

**The College of West Anglia
Minutes of
The Corporation Board Meeting
30 June 2021
8.30 am
Remote Meeting – Microsoft Teams**

Present	Sharon Cambridge	Governor (Chair)
	Chris Ashman	Governor (Vice Chair)
	Andrew Cave	Governor (Vice Chair)
	Dave Clark	Governor
	Sam Fletcher	Governor
	Rebecca Hamilton	Governor
	Ray Harding	Governor
	Scott Leadley	Governor
	Alan Measures	Governor
	Sally Mitton	Governor
	Jacob Morton	Governor
	David Pomfret	Governor (Principal)
	Carolyn Rand	Governor
	Gill Rejzl	Governor
	Lee Smith	Governor
	Gary Webb	Governor
	Roderick Watkins	Governor
	Hein van den Wildenberg	Governor
	Donna Woodruff	Governor
 Attending	Paul Harrison	Vice Principal Corporate Services
	Ruth Harrison	Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality
	Paul O'Shea	Assistant Principal Student Services
	Rob Petto	Assistant Principal Funding & Performance
	Stephen Halls	Clerk to the Corporation

1 Apologies

Sam Fletcher had advised in advance that she would be slightly late to the meeting. Roderick Watkins had advised in advance that he would need to leave the meeting for a short period at 10.00am. Cristiana Germeno was absent from the meeting.

2 Declarations of Interests

Declarations of interest were recorded for Sharon Cambridge and Sam Fletcher (Item 5.i); Gill Rejzl (Item 5.ii); Chris Ashman, Sharon Cambridge, Andrew Cave, Sam Fletcher, Gill Rejzl, Hein van den Wildenberg (Item 5.iii); Scott Leadley, Paul O'Shea, Rob Petto, Donna Woodruff (Item 13); Roderick Watkins (Item 15).

3 Minutes of the previous meeting – 19 May 2021

The Minutes of the meeting held on 19 May 2021 were reviewed and agreed as being an accurate 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. The Principal provided updates on the following items from the meeting on 19 May 2021:

- i. The outcome of the collaborative funding bid with NALEP and other colleges would not be known until the end of the summer period;
- ii. ESFA Early Intervention – representatives from the ESFA had indicated that they would be removing CWA from early intervention measures in light of the “good” financial health position reported in the College’s accounts for 2019/20.
- iii. FEC Commissioner – the Chair, Principal, Vice Principals and Clerk had been invited to attend a remote meeting with the FE Commissioner on 7 July 2021 for what was hoped would be the final review meeting.

5 Governance Items

1) Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair

The Chair thanked Andrew Cave for his service and support as Vice Chair of the Board over recent years, noting that he was not standing for re-election for the next academic year. Andrew would be retiring from the Board in December 2021.

Sharon Cambridge left the meeting at 8.36 am. The Clerk took the Chair.

The Clerk moved to the election of Chair and Vice Chair. There were no questions or concerns raised by members to the nominations as detailed in the report.

Election of Chair – Sharon Cambridge, proposed by Gill Rejzl, seconded by Andrew Cave. This was approved.

Election of Vice Chair – Sam Fletcher, proposed by Sharon Cambridge, seconded by Andrew Cave. This was approved.

*Sharon Cambridge re-joined the meeting at 8.37 am and re-took the Chair.
Gill Rejzl left the meeting at 8.38 am*

2) Chair-Elect

The Clerk moved to the appointment of Chair-Elect. There were no questions or concerns raised by members to the nomination as detailed in the report.

Appointment of Chair Elect – Gill Rejzl, proposed by Sharon Cambridge, seconded by Chris Ashman. This was approved.

Gill Rejzl re-joined the meeting at 8.40 am

3) Committee Chairs 2021/22

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. The Clerk referred members to the recommendation from the Search & Governance Committee as listed in the report:

Committee	Chair	Note
Audit	Gill Rejzl	
Finance & General Purposes	Andrew Cave	To be succeeded by Hein van den Wildenberg following Andrew Cave's retirement from the Board in December 2021
Search & Governance	Sharon Cambridge (as Chair of the Board)	
Remuneration	Chris Ashman	Replacing Andrew Cave
Employment Policy	Sharon Cambridge	
Performance Review & Quality	Sam Fletcher	
Chairs' Meeting Group	Sam Fletcher	

The recommendation for Committee Chairs from the Search & Governance Committee was approved.

- 4) Expiration of Terms of Office – this item was noted.
- 5) Appointment of New Governor – the Clerk reported on the application from Kay Driver and the recommendation from the Search & Governance Committee. There were no questions or concerns raised.

The appointment of Kay Driver as a co-opted non-governor serving on the Employment Policy Committee was approved.

- 6) Resignations from the Board – the Clerk noted the resignation of Lucy Nethsingha from the Board. Lucy had recently been appointed as Leader of Cambridgeshire County Council. This resignation had created 2 vacant positions as link governors for Careers and the Cambridge Campus; the Clerk asked members to consider taking on these responsibilities.
- 7) Application of the Corporation Seal – this item was noted.
- 8) Schedule of Meetings 2021/22 – the Clerk referred members to a revised schedule of meetings at Appendix 3. The Search & Governance Committee had agreed at its meeting on 2 June 2021 that all board meetings would be held on campus with a selection of committee meetings to be held remotely via Microsoft Teams in 2021/22. Governors asked if there would be the opportunity of attending an on-campus meeting remotely (hybrid option); the Clerk advised that this would not be possible at the current time due to the technology available in the meeting rooms.

The Clerk advised that a further revised schedule would be issued in due course, to include 2 very recent changes: A Risk Workshop had been arranged for Wednesday 15 September 2021 and the Graduation Ceremony planned for September 2021 had been moved to Saturday 19 March 2022.

6 Committee Chairs' Briefing Items:

- Audit Committee – The Committee Chair gave her thanks to Rob Petto and RM for the recent report to the Committee on cyber security. There remained some issues still to solve, including the preparation of an action plan and a review of the risk rating. The scope of works to be carried out in the next Apprenticeship Funding Audit, due for this summer had been reviewed. The risk register was reviewed, and thanks given to Hein van den Wildenberg for suggesting and preparing a Risk Dashboard which had now been included as part of the report. A risk workshop had been planned for 15 September 2021 for all governors to attend. The outstanding actions on previous audits had been reviewed, noting particularly one historical action regarding the delayed introduction of a new customer relationship management system; the Committee was pleased to hear that this item was now progressing. The contracts register, waivers and debt write-offs had been reviewed, with the Committee asking for more information to be supplied in future reports on the rationale for authorising waivers. The Audit Needs Assessment and Audit Plan had been reviewed, (on the agenda at Item 19 for the Board to approve); good work had been carried out on the key financial controls. The Committee reviewed the annual value for money report which included benchmarked data to allow for comparison, however, the data was not as detailed as that which was compiled by Tribal in its specially commissioned report to the College last year, making this year's analysis difficult. KPMG, external auditors, presented their audit plan for this year's accounts and the Committee met Emma Larcombe, the new relationship manager with KPMG. The Audit Code of Practice for this year now required auditors to give a presentation to both the Audit Committee and the Board, and so therefore KPMG would be attending the Board meeting in December 2021 when the accounts would be reviewed and approved.

Roderick Watkins joined the meeting at 8.54 am

- Employment Policy Committee – The Chair highlighted to the Board the work of Nicky Rowland, Head of HR, Danny Huddleston, Health & Safety Officer and the HR team in supporting managers and staff during the Covid-19 pandemic. This had been a very busy time with ever-changing rules and regulations regarding how staff should work and in how buildings and premises should operate. The Committee reviewed a draft of the College's Flexible Working policy which, once finalised, would include guidance on home working, noting that one side issue of the pandemic had been the realisation that some work could be satisfactorily undertaken at home and that there was value in giving individuals greater control over how they worked. Further work still needed to be done on the policy and guidance was awaited from the AoC and its solicitors, Irwin Mitchell. The Committee had reviewed safeguarding matters and noted that all staff had had a DBS check, with checks also in place for all on site contractors, those engaged through partnerships providers, self-employed and agency staff. At the time of the report, 18 staff were yet to complete their initial safeguarding training, although they would have received the safeguarding handbook prior to their first day at work. 26 staff had still to complete their PREVENT training. Governors commented that all staff should ensure they completed the appropriate training. Paul O'Shea advised that PREVENT training was provided on-line, allowing staff to easily complete the training; for safeguarding, an on-line module was being developed to help hourly-paid staff complete the training. The Principal added that all staff would have received some level of training, in addition to the policy booklets, as part of their initial induction process.
- Finance & General Purposes Committee - The Committee Chair reported that the Committee had reviewed the proposed budget for 2021/22 and would be recommending it to the Board at Item 12 on the agenda. The budget had a modest surplus of £354k and assumed operations would be normal next year, with no repeats of major lockdowns. The Committee reviewed and approved the proposed sub-contractor partnership activities for 2021/22, and also the Supply Chain Fees & Charges Policy. The College would continue its reduction of subcontracted activity so that there was no more than 25% of any income

stream. Four areas of provision would cease either prior to the start of next year, or during the year itself. The Principal added that the College had given its proposals to the ESFA to be down to the 25% level by 2022/23.

- Performance Review & Quality Committee – Scott Leadley, Vice Chair of the Committee provided the update: Across the various reports reviewed by the Committee it was noted that there was good support being offered individually to students by staff. Staff were working hard helping their students complete their courses this year. The current circumstances remained challenging but the focus on teaching and progress continued. The Committee was realistic in noting that achievement rates would be down this year. There had been challenges and risks around outcomes for Functional Skills but despite strong leadership in this area, results in this area were expected to be down. A regular report was received regarding Apprenticeships. The Committee was concerned about the level of overdue apprenticeships and although funding would not be affected (merely moved to next year), the impact on the individual apprentices and their employers was a concern. The Committee would continue to monitor all areas of concern.
- Search & Governance Committee – the Chair reported that the AoC had issued a draft consultation document on the Code of Good Governance at the end of April 2021 with a limited timeframe in which to receive responses. The Committee reviewed the proposed changes which included a new section on Environmental Sustainability and also increased guidance of Equality, Diversity & Inclusion. The finalised Code, once published, would be circulated to all governors. It was noted that the AoC expected to undertake a much larger revision of the Code in 2022.

The updates were noted.

Sam Fletcher joined the meeting at 9.05 am

7 Student Governor Report

Jacob Morton, Student Governor, highlighted the balance of funds available in the student union accounts and advised that Clare Pelling, Learning Experience Manager would be liaising with students in the next academic year on how best to utilise these funds.

Noting that this would be Jacob's last Board meeting before leaving the College, the Chair thanked Jacob for his work as Student Governor during the year, for his reports, attendance at meetings and his engagement with other events. The Chair wished Jacob well with his future plans.

The report was noted.

8 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

The Principal advised the Board that this draft policy had been reviewed by the Performance Review & Quality Committee at its meeting on 9 June 2021, with only minor changes and updates to the policy being proposed under this review.

Governors asked for the protected characteristics in the opening paragraph of the policy to be checked, particularly with regard to maternity and pregnancy. **ACTION-Principal/LEM**

The Board approved the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy, subject to it being amended to reflect maternity and pregnancy in the protected characteristics, if required.

9 Current Performance Data and KPIs 2020/21

The Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality reported that staff were busy working on the required exams for functional skills. It was expected that around 1,200 exams would be taken. Pass rates were not expected to be as high as in previous years. For GCSE students, performance would be assessed using teacher assessed grades (TAGs).

The Chair asked about the publication of performance data. The Vice Principal confirmed that comparable performance data was not being published for the academic year.

The report was noted.

10 Applewood Nursery Update Report

The Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality reported that the environment within the nursery was now much changed following the positive work that had been undertaken by the Head of Faculty, the nursery manager and staff. Regular visits were being made by the Vice Principal and Head of Faculty to the nursery. The return of Ofsted to the nursery was now due. The Principal added that there was a risk of Ofsted visiting during the holiday period when key staff members could be on annual leave; the Vice Principal assured governors that throughout the summer period either herself, the Head of Faculty or the nursery manager would be onsite to welcome Ofsted should they visit.

Governors asked about the action that would be taken should the next inspection deliver another 'requires improvement' grade. The Vice Principal advised that the College would review its ability to continue running the nursery in its current form, noting the reputational and funding damage that could result. The Principal said that the nursery provided a necessary service to support both students, staff, and parents in the local area and that, if necessary, a third-party operator could be considered to manage the nursery on the College's behalf. The Vice Principal noted that the nursery also provided work placements and work experience opportunities for students on childcare courses.

The report was noted.

11 Management Accounts – April 2021

The Vice Principal Corporate Services advised the meeting that the management accounts for May 2021 would be published very shortly; these continued the positive reporting from the April accounts now being presented and would be submitted to the FE Commissioner for review in due course.

Governors commented on the staffing overspend as detailed in paragraph 3.2.6 of the report. The Vice Principal confirmed that the majority of the overspend had been caused by an error in the setting of the budget.

Governors asked what action was being taken to address apprenticeship income, as noted in paragraph 3.1.3 and if there was time to improve the situation before the end of the year. The Vice Principal advised that action was being taken and staff were trying to process completions as quickly as possible. The financial forecast had allowed for some slippage of activity to the next financial year.

Governors asked about catch-up funding and how this would be applied in functional skills. The Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality advised that funding would be used to provide help with revision and practice in advance of learners taking their exams, noting that limitations had been applied as to how the additional funds could be utilised. The College was using a mix of catch-up funding and additional learning support funds to help learners in the most appropriate way.

Governors commented on the contribution analysis and the low level of return received from the Landbased faculty. The Vice Principal Corporate Services advised that this area was under review. The Principal said that this faculty generated commercial income which supported the curriculum area; income had been much reduced in the year due to the pandemic. The Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality advised that Equine was moving into the Support to Improve monitoring process; the College would strongly support and help Equine to improve and develop for the good of the animal care team and the landbased faculty. The Assistant Principal Funding & Performance commented on the high cost of running this particular curriculum area. Governors commented on the need to review all areas, accepting that some would have low levels of contribution but added to the overall offer and marketing opportunities for the College.

The report was noted.

12 Budget 2021/22 and 3 Year Financial Plan

This item was deemed "Confidential."

13 Annual Pay Settlement

This item was deemed "Confidential."

14 Three-Year Strategic Plan 2021-24

The Principal introduced the proposed 3-year strategic plan, which had been developed following the Board's strategy morning on 21 April 2021. The Vision and Values of the plan remained unchanged. The fourth strategic ambition relating to finance had been re-worded to: "Use our resources to achieve maximum impact." The targets for each ambition had been reviewed, with some targets now being of a "qualitative" nature rather than "quantitative" nature. Recent issues for the College and the sector, such as cyber security and climate/carbon reduction had been included within the plan.

Governors discussed the need to work more closely with employers in the coming years and the need to ensure the approach for adopting and working towards the plan was accepted across the entire organisation.

Governors reviewed Strategic Ambition 2 – Local social and economic prosperity and asked for the reference to recovery from Covid-19 and Brexit to be reworded.

ACTION-PRINCIPAL

Governors commented favourably that not all targets were "SMART" but were still able to convey the intended direction for the College. Governors asked about the monitoring and reporting of the targets. The Principal explained that managers would continue to update their targets each term with the progress made, with a report submitted to each appropriate committee and then to the whole Board.

The Board approved the Three-Year Strategic Plan 2021-24 (subject to the amendment requested under Ambition 2).

15 Higher Education Report : 1-Year Plan

Roderick Watkins noted his interest in this report (as ARU Vice-Chancellor)

The Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality reported that the plan had been considered by the Performance Review & Quality Committee at its meeting on 9 June 2021. The plan would cover HE provision at the College for the next academic year, during which time it would develop its strategy moving forward with partners and other stakeholders.

The Vice Principal highlighted the need to develop the vet nursing programmes, in association with Anglia Ruskin University.

Governors noted the need to move speedily with the development of the plan and were concerned about there being sufficient time available to do this. The Vice Principal was confident that there would be time to prepare, review and approve the plan in time for the 2022/23 year.

Governors were pleased with the number of courses currently available, particularly those that would link to the government's call for skills in areas such as the environment and technology. Governors asked if enough was being done in the way of marketing and advertising for the courses. The Vice Principal explained that much of the engagement came via existing learners, including apprenticeships.

The HE Plan for 2021/22 was approved.

16 Quality Framework 2021/22

The Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality advised governors that the framework provided the College with the means to monitoring quality across the teaching areas. It was considered that the self-assessment process across the college had improved over recent years and that curriculum managers were now very experienced at reviewing their respective areas at the three required points each year.

The process would be supported by external validation with consultants/teaching professionals being engaged to carry out reviews of particular areas from time to time, adding further challenge to that already provided internally by Heads of Faculties and Senior Managers. The feedback received from all reviews would help to shape the action plans for each area. Governors were pleased to note the involvement of external professionals in the reviews, offering a different perspective and a critical approach.

Governors asked about their own involvement in the process. The Vice Principal advised that Governors were invited to take part in the annual self-assessment review process. Further, governors could be invited to take part in individual area reviews ("deep-dives") from time to time.

Governors asked about the costs for carrying out the reviews. The Vice Principal explained that the additional costs incurred would be for the use of external consultants. It was expected that all areas would be reviewed over a two-year period, with the areas of more concern being reviewed first.

The Quality Framework 2021/22 was approved.

17 Marketing Plan 2021/22

The Vice Principal Corporate Services noted that the date for the graduation ceremony as listed within the report had recently been amended to Saturday 19 March 2022; also, one or two of the business objectives for 2021/22 would be amended/completed following the approval of the college's Strategic Plan (earlier at Item 14).

Governors noted the very comprehensive report. Governors were interested in how marketing was provided for staff recruitment; if managed by the Marketing Department or by the HR department. The Vice Principal advised that traditionally the HR Department managed staff recruitment itself, calling on the support from the Marketing Department when needed (particularly with senior roles). A new post had been created within HR to manage staff recruitment, further, marketing would be included in a new HR strategy

currently being developed. The Principal added that within the new Strategic Plan the College had as one of its targets to gain public recognition as a great employer by winning an award such as the Sunday Times 100 Best Companies award.

Governors reviewed the marketing analysis within the report and were concerned to note a decrease of 7.4% in the proportion of adults in the BCKLWN area with level 2, or above, qualifications.

Governors considered that the recent change in the mayoral leadership of the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority could present both opportunities and threats for the College, particularly with regard to activities at the Wisbech and Cambridge campuses. Governors discussed the development of transport subsidies for students, again, particularly due to the new mayor and his particular interest in community transport.

Governors commented that the marketing plan should refer to the diversity of the local community, rather than just focus on the diversity of the student body. This would be amended in the next review.

ACTION-VPCS/Marketing

The Marketing Plan for 2021/22 was approved.

Roderick Watkins left the meeting at 10.57 am

Lee Smith left the meeting at 11.00 am

18 Review of the Risk Register

The Vice Principal Corporate Services gave his thanks to Hein van den Wildenberg for his help in developing the Risk Dashboard, now included as part of the report.

The Chair of the Audit Committee reported that the risk register would be reviewed in further detail following the Risk Workshop on 15 September 2021, after considered risk appetite, risk scoring and so on.

Governors asked about the need to review the risk of Safeguarding. The Chair advised that this was currently being reviewed by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (Paul O'Shea).

The report was noted.

19 Internal Audit – Needs Assessment and Audit Plan 2021/22

The Vice Principal Corporate Services explained that the audit plan comprised the previously contracted core financial systems, as listed in the report, and as agreed by the Audit Committee at its meeting on 23 June 2021. Further, additional audits would be commissioned as required during the year. There were no questions or concerns raised.

The Internal Audit Plan 2021/22 was approved.

20 Any Other Business

- i. Nursery Inspection - Governors asked about the aspirations of the nursery staff and if a grading of "Outstanding" was a possibility to aim for during the next inspection. Senior managers were keen for the College and all staff to aim for the best possible outcome.
- ii. Governors gave their thanks to the staff and students for the recent on-line Art & Design exhibition.

- iii. Student Awards – the Chair asked for the Principal's presentation, used during the recent student awards, to be circulated to all governors. **ACTION-CLERK**

23 Date and time of next meeting

Wednesday, 13 October 2021 at 8.30 am.

The Chair thanked everybody for their attendance and engagement in the meeting.

The meeting closed at 11.07 am