



**CONFIDENTIAL CORPORATION MEETING**  
**5.40pm Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> March 2019**  
**BT5, Sussex Rural Business Centre, Plumpton College**  
**MINUTES**

Present: Stan Stanier (Chair), Jeremy Kerswell (Principal), Julie Dougill (Vice Chair), Leeni Lear, Stephen Waite, John Evans, Bill Pepper, Ruby Franklin-Goddard (Student Governor), Sarah Blake (Support Staff Governor), Mike Atkinson and John Moore-Bick.

In attendance: James Hibbert (Deputy Principal), Alison Kent (Vice Principal), Chris Knell (Director of Finance) David Stokes (Vice Principal and Laura Holt (Clerk to the Corporation)

Apologies: Suzanne Craig, Tim Laker, Helen Key (Co-opted Member) and Sally Kinsey

Minute no.		Action by whom	Action by when
<b>GOV/18 19/99</b>	<b>Welcome and apologies</b> The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Suzanne Craig, Tim Laker, Helen Key (Co-opted Member) and Sally Kinsey.		
<b>GOV/18 19/100</b>	<b>Minutes of the Corporation meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2019 and matters arising</b> Members considered and approved the minutes of the Corporation meeting held on 26 <sup>th</sup> February 2019 as an accurate record of the meeting. The minutes were signed by the Chair. Members noted the matters arising report discussion took place regarding the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cyber security training – 3 governors are yet to complete this, Clerk to follow up.</li> </ul>	LH	Mar 19
<b>GOV/18 19/101</b>	<b>CONFIDENTIAL</b>		
<b>GOV/18 19/102</b>	<b>Recommendations from Committees</b> The Chair advised that Audit Committee met last week. Following the meeting the Terms of Reference for the Task and Finish Group – Subsidiaries was created. All governors are invited to join Task and Finish Group meetings.		

Minute no.		Action by whom	Action by when
	<p><b>Action – Clerk to circulate Terms of Reference for the Task and Finish Group: Subsidiaries to all members and circulate details of the first meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> March.</b></p> <p>The Chair of Audit Committee advised that discussion had taken place regarding the quality of the External Audit. While the Committee felt that now was not the time to change audit firm, it was agreed that the college should request a change in Audit Partner to restore confidence.</p> <p>A governor asked whether the newly appointed Co-opted Member of Audit Committee has been invited to attend a Corporation meeting. The Clerk responded that she has been sent all of the dates for the year.</p>	LH	Mar 19
<p><b>GOV/18 19/103</b></p>	<p><b>Mid-year Student Survey results and updated Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)</b></p> <p>Ali Kent advised that the college had received the results from recent the Animal Management exams. The pass rates were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Level 3 (year2) – 100%</li> <li>• Level 3 (year 1) – 96%</li> <li>• Level 2 – 3 fails out of 45 students</li> </ul> <p>The results of the student survey were presented with and without Animal Management students. Students in Animal Management have had a particularly challenging year in terms of teacher changes and clarity of communications and have been very clear about their level of dissatisfaction in their feedback. The cross College QIP reflects revised actions linked to student survey feedback, with a review on impact of actions immediately after the Easter break.</p> <p>All students are to receive a one to one tutorial prior to the Easter break, with 2.5 weeks to go 58% are complete. A poll will be put on Plumpton on line asking students whether they have had a one to one tutorial rather than waiting for the summer student survey. The use of Markbook has increased to 80-90%. Actions are reviewed weekly at Academic Management Team meetings, as a result attendance of 14-16 students has improved.</p> <p>Questions were invited:</p> <p>Governors asked whether the information had been examined by type of course. Ali Kent advised that this survey was purely for FE students, a separate survey is completed for HE and apprenticeships.</p> <p>Governors asked whether there was any difference in satisfaction between 16-18 and 19+ learners. There is no difference between age of learners. There is a distinction between level of study. Learners on level 1 and level 2 programmes were satisfied. Level 3 students were wanting more feedback from teachers on how to improve and more information around targets.</p> <p>Governors asked whether there was a gender divergence, and if there was does this matter? There is not an even balance of male and females across each area, for example there are more females studying animal management. Animal management students are less satisfied and this would affect the figures. 95% of students feel safe at college.</p> <p>Discussion took place regarding the use of 'Plumpton on line' to extend learning rather than acting as a depository.</p> <p>Governors asked for more information regarding the low scores for food in</p>		

Minute no.		Action by whom	Action by when
	<p>the survey, is this related to price or quality? The Deputy Principal advised that the college needs to charge high street prices in order to cover costs. The Catering Manager will attend both student rep and residential focus groups in Spring and Summer terms in order to enable us to better understand these concerns from students and therefore be better placed to respond appropriately.</p> <p>Discussion took place regarding the bus service which is going out to tender for next year. Staff have been deployed to bus stops and have followed buses to gain accurate data around timing. Most buses arrive by 9.05am ready for lessons at 9.15am. This indicates that the timetables are wrong as buses should be arriving by 8.50am.</p> <p>Governors asked how the actions resulting from the student survey were being shared with the student body. Ali Kent informed governors that 'You said' 'We did' notice boards were being displayed and students were also being informed in group tutorials.</p> <p><b>Action – Governors to discuss QIP at link meetings.</b></p> <p>Governors asked whether there were clear and obvious reasons for the problems in the Animal Management Department, do SMT understand the reasons that the problems arose and can lessons be learned for the future? SMT advised that the problems were a leadership and management issue, but that interventions taken in the past month were having more impact. The previous CM postholder left the college in December and the college are in talks with a headhunting agency to find a replacement. In the meantime, interim arrangements are in place and further details of the Animal Management action plan were outlined including, the college adopting a pilot in the innovative approach to one to one tutorials using a progress coach and a new level 3 Programme Manager.</p>	All	On-going
<p><b>GOV/18 19/104</b></p>	<p><b>Period 7 Management Accounts</b></p> <p>The Principal apologised for the lateness in sharing the management accounts with governors. SMT met on Friday to discuss the management accounts and a number of actions were put in place as a result. SMT wanted to share the actions in the management accounts documents. The Chair request that, as the information had been submitted too late for governors to absorb the information in depth, detailed comments and questions should be submitted via e-mail after the meeting.</p> <p>The Finance Director highlighted key points from the management accounts including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The P7 (February) performance was worse than expected with a headline £161k deficit. Within this are a number of one-off and timing differences e.g. RAU validation fees of £47k paid in February but profiled for March. Having allowed for this and other such items the underlying financial performance is a £60k deficit for the month against that which had been forecasted</li> <li>• Income <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Apprenticeship income – there have been delays to the levy funding due to issues with the on-line portal. These have now been resolved. There is a difference with receipts for</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		

Minute no.		Action by whom	Action by when
	<p>carry-ins (under the old arrangements with the ESFA). The FD and David Stokes are investigating. SMT are confident this anomaly will be resolved. The FD advised that he will not accrue for expected income in year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ AEB – income is above forecast but below the funding level. The Principal and Ali Kent are identifying additional in-year options to increase AEB income.</li> <li>○ Student withdrawals – the FD is reviewing all withdrawals to ensure refunds are appropriate and within Student Loan Company rules.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Expenditure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Staff costs were £37k better than forecast. Payroll is moving in the right direction with March payroll £28k lower than February. SMT have agreed a reduction in time-sheeted staff and will continue to seek further savings.</li> <li>○ RAG rating of budget holders has identified 7 ‘red’ rated (with both a deficit year to date position and a deficit for the period moving in the wrong direction). These managers are invited to weekly budget holder intervention and support meetings. 10 budget holders are rated ‘amber’ (2 periods with a deficit or a deficit year to date). These managers are actively monitored by finance and offered additional support. All managers who didn’t attend the CPD week forecasting will attend on 28<sup>th</sup> March.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Questions were invited:  <i>How have you achieved reduction in staff costs without compromising on quality?</i>  Difficult business decisions have had to be taken. SMT have had to decide where we can be leaner, and taken a risk based approach. <i>How can governors be assured actions have not affected quality?</i>  KPI reports, student survey reports and standard reports to Corporation, which currently demonstrate that to date, learner experience has not been adversely affected by these changes  <i>Do you still plan to deliver £104k surplus for the year?</i>  Yes, the reforecasted budget also included a k contingency of £240k of which £40k has been used to date.  Discussion took place regarding the importance of achieving a surplus at the end of the year to ensure that bank covenants are not breached. Discussion took place regarding reviewing depreciation rates for buildings however due to recognition of deferred capital grants, this may not have a huge impact.  <b>Action: Mike Atkinson to meet with Chris Knell to consider reviewing depreciation rates for buildings.</b>  The Chair asked governors to submit further comments and questions via e-mail.</p>		
<b>GOV/18 19/105</b>	<b>Flimwell</b> The Deputy Principal outlined key points in his paper recommending the sale of the college’s leasehold interest in the two units at Flimwell. The		

Minute no.		Action by whom	Action by when
	<p>intention several years ago had been to develop a training centre at Flimwell for the delivery of woodland, forestry and arboriculture courses, including 14-16 and Forest School groups. However, the units have rarely attracted a viable business use. At present no provision is being delivered at the units for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Isolation and safeguarding of young people – we have to provide the same welfare, caretaking and technician provision for courses delivered at the units as we do for the Lewes site. This means that Lewes-based staff travel to/from the units to ensure that adequate cover can be provided for aspects such as first aid, technician support, IT and equipment access. This removes capacity from the Lewes site whilst representing a poor utilisation of staffing, impacts on vehicle resources as well as being costly due to mileage expenses.</li> <li>• The capacity of the two units would only accommodate a maximum of two groups of 8 (16 students) simultaneously.</li> <li>• There is no easily accessible public transport.</li> <li>• The pipeline demand for courses at the units has been small and variable and is more easily delivered at the Lewes site, without impacting demand.</li> <li>• There is a duplication of machinery requirements created by the units which leads to additional staff resource employed in transporting equipment between sites.</li> <li>• The volume of timber for felling is limited because of the management plan to retain a 'semi natural woodland'. The College has access to multiple other sites offering more security and these include the Great Wood at Stanmer Park.</li> <li>• The college faces a number of site costs.</li> </ul> <p>Members were supportive of the recommendation to sell. The need to ensure relationships with High Wealden area was noted. The college's 20% share in Woodland Enterprise Limited (WEL) was noted.</p> <p><b>Approved:</b>  <b>SMT authorised to pursue the sale of the college's leasehold interest in Units 5 and 6, Woodland Enterprise Centre, Flimwell. The funds are to be ring-fenced for future capital development or used to increase reserves.</b></p>		
<p><b>GOV/18 19/106</b></p>	<p><b>Approval of Policies</b>  Governors considered the following policies for approval:  <b>Approved:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Safeguarding policy</b></li> <li>• <b>Health and Safety Policy</b></li> <li>• <b>Student Health and Safety Policy</b></li> </ul>		
<p><b>GOV/18 19/107</b></p>	<p><b>Impact of Governance in March</b>  Leeni Lear gave feedback regarding the English and Maths Quality Review meeting she attended, data was looked at in-depth with robust challenge. English and Maths staff had close links with vocational staff.</p>		

Minute no.		Action by whom	Action by when
	<p>John Moore-Bick reported he had attended a successful forestry showcase event which was well attended by employers and representatives of NGBs from the sector</p> <p>Mike Atkinson reported that he had also attended a Quality Review meeting and had been impressed with the granularity of the discussion and how the data is being used.</p> <p>Mike Atkinson had also met with the Health and Safety Manager. One area of risk which needs to be monitored is the safety management of apprenticeships. As apprenticeship numbers under national contracts is growing rapidly, how we assure the safety of apprenticeship training in remote hubs and workplaces needs to be monitored.</p>		
<b>GOV/18 19/98</b>	<p><b>Any other business</b></p> <p>The Chair advised that Howard Wood had resigned as a governor with immediate effect. Howard has made a valuable contribution to the Corporation and the Chair thanked him for all his hard work.</p> <p>The meeting closed at 7.30pm.</p>		

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_