

Approved

EXETER COLLEGE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION

CORPORATION BOARD

Minutes of the meeting held on Friday 7th October 2016 in the Boardroom, Hele Road, Exeter College

Present

Philip Bostock	Chair
Emma Webber	Vice. Chair
John Laramy	Principal
David Allen	
Bindu Arjoon	
David Batho	
Sarah Brampton	
John Bunting	
Mark Goodwin	
Chris Hoar	
Elaine Hobson	
Craig Marshall	
Martin Owen	
Michelle Pugh	
Matt Roach	
Dave Underwood	
Silas Welsh	

Observers

<i>Item 6 only</i>	Ash Dyer	Teaching & Learning lead, Maths & Science
	Jo Matthews	
	Co-opted	

Apologies

In Attendance

	Rob Bosworth	VP Schools, Partnerships & Curriculum
	Steve Campion	VP, Finance & Business Operations
	Julie Skinner	VP Standards and Student Experience
<i>Item 6 only</i>	Emma Fielding	Assistant Principal
<i>Item 8 only</i>	Dee Rowett	Director Teaching, Learning & Performance and Strategic Plan lead
	Barbara Sweeney	Clerk to the Corporation

1. **Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest**

Action

The Chair welcomed members to this the first meeting of the academic year. He commended the new lecture theatre and additional classrooms,

Approved

reconfigured from the old sports hall, and which the Board had toured prior to the meeting. He congratulated all those involved.

There were no apologies.

Declarations of Interest

Bindu Arjoon declared an interest in item 5.2 Principal's Strategic report for items relating to planning, item 14.1, Opportunities and Developments Register and item 11.4, Property Update, as Assistant Director, Exeter City Council.

2. Minutes of Meetings

- 2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 6th July 2016, as circulated, were agreed and signed by the Chair.
- 2.2 The confidential minutes of the meeting held on 6th July 2016, as circulated, were agreed and signed by the Chair.

3. Matters arising

A copy of the updated organisational chart was received and noted.

There were no other matters arising which were not elsewhere on the agenda.

4. Appointments

- **External Appointments**
- **Student Governor representing 19+**

The report, including the CV of the candidate for the external appointment, was received. The vacancy had arisen following the resignation of Michael Caines and his subsequent appointment as Patron of the College. The Chair updated the Board on the meeting with Glenn Woodcock and the recommendations made at the Search and Governance Committee meeting on the 12th September 2016.

At the invitation of the Chair, the Clerk updated the Board on the process to elect a 19+ Governor. Nominations had been invited with the deadline of Wednesday 12th October 2016 and voting was scheduled for the 13th and 14th October 2016. The Board would be invited to note the outcome of the election at its next meeting and the successful candidate would be appointed to the Quality and Standards Committee and invited to attend the next meeting of that Committee and the next meeting of the Board on 9th December 2016.

The Principal updated Governors on progress to recommend a new member representing the City Secondary Schools. Discussions were underway and it was anticipated that there would be a recommendation

Approved

to the next meeting of the Board on 9th December 2016. There was a proposal under item 13.3 that the Standing Orders should be amended to reduce the term of office of the Secondary School Governor from four years to two with an option of two terms.

The Board agreed:

a) to appoint Glenn Woodcock to the Board for a four year term of office from 10th October 2016 to the 9th October 2020 BHS

b) to appoint Glenn Woodcock to the Business Services Committee for the remainder of the academic year to 31 July 2017 BHS

c) To note the update on the vacancy for a 19+ Student Governor and external Governor representing the City Secondary Schools

Vote: Unanimous

5. **Strategic matters**

5.1 Area review Update

The update was received and the Principal reminded the Board that the Area Review would start in November as scheduled, with the first meeting on the 9th November 2016, and which the College would host. All Governors were invited to a pre-meeting on that day ahead of the formal meeting comprising Chairs and Principals of the 10 colleges involved, plus representatives from a number of government and regional bodies. In this, the last wave of reviews, change was unlikely.

A site visit was scheduled for 22nd November 2016 to validate responses included in the pre visit questionnaire which the Task and Finish Group had considered at its two meetings. Focus would be predominantly on finances.

The Board noted the update.

5.2 Principal's Strategic Report

This item was dealt with as a confidential item in accordance with the College's confidentiality policy and recorded in the Confidential Minutes.

5.3 Student Recruitment

This item was considered under item 5.2

5.4 Cost of Living Pay Award

This item was dealt with as a confidential item in accordance with the College's confidentiality policy and recorded in the Confidential Minutes.

Emma Fielding, Assistant Principal joined the meeting for item 6 only.

6. Student results 2015/16

The presentation was received and Julie Skinner, Vice Principal Standards and Student Experience confirmed that whilst some results were still awaited it was clear that results were outstanding, with all levels of 16-18 results outstanding, the best A level results ever, strong 19+ outcomes despite falling numbers, and apprenticeship overall success rates and timely success rates significantly above the national average. Value added, which had received particular focus from the Board, had improved significantly, whilst retaining outstanding success outcomes. Progression was also strong.

Emma confirmed that she had been Assistant Principal responsible for the sixth form centre for the past three years and updated the Board on the results for 2015-16.

There was an increase in the pass rate for A2 to 99.8% against a national average of 98.1%. 54% achieved high grades (A*- B) compared to 48% last year. 83% achieved A*-C compared with the national average of 77.3%. Thus the College had achieved an increase in high grades and retained high success rates. Turning to AS results, the pass rate had increased to 91% against a national average of 90%. High grades had increased to 38% against a national average of 41%, with 46% achieving grades A*- C. Success rates had decreased slightly to 83%. Using tables, Emma illustrated the upward three year trend.

Value added scores also gave a positive message. Using A Level Performance System (ALPS) there had been an improvement over the last three years from a score of 7 in 2014, 6 in 2015, to 3 in 2016, which put the College in the top 25% of providers. This had been achieved by concerted effort, and within the College there was now a culture of progression and value added.

Emma highlighted outstanding performance. Several subjects had achieved 100% pass rate with high ALPS. The impact of subjects with high learner numbers, such as history, had contributed significantly to the overall improved outcome. Of the 16 new linear AS Levels, 10 subjects had increased their pass rate, one had remained the same and five had declined. Thirteen of the 16 subjects had increased their high grade scores on 2015 results.

The International Baccalaureate (IB) results were also strong, with a pass rate of 97% (against a world average for 2015 of 78%). Four students had scored over 40 points, putting them in the top 1% in the world. Nine had achieved over 36 points, which equated to four A Levels at grade A. IB numbers were growing.

Progression to Oxbridge was up on 2015, with 14 students receiving offers and ten places secured against nine places in 2015 from 11 offers.

Emma confirmed that GCSE English and maths was challenging for the whole sector. There was a significant increase in student numbers. As per the sector, the College's results had declined. National benchmarks had fallen significantly but both the College's English and maths GCSEs were above national benchmarks. Recent results had improved the position of Functional Skills outcomes following remarks. Nevertheless, the College would no longer offer Level 2 Functional Skills in the subjects as the exams were more difficult and less well recognised than GCSEs.

The College had introduced two pathways: the Delta group for those with grade D on entry and who were working towards a C in one year, and an Echo group for those with grade E at entry, and who would aim for progression to a D in the first year and a C in the following year. Benefits included more bespoke teaching and achievable targets to inspire those with the lower entry grade. This model would have a negative impact on A-C results, but the E to D grade targets would have a positive effect on progression data.

Emma confirmed the changes for this academic year. English GCSEs would be graded by numbers rather than letters, with Grade 4 equating to a low C. Maths grading would remain by letter, with C the target grade.

Turning to 19+ results, Julie presented year on year comparisons. All age long success rates were above the all provider average. Apprenticeship overall success was also above the national average. Finally Julie showed the teaching observations grades, with an increase in those achieving grade 1 or 2.

The Chair of Quality and Standards commended the results. The focus on Value Added had achieved the outcome sought by the Board, and it was commendable that success rates had also remained strong. It demonstrated the breadth of quality across the teaching and learning in the A level and IB cohorts. It was also positive that Functional Skills had improved but he endorsed the decision to no longer offer this in the future.

The Board noted the update.

7. Learner Voice Update

7.1 College news

The report was received and taken as read. The Principal confirmed that, as seen from the update on results and his strategic report, the College was in a good place and performing well thanks to a lot of effort and hard work.

The Board noted the report.

7.2 Student Governor's Report

The report was received and Silas Welsh, Student Governor (16-18) highlighted the key points. He confirmed that there was a new Student Representative Committee (SRC) Team, which had been heavily involved in Freshers' week. For the first time there was also a Refreshers' week, for returning students, which had included events on progression and employability.

Mental Health Week commenced 10th October 2016, and which Silas invited the Board to follow on social media.

There remained a few vacancies for roles on the SRC, which he hoped would soon be filled.

Responding to comment and questions, Silas confirmed the target for the 2016-17 College Charity. The support for Mental Health Week was welcomed given the pressures on resources to deal with such issues.

The Principal confirmed the strength and reach of the Student Representative Committee, evidenced by the high turnout of voters in the SRC elections. Finances were strong and it was intended that surplus be invested in the student experience over the next year, resulting in a planned deficit.

The Board noted the report

Dee Rowett, Director of Teaching, Learning and Performance and Strategic Plan Champion, joined the meeting for item 8 only.

8. **Strategic Plan**

The report was received and copies of branded plan were tabled. Steve reminded the Board of the process and the timeline. There had been significant consultation both internally and externally, including a number of sessions with the Board and regular consultation with three Governors. A session with external stakeholders over the summer had been particularly useful and participants had been influential individuals in the community. External designers had been engaged and the final version was almost there.

Dee confirmed that process had been dynamic and iterative. The Vision statement was meaningful and concise. Strategic priorities were represented by infographics, giving the College Dimensions identity and cohesion. Representing the key areas of the College's offer, the Dimensions focussed on the impact on people.

Approved

The Values section still needed some work, with student feedback recommending greater visual impact, and some sections needed to be repositioned. The photograph of the whole Board would be included and the Plan would be proof read, and edited to read as one voice. The Board recommended that the College success should be celebrated more explicitly in the document.

The proposal was for the Strategic Plan to be multimedia, using hard copy, posters, pamphlets and digital versions. The Board recommended that, whilst the Strategic Plan was for a four year duration, it should be reviewed and updated regularly to remain a live and relevant document.

The Board thanked all those involved and agreed to

Approve the Strategic Plan 2016-2020

Vote: unanimous

9. Board Self-Assessment

The report, including a draft self-assessment report (SAR) for the Board and its Committees was received. Responses to questionnaires sent to Governors had informed the narrative and helped to develop the draft strengths and areas for improvement.

The Board considered the process, and whilst accepting that self-evaluation was important, agreed that the current process was onerous and a deterrent to full engagement.

The narrative, with strengths and areas for improvement, was drafted by the Clerk and informed, inter alia, by responses from Governors during individual appraisals. However annual Board and Committee questionnaires were not considered to add value. The Search and Governance Committee had recommended that the evaluation of Board and Committee meetings should be included in the biennial Governor appraisal questionnaire. Responses should remain anonymous. The last meeting in the academic year of the Board and each Committee should include an item of self-reflection.

The Board agreed to

a) Approve the revised process for Board and Committee self assessment

BHS

b) Approve the Board's SAR for inclusion in the College SAR.

BHS

Vote: Unanimous

Approved

Part 2: REPORTS FOR APPROVAL

The following recommendations were received and the Chair invited the Chair of each Committee to give a brief update on Committee decisions and key items considered at the meeting.

10. Recommendations from Quality and Standards Committee

10.1 Executive Summary from Committee Meeting on 19th September 2016
The report summarising the key issues considered by the Quality and Standards Committee meeting held on 19th September 2016 was received and noted. The Committee Chair highlighted the key issues. Details of significant mandatory strategic changes in curriculums were received by the Committee and would be further considered by the whole Board at the Governor Autumn Twilight event on 21st November 2016.

10.2 Safeguarding

- Year Review
- Child Protection Policy

The Committee Chair confirmed that the documents had been reviewed and were recommended to the Board. The Board noted that reductions in funding and declining resources for external agencies had increased the challenge on the capacity of the team.

The Board agreed to approve

- a) The Safeguarding Year Review**
- b) Child Protection Policy**

BHS

Vote: unanimous

10.2 Prevent

- Year Review
- Visiting Speaker Policy

The Committee Chair confirmed that the documents had been reviewed by the Committee and were recommended to the Board. The College was ahead of the curve, evidenced by the positive letter from the external regional co-ordinator. Partnerships with local agencies were strong.

The Board considered the Visiting Speaker Policy and was assured that it was not designed to reduce freedom of speech but to provide a safe and standardised process which served as a framework for decisions.

The Board agreed to approve

Approved

- a) Prevent Year Review**
- b) Visiting Speaker Policy**

BHS

Vote: unanimous

- 10.3 Equality and Diversity and British Values Annual Update (EDBV)
The Committee Chair confirmed that the documents had been reviewed by the Committee and were recommended to the Board. Governors would be invited to complete new on line training on EDBV, which included the new element on British Values. The Board agreed that values were generic rather than national.

BHS

The Board agreed to approve

The Equality and Diversity and British Values Annual Update

Vote: unanimous

11 Recommendations from Business Services Committee

- 11.1 Executive Summary from Committee Meeting on 26th September 2016
The report summarising the key issues considered by the Business Services Committee meeting held on 26th September 2016 was received and noted. The Committee Chair highlighted the key issues.

The Committee Chair updated the Board on potential collaboration on a project with the University of Exeter. No decision was yet required but the Board was invited to note the update.

The College had been engaged in delivering the Schools Strategy for over 10 years. The circulated report under item 11.2 set out progress to date and highlighted key aims. The Strategy was multifaceted but there were two key elements: working with schools for the benefit of the learners of Greater Exeter and the creation of a sustainable business case for the College.

Residential Accommodation was now becoming business critical. The Committee Chair updated the Board on a potential option previously considered and rejected, but which was now back on the table.

The July end of year operating position was a strong outturn of circa £800k surplus. However the impact of FRS17 pension charge had been significant and would increase going forward. Nevertheless the outturn was £285k surplus including FRS17. There was a recommendation that future Management Accounts show the FRS17 separately, with reconciliation in the Statutory Accounts.

The planning application for Wear Barton had been deferred. However the

Approved

lease had been secured on Flowerpot playing fields, and, thanks to the positive relationship with the University, alternative accommodation secured for the cricket pitch, allowing for the construction of the 3G pitch to commence.

The Board agreed to

a) Note the report

b) Note that future Management Accounts show the FRS17 separately, with reconciliation in the Statutory Accounts.

SC

11.2 Strategic Partnerships – Schools Strategy

The report was received and considered under items 5.2 and 11.1.

11.3 Property Masterplan

The report was received. AWW and Keystone had been appointed to develop a 20 year masterplan. Engagement meetings were scheduled with the Senior Leadership Team and the Board, and during staff development sessions.

The Board noted the report.

11.4 Property Matters

The report was received and considered under item 11.1.

11.5 Financial Regulations

The report was received. The Financial Regulations had been updated to reflect the change in structure of the Senior Leadership Team.

The Board agreed to

a) Approve the updated Financial Regulations

SC/
BHS

b) Approve the Expenses Policy

Vote: Unanimous

12. **Recommendations and key issues from Audit Committee**

12.

12.1 Executive Summary from Committee Meeting on 28th September 2016

The report summarising the key issues considered by the Audit Committee meeting held on 28th September 2016 was received and noted.

The Committee Chair highlighted the key issues considered when agreeing to recommend the resolutions approved under items 12.2-12.8.

Approved

In additional, the Chair of Audit assured the Board that the Business Continuity review had concluded that incidents were managed appropriately. An overarching procedure would provide an additional tool for the new Senior Leadership Team, and scenario rehearsals, which a member of the Committee would attend, would also increase assurance.

Anti-Fraud training would be delivered to the Audit Committee on 30th November at 4.30pm. An open invitation was extended to all members of the Board.

The Board noted the report.

12.2 Risk Management

The report was received and considered. The revised Risk Management Policy, which was due its biennial review, included updates due to the revised Senior Leadership Team and an updated schedule of key dates in the risk management cycle.

The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) had reviewed and updated the Risk Register and Risk Heat Map. Steve highlighted the changes to the previous version, and provided justification for decisions.

The Board agreed to:

a) To approve the Risk Management Policy

BHS

b) To receive and approve the updated Risk Register

The Board unanimously agreed items 12.3-12.8.

12.3 To reappoint PricewaterhouseCoopers as Internal Auditors for year ending 31 July 2017.

SC/
BHS

12.4 To approve the Internal Audit Service Annual Report 2015-6

SC/
BHS

The Chair of Audit confirmed that although the number of recommendations had increased, this was due to more targeted reviews, thereby increasing value for money. The Internal Auditors had confirmed that they found nothing untoward.

12.5 To approve the Internal Audit Service Risk Assessment and Plan for 2016-17.

SC/
BHS

If required, contingency days would be used for more focussed reviews, together with days taken from the Subcontractor Review, given the fall in subcontractor provision and the fact that the College's value was so close

Approved

to the threshold for SFA requirements for an independent assurance

- 12.6 To approve the External Auditor's Audit Plan for the year ending July 2016. SC/
BHS

The audit would be completed under the new FRS102 rules. Key risks to be tested were common to the sector

- 12.7 To receive the update on the proposed process for tendering for internal and external auditors SC/
BHS

The process would commence in the new calendar year 2017 for new internal and external auditors from 1 August 2017.

- 12.8 a) To approve the Information Security Policy
b) To approve the change to the frequency of Governors' passwords, subject to adequate controls BHS/
RBr

The policy supported the business critical balance between security and the need for systems and processes to be fit for purpose. The Board agreed to a revised procedure for the renewal of Governor passwords.

13. **Recommendations and key issues from Search and Governance Committee**

- 13.1 Executive Summary from Committee Meeting on 12th September 2016. The report summarising the key issues considered by the Search and Governance Committee meeting held on 12th September 2016 was received and noted. The Chair highlighted the key issues.

- 13.2 Process for electing a new Chair and Vice Chair. The report was received and considered. In accordance with the Code of Good Governance, the process by which the Chair is nominated and elected should be transparent and agreed by the Board. The paper outlined the proposed process for the nomination and election of the Chair from 1st August 2017 for a two year term, renewable for a further two years.

Governors considered the draft process map and proposed schedule. Following clarification, it was confirmed that there was provision for a scenario where a Vice Chair might be elected, triggering a subsequent election for the Vice Chair. However, the proposal was that in normal circumstances, the Vice Chair would be elected for a two year term with the potential for a second two year term, as per the current Standing Orders, and that this benefited from being out of sync with the Chair's

Approved

term to provide support and continuity.

In the event of a number of candidates standing, the proposed time line provided adequate opportunity for manifestos to be published, if required. The proposed schedule also allowed for alternative processes to be approved, should nobody stand.

The Board agreed to

a) Approve the process for the nomination and election of the Chair, and if required, the Vice Chair.

BHS

Vote: Unanimous

- 13.3 Amendment to Standing Orders.
The report was received and the Board considered the amendment in the light of the previous resolution on the process for nomination and election of a Chair.

The Board agreed to

Approve the revised Standing Orders

BHS

Vote: Unanimous

- 13.4 Role descriptions.
Role Descriptions, updated to reflect the change in Senior Post Holders, were received. The Board agreed to

Approve the following revised Role Descriptions:

BHS

- a) The Chair's**
- b) The Vice Chair's**
- c) Committee Chairs'**
- d) Governors'**

Vote: Unanimous

PART 3: REPORTS AND MINUTES FOR INFORMATION

The following reports and minutes were received and **noted:**

- 14. **Reports for Information**
- 14.1 Opportunities and Development Risk Register
- 14.2 HR annual report and policies
- 14.3 Bursary Update
- 14.4 Forecast Outturn 2015/16

Approved

- 14.5 Subcontractor Update
- 14.6 Balanced Score Cards
- 14.7 Governance Report
The Clerk reminded the Board of the Autumn Twilight Seminar on the 21st November 2016. She updated the Board on the recent Clerks' Conference. Volunteers were invited to represent the College at the annual Cathedral quiz.
- 14.8 Sealing Report

- 15. **Minutes for information:**
The following minutes were received and **noted**.
 - 15.1 Business Services Minutes 27 June 2016. *Approved*
 - 15.2 Search and Governance Committee Minutes 12th September 2016. *Draft*
 - 15.3 Quality and Standards Minutes 19 September 2016. *Draft*

 - 15.4 Business Services Committee Minutes 26 September 2016 *Draft*
 - 15.5 Audit Committee Minutes 28 September 2016 *Draft*
 - 15.1 Business Services Minutes 27 June 2016. *Approved*
 - 15.2 Search and Governance Committee Minutes 12th September 2016. *Draft*
 - 15.3 Quality and Standards Minutes 19 September 2016. *Draft*
 - 15.4 Business Services Committee Minutes 26 September 2016 *Draft*

- 16. **Confidential Minutes for information:**
The Following confidential minutes were received and **noted**.
 - 16.1 Business Services Confidential Minutes 27 June 2016. *Approved*
 - 16.2 Area review Task and Finish Group Minutes 12th September 2016
Approved
 - 16.3 Search and Governance Committee Confidential Minutes 12th September 2016. *Draft*
 - 16.4 Business Services Committee Confidential Minutes 26 September 2016
Draft
 - 16.5 Area review Task and Finish Group Minutes 26th September 2016 *Draft*

- 17. Dates of scheduled meetings for 2016/2017
 - Friday 9th December 2016
 - Friday 10th February 2017
 - Friday 5th May 2017
 - Wed 5th July 2017