Minutes of Corporation Meeting No. 146

Monday 11th December 2023

Chair: M Atherton

Members Present: S Codling, Ian MacNaughton, M Atherton, K Finnigan, D Stebbings, J Owens, Jo Johnson, J Tallentire, D Morran, M Sherer, L Russell, G Callegari

In Attendance: Assistant Principals: J Cadman, I Fraser, A Frost, S Prince, G Rayner, N Goldsmith (Finance Manager), T O'Connor (Scrutton Bland)

Clerk: Charlotte Bowen

Members of the Corporation are both governors and trustees. For the purposes of these minutes and in the context that minutes are published on the website for public information, the generic term 'governor' has been used where it has been deemed appropriate to do so. Minute numbering follows the order of discussion

The Chair opened the meeting by welcoming everyone present. Attendees were made aware that virtual conferencing facilities would be in use throughout the meeting and that the meeting would be recorded to facilitate minute taking

146.1   Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Scott Townshend, S. Williams, D. Ruseski.

146.2   Any other business

Thanks were given to the two students governors for 2022-23. Damian had given apologies. Quentin was in attendance and was presented with a small gift.

146.3   Declaration of interest

None declared

146.4   Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes from meeting 145 were distributed prior to the meeting and taken as read. The minutes were approved as a true record.

146 .5   Student Reports

146.5 (i) The student governor report was circulated prior to the meeting and taken as read. The report was summarised during the meeting highlighting events co-ordinated by the College Council as well as actions they had taken in response to student feedback through out the year. A governor asked 'What pleased you most as Student Governor'. The response was the opportunity to build on leadership skills. Thanks, were again given to the student governors and the College Council for helping build a strong college community this academic year.

146.5 (ii) The new students' governors were in attendance as observers and their positions within the governing body was unanimously approved.

146.6   Audit matters

146.6 (i) The External Audit report was circulated prior to the meeting and taken as read. The report was presented as a 'clean' report with increases to some funds including tuition, trips and visits, catering and interest. A post Covid normalisation was noted. Cost increases were also highlighted including staff costs, gas and electric, and inflation. The increase of 5% to the teacher's pension scheme was noted along with a funding contribution which is in place for one year.

146.6 (ii) a correction to the agenda in relation to the report date was noted. The correct year for the Audit Committees annual report is 2022-23. The report was circulated prior to the meeting and taken as read. A discussion on the Risk Register document was held. The increased and ongoing risk to Cyber Security was highlighted. One governor asked if, the threat level could be moved from red to amber? It was discussed and decided that the risks to cyber security are constantly evolving making it difficult to reduce the level of threat to the college systems. A discussion was held regarding the need for a Business Recovery Plan to be in place. Although confident the College is working in excess of recommended guidelines a physical document needs to be created. The next Audit committee meeting was suggested as a deadline for a draft copy to be presented.

146.6 (iii) The Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year to July 2022 were circulated prior to the meeting and taken as read. Little change was reported. Attention was bought to the insurance claim on the caretaker's house which was paid out at £7000. There was an adjustment to the pension scheme which was expected.

Both the Annual report and Financial statements were approved.

146.6 (iv) Approval was unanimously given to the reconciliation of Financial statements to management accounts.

146.6 (v) The Audit regularity questionnaire was deferred at the September corporation meeting for review at the Audit Committee meeting in November. The audit committee presented their approval to the corporation.

The corporation unanimously approved the Audit regularity questionnaire.

Tim O'Connor left the meeting

146.7   Principals Strategic matters

146.7 (i) The Principals 3rd Autumn term report

The Principals 3rd Autumn term report was circulated prior to the meeting and taken as read. Some aspects were highlighted and some updates given;

The 2023-24 Financial year - The Principal highlighted the tough financial year in 2023-24 with the recent government Autumn Term Financial Statement communicating the framework of 'unprotected' government expenditure areas, including FE, experiencing further 17% real terms cut to funding over a three-year period 2024-2026. The specific 24/25 funding allocation notification is due late winter. Further cuts are in a context additional spending requirement needed for mental health support, curriculum changes and social service roles which are stretching already significantly under pressure resource levels.

ASLEF train strike – it was reported to governors that the recent one-day ASLEF train strike did not affect attendance too badly - with the vast majority of students attending college / their lessons.

Carol Concert – The college Carol Concert is scheduled for Tuesday 12th December at 19:00 with refreshments in the refectory following. Governors were also informed of dance performances taking

place at college on the 13th and 14th December and the annual Reunion and Awards ceremony being held at the Charter Hall on Tuesday 19th December at 19:00.

One governor questioned re. the potential progression of the caretaker's house site project and cost. When the application for planning permission was submitted in 2022/23 year the expected cost was approximately £4m. With inflation we would now expect current project costs to increase by a minimum of around 10%. Currently, unless substantive government capital funding is granted, the project is financially not feasible.

146.7 (ii) Principals Annual Report 2022/23

The Principals Annual Report was circulated prior to the meeting and taken as read.

The report is written holistically so differs from the self-assessment in that it focuses on the organisation as a whole.

This report is helpful for Governors to prepare for Ofsted and will providing of interest to governor's data. Admissions data, for example, provides information on the trends in recent years.

The context section has been simplified this year but, especially for newer governors, highlights how massive the resourcing cuts have been since 2009 – 60% of the real terms funding per student has now been taken away since 2009.

Context was also highlighted around the high proportion of students that fit into the category of 'Additional Needs' which could be SEND related, mental health related, safeguarding related or more increasingly socio economic related.

146.8   Strategic plan and priorities

146.8 (i) The cross-college SAR 2022-23 and QIP 2023-24 were circulated prior to the meeting and taken as read. Additions to the document, following feedback from the September corporation meeting, included extra evidence of works experience. The document also highlighted our strengths in ensuring the majority of students who came to College without a level 2 qualification in English then left with either a passing grade in GCSE English or Functional skills English. A discussion was held re. the improvements for students with a low Socio-economic background. This is an area recognised within college and is being addressed by the Stretch and Challenge TLC.

Both documents were approved.

146.9   Operational and Statutory reports

   (i)   Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

An updated version of the March 2023 EDI report for 2022-23 was circulated prior to the meeting and taken as read. Attention was drawn to the completed shared values poster and the work in supporting the College community code. A student on the College council will now attend all EDI working group meetings to ensure a student voice and representative is present.

No questions were asked at the end of the presentation.

17:45 Clarissa Ford left the meeting.

17:45 Graham Rayner joined the meeting.

   (ii)   Human Resources

In Sarah's absence the Chair drew attention to the approved pay awards for teaching staff and support staff that were paid in November and backdated to September.

(iiI) Finance

The October management accounts were circulated prior to the meeting at taken as read. Two amendments were noted. The first budget difference highlighted was the staffing pay increase which was expected to be included in the October pay run had been delayed until November. The second item mentioned was the increase in Higher Needs Funding which was better than expected.

Additional changes included a decrease in catering funds, and overspend on the marketing budget and the as and Electricity costs currently being under budget.

All amendments to the budget were approved by governors.

146.10 Governance Matters

(i) Governors Visit day – November 2023

A short discussion was held regarding the Governors visit day. It was decided the departmental summary reports should be sent to Charlotte Bowen for logging.

(ii) Membership Matters

(a) **Clerk –** A paper regarding the appointment of the new clerking service based in Wigan was circulated prior to the meeting and taken as read. We have been assigned Sophie Gardiner as our point of contact and clerk at the service.
(b) **Parent Governor Elections –** four applications have been received. The next stage which will include a vote will be on hold until the Wigan service are able to proceed.
(c) **Support Staff Governor –** two members of the support staff have submitted an application. A vote has been circulated to all member of support staff.

(iii) Search and Governance

The minutes from the 8th November Search and Governance meeting were circulated to Governors and taken as read.

The minutes were approved.

These minutes were approved by the Corporation on