

EXETER COLLEGE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION

CORPORATION BOARD

Minutes of the meeting held on Friday 11 October 2019 in the Boardroom, Hele Road, Exeter College

Present	David Allen	Chair
	Bindu Arjoon	Vice Chair
	Sue Clarke	
	Chris Hoar	
	John Laramy	Principal
	Tom Matthew	
	Jo Matthews	
	Matt Roach	
	Tim Rutherford	
	Toby Smith	
	Dave Underwood	
	Emma Webber	
	Cassandra Wood	
	Glenn Woodcock	
Observers	None	
Apologies	Sarah Brampton	
	Heather Ancient	
	Stewart Noakes	
	Sonja Longmore	
In Attendance	Rob Bosworth	Vice Principal Schools, Partnerships and Curriculum
	Steve Champion	Vice Principal Finance and Business Operations
	Jade Otty	Vice Principal Performance
	<i>Item 6.2 only</i> Stephen Mariadas	IoT Chief Executive Officer
	<i>Item 6.3 only</i> Nick Anderson	Assistant Principal
	<i>Item 4 only</i> Gemma Noble	Director of People and Organisational Development
	Alison Layton-Hill	Clerk to the Corporation

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| 1. | Welcome and Apologies
The Chair welcomed members to the first Board meeting of the academic year. | Action |
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Apologies were received from Sarah Brampton, Stewart Noakes, Sonja Longmore and Heather Ancient.

The Chair particularly welcomed new governors; Tom Matthew, FE Student Governor, Toby Smith, HE Student Governor and Tim Rutherford, Secondary School Governor. Tim is Headteacher of West Exe School and Deputy CEO of the Ted Wragg Trust. The Chair encouraged all new governors to fully participate in the meeting and not to hesitate to ask questions.

Declarations of Interest

Bindu Arjoon, Director, Exeter City Council declared an interest in any items relating to planning.

Glenn Woodcock, Member of Council, University of Exeter, declared an interest in items relating to the University and as an employer, an interest in items relating to the Institute of Technology.

Dave Underwood, independent advisor declared an interest in any items relating to the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital.

Chris Hoar, Partner Michelmores, declared an interest in any items relating to the Institute of Technology and Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital.

David Allen noted in relation to item 11.2 that he had previously had a professional relationship with the candidate.

2. Minutes of Meetings

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 5 July 2019, as circulated, were agreed and signed by the Chair.

2.2 The confidential minutes of the meeting held on 5 July 2019, as circulated, were agreed and signed by the Chair.

3. Matters Arising

3.1 Student Governor Elections

The Board noted that Tom Matthew and Toby Smith had been elected to the post of Student Governor for the 2019/2020 academic year. In accordance with usual process it was proposed that the student governors serve on the Quality and Standards Committee. The Chair highlighted the importance that the College puts on the student voice and advised that the Student Governors will report elements of their experience as students at the College to each Board meeting.

The Board approved the appointment of Tom Matthew and Toby Smith to the Quality and Standards Committee.

The Board agreed that the Student Governors will bring a report to each Board meeting. TM/TS

Gemma Noble, Director of People and Organisational Development joined the meeting for item 4 only

4. HR Annual Report

The Director of People and Organisational Development was welcomed to the meeting. The Board was reminded that the HR report had previously been tabled at committee level, however the profile of the People service had been raised and this report is now received by the Board.

The Board received an overview of the key themes and was complimentary of the comprehensive report. It was questioned whether there are statistics available in terms of members of staff who complete the probation period of 9 months. It was noted that the probation process is comprehensive with reviews at 3, 6 and 9 months. Action plans are put in place at an early stage if required, which has resulted in only 2 out of 204 people not completing their probation period.

It was clarified that the suggestion in the staff survey to review the pastoral/tutorial system had been recognised and the process changed.

The Board was pleased to note the support that has been put in place to assist staff physical and mental wellbeing. The mental health first aiders programme had been launched, enabling staff to obtain informal support. Governors questioned whether there are trends in terms of staff mental health. The complexities of the data was acknowledged, in that Occupational Health are not always able to share information and staff themselves are in control of the reasons they report for their own absence. It was noted that trends across the country would suggest there remains a stigma in terms of disclosing mental health issues. However, it was reported anecdotally that more staff are coming forward to seek support due to awareness raising and a changing climate in relation to mental health and wellbeing.

The Board asked if there was further detail in terms of the reasons for staff turnover across the College. It was confirmed that there is a further breakdown by area and reason for leaving and where this identifies an area of concern it is addressed. It was noted that the small number of redundancies (9) during the year has inflated the leaver statistics.

It was advised that out of 320 cities surveyed across Europe, Exeter has the second lowest level of unemployment, which brings challenges when recruiting staff, particularly to support roles. Governors asked how this challenge impacts on the HR Strategy and were advised that the College focuses heavily on staff retention. A staff benefits package had been launched, along with the option to purchase additional leave and access loans and savings schemes. The lowest two pay points had been removed to enable the College to compete in areas where recruitment is difficult and market forces payments are made in exceptional circumstances.

In response to the Board’s suggestion, it was acknowledged that an analysis of the age profile of those that are leaving would be worthwhile and some further research of this demographic would be explored with the Association of Colleges. **GN**

The Board received a reminder of the gender pay gap statistics.

	2017	2018	Public Sector	Education
Mean	7.3%	9.7%	17.5%	17.3%
Median	8.8%	11.9%	19%	25.9%

The Board noted that although the College gender pay gap had increased marginally on the previous year, it is significantly lower than the National, Public and Education sector.

The Board was reassured that the College takes the gender pay gap seriously and is particularly embracing flexible working; for the first time there are four part time members of staff on the College Leadership Team.

It was acknowledged that when recruiting staff to the lower quartiles, traditionally applicants are female and there had been a need to introduce market forces in areas that traditionally attract males.

The Board noted the HR Annual Report

5. Chair’s Oral Report

The Chair reported that Gavin Williamson, the Secretary of State for Education had visited the College earlier in the week and complimented the professional organisation of the meeting. It was particularly pleasing to see the involvement of students. The Secretary of State appeared fully engaged and interested and the Principal was confident that the College had managed to convey its key points well.

6. **Strategic Matters for discussion**

6.1 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.

Stephen Mariadas, SWIoT Chief Executive Officer joined the meeting for item 6.2 only

6.2 Institute of Technology (IoT)

The Board received a presentation from the Vice Principal Schools, Partnerships and Curriculum and the South West Institute of Technology (SWIoT) Chief Executive Officer.

The Board congratulated Stephen Mariadas on his appointment as the SWIoT's CEO.

The Vice Principal gave the Board an update on the College's digital strategy, reminding governors that the IoT is part of a wider College strategy which will be discussed further at the Board Residential in March 2020.

The CEO advised the Board that the SWIoT is employer led and will deliver higher level and above technical education in partnership with the employers. The SWIoT is fortunate to have four of the best companies as its anchor employers: Oxygen House, Babcock International, the Met Office, TDK and there is a focus on working collaboratively across all partners to meet the learner and employer needs.

The Board noted the investment of each partner within the SWIoT and that £5m had been allocated to the College for a new adult learning space on the Hele Road site. Nationally there are 11 IoTs that have been successful in their bid, two of which have been signed off (the South West and West London).

The SWIoT will have 2500 students by the fifth academic year and the intended split in education is 60% digital and 40% engineering and manufacturing. The curriculum will have an emphasis on courses that have a progression route and there is a drive to ensuring each qualification that is the same has a standard title.

The Chair congratulated Rob, Stephen and the team for an outstanding performance to have achieved the progress to date.

The Board thanked the presenters for their informative presentation.

Nick Anderson, Assistant Principal joined the meeting for item 6.3 only

6.3 Emerging Outcomes

The Board received a presentation from the Vice Principal Performance and the Assistant Principal, which included the headline data in terms of the emerging outcomes.

The achievement percentage for the College, which is based on retention (the number of students that complete the course) and pass rates is 87.9%. The Board noted areas for improvement, specifically that Level 1 16-18 foundation studies and 19+ courses did not retain sufficient learners, which impacted on the overall achievement rate.

The Board noted that the College apprenticeship offer is world class, however there is the potential for marginal gains that will be explored.

The performance of GCSE English and Maths, which was a concern following the previous year's results, is a marked success and well in excess of the national average.

The Vice Principal gave the Board an overview of A Level performance. The slight reductions in achievement rates at Level 3 was impacted by the challenge of two-year retention in some A level subjects, which no longer have external AS exams at the end of year 1. It was noted that students that move to other courses within the College are not included in the retention calculation.

The pass rate for Level 3 was high with only 7 students out of over 2000 entries not receiving a pass grade. 30 out of 36 A level subjects offered achieved a 100% pass rates.

The Board noted that in terms of progress, the ALPS (A Level Performance System) provider score had reduced slightly compared to a grade 2 the previous year. There continue to be remarks coming through, however it was accepted that the College position is likely to fall just below the top 25%. Specific areas for improvement were identified and measures for improvement had been put in place.

The AS results were the best in the history of the College and both A Level and AS level results are well above the national average.

The Board was advised that the performance of the International Baccalaureate offer was a major success, enjoying the best results the College had experienced, which were well above world average.

The Board was pleased to note the positive progression information in terms of UCAS destinations: 1035 students will progress to university,

148 students had received offers but have deferred commencement to 2020 and 319 students had been accepted into a Russell Group University. Every student that was holding an Oxbridge offer was accepted. It was also worthy of note that 15 students progressed to university to read medicine and veterinary science compared with 5 the previous year. The College Medical Society was acknowledged as having a positive impact on the success of these students.

The top three destinations were identified as University of the West of England (UWE), Exeter and Plymouth and the top five subjects are Law, Psychology, Geography, Sport and Exercise and Mathematics.

The Board acknowledged that offering disadvantaged students the opportunity to attend the Reach Academy on lower attainment grades was positive.

It was also pleasing to note that some 16-18 students had achieved high grades in the English GCSE resits. The Board agreed to communicate with schools appropriately in terms of a wider strategy for improving English GCSE and the Chair acknowledged the positive collaboration with headteachers across Exeter.

The Chair of the Quality and Standards Committee informed the Board that the Committee had also received information on the emerging results and noted that there are clear areas for the Committee to challenge and monitor to provide assurance to the Board.

The Board noted the presentation

7. Learner and Student Voice update

7.1 College news

The report was received and taken as read. The Board particularly noted that the College will unusually be represented at the A Level excellence network for three subjects due to the high value added achieved.

The Board noted the report

7.2 Learner and Student Voice Report

The report was received and taken as read. The Board noted that the College is the second best seller of Totum cards (previously NUS card) in the country.

The Board noted the report

Part 2 REPORTS FOR NOTING/APPROVAL

8. **Recommendations from Audit and Risk Assurance Committee** 8.1 Executive Summary from Committee Meeting on 16 September 2019.

The report summarising the key issues considered by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee meeting held on 16 September 2019 was received. The Vice Chair of the committee highlighted the key issues.

It was explained that deep dive presentations received by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee are to provide further reassurance in areas that are considered a significant risk to the College. In order for the deep dive presentations to be more accessible, they will be moved to the beginning of each Audit and Risk Assurance Committee meeting and all governors will be invited to attend. Suggestions of areas suitable for future deep dives from the Chair of Quality and Standards and the Chair of Business Services would be welcomed.

There was some question about potential conflict between the areas of responsibility of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee compared to the Quality and Standards and the Business Services Committees. The Chair tasked the Principal and the Vice Principal to develop a protocol to bring to the Committees and the Board for agreement.

Governors agreed that:

- a) **Safeguarding, Competition for HE and Information Security will be subject to a Deep Dive this academic year**
- b) **The Principal and Vice Principal will develop a protocol in terms of providing clarity on how the deep dive presentations to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee complement the scrutiny of other committees**

JL/SC

8.2 Risk Register The Risk Register was considered as circulated. The Board acknowledged the much improved risk register and welcomed the change in format. The Vice Principal Finance and Business Operations advised that there will be a discussion at the Board Residential to develop the document further.

The Board approved the Risk Register

8.3 Internal Audit Programme The Board considered the internal audit programme and noted the areas proposed for scrutiny and the Committee's recommendation to approve.

The Board approved the internal audit programme for 2019/2020 subject to a reduction in audit days.

- 8.4 Re-appointment of the Internal Auditors
This item was dealt with as a confidential item in accordance with the College's confidentiality policy and recorded in the confidential minutes.

9. **Recommendations from Quality and Standards Committee**
9.1 Executive Summary from Committee Meeting on 30 September 2019.
The report summarising the key issues considered by the Quality and Standards Committee meeting held on 30 September 2019 was received and noted. The Chair highlighted some key elements of the meeting.

The Committee had agreed areas that would be included in the intensive care and outpatients programmes and will monitor progress after the internal exams in January 2020. The Committee agreed to continue a provision for A Level music, as although numbers are low, the College is committed to retaining breadth in its curriculum.

The Lead Safeguarding Governor had visited the new boarding provision and an Ofsted inspection is imminent. There were some minor issues identified and the Board was reassured that these had been rectified. The Committee Chair offered congratulations to Cassandra Wood on her new role as Safeguarding Manager.

The Committee had scrutinised the NEET provision and considered the wider social justice agenda across the College to ensure that the most vulnerable learners are supported.

The Board noted the report

10. **Recommendations from the Business Services Committee**
10.1 Executive Summary from Committee meeting on 23 September 2019.
The report summarising the key issues considered by the Business Services meeting held on 23 September 2019 was received and noted. The Committee Chair highlighted the key issues.

The Committee had welcomed the Principal's new style and dynamic Opportunities and Developments register.

The ESFA letter to Chairs regarding Bournville College had been considered and the Committee requested that College practice is checked against the issues raised.

The Committee was pleased to note that the Clocktower boarding facility and the new family centre were complete and open.

The Committee had received an update on the sustainability agenda and noted that further work will be undertaken with a link to the strategic plan.

10.2 Financial Regulations

The Board received the financial regulations 2019, the financial regulations appendices 2019 and the Financial Procedures September 2019. The Board noted the Committee's addition to the Regulations that the Chair of the Corporation approves the Principal's credit card expenditure.

The Board approved the financial regulations 2019, the financial regulations appendices 2019 and the Financial Procedures September 2019

11. Recommendations from Search and Governance Committee

11.1 Executive Summary from Committee Meeting on 7 October 2019

The report summarising the key issues considered by the Search and Governance Committee meeting held on 7 October 2019 was received and noted. The Committee Chair highlighted the key issues.

Sue Clarke had previously been appointed by the Board as lead Safeguarding Governor and had subsequently agreed to also take the lead for Equality Diversity and British Values (EDBV).

The Board approved the appointment of Sue Clarke as Lead Governor for EDBV.

The Chair reminded the Board that Mark Goodwin's resignation from the Board had left a vacancy for a Vice Chair of the Quality and Standards Committee. The Committee had suggested that Jo Matthews would be an ideal candidate and the Chair was pleased to note that Jo would be willing to take on the role.

The Board approved the appointment of Jo Matthews as Vice Chair of the Quality and Standards Committee.

Attendance of Governors

The Board was made aware that governor attendance at meetings including the Board Residential was 83.32%. Attendance at meetings excluding the residential was 83% which is above the target of 80% but 3% lower than the attendance rate for the previous year.

The Chair advised the Board that Ian McGregor and Tim Tamblyn's terms of office end this autumn. He expressed his appreciation and acknowledgement of their valued contribution to the College.

11.2 Appointment of a College Patron
This item was dealt with as a confidential item in accordance with the College's confidentiality policy and recorded in the confidential minutes.

11.3 Governance Policies
The Board reviewed the amendments suggested by the Committee to the following governance policies:

- Associates Policy
- Attendance of Non-Committee Members Policy
- Complaints against Board Members Policy
- Conflicts of Interest Policy
- Governor Appointment and Removal Policy

The Board approved the policies

11.4 Draft Board Residential Programme
The Board considered the draft residential programme to be held in March 2020 and was pleased to note that Sir Ian Diamond, chair of the Four Nations Commission and National Statistician had agreed to be a guest speaker. The Committee had also agreed to invite Donna Kehoe, Agent for the Bank of England.

The Chair requested that Donna Kehoe's presentation from a meeting of regional chairs and principals is circulated to new governors. **Clerk**

The Board noted the draft Board Residential Programme

Further items pertaining to the Search and Governance Committee were discussed and dealt with as confidential items in accordance with the College's confidentiality policy and recorded in the confidential minutes.

12. **Recommendations from Remuneration Committee**

12.1 Executive Summary from Committee Meeting on 7 October 2019
The report summarising the key issues considered by the Remuneration Committee meeting held on 7 October 2019 was received and noted. The Committee Chair highlighted the key issues.

The Committee had noted that during the absence on maternity leave of the Director of People and Organisational Development, the Head of People will be lined managed by Sam Hillman.

12.2 The Board noted that the end of year performance reviews for the senior post holders had taken place. The Committee reported that the reviews had been positive and that the remuneration for senior post holders was appropriately benchmarked and reviewed.

The Board noted the report

PART 3: REPORTS AND MINUTES FOR INFORMATION

13. Reports

The following reports were **received and noted**.

- 13.1 Anti-bribery Policy
- 13.2 Opportunities and Development Risk Register
- 13.3 Management Accounts (June 2019)
- 13.4 ESFA Letter (Bournville College)
- 13.5 Associates Policy
- 13.6 Attendance of Non-Committee Members Policy
- 13.7 Complaints against Board Members Policy
- 13.8 Conflicts of Interest Policy
- 13.9 Governor Appointment and Removal Policy
- 13.10 Senior Leadership Structure
- 13.11 Governance Report
- 13.12 Committee Membership
- 13.13 Sealings Report

14. Minutes

The following minutes were **received and noted**.

- 14.1 Audit and Risk Assurance Committee minutes 16 September 2019 *Draft*
- 14.2 Quality and Standards Committee minutes 30 September 2019 *Draft*
- 14.3 Business Services Committee minutes 23 September 2019 *Draft*

15. Confidential Minutes

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

- 15.1 Audit and Risk Assurance Confidential Minutes 16 September 2019
- 15.2 *Draft*
Business Services Committee Confidential minutes 23 September 2019
Draft

15. Dates of scheduled meetings for 2018/2019

- Friday 6 December 2019
- Friday 7 February 2020
- Friday 8 May 2020
- Friday 3 July 2020