

Minutes of a Meeting of the CORPORATION held on Wednesday 22nd May 2024 at College Business Centre

64/24 WELCOME AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chair welcomed Members to the meeting. She emphasised the importance of attending in July. The meeting would be extended by 30 minutes with refreshments after.

The Chair congratulated Grace Allen on being awarded Military and Public Services Student of the Year, and the Principal acknowledged the significant role she had played in organising the passing out parade.

There were no declarations of interest.

65/24 APPROVAL OF THE NON CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 27 MARCH 2024

The minutes of the meeting held 27 March 2024 were approved as a true record.

66/24 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF 27 MARCH 2024

The Director of Governance reported on Matters Arising. Confidential minutes now designated non-confidential for the year 2022/23 had been edited for accessibility compliance and published on the College website. A QR code for reporting Health & Safety accidents, incidents and illnesses had been created and was displayed on all Health & Safety noticeboards across the Campus. All Governors had been invited to the first meeting of the re-established External Governance Review (EGR) Task & Finish Group on 25 April. The Monthly Finance Report had been produced and circulated to Governors as requested in April as there was no Corporation meeting scheduled. The Strategic Plan presentation had been circulated and comments invited. The Vice Principal had confirmed the data sources for figures in the Accountability Plan and a draft had been circulated to Governors.

The Director of Governance reported that the AI training session for Governors could be offered as an online webinar and consulted Governors on the mode of training. Members confirmed that they were happy for this session to take place online. A Member asked what the session would cover. The Director of Governance responded that the Vice Principal, who was leading on the session, would welcome feedback on what Members would like to see covered and she asked Members to feed comments to the Vice Principal.

67/24 CHAIR'S BUSINESS

The Chair reported that she attended the Chairs' and Principals' Association of Colleges (AoC) conference call. She also reported on progress on the work of the EGR Task and Finish Group.

With the agreement of the Chair the agenda was taken out of order.

68/24 DEPARTMENTAL REVIEW – ENGLISH FOR SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES (ESOL)

The Head of Learning – English, ESOL and Maths presented the departmental review report for ESOL. The current self-assessment grade is grade 2. Predicted achievement is 88%, an increase from 73% in 2022/23. The introduction of employability skills in 2024/25 would further enhance the offering and

further additional learning aims for learners to support employability and life in the UK. He outlined key risks as a limited catchment area on the Island with more work required to reach areas such as the hospital and jobcentre. The retention of Ukrainian learners was a concern. There is poor achievement on the Level 2 programme. This programme would be discontinued for 2024/25. He spoke of excitement for growth, and of his intention to work towards a self-assessment grade 1.

A Member asked whether students would be negatively impacted by the withdrawal of the Level 2 programme for 2024/25. The Head of Learning responded that there were only four students currently enrolled on that programme with three not expected to achieve, therefore a cross-College Level 1 programme would be offered as a stepping stone ahead of re-introduction of the Level 2 programme. The discontinuation of the Level 2 programme was temporary to enable a pause for improvements and an increase in numbers. The Chair suggested refining the wording of the report to clarify that the discontinuation was temporary.

A Member enquired of any hubs for non-English speakers and the Head of Learning responded that the Riverside Centre was a hub and he was making links with the Centre. His intention was for the College to become a hub and 'first thought' for non-English speakers.

The Assistant Principal (SEND and Foundation Skills) reported that the Head of Learning had increased and stabilised the provision in the short time he had been in role since January 2024.

The Corporation CONSIDERED the report.

69/24 STUDENT GOVERNOR REPORT

The Student Governors presented their verbal report. She noted the reference to students lacking skills to write applications and CVs in the ESOL department but considered that there was a need for these skills to be developed in all students. The Head of Learning responded that it was good to hear this and spoke of the intention to look at introducing this as part of enrichment activities.

The Student Governor enquired of any plans to introduce gender neutral toilets at the College. The Principal confirmed that there would be gender neutral toilets in the new build and this was commonplace across colleges. It was also confirmed that disabled toilets would be renamed accessible toilets and open to all. In response to a query from the Student Governor, the Principal confirmed that she had experienced some negative feedback on this in a previous role.

The Chair asked the Student Governor how students were feeling at College. The Student Governor responded that most people were very positive about College in her experience. The Chair thanked the Student Governor for the verbal report and asked that this feedback continue. Following a request from the Student Governor it was agreed that this item would be placed at the end of the meeting going forward.

The Corporation CONSIDERED the report.

Mr Martyn Pearl joined the meeting and the agenda returned to order.

70/24 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR OF CORPORATION

The Director of Governance took the Chair for this agenda item and outlined the process for the election of the Chair and Vice Chair of Corporation for 2024/25. Nominations had been sought prior to

the meeting and were invited again during the meeting. There were two nominations, Mrs Sara Weech as Chair, and Mr Graham Barnetson as Vice Chair. The nominees left the room during the voting period.

Mr Graham Cooper proposed Mrs Weech as Chair, and Mrs Christine Palmer seconded the proposal. All Members were in favour.

Mr Martyn Pearl proposed Mr Barnetson as Vice Chair, and Mrs Christine Palmer seconded the proposal. All Members were in favour.

The Corporation ELECTED Mrs Sara Weech as Chair, and Mr Graham Barnetson as Vice Chair for the 2024/25 academic year.

The nominees re-joined the meeting.

Mrs Jessica Garbett joined the meeting.

71/24 PRINCIPALS REPORT

The Principal presented her report. She outlined key developments in the national context: the publication of the AoC paper *100% opportunity: the case for a tertiary education system*, an update on the Turing Scheme, and a guide for colleges on the General Election.

A Member enquired whether the College would consider hosting hustings. The Principal confirmed that this would be taking place as part of enrichment to promote political literacy.

A Member enquired whether the Erasmus Programme might be back on the agenda as an option, and the Principal responded that this was not an option as far as she was aware.

A Member enquired regarding the definition of tertiary, and the Principal provided the following definition: tertiary is defined in many different ways but primarily in our context it is referencing further and higher education, it is education after secondary. There are some instances where private education is also included in the mix.

The Chair asked the Principal what the three biggest risks were currently for the College. She responded that these were: 1) finance, as there was always the potential for shocks; 2) change of Government; and 3) Capital project changes. The Chair enquired how the board could provide support and the Principal responded that the board could provide support with mentoring the Finance team and supporting the recruitment of a Director of Finance.

The Vice Chair reported that the General Election date had now been announced for 4 July.

The Corporation CONSIDERED the report.

72/24 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN

The Chair introduced the Accountability Plan and noted that this needed to be approved by Corporation and submitted by 30 June with publication within three months. It was noted that some further proofreading of the draft was required.

The Vice Principal presented the draft Accountability Plan highlighting key issues in the local context.

A Member queried the figure for economically inactive residents and the Vice Principal clarified that this figure included pensioners.

A Member commented that she did not get a feel for the University Centre and what was being done as part of this. The Assistant Principal (HE, Academic and Vocational) outlined work and partnership in this area. The Chair thanked the Assistant Principal and commented that it would be helpful to hear more about higher education and enrichment, suggesting that Governor Contact Day may be a suitable vehicle for this.

A Member commented on the issue of housing and considered that this was key to attracting people to the Island, as well as to preventing leavers. He did not consider that the Local Authority had a strategic plan to address this. He asked the Principal to what extent she was discussing this with the Local Authority. The Principal confirmed that she was discussing this issue with key contacts at the Local Authority. She was also liaising with a College in the Outer Hebrides regarding their approach to student accommodation.

A Member enquired of any feedback from stakeholders on the Accountability Plan. The Vice Principal confirmed that the draft had been circulated to key contacts and that it was resonating with people. In response to further queries from the Member, it was confirmed that there was not feedback from stakeholders on last year's Plan, though key stakeholders were consulted as part of its development, and that whilst there was no requirement to review objectives, the Vice Principal did intend to do so.

A Member commented that the raising of participation rates in under-represented groups came across as a target but rather she queried was there an unmet need and reluctance to participate. How could those groups be made to feel more confident she asked.

It was agreed that the draft would proofread and any amendments circulated.

The Corporation CONSIDERED and APPROVED the Accountability Plan subject to proofreading.

73/24 STRATEGIC PLAN

The Principal gave a presentation on the draft Strategic Plan. This had been developed according to feedback given in the previous meeting and subsequently. It was aligned with the Accountability Plan. It was intended to run to 2030 but with annual review. She outlined partnership working and vision, and the strapline as *Isle of Wight College: the home of further learning and skills*. There had been further refinement of the work around values. She spoke of the need to look at processes to reduce workloads and value staff.

A Member queried what was wrong with using the term 'outstanding'. The Principal responded that this was associated with Ofsted inspection and outlined that the aim was to achieve excellent outcomes for learners.

A Member asked whether the bullet points in the presentation under CARE (Collaborative; Accountable; Respectful; Excellent) should be modelled throughout and the Principal confirmed that this should be modelled in all strategic priorities.

The Principal asked Members whether these were the right themes in their opinion and whether any should be omitted.

A Member enquired what was meant by sustainable, and the Principal responded that this referred to energy efficiencies, and technology. The Member commented that this felt like a buzzword. The Principal responded that this could be modified to environmental impact or environmental working.

The Chair considered that the content of point five was more inclusive than innovative. The Principal responded that she would withdraw this section and incorporate into every other area instead.

A Member queried whether quality and quality improvement were captured sufficiently in the various areas. She asked how we could embrace quality improvement and the ongoing striving for excellence in all foci. The Principal responded that she would take this away and incorporate.

The Chair invited any feedback on the proposed strapline. Members responded positively to this with one Member stating that the College had been changing lives for 40 years plus including her own. A Member asked if the word 'further' should be removed from the strapline. The Principal confirmed that there would be testing of the strapline.

A Member asked how the strategy could be captured in a simple visual key of one side of A4. The Principal responded that she was working on this.

A Member asked whether the name CECAMM could be discontinued. The Principal responded that the College was tied into a commitment currently on this but suggested that branding could be improved. The Chair suggested the strapline of 'We build engineers' for CECAMM.

The Chair praised the visuals at the College Open Evening.

The Chair commented that the presentation had begun with the Island context but considered that it would be more impactful if it began with the mission and vision because of the context. She suggested changing the order of the slides. The Principal responded she would be happy to make this amendment and pick out the salient points context-wise.

A Member commented that there were two parallel areas: one about the Island and its issues; and the other about attracting people to the Island. He spoke of balancing these two areas in the strategy.

The Principal thanked Members for their feedback. She continued to work on this weekly and was aiming to get to the point at which this could be shared with staff. She considered that Corporation had provided sufficient feedback for her to do this. She confirmed that the journey would continue and invited any further comments by email prior to the next meeting.

The Corporation CONSIDERED the report.

74/24 MONTHLY FINANCE REPORT

The Chair confirmed to Members that the Director of Finance was not now expected to return prior to her departure due to bereavement. She encouraged Members to support the Finance department at this time of change.

The Chief Operating Officer presented the Monthly Finance Report. This can be summarised as follows:

- The College's management accounts for the 9 months to April show an operating surplus of £498k (versus a budget forecast surplus of £133k surplus) excluding staff restructuring. This results in a £365k year to date favourable variance.
- The key variances in the month can be attributed to the following:

INCOME:

- ESFA allocation is higher than budgeted resulting in a £643k favourable variance:
 - o ESFA pay grant year to date £370k
 - o ESFA allocation year to date £207k
 - o ESFA teacher's pension allocation year to date £39k
 - o Deferred capital grant income is £30k higher
- Tuition fees and educational contracts income is giving rise to a £35k favourable variance, which is likely to be caused by phasing.
 - o International fee and bid income year to date is £108k (not included in budget)
 - o Full cost income is £16k favourable year to date
 - o Advanced Learner Loans adverse income variance is £62k (this income stream has been downturned in the latest estimate)
- Interest income received year to date is £72k higher than budget.

PAY:

- Pay costs show a favourable variance of £10k for the year date due to:
 - o a number of non-recruited vacancies (although non pay includes £179k of agency costs)
 - o offsetting higher pay cost that is offset by ESFA pay grant

NON-PAY:

- Non-pay costs are £322k higher than planned for the year to date. This is due to exam costs and franchise costs being higher than budgeted, although this is somewhat offset by savings on utility costs. Non-pay will continue to be tightly monitored and controlled.
- Control of non-pay, achievement of income, control of pay including vacancies and deployment of under-deployed staff remain the critical areas for attention.

Depreciation is £39k higher than budgeted, although it is offset by higher deferred capital grant income.

The Corporation CONSIDERED the report.

75/24 LATEST ESTIMATE

The Chief Operating Officer presented the Latest Estimate. This can be summarised as follows:

The key changes to the latest estimate this month are as follows:

· INCOME

- o Review of the latest ILR has yielded the following improvements to income
 - § National skills fund £20k
 - § AEB Boost income £65k
 - § Advanced learner loan income £31k

- o Additional TPS allocation due to the increased employer's contribution rate from April 2024 - £52k
- o HE income reduction (lower numbers) -£31k
- o International and Turing income £153k
- o Full cost income £41k

· PAY

- o Non recruited vacancies are contributing to a lower than anticipated establishment list cost and revision of existing vacancies, leading to a lower payroll projection of £157k

· NON PAY

- o Review of the utilities forecast, giving rise to a £225k projected reduction

A Member commented that the improvement in budget was no surprise and enquired of a spending plan. The Chief Operating Officer confirmed that there was a spending plan and that the Director of Finance had had a series of meetings to look at reducing the surplus with monies allocated accordingly with strict criteria for adherence. The Member asked if there was sufficient agility for response and adherence and the Chief Operating Officer confirmed that there was. The Principal commented that this was about being able to renew resources that we wouldn't have been able to do at the beginning of the year.

A Member enquired of the Director of Finance's absence and the impact of this on the team. He asked of ways in which those with the appropriate expertise on the board could provide support. The Chief Operating Officer responded that the Senior Management Accountant was taking on additional responsibilities and that a new junior management accountant was settling in well. There were other imminent changes in the pipeline so the team was considered fragile at present. The Director of Finance continued to provide support two days per week to undertake the most technical functions. A Member enquired of the potential for an Interim Finance Director and the Principal responded that she was already taking action on this with ten agencies working on the College's behalf.

The Chair asked Members to respond promptly to any requests for support from the Chief Operating Officer.

The Corporation CONSIDERED the report.

76/24 APPOINTMENT OF INTERNAL AUDITORS (CONFIDENTIAL)

77/24 VICE PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

The Vice Principal presented his report. It was the first time he had presented a report of this style and he welcomed any feedback. The report included: outcomes of the Learner Survey; termly teaching, learning and assessment report; recruitment for 2024/25; withdrawals for 2023/24; retention for 2023/24; progress and predicted achievement for 2023/24; performance against strategic objectives; and an update on projects and impact.

A Member queried the satisfaction calculations. The Vice Principal provided clarity and confirmed that the figures were correct. The Member requested a tabular format for figures in order to see year on year trends.

The Chair commented that some responses regarding implementation were quite vague. She asked for more specificity in order to be able to properly assess whether targets had been met.

A Member enquired whether there was a lag factor for recruitment. The Vice Principal responded that there had been a low number for T Levels this year but highlighted the official re-opening of the new plumbing department facility as a development he was proud of. In response to a further query from the Member, he responded that he was positive about T Levels and that there was a need to keep spreading the message to prospective students and their families. Three new T Levels were being launched this year, he added. He concluded that he was proud of the teaching team delivering T Levels who had been under stress due to the slow information coming through from awarding bodies. The Principal clarified that recruitment was low as adults could no longer be recruited on to T Levels.

The Chair asked for the report to include key risks next time.

A Member queried the retention calculations.

The Corporation CONSIDERED the report.

78/24 REVIEW OF GOVERNOR CONTACT DAY

The Corporation NOTED the report.

79/24 DRAFT COMMITTEE MINUTES

The Corporation NOTED the draft Capital Committee minutes of 28 February 2024 and 27 March 2024.

80/24 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Principal noted that the declaration for Delamite Ltd needed to be signed at Companies House the following day. She had had a conversation with the Chair and Vice Chair regarding her role as sole director and understanding of the liabilities. Advice had been sought and provided but she considered that further clarification was necessary. Indemnity insurance was being secured. It was suggested that specialist corporation tax and VAT specialist tax advice was required and that there may need to be provisioning for corporation tax.

81/24 SELF-ASSESSMENT OF MEETING

The Chair invited Members' participation in a self-assessment of the meeting. The Student Governor responded positively. A Member said that the meeting had not felt rushed and there had been sufficient time to be thorough.

The Chair asked if the meeting had been of value to the senior leadership team (SLT). The Vice Principal welcomed the feedback on his report and how Members would wish this to be presented in future. The focus on strategy was valued.

The Vice Chair said that she would like to dig deeper into the Learner Survey feedback and it was agreed that she would follow up on this post-meeting.

82/24 DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

Wednesday 10TH July 2024 at 1.15pm.