

**MINUTES OF A CORPORATION meeting
 held on Thursday 8 February 2024
 at 5.00 pm at Chippenham campus**

Present	Dr Carlton Brand (Chair), Ajay Nithyananthan, Brian Humphreys, Clive Barker, Daisy Agathine-Louise, Iain Hatt, Jenny Davies, Justin Purkis, Katie Walker, Lily Raynor-Blundell, Mags Patten (remote access), Oliver Leach (from item 5), Paul Fox, Philippa Gray (from item 5).
In Attendance	<i>Oliver Symons (Deputy Principal Curriculum and Quality), Steve Campion (Deputy Principal Corporate Resources), Heather Cross (Director of Governance) and Wendy Lloyd (Senior Executive Assistant).</i>

	Minute	Action
2023-24 4/1	Apologies for absence	
	Apologies were received from Harry Adam. As this would have been his last meeting, the Chair informed the meeting that he had written to Harry to thank him on behalf of the Board and the college for his 8 years of service as a governor.	
2023-24 4/2	Declarations of interest	
	Paul Fox reminded the meeting of his non-executive Director role at the RUH, Bath.	
2023-24 4/3	Chair's Introductory remarks	
	<p>The Chair opened the meeting by thanking SLT for the quality of slides and papers for the evening's meeting, which specifically addressed Board's presentational requests.</p> <p>He reported to the meeting on his recent activities in the college. He had recently undertaken learning walks in Travel & Tourism and Childcare. In both cases, it was good to see clear objectives shared at the start of lessons. He had attended an AoC meeting for Chairs and Vice Chairs; a Remuneration Committee, and a 'show and tell' external governance review event. He asked the Board to note that a sub-group of the Finance & Resources Committee had met recently, of which he had been a part, following the Board's decision that this sub-group be mandated finally to determine whether or not the PFI contract for the Salisbury student accommodation should be maintained. The sub-group had determined that notice should be given on the contract, having analysed the financial position. Governors thanked the sub-group for their work in considering the position and noted that notice had now been given on the contract and the college duly would be taking direct responsibility for managing the accommodation later in the year.</p> <p>The Chair had also joined a visit of RUH board members to the Trowbridge campus to explore offering the Associate Nursing foundation degree (as at</p>	

	<p>the Salisbury campus). A follow up meeting was scheduled for the following week.</p> <p>The Chair also informed governors about upcoming events he was planning to attend - including the Apprenticeship Awards' Ceremony (22 February), the Annual Strategic Conversation with the DfE/ESFA (6 March), the signing of the Armed Forces Covenant (15 March at Tilshead) and the CMG residential in Salisbury (19 – 20 March).</p> <p>He informed the meeting that the college had been successful in gaining free support from the DfE for the recruitment of one new governor, which was to be supported by the company Peridot, retained by the DfE for this work.</p> <p>The Chair encouraged governor attendance at QRRs (4 and 5 March) as well as curriculum plan sign off meetings later the same month, which would provide good opportunities for governor oversight of the curriculum.</p>	
2023-24 4/4	Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising	
	<p><u>Minutes of the meeting held 14 December 2023</u></p> <p>The minutes of the meeting of the meeting held on 14 December 2023, which had been circulated previously, were approved as a true record of the meeting subject to the inclusion in attendance of Jenny Davies and Paul Fox.</p> <p><u>Matters arising</u></p> <p>The Principal/CEO provided an update on the confidential item discussed at the previous meeting concerning Doric Park(2023-24 3/6). He informed governors that Trowbridge Town Council has decided not to proceed with the project and therefore there was no scope for the college to consider use of sports facilities in that location. In due course the delivery of sports courses in the north of the county would need to be considered.</p>	
2023-24 4/5	People Strategy – First Year Performance Review and Year Two Proposed Developments	
	<p>The Chair welcomed Gail Larkin, Head of HR to the meeting. A presentation summarising the first year's performance of the People Strategy against its objectives had been circulated previously. Gail presented each aim of the People Strategy and governors asked questions.</p> <p>The significant improvement of the HR Team was discussed which was now self-assessed as 'Good', with the reputation of the team significantly enhanced across college. In answer to a question, Gail explained that the team comprised 11 members. The Principal/CEO paid tribute to Gail's work in transforming previous issues in the team, with work undertaken on career development and the introduction of iTrent as the new HR system as two examples. The Chair thanked her for her work to date.</p> <p>Theme 1 (Recruitment & Retention): New iTrent system has gone live and whilst manager training was ongoing and there were still some teething issues, the system considerably improved the processes both for candidates and managers. 'Stay' questionnaires had been sent out to current employees with 29 responses received to date, asking staff who had worked at the college for some time what features made them want to stay doing so. The college had signed up to Armed Forces job board.</p>	

Theme 2 (Rewarding & Recognising High Performance): A complete overhaul of staff benefits and a new rewards' package had been introduced. The pay structure had been changed with increments to Grades 3 and 4. A recognition system (We are Celebrating) was now available in iTrent which included sending cards for special occasions and the ability to recognise exceptional work with a voucher.

Theme 3 (Health & Wellbeing): An Executive Director was undertaking Senior Wellbeing Team Lead training. Staff benefits now included access to healthcare support. Future plans included reviewing the college's occupational health provider. Data will be collected to ensure these actions are making a difference. In response to a question about whether the benefits were potentially available to students, the HR Director confirmed there are plans to link the student and staff wellbeing offer in the future.

Theme 4 (Leading and Inspiring People and Managing Performance): The college PDR form had been updated and completion was up on last year (over 30% increase). Developments for year 2 included the introduction of an electronic PDR form and a leadership training and coaching programme for CMG, with the long term aim of CMG members being coaches. A governor offered a contact of a company used successfully for coaching in a large organisation with which he was connected where good links might be established to support the college's coaching programme.

Theme 5 (Building Capability and Continuous Improvement): Digital literacy benchmarking was to take place as part of the current month's staff development days. A successful EDI session had taken place during the October staff development days. Staff inductions had returned to in-person sessions. The plan for year 2 was to implement a Learning Management System for all staff which will provide data on learning to SLT and CMG.

Theme 6 (Empowering and Involving People): The June staff survey identified key themes including pay, career development, workload. In response, a workload task and finish group was set up. A pulse survey on communication had been carried out with over 270 responses (currently being reviewed). CMG had a very successful EDI training session with an external trainer. A staff inclusion network and calendar had been set up with themes to celebrate throughout the year. Termly campus conversations with HR were taking place. More consistent EDI training is planned for Year 2 as well as setting up staff networks. HR will continue to improve data collection. Governors questioned what was being done as a result of the staff survey and in response it was explained that high level results and key themes have been fed back to staff via SLT briefings. "You said, we did" feedback will continue. Feedback had been broken down into faculties / departments. Staff were encouraged to attend team meetings. Results of surveys / task groups were to be brought back to CMG for review. The Principal confirmed that in the next round of QRR meetings HoFs would be asked about career development plans for their staff and this would then continue as a regular feature.

Governors strongly welcomed such a range of positive activities and they positively encouraged continued investment in coaching as being the most likely future activity to produce results. They also encouraged the re-coupling of survey outcomes to KPIs so that results can be seen to flow out. The Principal confirmed that the 'People' elements in the Balanced Scorecard

	<p>were the same as in the People Strategy. He was currently in dialogue with an external leadership coach to work with the college.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the HR Director for her very clear presentation outlining what had been achieved and what plans are in place for the 2nd year of the People Strategy with very positive work being undertaken. All governors joined him in commending the college's ongoing work in this area.</p>	
2023-24 4/6	Risk Review	
	<p>The top ten risks report had been circulated previously.</p> <p>The Chair commented on a recent incident at a local hospital where the hospital site had been put into lockdown following a report of someone on the premises wielding a knife and he asked what would help the college to prepare for a similar incident to this, whilst of course hoping that it would never occur. The Principal confirmed that this scenario had been considered before and was regularly discussed by the Access Control Group (set up at the start of this academic year). It was noted that the Deputy Principal Corporate Resources had dealt with emergency planning in the past, including at a previous college and governors were reminded about the college's Major Incident Plan / Business Continuity Plan. A WhatsApp group for communications in emergencies had been set up and a number of measures were being introduced to control access including in the Tech Centre at Trowbridge and at Salisbury access control limiting access beyond reception without a pass. At Trowbridge additional fencing at the site perimeter was planned to be erected to seek to control anti-social behaviour at the weekends. It was requested that this area be captured on the risk register appropriately.</p> <p>It was noted that the updated Register was reviewed by SLT in January and would be considered by the Audit Committee at its forthcoming meeting scheduled on 27 March. The key risk of student transport was discussed because Wiltshire Council had alerted the college at the end of 2023 to the intended removal of all student transport to Lackham from September 2024. This would pose challenges for students going from Year 1 to Year 2 and would also have impacted promotion of some courses which had been going well at recent open events. Governors were very pleased to hear that the Principal and Deputy Principal Corporate Resources recently met senior members of the Council and had been given a verbal assurance that transport would be maintained from next September, at the Council's cost. It was agreed that the residual risk remained high and governors commended the ongoing planning for future years which was being undertaken. Options such as a shuttle bus from Chippenham continued to be reviewed and further information would be brought to future Board meetings. In response to a question the Deputy Principal Corporate Resources confirmed that transport costs would be factored into the budget for 2025/26 as a precaution. Governors noted that the Doric Park project has been removed from the register.</p> <p>The Audit Committee Chair noted that the Workforce capability risk had reduced. This had been a useful discussion topic at the Autumn term Audit Committee. He asked governors to let him know if they would like any other specific deep dive topics at the next Audit Committee.</p> <p>The Deputy Principal Corporate Resources was congratulated on the clear format of the register. Risks generally fell into 2 categories: Reputational or</p>	<p>DPCR</p> <p>DPCR</p> <p>Governors</p>

	<p>Financial. Transport was, understandably, high on the list because of the short timeframe originally given by the Council for their policy change.</p> <p>Governors asked questions about the relationship between residual scores and risk appetite and at what point a risk would fall outside of the risk appetite. It was agreed that the Deputy Principal Corporate Resources and Justin Purkis would look at mapping this relationship.</p>	DPCR / JP
2023-24 4/7	Strategic Plan – Cross-cutting Themes Performance Review	
4/7.1	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	
	<p>An annual report giving the performance of the college concerning equality, diversity and inclusion had been circulated previously. The Vice Principal Curriculum & Student Experience (VP) was welcomed to the meeting to speak to the report. A SWOT analysis has been carried out to identify cross-cutting themes in the Strategic Plan to which the action plan will be aligned.</p> <p>The three elements of the Public Sector Equality Duty were reviewed via the report included in the Board pack. A great deal of work was being carried out with SEND students to ensure equity of opportunity with their peers. The Student Alliance was playing a key part in how the college makes its students feel included. Celebratory events and the inclusion calendar are important strands of this aim. Creative Arts, Media & Performance had shared resources used with their students. Feedback received from Hairdressing students had now been incorporated into the curriculum. Early Years' students also have a key role to play in promoting EDI to the young children with whom they come into contact. A governor commented that it was great that departments have been asked for actual examples and good to see their specific responses. The governor asked if there were any weak curriculum areas. The VP responded concerning the managerial action taken to assist staff to develop, with all staff development days including sharing of best practice, the Director of Teaching, Learning & Assessment feeding back any weaknesses picked up during learning walks and staff were then linked to colleagues in other areas if they need support embedding EDI into their curriculum. The governor noted that there may sometimes be a general level of fatigue around EDI and asked whether that had been found in college? The VP agreed there are points in time when that could be felt but generally college staff are passionate about EDI. The Deputy Principal Curriculum & Quality commented that the aim is always how to deliver EDI in naturally-occurring situations. There was confidence that all staff aim to be inclusive.</p> <p>Governors commented that the reporting of the alignment to equality legislation was really helpful and it was good to see how staff could unleash their creativity in the area of EDI. Governors asked how the staff see EDI as different concepts and how success was being measured. This will be monitored via the action plan's clear impact measures. Progress will be brought back to the Board later in the year.</p> <p>Governors asked whether EDI training was having a real impact. It was confirmed that trainers were thoroughly scrutinised and the most recent training session for CMG had been very well-received. The Director of HR had experience of hiring trainers which brought increased impact as a result and she was a valued addition to the EDI group. Staff governors commented that EDI was increasingly discussed on a day-to-day basis and the recent CMG training had indeed been very useful.</p>	VP C & SE

	<p>The Chair requested that some further discussion at the Board awayday in May on this subject may be useful. He also noted that the Board was lacking diversity in terms of some local populations and he was keen to understand why that should be the case and whether that might be remedied.</p> <p>The Principal/CEO commented that transition from school to college for SEND students needed to take priority in the High Needs' action plan. Receiving better information in advance of admission of these students to college would ensure the reasonable adjustments needed could be readily in place to support their learning. The Deputy Principal Curriculum & Quality had run a workshop that day with the college team concerning this.</p> <p>The Board thanked the Vice Principal Curriculum and Student Experience for her report.</p>	DoG
2023-24 4/7.2	Digital Excellence in Teaching and Learning	
	<p>The Chair welcomed the Director of Teaching Learning & Assessment to the meeting (Dir TLA) and his presentation had been circulated previously to give an update. Governors heard about the resources, including advisers and lead staff, being assigned to digital excellence to support both staff and students. An Advanced Skills Development programme was planned.</p> <p>Governors asked questions concerning the measurement of staff IT literacy and the impact on students. Benchmarking was planned at the forthcoming staff development day. Staff had been overwhelmingly positive about moving from Moodle to Teams and away from server to cloud storage. The HE student governor confirmed that moving to cloud storage had made a positive difference from a student viewpoint.</p> <p>New software for students to communicate with their teachers was being utilised and licensing covered all students and staff at home via Teams, so no-one should be disadvantaged by being without access.</p> <p>A staff governor commented that staffroom conversations would often include how to use technology to provide work solutions. The Dir TLA confirmed that the college only sees very minimal reluctance in technology usage. Quality Leads are digital experts and work with teachers on how to maximise their use of technology. The use of the immersive classroom facilities at Salisbury and Trowbridge were very popular indeed. The College had just invested in TeacherMatic to help with lesson planning, with support from training sessions and an ongoing consultation group.</p> <p>The Dir TLA outlined upcoming projects: Tech Trowbridge, the High Needs campaign and Wiltshire Business School in Lackham House. Capital projects were also being designed to replicate the 'digital' approach in industry. In response to a question about the possible use of drone technology for construction, it was confirmed that virtual reality was regularly being considered in a number of areas of the curriculum. A governor commented that they had recently attended a presentation from JISC and asked about the extent to which students may be using AI to create their work. Whilst noting that there was no foolproof system which could fully detect the use of AI, the college was intending to harness tools available without undermining the quality of education and also recognising the extensive benefits that AI could bring to a whole range of college activities, but also being aware that nationally much work was needed concerning assessment processes.</p>	

	The Director of Teaching, Learning and Assessment was thanked for his highly informative and thought provoking presentation.	
2023-24 4/7.3	Sustainability	
	<p>An annual report on sustainability prepared by a consultant employed by the college, together with reference material on the carbon footprint of the farm had been circulated previously.</p> <p>Governors were reminded that the college adopted the FE Climate Action Roadmap in 2022 and was aiming to become a 'Leading' college in sustainability by year 5 of the Strategic Plan. A number of actions taken were noted from the report.</p> <p>Net zero targets for 2030 were reviewed together with next steps and key priorities for 24/25 were reviewed. Construction staff had started training in alternative technologies. Resourcing for an ongoing sustainability lead in the college staff was under discussion, whilst recognising the clear value that such a post would bring. One potential option under investigation was to share resources with other public sector partners.</p> <p>The Deputy Principal Curriculum & Quality confirmed that every student will receive sustainability training as part of every course. There will be a link to the Student Alliance, including projects where students can see the clear benefit. The Alliance will also ensure national campaigns are celebrated. It was agreed that it would be beneficial for the Board to have a lead governor for this area and he invited any governor interested to put their name forward.</p> <p>In discussion governors welcomed the forward-thinking in terms of curriculum and encouraged the intent for staff to revisit what aspects of their curriculum would lend itself to sustainability. It was questioned where sustainability matters were assigned at committee, but given the span of the issue it was not intended to allocate this at present.</p> <p>The Chair confirmed the close link to the Estates' Strategy which will be reviewed at the governor awayday in May.</p>	DPCR
2023-24 4/8	Principal's Report (including safeguarding).	
	<p>The Principal's Report had been circulated previously.</p> <p>From his report he highlighted increased student applications and successful open days which continued to be popular and well-attended. Applications continued to be above the levels this time last year.</p> <p>An Ofsted monitoring visit was still awaited on residential accommodation and good work had been carried out by the college to improve access control further on the Lackham campus.</p> <p>The Principal drew the meeting's attention to the requirement for the Accountability Agreement to be approved by the end of May which would run alongside BusinessWest writing an updated Skills Improvement Plan. In an updated document produced by the DfE in December, a requirement was now placed on the governing body to comment on how the local skills' need is being met by the curriculum. Governor attendance at curriculum planning meetings will contribute to this requirement. It was also a requirement to</p>	

	<p>meet other governing bodies. The college will be making contact with other providers to discuss the curriculum offer in the region.</p> <p>The Deputy Principal Curriculum & Quality highlighted approval of the Nursing Associates programme in partnership with Coventry University. GCSE English resits had gone well (c100 passes). Maths numbers were slightly down (43 passes). In response to a question concerning the continuation of the Get Further programme, it was commented that the programme continued in this year and its longer term usage was dependent on the availability of future additional DfE tuition funding.</p> <p>It was noted that Apprenticeship starts, which had dropped considerably during the pandemic, were continuing to go well and were on track to hit target of 735 starts this year.</p> <p>The Principal drew attention to the update on subcontracting with The Colleges' Partnership contract variation having been given approval by the ESFA.</p> <p>The Deputy Principal Corporate Resources gave an update on the many capital projects (£15m expenditure) being undertaken between now and the summer. A project manager had been appointed at Salisbury to free up the Head of Estates to concentrate on projects in the north. Mitie had been appointed as the contractor for works at Salisbury which were to be carried out floor by floor. They are also the appointed contractor for the new Healthcare zone on that campus. YoYo Construction Ltd had been appointed for the Tech Trowbridge project.</p> <p>The governing body asked the DPCR to pass on their thanks to the Head of Estates for work on the capital projects. Thanks are also to be passed on to the Head of Finance for her finance work in support of these.</p> <p>The DPCR highlighted the current financial position. The college had originally forecast a £576K surplus but governors had already been made aware of the possibility of some exceptional in-year growth funding and as a result the surplus should now be c£800k. Under lagged funding rules, this would carry into a larger allocation for next year.</p> <p>The Principal reported on a near-miss accident at Lackham at the end of January involving a tractor and trailer driven by a student. Two students were taken to hospital for minor injuries and discharged the same day. The accident was being investigated by the Health & Safety Manager. No vehicles were currently being driven by students during the course of the investigation. Risk assessments were being updated accordingly. In future, students would no longer be able to drive tractors with fellow students in the trailer.</p> <p>It was confirmed that SLT continue to receive a weekly safeguarding report. The safeguarding link governor highlighted the recent DfE consultation on gender and confirmed that the Director of Safeguarding and Student Services had shared a draft college procedure with him. The Principal commented that there will be costs involved in implementing the procedure and work continued in this area.</p>	<p>DPCR / WL</p>
<p>2023-24 4/9</p>	<p>Student Alliance Report.</p>	
	<p>The FE Student governor gave a report on many good events which the Student Alliance was supporting such as the Red Cross collections on</p>	

	<p>International Migrant Day, the Odd socks campaign during Anti-bullying week. The Student Alliance also helped prepare marketing materials for Appren-T-Fests. An EDI Group was starting up comprising 25 volunteers from every campus. The Alliance aimed to start up clubs, societies and possibly sports teams, commencing with a couple on every campus.</p> <p>In response to a question it was confirmed that students held sustainability high on the agenda and were involved in various practical actions to support.</p> <p>Additional seating around the campuses had been improved as a result of this being raised as an issue and complaints concerning the suitability of some laptops provided with adequate software for their purpose had been followed up. Key actions on wellbeing were also being taken to support students.</p> <p>Work on the Student Alliance branding had been completed, making use of college colours. The branding was being used to spread the word about the Student Alliance. There will be dedicated lanyards for Student Alliance members and improved signage to support its initiatives. Communication with students will be via their Personal & Social Development (PSD) sessions and will enable them to voice their concerns and make suggestions.</p> <p>SLT focus groups with the Student Alliance had been scheduled on every campus after half term.</p> <p>A weekly student bulletin was being planned to be distributed via the PSD team to improve communication and let students know what is available.</p> <p>A governor commented that Teams will be an effective way of communicating what is taking place and when. The DPCR confirmed that a new App is also available for this purpose.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the Student President for a very well-constructed presentation and welcomed the developments which were taking place.</p>	
2023-24 4/10	Balanced Scorecard.	
	<p>The balanced scorecard report had been circulated previously. The Deputy Principal Corporate Resources highlighted that although the sickness rate had improved in the previous report, this had now returned to red. Unfilled vacancies have turned green for the first time this academic year. Vacancies in the lower pay grades had reduced following the pay award. SLT had oversight of which vacancies were longstanding and steps were being taken to advertise these vacancies differently. In some areas, eg Construction and Engineering, it remained challenging to fill the vacancies even with agency staff.</p> <p>Governors thanked the Deputy Principal for his report and commended the actions being taken to address key indicators which needed improvement whilst welcoming the favourable position on many of the indicators.</p>	
2023-24 4/11	Management Accounts	
	<p>The latest Management Accounts had been circulated previously and were reviewed and received. The key position on the current financial situation had been discussed earlier under the Principal's report.</p>	

2023-24 4/12	Revised Key HR Policies – Disciplinary and Grievance – for approval.	
	Revised Disciplinary and Grievance policies which had been circulated were Approved. .	WL
2023-24 4/13	Update on Governance Developments.	
	As noted under Item 1.4 (Matters Arising).	
2023-24 4/14	Any Other Business.	
	There was no other business.	
2023-24 4/15	Contribution to outstanding governance.	
	The Chair requested governors' reflections on this evening's meeting. Governors thought that the papers were very good with consistency and cross-referencing in the papers very helpful. Governors agreed that 3 visiting presenters was, perhaps, too ambitious and in future the number should be confined to two as far as possible. The Chair thanked everyone for a good meeting.	
2023-24 4/16	Date of next Board meeting – Thursday 9 May 2024 at 4pm (part of Strategy 'Awayday' and evening 9/10 May).	
	The date of the next meeting as previously determined was noted. The venue for the 'awayday' would be communicated once this was decided.	