

Corporation Meeting

**Minutes of the meeting held
Thursday 17 October 2024 – 3.00pm – 6.40pm
Committee Room, Askham Bryan College, York, YO23 3FR**

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

The meeting started with a tour of the York Campus.

1 Present

Linda Haigh (LH)
Annabel Jelley (AJ)
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
Kailum Farmery (KF) – Student Governor/SU President

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

Stephanie Burrell (SBu) – Boardroom Apprentice
Judith Clapham (JC) – Director of Governance/Clerk to the Corporation
Sharon Sheppard (SS) - Vice Principal
Sofia McGreavy (SM) – Director of People Services
Chris Moss (CM) – Co-optee Audit Committee

Clare Williams (CB) – Vice Principal was not in attendance, Emma Barbery (EB) – Chief Finance Officer was in attendance for the tour, but not the meeting.

KF and SM were welcomed to their first Corporation meeting and SB was welcomed back for a second year and Governors introduced themselves.

2 Apologies

Acceptance of apologies for absence.
Tazambal Ali (TA) – Staff Governor
Shaun Broadbent (SB)
Dominique Lendhill (DLe) – Staff Governor
Tracy Lightfoot (TL)
Matthew Parkin (MP)
James Sadler (JS)

3 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, plus with the East Midlands 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, King's 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 6 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.

4 Minutes from the Last Meeting (11 July 2024)

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

Matters Arising from the minutes/Actions schedule

The Action Schedule was updated.

5 Chair's Report

The Chair of Corporation stated that it was lovely to be back in College and feel the energy of the students and see what had been achieved over the summer with campus developments. There was an optimistic, positive

feel, but also mindful of capacity within the team and conflicting pressures and need to settle. The Chair of Corporation stated that she thought the Graduation ceremony was fabulous and it was great to see the issuing of Askham Bryan College validated Foundation Degrees and the ABC colours on gowns, for the first time since acquiring Foundation Degree Awarding Powers.

6 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 being a busy start to the term with positive recruitment and the time spent on progression activities coming through.
- The Adult Skills Funding continues to be a risk. The FE Commissioner's team have been in to the College to do a workshop, demonstrating effective practice in this area.
- LB has left her role and the areas overseen have been distributed.
- The Self Assessment Report process was hailed by Landex as an exemplar of good practice.
- College achievement rates have improved.
- Thanks were expressed to the Vice Principals and Assistant Principals.
- Changes in government thinking are beginning to come through and involved in the discussions as much as possible.
- The financial health position will be auto moderated to requires improvement, due to EBITDA.
- Drees and Sommer have been appointed to undertake a master planning.
- There has been much capital activity over the summer which has been delivered on time and in budget.
- The Gateshead Centre has opened.
- The Access and Participation Plan has been submitted. Thanks were given to the Assistant Principal HE.
- The new Head of Apprenticeships has been appointed and is having a positive impact.
- 96% of students feel safe.
- The Head of Marketing is having a positive impact.
- Residential occupancy is at 99.25%.
- The Director of People Services and Organisational Development joined in August and is having a positive impact, addressing challenges and legacy issues.

The Chair of Finance and General Purposes asked if there is a tour with external parties, is there just a focus on the good things. It was noted

that they are also shown the challenges, for example the engineering yard.

An Independent Governor asked about the VAT position for the College. It was noted that Colleges are exempt.

An Independent Governor asked about the Adult Skills Fund (previously AEB) and expressed concern that devolution will mean it is based on previous figures and in the financial position the College is in, it needs to be maintained. It was noted it will be based on residents of York and North Yorkshire, 19+, which the Combined Authority will distribute, based on past performance. It was noted that the College does not have a contract with Tees Valley. It was noted that it is 7% of our budget.

The Chair of Audit Committee asked about staff sickness and if there is any comparative data for other landbased or other Colleges. It was noted that there is some land based comparative data available via the NSS report from HEAB. ACTION share NSS land based comparative data report from HEAB.

7 Student Union Update

The Student Union President reported that vacancies have been filled on the SU, with the exception of Sustainability. Student Representatives from varying courses are in place and student meetings are taking place. Students loved the Graduation and Freshers' Fair. Activities are now in place for all students, not just those that are residential.

It was noted that RH will be representing the College at the AoC Conference in November.

8 Staff Update

The Director of People services reported that recruitment of the staff representatives for each area has started and that she is working with the Staff Governors to set up a Staff Forum which is open and transparent and includes People Services, so can ensure actions happen. There will be a rota so will get a range of voices.

The Chair of Audit Committee asked if staff are being guarded. The Director of People Services stated that staff have been very open, honest and transparent with her since starting. It was noted that there is still a job of work with developing the culture of the College, but heading in the right direction.

An Independent Governor asked if Investors in People is still in place. It was noted it is and the College is in a two year cycle.

9 Strategy Update – Key Corporate Measures and targets Update including student recruitment

The Vice Principal presented the Governor dashboard and key corporate measures for the end of 23/24, plus student recruitment, giving an overview and highlighted:

Theme 1

Achievement has improved in all provision types, but further improvement to be made to meet all minimum levels of performance and national benchmarks.

It was noted the measure for destinations has been changed as now includes unknown destinations so is reduced. Under the old measure it would have been 93%.

The Chair of Corporation asked what we are doing about the unknowns. It was noted that a third party organisation follows up with students.

Attendance is being monitored as is a risk and below KPI.
Retention has improved for Apps and FE, but not HE.

The Chair of Quality and Standards asked what happened in HE. The Vice Principal stated the data appears to be due to drop outs after Easter so did not do assessment boards.

The Chair of Corporation asked if the Student Governors could look at this for the coming year.

Theme 2

Student voice – the College is inclusive at 94%, Student Satisfaction is positive as is HE Teaching on Course.

Theme 3

Google Review for Wildlife Park at 4.6.
Students recommending the College is increased.
Employer satisfaction has declined by 3%, which is being looked in to.

Theme 4

Sustainability report will be reported at the December Corporation meeting having gone to the F&GP Committee in November.
Overall Staff satisfaction measure is being considered.

Student recruitment

FE up on year before, currently 5.4%, but processing some withdrawals.
Accepts to enrolments sitting at 92% (up 13%). Data consistency has been better this year.
HE has exceeded its target.

The Chair of Audit Committee asked if the figures have returned to the levels they were. The Vice Principal stated that they are just below, but would like to think next year will be above.

It was noted that the Apprenticeships dashboard should be ready in the New Year and it is all round enrolment for apprentices.

Funding dashboard

It was noted that there is a plan for delivery for the ESFA adult funding and West Yorkshire Authority. To date we are above target due to Adult Infill. The Vice Principal stated that the plan is working, but there is a long way to go. The new funding dashboard shows phasing.

An Independent Governor asked about the allocation. It was noted it is maintained, but must hit it this year.

The Vice Chair of Corporation/Chair of Q&S Committee stated that things appear to be going in the right direction so what areas should we be concerned about it. The Vice Principal stated that the Adult Skills Fund is a concern and the CEO/Principal stated need to maintain and grow.

Credit was given to the Vice Principal and MIS for the data dashboard developments, enabling everyone to access the same data and enabling informed decision making.

The Chair of Finance and General Purposes Committee asked if the visits to schools is still happening. It was noted that they are and will be maintained.

ACTION to organise a twilight session on the dashboard.

10 Special Focus Topic – relevant for Corporation/questions

The meeting was preceded by a tour of the York campus, taking in the new developments, Heritage Conservation Farm, Electric Cow, New Teaching Block, Sports Hall, Gym and AI Learn.

11 Finance and General Purposes Committee no meeting, P12 Management Accounts, CDOG, Capital Expenditure Update

Consideration was given to the Finance and General Purposes Committee key messages. It was noted that further to the 11 July Corporation meeting, there has not been a formal meeting, but the Committee had voted for various contractors covering 18 transport routes as outlined on the last page of the evaluation report. The term of the contracts will be two years with an option to extend by a further two 12-month periods. Work continues to compare the costs to budgeted values for 2024/25 and where savings can be made. In addition, working with the suppliers to ensure where possible that there are review dates set during the contract term to ensure their supply is meeting our demand.

The Chair of Finance and General Committee stated that the P12 management accounts were in a slightly better position than anticipated, but some areas to oversee, eg estates costs and farm forecast.

There are no covenant breaches.

It was noted that a lot of capital work had happened over the summer with no current areas of concern. It was noted that the heating element of the electric cow has to be value engineered due to cost. The Chair of Audit Committee asked if there is a value to be gained. It was noted that there has been a tendency to under estimate the cost reality. An Independent Governor stated that it has been a challenge due to capital inflation, so not surprised.

The Vice Chair of Corporation asked about the solar panels and when will see the benefit. It was noted that it will be reported in the carbon report at the end of each year.

The Boardroom Apprentice asked if there are any further plans for energy planning in future projects. It was noted that it is planned in to all future planning.

A verbal update was given on the CDOG meeting master planning.

12

Audit Committee 8 October 2024, Regularity Self Assessment Questionnaire, TPS Engagement Letter, Internal Audit Plan and Engagement Letter and Risk Register

Consideration was given to the Audit Committee Meeting Minutes and key messages.

It was noted that David Reeve joined the Committee and gave valuable contributions and the new Internal Auditors, WBG attended.

The Chair of Audit Committee stated that there are two risks outside risk appetite, item 8 insufficient income and 10 high staff turnover.

The key messages were noted as:

- External Audit has commenced.
- **Recommendation:** The Audit Committee recommended the Regularity Self Assessment Questionnaire for financial year 2023/24 for Corporation to sign with the addition at item 8. **Resolved:** Corporation approved this.
- **Recommendation:** The Audit Committee recommended the Letter of Representation for the TPS audit, for signing. **Resolved:** Corporation approved this.
- The Gift Register and Register of Sealings were noted.
- **Recommendation:** The Audit Committee recommended the Internal Audit Plan for approval and the Internal Audit letter of engagement, subject to review by the CFO. The plan includes for 2024/2025:

1. Procurement as the new Procurement Bill is due to become law in October 2024, which is now February;
2. Compliance with College Financial Handbook which is mandatory and will focus on the musts;
3. Student Records funding stream 16 – 19 year olds;

4. Curriculum Planning process and linkage to other plans and timetabling;
 5. HR audit – possibly Staff Wellbeing, but the new Director of People Services is considering the best focus of this, for example may focus on Onboarding/induction and absence management or response to government policy changes;

6. Follow Up. **Resolved:** Corporation approved this.

- Consideration was given to the Implementation of Audit Recommendations Report and Audit Recommendation Tracker as at 27 September, with a total of 129 recommendations of which 81% (104) are complete (showing those completed since the last meeting) and 19% (25) still not complete, with 25 out of date.

- **Recommendation:** The Audit Committee proposed the changes to the Strategic Risk Register and amendments to the Risk Management Procedure. **Resolved:** Corporation approved this.

- **Recommendation:** The following policies and procedures were recommended for approval:

Data Subjects Rights Policy and Procedure

Freedom of Speech Code of Practice

Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations Policy

Risk Management Procedure

Data Breach reporting Policy

Data Breach reporting Procedure

Data Classification Policy

Data Protection Policy

Data Retention Policy

- Data Retention Procedure. **Resolved:** Corporation approved this.

- There are currently 10 policies and procedures that are overdue/outstanding, of which 2 are “essential.”

- The GDPR report was noted. No reportable breaches since the last meeting. The College is working towards Cyber Essentials.

- No concerns regarding the OfS Regulatory spreadsheet.

- No fraud, irregularities, impropriety or whistleblowing incidences requiring the College’s attention since the last meeting or overseas expenses, except in relation to student trips overseas linked to curriculum.

- Consideration was given to the External Board Review actions, some of which require base line data before a SMART objective can be reached. It was proposed that there is a twilight session or to incorporate it in to the Search and Governance Committee, to resolve what we want to achieve from the actions, for example would training be a more appropriate action.

- A WYCA Audit has taken place confirmed that all actions have been completed and they are satisfied that the evidence provided, supports the areas identified through the compliance audit. The College will have a desktop compliance audit in the first five months of the next academic year.

13

Q&S Committee no meeting/FE update and HE update for anything since Q&S Committee

Consideration was given to the Q&S Committee key messages. It was noted that further to the 11 July Corporation meeting, there had not been a formal meeting.

The Vice Chair of Corporation/Chair of Quality and Standards Committee stated that he had attended the SAR process and had been impressed with the process by the Vice Principal and Assistant Principal. The Chair of F&GP Committee endorsed the process too and thanks were expressed to all for the hard work that had gone in to it. The Quality Improvement Plan actions will be monitored by the Committee.

It was noted that he had been involved in the OfS Provider Visit to College.

14 Governor activities/training, visits, Governor Recruitment, Chairs's Committee

Resolved: The Corporation approved to:
Extend TL Term of Office by 4 years, CM by 2 years, PH by 4 years (following a discussion), MV by 2 years and GO by 2 years – discussion to take place regarding roles of Chair and Vice Chair positions. • JS be offered a full Corporation member role. • BH be appointed as a Co-optee for Q&S Committee.

The Vice Chair of Corporation asked for a note of thanks to all the staff and students involved in British Eventing 12/13 October and that he had invited Rishi Sunak to visit the College.

Thanks were expressed to the Corporation for completing their KCSIE statements.

A review of the AoC Code of Good Governance and CUC HE Code of Good Governance is taking place to shape the Governance Improvement Plan and measure impact and also considering how connect/collaborate with other Colleges.

Governors will also be consulted on curriculum/corporate area briefings in this year.

15 College Company 7 October 2024 Meeting

Consideration was given to the College Company Meeting Minutes and key messages. It was noted that there were no recommendations.

Disappointment was expressed in what was noted as not the easiest of years.

- ABC Co Ltd Farm - behind forecast, due to milking seasonality adjustment to the milk price, but will come back in Autumn. Contractor costs were up and also an increase in stock valuation, livestock gone down and lower stock valuation.
- ABC Enterprises Ltd - behind due to Wildlife Park and reduction in visitor numbers. Staff are working hard to achieve the Rare Breed Trust accreditation and in the early stages of engaging with a National Lottery bid for funding to develop the native Wildlife Park corridor.

- Anaerobic Digester (AD) started to produce electricity 20 September and the Heritage Conservation Farm has now opened.
- Company structure work with PWC has halted due to capacity. It will not impact on the external audit, which will continue as before. The letter of comfort has been submitted to the DfE for approval.
- Difficult to find a member of staff, partly due to the lack of accommodation which is required due to the livestock element of the work. Options are being considered.

16 Policies and Procedures

Resolved: Having been through Policies and Procedures group, the following policies and procedures were approved:

- Data Breach Reporting Policy and Procedure
- Data Classification Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Data Retention Policy and Procedure
- Data Subject Rights Policy and Procedure
- Freedom of Speech Code of Practice
- Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations Policy
- Risk Management Procedure and Guidance

17 Confidential Items – External Members Only

Members agreed aspects of minute 6 and item 17 should be classified as confidential.

18 Any Other Business

The Chief Executive/Principal stated that H&S now reports through People Services and the Director of People Services and OD is the Designated Safeguarding Lead in CW's absence.

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

19 Date and time of next meeting

12 December 2024 - EDI
13 March 2025
19 May 2025
10 July 2025

KF, RH and SS left the meeting.

There was a confidential session for Independent Members only.

Date Action Raised	Minute No	Action required	Responsible	Deadline
Current				
17/10/24	6	Share land based comparative data report from HEAB.	JC	12/12/24
17/10/24	9	Organise a twilight session to demonstrate the Governor dashboard.	JC/SS	New Year
17/10/24	14	Ensure RS invite been sent.	JC/TW	12/12/24
17/10/24	14	Consult with Governors on curriculum/corporate area briefings in this year.	JC/AH	New Year
Pending				
11/07/24	88	An external party or MP to undertake a risk appetite session either at an Away Day or at a Special Focus Topic at Corporation.	JC/MP/TS	07/25
20/05/24	65	Produce a programme for staff update section at Corporation meetings.	DLe/TA/JC	10/24
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. 11/7 will produce an annual report in Autumn Term for F&GP Committee and then Corporation on carbon reduction.	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				
11/07/24	85	Add correct link to Governance dashboard in Corporation Teams and for Governors to consider how they would like to see the recruitment data. 17/10 included in Corporation Team	TA/JC	09/24
11/07/24	85	AEB monitoring to be included on dashboard. 17/10 Funding dashboard is included	SS	Autumn Term

I certify that this is a true and accurate record of the meeting held 17 October 2024 and agree to them being made public on the Askham Bryan website.

Signed
Chair

Date