

EXETER COLLEGE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION

CORPORATION BOARD

Minutes of the meeting held on Friday 14 October 2022 in the Boardroom, Hele Road, Exeter

Present	Bindu Arjoon Glenn Woodcock Dr. Sangaralingam Ahilan Emma Bradshaw-Smith Sarah Brampton Sue Clarke Neil Hitchings Sonja Longmore Carol McCormack	Chair Vice Chair
To item 5.3	Tim Quine Matt Roach Victoria Roberts Patrick Tigwell Sally Wolkowski	
Observers	None	
Apologies	Rob Hutchins Phil Randall John Laramy Stewart Noakes	
In Attendance	Rob Bosworth Jade Otty Richard Church <i>Item 5.3 only</i> Gemma Noble Sam Hillman Billie Stokes Alison Layton-Hill	Deputy Principal/CEO Vice Principal Performance Chief Financial Officer Director of People and Organisational Development Assistant Principal Assistant Principal Head of Governance

- | | | |
|----|---|---------------|
| 1. | Welcome and Apologies
The Chair welcomed colleagues to the first Board meeting of the academic year. Apologies were received from Rob Hutchins, Phil Randall, Stewart Noakes and John Laramy. | Action |
|----|---|---------------|

The Chair extended a particular welcome to Dr. Sangaralingam Ahilan as the HE student governor and highlighted how much the Board values the input of student governors.

The Board noted that this would be the final Board meeting attended by Matt Roach and Sonja Longmore although they will remain as governors until their terms of office conclude 6 December 2022. The Chair extended her sincere thanks, on behalf of the Board, for their valued contribution and particularly acknowledged Matt's commitment to the College and its students over his term of 12 years.

Declarations of Interest

Bindu Arjoon, Deputy CEO, Exeter City Council declared an interest in any items relating to Exeter City Council.

Glenn Woodcock, Member of Council, University of Exeter declared an interest in items relating to the University.

Tim Quine, Deputy Vice Chancellor, University of Exeter declared an interest in items relating to the University.

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

2. Minutes of Meetings

2.1 The open minutes of the meeting held on 1 July 2022, as circulated, were agreed.

2.2 The confidential minutes of the meeting held on 1 July 2022, as circulated, were agreed.

2.3 The restricted minutes of the meeting held on 1 July 2022, as circulated, were agreed.

3. Matters Arising

3.1 Board Self-Evaluation 2021/2022

The Board received the self-evaluation which had been updated following the previous meeting. Governors discussed the content and agreed further comments, which will be added by the Head of Governance and agreed by the Chair.

The Board approved the self-evaluation for 2021/2022 subject to minor amendments to be agreed by the Chair

**HofG
Chair**

4. Chair's Oral Report

The Chair thanked those governors who attended the graduation ceremony and extended her appreciation to students and staff for their hard work in making the event such a success.

The Chair had attended the opening of a second E-sports room at the College and had been impressed to engage with learners and partners on the cutting edge of skills for the future.

The Chair advised the Board that Philip Bostock's term of office as an Associate of the College concluded this week. Governors were reminded that Philip was a previous Chair of the Corporation and agreed to send a letter of thanks to Philip.

The Chair acknowledged the outstanding exam results, which were shared with the Board later in the meeting. On behalf of the Board, she offered her thanks and congratulations to staff and students and acknowledged that the College had maintained its integrity around assessment during the Pandemic.

Governors were reminded that the College was expecting an Ofsted inspection imminently. The Board was satisfied that the College is in a good place to demonstrate its outstanding qualities.

In terms of the new Ofsted enhanced inspection, the Chair advised that the College had made good progress since the 'skills review' that the Board commissioned in May 2022 and governors are clear about their responsibility for ensuring the College works to meet the local skills need. The College had started a Retrofit Academy which the Deputy CEO shared more detail about later in the meeting. The College had started a skills 'Boot Camp' for green (retrofit) skills and the name Business Solutions had been changed externally to 'Exeter College Apprenticeships'. The Board was pleased to note the progress of the actions that had emerged from the skills review.

The Board recalled that carpentry is the major skills need for the next five years and in response this area is currently the College's largest apprenticeship programme.

The Chair raised that although governors had received regular updates from the Principal/CEO and the Deputy CEO, she proposed that the Board formally receives a brief 'Skills Stocktake' report from the Deputy CEO at every Board meeting and information on how the College engages with local employers. Governors agreed and welcomed the opportunity to be kept up to date on local market intelligence and the changes and improvements to the College's skills offer.

The Board agreed to receive a Skills Stocktake report at every Board meeting

RB

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 Exeter College 2022 Results

The Board received a presentation highlighting the excellent exam results for 2022. The data for four years was shared with the Board and governors were pleased to note that the overall impact of the pandemic was minimal. The Board reflected that the decision to keep the College open as much as possible and provide live online lessons during the pandemic had been the correct one.

The Board was particularly pleased with the A level results, the College's move to ALPS 2 (top 10% nationally), GCSE results being well above national average, impressive destination data and that the adult provision had improved significantly from good to outstanding. The Board was delighted to note that those subjects that governors had overseen under 'intensive care' support had improved significantly.

Apprenticeships had been challenging having been impacted the most during the pandemic. This, however, was a national issue and the College remained confident that achievement would be above national average.

Before inviting questions, the Chair, on behalf of the Board, congratulated staff and students for the outstanding results.

The Board questioned how the College is mitigating against the impact of school-assessed GCSE grades. The College had prioritised vocational courses with funding, used the tuition fund to intervene with learners who have low prior attainment, increased tutorial hours and introduced new roles to support attendance.

Governors requested an understanding of why more learners are not attending higher tariff universities and how the College provides aspirational guidance. There is a comprehensive tutorial programme for learners which is focussed on UCAS guidance and applications. There are also events for parents to support their understanding of options available to learners and to give them confidence in terms of the financial implications. It was advised that the main challenge is learner confidence and a more local preference had always been strong. It was suggested that consideration be given to providing learners with funding to attend open days.

Gemma Noble, Director of People and Organisational Development joined the meeting for item 5.3 only

5.3 HR Annual Report

The Director of People and Organisational Development was welcomed to the meeting. The Board received an overview of the key themes within the HR annual report which covered the period from 1 September 2021 to 31 August 2022.

The Board questioned why 11% of staff had indicated that they do not understand the direction the college is going in as this was felt to be a high figure. It was acknowledged that, following its approval by the Board, the pandemic had not allowed for a comprehensive launch and roll out of the Strategic Plan. However, face to face meetings with all staff are planned to highlight the strategic direction of the College.

Governors sought clarification around the number of vacancies compared to headcount. It was confirmed that there are approximately 20 vacancies currently which are not causing a concern in terms of covering teaching, as part time staff are willingly increasing their hours if necessary. It was also noted that some vacancies are as a result of the College growing and restructuring in some areas.

Governors challenged the context of 'other' reasons related to staff leaving. It was accepted that staff leaving within two years is a challenge and the College is working to support those newer staff. Governors also questioned why performance management was not identified as a reason for leaving and sought assurance that there are processes and training in place related to performance management, which was confirmed.

The Board noted the need to readvertise frequently resulting in vacancies not being filled for some time and questioned the impact on the quality of provision and existing staff. Recruitment is a challenge nationally, however the College does offer incentives to engage quality staff. There is also a focus on improving staff retention through staff development, training, mentoring and making sure staff feel valued and engaged.

The Board acknowledged the positive attendance at the mandatory staff training.

The Board questioned whether staff are able to add comments to the staff survey and whether there were any recurring themes. It was

advised that parking is always raised as an issue, although the College had negotiated a reduced cost for staff parking at a local car park.

Gemma Noble was thanked for an honest, interesting and informative report.

The Board noted the HR Annual Report

6. Learner and Student Voice update

6.1 College News

The report was received and taken as read and the Chair offered her congratulations to the Exeter College Apprentice and Employer event award winners.

The Board noted the report

Part 2 REPORTS FOR NOTING/APPROVAL

7. Recommendations from Search and Governance Committee

7.1 Executive Summary from Committee Meeting on 29 September 2022

The report summarising the key issues considered by the Search and Governance Committee meeting held on 29 September 2022 was received and noted.

7.2 Appointments

The Committee had reviewed Deirdre Hughes' CV and the Board noted that she had met with the Chair of the Corporation, the Principal/CEO and the Head of Governance. Deirdre's expertise in careers was felt to be of significant benefit to complement the skills of existing Board members. The Committee recommended that Deirdre Hughes is appointed to the Board and that Deirdre is invited to serve on the Quality and Standards Committee.

The Board approved the appointment of Deirdre Hughes as a governor of Exeter College with effect from 9 December 2022 and agreed to invite Deirdre to serve on the Quality and Standards Committee

The Committee recommended that Patrick Tigwell is appointed as Chair of the Business Services Committee.

The Board approved the appointment of Patrick Tigwell as Chair of the Business Services Committee from 7 December 2022.

The Committee recommended that Emma Bradshaw-Smith is appointed as Chair of the Remuneration Committee.

The Board approved the appointment of Emma Bradshaw-Smith as Chair of the Remuneration Committee from 7 December 2022.

7.3 Standing Orders

The Committee had reviewed the Standing Orders which had been updated to reflect changes to the Teaching, Learning and Development department, clarity around the employment status of existing governors, ensuring the robustness of DBS checks and highlighting the importance of declaring the interests of connected persons.

The Board approved the revised Standing Orders

7.4 Committee Structure 2022/2023

The Board received the updated governance committee structure for 2022/2023.

The Board approved the Committee Structure for 2022/2023

7.5 Governance SAR 2021/2022

All committees and the Board had undertaken a self-assessment in the summer term. The Committee recommended the Governance SAR to the Board for approval.

The Board approved the Governance SAR 2021/2022 subject to minor amendments agreed in item 3.1.

7.6 Number of Board Meetings

The Committee had discussed the potential to reduce the number of scheduled Board meetings from five to four each year to align with committee meetings. This was in the context of retaining the Board strategy days and the Chair convening extraordinary Board meetings if necessary.

The Board agreed to reduce the number of Board meetings from five to four from September 2023. HofG

8. **Recommendations from Remuneration Committee**

8.1 Executive Summary from Committee Meeting on 29 September 2022
The report summarising the key issues considered by the Remuneration Committee meeting held on 29 September 2022 was received and noted.

The Board noted that the end of year performance reviews for the senior post holders had taken place and all had been positive. Governors were keen to ensure that the senior leadership team are supported in terms of their wellbeing.

- 8.2 Remuneration Committee Annual Report 2021/2022
The Committee had received the Remuneration Committee Annual Report for 2021/2022 and recommended it to the Board for approval.

The Board approved the Remuneration Committee annual report for 2021/2022

- 8.3 Leadership Team Structure
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 Business Services Committee**

- 9.1 Executive Summary from Committee Meeting on 26 September 2022
The report summarising the key issues considered by the Business Services Committee meeting held on 26 September 2022 was received and noted.

- 9.2 Financial Regulations 2022, Financial Regulations Appendices 2022 and Financial Procedures 2022
The Committee recommended the Financial Regulations and Procedures 2022 to the Board. It was noted that the financial regulations would be comprehensively reviewed in 2023.

The Board approved the Financial Regulations 2022, Financial Regulations Appendices 2022 and Financial Procedures 2022

10. **Recommendations from Quality and Standards Committee**

- 10.1 Executive Summary from Committee Meeting on 3 October 2022.
The report summarising the key issues considered by the Quality and Standards Committee meeting held on 3 October 2022 was received and noted.

The Committee had received a presentation and had acknowledged the excellent exam results. Governors had received an update on the impact of catch-up funding and how the funding would be used in this academic year.

The Committee had received the EDBV annual report and had noted the progress with the EDBV action plan. In addition, there had been a staff training day in response to the Ofsted thematic review on sexual harassment, collaborative work on preferred names and pronouns and EHCP learner pen portraits had been added to the MIS. The Committee had been particularly impressed with the Hub for Independent Living and Learning, which is an excellent new provision for students with additional learning needs.

The Stakeholder Feedback report had been received and governors had requested how complaint escalation and learning from those complaints is reported.

The Board noted the report

PART 3: REPORTS AND MINUTES FOR INFORMATION

12. **Reports**

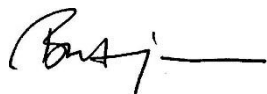
The following reports were **received and noted**.

- 12.1 Opportunities and Developments Risk Register
- 12.2 Sustainability report
- 12.3 ICT annual report
- 12.4 Catch-up funding
- 12.5 EDBV annual report
- 12.6 Stakeholder Feedback report
- 12.7 Letter from FE Commissioner

13. **Dates of scheduled meetings for 2022/2023**

Friday 9 December 2022
Friday 24 February 2023
Friday 28 April 2023
Friday 7 July 2023

Signed by the Chair



Date: 9th December 2022