

EXETER COLLEGE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION
CORPORATION BOARD

Minutes of the meeting held on Friday 30 April 2021 via Zoom

Present

From item 1	David Allen	Chair
	Bindu Arjoon	Vice Chair
	John Laramy	Principal
	Carol McCormack	
	Heather Ancient	
	Matt Roach	
	Sue Clarke	
	Emma Webber	
	Neil Hitchings	
	Sonja Longmore	
	Olivia Dupont	
	Tim Quine	
	Vicki Roberts	
	Stewart Noakes	
	Glenn Woodcock	
	Will Valastro	
	Tim Rutherford	

Observers

None

Apologies

Sarah Brampton

In Attendance

Rob Bosworth	Deputy Principal/CEO
Richard Church	Chief Financial Officer
Jade Otty	Vice Principal Performance
Gemma Noble	Director of People and Organisational Development
Alison Layton-Hill	Clerk to the Corporation

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Special Item

Action

Appointment of the Chair of the Corporation as from 1 August 2021
The Board considered the reappointment of Bindu Arjoon to a third term of office of four years commencing on 1 August 2021.

The Board approved the re-appointment of Bindu Arjoon to a third term of office for a period of four years from 1 August 2021 to 31 July 2025.

The Board noted that the current Chair's term of office concludes on 31 July 2021. A nomination form had been received supporting Bindu Arjoon's appointment as Chair of the Corporation from 1 August 2021 and the Chair added his support to the appointment.

The Board approved the appointment of Bindu Arjoon as Chair of the Corporation from 1 August 2021 for a period of two years to 31 July 2023.

1. Welcome and Apologies

Bindu Arjoon joined the meeting. The Chair confirmed the extension of Bindu's term of office and welcomed her to the meeting as Chair Elect. He welcomed all colleagues and noted apologies from Sarah Brampton.

The Chair reported that Susie Hills had had to withdraw from membership of the Board. The Board expressed its thanks to Susie for her valuable contribution and sent her their best wishes. The Chair also advised that Heather Ancient will be stepping down at 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 26 February 2021, as circulated, were agreed.

2.2 The confidential minutes of the meeting held on 26 February 2021, as circulated, were agreed.

3. **Matters Arising**

None

4. **Corporation Chair's Report**

4.1 Covid-19 reflections from the Chair

The Board received the Covid-19 Chair's reflections report and noted that he was cautiously optimistic for the future due to the vaccination programme, however he did recognise the risks of new variants and that vaccines were not providing 100% protection. He believed that the College had done well to keep students and staff safe and thanked all governors and staff who had continued to support the College. It was acknowledged that the lack of governors meeting each other for informal networking had been less than ideal. There was a consensus of support for the paper.

The Chair raised three main issues:

1. How the Board meets:

It was suggested that the College continues to follow a hybrid model with committee meetings remaining virtual but the full Board meeting in person.

2. Changes to society:

The Chair felt that colleges will become more important, however there may need to be some changes to how they operate ie. the level of staff required to be present, how the estate is used, staggered times of arrival and the balance of investment in IT and buildings.

3. Governance challenges:

During the pandemic much was mandated, however governors will need to make decisions coming out of the pandemic. There may be differing views about what is the right society and the right college.

The Board agreed that a hybrid option would promote resilience and allow flexibility in terms of equality, diversity and inclusion and considered the Future Skills Centre as a location for the Board meeting in July 2021. It was also noted that there could be significant change over a longer period of time and governors will need to be prepared.

The opportunities through the digital transformation of education was discussed and although some learners welcome the new model there may be challenges around staying connected and mental health.

The Principal, Chair, Vice Chair and Clerk will discuss options for the July 2021 Board meeting.

Clerk

The Board noted the report

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 Covid Pandemic – Lessons Learned

The Board received a presentation from the Deputy Principal and Vice Principal Performance which focused on preserving the core business of the College as well as stimulating progress.

The Board welcomed the new projects that were outlined and noted that it was remarkable that the College was able to provide such an energising and exciting presentation.

The Board challenged whether the online parent consultations were inclusive and whether the parents of disadvantaged students were equally as engaged. It was confirmed that those faculties that had less online appointments contacting other parents by telephone to widen the opportunities for engagements.

Governors questioned how the College can ensure that credibility can be achieved when moving into new areas of development and the importance of collaboration and working in partnership was agreed.

The Board thanked the Deputy CEO and Vice Principal Performance for an energising and exciting presentation.

5.3 Employee Brand

The Board received a presentation from the Director of People and Organisational Development explaining the development of an employee brand for the College. The presentation focused on the employee benefits offered by the College.

The Board noted that the College values should be owned by the governing body and questioned whether there would be an opportunity for the board to have a discussion about them. It was agreed to share the values in draft with the Board.

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The Board asked whether recruitment is generally from the South West region or further afield. It was confirmed that support staff are drawn mainly from the local area, however some teaching staff join from out of area and relocation expenses are occasionally offered. The Board discussed how to import talent and recruit positively from those moving to the South West and how the College could market itself as an attractive employer.

The Board offered to support the College with the "Best Companies" submission.

Governors sought assurance that staff at all levels were able to articulate the number of benefits available to them. It was acknowledged that not all

staff might be aware of the breadth of offer and that there was an intention to celebrate and promote the benefits package further.

The Board noted that the market place is increasingly competitive and questioned how the College makes progression equal and inclusive. Career progression had been amended recently and new grades had been introduced to allow progression for non-managers. The College continues to consider succession planning opportunities and endeavours to retain staff on their career path at the College.

It was noted that currently there is not enough flexibility in terms of salaries when recruiting to administrative roles.

The Board questioned the College's approach to flexible working. It was confirmed that the College is considering a direction of travel in terms of flexible working, however it was noted that the vast majority of staff must be in College every day and the need for equity was highlighted.

Governors were pleased to note the strategic element of human resources at the College and the focus on the employee experience, culture and values.

The Board thanked the Director of People and Organisational Development for an excellent and informative presentation

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 Board was pleased to note that the report included how the College reflects back to learners how their feedback translates into action. Governors were also advised that a video has been recorded to update students on changes that have taken place in response to their comments.

The Board noted the report

6.3 Student Governor Reports

The Board received the positive reports provided by the Student Governors. The value of alumni returning as external speakers was particularly acknowledged as an opportunity to hear examples of how students had progressed after College.

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 15 March 2021
The report summarising the key issues considered at the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee held on 15 March 2021 was received and the Committee Vice Chair highlighted the key issues.

The Deep Dive had provided continued reassurance in terms of the College's response to the pandemic. Referring to the internal audit programme, the Committee Vice Chair confirmed that the committee is mindful of balancing good governance with the pressure internal reviews have on staff. It was confirmed that the cyber essentials certification is in place.

- 7.2 Risk Register
The Board considered the risk register, which had been scrutinised by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee. The risk register will continue to evolve to align with the new strategic plan and include a greater focus on articulating the Board's risk appetite.

Following a recent governor development opportunity, some potential risks had been highlighted which the Vice Chair of the Corporation will discuss with the Principal and Vice Principal. It was also questioned whether the Covid-19 risk should remain classified as high and it was agreed that there should be further discussion by governors.

The Board approved the Risk Register

- 7.3 Re-appointment of the external auditor
The Board considered the report recommending that Bishop Fleming was reappointed as the College's external audit for 2020/2021.

The Board approved the re-appointment of Bishop Fleming as the external audit for 2020/2021.

8. Recommendations from Search and Governance Committee

- 8.1 Executive Summary from Committee Meeting on 22 March 2021.
The report summarising the key issues considered by the Search and Governance Committee meeting held on 22 March 2021 was received and the Chair highlighted the key issues.

- 8.2 Appointments
The Board noted that Tim Rutherford's term of office concludes on 6 July 2021 and the Chair thanked Tim for his valuable contribution to the Board. The Board considered the Committee's recommendation that Phil Randall is appointed as Tim's successor.

The Board approved the appointment of Phil Randall, Headteacher of St Peters Church of England Aided School as Secondary School Headteacher Governor for two years from 7 July 2021.

The Board received Sally Wolkowski's CV and noted that Sally is employed at the Met Office. The Committee had recommended that Sally is appointed as a member of the Board.

The Board approved the appointment of Sally Wolkowski as a new member of the Board.

The Board noted that Emma Webber had taken on the role of Health and Safety Lead Governor for the current academic year and the Chair thanked Emma for kindly taking on the role on an interim basis. The Board considered the Committee's recommendation to appoint Neil Hitchings to the role of Health and Safety Lead Governor.

The Board approved the appointment of Neil Hitchings as the Lead Governor for Health and Safety as from September 2021

- 8.3 Recruitment and Succession Planning strategy
The Board received and considered the recruitment and succession planning strategy and noted that it had a helpful focus on equality, diversity and inclusion. The Board requested an additional focus on the support available for new governors.

The Board approved the recruitment and succession planning strategy as policy dependent on an additional reference to the support available for new governors.

- 8.4 Role Descriptions
The Board considered the updated role descriptions for the Committee Chair, Co-opted Governor, Safeguarding Lead Governor, Staff Governor and Student Governor.

The Board approved the role descriptions

- 8.5 Self-evaluation criteria for committees
The Board received and considered the proposed self-evaluation criteria which will be used by committees at their final meetings of the academic year. It was suggested that some of the criteria within the Board self-evaluation could also be included in the committee self-evaluation.

The Board agreed to trial the self-evaluation criteria for committees for this academic year

- 8.6 Self-evaluation criteria for Board
The Board received and considered the proposed self-evaluation criteria for the Board to assess itself against.

The Board approved the self-evaluation criteria for the Board

9. Recommendations from Remuneration Committee

- 9.1 Executive Summary from Committee Meeting on 22 March 2021
The report summarising the key issues considered by the Remuneration Committee meeting held on 22 March 2021 was received and the Committee 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 Board noted the report

10. Recommendations from Business Services Committee

- 10.1 Executive Summary from Committee meeting on 29 March 2021.
The report summarising the key issues considered by the Quality and Standards Committee meeting held on 29 March 2021 was received and the Committee Chair highlighted that the College remains in a strong financial position. The Committee had also agreed for the Principal to make enquiries in terms of securing a building for the NEETs provision.
- 10.2 Banking update
This item was dealt with as a confidential item in accordance with the College's confidentiality policy and recorded in the confidential minutes.
- 10.3 Exeter College Services Ltd
This item was dealt with as a confidential item in accordance with the College's confidentiality policy and recorded in the confidential minutes.

PART 3: REPORTS AND MINUTES FOR INFORMATION

11. Reports

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

- 11.1 Treasury Management Policy
11.2 Anti-slavery and human trafficking statement
11.3 Governance report
11.4 Sealing report

12. Dates of scheduled meetings for 2020/2021

Friday 2 July 2021
Friday 8 October 2021
Friday 10 December 2021

Signed by the Chair
Date: 2 July 2021

