

**The College of West Anglia
Minutes of
The Chairs' Meeting
16 June 2021
10.35 am
Remote Meeting – Microsoft Teams**

Present	Sam Fletcher	Governor (Chair)
	Chris Ashman	Governor
	Sharon Cambridge	Governor
	Andrew Cave	Governor
	David Pomfret	Governor (Principal)
	Gill Rejzl	Governor
Attending	Stephen Halls	Clerk to the Corporation

1 Apologies

There were no apologies for absence received.

2 Declaration of Interests

No interests were declared.

3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting – 28 April 2021

The minutes of the meeting of 28 April 2021 were agreed as being an accurate record.

4 Matters Arising

The progress against the outstanding matters from previous meetings was summarised in the report for item 4.

5 Principal's Update

The Principal provided updates on several matters:

- a) Finance – the ESFA's financial dashboard, recently received, confirmed the "Good" financial health of the College and supported the move away from early intervention by the ESFA. The budget for 2021/22 had been reviewed by the Finance & General Purposes Committee at its meeting earlier that morning (16 June 2021) and would be presented to the Board at its next meeting for approval. The budget provided a modest surplus and although not overly optimistic it was considered to be deliverable. There was confidence in the major income lines, notably 16-18 year funding where student numbers had grown in the current year and applications for 2021/22 were currently 13% higher than at the same time last year. Student numbers at Wisbech were expected to increase further following the introduction of the small animal care and dog grooming courses during 2020/21 and which had helped to offset the move of the Art provision

from Wisbech to King's Lynn. It was noted that the Fashion course at King's Lynn was performing well. The Principal noted his slight concern about the current year's finances where the forecast out-turn had reduced to £400k, whereas in the earlier review in March 2021 the forecast was showing to be around £900k.

- b) FE Commissioner – the final review meeting had been booked for 7 July 2021 and would be a remote meeting with the FE Commissioner (interim), Frances Wadsworth and Deputy FE Commissioner, Andrew Tyley. The FE Commissioner had requested the attendance of the Chair, Principal, Vice Principals and Clerk. A reduced number of documents had been requested to be submitted prior to the meeting. With all recommendations actioned and the positive financial plan moving forward the Principal was confident of receiving a positive final report from the FE Commissioner.
- c) Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs) – these had now been completed across the various teaching areas, all slightly ahead of the schedule. Final gradings would be subject to external validation. The Principal was pleased with the approach taken by staff throughout the process.
- d) Functional Skills – results for this area were expected to be poor following the challenges throughout the year of lockdown, remote teaching and late notification of grading/examination requirements. Feedback across the sector suggested that many colleges had struggled with functional skills throughout the year.
- e) Apprenticeships – although great effort was being put into supporting apprentices there remained a number of overdue completions and delays in getting apprentices through to their end point assessments. Not all issues were Covid related and staff were being asked to focus on supporting apprentices to completion. The reporting and forecasting of apprenticeship data were considered to be weak, with this matter was to be addressed by the apprenticeship team with support from CIS. The Performance Review & Quality Committee was aware of the issues and the actions currently being taken.
- f) School of Nursing Studies – progress was being made with ARU and the Nursing & Midwifery Council (NMC). There had been much interest received from potential new students to the course. Due to the need for the facilities to be viewed and assessed prior to sign-off by the NMC, a delay in gaining the necessary accreditation was expected with some risk to the January 2022 start date for the course. Alice Webster, Chief Nurse at the QEH would liaise with the NMC directly to try to speed up processes. It was anticipated that building works on the King's Lynn campus for the facility would be completed by the third week of August.
- g) World Skills – the College had 12 entries in the competition (Fitness Training x 5, Digital Media Production x 4, Hairdressing x 3). Within the Hairdressing entries, the Principal highlighted Rachael Penney, a mature student studying hairdressing at the Wisbech Campus who had already won 2 national competitions. Due to Covid, there would again be no national live event at the NEC, Birmingham.
- h) Support Staff Job Evaluation – this was still to be launched. Managers had challenged some of the proposed changes to posts. The latest new posts following the restructure had been evaluated against the scheme. Sign-off from the national Unison office was still outstanding. The scheme, once launched, would be backdated, but staff were raising their concerns and frustrations over how long the process had taken. The Vice Principal Corporate Services was working with the Head of Finance to finalise and complete the process.
- i) Bake Off: The Professionals – 2 of the college's lecturers, Alex Harrison and Stacey Martin, appeared in a recent episode of the Channel 4 television programme, although

sadly failed to move to the next round of the competition. The lecturers were the first team to enter the competition from the further education sector and their appearance on the programme generated much coverage by the AoC.

- j) Nursery Ofsted Inspection – the anticipated inspection was still eagerly awaited by staff who were concerned that if it took place during the summer holiday period then some members would not be present to meet with the inspectors. There was a good team spirit within the nursery and the Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality was confident that the provision within the nursery was “good.” The Chair added that she had noticed an increase in the number of inspections by Ofsted taking place recently.
- k) Projects – the Strategic Development Fund bid with the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority had been submitted. The project with Fenland District Council for Levelling Up Funding would now not go ahead. The Principal had met with the CPCA regarding the NetZero project at the Wisbech Campus where funding may become available in 2021/22. The Principal would look to meet with the new mayor of the CPCA, Dr. Nik Johnson in due course to discuss possible projects that would fit in with the aspirations of the College and the new mayor, such as transport subsidies for students.

Governors commented on a recent government grant to local authorities and asked if the College would benefit from this. The Principal advised that although no major project was expected for the College, it was in conversations with the Council regarding skills and would expect to be included in various activities across King's Lynn and the Borough.

- l) Student Awards – the Principal thanked governors for supporting the Student Awards remote sessions, noting the importance of recognizing students' achievements.

The Principal's updates were noted.

6 Update from Committee Chairs

- a) Audit Committee – this Committee would be meeting on 23 June 2021.
- b) Employment Policy Committee – at its last meeting on 2 June 2021 the Committee reviewed a report which looked at the impact on staffing caused by the pandemic. Various policies were reviewed, including Leave, TOIL and Flexible Working. The Flexible Working policy would be amended in due course to take into account the regular home working of staff, once guidance had been issued from the AoC. Safeguarding was reviewed, and it was noticed that some staff had training outstanding for safeguarding and/or Prevent – this would be followed up by management and monitored by the Committee.

Chris Ashman left the meeting at 11.20 am

- c) Finance & General Purposes Committee – at its meeting earlier that morning (16 June 2021) the Committee reviewed the proposed budget for 2021/22. It was noted that budget figures (income and expenditure) had not been included for the School of Nursing Studies, due to launch in January 2022. The budget assumed there would be no lockdown during the year and that operations would be as normal. The Principal added that should split-classes be required again, this would affect the overall contribution rates within most faculties. The Management Accounts for April 2021 had been reviewed. The Committee Chair was concerned that these accounts had been received late and had asked if there was a capacity/resource issue within the Finance department, especially as the department had been very busy recently preparing the current year reforecast and the new budget for 2021/22. The Sub-

contracting plan for 2021/22 had been reviewed and approved, noting the need to continue reducing this activity further by 2022/23. The guidance received from the ESFA regarding the need to obtain permission to continue some provisions had been confusing. The Committee had also reviewed the insurance cover for the College, an ESFA contract and a transition proposal for the LIBOR loan facility.

The next discussion was deemed “Confidential.”

- d) Performance Review & Quality Committee – The Committee Chair reported that the Committee had reviewed an honest report regarding the performance within English and Maths. The challenges faced by teacher assessed grades and functional skills had been discussed. There was a continued concern with Apprenticeships, particularly with the availability of accurate and up-to-date data. The Committee would continue to review Apprenticeships and the Technology Faculty. The Committee had also reviewed the Quality Framework document, the HE one-year plan and the EDI objectives.
- e) Search & Governance – The Committee Chair advised that the Committee had reviewed the recent survey for governors on remote meetings. Taking into account the feedback received the Committee had agreed that for 2021/22 all Board meetings would be held on campus, whereas for committee meetings there would be a mix of on-campus and remote meetings. There would not be the option of a hybrid meeting allowing a governor to dial-in remotely to attend a meeting taking place on-campus. The Committee was mindful of the need for new governors to physically meet other governors and visit the campuses. The Clerk said that he would monitor members' comments and liaise with Committee Chairs if there was a need to review the proposed schedule for meetings during the year, with regard to on-campus/remote meetings.

7 Any Other Business

There were no items of other business.

8 Chair's items for briefing to the Corporation

There were no specific items to note for the Corporation.

9 Date and time of next meeting

Wednesday, 8 September 2021 at 8.30 am.

Governors noted that there were no meetings scheduled during the summer break. The Principal advised that should there be any urgent developments on any matter he would email the Committee Chairs, and if needed, the Clerk would call an additional meeting of the group.

The meeting closed at 11.43 am