

**Minutes of the Corporation meeting held on
Thursday 16 October 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 woodlands on the College estate.

1. Present

Graeme Osborn (GO)	Chair of Corporation and meeting
Tazambal Ali (TA)	Staff Governor
Heather Clegg (HC)	Student Union President/Student Governor
Linda Haigh (LH)	Vice Chair of Corporation
Paddy Harrop (PH)	
Annabel Jelley (AJ)	Chair of Quality & Standards Committee
Dominique Lendhill (DL)	
Martin Moorhouse (MM)	Chair of Finance & General Purposes Committee
Matthew Parkin (MP)	
Tracey Roberts (TR)	
Trevor Shaw (TS)	Chair of Audit Committee
Anne Tyrrell (AT)	
J Walker (JW)	Student Union Vice President/Staff Governor
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
Chris Moss (CM)	Co-optee Audit Committee
Sharon Sheppard (SS)	Vice Principal
Stacy Vipas (SV)	Assistant Principal Quality and Progress
Sharon West (SW)	Interim Clerk to the Corporation

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from James Sadler (JS).

3. Welcome

The Chair welcomed everyone to the first Corporation meeting of the academic year and his first meeting as Chair and invited everyone to introduce themselves.

The Chair was delighted to welcome Paddy Harrop and Anne Tyrrell to their first meeting as full Governors following their appointment in July, Tracey Roberts (following her appointment as an Independent Governor which had been approved by

written resolution electronically in August), and Heather Clegg and JJ Walker, the new President and Vice President of the Students Union respectively.

4. Declarations of Interest

The Corporation noted that new Governors would be required to complete a declaration of interests form.

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 Skills Innovation Fund which is part of the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority Mayoral Investment Fund. The college is a delivery partner on this project.
- 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.

5. Minutes from the Meeting held on 10 July 2025

Resolved: The Minutes of the meeting held on 10 July 2025 were accepted as a true and accurate record.

Matters Arising from the minutes/Actions schedule

The Chair informed the Committee that no contact had been received from David Jones (Independent Governor) and Stephen Russell (Shadow Governor) since their appointment in July. It would therefore be necessary to continue to recruit for individuals with HR and HE experience.

The Director of Governance/Interim DCEO reported that she was working with the Friends of Askham Bryan College on the potential transfer, which was on track.

The Chair informed Governors that there was a proposal to combine the requested twilight session to demonstrate the Governor and FE Provider dashboards with an additional meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee on 10 November. The Chair of F&GP extended an invitation to all Governors to attend the additional

meeting. The Vice Principal advised that the FE Provider dashboard would best be reviewed after R14 as it would then include the most up to date data.

6. Chair's Report

The Chair informed Governors that the focus for the next few months would be on developing the new strategy. The Principal/CEO had circulated a proposed timeline and this would be shared with the rest of the Corporation.

7. Chief Executive's Report

The Principal/CEO presented his report and provided an overview of content with input from the Executive, as detailed in the report. In particular, he highlighted:

- Student recruitment and retention for FE and HE;
- Recruitment for the two Senior Leadership Team (SLT) vacancies;
- The Self-Assessment Review (SAR) process and thanked Governors for their participation. The process had been very positive, with a number of both academic and support areas self-assessing as Outstanding, with others very close, which reflected the significant progress made over the past two years;
- A marked improvement in achievement rates across all three of our main provision types:
 - **16–19 provision:** Up 6% to 83.9%, now above the national benchmark.
 - **Apprenticeships:** Up nearly 12% in a single year, placing us over 10% above national benchmarks.
 - **Higher Education:** Pass rates rose by 9%, again placing us well above national benchmarks.
- That the Graduation Ceremony at York Minster had been a great celebratory event;
- Developments in the national policy landscape.

A question was raised as to whether there would be a rebasing of the SAR against the new Ofsted inspection framework. Governors acknowledged that this would be a gradual process as the new framework became established.

8. Student Union/Student Governor Update

The SU President/Student Governor reported that the freshers' event had been successful. Some issues were being experienced in recruiting members to the Student Union. A questionnaire had been sent to students regarding events and was receiving a lot of feedback.

Governors were informed that Student Council meetings for both FE and HE had been held around employability, and both had been positively received. Members of the SLT and key managers would be invited to participate in future meetings.

The Corporation noted that both the rugby team and netball had played their first matches.

9. Staff Update

There had been no staff forum meetings since the last Corporation meeting.

10. 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 advised that the final return to the Department of Education (DfE) on student numbers was due to be submitted on 23 October, no substantial changes to the data were anticipated.

Governors were pleased to see the improvement in achievement rates which demonstrated a 3-year upward trend across all areas despite the challenges faced post-Covid. This reflected the emphasis placed on attendance and retention and would be underpinned by a lot of stories where individual students were being supported.

Governors discussed the challenges around attendance and retention. They noted that whilst attendance continued to be slightly below target there were positive trends for retention.

Governors had been concerned about the English and Maths requirements for T Levels and were therefore pleased to see the number of new starts and returners.

Development of New Strategy/Timeline

The Principal/CEO outlined the proposed timeline. He said that he would like to focus on forward planning at the Corporation away day in March based upon the new strategy. He welcomed feedback from Governors on the timeline, context and outline strategy. Details of the twilight sessions to consider these in detail would be circulated in due course.

11. Special Focus Topic – relevant for Corporation/questions

[SV joined the meeting.]

The Assistant Principal gave a presentation on the new Ofsted framework. She highlighted some of the key changes including the introduction of the report card, the move to a 5-point scale, sharper focus on inclusion and new toolkits for providers. She explained that Ofsted would be adopting a different approach to inspections by taking contact into account, working more collaboratively, providing constructive advice with clear recommendations for improvement.

The Assistant Principal outlined the College's 'Ever R.E.A.D.Y' plan for inspection and the associated work which was being undertaken.

AT stressed that Ofsted would be looking at inclusion at all levels and barriers to learning. They would be seeking a 'secure fit' rather than a 'best fit'.

Governors discussed how the College's SAR would be transferred to the new grading scale and asked whether they had a role in this. The Assistant Principal explained that it would be a fairly simple process to translate the SAR data against the grade descriptors. A conversation was needed on whether to change the gradings in line with the inspection framework. The 'Ever R.E.A.D.Y' plan included training for Governors. The Chief Executive confirmed that Governor leads would still be required for key areas.

Governors noted that one of the key questions that had come out of an online training session provided by Ofsted earlier that day was how Governors added impact.

A question was asked as to whether there was any indication on inclusion. AT explained that the definition had been widened to include all students and all barriers to learning. The judgement would therefore be much broader.

Governors thanked the Assistant Principal for providing an impressive summary of the new framework. The Chair added that he had been impressed with the SAR process and outcomes and passed on the Corporation's congratulations to the Assistant Principal and her team.

[DL and SV left the meeting.]

12. Finance and General Purposes (F&GP) Committee

There had not been a meeting of the F&GP Committee since the last Corporation meeting.

The Chief Finance Officer (CFO) outlined the letter of comfort to the College companies and the tendering exercise that had taken place for the farm management contract.

Recommendation: Resolved that:

- (a) The letter of comfort be approved and signed by the Vice Chair on behalf of the Corporation;
- (b) The farm management contract be awarded to Velcourt.

Governors received and noted the P12 management accounts.

13. Audit Committee – meeting on 7 October 2025 inc Risk Register

The Chair of the Audit Committee summarised the key messages from the meeting held on 8 October:

- Election of TS as Chair of Audit Committee for 2025-26;
- Reviewed the outstanding action list;
- Reviewed the Regularity Self-Assessment Questionnaire and TPS audit letter of representation and recommend them to Corporation;
- Reviewed the 2025-26 Internal Audit Plan, the internal audit report on Curriculum Planning and Internal Audit Annual Report 2024-25 reported to this meeting 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;
- Policies and Procedures update was reviewed;
- GDPR and OfS regulatory spreadsheet were reviewed.

The Chair of Audit drew attention to the Committee's concern relating to the implementation of audit recommendations and reviewing policies and procedures.

Governors reviewed and noted the Strategic Risk Register.

Resolved that:

- Regularity Self-Assessment Questionnaire and TPS audit letter of representation be approved and signed by the Chair on behalf of the Corporation;
- The 2025-26 Internal Audit Plan, internal audit report on Curriculum Planning and Internal Audit Annual Report 2024-25 be approved;
- The audit actions relating to internal audit recommendations be approved.

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14. 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

There had not been a meeting of the Quality & Standards Committee since the last Corporation meeting.

AJ had been asked to become the new Chair of the Q&S Committee. She reiterated how good the SAR review process had been and the work that had been done on outcomes for learners.

15. Governor activities/training, visits, Governor Recruitment, Chairs' Committee

Chairs' Committee

The Chair reported that a meeting of the Committee had been held on 9 October. The meeting had focused on the governance structure and Governor appointments.

Governor activities/training

The Chair thanked Governors for participating in the SAR review process. A number of Governors had attended the Graduation Ceremony at York Minster – congratulations were passed on to the Assistant Principal HE and her team on a successful event. The British Eventing competition had taken place the previous weekend and had received complimentary feedback. The operation of the event had been impressive, and congratulations were passed on to the staff and students that had been involved.

Departmental briefings/visits had taken place on 9 October on Safeguarding and Prevent (GO), apprenticeships (MM) and adult and future skills provision (AJ). AJ highlighted that there was more that could be done to link up commercial with adult provision.

16. College Company

There had not been a meeting of the College Company since the last Corporation meeting.

17. Policies and Procedures

The Director of Governance/Interim DCEO presented the Policies and Procedures Update.

Governors agreed that it would be useful if a plan setting out the priorities for reviewing outstanding policies and procedures was put in place.

Governors considered the Recruitment and Selection Policy 2025-27. It was felt that the policy was very detailed and difficult to access, and a query was raised as to whether it could be simplified.

Action: JC

18. Legal and Compliance Update

The Director of Governance/Interim DCEO presented the Legal and Compliance Update. The Chair added that he had offered to share some guidance that had been given to HE institutions. Governors noted that the Fraud Prevention Plan, Anti-Bribery Policy and guidance, and Anti-Money Laundering Policy and Procedure would be reviewed and, where necessary, procedures strengthened so that they also applied to preventing fraud.

19. Safeguarding, EDI and Health & Safety

The Director of Governance/Interim DCEO advised Governors of the new safeguarding arrangements. The Safeguarding Committee had met recently, and the meeting had been attended by the Chair as Link Governor for Safeguarding.

Governors noted that the Health & Safety Committee had met and was looking at priorities.

There were no matters relating to Safeguarding, EDI and Health & Safety to bring to the attention of the Corporation.

20. Any other business

Cyber Security

AJ highlighted the number of recent high profile cyber attacks and cautioned that the College needed to be alert to the risk of a possible attack. The Chair said that the Audit Committee was acutely alert to the risk. The CFO added that cyber security and business continuity were key areas on the Strategic Risk Register.

TR offered to put the College in contact with the Co-operative Group to learn from their recent experience if that would be useful.

TA outlined the College's IT Recovery Strategy and licensing. He explained that cyber security was a constantly moving picture and the College try to mitigate as much risk as possible in line with JISC guidance and briefings. Governors agreed that there was a degree of comfort if the College was in line with the rest of the sector. They recognised that a level of vulnerability remained no matter how good a business was, as it was a question of 'when' rather than 'if' a cyber attack would occur. The College therefore needed to establish what action it would need to take in response.

Board Apprentice

The Chair informed Governors that SB would be leaving the Corporation on 1 December 2025 as she was taking a year's sabbatical. He thanked her for her insightful and constructive contribution during her time as Board apprentice.

SB thanked Governors for the welcoming reception and support she had received since joining the Corporation. The experience had helped to build her confidence and given her the skills to take on Board positions in the future.

21. Confidential Items

Members agreed that aspects of the minutes, Minute 23 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, EB, HC, JC, SS and JW, left the meeting.]

There was a confidential meeting for Independent Governors.

22. Date and time of next meeting

11 December 2025 at 1.00pm.

Date Action Raised	Minute No	Action required	Responsible	Deadline
Current				
16/10/25	17	Director of Governance/Interim DCEO to enquire if it is possible to simplify the Recruitment and Selection Policy.	JC	
Pending				
10/7/25	90	Director of Governance/Interim DCEO to investigate a possible transfer from the Friends of Askham Bryan College.	JC	
17/10/24	9	Organise a twilight session to demonstrate the Governor dashboard/FE Provider dashboard.	JC/SS	R14

I certify that this is a true and accurate record of the meeting held 16 October 2025 and agree to them being made public on the Askham Bryan website.

Signed:

(Chair)

Date: