MINUTES OF THE
CORPORATION MEETING
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 10th DECEMBER 2014 AT 6.00 P.M.
MEETING 14/02

Present: Randall Anderson, Michael Bailey, Teresa Carter,
Kevin Claxton, Ayas Fallon-Khan, Elaine French, Philip Harland,
Simon Lindfield, Ted Lucas, Nigel Marshall, Cathy McDonnell, Janice
Robinson, Nico Trunz

In Attendance: Jill Arnold, Nicolas Carr, Simon Hinks, Jill Sawyer, Louise Pennington

Apologies received: Anton Pruden

In the Chair: Janice Robinson

1. Welcomes and Apologies for Absence

Apologies – as recorded above.

Welcomes – Cathy McDonnell (Parent Governor)

2. Membership Matters

Janice Robinson reminded Governors that following William Deighan’s resignation as a Community Governor earlier in the term that the Search and Governance Committee would be considering his replacement, ideally with someone with Higher Education experience. She advised that at its last meeting, the Committee reviewed the options available and confirmed that the Search and Governance Committee members (Janice Robinson, Kevin Claxton and Philip Harland) recommended to Corporation that Jane Alderton (previously co-opted Member of the Curriculum and Standards Committee until 31st December 2013) be appointed as a Community Governor for a four year term of office. The Corporation approved the recommendation. **ACTION: Janice Robinson/Louise Pennington**

Janice Robinson also reported that within the last week, Norma Williams had submitted her resignation and she confirmed that the Search and Governance Committee would review the vacancy at its next meeting and make recommendations to Corporation's March 2015 Meeting. The Corporation recorded its thanks to Norma Williams for her long service to the College, both as co-opted Member of the HR Committee and latterly as Community Governor. **ACTION: Janice Robinson/Louise Pennington**

The Corporation approved the appointment of Cathy McDonnell as the new Parent Governor with immediate effect for a two year term of office until 31st December 2016, following her election as Parent Governor. **ACTION: Louise Pennington**
3. Declaration of Interest

None recorded.

4. Minutes of the Meeting on 15th October 2014

The minutes were approved by Corporation and the Chair authorised to sign these as a correct record of the meeting.

5. Matters Arising and Action Points – Progress Report

The contents of the action points’ schedule were noted and Governors were advised which actions had been completed. An update was given to Governors regarding progress with those actions not yet completed or updated since preparation of the Actions’ Schedule, as recorded below:

- Governors’ Links Day was held on 2nd December 2014 – refer Chair’s feedback below.

- College Development Plan – Update dashboard of key indicators – on-going. **ACTION: Philip Harland/Janice Robinson**

- Strategic Planning Seminar – 16th February 2015.

- Child Protection/Safeguarding – LA Course for interested Governors – booked for Simon Lindfield (2nd December) and Janice Robinson (9th December); Kevin Claxton – to be agreed. **ACTION: Louise Pennington**

- Governors’ Mid-Term Seminar was held on 25th November 2014 (topic College Self-Assessment Report).

- Health and Safety Annual Tour of College by Designated Governor (Kevin Claxton) – held on 2nd December during Links Visit.

- Item 9) ii) a) IQR – Update – Philip Harland advised Governors that following unsuccessful discussions with the Unions, CET had decided that the matter would be managed via the existing procedures in place regarding capability, performance management and the current SAR.

The action schedule will be revised accordingly for the next meeting. **ACTION: Louise Pennington.**

6. Chair’s Report

Janice Robinson confirmed that she would report on the feedback from the Links visits within the Search and Governance Report below.
7. Principal’s Report

    a) Incident involving a Student – refer to Part II minutes

    b) New Timetable: Various concerns have been brought to the attention of CET by Staff and Students and although it will be impossible to resolve all issues to the satisfaction of everyone, CET are working on the basis of retaining the new timetable but with some minor adjustments.

8. Student Governors’ Report

Nico Trunz and Ted Lucas gave the Student Governors’ Report with a focus upon the issues identified by student feedback regarding the timetable changes including insufficient study areas, single lesson allocation on some days for some students, Canteen opening hours, variable lunch breaks, earlier start time, more than one teacher per subject area with associated inconsistencies regarding approach towards homework deadlines etc. Philip Harland responded to the various issues also noting that staffing concerns had to be taken into account too. Elaine French explained that she would be meeting with Pabulum to discuss the catering issues and confirmed that the opening times would be brought forward to 8.20 a.m. to cater for earlier start time for Students.

9. Audit

Randall Anderson presented the Audit Committee papers to Corporation and also referred Governors to the detail arising from the meeting, included within the Audit Committee Minutes (item k). The following items were considered, taking into account the Audit Committee minutes and approved by the Corporation and comments recorded below.


    b) Annual Report and Financial Statements – taking into account the financial dashboard below in item 10) a), the paper was approved.

    c) Audit Completion Report – approved.

    d) Letter of Representation – approved.

    e) Regularity Audit Letter – approved.

    f) Internal Assurance Performance Review (Mazars) – approved.

    g) Risk Management Report – approved.

    h) Assurance Map Update and Risk Gross to Net Analysis – approved. Randall Anderson reminded Governors about the change in internal audit where Colleges are no longer required to have an Internal Audit. As a result of this Colleges have prepared risk assurance maps to provide a reasonable level of assurance to Governors that the College is not running an unacceptable level of risk. The work carried out by the Audit Committee to date was noted and Governors accepted that they were required to ensure sufficient challenge to enable adequate assurance to be achieved. Randall Anderson drew Governors attention in particular to the Governance Oversight column in respect of the Corporation and Audit Committee and the level of assurance per major risk areas were noted. It was reiterated that Governors should be content with the various assumptions given and the level of risk retained by the College. Regarding the discussion and consideration of emerging risks, it was resolved that instead of including a question to this effect for all
Governors to consider on the risk assurance map, a statement should be included on the Significant Risks page of the Corporation Meeting Agendas (“Do you foresee any other risks?”), so that at every meeting, Governors would have a reminder and opportunity to raise suggestions or queries relating to potential emerging risks. This could also include any potential new risks identified by Managers. It was also suggested that an additional column could be added to the schedule entitled “Emerging Risks”. It was resolved that any potential emerging risk could be raised at each Audit Committee and included within the Risk Register on a termly basis, additionally with an annual review at the Risk Group Meeting in the Summer Term. At this point the Corporation noted the potential “radicalisation” risk and Randall Anderson explained some of the issues within the sector relating to this, including Ofsted’s approach. ACTION: Philip Harland/Nicholas Carr

i) Anti-Bribery Policy – approved.

j) Anti-Fraud and Irregularity Policy – approved.

k) Minutes of Meeting held on Wednesday 26th November 2014 – the contents were noted by Governors and recommendations were endorsed.

10. Finance

Nicholas Carr presented the Finance reports to the Corporation and the following points were recorded:

a) Financial Dashboard and Executive Summary – October 2014

The dashboard has been revised since the last Corporation meeting in October to include one additional month’s figures (period 3 compared to period 2 presented at October meeting). No material changes have been identified and the projected deficit to the year end remains at (£78,000).

b) Property Matters including CIF Bid and BCIF Reconciliation and Risk Update

The Corporation noted the contents of the current BCIF progress and risk reports, presented by Nicholas Carr, the latter of which was prepared by the Project Manager. He explained the EFA’s requirements to submit monthly expenditure returns and confirmed that the project was due to finish on time by the end of February/1st week of March 2015.

In respect of the new CIF which replaces the BCIF, Philip Harland tabled a diagram of proposals for consideration regarding the development of the College’s master property plan. He summarised the key features of the new fund which now applies to FE Colleges, Schools and Academies, namely:

- Funding applications may be made in respect of either condition priorities (i.e. category D) or expansion priorities (in respect of increasing student numbers, including the need to address a lack of, or the suitability of, key specialist facilities such as science laboratories or sports hall).
- Capital funding bids may be between £8,000 and £4M per project application and there is a limit of 2 projects per College (one of which may be expansion), with the duration of the project able to extend over 1 year, unlike BCIF. The overall fund is in the region of £0.5 bn with over 4,000 institutions eligible to apply.
The next phase of the College’s site re-development plan would involve the development of the North Quad next to the Hutchings Wing and Philip Harland also referred to his last presentation to Governors. This would involve replacing the pre-fab buildings either in one phase or three, with a block of 20 teaching classrooms and also with an option to include a Sports Hall Development.

Philip Harland explained the proposal to split one overall project into two separate projects owing to the cost limitations - with the first half relating to condition only (replacing the pre-fab structures) involving the introduction of a 12 classroom, 2 floor structure; the existing mobile classrooms would be retained (but re-sited) until the new structure had been completed. This specific project would cost in the region of £2.5M plus VAT, fees, fixtures and fittings but subject to value engineering. The works would involve the introduction of an internal access road behind the College buildings (costing approximately £100,000). It was unclear whether the EFA would approve this project within the current criteria.

The second part of the overall project would include laboratory space provision, possible student social space, canteen outlet and bathrooms, costing approximately £2M. It had been hoped that a sports hall option could be added to this second part of the project, but the current funding provision would not enable this to be included presently. Likely problems arising from a Sports Hall development were discussed including Sport England support.

The proposals are at Stage B so the College has not yet reached the Tender stage and the aim would be to submit a planning application in March/April 2015, if the bid application is successful. Governors were reminded that the College’s broad long term Property plans have been shared and acknowledged by the Local Planning Department.

It was also recorded that the EFA would give priority to those Colleges willing to include loan arrangements within the overall project costs, with an expectation of £250,000 loan per College. However it was noted that aspect would have to be reviewed by Governors if the bid submission was granted.

Taking into account the points made above, the Corporation approved the recommendation that the 2 projects, as detailed above, should be submitted to the EFA, noting that the deadline was 19th December 2014. ACTION: Philip Harland

c) EFA Assessment of College Financial Plan 2014-2015

Governors noted that the College’s financial health assessment had been endorsed by the EFA.

d) Key Financial Performance Indicators for SFCs

Janice Robinson introduced the paper to Corporation and explained that the information contained therein has been taken by the EFA from all SFCs’ submitted financial forecasts. It was agreed that the document may be a useful annual return to remind Governors of key financial details, comparisons with other Colleges and highlight potential areas of concern. The high percentage of staff costs as percentage of income, compared to the SFC sector average was highlighted. It was noted that some issues could be included in the discussions to be held at the next Strategic Planning Event in February 2015. The points score matrix colour coding was noted and in particular that Varndean was within the good
and outstanding categories for 2011/2012 to 2015/2016, except year 2012/2013 which has achieved a satisfactory score (yellow code). Following a query from Governors, Philip Harland agreed to enquire which College’s had been classified as red, being inadequate.

**ACTION: Philip Harland**

11. Curriculum and Standards

i) Quality of Teaching and Learning

a) College SAR

Philip Harland presented the College Self-Assessment Report (SAR) to the Corporation, noting that the draft document had been discussed in some detail with Governors who attended the mid-term seminar earlier this term. The following points were made:

- Outcomes for Students – graded Good.
- Quality of Teaching Learning and Assessment – graded Good.
- Effectiveness of Leadership and Management – graded Good.
- The self-assessment judgements on pages 5 – 10 and the key date on page 11, which supported the grade decisions, were noted.
- In response to a query from Governors, Philip Harland reiterated the self-assessment process including lesson observations, analyses of results, retention, success rates, value added, progression etc. and that student feedback was considered before the final conclusion was reached. The process was then moderated involving the Head of School and Simon Hinks, Assistant Head of School.
- The cluster analyses emailed to Governors prior to the meeting, which supported the SAR, were also noted and that the student feedback analysis had not yet been completed.
- Last year the grades achieved were also Good and CET confirmed that the process overall had improved, although it was thought not yet sufficiently to be able to achieve an Outstanding grade. Approximately 82% of provision has been graded as Good or better with the College’s success rate for long course provision being 84.5% compared to 75% and 81.9% respectively, for the previous year. Success rates are also in line with the SFC sector benchmark 50th percentile and value added calculated via the ALPS system, is excellent at AS Level and very good at A Level; Governors welcomed the improvement in the valued added position compared to that achieved last year.
- Page 4 of the Report – “What do we need to do to improve?” – 6 areas highlighted including increasing the overall proportion of students completing their courses successfully; increasing the amount of outstanding teaching and learning; monitor more closely those areas identified as requiring improvement or inadequate; scrutinise any underperformance by teachers or teaching teams; develop high quality self-assessment and self-evaluation; develop the College via the refinement of the three year strategy to support capital redevelopment. Philip Harland also mentioned the Internal Quality Review (IQR) which CET had not managed to implement successful owing to concerns raised by staff. He explained that existing College policies for staff performance review etc, would continue to be utilised instead.
Philip Harland summarised the main curriculum areas where there was still a need to improve but explained that there had been some improvements over the last year:
- Maths (Grade 2) – despite a decrease in achievement particularly at A Level, CET has proposed that there is sufficient evidence of improvements underway following a good EQR (External Quality Review) carried out earlier in the year.
- Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) (Grade 2) – a successful EQR was completed 3 weeks ago, although noting that again there is room for improvement in success rates.
- Business Studies – Grade 3 Requires Improvement, rather than Grade 4 Inadequate.

Taking into account the details above, the Corporation queried whether there were any particular concerns raised by students within the three areas above and Simon Hinks explained that the EQRs within MFL and Maths had taken account student input. However he reported that work was on-going to improve the above three areas and also that this would take account feedback from students. It was confirmed that students were able to identify specific teachers in their feedback if necessary. Following a request from the Corporation, it was noted that further analysis of Student feedback would be useful for Governors. **ACTION: Philip Harland**

Subject to the points made above, the College SAR was approved by Corporation.

12. Human Resources

a) Outcome of SFCA National Pay Negotiations

Philip Harland reminded Governors that the SFCA had concluded their national pay negotiations with the Unions on behalf of the sector earlier in the year (and reported to the October 2014 Corporation meeting, with a 1% pay rise for both teaching and support staff being agreed with effect from 1st September 2014. He also explained that the new pay scale for teaching staff which is to be closely aligned to the new performance management structure had been agreed by the Unions and that 72% of SFCs have endorsed this to date. It was noted that the SFCA new system was expected to be implemented for September 2016 which would mean that Colleges adopting the new system, would need to have the associated performance management standards in place from September 2015. Governors were advised that this had been discussed at Joint Consultative Committee (JCC). Philip Harland confirmed that further information would be presented to Governors in due course. **ACTION: Philip Harland**

13. Search and Governance

a) Self-Assessment (Governance SAR)

Janice Robinson presented the Governance SAR to the Corporation who endorsed the document and in particular the overall grade for Governance as Grade 2 Good. It was also noted that various suggestions arising from individual Governors’ 1:1 meetings with the Chair, had been incorporated into the SAR.
b) Governor Link Process

On the recommendation of the Search and Governance Committee, the draft process circulated at the last Corporation meeting, was approved, also noting that the Governor Links Day had taken place on 2nd December 2014, involving 6 Governors. At this point Janice Robinson reported on some of the key feedback from Governors and advised that she would be circulating a summary of the responses to her Links’ feedback questionnaire, completed by Governors. **ACTION: Louise Pennington/Janice Robinson**

The Corporation recorded thanks to the Staff and Students for their participation in the Governor Links Day.

c) Minutes of Meeting held on 19th November 2014

The contents of the minutes were noted and the recommendations recorded therein were approved, including the Freedom of Information Review recommendation and the Confidentiality Review recommendation. **ACTION: Louise Pennington**

14. Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 28th January 2015 at 6.00 p.m.

15. Any Other Business

Governors were reminded that the Strategic Planning Day would be held on Monday 16th February 2015 and that she would contact Governors shortly to determine whether there were any particular topics which could be considered for discussion on the day. **ACTION: Janice Robinson**

There was no other business.

16. Confidential Business – refer to separate Part II Minutes

Chair………………………………………………

Date………………………………………………

Louise Pennington 10/12/14