

EXETER COLLEGE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION

CORPORATION BOARD

Minutes of the meeting held on Friday 3 July 2020 at 9.30am remotely using Zoom conference call facility

Present

David Allen	Chair
Bindu Arjoon	Vice Chair
John Laramy	Principal
Chris Hoar	
Matt Roach	
Tom Matthew	
Jo Matthews	
Tim Rutherford	
Toby Smith	
Emma Webber	
Heather Ancient	
Stewart Noakes	
Neil Hitchings	
Sue Clarke	
Tim Quine	
Glenn Woodcock	
Dave Underwood	
Carol McCormack	
Sonja Longmore	
Vicki Roberts	

Observers

Kelly Tucker

Apologies

Sarah Brampton

In Attendance

	Rob Bosworth	Deputy Principal/CEO
	Jade Otty	Vice Principal Performance
<i>Item 5.2 only</i>	Sam Hillman	Assistant Principal
<i>Item 5.2 only</i>	Ross Morshead	Head of Faculty
	Alison Layton-Hill	Clerk to the Corporation

1. Welcome and Apologies

Action

The Chair welcomed colleagues to the meeting and noted that apologies had been received from Sarah Brampton.

Tom Matthew and Toby Smith had come to the end of their term of office and this would be their final meeting as student governors. The Board acknowledged that they had been outstanding student governors and had

been valued members of the Board and the Quality and Standards Committee. The Board wished them well for their future.

The Board noted that John Coombs' second term of office as a co-opted governor, serving on Audit and Risk Assurance Committee, had concluded. The Board formally thanked him for his contribution, not only as a co-opted governor for 8 years but also as a full member of the governing body for 8 years prior to that.

The Chair also reported that Chris Hoar's second term of office had concluded and this would be his last meeting. Chris had served as Chair of Audit, Vice Chair of Business Services, Chair of the Remuneration Committee and had also been co-opted to Search and Governance. The Board agreed that Chris's legal expertise, professionalism and reflective judgement have benefitted the College enormously and that he will be sorely missed.

The Board welcomed Carol McCormack, Partner at Michelmores, to her first Board meeting. Carol brings a wealth of experience and expertise in providing strategic legal construction advice for major capital projects. Governors also warmly welcomed Vicki Roberts, the newly elected Business Support Staff Governor.

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.

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

Dave Underwood, independent advisor for matters relating to the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital.

David Allen declared an interest in the Halpin Partnership (item 10.9) as he undertakes consultancy work for the organisation.

2. Minutes of Meetings

- 2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 1 May 2020, as circulated, were agreed and will be signed with the Chair's electronic signature.
- 2.2 The confidential minutes of the meeting held on 1 May 2020, as circulated, were agreed and will be signed with the Chair's electronic signature.

3. **Matters Arising**

3.1 Committee Membership

- Governor re-appointment

The Board approved the reappointment of Glenn Woodcock for a further four-year term.

The Board received the proposed Committee Membership for 2020-2021 and particularly noted the Committee Chair/Vice Chair changes. The Board also noted the proposal that Vicki Roberts will serve on the Quality and Standards Committee and Carol McCormack will serve on the Business Services Committee.

The Board approved the Committee Membership for the year 2020-2021

On behalf of the Board, the Chair thanked Matt Roach, Heather Ancient and Emma Webber for taking on additional roles.

3.2 Information Governance Policy

The Board received the Information Governance Policy which had been prepared by the College's Data Protection Officer. As a new policy this required approval by the Board.

The Board approved the Information Governance policy

4. **Corporation Chair's Report**

The Chair thanked governors for their contribution and support over the past year, in particular their flexibility and understanding as the College had amended its ways of working over the last few months. He also acknowledged the professional experience that governors had brought to support the College through the pandemic.

On behalf of the Board, the Chair thanked the senior leadership team for their tireless work to ensure students have had the best possible experience in very strange times. The Board was pleased to note that student satisfaction had held up very well and the College is grateful to its learners for their cooperation.

Following his attendance at the AoC's Principals and Chairs meeting, the Chair referred to a presentation from David Hughes and confirmed that there will be a white paper later in the year in relation to Further Education.

The Chair reminded the Board that Richard Church joins the College as Chief Financial Officer in August. He also set the scene in terms of the new

strategic plan and suggested that an additional Board meeting is arranged, specifically to focus on College strategy, in the autumn term. In particular, he noted the opportunity to develop a financial strategy as a key enabler of the overall strategy.

The Board noted that Chris Hoar, as one of the governors appointed to provide oversight to the development of the strategic plan, will need to be replaced.

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 Strategic Plan

The Board received a presentation detailing the evolving strategic plan, which included a timeline of activity and how staff and students had been consulted. It was explained that two new golden threads had been introduced throughout the plan; "digital" and "sustainability". Support from student and staff groups was acknowledged, particularly the dimension champions. An overview of each of the five dimensions was given; Adult and Higher Education, Sixth Form, Apprenticeships and Employers, Resources and Business Services, People.

The Board was pleased with the shape of the strategic plan and made several suggestions for improvement such as; expanding on the golden threads and adding success measures, framing the issue of sustainability to encourage learners to have a positive impact on the environment, increasing focus on student welfare as well as staff welfare, and an emphasis on the College's role within the wider region.

The Chair summarised that the emerging strategic plan will be refined and developed taking into consideration public policy development. The Board will have the opportunity, at a special meeting, to consider a further developed draft. It was also thought useful to hold a high-level meeting with the University to ensure alignment and synergies, as well as additional bilateral meetings to support the perception of Exeter as an exemplar in the new regional way of working.

The Board thanked Sam Hillman and Ross Morshead for the work undertaken on the strategic plan to date

The Board agreed to convene a special Board meeting in the autumn term to discuss College strategy and consider a further developed draft of the strategic plan

Clerk

5.3 Scenario, Planning for September 2020

The Board received the presentation, which was based around the strategy of 'stabilise', 'mobilise', 'normalise'. The Deputy Principal highlighted how well placed the College is in terms of its digital capabilities; Microsoft showcase college 2020, iDEA badges, EdTech Demonstrator College and it had carried out an online showcase covering all 52 subjects.

The Vice Principal Performance explained how the curriculum and timetable might look from the start of the 'normalise' phase on 19 August 2020. The most likely scenario (subject to the overall priority of safety) will be a blended learning approach with a minimum of 50% in person learning experience for all students. The College plans to engage with and train staff, increase support for learners, invest in IT and ensure the estate is prepared according to government guidelines.

The Board was reassured that IT equipment will be deployed to students who need it and the Student Experience Department is contacting those learners who may have disengaged. The College is also accommodating students who wish to attend College to use the equipment.

Governors questioned whether the 50% minimum in person learning also applied to HE learners. It was explained that HE courses are generally smaller groups and therefore it is likely that learners can be on site for all of their lessons.

The Board raised that transport will be a particular challenge in terms of students travelling to College. It was confirmed that this issue is at the forefront of the College's thoughts and the Principal has been working with Stagecoach and GWR. Transport has been added to the risk register, linking into the 16-18 recruitment risk. It was noted that effective transport will be essential to support the DfE guidance that all students attend College.

The Chair thanked the senior leadership team for their professional approach and that although most actions are operational and the Principal's responsibility, governors were assured that everything reasonably possible is being done to keep staff and students safe and parents reassured. Issues around student and staff mental health and support received at home should be addressed, as well as access to learning. It was also noted that the College needs to be able to react quickly to any infections and possible future lockdowns.

The Board noted the report

Heather Ancient and Dave Underwood left the meeting

6. **Learner and Student Voice update**

6.1 Learner Voice

The Board received the report that had been circulated with the papers.

The Board noted the report

6.2 Student Governor Reports

The Student Governors gave a brief overview of their reports, on this occasion focused on their experience as governors of Exeter College, which were welcomed by the Board. Both had enjoyed the experience and stated that it had been a privilege to serve on the Board. It was suggested that the Board might reach out to a broader selection of students and the Principal confirmed that the College will liaise with the Student Union in terms of undertaking specific research for the Board.

The Board noted the Student Governors' reports

Part 2 REPORTS FOR NOTING/APPROVAL

7. **Recommendations from Audit and Risk Assurance Committee**

7.1 Executive Summary from Committee Meeting on 15 June 2020

The report summarising the key issues considered by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee meeting held on 15 June 2020 was received and Neil Hitchings highlighted the key issues.

7.2 Risk Register

The Risk Register and Covid-19 Recovery document, which had been scrutinised at the Committee meeting on 15 June 2020 and subsequently considered by the Quality and Standards and Business Services Committees was referred to.

The Board approved the updated risk register

7.3 Financial Statements Audit Plan

The Committee had received the report and recommended Bishop Fleming's financial statements audit plan to the Board for approval.

The Board approved the financial statements audit plan for 2019/2020

7.4 Risk Management Policy

The Committee had received the revised risk management policy and had noted the minor amendments.

The Board approved the risk management policy

8 **Recommendations from Quality and Standards Committee**

- 8.1 Executive Summary from the Committee Meeting on 22 June 2020.
The report summarising the key issues considered by the Quality and Standards Committee meeting held on 22 June 2020 was received and the Committee Chair highlighted the key issues.

The Committee had been reassured in terms of how online learning had been delivered and the process for grading. Governors were also pleased at how well students were being supported and that the safeguarding lead governor had remained fully informed by the Student Experience team.

The Committee also received a presentation on how HE teaching and learning was continuing. It was pleasing to note that the OfS had switched its focus to supporting students to complete courses as opposed to regulatory activities.

Subcontracting had continued to reduce with a good level of compliance with ESFA funding regulations.

The Committee had undertaken the usual annual self-assessment and graded itself as remaining outstanding. The Committee requested that the Clerk research and provide criteria by which the Committee can assess itself for the future self-assessments.

Clerk

8.2 Committee Terms of Reference

The Board approved the updated Terms of Reference for the Committee

9. **Recommendations from Business Services Committee**

- 9.1 Executive Summary from the Committee meeting on 29 June 2020.
The report summarising the key issues considered by the Business Services Committee held on 29 April 2020 was received and noted. The Committee Chair highlighted the key issues.

9.2 Provisional Budget 2020/2021

The Committee had gained reassurance that the break-even budget was achievable and set with realistic assumptions. The lowest cash position predicted for the year is in excess of £3m. The Committee challenged areas that appeared to be ambitious but was confident that there was more prudence than ambition. The majority of income (£30m for 16-19) was guaranteed, apprenticeships look as though they may be more positive than budgeted for and the College is well positioned in terms of additional capital funding. It was noted that the financial position may be more challenging in future years and that savings may need to be made.

The Board approved the budget for 2020-2021


- 9.3 Loan Facility
This item was dealt with as a confidential item in accordance with the College's confidentiality policy and recorded in the confidential minutes.
- 9.4 Committee terms of reference

The Board approved the updated terms of reference for the Committee

The Chair thanked Toby Coombes, Kate Barczok, Steve Strang and the Principal for their support to the Committee over the year.

PART 3: REPORTS AND MINUTES FOR INFORMATION

10. **Reports**
The following reports were **received and noted**.
- 10.1 Internal Audit Plan
 - 10.2 Student Engagement and Welfare presentation
 - 10.3 18+ and HE presentation
 - 10.4 Online learning and results
 - 10.5 Opportunities and Developments Risk Register
 - 10.6 Management Accounts (April 2020)
 - 10.7 Governance Report
 - 10.8 Sealings Report
 - 10.9 Halpin Partnership flyer
11. **Open Minutes**
The following minutes were **received and noted**:
- 11.1 Audit and Risk Assurance Committee minutes 15 June 2020 *Draft*
 - 11.2 Quality and Standards Committee minutes 22 June 2020 *Draft*
 - 11.3 Business Services Committee minutes 29 June 2020 *Draft*
12. **Confidential Minutes**
The following confidential minutes were **received and noted**:
- 12.1 Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Confidential minutes 15 June 2020 *Draft*
 - 12.2 Business Services Committee Confidential minutes 29 June 2020 *Draft*
13. **Dates of future meetings**
Friday 9 October 2020
Friday 11 December 2020
Friday 26 February 2021

Signed by the Chair 

Date: 9 October 2020