

**Plumpton College**

**Minutes of the Corporation Meeting  
held on Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> December 2009**

- Present: Mike Atkinson - Governor (Chairman)  
 David James - Governor (Vice Chairman)  
 James Currin - Governor  
 Nigel Ellis - Governor  
 John Evans - Governor  
 Pat Foster - Governor  
 Julia Hadden - Governor  
 Christine Howe - Governor  
 Des Lambert - Governor / Principal  
 Judy Llewellyn-Burke - Governor  
 Richard Partridge - Governor  
 Stan Stanier - Governor  
 Denise Stokoe - Governor  
 Jeff Trunkfield - Governor
- In attendance: Jenny Brooker - Clerk  
 Chris Foss - Head of Wine Department  
 Geoff Gregory - Deputy Principal (Resources)  
 David Stokes - Deputy Principal (Academic & Quality)
- Apologies: Jeremy Courtney - Governor  
 David Evans - Governor  
 David Rafferty - Governor  
 Neil Ravenscroft - Governor  
 Val Wilkinson - Director of Finance & Administration

Meeting commenced at 5.00 pm

Minute no.		Action by whom	Action by when
<b>GOV/09/43</b>	<p><b>Talk by Chris Foss on the Wine Training Initiative</b></p> <p>Mr Foss provided a presentation on Wineskills - a Wine Training Initiative (see notes at Appendix 1).</p> <p>[Following the presentation Chris Foss left the meeting].</p>		
<b>GOV/09/44</b>	<p><b>Simon Bishop</b></p> <p>The Chairman asked that the Corporation's sadness at the tragic loss of Simon Bishop, Head of Netherfield, be placed on record. Some members of the Corporation had attended Simon's funeral and on behalf of the Corporation, Mr Atkinson had written to Simon's wife.</p>		

<b>GOV/09/45</b>	<b>Minutes of the Last Meeting</b>  <b>Agreed:</b> The minutes and confidential minutes of the meeting held on 29 <sup>th</sup> September 2009 be agreed and signed by the Chairman.	MA	15.12.09
<b>GOV/09/46</b>	<b>Matters Arising</b>  GOV/09/36: Mr Atkinson had received no response to a letter he had sent to the LSC which queried the requirement for mandatory annual internal audits of areas with repeated high assurance ratings, e.g. risk management.  GOV/09/37: The report on progress against 2008-09 strategic aims had been superseded by the annual self assessment report.  GOV/09/40: The Principal would contact Paul Tobin with regard to London 2012 work experience opportunities.	DPL	31.01.10
<b>GOV/09/47</b>	<b>Appointment of Governors</b>  Mr Trunkfield was welcomed to the committee. Mr Trunkfield was from a farming background and his appointment was a recommendation of the Search Committee.  An election had been held for the position of HE Student Governor and David Rafferty had been identified as the preferred candidate.  <b>Agreed:</b> i) Mr Trunkfield be appointed as a member of the Corporation for a period of four years and become a member of the F&GP Committee and Buildings and Farm Sub Committee.  ii) Mr Trunkfield become a link governor for the farm and the Old Plumptonian Association.  iii) David Rafferty be appointed as the HE Student Governor and a member of the F&GP Committee, the appointment being for a period of four years or until he ceased to be a student, whichever was the soonest.	Clerk  Clerk  Clerk	22.12.09  22.12.09  22.12.09
<b>GOV/09/48</b>	<b>Minutes of the Corporation's Committees</b>  The respective Committee chairmen outlined the key points of the meetings and the minutes were noted.  <b>a) Academic Committee</b> Mr James advised that the meeting had been very sombre as		

	<p>had taken place a few days after the tragic death of Mr Simon Bishop. All HoDs had attended the meeting and the focus of the meeting had been on reviewing performance of the last academic year and priorities for the coming year. The meeting had been informative for Governors and Mr James reported that external validation had taken place since the meeting and all Departments had been graded good or outstanding. The Committee had considered and recommended the approval of the College HE Strategy. Lastly, a research strategy had been considered by the committee. This was being further developed and would be brought to the Corporation for approval in 2010.</p> <p><b>b) F&amp;GP Committee</b>  Mr Atkinson advised that the F&amp;GP Committee had increased its oversight of non-academic areas due to the need to increase income from these areas. The Committee was grateful to Mr Stanier for agreeing to Chair a newly created residential services sub group. The Buildings Sub group terms of reference had been extended to include the farm and winery.</p> <p>The 2008-09 statutory accounts had been considered by the committee and the risk that the pension liability was understated had been identified. Reference to this risk had been added to the annual report, and the College's Actuary would be asked to calculate the liability on the basis that longevity would continue to increase over the next twenty years at the same rate as over the last twenty.</p> <p>The annual report on health &amp; safety had been considered by the committee. The accident rate in the areas of equine and animal care, particularly in the first term of the academic year, had increased significantly. The Committee felt that Governor oversight of safety trends needed to be strengthened and had requested that the quarterly reports from the Equine and Animal care HoDs to Academic Committee should include a section on health &amp; safety trends and mitigation.</p> <p><b>c) Audit Committee</b>  The Committee had expressed concern at the lateness of the production of the statutory accounts. The Committee had been assured that additional staff would be brought in next year for the closure of the accounts.</p> <p>The Committee had considered the inclusion of the FMCE and the regularity audit self assessment questionnaire within the annual report. The Committee had decided against this however to prevent the FMCE and questionnaire being subject to audit. Mr Atkinson stated that that the regularity</p>		
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	<p>audit self assessment questionnaire and the FMCE would be signed by both the Chairman and Principal as the documents were Corporation and Accounting Officer issues, and the FMCE should only be passed to LSE accompanied by the Annual Report because it had to be read in context.</p> <p>Full assurance was provided on an internal audit of risk management with no recommendations made.</p> <p>The committee recommended the internal audit contract with ESCC was extended by one year which would take the contract to the end of the 2010-11 academic year. The Corporation noted the potential conflict of interest once 14-18 funding was routed through ESCC.</p> <p><b>Agreed:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) The financial statements management letter be noted.</li> <li>(ii) The FMCE return be approved and returned to the LSC with the annual report under a single covering letter.</li> <li>(iii) The annual report of the Audit Committee 2008-09 be noted.</li> <li>(iv) The regularity audit questionnaire be placed on the College website.</li> <li>(v) The internal audit contract be extended by one year to the end of 2010-11 and a tendering process then be undertaken for a three year internal audit contract.</li> </ul>		
		Clerk	31.12.09
		Clerk	22.12.09
		Clerk/VW	01.03.10
<b>GOV/09/49</b>	<p><b>Annual Members Report &amp; Financial Statements 2008-09</b></p> <p>The Annual Members Report followed the structure to the previous year's report. The document was relatively long because it served several purposes. It set out the College priorities, would provide a single basis for discussion with the College's stakeholders and provided information staff could use when writing reports both internally and externally. Lastly, it set out the changes the College wished to see in others and would be used as a lobbying vehicle.</p> <p>The report including the 2008-09 statutory accounts had been considered in draft by the F&amp;GP Committee and has been updated in response to member comments. The Chairman and Principal thanked the Clerk for her assistance in producing the report.</p> <p><b>Agreed:</b> The Financial Statements 2008/09 and annual members report be approved and signed by the Chairman and Principal.</p>		
		MA/DPL	22.12.09
<b>GOV/09/50</b>	<b>Finance Report</b>		

	<p>The F&amp;GP Committee had considered the management accounts for the current financial year up to November 2009. Profitability was projected to be above budget due to increased HE income.</p> <p>With regard to the cash flow position, the final capital grant payment from the LSC of £2m was due in April 2010 at which point the balance of the current revolving loan facility would be converted into a long-term loan. The risk of the LSC grant payment not being paid to time was small but the impact of a delay to the payment would be high.</p>		
<b>GOV/09/51</b>	<p><b>Development of the Farm</b></p> <p>The Corporation had previously agreed the development of the farm as part of the phase three proposals. Following the LSC announcement that no further capital grant funding was available, the F&amp;GP Committee had recommended more modest proposals involving a phased redevelopment of the facilities for the dairy herd, associated milk processing and student practical facilities.</p> <p>Phase 1a comprised the development of a cellar slurry system and phase 1b comprised the development of a cubic shed. The re-development of the facilities for the dairy herd feeding and housing was important for cow welfare, milk yields, and compliance with new tougher waste water requirements. .</p> <p>Phase two comprised the construction of a new milking parlour, student practical facilities and milk processing areas, particularly for cheese. It was hoped that building work could commence in April for phases 1a and 1b once the final grant payment had been received from the LSC, with the building complete by the Autumn. Planning permission for the project had been approved prior to the establishment of the South Downs National Park.</p> <p><b>Agreed:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Financial approval be given to Phase 1a of the development of the dairy at a cost of £650k and Phase 1b of the development at a cost of £550k, subject to detailed appraisal of the plans and business case by the Buildings &amp; Farm Sub Committee.</li> <li>(i) Consideration be given at the Strategic Workshop to the opportunities arising from the establishment of the South Downs National Park.</li> </ul> <p>[An item was taken as confidential at this point. See confidential minute GOV/09/60]</p>	<p>DPL</p> <p>MA</p>	

<p><b>GOV/09/52</b></p>	<p><b>Principal's Report</b></p> <p>Ivyland staff were being helped as much as possible on a rota basis by the SMT and HoDs. Consideration would be given next term to the future management of East of County operations.</p> <p>The College's residential provision had recently been inspected. The College had been graded as Outstanding in the level of pastoral support provided to students but under the new Ofsted framework the overall grade had been limited to Satisfactory as a result of trivial clerical omissions in recruitment procedures. This included the partners of staff living on site not being CRB-checked.</p> <p>College Policies with a bearing on Safeguarding would need to be reviewed and updated. It was noted that Dr Stanier had agreed to become a designated governor for child protection and the College child protection policy would be reviewed and brought to the Corporation for consideration next year. Governors expressed disappointment at what appeared to be a box-ticking approach on Ofsted's part. Inspectoral requirements needed to be fully understood including the implications for the college's academic provision. It was important that management attention should not be distracted away from the day-to-day welfare needs of our students by an overly bureaucratic approach.</p> <p>Machinery of Government changes continued and funding and commissioning arrangements remained unclear as did the future of discretionary funds. There was little known about the financial control and audit processes for 14-19 funding. This issue along with changes to the qualification framework, would need to be considered at the strategic workshop, but Governors expressed concern that it was now too late to introduce any significant changes to 14-19 audit arrangements in April 2010 without jeopardising effective financial control. Student recruitment was on target for 16-18, far below target on 19+ and far above target on HE.</p> <p><b>Agreed:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Credit be provided to Mr James Hibbert and his team for the positive aspects of the residential inspection report.</li> <li>(ii) The College safeguarding policies and procedures be reviewed.</li> </ul>	<p>DPL</p> <p>Clerk</p>	<p>22.12.09</p> <p>30.03.10</p>
<p><b>GOV/09/53</b></p>	<p><b>HE Strategy</b></p> <p>It was a requirement of HEFCE that the College produced an HE Strategy. The College HE Strategy for 2009-14 had been</p>		

	<p>developed by an HE Strategy group comprising senior members of staff from both the College and the UoB. The strategy set out the College's aims and aspirations for moving forward HE within the College and minor amendments had been made to the strategy at the request of the Academic Committee. The strategy would form part of the documentation for the Partner Review in February and the IQER in November.</p> <p>It was noted that several forward-looking aspects of the strategy, including the growth and quality projections, had already been overtaken by events, and that it did not take account of recent important changes in Government HE policy. It was however confirmed that the submission of the Strategy Document would in no way constrain the Corporation's ability to continue to review its HE strategy annually at the Strategic Workshop.</p> <p><b>Agreed:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) The Strategy Document be approved and submitted to HEFCE.</li> <li>(ii) The HE Strategy would be further reviewed at future Strategic Workshops.</li> </ul>	Clerk MA	22.12.09
<b>GOV/09/54</b>	<p><b>Self Assessment Report</b></p> <p>A summary of the Self Assessment Report was presented by Dr Stokes. The Corporation considered the parameters the College judged itself against, self assessment grades over the last three years for each parameter and the grade needed for each parameter in order to reach outstanding overall.</p> <p>16-18 and 19+ achievement &amp; standards continued to both be graded as good. The College had undergone a period of rapid expansion and the overall success rate of 83-84% was Good. The College had hitherto taken a success rate of 85% as representing Outstanding but in recent years the national average success rates had improved rapidly and many other colleges now had comparable rates of success. Ofsted were now indicating a requirement of around 90% for Outstanding Achievement. Governors noted that cutting the failure rate by one-third represented a significant moving of the goalposts. Although Added Value was taken into account by Ofsted it was given less weight than Success Rates. Concern was expressed that pursuit of a 90% success rate might not be compatible with the primacy that the Corporation gave to achieving Outstanding added value or with the continuing strong emphasis on inclusivity. There should be no presumption that the Corporation will wish to pursue Outstanding Achievement as now re-defined by Ofsted.</p>		

	<p>The three key areas for continuing improvement were identified as ensuring high levels of success by improving the management of learners, improving the effectiveness and quality of teaching and learning and the further development of leadership and management. These three critical actions would be underpinned by an action plan being developed.</p> <p>The College had self assessed itself as Good with many Outstanding features and that view had been supported at external validation and by Landex. Dr Stokes advised that the achievement of Outstanding was more likely to be achieved in two years rather than one. The solidity of the self assessment process and the forward movement of departments was welcomed.</p> <p><b>Agreed:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) The College self assess itself for 2008-09 as Good with many Outstanding features.</li> <li>(ii) For 2009-10 self-assessment should be against the pre September 2009 Ofsted criteria on which the College's Quality Objective and Aims had been based.</li> <li>(iii) The Corporation should consider further at its January Strategic workshops what alternative to the re-defined Ofsted interpretation of Outstanding was needed to deliver its own view of the College's Mission, particularly as regards inclusivity.</li> </ul> <p>[Mrs Hadden left the meeting at this point].</p>	<p>DTS</p> <p>DTS/MA</p> <p>MA</p>	<p>22.12.09</p> <p>26.01.10</p> <p>26.01.10</p>
<p><b>GOV/09/55</b></p>	<p><b>Election of Chairman 2010</b></p> <p>The Vice-Chairman took the chair for this item. Mr James thanked Mr Atkinson for his hard work over the last year.</p> <p>On the nomination of Mr James seconded by Mr Evans it was:</p> <p><b>Agreed:</b> Mike Atkinson be re-appointed as Chairman for the 2010 calendar year.</p> <p><i>(Mr Atkinson resumed the chair.)</i></p>	<p>JKB</p>	<p>22.12.09</p>
<p><b>GOV/09/56</b></p>	<p><b>Election of Vice-Chairman 2010</b></p> <p>Mr Atkinson thanked Mr James for his support and contribution over the last year, particularly on academic issues.</p> <p>On the nomination of Mr Atkinson, seconded by Ms Howe it was:</p>		

	<b>Agreed:</b> David James be re-appointed as Vice-Chairman for the 2010 calendar year.	JKB	22.12.09
<b>GOV/09/57</b>	<p><b>Appointment of Vice-Chairman 2010 (Chair Designate)</b></p> <p>Mr Atkinson confirmed his intention to step down as Chair in December 2009. Following a call for expressions of interest Judy Llewellyn-Burke had been the only candidate to have expressed an interest in becoming the future Chair of the Corporation. On the nomination of Mr Atkinson, seconded by Dr Stanier, it was</p> <p><b>Agreed:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Judy Llewellyn-Burke be appointed as Vice Chairman (Chair Designate) for the 2010 calendar year.</li> <li>(ii) The Standing Orders be amended to reflect the second Vice Chair position.</li> </ul>	JKB	22.12.09
<b>GOV/09/58</b>	<p><b>Appointment of Committee Chairman and Vice-Chairman 2009</b></p> <p>The Corporation noted the membership of committees for the 2010 calendar year set out in a paper and considered the chairmanship and vice chairmanship of each committee.</p> <p><b>Agreed:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Mrs Llewellyn-Burke become a member of the Search Committee and Remuneration Committee in addition to her existing committee membership.</li> <li>(ii) Mr Currin become a member of the F&amp;GP Committee in addition to being a member of the Academic Committee.</li> <li>(iii) For the 2010 calendar year the following Governors Chair and Vice Chair Standing Committees: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Academic Committee Chair - Mr D James, Vice Chair - Mrs Stokoe</li> <li>Audit Committee Chair - Mrs Foster, Vice Chair - Ms Howe</li> <li>Buildings Sub Committee Chair - Mr Atkinson, Vice Chair - Mrs Llewellyn-Burke</li> <li>F&amp;GP Committee Chair - Mr Atkinson, Vice Chair- Mrs Llewellyn-Burke</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		

	<p>Remuneration Committee Chair - Mr Atkinson, Vice Chair - Mr D James</p> <p>Search &amp; Governance Committee Chair - Mr Atkinson, Vice Chair - Mr D James</p>		
<b>GOV/09/59</b>	<p><b>Date of Next Meeting</b></p> <p>The Governors strategic workshop would take place on Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> January 2010 at 1.30pm and next meeting would be held on Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> March 2010 at 5pm.</p> <p>There being no further business the meeting ended at 7.15pm</p>		

JKB 15/12/09

Signed.....(Chairman) Dated.....

**Confidential Minutes Follow after Appendix 1**

## **Appendix 1**

### **Notes of a Presentation by Chris Foss on the Wine Training Initiative**

- The Wine Training Initiative was an RDPE five year project designed to provide high quality training to the wine industry.
- Training would be delivered in the vine growing areas of the UK.
- The project was supported by the European Union and DEFRA funding. £320,000 Euros would be available annually over the next five years.
- Only trainees could be beneficiaries of the service. Trainees could not receive funding directly however but through a 90% subsidy of their training cost.
- Training would be delivered through workshops, master classes and a mentoring scheme.
- Workshops would be delivered in the region by Plumpton staff and other wine experts to small groups.
- Master classes were one day events which would take place once a month and involve wine experts providing lecturers.
- The mentoring scheme would involve four specialists each providing 25 days of consultancy over a two and a half year period.
- The College was working with the Royal Agricultural Society on the development of the initiative.
- No other organisations were offering a similar service but the situation could change now that funding was available.
- The initiative was being launched at 11am on Friday 5 February 2010 in the Vintners' Hall London.