

EXETER COLLEGE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION

CORPORATION BOARD

Minutes of the meeting held on Friday 18 February 2022 via Zoom

Present

	Bindu Arjoon	Chair
	Glenn Woodcock	Vice Chair
	John Laramy	Principal
	Carol McCormack	
	Matt Roach	
(to item 5.2)	Sue Clarke	
	Emma Webber	
	Neil Hitchings	
	Sonja Longmore	
	Vicki Roberts	
	Stewart Noakes	
	Auguster Irabor	
	Rob Hutchins	
	Sally Wolkowski	
	Phil Randall	

Observers

George Smith-Easton

Apologies

Simon Tapley
Sarah Brampton
Tim Quine

In Attendance

Rob Bosworth	Deputy Principal/CEO
Richard Church	Chief Financial Officer
Jade Otty	Vice Principal Performance
Sam Hillman	Assistant Principal
Lisa Smith	Assistant Principal
Billie Stokes	Assistant Principal
Alison Layton-Hill	Clerk to the Corporation

1. Welcome and Apologies Action

The Chair welcomed colleagues to the Board meeting and thanked the Vice Chair for standing in as Chair for the two previous meetings. Apologies were received from Simon Tapley, Sarah Brampton and Tim Quine.

Declarations of Interest

At the request of the Chair, the Clerk outlined governors' responsibilities in terms of declaring conflicts of interest and gave some examples. There were no additional interests declared.

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

Glenn Woodcock, Member of Council, University of Exeter for matters 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.

2. **Minutes of Meetings**

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 10 December 2021, as circulated, were agreed.

2.2 The confidential minutes of the meeting held on 10 December 2021, as circulated, were agreed.

3. **Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising that did not appear elsewhere on the agenda.

4. **Corporation Chair's Report**

On behalf of the Board, the Chair congratulated the Owlets nursery following the recent Ofsted 'good' grade. She particularly thanked Sam Hillman, Assistant Principal and all Owlets staff and noted that the result was particularly impressive against such a challenging context.

The Chair thanked all those involved in the Student Awards celebration conveying that the event was a wonderful reminder of the talent of students and staff and the successful collaborations the College has with partners.

The Board was pleased to note that the Chair and Principal, along with some students and staff, had collected the Queens Anniversary Prize which celebrates excellence, innovation and public benefit.

The College had been included in three Times Best Companies lists and the Chair thanked Gemma Noble, Director of People and Organisational Development and all staff involved. The Board noted the College's ambition to be in the top 50 Times Best Companies.

Referring to the South West Governance Conference, the Chair highlighted three key messages around diversity, sustainability education and the skills/LSIP agenda.

The Vice Chair of the Committee cited the completion of the new swimming pool in Exeter as a tremendous achievement in passive house construction. He highlighted the importance of the College working with industry leaders to develop generic sustainability guidelines into specific requirements to forge new careers for people of all ages.

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.

Sam Hillman, Assistant Principal and Billie Stokes, Assistant Principal joined the meeting

5.2 Strategic Dimension – Sixth Form

The Chair welcomed Sam Hillman and Billie Stokes to the meeting. She congratulated Sam and her team for the impressive Owlets Ofsted outcome.

The Board received the presentation and noted the shape of the College's sixth form and how the College is meeting its strategic objectives related to the sixth form.

Referring to the Sustainability Awards, the Vice Chair offered his support to help inspire young people and highlight the importance of sustainability in their lives and work after college.

The Board noted that the College has an unusual relationship with Exeter secondary schools whereby the secondary schools local to the College do not have sixth forms. When considering education providers outside of Exeter, governors suggested it would be worthwhile exploring whether the wide reach and expansion of Exeter College could negatively impact other providers. The Vice Principal explained that priority is given to learners from the immediate locality, however learners do travel some distance to the College due to its bespoke offer.

The Board noted that learners do not appear to want to move out of the region when progressing to university and asked how they are made aware of course offerings. It was explained that it is usual for more local universities to visit the College and invite learners to participate in projects. The College is keen to ensure learners are exposed to the full range available to support their decision making.

Governors enquired as to whether the College has any commercial engagement from organisations and employers in terms of sustainability. It was confirmed that guest speakers engage with students about

sustainability, however it was also noted that learners are exceptionally motivated and sustainability is led by the students.

The Board noted the report

Lisa Smith, Assistant Principal joined the meeting

5.3 Ofsted – Being Prepared

The Board received the presentation which explained the process of an Ofsted inspection and how the College is preparing.

The Board considered comments related to leadership and management in recent Ofsted inspections and identified which grade those comments related to. Governors noted the importance of close scrutiny and challenge, knowing the strengths and weaknesses of the College and effectively supporting leaders.

The Board acknowledged the high moral purpose of the College and its determined intention to be aspirational advocates for its students. Referring to its approach to transition, the College expressed confidence in its support and focus which is overseen by Student Services.

Governors enquired whether the new EIF had impacted on the likelihood of colleges retaining an outstanding grade. The new framework was considered to be challenging and although several had retained 'outstanding' it was acknowledged that others had reduced to 'good'.

The Board asked how learners are being prepared and reassured. Staff are engaging with learners, in and outside of the classroom environment, as part of the deep dive practice. There is also an intention to produce a video to support their understanding of the process.

The Board questioned what area the College would be most concerned about and where governors might be able to offer support. Due to the growth of the College the availability of social/relaxing space and how students perceive that is a challenge and therefore investment in these areas would be welcomed.

Governors sought assurance that staff are being supported in terms of their mental health and wellbeing. It was confirmed that the College is mindful of the impact on staff and there has been much preparation and engagement with them. It was pleasing to note that the feedback from staff following the deep dives had been positive.

The Board noted the report

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 the College is genuinely listening to students and investing in space and hygiene factors.

The Board noted the report

- 6.3 Student Governor Report
The Board received the report provided by Auguster Irabor, HE Student Governor. The Board discussed potential areas for improving the student experience related to catering options and the possibility of recording lectures.

The Board noted the reports and thanked Auguster for her report

Part 2 REPORTS FOR NOTING/APPROVAL

7. Recommendations from Search and Governance Committee

- 7.1 Executive Summary from Committee Meeting on 24 January 2022.
The report summarising the key issues considered by the Search and Governance Committee meeting held on 24 January 2022 was received and the Committee Chair highlighted the key issues.

- 7.2 Appointment
The Committee received the CV for Patrick Tigwell, Partner and Head of the Exeter Office of Thomas Westcott Chartered Accountants.

The Board approved:

- a) the appointment of Patrick Tigwell as a governor of Exeter College**
- b) that Patrick would serve on the Business Services Committee**

- 7.3 Governance Policies
The Committee recommended the following revised governance policies to the Board for approval:

- Expenses policy
- Induction and Training policy
- Publication of Minutes policy
- Scheme of Delegation policy
- Taking Independent Legal Advice policy

The Board approve the governance policies

- 7.4 Meeting Schedule of Dates 2022/2023

The Board considered the proposed meeting schedule of dates for 2022/2023 and noted that the Committee was also recommending that the number of Audit and Risk Assurance Committees reduced to three in line with the Audit Code of Practice.

The Board approved the meeting schedule of dates for 2022/2023 including the reduction of Audit and Risk Assurance Committee meetings to three per year.

7.5 Governor Code of Conduct

The Committee recommended the revised Code of Conduct to the Board for approval. The document is based on a template provided by Eversheds Sutherland solicitors and it was noted that the Committee had strengthened the focus of safeguarding the health, wellbeing and safety of learners.

The Board approved the Governor Code of Conduct

7.6 Board Residential draft programme

The Board received and considered the draft programme for the Board Residential on 13 and 14 May 2022 and suggested the potential to add an item related to the sustainability agenda.

The Board agreed the Board Residential programme

7.7 External Governance Reviews

The Board was advised that all colleges are now required to commission an external review of governance every three years. The Committee proposed that the College undertakes its first external review in the summer of 2023.

The Board agreed to commission the College's first external governance review in the summer of 2023

Clerk

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

8.1 Executive Summary from Committee meeting on 7 February 2022. The report summarising the key issues considered by the Quality and Standards Committee meeting held on 7 February 2022 was received and noted.

8.2 Owlets Nursery

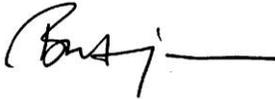
The Committee recommended that the Board writes a letter of appreciation and congratulations to the staff at the Owlets nursery in recognition of the 'good' Ofsted grade.

The Board agreed to write a letter to the Owlets nursery staff

BA/Clerk

PART 3: REPORTS AND MINUTES FOR INFORMATION

9. **Reports**
The following reports were **received and noted.**
- 9.1 EHCP/High Needs presentation
 - 9.2 Deep Dive Pilot Inspection summary
 - 9.3 Catch up funding
 - 9.4 External Inspection report (Owlets nursery)
 - 9.5 Admission policy
 - 9.6 Governance report
 - 9.7 External Governance Review guidance
 - 9.8 Sealing report
10. **Dates of scheduled meetings for 2020/2021**
Friday 29 April 2022
Friday 1 July 2022

Signed by the Chair: 

Date: 29 April 2022