valuable and brings the Committee up to speed and helps when get to the main meeting.

Consideration was given to the P8 Management Accounts which compared to the Q2 forecast position.

It was noted that approval had been received from the DfE for the expected covenant waiver from Santander at the end of the financial year for legal costs, which is £1k, plus VAT, which will either change the covenant wording or provide a waiver. It was noted it is likely to also be the case next year.

The Q3 position/P9 management accounts is improved. It was noted that the College has not been able to deliver the adult income as not been able to recruit the staff.

It was also noted that the risks continue to be staff recruitment and retention, transport and the Adult Education Budget.

It was noted that due to the EBITDA (scores 0 making less than 1%) position financial health would be moderated to requires improvement. It was noted that this had been discussed at the ESFA Strategic Conversation.

Consideration was also given to the ESFA Financial Statements Review 2022/23 letter.

The Chief Finance Officer stated that the budget process has started for 2024/25 and aiming to have the first draft of the budget by next week. It was noted that it is highly likely it will be a deficit position, but if do recruit student numbers need capacity and staffing. There are some risks for in

year income for the Adult Education Budget which has an improved contribution for provision. There is still a gap which is a risk to forecasted position and will impact the bottom line if not delivered.

The Vice Principal stated that there are two key areas of risk, adult and future skills, the plan is in the system. There is an unplanned gap of and also in the planned provision and staffed for and locations to deliver.

The Chair of Finance and General Purposes Committee stated the College is also holding back capital expenditure so careful with reserves and also to maintain the bank position. The CFO stated that a detailed paper will be submitted to F&GP Committee.

An Independent Governor stated that the adult position is worrying, particularly when the adult budget has been devolved. It was noted that the budget will be based on 18/19. It was requested for an update to be provided to Q&S Committee. ACTION It was noted that the College is working with Jo Pretty as suggested from the ESFA Strategic Conversation.

It was noted that the new CAM in this area has just started.

An Independent Governor asked if the marketing gap is going to impact on forecasts and recognised that student numbers are key. It was thought there would be minimal impact at this stage. Schools are doing exams, so for this cycle and a September start it's reliant on internal taster days, curriculum, but from an adult position it is impactful and is a risk.

An Independent Governor asked about the T-Levels as seems like an opportunity, but restricted as not all qualifications are available. It was noted that all the specifications are approved and although it is a challenge for the roll out and political position, applications are strong to deliver in September.

69 Audit Committee inc Risk Register

Consideration was given to the Strategic Risk Register. It was noted that there is a Risk Management Meeting 5 June and then Audit Committee is due to take place 18 June.

The Chair of Audit Committee stated that the Risk Register is in a better position than ever due to a lot of work. It was noted that there are a number of risks over appetite which have plans, but is mindful of what the Corporation wants moving forward and will the risks prevent us meeting out strategy and how we mitigate against this.

The Chair of Corporation stated she agreed it is a good document and hopes Audit Committee will continue to drive it.

70 Q&S Committee 26 February 2024 Quality/FE update and HE update for anything since Q&S Committee

It was noted that there had not been a formal Quality and Standards Committee, but a twilight session to consider the Accountability Agreement and Local Needs Duty Review, with suggestions made prior to the reports coming to this Corporation Meeting for approval.

The Vice Principal stated that the College had carried out a Local Needs Duty Review and the College is meeting the Local Skills Improvement Plans and meeting local, regional and national targets. There are some new sections where need to demonstrate how collaborate with others and update on progress being made since last year and the objectives, apps, adult provision. The in depth review has informed the Accountability Agreement this year. The latest version is in the pack to which a collaboration statement will be added.

Resolved: The Local Needs Duty Review and Accountability Agreement were approved for publication and for the Accountability Agreement to be put on the College website by 30 June deadline. The additional collaboration statement will also be included.

**71 Governor activities/training, visits
Governor Recruitment
Chairs' Committee 9 May 2024**

It was noted that the Chair of Corporation, Chair of Finance and General Purposes and an Independent Governor had attended the HE Poster Day and were very impressed with the quality and thought it was the best so far, with engaging posters with text and visuals, breadth of projects was astounding and the IoT was a great venue with a lovely atmosphere. Students did themselves proud and were a credit to the College – they were articulate, passionate and engaging in their discussions around the topics and had picked some very interesting subjects, such as Dangerous dogs, biodiversity value of golf courses, native and African animals and the fruitbat enclosure design evaluation project.

An Independent Governor stated that he had attended the South African delegation to the College that had made him view it in a different way. He had also hosted a second High Ground Farm visit which went well.

It was noted that Peridot have been undertaking a recruitment exercise for the College to find a Governor with a detailed understanding of the education sector with specific knowledge/experience and skills in Further Education, who is steeped in FE senior leadership experience, particularly curriculum and quality

Consideration was given to the recommendation from the Chairs' Committee held 9 May.

Resolved: The Corporation approved to

- Appoint DR as a Co-optee on Audit Committee with a view to succession planning as could also be on F&GP Committee.
- SH to become SEND Link Governor. (It was subsequently noted that SH had resigned due to health challenges).

72 College Company Meeting

Consideration was given to the College Company Meeting Minutes from 18 March 2024.

- Income is behind forecast, in part due to timing.
- Making an advance payment on the Heritage Conservation Fund, which has been risk assessed and due diligence undertaken.
- LEP funding for the anaerobic digester has increased, which will result in a greater contribution from College funds.
- **Recommendation:** To adopt the Principle 7 recommendations and produce a plan for the next meeting on the how.
- The Company Structure work with PWC has not progressed due to other priorities.
- There has been a RIDDOR reportable incident for a student who had an accident whilst completing lambing duties on the farm. They were wearing appropriate PPE and went directly to hospital from the site of injury and received treatment.
- The weather has taken a toll on the arable side of the farm and will impact on yield.
- 24 March Point to Point cancelled.

73 Policies and Procedures

The Corporation were asked to consider and approve the Use of AI Policy and updated Risk Management Policy.

The Chair of Audit Committee asked about how the Use of AI Policy will apply to visitors to the College. It was noted that there will be line in the signing in process.

The Draft Transgender Policy was also noted, awaiting to go to the unions. The Boardroom Apprentice asked if students had been consulted on the Policy. It was noted that they had and that the PAD tutors explain to students on such topics.

Resolved: The Corporation approved the Use of AI Policy and Risk Management Policy.

DLe, RH, EB, LB, JC, SS, TW left the meeting so only independent members were left to discuss the Remuneration Committee.

74 Confidential Items

Members agreed that part of minute 63 should be classified as confidential, along with the Remuneration Committee.

75 Any Other Business

There were no further items related to Safeguarding, EDI, Health and Safety to bring to the attention of Corporation not elsewhere on the agenda.

Governors were asked to consider any topics they would like to see in the Special Focus Topic section of future meetings and to contact the Director of Governance with any suggestions.

76 Date and time of next meeting

11 July 2024.

Date Action Raised	Minute No	Action required	Responsible	Deadline
Current				
20/05/24	65	Produce a programme for staff update section at Corporation meetings.	DLe/TA/JC	10/24
20/05/24	68	Adult Budget update to be provided to the Q&S Committee.	LB	06/24
Pending				
14/3/24	48	In the Gender Pay Gap Report state how if remove casual/part time staff it affects the outcomes.	LG	'25
14/12/23	28	Provide detail on how reducing carbon emissions. 14/3 move to pending. 20/05 ongoing.	EB, LH, MM	
22/07/19	100	Corporation members to undertake cyber security training during the board portal process. 14/12 Taz will provide an update at the meeting on access to Teams so training will also be put in place alongside	JC/Governors	07/22
Cleared				
14/3/24	51	External Board Review actions to be collated and overseen by the Audit Committee.	JC	06/24
14/12/23	37	Work with staff governors on developing the staff update item for future meetings. 14/3 move to pending. 20/05 on agenda	JC	05/24

I certify that this is a true and accurate record of the meeting held 20 May 2024 and agree to them being made public on the Askham Bryan website.

Signed
Chair

Date