

**MINUTES OF A CORPORATION meeting**  
**held on Thursday 14 December 2023**  
**At 5.00 pm at Trowbridge campus**

<b>Present</b>	Dr Carlton Brand (Chair), Daisy Agathine-Louise, Clive Barker (remote access), Jenny Davies, Paul Fox, Philippa Gray, Iain Hatt, Brian Humphreys, Oliver Leach, Ajay Nithyananthan, Justin Purkis, Lily Raynor-Blundell, Mags Patten, Katie Walker
<b>In Attendance</b>	<i>Oliver Symons (Deputy Principal Curriculum and Quality), Steve Campion (Deputy Principal Corporate Resources ) and Heather Cross (Clerk to the Corporation) Nathan Coughlin (Partner, Bishop Fleming, for part of item 10)</i>

	<b>Minute</b>	<b>Action</b>
<b>2023-24 3/1</b>	<b>Apologies for absence and welcome to new member</b>	
	Apologies were received from Lucy Townsend, Cath Giles, Mags Patten and Harry Adam.  Oliver Leach, Student President and FE Student Governor, studying Level 3 Games Development with the college was warmly welcomed to his first Board meeting following his recent election.	
<b>2023-24 3/2</b>	<b>Chair's Introductory remarks</b>	
	In welcoming governors to the meeting, the Chair thanked senior staff for their good executive summaries and other summary information in the Board pack for the meeting, which were a positive development in the presentation of papers to the meeting. He reported to the meeting on the various events he had attended associated with the college since the last meeting, including College graduation and thanked Brian Humphreys and Lucy Townsend also for their attendance. He had attended a number of QRR meetings, spent 3 days at the AoC conference where amongst other activities he had had an opportunity to meet senior staff from Swindon including their new Principal. He had attended the Public Service Board where he met with Chairs and Chief Execs from a number of key organisations in the county. It was proposed that a meeting be sought with the Chief Executive of RUH concerning joint working on the development of health and care programmes. He had held a number of 1 to 1 meetings with the Principal/CEO and the Director of Governance. In the following week he would be attending a meeting with the DfE with South West Chairs and Vice-Chairs.  It was noted that since the last meeting Clive Barker had been reappointed by written resolution as a governor for a second term of office until October 2027.	
<b>2023-24 3/3</b>	<b>Declarations of interest</b>	
	None	

<b>2023-24 3/4</b>	<b>Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising</b>	
	<p><u>Minutes of the meeting held 17 October 2023</u></p> <p>The minutes of the meeting which had been circulated previously of the meeting held on 17 October 2023, were approved as a true record of the meeting.</p> <p><u>Matters arising</u></p> <p>None, other than already on the agenda.</p>	
<b>2023-24 3/5</b>	<b>Trowbridge site location</b>	
	<p>A report had been previously circulated, following discussion at and recommendations from the Finance and Resources Committee, making a case for remaining on the current site and seeking to develop it, rather than continue to look for an alternative location. A Valuation report for the Trowbridge site, together with a recent long-term proposal for a land sale at Lackham as a source of potential funding had been considered and provided in the report.</p> <p>The Finance and Resources Committee Chair summarised the conclusions from the committee discussions. The economics of the situation, the lack of availability of another preferable site and the lack of long term planning certainty, together with the current investment in the present site and the preference in the community for the college to stay in the Studley Green area and support its development, were all key factors strongly in favour of remaining in the current location.</p> <p>Governors debated the merits of the proposal and the professional information provided by the valuation reports. After careful discussion of all the factors, it was unanimously <b>agreed</b> that the college should remain on its current site in Trowbridge and seek to develop it, no longer pursuing possibilities of relocation. College Senior management was requested to keep the idea of some land sale at Lackham 'live' with the developer at present, but anticipating that the current offer should ultimately be refused in the near future. Senior management were requested to bring options for improvements to the current Trowbridge site to the Awayday in May 2024 for discussion there.</p> <p>The Board thanked senior staff for their work in presenting the report and the further work to be undertaken on development proposals.</p>	<b>SLT</b>
<b>2023-24 3/6</b>	<b>Doric Park Developments – Confidential item</b>	
	<p>A confidential report concerning the accommodation possibilities for sports at Doric Park had been circulated. Governors received a verbal update from the Principal/CEO concerning the current situation and the position which was awaited from Trowbridge Town Council. The actions which were dependent on this position were discussed and agreed by the Board.</p>	
<b>2023-24 3/7</b>	<b>Reputation and Profile</b>	
	<p>The Chair introduced this item which he had requested be included on the agenda following a number of governors commenting that this wasn't</p>	

	<p>sufficiently discussed in the Board routinely and also following a comment by the AoC CEO at the recent conference that he would expect to see this as a discussion item on Board agendas for governors to consider how they contributed to college reputation and profile, how governing body contacts could be used to influence this and also generally how a college promotes itself and the sector. The Chair invited the Principal/CEO to talk about the discussion presentation which he had prepared and which had been circulated previously. Iain Hatt highlighted the key factors in reputation of student achievement, industry connections and employability, student/employer satisfaction; innovative programmes and facilities and community engagement and partnerships. The College was in a strong position concerning many of these, with increasing momentum. Community engagement was strongly embedded within the Strategic Plan. Conversations with students were noted as quickly impacting in the community. The College had a growing reputation and strengthening relationships with Wiltshire Council, which were becoming increasingly important. There were excellent links with current MPs and it was intended to offer contacts to all candidates in the elections due in 2024. There were connections into the community from each campus. The college had good current external judgements from Ofsted and Finance/Audit and senior staff with good links in the sector whether as inspectors or part-time advisers with FEC or AoC.</p> <p>Governors discussed the position and agreed that strong links should be maintained with MPs and candidates as skills development was a key component in the national political agenda. They welcomed the Principal's links with and prominence in local organisations such as Tech Trowbridge and the local NHS Place discussions and whilst recognising the time commitment in this involvement, how valuable it was. The new Director for Business Development was working well to improve college traction, particularly as a better proposition was offered. Other members of SLT had good links, such as participation in county-wide school representative groups, although there was still ongoing work to do to improve access to school children in their career advice.</p> <p>Governors encouraged possible strategies to increase the college's presence in the local media, including the possibility of using a PR agency to assist. The meeting looked forward to hearing from the Director of Marketing at a meeting in the near future concerning developments. It was agreed that 'reputation implications' should be included in all report executive summaries and that the Principal/CEO would include any comments about profile and reputation regularly in his reports.</p>	<b>P/CEO</b>
<b>2023-24 3/8</b>	<b>Risk Review</b>	
	<p>A risk review report had been circulated previously, identifying the proposals for change to the format of the college level risk register and presenting the top ten risks reported to the Board. The Chair thanked the Deputy Principal Corporate Resources, the Chair of the Audit Committee and Justin Purkis as a member of the Audit Committee for the work they had undertaken in developing the systems.</p> <p>Top ten identified risks were reviewed. It was noted that a risk on reputation was on the overall list held by the college, but it wasn't included here as it did not score in the top ten. The same issue applied concerning finance matters. Cyber security was in the top ten at number 8; the Audit Committee had received a recent reassuring presentation on this topic and was pleased to</p>	

	<p>hear about the various protections and measures the college had built into its systems and ways of working.</p> <p>In discussion a governor queried whether the biggest risk, concerning delivering a good service and outcomes to students was properly included – this was pointed out was intended to be covered through risk 3 – “Unsatisfactory quality assessment.” Governors requested that the specific risk of not meeting achievement rates should be reflected in the register and should not only be reported in terms of an Ofsted inspection result.</p> <p>The meeting checked whether there were any student or safeguarding risks which needed to be considered and this was confirmed not to be the case.</p> <p>The risk register format and the top ten risks were <i>accepted</i>.</p>	<b>SLT</b>
<b>2023-24 3/9</b>	<b>Governor Recruitment Proposals</b>	
	<p>A report concerning governor recruitment proposals had been circulated previously, recommending the basis for recruiting to three governor vacancies. It was hoped that the college may be successful in applying for support for the recruitment through the DfE funded recruitment scheme using Peridot. The result of this application was anticipated in the early Spring term.</p> <p>In discussion it was noted that current gender balance and increased BME numbers should be part of the considerations and the skills areas needed were additional curriculum delivery experience and educational leadership and HR knowledge and experience. Should any further skills gaps be identified from the current skills audit exercise, these would be factored in. It was agreed that any recruiter be asked to consider seeking to attract candidates from local communities including Moroccan and Polish as part of the brief.</p>	<b>DoG</b>
<b>2023-24 3/10</b>	<b>Financial Statements 22/23 and Associated reports</b>	
	<p><u>Summary position</u></p> <p>The summary paper which had been circulated from the Deputy Principal Corporate Resources explaining the end of year financial reports and associated requirements overall was welcomed by governors as a clear explanation of the requirements.</p> <p><u>Regularity Self- Assessment Questionnaire</u></p> <p>The questionnaire with its standard set of questions to be answered concerning regularity as put forward by the ESFA had been reviewed at the recent Audit Committee and was recommended to the Board for approval.</p> <p>The Completed questionnaire was <i>approved</i>.</p> <p><u>Audit Issues Report</u></p> <p>Nathan Coughlin, Partner at Bishop Fleming, joined the meeting to give a summary view of the Financial Statements Auditors position. The Audit Issues report from Bishop Fleming had been circulated previously.</p>	

Nathan reminded governors that it was a requirement from the Audit Code of Practice that the Board should hear directly from the Auditors about how the process of preparing the end of year accounts had been conducted. He reported that management had made significant efforts to make sure everything ran smoothly and high quality information had been provided to him and his team. He especially thanked the Deputy Principal Corporate Resources and the Head of Finance for ensuring this.

Nathan spoke about the pensions treatment in the Accounts and confirmed that his team had carried out some benchmarking to ensure assumptions were correctly made and the nil position on the balance sheet was appropriate. There was now slightly more work involved in the regularity audit they were required to carry out as checks had to be made concerning compliance with 'Managing Public Money.' There were no issues for the college but he advised that elsewhere in the sector where colleges were seeking to have letters of assurance approved when current loans were being renewed, these were proving difficult to obtain. A new Financial Handbook was expected to be issued in the Spring, bringing guidance together into one document.

This was the first year where the college's subsidiary was due for sign-off as part of the end of year exercise. There were no issues. The audit overall was very clean and prudent positions had been observed.

The Chair thanked Nathan Coughlin for his report at the meeting and the meeting *accepted* the Audit Issues report.

#### Letter of representation

The proposed letter of representation for signature, which was a standard letter, with no exceptional content, was *approved* for signature.

#### Audit Committee Annual Report to the Corporation

The annual report of the Audit Committee to the Corporation had been circulated previously.

The Committee Chair spoke to the report and especially commented on the welcome new membership during the year into the committee and the work of the committee in getting into the detail of risk examination.

The report was accepted.

#### Remuneration Committee Annual Report to the Corporation

The annual report of the Remuneration Committee had been circulated previously. The policies of the committee and the actions taken during the year were noted. The Chair commented that a meeting of the committee was due in the early new year to consider aligning the timing of payment of pay awards with other staff and the effect of the exceptional payment made to the college in September. The Board would be updated concerning this meeting when it next met in February. The annual report of the Remuneration Committee was accepted.

#### Members Report and Financial Statements 22/23

The Members Report and Financial Statements 22/23 had been circulated previously, having been reviewed by both the Finance and Resources and the

	<p>Audit Committees. The strong financial year being reported on and the position having met all financial objectives was warmly noted. Thanks to the Deputy Principal Corporate Resources and the Head of Finance were expressed concerning especially the clarity of the presentation of the accounts.</p> <p>The Board discussed the overall position of the finances. The Finance and Resources Committee was asked to review the forecast 5 year financial position as there were concerns about the messages of likely austerity for the public sector being expressed by government. It was noted that careful review of the college's cash position would be made and the opportunity to pay off the lease for accommodation at Salisbury, balanced against the capital works programme would be monitored.</p> <p>Governors asked questions concerning the performance of The Colleges Partnership as the Army was not in a current position to release so many recruits for training. It was understood there was to be a meeting in the Spring to review the likely position and the Army's general difficulties with recruitment. TCP was seeking to grow its direct contract work and the end point assessment subsidiary work was also growing, so there would be less reliance in future on the army contracts.</p> <p>The Members Report and Financial Statements for 22/23 year were <i>approved and agreed for signature and submission to the Education and Skills Funding Agency.</i></p>	<b>DPCR/ F&amp;R Cttee</b>
<b>2023- 24 3/11</b>	<b>Principal's Report (including safeguarding)</b>	
	<p>The Principal's report had been circulated previously. Key issues were all noted. He thanked governors for all their time given to the college recently in particular in attending QRR meetings and long service lunches.</p> <p>He commented that there had been considerable optimism at the recent AoC conference following additional funding and the public recognition by the government of the skills agenda.</p> <p>He flagged excellent student recruitment, with current ft numbers up over 400 on the previous year and over 250 up on funded places. Governors were very welcoming of this position, although asked questions concerning accommodating student numbers. College staff were actively considering the future consequences which may result from the introduction of the Advanced British Standard (ABS), with potential significantly to change the post 16 landscape overall and for the college to consider its long term curriculum structure. The Principal's election to Swindon and Wiltshire LEP Board and his appointment as Chair of Skills and Talents Group was noted.</p> <p>The positive work in establishing the Student Alliance and good work in carrying out pulse surveys with staff on workload were discussed.</p> <p>The safeguarding appendix report was noted, with the number of high cases reflected on. The safeguarding governor reported on his regular meetings with the safeguarding team, his review of the Central record and the MYConcern system, together with his satisfaction with the arrangements and operation.</p> <p>The Principal was thanked for his report.</p>	

<b>2023-24 3/12</b>	<b>Self-Assessment Report 22-23 and Quality Improvement Plan for approval as recommended by the Quality and Standards Committee</b>	
	<p>The Self- Assessment Report 22-23 and summary and Quality Improvement Plan had been circulated previously, together with a covering report. Governors were asked to reflect on whether the assessments accurately assessed the college against the Education Inspection Framework. The grades given matched those awarded by Ofsted at their visit in the year in November. The curriculum areas for improvement would be subject to deep dives – those in intensive care were:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Civil Engineering</li> <li>• Engineering and Manufacturing T Level</li> <li>• Autocare Technician (apprenticeship standard)</li> <li>• Criminology and Law L3</li> </ul> <p>It was noted that the intensive care process had been amended to be more course specific on those where progress was not being made. In discussion comments were made about the momentum for improvement and the various initiatives being employed. It was planned that High Needs should be assessing as 'good' by year end. Governors agreed that through the Quality and Standards Committee and in discussion at future Board meetings, they would particularly monitor the ongoing performance of the areas currently in intensive care, as listed above.</p> <p>Governors reviewed the Quality Improvement Plan, noting the new adult strategy and the impact of the English and Maths strategies. Governors commented on how pleasing it was to witness in a recent college visit students' ambitions in wanting to improve their abilities.</p> <p>The Quality Improvement Plan was received.</p> <p>The Self- Assessment Report for 22-23 year was <i>approved</i>.</p>	
<b>2023-24 3/13</b>	<b>Balanced Scorecard</b>	
	<p>A covering report and the latest balanced scorecard had been circulated previously. A revised, streamlined format to the scorecard had been developed and governors recorded their thanks to the Head of MIS and reporting for her work in assisting this process.</p> <p>Governors discussed the report including the increase in average group size and the improved sickness absence rate. There remained work to do to make improvements in staff PDR completion rates and significant improvement was anticipated.</p> <p>There was discussion concerning the ongoing difficulties in recruiting staff in skills shortage areas and the measures being used to try to assist improved recruitment. Alumni was an acknowledged good recruitment source.</p>	
<b>2023-24 3/14</b>	<b>Reports and any recommendations from committees</b>	
	<p><u>Report from Finance &amp; Resources Committee</u></p> <p>A summary report from the recent committee meeting held on 16 November 2023 from the committee chair had been circulated. The Committee Chair spoke in the meeting about the reassuring IT 'deep dive' in the committee which had examined the facilities available for use and the supporting infrastructure. The Committee had examined the possibility of sale of a parcel of land at Lackham and this work was ongoing, to ensure both that it would not</p>	

	<p>prejudice any future sales and checking its impact on reputation. The basis for the maintenance of the residential accommodation lease at Salisbury continued to be under review. The proposal to remain on the current Trowbridge site had been discussed earlier in the meeting.</p> <p>The Committee Chair was thanked for his report.</p> <p><u>Report from Quality and Standards Committee</u></p> <p>A summary report from the recent committee meeting held on 30 November 2023 from the committee chair had been circulated. The Committee had carried out a 'deep dive' into the support for English and Maths, had received a report on the Student Alliance and reviewed the Self-Assessment Report and Quality Improvement Plan.</p> <p>The HE Annual reporting had been a component of the meeting and reports had been agreed, fulfilling OfS requirements.</p> <p>The Committee Chair was thanked for her report.</p> <p><u>Report from Audit Committee</u></p> <p>A summary report from the recent committee meeting held on 28 November 2023 from the committee chair had been circulated. Key items at the meeting had been to consider the accounts and related documents, the new risk system and to have a report on cyber issues protections, which were reassuring. The discussion about risk had resulted in some changes to the assessment of cyber risk, as discussed earlier in the meeting.</p> <p>The Committee Chair was thanked for his report.</p>	
<b>2023-24 3/15</b>	<b>Management Accounts</b>	
	The latest available management accounts, period 2, which had been circulated previously were noted. There were no specific issues for comment, with the budget on track.	
<b>2023-24 3/16</b>	<b>Update on Governance Developments</b>	
	An update report on governance developments and progress with the Governance Action Plan which had been circulated previously were received. There had been an earlier discussion in the meeting concerning the recruitment process of new governors.	
<b>2023-24 3/17</b>	<b>Quality Improvement Plan 23-24 updates</b>	
	A current update to the Quality Improvement Plan had been circulated previously. This had been discussed in more detail at the Quality and Standards Committee and the actions were noted.	
<b>2023-24 3/18</b>	<b>Contributing to outstanding governance</b>	
	Governors were invited to comment on the extent of participation in the meeting. It was requested that notable celebrations be shared with governors in the meetings. It was agreed that at the meetings at the end of or following each term that an updating report on successes and celebrations be reported.	<b>P/CEO/DoG</b>



	The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and wished everyone a happy Christmas and a good New Year.	
<b>2023-24 3/19</b>	<b>Date of next Board meeting – 8 February 2024</b>	
	The next meeting was to be held at 17.00 at Chippenham campus.	