

**Plumpton College**

**Minutes of the Corporation Meeting  
held on Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> September 2009**

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

Meeting commenced at 5.00 pm

Minute no.		Action by whom	Action by when
<b>GOV/09/28</b>	<p><b>Minutes of the last meeting</b></p> <p><b>Agreed:</b> The minutes of the meeting held on 14th July 2009 be agreed and signed by the Chairman.</p>	MA	01.10.09
<b>GOV/09/29</b>	<p><b>Matters Arising</b></p> <p>GOV/09/29: The residential grant provided to the College had increased but not in line with the growth in student residential accommodation. Halls of residence were at full capacity but the level of grant had decreased per residential student. The Principal reported that the system of discretionary funding for residential grants was currently under review but there was a wide disparity between colleges.</p> <p>GOV/09/29: A feasibility study had been conducted on</p>		

	<p>the possible establishment of a technical vocational academy. The conclusions had not been welcomed by Lord Baker.</p> <p><b>Agreed:</b> A copy of the consultant's feasibility study be provided to the Chairman.</p> <p>GOV/09/19: The HE Strategy was scheduled to be considered by the Academic Committee before its consideration by the Corporation at its December meeting.</p> <p>GOV/09/20: The strategic and annual operating plans had been completed subject to the inclusion of performance indicators that had been developed and the sharpening of some targets for employer related work. The final document would be available to Governors on the Governors website and hard copies of the document were available from the Clerk on request.</p> <p>GOV/09/22: Further information on the recruitment pattern of students and destination of leavers would be provided to Governors at the Corporation development session taking place on Tuesday 6th October 2009.</p>	DPL	01.10.09
		Clerk	01.10.09
<b>GOV/09/30</b>	<p><b>Minutes of the Corporation's Committees</b></p> <p>The respective Committee chairmen outlined the key points of the meetings and the minutes were noted.</p> <p><b>a) Audit Committee</b> Mrs Foster advised that the internal and financial statements auditors had attended the last meeting of the committee. The committee had assured the financial statements auditor that the annual report would be produced earlier this year.</p> <p>Capital spend and the uncertain economic environment had increased the importance of monitoring long term cash flow. Seven year cash flow forecasts were now produced for consideration by F&amp;GP Committee.</p> <p>[Ms Wilkinson arrived at the meeting].</p> <p><b>b) F&amp;GP Committee</b> Mr Atkinson advised that the committee had considered the short fall in ALS funding and he would be writing to the LSC with a clear message that next year the College would be faced with turning away applicants with high additional learning needs next year unless the ALS</p>		

	<p>funding it received was increased.</p> <p>The F&amp;GP Committee had discussed the high volume of its business and recommended that some of its work be delegated to working groups.</p> <p><b>Agreed:</b></p> <p>(a) A working group be established to consider residential/catering and other areas of student services. The group be named the Residential Sub-Committee and it report to F&amp;GP Committee.</p> <p>(b) The terms of reference of the Buildings Sub Committee be extended to include the farm and winery and it be re-named the Buildings and Farm Sub-Committee.</p> <p>(c) The committee's terms of reference be amended as indicated and updated to reflect the establishment of the residential working group and the widening remit of the buildings group.</p> <p><b>c) Search Committee</b></p> <p>The Corporation had agreed in April 2008 that the membership of the Corporation be 19 but the committee recommended a more flexible approach to membership numbers to prevent the Corporation being rushed into filling vacancies.</p> <p>The committee had also considered the informal activities of governors and had agreed that the focus of the link governor scheme should be altered to deploying Governors' individual experience and expertise where it could most help management.</p> <p>The need for Governor involvement in future staff and student disciplinary appeal hearings had also been considered. The possibility of devolving the hearing of student appeals to the Principal would be explored further. If Governors continued to perform this role, it would be sensible for there to be at least one designated governor to sit on appeal panels. The designated governor would be offered training to develop any existing expertise they had of HR issues.</p> <p>The committee's proposal to increase the involvement of governors at Open Day and Prizegiving was welcomed by the Corporation.</p> <p><b>Agreed:</b></p> <p>(a) The number of Corporation members be re-determined on a daily basis in line with the actual numbers of Governors in post on that day, subject</p>	<p>MA</p> <p>MA/Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p>	<p>01.11.09</p> <p>01.11.09</p> <p>01.11.09</p> <p>01.11.09</p> <p>01.11.09</p>
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	<p>to the number determined being between 15 and 20 and the Standing Orders be updated accordingly.</p> <p>(b) The proposed changes to the link governor scheme be endorsed and HoDs be advised where a new link Governor had been appointed.</p> <p>(c) Governors be provided with a list of VIP attendees at future open day and prize giving events to ensure networking opportunities are fully exploited.</p> <p><b>d) Remuneration</b> [See confidential minute GOV/09/42].</p>	<p>Clerk</p> <p>DPL</p>	<p>01.11.09</p>
<b>GOV/09/31</b>	<p><b>Principal's Report</b></p> <p>The Principal reported that there remained much uncertainty surrounding the Machinery of Government changes. It was still unclear how inter local authority arrangements would work. A consultation document was scheduled to be published in October which would cover the proposed commissioning process and the relationships with the Local Authorities the Skills Funding Agency and a Young People's Learning Agency. It would also cover the mechanism for inter local authority working. He advised that a special meeting of the Corporation might be necessary for agreeing the College's response to the consultation.</p> <p>Referring to the completion of the West Wing, the Principal advised that taking into account rooms reserved for Concordia and routine rooms, student residential accommodation was largely full (although the restriction on residential grant meant that it had not been possible to offer additional bursaries to needy 16-18 students as planned); and the College had received a lot of interest in summer lettings for 2010. The workshops were near to completion and included metalsmithing facilities. The inclusion of these facilities had resulted in some additional costs. Some improvements had been made to the roads on campus to reduce traffic speed.</p> <p>Following recent negative press coverage of school visits to farms, the Principal provided reassurance to governors that very strict hygiene practices were in place for school visits on the farm including a footwear washing facility and strict rules on hand washing. Risk assessments were also conducted on visiting school parties. FACE was working hard to publicise that visits to working farms such as the college's farm were very different to visits to so-called petting farms.</p>		

	<p>Student recruitment was largely on target including HE. Student numbers on the specialised diploma were well below target but schools continued to send 14-16 year old students to the College on increased flexibility programmes.</p> <p>Referring to a graph of FE and HE income since 2000, the Principal identified that there had been a very strong growth in student numbers and income from 2002 to 2009 which the College had greatly benefitted from. However, the income growth had now begun to plateau.</p>		
<b>GOV/09/32</b>	<p><b>Finance Report to 31 July 2009</b></p> <p>The finance report had been considered by F&amp;GP Committee including the 2008-09 out-turn. The latest projected surplus for the year was less than the figure reported; the final surplus figure would be brought to the Corporation at its December meeting.</p> <p>Enrolment figures needed to be more closely examined before 2009-10 finances could be confirmed.</p> <p>Reporting on the cash flow position, Ms Wilkinson advised that the cash balances would decline rapidly between October 2009 and February 2010 due to the phasing of operating cashflow and the ongoing capital expenditure. The LSCs final capital grant repayment was due in April 2010 and it was critical that this was paid on time. The risks of it not being paid on time or in full arose because the LSC might have to reschedule grant payments through more urgent capital needs elsewhere, and because April 2010 was the first month that the LSC would no longer exist and the follow-on arrangements were still unclear.</p> <p>The College Finance Directors group were exploring the establishment of a loan facility for Colleges with Barclays Bank.</p> <p><b>Agreed:</b> The long term cash flow be included on the programme for the strategic workshop in January 2010.</p>	VW	
		Clerk	01.01.09
<b>GOV/09/33</b>	<p><b>Regularity Audit Questionnaire</b></p> <p>The Audit Committee had considered the draft regularity audit questionnaire and recommended its approval by the Corporation.</p>		

	<p><b>Agreed:</b> That subject to the addition of a College response to questions 17, 20, 24, 27, the regularity audit questionnaire be approved and signed by the Chairman and Principal.</p>	VW MA/DPL	01.10.09
<b>GOV/09/34</b>	<p><b>Financial Statements Audit Strategy</b></p> <p>The Audit Committee had considered and approved the proposed strategy for the audit of the financial statements. The Corporation endorsed the strategy. The Clerk agreed to investigate if the document needed to be brought to the Corporation for approval in future years.</p>	Clerk	0.01.10
<b>GOV/09/35</b>	<p><b>Internal Audit Annual Plan &amp; Strategy</b></p> <p>The Audit Committee had considered the internal audit plan and strategy and recommended its approval by the Corporation.</p> <p>The Audit strategy took into consideration mandatory audit areas and areas with a perceived high risk.</p> <p>The Chairman advised that the contract with ESCC for the internal audit service was due to expire in 2010 and the Audit Committee would need to give consideration to the impact of MoG changes and whether ESCC could continue to provide an audit service to the College whilst also providing funding to the College.</p> <p><b>Agreed:</b> The Internal Audit Annual Plan for 2009-10 and the Internal Audit Strategy for 2009-2012 be approved.</p>		
<b>GOV/09/36</b>	<p><b>Internal Audit Annual Report</b></p> <p>The Audit Committee had considered the annual report of the internal audit service and recommended its approval by the Corporation.</p> <p>An audit opinion of full assurance had been achieved for the second year running in the areas of control and governance processes and risk management. The Chairman advised that he would query with the LSC and its successor bodies the requirement to have mandatory audits of areas that consistently achieved full assurance ratings.</p> <p><b>Agreed:</b> The Internal Audit Annual Report for 2008-09 be</p>	MA	

	approved.		
<b>GOV/09/37</b>	<p><b>Report on Performance Against 2008-09 Strategic Aims</b></p> <p>Dr Stokes reported that the College had embarked on a process last year of greater quantification of the aims in the strategic plan. This meant that more accurate monitoring and reporting of progress against the aims was possible.</p> <p>HoDs were currently in the process of collating data to show Departmental performance against aims and it appeared that the vast majority of targets had been achieved.</p> <p>The new Ofsted common inspection framework included the concept of limiting grades for safeguarding and equality and diversity, and new, more prescriptive criteria for measuring performance against them. Governors needed to consider further whether these changes were wholly consistent with their own vision and how far they should be incorporated without modification into the College's own strategic objectives and aims. Dr Stokes suggested that Academic Committee consider how the College could demonstrate that it provided a safe environment for all students including those on work experience placements with employers.</p> <p>Achieving an outstanding grade for equality and diversity provided a real challenge due to the College not serving a diverse community. The promotion of equality and diversity within the curriculum was well established at the last inspection but consideration would be given to wider equality and diversity issues.</p> <p><b>Agreed:</b></p> <p>(a) A report on progress against 2008-09 strategic aims to be circulated to Governors.</p> <p>(b) Dr Stokes and Mr Atkinson to meet to discuss performance indicators against the aims of the 2009-10 annual operating plan.</p> <p>(c) For the purposes of the College's Strategic Aim of achieving FE Outstanding by July 2010, performance should be assessed by reference to Ofsted's pre-September 2009 criteria.</p> <p>(d) The January 2010 Strategic Workshop to consider how far to incorporate the new criteria for safeguarding and equality/diversity into the College's strategic plan.</p>		
		DTS	01.11.09
		DTS/MA	01.11.09

<p><b>GOV/09/38</b></p>	<p><b>Economic Impact Study</b></p> <p>The Corporation considered the key findings of an economic impact study that had been conducted to assess the current and potential economic impact of the College's activities on the local and regional economy.</p> <p>The Principal advised that the findings would be used to demonstrate the value the College provided to the local community.</p> <p>Mr Ravenscroft identified that the study was based on the spending impact of the College rather than the economic impact and therefore did not incorporate a multiplier effect; and it did not include the long term impact of the College providing its students with higher educational knowledge.</p> <p>It was agreed that when publicising the survey results it would need to be made clear that the findings did not include the value added aspect of the College's work which was far more difficult to quantify.</p>		
<p><b>GOV/09/39</b></p>	<p><b>Annual Governors Self Assessment 08-09</b></p> <p>The Corporation undertook its annual self assessment and considered its performance against the three previously agreed indicators of 'strategic direction and control', 'accountability and transparency of Governors' and 'Governors with a range of diverse backgrounds and skills'.</p> <p>It was agreed that senior management resources were limited and a collective view was required on what SMT should be focused on. This collective view was developed by discussions at the strategic workshop and by committee chairs meeting termly to agree Corporation and committee priorities.</p> <p>Dr Stokes advised that Ofsted formed judgements on three broad areas of governor activity. These were setting the College mission and strategic objectives, establishing effective arrangements for monitoring performance and lastly, ensuring statutory duties were fulfilled. The work of the Corporation would now need to be considered in light of the new common inspection framework.</p> <p>Governors agreed that the Corporation had a good mix of skills and although there were few Governors in the lower age range brackets, this was likely to be the case in most</p>		

	<p>Colleges. The importance of Governors having wide expertise was identified.</p> <p><b>Agreed:</b></p> <p>(a) The Corporation self assesses itself as Outstanding for the 2008-09 academic year.</p> <p>(b) 'Adaptability to new inspection criteria' to be added to performance against indicator A1 'Long Term Planning Horizons'.</p> <p>(c) 'Land based skills and wide area of expertise' to be added to performance against indicator C1 'Balance and span of Governors' professional skills'.</p> <p>(d) A summary of the key points from the common inspection framework to be circulated to Governors.</p>	<p>Clerk/MA</p> <p>Clerk/MA</p> <p>DTS</p>	<p>01.11.09</p> <p>01.11.09</p> <p>01.11.09</p>
<b>GOV/09/40</b>	<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p> <p><b>2010-11 FE Prospectus</b> Copies of the 2010-11 FE prospectus were provided to Governors. The Chairman advised that additional copies were available to Governors to distribute to key contacts.</p> <p><b>Retirement of Bryan Stevens</b> The Chairman advised that Mr Stevens had reached the end of his tenure as Governor and was retiring from the Corporation due to work commitments. The Corporation expressed its gratitude to Mr Stevens for his contribution as governor, particularly the accounting and finance advice that he had brought.</p> <p><b>London 2012 Olympics</b> In response to Mr Currin, the Principal advised that the College had considered ways in which it could be involved in London 2012.</p> <p><b>Agreed:</b> The Principal to contact Paul Tobin with regard to work experience opportunities for students at London 2012.</p>	<p>DPL</p>	
<b>GOV/09/41</b>	<p><b>Date of Next Meeting</b></p> <p>The next meeting would be held on Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> December 2009 at 5pm. The draft agenda for the meeting included the 2008-09 financial statements, the Annual Report, the FMCE, the Principal's report, the HE strategy, the College Self Assessment Report, the appointment of HE Student Governor and the appointment of the Corporation Chairman, Vice Chairman and Chairman Designate.</p>		

	<p>A Corporation training session was scheduled to take place on Tuesday 6 October 2009 at 4pm and would include a tour of the West Wing and the annual report of the work of the College Charity.</p> <p>There being no further business the meeting ended at 7.10pm.</p>		

JKB 16/10/09

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