

**EXETER COLLEGE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION
CORPORATION BOARD**

Minutes of the meeting held on Friday 11 December 2020 via Zoom

Present	David Allen	Chair
	Bindu Arjoon	Vice Chair
	Carol McCormack	
	Sarah Brampton	
	John Laramy	Principal
(from item 5.1)	Heather Ancient	
	Matt Roach	
	Tim Rutherford	
	Sue Clarke	
	Emma Webber	
	Neil Hitchings	
	Sonja Longmore	
	Olivia Dupont	
(from item 5.1)	Tim Quine	
	Vicki Roberts	
	Susie Hills	
Observers	None	
Apologies	Jo Matthews	
	Will Valastro	
	Glenn Woodcock	
	Stewart Noakes	
In Attendance	Rob Bosworth	Deputy Principal/CEO
	Richard Church	Chief Financial Officer
	Jade Otty	Vice Principal Performance
	Sam Hillman	Assistant Principal
	Ross Morshead	Director of Vocational and Technical Education
	Alison Layton-Hill	Clerk to the Corporation

1. Welcome and Apologies Action

Prior to the formal commencement of the meeting, the CEO/Principal advised governors that an Exeter College student had tragically passed away during the previous weekend. The Board observed a period of silence to reflect on the sad loss of a young life.

The Chair welcomed colleagues to the Board meeting and extended a particular welcome to Olivia Dupont and Susie Hills to their first Board meeting. Apologies were received from Jo Matthews, Will Valastro, Glenn Woodcock and Stewart Noakes.

The Chair advised the Board that Jo Matthews will step down as a governor at the end of December 2020 due to relocation. He acknowledged Jo's vast FE experience and positive contribution and thanked her for her dedication as a governor in her absence. The Chair, on behalf of the Search and Governance Committee, proposed that Jo is offered the role of Associate of Exeter College. He also proposed that Jo is invited to remain as a co-opted governor serving on the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee until the end of the academic year.

The Board approved:

- a) The appointment of Jo Matthews as an Associate of the College**
- b) That Jo Matthews, if willing, would remain serving on the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee until the end of the academic year**

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 for matters relating to the University and as an employer, an interest in items relating to the Institute of Technology

Tim Quine, Deputy Vice Chancellor, University of Exeter, for items relating to the University.

Carol McCormack, Partner Michelmores, declared an interest in any items relating to Michelmores.

John Laramy, Principal/CEO declared an interest in any items relating to Pearson.

David Allen, Chair, declared an interest in any items relating to the Halpin Partnership for which he provides occasional consultancy.

2. Minutes of Meetings

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 9 October 2020, as circulated, were agreed.

2.2 The confidential minutes of the meeting held on 9 October 2020, as circulated, were agreed.

3. **Matters Arising**

3.1 Vice Chair of Quality and Standards Committee

The Chair advised that the Search and Governance Committee had agreed to recommend to the Board that Sue Clarke be appointed to the role of Vice Chair of the Quality and Standards Committee.

The Board approved Sue Clarke's appointment as Vice Chair of the Quality and Standards Committee

3.2 Health and Safety Policy

The Board received the interim updated Health and Safety policy and the Clerk summarised the amendments, which included two references to Covid-19 within the 'Fire drills' and 'Protecting yourself against infection' sections. The Board lead for health and safety, Emma Webber, confirmed that she had been consulted and was happy with the proposed changes.

The Board approved the interim Health and Safety policy

4. **Corporation Chair's Report**

The Chair acknowledged that the College had operated in very unusual circumstances over the past ten months and thanked governors and all College staff for providing the best possible experience for students. He praised the senior leadership team for keeping the College open and acknowledged the efforts to flex governance arrangements and provide effective blended learning, and at the same time achieving extraordinary levels of student satisfaction.

The Chair noted that Exeter College had successfully retained outstanding financial health in a climate when many in the sector were struggling. However, it was noted that pressure on funding, rising prices, increased unemployment and disruption to supply chains are to be expected, particularly in the event of a trade agreement with the EU not being reached by the end of the transition period.

The Board agreed that the Chair and the Principal/CEO are given delegated powers to make decisions to mitigate any disruption to the College in December 2020/January 2021 arising from the ending of the transition period.

5. **Strategic Matters for Discussion**

5.1 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.

5.2 Self Assessment Report 2019/2020 (SAR) and Quality Improvement Plan 2020/2021 (QIP)

The Board received a presentation from the Vice Principal Performance and noted that the College had assessed itself as 'outstanding' in all curriculum areas except for 19+ provision, which was assessed as 'good'. The College had assessed itself as 'outstanding' in all Ofsted Education Inspection Framework elements: Quality of Education, Behaviour and Attitudes, Personal Development and Leadership and Management. The Vice Principal Performance gave an overview of the previous year's achievements and areas for improvement that are identified in the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) for 2020/2021.

The Board welcomed the more streamlined QIP which included the priorities for the year: keep the risk low, stay outstanding and grow and thrive. It was confirmed that the Quality and Standards Committee will receive progress updates on these priorities as well as safeguarding, Equality and Diversity and the wellbeing of learners and staff.

The Chair of the Quality and Standards Committee confirmed that the committee had scrutinised the SAR and QIP and supported the reports.

The Board received reassurance that areas for improvement will be achievable in a reasonable time period as effective investment in those faculties had been made. The Board was also reassured that improvements are demonstrated through strong narrative and comparisons with national data.

The Board thanked the Vice Principal Performance for her presentation and approved the SAR 2019/2020 and QIP 2020/2021

Sam Hillman and Ross Morshead joined the meeting for item 5.3 only

5.3

Strategic Plan

The Chair explained the process of how the new strategic plan had been developed and the Board received a presentation of the updated strategic plan including the amended dimensions, following feedback from governors. Additional focus had also been given to the golden threads of 'digital' and 'sustainability'.

The Board engaged in a full discussion following the presentation and provided comments and suggestions for consideration related to:

- defining the phrase 'digital citizen'
- the merit of measurable and simple targets
- the provision of adult and HE focussed learning and café space
- staff wellbeing and the use of the staff survey
- flexible and agile teaching and learning
- raising the visibility of the learner
- including a reference to people in the vision

An updated version of the plan will be reviewed by Heather Ancient and Emma Webber, as well as being shared with the Chair of the Corporation and the Committee Chairs.

The Board noted the presentation and thanked the Assistant Principal and Director of Vocational and Technical Education

6. Learner and Student Voice update

6.1 College News

The report was received and taken as read.

The Board noted the report

6.2 Learner and Student Voice Report

The report was received and taken as read. The Principal advised that 41 students had gained an interview for Oxford or Cambridge. He also thanked Will Valastro, student governor for the work he had undertaken in support of the Covid-19 Student Charter.

The Board noted the report

6.3 Student Governor Reports

The Board received the reports provided by the Student Governors.

The Board noted the reports

Part 2 REPORTS FOR NOTING/APPROVAL

7. Recommendations from Audit and Risk Assurance Committee

7.1 Executive Summary from Committee Meeting on 16 November 2020.

The report summarising the key issues considered by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee meeting held on 16 November 2020 was received and the Chair highlighted the key issues.

7.2 Risk Register

The Committee had received a deep dive into the Covid-19 risk management process and the Chair advised the Board that it will continue to focus on this risk at the following meeting.

The Board considered the risk register, which had been scrutinised by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.

The Board approved the Risk Register

7.3 Risk Management Annual Report

The Board considered the Risk Management Annual Report which summarised the activity relating to risk management for the preceding year.

The Board approved the Risk Management Annual Report

7.4 Key Issues Discussion Document

The Board considered the Key Issues Discussion Document which confirmed a clean audit and it was noted that the external auditors had complimented the finance team. There had been no change to the agreed plan, no significant findings and no override of manual controls. Assumptions made were appropriate and the Financial Statements represented a fair view of the College's position.

The Board approved the Key Issues Discussion Document

7.5 Regularity Self-Assessment

The Board considered the Regularity Self-Assessment, and additional self-assessment specifically related to Covid-19, which had been reviewed by the Committee.

The Board approved the Regularity Self-Assessments

7.6 Letter of Representation

The Auditors require the Board to confirm its understanding of its responsibilities by signing the Letter of Representation before the accounts are finalised.

The Board approved the Letter of Representation for signature by the Chair

7.7 **Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Annual Report**

The Board considered the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Annual Report which assured the Board that the Committee is satisfied with the adequacy and effectiveness of the College's systems of internal control.

The Board approved the Risk Assurance Committee Annual Report

8. **Recommendations from Business Services Committee**

8.1 Executive Summary from Committee Meeting on 23 November 2020.

The report summarising the key issues considered by the Business Services Committee meeting held on 23 November 2020 was received and the Committee Chair highlighted the key issues.

The Board noted that the latest version of the management accounts indicated a positive start to the new financial year. The positive recruitment resulting in an increase in student numbers was also noted. The Committee had given some focus on borrowing and the volume of capital projects.

- 8.2 Exeter College Financial Statements and Going Concern
The draft accounts for Exeter College for the year ended 31 July 2020, which had been reviewed by the Business Services Committee and recommended for approval, were received along with a supporting going concern paper. The Chief Financial Officer gave an overview of the going concern paper to give the additional assurance required by the Board.

The Board extended its thanks to the Principal, Chief Financial Officer and the wider finance team for producing a clean set of accounts.

The Board approved the Exeter College Financial Statements and authorised the Chair and Principal to sign them

- 8.3 A Plus Training (UK) Ltd Financial Statements

The Board received the draft accounts for the dormant company A plus Training Ltd for the year ended 31 July 2020, which had been reviewed by the Business Services Committee and were recommended for approval.

The Board approved the A Plus Training (UK) Financial Statements

9. **Recommendations from the Quality and Standards Committee**

- 9.1 Executive Summary from Committee meeting on 30 November 2020. The report summarising the key issues considered by the Quality and Standards Committee meeting held on 30 November 2020 was received and noted. The Committee Chair advised that the Committee had approved the following HR Policies: probation procedure, suspension and dismissal policy, capability policy and special leave procedure. The Chair also highlighted the following items for Board approval.

- 9.2 Safeguarding Report
The circulated annual report was received, which had been scrutinised by the Quality and Standards Committee. The Committee was pleased to note the restructuring of the service and the additional wellbeing advisers to strengthen the frontline referral service. The report was considered thorough and reflected the College's offer for safeguarding and wellbeing.

The Board approved the Safeguarding Annual Report and thanked the Safeguarding team

- 9.3 Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
The circulated policy was received. The Board noted that the Committee Chair and Safeguarding Lead Governor had attended safeguarding training and were reassured that the college has a comprehensive approach to safeguarding.

The Board approved the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

- 9.4 Self-Assessment Report (SAR) 2019/2020 and Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) 2020/2021

This item had been covered earlier in the agenda.

- 9.5 HE Self-Assessment Report (SAR) 2019/2020 and Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) 2020/2021

The HE SAR and QIP were received and considered.

The Board approved the HE SAR 2019/2020 and QIP 2020/2021

PART 3: REPORTS AND MINUTES FOR INFORMATION

10. **Reports**

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

- 10.1 Management Accounts (September 2020)
- 10.2 Student Union Accounts
- 10.3 Probation procedure
- 10.4 Suspension and Dismissal policy
- 10.5 Capability policy
- 10.6 Special Leave procedure
- 10.7 Letter from Eileen Milner
- 10.8 Governance Report
- 10.9 Sealings Report

11. **Minutes**

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

- 11.1 Audit and Risk Assurance Committee minutes 16 November 2020 *Draft*
- 11.2 Business Services Committee minutes 23 November 2020 *Draft*
- 11.3 Quality and Standards Committee minutes 30 November 2020 *Draft*

12. **Confidential Minutes**

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

- 12.1 Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Confidential minutes 16 November 2020
- 12.2 Business Services Committee Confidential minutes 23 November 2020 *Draft*

13. **Dates of scheduled meetings for 2018/2019**

- Friday 26 February 2021
- Friday 30 April 2021
- Friday 2 July 2021

The Chair of the Corporation thanked the Clerk and Deputy Clerk for their support and wished governors and all staff a happy Christmas and best wishes for 2021.

Signed by the Chair

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David Allen".

Date: 26 February 2021