

**Minutes of the Corporation meeting held on
Thursday 11 December 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.

24. Present

Graeme Osborn (GO)	Chair of Corporation and meeting
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
Martin Moorhouse (MM)	Chair of Finance & General Purposes Committee
Matthew Parkin (MP)	
Tracey Roberts (TR)	(via Teams)
Trevor Shaw (TS)	Chair of Audit Committee (via Teams)
Anne Tyrrell (AT)	
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
Judith Clapham (JC)	Director of Governance/Interim Deputy Chief Executive
Karen Rae (KR)	Armstrong Watson
Sharon Sheppard (SS)	Vice Principal
Sharon West (SW)	Interim Clerk to the Corporation

25. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Tazambal Ali, Dominique Lendhill. Chris Moss (CM) and James Sadler (JS).

26. Welcome

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained that a session on the new strategy would follow as a separate item.

27. 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.
- GO as Chair of Durham University Students' Union.
- 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 & Procurement Director at South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service with possible links to the College from public service training, King's Trust.
- TR as a Member of National Council - Co-operative Group.

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.

28. External Audit Findings

Ms Rae presented the External Audit findings and explained that the audit covered all of the entities within the group. She outlined the work that had been undertaken by the Audit Team and confirmed that no issues had been identified regarding 'Going concern'. Some minor unadjusted errors had been found but these were of no materiality. The audit had identified no deficiencies in the College's internal controls. The outcome was a very clean audit opinion.

Ms Rae thanked the Finance Team for their assistance and collaboration.

Ms Rae informed Governors that Armstrong Watson would be running a webinar in the new year on the new FE and HE Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP). She highlighted the changes which could impact on the financial statements in the future.

Ms Rae asked Governors if they were aware of any issues of fraud or 'Going concern'. Governors confirmed that they were not aware of any such issues.

The Chair of the Audit Committee advised Governors that the Audit Committee had reviewed the audit findings in detail and had recommended them to the Corporation.

A question was raised in relation to the new SORP and the changes relating to leases. Ms Rae explained that the changes would affect leases of land and buildings, and large pieces of equipment. Digital leases would not be affected as this were generally in the form of licences.

The Chair recorded the Corporation's thanks to Ms Rae and the Audit Team, the Finance Team and the Audit Committee.

Resolved: to approve the External Audit Findings.

[Ms Rae left the meeting.]

Resolved: To approve:

- The Financial Statements and Annual Report 2024-25;

- The Financial Statements and Directors Reports for Askham Bryan College Company Limited and Askham Bryan College Enterprises Limited;
- The Going Concern Assessment 2024-25;
- The Letter of Support;
- The Letters of Representation; and
- The Streamlined Energy & Carbon Report.

29. Minutes from the Meeting held on 16 October 2025

Resolved: The Minutes of the meeting held on 16 October 2025 were approved as a true and accurate record.

Matters Arising from the minutes/Actions schedule

The matters arising and actions schedule were updated.

30. Chair's Report

The Chair drew Governors' attention to the documents included in the attachments folder including the FE Commissioner's newsletter and letter from the Secretary of State for Education.

31. 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;
- The continuing improvement in achievement;
- Appointments had been made to the Director of People & Organisational Development, Vice Principal and Assistant Principal vacancies;
- The successful open day which demonstrated how staff came together;
- Recruitment for 2026-27 was underway and looking strong;
- Developments in the national policy landscape which presented opportunities and challenges.

The Principal/CEO said that there was a lot of good work going on at Stewart Park and suggested that Governors may like to hold a future Corporation meeting there and have a tour round.

The Principal/CEO had recently attended the AoC National Conference and proposed that Governors should consider attending in future as there was a substantial governance element.

A question was raised on the proposed introduction of V Levels. The Principal/CEO explained that consultation was ongoing and that the College was involved in several sector forums. The picture was currently unclear, and a lot of questions remained. It appeared that the proposal was to build a qualification like an A Level with a vocational element. Governors acknowledged that the initial years of delivery could be as complex

as that for T Levels. They noted that the level of assessment on T Levels was becoming an issue.

The Vice Chair had undertaken a Departmental visit to Student Services. She reported that the Team was very stretched due to a lot more demand, less support in terms of the NHS and was also suffering from a lack of cover. The Director of Governance/Interim Deputy Chief Executive explained that she had met with the Team the previous day and that a plan had been developed. The situation was still a significant concern, and the solutions would not be straight forward or easy. Governors accepted that expectations were much higher and that students were coming with more complex problems and often presenting for the first time. There was however some comfort in that the College recognised the problem was there.

The Chair recorded thanks to the Vice Chair and AT for their assistance on the Executive recruitment panels.

32. Strategy Update

Key Corporate Measures and Targets Update and Student Recruitment

As certain of the detailed information relating to student recruitment was considered by the Corporation to be commercially sensitive, a separate confidential minute was taken in a confidential annex marked Annex 1, 11/12/2025.

The Vice Principal presented the Key Corporate Measures and targets.

Governors were informed that attendance rates were 85% for FE, 92% for apprenticeships and 82% for HE. Retention rates were 98% for FE, 100% for apprenticeships and 98% for HE. Overall student satisfaction was up.

Governors discussed the challenges around attendance and noted that this was not translating into retention. They agreed that it would be useful to gain an understanding of what lay behind the attendance issues. The Vice Principal explained that there was a lot of work going on behind the scenes and that no real trends had been identified.

Governors were pleased to see the number of applications and asked if these could be tracked. They acknowledged that the number of applications reflected on the events held and school liaison activity, as well as social media. The Principal/CEO stated that some analytics were required to establish if the College was recruiting in a small pool or a wider pool.

A question was raised about correlation between courses with a 'Notice to Improve' (NTI) and those receiving active support. The Vice Principal explained that for an NTI to be put in place there would need to be at least four triggers, whereas active support required fewer triggers or could be at a Team's request. It might not necessarily be a question of achievement but of the wider College experience.

Governors asked what the balance between internal and external applications was. The Vice Principal explained that internal applicants related to progression. Data on external applications required some further work and it was hoped that reports would be available on the Data Dashboard within the next week.

33. Student Union/Student Governor Update

The SU President/Student Governor reported that ten people had taken on roles within the Students' Union. Weekly meetings were taking place and there were also regular meetings with College staff. Events were proving successful and a programme had been put in place. Money was being raised for the Students' Union chosen charity. There had been varied success with societies and the Students' Union was trying to gain an understanding and provide support.

A question was raised about the rules and regulations around a charity raising funds for another charity.

The Director of Governance/Interim DCEO had recently attended a meeting of the HE Student Forum. The students had been very engaged and had provided lots of helpful feedback.

34. Staff Update

Governors were advised that there were lessons to be learned from the Student Forums on how to structure Staff Forums.

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

The Chair of the F&GP Committee reported back on the meeting held on 25 November and highlighted the recommendations made by the Committee.

The Chief Finance Officer (CFO) outlined the reason for the waiver letter and the need for DfE approval.

The Chair of the F&GP Committee explained that the Committee was aware that the College had lagged behind in terms of salaries for some time and could not afford to fall further behind and it was therefore recommending adopting the AoC pay award recommendation. The CFO added that there would be an issue around payscale 17 by April 2027 because of increases to the National Minimum Wage. Once in post the new Director of People & Organisational Development would need to undertake a review and look at how the differential could be maintained. Governors acknowledged that this would be a large and sensitive piece of work which was a crucial part of the College's development of its people and culture.

Resolved:

- (a) to approve the Santander waiver of the debt service cover covenant and the associated waiver fee; and
- (b) To approve to accept the AoC Pay Recommendations for 2025-26 that from 1 February 2026 all staff to receive a consolidated uplift in pay of 4% and that following the announcement of National Minimum Wage for 2026, approve that SP17 be adjusted upwards (as required) to meet the legal requirement.

Governors received and noted the P2 management accounts.

36. Audit Committee – meeting on 25 November 2025 inc Risk Register

The Chair of the Audit Committee summarised the key messages from the meeting held on 25 November:

- 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.

Governors reviewed and noted the Strategic Risk Register.

Resolved:

- (a) to accept the Annual Report of the Audit Committee 2024-25, and
- (b) that the audit actions relating to internal audit recommendations be approved.

37. Quality and Standards (Q&S) Committee – meeting on 20 November 2025 – Quality/FE update and HE update for anything since last Q&S Committee, Accountability Agreement

The Chair of the Q&S Committee reported back on the business covered at the meeting held on 20 November and outlined the recommendations made by the Committee. She highlighted the work that had been done to improve retention and achievement and said that the staff should be congratulated.

The Committee had reviewed and approved 16 policies/procedures. The Chair agreed that the number of policies and procedures needed to be kept under review but many were required as the College was a complex organisation and this involved a lot of staff and Policy Group time. The Chair of the Q&S Committee said that the Committee had had a useful conversation to gain an understanding of the review process and its role.

Governors were pleased to note the significant and continuing improvement on attainment.

Resolved:

- (a) To approve the Annual Safeguarding Report for 2024-25;
- (b) To approve the Self-Assessment Report and Quality Improvement Plan.

38. 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

Departmental briefings/visits had taken place on Finance (PH), HE (PH), Commercial (MP), Adult provision (AJ), Equine, Agri and Land-based Engineering (TS), Student Services (AJ), Safeguarding and Prevent (GO), Animal Management (BH) and Apprenticeships (MM).

The Chair informed Governors that he had been involved in visits to the College by Rachel Maskell MP and Paul Kissack (DEFRA). He recorded his thanks to Jenni Scott for the briefing as there had been a lot of work involved. It had been good to have the Landex Chief Executive involved in the visits.

The Chair reported that he had attended the AoC Reception and had been pleased to see the recognition and support for the role of the sector.

The Chair had reviewed the Single Central Register twice as the Safeguarding Link.

The Chair thanked Governors for their contributions both in and outside of meetings. He added that staff and students valued their engagement.

Governors noted that potential candidates were still being sought to fill the need for individuals with HE and HR experience.

39. College Company

The Chair of F&GP Committee reported back on the business conducted at the meeting of the College Company held on 24 November. He highlighted the re-appointment of Velcourt and that a new Farm Manager would be taking up post in January. The Farm and Wildlife Park were doing well.

The Chair suggested that it would be good to have a few Governors visit the farm and meet the new Farm Manager.

40. Policies and Procedures

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

Resolved: To approve the

- Data Protection Policy 2025 – 2026
- Data Breach Reporting Policy 2025 – 2026
- Data Breach Reporting Procedure 2025 – 2026
- Data Retention Policy 2025 – 2026
- Data Subject Rights Policy 2025 – 2026
- Data Subject Rights Procedure 2025 – 2026
- Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations Policy 2025 – 2026
- Risk Management Policy 2025 – 2027
- Risk Management Procedure 2025 - 2027
- Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure 2025 – 2027
- Health and Safety Statement 2025 – 2025
- Modern Slavery Statement 2025 – 2026

- Procurement Policy 2025 - 2027
- Financial Regulations 2025 - 2026
- Health and Safety Statement 2024 – 2025
- Health and Safety Statement 2025 – 2026

41. Safeguarding, EDI and Health & Safety

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

42. Any other business

There were no matters of any other business.

43. Confidential Items

Members agreed that aspects of Minute 32 and the entirety of Minute 45 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.

[HC and SS left the meeting.]

There was a confidential meeting for Independent Governors. A separate confidential minute (Minute 45) was taken and is contained in the aforementioned confidential annex marked Annex 1, 11/12/2025.

44. Date and time of next meeting

12 March 2026 Corporation Away Day.