

EXETER COLLEGE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION

CORPORATION BOARD

Minutes of the meeting held on Friday 28 April 2023 in the Boardroom, The Tower Building, Hele Road, Exeter

Present

Bindu Arjoon	Chair
Glenn Woodcock	Vice Chair
John Laramy	Principal/CEO
Sangaralingam Ahilan	
Sarah Brampton	
Sue Clarke	
Pamela DeGregorio	
Neil Hitchings	
Tim Quine (<i>online</i>)	
Phil Randall	
Patrick Tigwell	
Sally Wolkowski	
Zakia Volshenk	

Observers

January Roberts

Apologies

Emma Bradshaw-Smith
Carol McCormack
Stewart Noakes
Vicki Roberts
Rob Hutchins

In Attendance

	Jade Otty	Vice Principal
<i>From item 5.3</i>	John Dowell	Executive Director of Finance
<i>From item 5.3</i>	Steve Strang	Executive Director of Estates and IT
<i>For item 5.3 only</i>	Gemma Noble	Executive Director of People and Organisational Development
<i>For item 5.2 only</i>	Mike Blakeley	Executive Director of Apprenticeships and Future Skills
<i>For item 5.2 only</i>	Samantha Wilson	Head of Apprenticeships
	Alison Layton-Hill	Head of Governance

Action

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed all colleagues to the meeting and extended a particular welcome to January Roberts who was in attendance as an observer. The Chair noted that this would be Phil Randall's final Board meeting as his term of office concludes on 1 July 2023. On behalf of the Board, the Chair thanked

Phil for his supportive observations and contribution, particularly related to the Ofsted inspection.

Apologies were noted from Stewart Noakes, Victoria Roberts, Carol McCormack, Rob Hutchins, Rob Bosworth and Emma Bradshaw-Smith.

Declarations of Interest

Bindu Arjoon, CEO, Exeter City Council declared an interest in any items relating to the City Council and as a Director of Exeter College Services Ltd in item 8.5.

Glenn Woodcock, Member of Council, University of Exeter declared an interest in items relating to the University and left the meeting for item 8.5.

Tim Quine, Deputy Vice Chancellor, University of Exeter declared an interest in items relating to the University and left the meeting for item 8.5.

John Laramy, Principal/CEO declared an interest in any items relating to Pearson and as a Director of Exeter College Services Ltd in item 8.5.

Bindu Arjoon and Glenn Woodcock also declared an interest in item 9.2 and left the meeting when their re-appointments were discussed.

2. Minutes of Meetings

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 24 February 2023, as circulated, were agreed.

2.2 The confidential minutes of the meeting held on 24 February 2023, as circulated, were agreed.

3. Matters Arising

None that did not appear elsewhere on the agenda.

4. Corporation Chair's Report

The Chair and Sue Clarke had attended the opening of the Hill (Hub for Independent Living and Learning) which is a dedicated facility for high needs learners. They had noted that the learners appeared settled and confident and that the Hill is well placed at the heart of the College.

The College had been awarded £2.9m of capital funding against an original bid of £14m. The Board had previously challenged the leadership team to suggest options to improve blocks B & C if a reduced level of funding was received. The Chair referred to the Principal/CEO's strategic report in which he will be seeking the Board's agreement to progress with planning a £12m project. This would be scrutinised by Business Services and come back to the Board in July for approval.

The Chair noted that although the College is in a healthy financial position compared to many others in the sector, 2023/2024 is going to be more challenging. Rob Bosworth is chairing a Business Efficiency Group and the Business Services Committee will fully scrutinise the proposed budget for 2023/2024 before it comes back to Board for approval in July 2023.

It was noted that the Board Residential is approaching and will focus on setting the direction of travel for the College and shaping the next strategic plan.

The Chair informed governors that the Principal/CEO, Deputy CEO and Vice Principal, along with some of the wider leadership team, are actively supporting the improvement of other colleges in the region following the Ofsted inspection and as part of the Principal/CEO's Leader of FE role. The Board was pleased to note the positive reputation of the College's senior leadership team.

The Chair referred to the College's current membership with the CBI and advised governors that she would be discussing the implications for the College with the Principal/CEO.

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.

5.1.1 Accountability Agreement

Governors received the accountability agreement that had been revised following discussion at the previous Board meeting. Elements of the national priorities had been included along with the Board's feedback related to digital. Governors suggested adding a reference to academic outcomes and inclusion and to refer to 'other qualifications' which was agreed.

The Board approved the Accountability Agreement for submission to the ESFA, subject to the agreed minor amendments

Mike Blakeley and Samantha Wilson joined the meeting

5.2 Employers and Apprenticeships

The Board received a presentation from the Executive Director of Apprenticeships and Future Skills and the Head of Apprenticeships and noted the success of the provision along with the challenges. The impact of apprenticeships on productivity was acknowledged.

The Board questioned how the College promotes the longer-term career prospects that lead from apprenticeships. The College explains the clear pathways available when discussing the option of an apprenticeship with a learner and next steps are discussed as part of regular reviews with learners.

Governors asked whether more school leavers are becoming attracted to apprenticeships and it was confirmed that the numbers have increased by 20%. The greatest area for applications is in the area of traditional construction and green construction. It was noted that apprenticeships in the Arts are minimal. It was also confirmed that employers are increasingly retaining apprentices.

The Board noted the presentation with thanks

Gemma Noble, John Dowell and Steve Strang joined the meeting

5.3 Gender Pay Gap and Staff Benefits

The Board received the Gender Pay Gap report and the Executive Director of People and Organisational Development explained the report. The Board also received a presentation focused on the range of staff benefits currently offered by the College and those that are emerging.

The Board questioned how the College's offer compares to other colleges. The College does share its offer through an AoC network and benefits are similar although Exeter College's offer of a staff lounge and a wellbeing garden are unique to the College.

The format of the Future Leaders Programme was explained and it was confirmed that the first cohort would consist of twenty places.

It was noted that childcare costs can be restrictive for parents returning to work. To support staff with returning to work flexible working requests are rarely refused.

The Board considered that the lower pay quartiles predominantly consisted of female staff and asked how the College is trying to increase male members of staff into those roles. The College has tried to advertise and promote the role of a learning assistant as a career, however males are not choosing those paths.

Governors asked whether exit interviews give insight into reasons for staff turnover/retention. It was accepted that the response rate from exit interviews could be higher and staff survey questions more targeted. This would be improved in an attempt to evidence the impact of benefits on staff recruitment and retention more fully.

The Board noted the presentation with thanks

6. Learner and Student Voice update
6.1 College News

The report was received. The Principal/CEO particularly highlighted the Highly Commended AA College Rosette awarded to the @34 restaurant which is the highest accolade a college restaurant can achieve.

The Board noted the report

6.2 Learner and Student Voice Report

The report was received and taken as read. Sue Clarke had attended the Learner Voice Conference and was pleased to note the learner enthusiasm around the quality of teaching, relationships with teachers and the Extra opportunities on offer. The Board noted that there remain challenges around providing quiet study space, as well as social space. It was suggested that making links with local cafes might help to provide additional space. The quality of transport provision was affecting attendance and additional training for staff in neuro diversity would be beneficial.

The Board questioned whether the cost of transport, food and other associated costs was preventing lower income families from attending College. The College had increased the financial support towards travel and meal costs in support of those families.

The Board noted the report

6.3 Student Governor Reports

The Board received the Student Governor reports
Zakia's report was made up of the views of a wide range of students and there was a particular concern raised related to the appropriate use of tutorial lessons which the Leadership team will look into.

The Board noted the reports with thanks

Part 2 REPORTS FOR NOTING/APPROVAL

7. Recommendations from Audit and Risk Assurance Committee

7.1 Executive Summary from Committee meeting on 13 March 2023

The report summarising the key issues considered at the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee meeting held on 13 March 2023 was received and the Committee Chair highlighted the key issues.

The Deep Dive had provided continued reassurance in terms of the College's response to risks R70, failure of travel partners to provide a reliable and robust service and R17 failure to maintain financial stability. The Committee had agreed that the level of assurance met expectations. All governors are to be invited to the deep dive presentations. **HofG**

7.2 Risk Register

The Board considered the risk register, which had been scrutinised by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee on 13 March 2023. There had been

good discussions related to the risk register and the format had been improved over recent years. Committees were encouraged to review the risks that they are responsible for and report any concerns back to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.

The Board approved the Risk Register

- 7.3 Re-appointment of the external auditor
The Board considered the performance report recommending that Bishop Fleming was reappointed as the College's external auditor.

The Board approved the re-appointment of Bishop Fleming as the external auditor for the second year of a five-year contract

8. **Recommendations from Business Services Committee**
8.1 Executive Summary from Committee meeting on 20 March 2023.
The report summarising the key issues considered by the Business Services Committee meeting held on 20 March 2023 was received.
- 8.2 Strategic Financial Objectives
The Committee had received the proposed strategic financial objectives for 2023/2024 which is the starting point for budget setting. The Committee Chair explained the terms used and that the objective is to deliver good financial health.

The Board approved the strategic financial objectives for 2023/2024

- 8.3 Coat of Living Payment
This item was dealt with as a confidential item in accordance with the College's confidentiality policy and recorded in the confidential minutes.
- 8.4 Anti-Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement
The revised statement was received and considered.

The Board approved the updated anti-slavery and human trafficking statement

Glenn Woodcock and Tim Quine left the meeting

- 8.5 Exeter College Services Ltd
This item was dealt with as a restricted item in accordance with the College's confidentiality policy and recorded in the restricted minutes.

9. **Recommendations from Search and Governance Committee**
9.1 Executive Summary from Committee Meeting on 27 March 2023.
The report summarising the key issues considered by the Search and Governance Committee meeting held on 27 March 2023 was received and the Chair highlighted the key issues.

Bindu Arjoon left the meeting, Tim Quine re-joined the meeting

9.2 Appointments and re-appointments

The Board received the recommendation from the Committee that both Bindu Arjoon and Glenn Woodcock are re-appointed to their roles as Chair and Vice Chair of the Corporation.

The Board approved the re-appointment of

- a) Bindu Arjoon as Chair of the Corporation for a further term of two years concluding on 31 July 2025**
- b) Glenn Woodcock as Vice Chair of the Corporation for further term concluding on 6 October 2024 to coincide with the end of his second term of office**

Bindu Arjoon and Glenn Woodcock re-joined the meeting

The Board noted that Phil Randall's term of office concludes on 1 July 2023 and that Lindsay Skinner (headteacher of St James School) was proposed as the secondary school headteacher governor as from 2 July 2023.

The Principal/CEO, Head of Governance and members of the Search and Governance Committee had met with Cynthia Sedgman and Graham Atkins as potential governors. The Board received Cynthia and Graham's CVs.

The Board agreed:

- a) the appointment of Lindsay Skinner as the secondary school headteacher governor for a term of two years commencing on 2 July 2023**
- b) the appointments of Cynthia Sedgman and Graham Atkins to the Board for an initial term of four years with effect from 1 June 2023**
- c) that both Cynthia and Graham serve on the Business Services Committee**

9.3 External Governance Review

The Board received and considered the proposal to appoint Governance4FE as the provider to undertake the external governance review.

The Board approved the appointment of Governance4FE

9.4 Governance Role Descriptions

The Board received the following governance role descriptions and noted the minor amendments:

- Corporation Chair
- Corporation Vice Chair
- Committee Chair
- Governor
- Staff Governor

- Student Governor

The Board approved the governance role descriptions

10. Recommendations from Remuneration Committee

- 10.1 Executive Summary from Committee Meeting on 27 March 2023
The report summarising the key issues considered by the Remuneration Committee meeting held on 27 March 2023 was received and the Chair highlighted the key issues.

The Board noted that the Committee had considered the progress that the senior post holders had made against their targets at their mid-year performance reviews. The Committee had also discussed succession planning for the senior leadership team.

The Board noted the oral report

PART 3: REPORTS AND MINUTES FOR INFORMATION

11. Reports

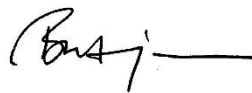
The following reports were **received and noted**.

- 11.1 Anti-bribery and anti-fraud policies
- 11.2 Safety, Health and Environment Annual Report
- 11.3 Opportunities and Developments Risk Register
- 11.4 Governance Role Descriptions
- 11.5 Board Residential Programme
- 11.6 Governance and Sealings report

12. Dates of scheduled meetings for 2021/2022

Friday 7 July 2023
Friday 13 October 2023
Friday 8 December 2023

Signed by Chair:



Date: 7th July 2023