

**The College of West Anglia
Minutes of
The Corporation Board Meeting
9 December 2020
8.30 am
Remote Meeting – Microsoft Teams**

Present	Sharon Cambridge	Governor (Chair)
	Andrew Cave	Governor (Vice Chair)
	Jacob Burton	Governor
	Dave Clark	Governor
	Sam Fletcher	Governor
	Cristiana Germeno	Governor
	Rebecca Hamilton	Governor
	Ray Harding	Governor
	Scott Leadley	Governor
	Alan Measures	Governor
	Lucy Nethsingha	Governor
	David Pomfret	Governor (Principal)
	Gill Rejzl	Governor
	Lee Smith	Governor
Gary Webb	Governor	
Donna Woodruff	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 Jacob Burton and Cristiana Germeno to their first meeting as Student Governors.

1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Chris Ashman and Roderick Watkins.

2 Declarations of Interests

Declarations of interests were noted for Jacob Burton and Cristiana Germeno (Item 5i – Ratification to the Board); Lee Smith (Item 7 – School of Nursing); Andrew Gedge, Paul Harrison, Ruth Harrison, Scott Leadley, David Pomfret and Donna Woodruff (Item 8 – Staffing Restructure); Paul Harrison, Ruth Harrison and David Pomfret (Items A1 & A2 – Senior Post Holders’ Pay and Appraisals).

3 Minutes of the previous meeting – 14 October 2020

The Minutes of the meeting held on 14 October 2020 were reviewed and agreed as being a correct record of the meeting.

4 Matters Arising

The progress against the outstanding matters from previous meetings was summarised in the report for item 4. There were no questions or concerns raised on the items.

5 Governance Items

1) Student Governors

The Clerk reported that following a recent recruitment campaign carried out by Student Services, Jacob Burton and Cristiana Germeno had been elected by the student body to serve as Student Governors on the Board.

Governors ratified the appointments of Jacob Burton and Cristiana Germeno as Student Governors for a period of 4 years or to the end of their respective terms of study, whichever was the sooner.

2) Link Governor

The Clerk noted that due to the continued difficulties of holding meetings on campus that link meetings had not taken place during the autumn term. The Clerk would arrange for meetings to take place at the beginning of the next term on Microsoft Teams so that link governors could receive an update from the managers of their respective areas of responsibility.

ACTION-CLERK

David Pomfret joined the meeting at 8.36 am

6 Committee Chairs' Briefing Items:

- Audit Committee - The Committee Chair reported that the Committee had reviewed its Annual Report to the Board for 2019/20, being presented at today's meeting. The statutory accounts and letter of representation had been reviewed along with the external auditor's report and the Committee would be recommending these to the Board for approval in Item 17. The Committee had appointed Dave Clark as its Vice-Chair for 2020/21 and had thanked Rebecca Hamilton for serving in this post in the previous year. New reporting and assurance regarding the contracts register, losses and waivers had been reviewed. There had been positive developments in assurance framework and risk reporting, with thanks expressed to the executive team for addressing the issues raised by the Committee, resulting in improved reporting and levels of assurance. The College's risk appetite would be considered in the future and the Committee Chair asked for support from the Board for this. Two internal audit reports had been reviewed, one of which had arisen from a whistleblowing report from a member of staff relating to procurement procedures. Due to its nature it was considered appropriate for the auditors to investigate the claim. The College welcomed concerns raised by staff. It was pleasing to note that nothing untoward was found. The outcome of the investigation had been reported back to the individual who raised the concern.
- Performance Review & Quality Committee – The Clerk reported that the Committee continued to focus on Maths & English, Apprenticeships and Technology. The evidence and verbal reports received from the managers of Maths & English and Apprenticeships indicated the enormous amount of work that had been carried out. The Committee had confidence in the management of these particular two departments. The Committee was positive about the improvements made in the Applewood Nursery and the monitoring and assessments being carried out in advance of the anticipated inspection by Ofsted in January 2021.

The updates were noted.

7 Principal's Strategy Report

1. Ofsted Monitoring Visit - *This item was deemed "Confidential."*
2. Metalcraft – North Cambridgeshire Training Centre - *This item was deemed "Confidential."*
3. School of Nursing - *This item was deemed "Confidential."*
4. Spending Review – The Principal reported that the Government had published a listing of the skills eligible for funding at Level 3 with effect from April 2021.

The report was noted.

8 Staffing Restructure

This item was deemed "Confidential – Restricted."

9 Applewood Nursery – Update Report

The Vice Principal Curriculum & Learning reported that the anticipated re-inspection for January 2021 was now likely to take place in the summer 2021 term.

The inability to attract government funding for 2-year olds was being investigated following Ofsted's recent interim visit in November 2020 when it was reported that Ofsted was satisfied that the required safeguarding and welfare actions had been completed.

Managers would ensure that the momentum of improvement was maintained.

The report was noted.

10 Learning Strategy 2020/21

The Vice Principal Curriculum & Learning advised that the learning strategy had been in place at the College for several years and was reviewed annually. The strategy was used to drive teaching and learning across the College and to aid in the formation of teachers' development plans. The Performance Review & Quality Committee had reviewed the document at its last meeting.

The Board approved the Learning Strategy for 2020/21.

Lee Smith left the meeting at 9.27 am.

11 Learner Outcomes 2019/20

Governors considered that the results for Maths and English were generally disappointing and asked if management was fully aware of the reasons for the decline, and what action was being taken to address this. The Assistant Principal Quality & Students responded that the results had been reviewed in detail and that teachers and managers were aware of the issues that were reflected in the results achieved. The Performance Review & Quality Committee was receiving regular reports from the Head of Faculty as to the progress being made. The Maths department was being managed under Support to Improve and the Vice Principal Curriculum & Learning was also closely monitoring the performance.

The Vice Principal explained that the current performance had been a longstanding issue and was being experienced across most educational institutions. The level of

understanding of students on arrival, particularly with regard to Maths, was considered to be poor. Students were reviewed individually to assess the best qualification for them to undertake. The Vice Principal added that there was a shortage of good maths teachers in the sector and that budget restrictions had impacted on the recruitment of suitably qualified and experienced teachers.

Governors commented positively from the presentation made at the recent self-assessment review meetings and asked if the coronavirus situation had undermined progress. The Vice Principal explained that the teaching of Maths and English had moved fully to on-line delivery for the autumn term and that there had been some issues early in September which had since been addressed. Attendance was being monitored and challenged where necessary. Teaching resources were good, and staff were working hard in their delivery of the subject. Progress checking was an area in need of improvement. The Vice Principal was confident that the College's strategy, progress and review was sound.

The Chair of the Performance Quality and Review Committee confirmed that the Committee was closely monitoring the English & Maths provision and were fully aware of the issues faced and the outcomes being achieved. The Committee had confidence in the Head of Faculty to improve performance.

Governors noted the challenges of attendance with on-line delivery and asked how teachers were coping with this method of delivery. The Vice Principal considered that teachers were performing well, having been encouraged and supported by managers in the delivery of their subject. Staff wellbeing and mental health was a concern, and to support staff weekly meetings continued every Friday to check-in with team members and indeed, daily check-ins were being undertaken in some instances. Performance measures were not being published at the current time, so it was difficult to monitor progress, but staff were certainly learning a great deal in the delivery of learning using alternative methods.

Governors suggested linking with ARU to identify strong maths students who could act as mentors and study buddies to support those students who were struggling with the subject. The Vice Principal replied that peer mentoring was certainly an area to be investigated. The Vice Principal added that the College was making use of a catch-up funding grant from the government to provide additional assistance to those students who had fallen behind as a result of the coronavirus disruption.

The report was noted.

12 Current Performance Data and KPIs – 2020/21

The Assistant Principal Quality & Students reported that maths and English attendance was a current concern. Further concerns were to be found within Apprenticeships where the effects of the coronavirus pandemic in 2019/20 were still having an impact in the current year, with some apprentices still furloughed and training delayed.

There were no questions or concerns raised on this report.

The report was noted.

13 Quality Improvement Plan 2020/21

Governors asked if the identified actions were aligned to the learning strategy and targeted outcomes. The Assistant Principal Quality & Students confirmed that this was the case, adding that the areas of concern arising from the area performance reviews (self-assessment reviews) were also taken into account.

The report was noted.

14 Strategic Targets 2020/21 – Progress Review

Governors asked about target 2.4 regarding the College's response to supporting those made redundant. The Vice Principal Curriculum & Learning referred to the Adult Strategy, offering routes back to learning, short courses and the recently announced funding for eligible skills at Level 3 with effect from April 2021. Budget and targets utilising the adult education funding from the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority had already been achieved in the current year and the College had requested additional funding in order to carry out more activity.

Under 2.6a - Establish 16-18-year-old re-engagement provision at Wisbech, Governors were pleased to note that Animal Care had been successfully introduced at the Wisbech Campus.

The Chair commented on 1.7c regarding attendance levels for those learners involved in care. The Assistant Principal Quality & Students advised that there were 17 identified learners under this heading, although the list was continually changing as circumstances changed. Regular reviews were undertaken with support from social services where appropriate.

The report was noted.

15 Student Governor Report

Jacob Burton, Student Governor, advised that in respect of the virtual campus tours noted in the report, 481 prospective learners had registered to date.

Recent activities for students included an on-line event with James Wild MP where he discussed his role within Parliament and answered questions from the students. The Principal added that this was a successful event and provided a good experience for students. The Chair asked for a summary of the event with James Wild MP to be included the next Student Governor report.

ACTION-CLERK/JB/CG

The report was noted.

16 Annual Report of the Audit Committee 2019/20

The Clerk explained that it was a requirement that the Audit Committee provided to the Board a report on its activities over the past year. The report detailed the meetings that had taken place, the audits undertaken and other work that the Committee had been involved with. Lucy Nethsingha gave thanks to the Committee Chair, Gill Rejzl, for effectively leading the Committee during the last academic year during which time much work had been undertaken.

Governors asked about sub-contracting partnerships and noted that the safeguarding issues highlighted by Ofsted during its recent monitoring visit had not previously been reviewed. The Committee Chair explained that this area had not been included in the terms of reference for the Audit Committee but now that the issue had been highlighted independent assurance would be gained in the future to ensure this area was effectively monitored. The Vice Principal Corporate Services added that the actual audit that was undertaken on sub-contracted partnership provision had been mandated by the ESFA which itself did not include safeguarding within its scope of works.

The Annual Report from the Audit Committee for 2019/20 was noted.

17 CWA Accounts to 31 July 2020

The Chair gave thanks to Paul Harrison, Vice Principal Corporate Services; Neil Harries, Head of Finance and the Finance Team for their work in producing the annual accounts for 2019/20. The Chair noted that Neil Harries was retiring from the College in January 2021 and gave thanks to Neil for his work and for his support of the College.

The Vice Principal Corporate Services advised that there was a range of documents attached to the report for signing in order to complete the annual accounts and audit process. This year, the accounts would be signed electronically. The Chair confirmed her agreement for the use of electronic signatures on the accounts.

The Vice Principal assured the Board that the papers had been reviewed by the external auditor, KPMG, with a copy of their report provided at Appendix 2, noting that this had since been updated following earlier reviews of the accounts and all reports by the Finance & General Purposes Committee and the Audit Committee.

The Vice Principal highlighted the following points to note: KPMG would be issuing a clear opinion on the financial statements; the audit had been carried out remotely and although the ESFA had granted colleges an extension of one month, CWA had managed to complete the accounts and audit within the usual timetable. The Chair of the Audit Committee gave her thanks to the Finance Team and the auditors for a good, clean audit with no issues of concern.

The Vice Principal added that the accounts were positive and would generate a financial health rating of "good" enabling the College to move out of early intervention monitoring. The Chair of the Finance & General Purposes Committee advised that the Committee had reviewed the accounts and were pleased to note that there were no concerns with the going-concern concept for the College.

The Vice Principal referred to the additional agenda item, Item 17a, CWA Developments & CWA Enterprises which was a late request from the auditors asking the Board to note the financial position of each subsidiary, to confirm its continued support of the College for both subsidiaries and to authorise the Chair to sign letters of support for each subsidiary. Details of the accounts and projected cash flow position for each subsidiary had been provided within the report.

It was proposed by Andrew Cave and seconded by Gill Rejzl to:

- approve the accounts for 2019/20, the letter of representation and the self-assessment of compliance with regulatory and propriety requirements;**
- to note the financial position of each subsidiary, to confirm the Board's continued support of the College for both subsidiaries and to authorise the Chair to sign letters of support for each subsidiary.**

This was agreed.

The external audit report was noted.

18 Management Accounts – September 2020

The Vice Principal Corporate Services advised that with this being the first set of accounts for the new financial year it was currently too early to draw meaningful conclusions from the figures produced.

Governors asked about the £46k interest charge that had been incurred against a budget of £9k as detailed within the Income & Expenditure statement. The Vice Principal explained that the charge covered a 3-month period and had not been adjusted for correctly. This would be amended.

ACTION-VPCS

Governors noticed that no figures had been entered for the bank loan creditor in the Balance Sheet for September. Again, the Vice Principal advised that this would also be amended.

ACTION-VPCS

The Management Accounts for September 2020 were noted.

19 Medium Term Financial Plan

This item was deemed "Confidential."

20 Funding Position 2020/21

The Vice Principal Corporate Services provided the following updates to the report: In the report, Study Programme recruitment in the current year was stated as 2,780. As a result of withdrawals, this had reduced to 2,753 at the census point (27 down). The income generated by the reduced numbers remained ahead of the figures included in the MTFP (2021/22 – under the lagged learner model). The recent funding meeting was broadly positive across all of the income lines apart from College-delivered non-devolved Adult Education Budget where there was an identified need to generate over £400k in additional provision to hit the targets. This was flagged as a risk in the previous report (Item 19 - Medium-Term Financial Plan) and would be monitored closely going forwards.

The Principal added that with Adult Education Budgets there was the risk of potential clawback if targets were not achieved.

The report was noted.

The Chair called for a short break in the meeting at 10.09 am

The meeting re-commenced at 10.13 am

21 Annual Report on Risk Management and Review of the Risk Register

There were no questions or concerns raised on this report.

The report was noted.

22 Health & Safety Policy Statement

Governors asked if there was a need to specifically highlight homeworking risk assessments in light of the coronavirus effects with more staff working remotely. The Principal advised that risk assessments and procedures were in place to cover this. The Chair commented that there had been a concern raised regarding musculo-skeletal issues due to staff using inappropriate work stations at home for lengthy periods. The Principal added that the Health & Safety Committee meeting held the previous day (8 December 2020) noted that there was no evidence of a rise in musculo-skeletal issues and staff had been supported to adapt their work stations accordingly.

It was noted that the Employment Policy Committee had approved the Health & Safety Policy.

The report was noted.

23 Annual Safeguarding Monitoring Report 2019/20 and Policy Review

In light of the recent Ofsted monitoring visit, the Chair commented that there would be a need to provide increased focus and monitoring of sub-contractor partnership activities in respect of safeguarding.

Governors noted the increase in the number of students with safeguarding concerns from 359 in 2018/19 to 499 in 2019/20 and asked how these were being supported by the professional services who themselves may have been suffering staffing difficulties due to the coronavirus situation. The Assistant Principal Quality & Students advised that this was not necessarily the case, and, for example, for mental health issues, more support had become available during recent times.

Governors asked if the policy needed to be more explicit in terms of the checks that were required, particularly with regard to sub-contractor partners. The Assistant Principal gave his assurance that the correct checks for documents and staffing were being carried out although there was now a need to focus more on the reporting and monitoring of any incidents within the sub-contracted provision. The Principal added that there would be a need to record how the College had responded to the action plan from Ofsted. The Designated Safeguarding Lead would engage directly with all partners to ensure reporting of concerns was carried out correctly with information being reported back to Governors in the annual report. The Principal confirmed that Ofsted had indicated that it was satisfied with the checks carried out by the College and that the area of focus was on the reporting of issues from partners.

Governors asked about the impact on the mental wellbeing of students learning from home and the impact this was causing on accessing counselling. The Assistant Principal advised that there had been good engagement with the support team using the online facilities, with some face-to-face meetings where appropriate. The number of cases had increased but so far these had been covered with the resources available.

The monitoring report was noted.

The Board approved the Safeguarding Policy.

24 Single Equality Scheme & Equality Objectives 2020/21

Governors asked how the narrowing of achievement gaps could be reviewed from the data available to the College. The Assistant Principal Quality & Students advised that the information was available within the key performance indicators which analysed performance across the various groups of students. The data was reviewed by the Performance Review & Quality Committee and then also brought to the Board. The self-assessment review process also enabled the chance for discussion between governors and management on how the differences between student groups were being managed and the progress being made. The current concern was digital poverty which appeared to be affecting particular groups of students.

Governors asked how the proposed staffing restructure would affect the College's current performance with regard to gender pay gap analysis. The Principal responded that due to the staffing areas under review there would be a disproportionate impact on support staff, mainly affecting females due to the current staffing profile. The Principal added that there was currently a delay with the support staff pay review, although once agreed, it would be backdated to August 2020.

Governors asked about diversity on the Board and how this was being addressed. The Chair advised that the Search & Governance Committee was very mindful of Board

diversity and that the College was currently working with a company to help address this in a future recruitment campaign.

The Board approved the Single Equality Scheme and Objectives for 2020/21

25 Equality Objectives – Annual Progress Review 2019/20

The Assistant Principal Quality & Students commented that the coronavirus during 2019/20 had impacted on the College's activities resulting in disruption in the targets being progressed and affecting final outcomes. The Chair considered that despite the difficulties and challenges that had been endured that the outcomes for the year had been good.

The report was noted.

26 Any Other Business

The Chair noted that this was the last meeting for Andrew Gedge, Assistant Principal Quality & Students. Andrew had worked for CWA for 28 years and was leaving for a position as Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality at the recently merged Brooksby Melton / Stephenson College. The Chair thanked Andrew for his efforts, his "can-do" attitude and for his dedicated support of the College and wished him well in his new role.

27 Date and time of next meeting

Wednesday, 17 March 2021 at 8.30 am.

10.33 am: The Principal, SMT members, Staff Governors and Student Governors left the meeting at this time with only Independent Governors remaining.

A1 Determination of the Pay and Conditions of Senior Postholders and Clerk 2020-21

This item was deemed "Confidential - Restricted."

A2 Appraisals of Senior Postholders and Clerk

This item was deemed "Confidential - Restricted."

The meeting closed at 10.42 am