

**Minutes of the Corporation meeting held on
Thursday 10 July 2025 at 1.00pm
Committee Room, Main Building, Askham Bryan College, York, YO23 3FR**

The pack of meeting papers was circulated in advance of the meeting for Governors to read. The meeting was followed by a tour of the wider College estate.

77. Present

Maureen Vevers (MV)	Chair of Corporation and meeting
Tazambal Ali (TA)	Staff Governor
Rhys Holding (RH)	Student Governor
Annabel Jelley (AJ)	
Martin Moorhouse (MM)	Chair of Finance & General Purposes Committee
Graeme Osborn (GO)	Corporation Vice Chair/Chair of Quality & Standards Committee
James Sadler (JS)	
Trevor Shaw (TS)	Chair of Audit Committee
Tim Whitaker (TW)	Principal/Chief Executive

With over seven members present, the meeting was confirmed as quorate. The Chair reported that proper notice of the meeting had been given.

Emma Barbery (EB)	Chief Finance Officer
Stephanie Burrell (SB)	Board Apprentice
Judith Clapham (JC)	Director of Governance/Interim Deputy Chief Executive
Paddy Harrop (PH)	Shadow Governor
Sofia McGreavy	Executive Director People Services and OD
Chris Moss (CM)	Co-optee Audit Committee
Sharon Sheppard (SS)	Vice Principal
Sharon West (SW)	Interim Clerk to the Corporation

78. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Linda Haigh (LH), Dominique Lendhill (DL), Tracy Lightfoot (TL) and Matthew Parkin (MP).

79. 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 and Vice Chair of Landex.

- 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 Governors that the College was also an exempt charity and that all transactions must be compliant with all obligations under applicable charity law.

80. Minutes from the Meeting held on 19 May 2025

Governors agreed that aspects of the Minutes, item 82 should be classified as confidential on the grounds of commercial sensitivity and reviewed in one year. The Minutes and associated reports would not therefore be made available for circulation to the public, college staff or students (excluding senior post holders), along with any draft documents.

Resolved: The Minutes of the meeting held on 19 May 2025 were accepted as a true and accurate record including the Confidential Minutes.

Matters Arising from the minutes/Actions schedule

A meeting of the CDOG had been held on 18 June. The campus tour was taking place following the close of this meeting. The twilight session to demonstrate the data dashboard would be arranged for early in the autumn term.

81. Chair's Report

The Chair informed Governors that the revised financial benchmarks were described as aspirational which was interesting. The Annual Strategic Conversation Letter, FE Commissioner summer newsletter and letter regarding financial benchmarks and programme recognition letter from the Animal Behaviour & Training Council were noted.

The Chair reminded Governors that this was her last meeting. She recorded her thanks to Governors, the Executive Team and Principalship staff and said that she was leaving the College in good hands.

82. Chief Executive's Report

The Chief Executive presented his report and provided an overview of content with input from the Executive, with detail as in the report.

The Chief Executive advised Governors that a recording of his end of year presentation to staff had been uploaded to the Corporation Teams area for them to view at their leisure.

The Chief Executive highlighted:

- That retention in FE had improved significantly, but attendance remained a concern;
- Quality assurance remained robust;
- Predicted achievement rates were looking positive and it was anticipated that these would be above national average;
- HE Academic Regulations had been reviewed and were being issued and work was underway to request a variation to the College's Degree Awarding Powers to make it indefinite;
- HE achievement rates were up as were apprenticeship outcomes;
- Adult Funding and Skills delivery plans were being finalised for the coming year and the College was on target to deliver its ESFA budget;
- The National Student Survey outcomes had been published the previous day. The College had received positive ratings in terms of 'Teaching on my course', assessment and feedback. Areas to work on were student voice and an element around resources, congratulations were recorded to the HE Team;
- The marketing strategy had been approved and a lot of work was being done including the introduction of a dedicated alumni page on the web site and a stand at the Great Yorkshire Show;
- The June Open Day had been well attended;
- The Government's industrial strategy had been updated and now included agritech.

The Chief Executive recorded his personal thanks to the Chair for her contribution over the past 8 years, in particular her thoughtful observations and challenge.

The Vice Chair noted that the NSS were very positive and demonstrated that the College was competitive. Governors recorded their thanks to the HE Team.

83. Student Union/Student Governor Update

The Student Governor reported that there had been good take up throughout the year for student events including, karaoke, lunchtime and LGBTQ+ events. The SU Vice President had been asked to look into how this could be built upon and used to celebrate successes. All of the SU roles had been filled with the exception of the Sustainability Officer, which he had asked the SU Vice President to look into because of the work being undertaken by the College to ensure a sustainable campus.

[AJ arrived]

The Chair highlighted that this was also RH's last meeting as Student Governor and recorded Governors' thanks to him for his contribution.

84. Staff Update

TA reported that there had been no staff forum meetings since the last Corporation meeting. All staff had been encouraged to participate in 'Colleague Engagement Week'.

TW reported that the College had achieved a significant victory at the varsity event.

85. Strategy Update – Key Corporate Measures and targets Update including student recruitment

The Vice Principal presented the Key Corporate Measures and targets, including student recruitment using the live dashboard. Governors were pleased that achievement rates and student success had improved and asked if this had an impact on recruitment. The Vice Principal confirmed that it had a positive impact on the College's reputation.

A question was raised about the number of courses with an internal notice to improve. The Vice Principal explained that a course remained in the category all year. Of the 16 courses in receipt of a notice only 2 had not made the progress that she would have liked.

Governors discussed attendance and retention. They acknowledged that this was a sector wide issue. The Vice Principal clarified that attendance did not appear to impact on retention or achievement. Governors asked if there were any discernible patterns. The Vice Principal explained that attendance and retention were reviewed at departmental and course level and that while there was poor attendance in certain curriculum areas, there were no discernible gender or ethnicity patterns. The Chief Executive added that timetable scheduling could also be challenging.

86. Special Focus Topic – relevant for Corporation/questions

The Vice Principal gave a presentation on the student recruitment context. She outlined the 4 provision types: FE; HE; ASF and apprenticeships. The funding arrangements, targets and conversion rates.

The Chief Executive explained that the Foundation T Level had not been funded until mid-year in the current year.

Governors asked if there was evidence of later decision-making. The Vice Principal explained that many applicants waited until they had received their results before deciding. A lot of targeted work was undertaken around results day. Staff will contact every offer made to offer advice/guidance.

A question was asked about how many additional HE new starters could be picked up through clearing. The Vice Principal confirmed that it was not impossible to achieve the target.

Governors agreed that they would need to pick up the ASF offer when discussing the College's strategy. The Vice Principal was confident that the ESFA and YNYC allocations could be achieved. The biggest risk was achieving the WYCA allocation. Try to mitigate any shortfall from WYCA.

Governors thanked the Vice Principal for providing such a useful overview and the good work on internal progression.

87. Finance and General Purposes (F&GP) Committee – meeting on 18 June 2025, Budget 2025-26, Forecast 2026-27, CFFR, P9 Management Accounts

The Chair of the F&GP Committee summarised the key messages from the meeting on 18 June.

- P9 management accounts marginally ahead of Q3 forecast, pay costs were reporting overspend, likely this would continue into P10 and for the remainder of the year.
- Historic pension provision had been reversed in Q3 forecast.
- DfE financial health expected to return to 'Good' for FY 2024/25.
- **Recommendation:** The Committee recommended the budget for 2025/26 and forecast for 2026/27. **Resolved** that the budget for 2025/26 and forecast for 2026-27 be approved.
- FE Commissioner has revised benchmark for cash days (increased from 25 to 40 days) and changed the measure for operating performance to EBITDA as % of Adjusted Income > 6%.
- Potential fee level breach had been flagged by the OfS in relation to fees charged to year 2 students on the Vet Nursing programme. There might be a financial impact c. £85k provision for which had been made in the 2025/26 budget assumptions.
- **Recommendation: Resolved** that a waiver of the procedures set out in the College's Procurement Policy be agreed for a period of 3 years (36-months) allowing the continued annual engagement with DHA Equestrian (British Eventing course builder) for the period of October 2025 to October 2027.
- **Recommendation: Resolved** that Rhodes Joinery be appointed to undertake improvement works in student residential accommodation (Arkendale building) over the summer at a cost of £300k, using monies from reserves as included in the 2024/25 budget and allocated in 25/26, be approved.
- Written approval had been received from DfE for the All Weather Pitch.
- On 12 June 2025, OfS Capital published its Capital funding for financial year 2025-26 (April to 31 March). The fund criteria aligns to LSIP and Skills England priorities, with £72.75m being allocated through a bidding exercise with a deadline for receipt of competitive bids by 30 July 2025. Outcomes to be confirmed to bidders in September 2025. The minimum threshold for funding is grant £150k and maximum cap £2.5m. Successful bidders will be required to spend all capital funds awarded by 31 March 2026. A bid for funding for the replacement of the Science building roof (works already underway, partly funded by College reserves) enhanced by the refurbishment of a laboratory and specialist equipment and supporting facilities (aligned to the short-term master plan) to meet the needs of agri science HE programmes will be submitted.
- **Recommendation: Resolved** that the Anti-Money Laundering Policy and Procedure and the Tuition Fees Policy be approved.

88. Audit Committee – meeting on 17 June 2025 inc Risk Register

The Chair of the Audit Committee summarised the key messages from the meeting held on 17 June.

- Congratulate the Director of Governance on her appointment to the new role of Interim Deputy Chief Executive;
- Reviewed the outstanding action list;
- Reviewed the External Audit Strategy Memorandum and recommend it to Corporation;
- Reviewed Progress on the 2024-25 Internal Audit Plan including the 3 Audits reported to this meeting. Audit reports all positive and recommended to Corporation.
- Reviewed the progress on implementing Internal Audit recommendations, Progress was being made and actions are recommended to Corporation;
- The Strategic Risk Register and Risk Appetite Statement were reviewed, wording was agreed for Sustainability in the Risk Appetite Statement, and both recommended to Corporation;
- Policies and Procedures were reviewed and 7 are recommended to Corporation;
- GDPR and OfS regulatory spreadsheet were reviewed;
- The Committee reviewed its own effectiveness and discussed it with the External and Internal Auditors concluding its effectiveness was satisfactory;
- The Committee noted the Historic Pensions issue was now closed subject to additional information coming forward, we discussed the 2 audit services and concluded they were working well and noted further work needed to be progressed relating to staff accommodation.

The Strategic Risk Register was noted.

Resolved that:

- The External Audit Strategy Memorandum be approved;
- The internal audit reports on (a) compliance with the College Financial Handbook; (b) Procurement and (c) the Funding Review, be approved;
- The audit actions relating to internal audit recommendations be approved;
- The Strategic Risk Register and Risk Appetite Statement be approved;
- The following policy/procedure documents be approved:
 - a. Data Sharing Policy 2025-26;
 - b. Data Sharing Procedure 2025-26;
 - c. Data Retention Procedure 2024-25 (updated);
 - d. Subject Access Request Policy 2025-26;
 - e. Subject Access Request Procedure 2025-26;
 - f. Freedom of Information Act Policy 2025-26;
 - g. Freedom of Information Act Procedure 2025-26.

89. Quality and Standards (Q&S) Committee – meeting on 9 June 2025 – Quality/FE update and HE update for anything since last Q&S Committee, Accountability Agreement

The Chair of the Q&S Committee summarised the key messages from the meeting on 9 June.

- Local Needs Duty Review and Accountability Agreement for 2025-26 approved on behalf of the Corporation for submission to the DfE on the 30 June 2025;

- Noted that the following policies and procedures had been reviewed by the Policies and Procedures Group:
 - Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Policy - Further Education 2024-26;
 - Fitness to Practice Policy and Procedures Sign Off Sheet 2024-26 update;
 - Use of AI Policy 2025-26;
 - Accreditation and Recognition of Prior Learning (ARPL) Policy and Procedure (HE) 2024-26 (2025 Update);
 - HE Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedure 2024-26 (2025 Update);
 - HE Assessment Policy and Procedure 2025-27;
 - HE Hardship Fund Procedure 2025-26;
 - HE Quality Assurance and Enhancement Policy and Procedure 2025-27;
 - HE Research Ethics Policy and Procedure 2025-27;
 - HE Student Admissions Policy and Procedure 2025-26;
 - HE Student Postponement and Withdrawal Policy and Procedure 2025-27;
 - OSCE Policy 2025-27;
 - OSCE Procedure 2025-27;
 - Policy on Closure or Suspension of HE Programmes 2025-27;
 - Procedure on Closure or Suspension of HE Programmes 2025-27.
- HE Mitigating Circumstances Policy and Procedure 2025-27 to be combined with the self-certification procedure and brought back to the Committee;
- Delivery of online provision had been halted by West Yorkshire and a move to face to face provision requested;
- Meeting HE growth targets would be challenging;
- FDAP proposal to be presented to the Committee and Corporation;
- Retention and attendance remain key issues.

90. Governor activities/training, visits, Governor Recruitment- Proposed changes; I&A proposed changes and advice

The Director of Governance outlined the proposed changes to membership of the Corporation, Committees and Subsidiaries.

Governors noted that Tracy Lightfoot was standing down as an Independent Governor, but was happy to remain as a co-optee on the C&Q Committee. Governors recorded their thanks for her contribution.

The Vice Chair and Chair of F&GP Committee had met with two prospective Governors.

Resolved that:

- Paddy Harrop be appointed as an Independent Governor for a term of office of 4 years;
- David Jones be appointed as an Independent Governor and member/Chair of the Remuneration Committee for an initial term of office of 2 years;
- Stephen Russell be appointed as a Shadow Governor and member of the Audit Committee for an initial term of 2 years;

- Paddy Harrop be appointed to the F&GP Committee; James Sadler be appointed as a Director of the College Companies and stands down from F&GP Committee.
- TR to be seen as a potential Governor and if suitable to be appointed as a full Governor and member of the F&GP Committee.

The Director of Governance had met with the Friends of Askham Bryan College, who operate as a separate Charity to the College and have the objectives to make payments to the College to improve its educational activities and to make payments to students to assist them in furthering their education (the existing monies to be for the benefit of Agriculture/Horticulture students) and were looking to transfer this entity into the College and link it to the Alumni Strategy to future proof it. She sought the Corporation's approval to undertake further investigations into such a transfer.

Resolved that the Director of Governance be authorised to investigate a possible transfer from the Friends of Asham Bryan College.

Governor activity – the Vice Chair had met with the new Head of English & Maths. PH and LH had attended the Leavers celebration event at Stewart Park.

The Director of Governance outlined the proposed changes to the Instrument following the DfE's Chairs letter of 17 June and the guidance from Eversheds Sutherland. **Resolved** that the amendments to the Instrument be approved.

The Vice Chair expressed his thanks to the Chair for all of her valuable contributions on behalf of the Corporation and the Chair was presented with some gifts as a token of appreciation.

91. College Company – 9 June 2025

Consideration was given to the College Company Meeting minutes and key messages which MM reported on as follows:

- The Farm faced some cost pressures but was anticipated to achieve the year end forecast;
- The Wildlife Park is on target to achieve the budget;
- The draft Budget for 2025-26 would be circulated electronically to Directors for consideration and approval; It was noted that this had happened and was approved.
- Beef, Sheep and Dairy were performing well;
- HSE review on pesticides went well;
- Successful schools event well received (Animal Aspirations);
- Annual review and self-assessment conducted.

92. Policies and Procedures

It was noted that there were no policies and procedures for approval at this meeting, other than those that had come for approval via the Committees.

93. Safeguarding, EDI and Health & Safety

It was noted that there were no matters relating to Safeguarding, EDI and Health & Safety to bring to the attention of the Corporation.

94. Confidential Items

Members agreed that aspects of the minutes, Minute 97 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.

TA, RH, SM and SS, left the meeting.

There was a confidential meeting for Independent Governors.

95. Any Other Business

There were no items of any other business.

96. Date and time of next meeting

16 October 2025 at 1.00pm to be followed by a tour of the Woodland managed by the College.

Date Action Raised	Minute No	Action required	Responsible	Deadline
Current				
10/7/25	90	Director of Governance to investigate a possible transfer from the Friends of Askham Bryan College.	JC	
Pending				
17/10/24	9	Organise a twilight session to demonstrate the Governor dashboard. 19/5 pending so can combine with FE Provider dashboard	JC/SS	New academic Year
Cleared				
19/5/25	63	Organise a CDOG meeting prior to F&GP to discuss offer.	JC	w/c 2/6
13/3/25	52	Cover commercial facilities when Governors do the York campus tour. 19/5 pending	TW	07/25-10/25

I certify that this is a true and accurate record of the meeting held 10 July 2025 and agree to them being made public on the Askham Bryan website.

Signed
Chair

Date