

**The College of West Anglia
Minutes of
The Corporation Board Meeting
1 July 2020
8.36 am
Remote Meeting – Microsoft Teams**

Present	Andrew Cave	Governor (Vice Chair) (Meeting Chair)
	Chris Ashman	Governor (Vice Chair)
	Dave Clark	Governor
	Rebecca Hamilton	Governor
	Ray Harding	Governor
	Scott Leadley	Governor
	Alan Measures	Governor
	Lucy Nethsingha	Governor
	Mollie Pemberton	Governor
	Sam Penn	Governor
	David Pomfret	Governor (Principal)
	Gill Rejzl	Governor
	Roderick Watkins	Governor
Gary Webb	Governor	
Attending	Andrew Gedge	Assistant Principal Quality & Students
	Paul Harrison	Vice Principal Corporate Services
	Ruth Harrison	Vice Principal Curriculum & Learning
	Stephen Halls	Clerk to the Corporation

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, thanking them for embracing the remote technology and for continuing to attend their respective committee meetings during the summer term. The Chair advised that Sharon Cambridge remained absent due to illness and would be returning in the autumn term. The Chair advised that the finalised dates for the 2020/21 meetings would be circulated later that day by the Clerk, adding that it was likely that the first few meetings in the autumn term would be held remotely. Although there were usually no meetings over the summer holiday period, the Chair reported that the Chairs' meeting group had planned two additional meetings during the break.

The Chair offered the Board's thanks to Mollie Pemberton and Ruby Platt, Student Governors, whose term of office would end today. Both students had completed their studies and would be leaving the College. The Chair wished them well and thanked them for their reports and updates presented at Board meetings and for representing the Board within the student population.

Chris Ashman and Mollie Pemberton joined the meeting at 8.38 am

The Chair reported that Adam Thompsett, Staff Governor, would be stepping down from the Board in the autumn term. The Chair offered the Board's thanks for Adam's contribution to the Board and to the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

The Chair thanked the senior managers and other managers who had prepared reports for this meeting and for the respective committee meetings, noting that it had been a very busy term for all; the reports were valued, and the guidance provided by managers at meetings was appreciated by Governors.

1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Sharon Cambridge, Lee Smith and Adam Thompsett. Ruby Platt was absent from the meeting.

2 Declarations of Interests

Declarations of interest were noted for the Election of Officers in Item 5 – Governance Items: Andrew Cave, Chris Ashman, Sam Penn, Gill Rejzl. Interests were also noted for Scott Leadley for Item 9 – Annual Pay Settlement.

3 Minutes of the previous meeting – 18 March 2020

The Minutes of the meeting held on 18 March 2020 were reviewed. Under Item 6, Learning Walks, it was noted that the visits undertaken by Rebecca Hamilton and Ray Harding had been transposed in error. The Clerk would correct this error in the final set of minutes prior to publication. Apart from the error noted, the minutes were agreed. **ACTION-CLERK**

4 Matters Arising

The progress against the outstanding matters from previous meetings was summarised in the report for item 4. The Clerk advised that there was nothing further to add to any of the updates provided. There were no questions or concerns raised on the items.

5 Governance Items

1) Appointment of Chair and Vice Chairs

Andrew Cave and Chris Ashman left the meeting. The Clerk took the Chair.

The Clerk advised that under the terms of office Sharon Cambridge (Chair) and Andrew Cave (Vice Chair) had now exceeded the usual maximum terms of office and so the transition rules would apply, in that the elections for their respective positions would be for a term of one year. For Chris Ashman, (Vice Chair) the election would be for a term of 3 years. Governors expressed their appreciation for the additional work undertaken by the Chair and Vice Chairs during the coronavirus pandemic. Governors asked for more detailed information to be made available by the Clerk regarding members' terms of office to enable consideration for succession planning in advance of governors leaving the Board.

ACTION-CLERK

Governors commented that the Board benefitted from those Governors with long service and that it was important not to lose the experience, skills and knowledge as members retired. The Chair of the Audit Committee commented that this had been taken into account when the new terms of office were reviewed in March 2020 by including transition rules to allow governors who had completed long service to continue on the Board for the time being.

Election of Chair – Sharon Cambridge, proposed by Gary Webb, seconded by Rebecca Hamilton. This was approved.

Election of Vice Chair – Chris Ashman, proposed by Alan Measures, seconded by Scott Leadley. This was approved.

Election of Vice Chair – Andrew Cave, proposed by Gary Webb, seconded by Gill Rejzl. This was approved.

Chris Ashman re-joined the meeting

2) Committee Chairs 2020/21

The Clerk asked Governors to indicate if they wished to comment on the appointment of committee chairs and if so, Committee Chairs would be asked to leave the meeting. No indications were received.

Andrew Cave re-joined the meeting

The Clerk advised the Board that the recommendation from the Search & Governance Committee was that there be no changes to the current appointments.

Audit	Gill Rejzl
Finance & General Purposes	Andrew Cave
Search & Governance	Sharon Cambridge (as Chair of the Board)
Remuneration	Andrew Cave
Employment Policy	Sharon Cambridge
Performance Review & Quality	Sam Penn
Chairs' Meeting Group	Sam Penn

It was proposed by Ray Harding and seconded by Roderick Watkins to appoint the above persons as committee chairs for 2020/21. This was approved.

The Clerk advised that the remainder of the Governance report – Expiration of Terms of Office, Written Resolutions and Application of the Corporation Seal were items to note.

With regard to the Written Resolutions, it is a requirement of the Instrument and Articles of Government that when a decision has been made through a written resolution it should be recorded in the minutes of the following meeting of the Corporation. Since the last Corporation meeting (18 March 2020) the following written resolutions, as detailed in the Governance report, had been passed by the Board:

	Decision Details	Date
1	To approve the CWA Quality Framework for 2020-21	20/5/20
2	To approve the Property Strategy for 2020/23	20/5/20
3	To approve the Equality & Diversity Policy	20/5/20
4	To approve the Governance & Financial Management Regulations 2020	20/5/20
5	To approve the new terms of office for governors, to commence from 20 May 2020	20/5/20
6	To approve the Student, Employer and Mental Health & Well-Being charters for 2020/21	20/5/20
7	To approve KPMG as External Auditor for a further year (2019/20 accounts)	20/5/20

6 Committee Chairs' Briefing Items:

- Audit - The Committee Chair reported that the committee would be recommending the Audit Plan for 2020/21 at Item 15 on the agenda. This paper had been revised and circulated the previous day and thanks were given to the Vice Principal Corporate Services for producing the revised report following the Audit Committee's meeting the previous week (24 June 2020). Under Item 16, appointment of Internal Auditors, the Committee would be recommending Scrutton Bland to continue for a further year; although Scrutton Bland had only completed one audit for the College there were no concerns regarding their performance. The Committee did however feel that the overall judgement on the audit by the auditors had not been as strong as perhaps it ought to have been. The Committee was pleased with the lead auditor who was enthusiastic and had a good understanding of the FE sector. The Committee had also reviewed the external audit plan from KPMG who were themselves confident that a full audit could be undertaken despite the challenges of restricted access on site.
- Employment Policy Committee – The Chair reported that the Committee had reviewed the impact that the coronavirus pandemic was having on staffing issues and noted how well staff were being supported. The recruitment of staff to the Technology faculty was reviewed and the difficulties that this particular faculty was experiencing were understood. The annual pay award was considered; the Committee's recommendation would be discussed in Item 9 on the agenda.
- Finance & General Purposes Committee – The Chair reported that the main item of business reviewed was the budget for 2020/21. The budget had been created with input from the curriculum plan, which, once completed, was very close to the initial values allowed for in the medium-term financial plan. The sub-contracting plan for 2020/21 had been reviewed, along with the IT strategy and insurance cover. The management accounts for April 2020 had been reviewed in its new presentation format with positive comments received from the F&GP Committee and although this was not on the agenda for today's meeting, the accounts were available to view on SharePoint.
- Performance Review & Quality – The Committee Chair noted the huge effort that had been put in to change the delivery of teaching across the College. The Committee spent time discussing how best to monitor and review performance going forward, however members were mindful that any changes to reporting methods should not cause additional work for managers at this time.
- Chairs' Meeting Group – nothing to report to this meeting as the minutes of the last Chairs' meeting (22 June 2020) had been circulated to the Board.

The updates were noted.

7 Principal's Strategy Report

The Principal provided the following updates to his report:

1. College Collaboration Fund - the joint college bid with CWA as the lead college was submitted on Friday (26 June 2020). The total project cost was £260,854, with partners contributing a total of £65,214, being 25% of the total, with the remaining £195,640 being requested in the application. The fund, if awarded, would be used to invest in digital skills, coaching and mental health support.
2. Capital Funding Update – *This item was deemed "Confidential."*

3. Return to College – Governors asked for an update on the experiences being observed since the re-opening of the campuses. The Principal reported that the return of students and staff was going well, emphasising that this had been on a small scale so far. There was a restricted use of buildings in place. Technology areas would be re-opened in due course and apprenticeship assessors would commence visiting employers to carry out workplace inspections during the following week. Detailed planning had taken place to get to this stage. Unions had been involved fully in discussions and had approved the re-opening plans. Plans for September were on-going and would be more difficult to construct based on the increased numbers requiring onsite teaching. The Principal referred to the proposed strategic plan for 2020-23, where one of the targets for 2020/21 was for the College to develop and implement a new flexible working / working from home policy. The Chair of Audit reported that mention had been made during the last Audit Meeting that employers had started to receive claims from their employees for using home office space (rent, utilities) and requests for home risk assessments. The Vice Principal Corporate Services reported that the College had received requests from staff who required their specialist furniture and equipment (e.g. riser desks) at home; the College had arranged for staff to collect their equipment for use at home. The Vice Principal considered that there would be some hidden costs in respect of home working and which would need to be funded from the contingency budget.
4. iMET Centre – *This item was deemed “Confidential.”*
5. FEC Diagnostic Assessment Monitoring Visit Update: Staff Restructure - *This item was deemed “Confidential.”*

The report was noted.

8 Budget 2020/21 and 3 Year Financial Plan

This item was deemed “Confidential.”

9 Annual Pay Settlement

This item was deemed “Confidential.”

10 Strategic Targets 2019/20 Progress Review

Under target 2.1, governors asked for an update on the delay with the commencement of the degree apprentice laboratory technicians’ course. The Principal explained that there had been a delay in gaining validation from the responsible faculty at ARU. The Vice Principal Curriculum & Learning was in contact with senior staff at ARU to progress this.

Under target 4.11, governors queried the high contribution target of 55% and asked if, based on previous and current performance, if staff would accept that as an achievable target. The Principal commented that the current target had perhaps been too ambitious when it was set, noting that in the proposed targets for 2020/21 the average contribution rate had been reduced (48%). The new target took into account the new budget and the latest curriculum plan and would help drive greater efficiencies across the College.

Governors commented on target 1.10c regarding Employer satisfaction scores, noting that in the current circumstances the score was likely to fall for the College based on expected staff responses. The Principal explained that this target related to the work that the College undertook with external employers, rather than it being related to its own staff satisfaction survey; however, the comment was still true in that the College’s staff satisfaction level was at the risk of reducing due to recent events, disruption and tight budget controls.

The Chair noted target 1.5b regarding the performance of English and maths where targets would not be achieved. The Assistant Principal Quality & Students noted that this was correct, adding that despite current performance being less than was hoped for, it had improved on the previous year and so was moving in the right direction.

The report was noted.

11 3 Year Strategic Plan 2020-23

The Principal introduced the proposed strategic plan, noting that it had been devised based on the strategic planning session with Governors held in April 2020 together with the feedback received following the circulation of the draft plan.

Governors considered that the ambition to develop an approach to ensure all students had an outstanding level of functioning English and maths skills was perhaps too ambitious. The Principal reflected that the intention for this ambition was for students to achieve the highest level that was most appropriate for them as individuals.

The Chair asked if the proposed challenging targets for Strategic Ambition 2: Social and Economic Prosperity, were achievable. The Principal agreed that the targets were stretching but were required in order to meet the income targets allowed for in the budget. Where appropriate, usual targets had been reduced to take into account the current situation, e.g. the apprenticeship enrolment target of 250, whereas in a normal year this target would be around 400.

With regard to this same ambition (Social and Economic Prosperity) Governors considered that activities in this area would become more important in the months ahead as the College looked for and developed opportunities, both for the benefit of the College and the community.

Governors asked for clarification on what was considered to be a “good” degree where the target had been set at 75%. The Principal advised that a 2:1 or First Class degree was deemed to be good, adding that this target had been achieved in the current year.

The Strategic Plan 2020-23 and associated targets were approved.

12 Curriculum Plan 2020/21 & Development Summary Report

The Vice Principal Curriculum & Learning advised that the plan had taken into account the government guidance as published, noting however that this was being reviewed and updated on a regular basis at the current time, therefore it may prove necessary to make amendments to the plan to ensure it remained compliant. The plan had been compiled with input from Heads of Faculties and Programme Managers who were fully engaged in the process and accountable for the plans and targets being set.

The Chair asked if the changes proposed resulted mainly from using the new 4Cast software system. The Vice Principal explained that the new software had played a part in developing the future plans, along with consideration being given to the Education Inspection Framework and market intelligence being received from employers.

Governors were interested in knowing how effective the new ways of delivering teaching remotely was being measured. The Vice Principal advised that feedback was being received from a number of methods, such as monitoring of the activity taking place on virtual learning environment, (VLE) the amount and quality of work being received back from students and student surveys. In addition, teaching staff were providing feedback on their recent experiences and some observations of remote teaching sessions had taken place, noting strong performance in some areas, and also some areas of weakness.

Governors said that close monitoring was essential and where weak delivery was noticed action would need to be taken. The Principal added that an OfSTED report had indicated from a survey of 20 institutions delivering remotely had concluded that performance had been good. The Principal accepted that there were difficulties in delivering practical sessions remotely and that the Performance Review & Quality Committee would be focusing on how best to monitor the remote delivery of teaching. The Chair of PR&Q noted that she was meeting with the Vice Principal the following week to discuss this issue. Governors noted that regarding online teaching, learning and assessment (TLA), formative and summative assessments tracking at a more precise level could help to provide assurance of standards and the progress being made. The Assistant Principal Quality & Students said that the College would continue with the survey approach moving forward and that this would include a 'Rate your Course' module for the VLE that would be set to appear randomly at different times; further, the monitoring of TLA by managers and the Learning Practice would continue.

Governors commented that a proactive approach for planning was required taking into account the needs of the local businesses and engaging with them to develop potential opportunities. The Vice Principal said that the apprenticeship team worked very fast when dealing with employers to understand their needs and that the College's business engagement advisers were active in identifying where new courses were needed.

Governors noted the difficulties of delivering practical sessions online and were concerned about the risk of increased withdrawals in September from L1 & L2 practical courses, especially for new students at the College. The Vice Principal reported that these students had been categorised as a priority along with adults for receiving on-campus tuition. Rotas would be created to offer a mix of remote study along with practical sessions in the classrooms/workrooms.

Governors asked about the supply of personal protective equipment to students in September. The Principal advised that there was no requirement for facemasks to be worn in the classroom setting. Temperature checks were currently being taken for anyone entering the campus but from September this would not continue as it was now considered as being unreliable and of little benefit to safety controls from Covid-19.

Governors were concerned that learning walks were not taking place and that it was difficult to remain in contact with the student population. The Vice Principal advised that observation of remote lessons could be arranged. The Assistant Principal reported that various delivery methods could be observed by Governors, such as pre-recorded presentations by teachers for students to watch at home at more convenient times.

Governors appreciated the need to prioritise the return of selected cohorts back to the campus but asked managers to consider setting minimum expectation levels for all students as to their study time on campus.

The Principal informed Governors that the recent sub-contractor activity plan, approved by the Finance & General Purposes Committee at its meeting on 17 June 2020 allowed for a reduction in activity and would result in the College directly teaching more of its students. This would improve income to the College with less funds being transferred to other providers. This was in line with guidance from the ESFA, the latest of which had been published the previous day (30 June 2020).

The Curriculum Plan 2020/21 was approved.

13 Marketing Plan 2020/21 with Progress Report on Targets Set for 2019/20

The Assistant Principal Quality & Students highlighted paragraph 5 of the report which listed the areas of focus for the months ahead.

The Chair asked if the unspecified area for increased focus (Para 5c) had been identified. The Assistant Principal advised that this would probably be in the form of a campus survey at Wisbech monitoring the applications received compared to the number of conversions to accepted places.

Governors referred to the labour market profile where there was expected to be a decline in retail and wholesale, notably in King's Lynn and West Norfolk and asked if the College was considering devising an offer to support this sector. The Assistant Principal advised that various methods could be utilised to attract those affected back into education and re-training, particularly access courses for adults.

Governors asked if any activities specifically for the Ely & Littleport areas had been considered. The Assistant Principal advised that the College had involved the Cambridge & Peterborough Combined Authority in its plans with regard to adult education but focus on the fenland area was an area to develop further.

The Chair commented on the low levels of interest from the fenland area and asked if there were any new activities to stimulate interest and increased numbers of students. The Assistant Principal reported that the improvement of Thomas Clarkson Academy in Wisbech where it had been graded "Good" by OfSTED following its January 2020 inspection was making it difficult to attract students to the Wisbech Campus. The Principal added that although he was no longer a member of the Opportunity Area Partnership Board for Fenland & East Cambridgeshire he remained in contact and was receiving information.

Governors commented on the lack of financial support given by county councils to subsidise student transport costs and considered that more action should be taken to address this concern. The Cambridge and Fenland area was considered to be a future growth area in respect of the land available for housing development.

The Marketing Plan 2020/21 was approved.

14 Review of Risk Register

The Chair of Audit reported that the risk register had been reviewed by the Committee at its recent meeting. The Vice Principal was thanked for making a number of changes to the report that had been requested. The risk of fraud would be added in due course.

ACTION-VPCS

Governors asked about the progress being made in the nursery to ensure that it passed its next OfSTED inspection. The Vice Principal Curriculum & Learning advised that OfSTED inspections remained suspended for the time being. There remained concerns with the quality of staffing due to the low levels of pay that were offered. The Vice Principal was confident that children in the nursery were well cared for and safe, and that learning walks and monitoring would commence in the autumn term. The Principal added that there had been some disruption caused due to some staff members being furloughed. Governors were concerned about the reducing time available to make the necessary changes and ensure that the nursery had improved before its next inspection.

Governors asked about the recent exposure to Covid-19 in the nursery. The Principal advised Governors that this had proven to be negative and that there was no concern.

The Chair asked for a colour coding key to be included in future reports of the risk register.

ACTION-VPCS

The report was noted.

15 Internal Audit – Needs Assessment & Audit Plan 2020/21

Governors were referred to the revised report, 15A, which had been recently circulated and which included the changes requested by the Audit Committee at its meeting on 24 June 2020.

The Audit Plan 2020/21, as detailed in the revised report, 15A, was approved.

16 Internal Auditors – Performance Review & Appointment

This item was deemed “Confidential.”

17 Any Other Business

- a) The Principal thanked Governors for their support over the recent months, for preparing well for the online meetings and particularly for the support received through the additional meetings of the Chairs’ group.
- b) The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and participation in the meeting and wished everyone well over the summer holiday period. Thanks were noted again for Adam Thompsett, Mollie Pemberton and Ruby Platt who were leaving the Board.
- c) Mollie Pemberton, Student Governor, thanked members for the opportunity of being on the Board, for the insight it had provided and for the amazing experience it had been.

18 Date and time of next meeting

Wednesday, 14 October 2020 at 8.30 am.

The meeting closed at 11.07 am