

STRATFORD-UPON-AVON COLLEGE CORPORATION

MINUTES OF CORPORATION MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 25 MARCH 2010

Present:	Alan Richardson	Chair
	Jenny Andrews	Governor
	Lyn Anslow	Governor
	Mike Atkins	Governor
	Satnam Bhogal	Governor
	Cedric Irankunda	Student Governor (left 2.30pm)
	Tony Jefferson	Governor
	David Kent	Governor
	John Latham	Governor
	Jack Mertens	Student Governor (left 2.30pm)
	Jeremy Moore	Governor
	Martin Penny	Principal
	Gill Roache	Governor
	Elaine Rowlands	Governor
	Geoff Thompson	Governor
	Andy Tyers	Teaching Staff Governor
	In attendance:	Charles Anderson
David Jackson		Clerk to the Corporation
Norman MacDonald		Vice Principal – Finance
Yvonne Rose		LSC
Hazel Skwirzynska		Director of Learner Services

PRESENTATION ON SAFEGUARDING

The Deputy Principal and Director of Learner Services gave a presentation on Safeguarding to the Corporation. Safeguarding, previously known as Child Protection, now included Vulnerable Adults and came high on the education agenda and Inspection criteria.

Elaine Rowlands, the Governor with responsibility, and the Deputy Principal and Director of Learner Services, who had College responsibility for this area, attended the very informative Annual National 14-19 Safeguarding Conference on 10 March 2010.

The Director of Learner Services related statistics to, say, 77 College students travelling on a double-decker bus: of that 77, 7 would go home to a non-loving/close family; 10 may go home to disability or social caring duties; 3 will go home to frequent violence; 3 will experience beatings themselves. The Deputy Principal stated that the College had a duty to support students who were at risk of abuse and the Safeguarding Policy gave clear guidance for members of staff to follow.

Relevant training, including some on-line, for all College staff was currently being undertaken and handouts were tabled at the meeting. A Counselling Helpline was available for all staff to access.

The College had promoted a number of 'staying safe' initiatives, including safe driving, mental health awareness, and anti-smoking. Computer and phone technologies were a national cause for concern with bullying/harassment/grooming, and a 'Think U Know' leaflet that was handed out to students was tabled at the meeting.

All new members of staff and Governors currently went through a CRB check. However, from later this year, this would change to an ISA (Independent Safeguarding Authority) check on all members of staff and Governors. The changes were mainly positive inasmuch as, should a potential safeguarding incident occur after an ISA check, the employer would be notified.

Elaine Rowlands, having attended the recent Conference and discussed Safeguarding with the Deputy Principal and Director of Learner Services, was impressed with the large amount of work being carried out by the College compared to other colleges.

The Chair concluded by stating that caring was a great strength of the College.

9.2 **Principal's Up-date**

The Principal presented his up-date for what had been a busy Spring Term for the College, including:

- A2 students' visit to Berlin;
- Students' attendance at the Skills West Midlands 2-day event which received good publicity for the College;
- Masons Road Carpentry students working with students with learning difficulties to make planters from pallets for the College Garden;
- Pre-Entry and Entry students in 'Entomology' show;
- Smart Risk talked to students and shared personal experiences;
- College Music student released first single and credited the College;
- Safer Internet Day productions for primary and secondary schools were given at local schools;
- Successful One World events took place from 1-12 March;
- Launch of new Football Academy with Stratford Town Football Club, and Coventry City involved - great interest shown by prospective students at Admissions events;
- 5 prospective MPs visited College to talk with students about the forthcoming election and was broadcast live on Stratcast, highlights of which were now available on Stratcast;
- Media students won contract to record the National Skills Academy's first Annual Conference at Birmingham Hippodrome and has now been published and distributed on a DVD for NSA. 5 College Creative Apprentices worked at the Birmingham Hippodrome and a number of College staff were involved. All this was very beneficial to the College and the industry.
- Summer School contract had been signed again with EAC and the College would be welcoming Italian and Spanish students over the summer;
- The Vice Principal Corporate and International Business Development and the Assistant Principal Curriculum had just arrived at Heathrow from a visit to China and Hong Kong. A Memorandum of Understanding had been signed with the Beijing Arts School, the first FE College to obtain this, and 4 new students had been recruited. A presentation on Hospitality Management was made in Hong Kong, similar to the French initiative, and they were very interested in how this would work in the Chinese and Hong Kong industry.
- Management training had been prioritised for the Senior Management Team, Wider Management Team and appraisal training for Line Managers which had received a good response. The WMT had met the previous Saturday to discuss how the College would work in the future.
- Current and future finance and funding and the effects of the Budget were discussed. It was likely that Government funding would be reduced by approximately £600K in 2010/11. Adult provision would see little by way of subsidy next year and this will result in classes being closed.
- The Budget had given more money to universities at a time when there was a higher demand for further education and re-skilling. The Vice-Chair explained the universities' position in this decision.
- The transport subsidy would be cut from next academic year which would affect courses such as SWIFT. It was noted that schools would be similarly affected.
- Non-priority courses, such as Holistic Therapies, Skills for Life, and work with the Dementia Society, were at risk.

The Chair concluded by saying that the College could only do what funding allowed it to do. Useful sound-bites were required to get message across. It was queried where had the AoC been in assisting colleges?

It was resolved **THAT:**

A letter be sent to the AoC expressing the College's strong disappointment in the AoC's inability to persuade Government that funding should have been directed towards Colleges as opposed to Higher Education. The letter to be signed by the Chair of the Corporation.

Cedric Irankunda and Jack Mertens left the meeting at this point.

PART ONE - ROUTINE BUSINESS

1. WELCOMES / APOLOGIES

- a) Jeremy Moore was welcomed to his first Corporation meeting;
- b) Nadhim Zahawi, prospective MP for Stratford-upon-Avon, was welcomed to the meeting as an observer;
- c) Apologies had been received from Julia Morris and Kay Taylor. Royston Hollyer did not attend the meeting.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were invited to declare any interest in business to be discussed at the meeting, following which the meeting was reminded that:

- John Latham was Pro Vice-Chancellor of Coventry University;
- Alan Richardson was Chair of Governors at Coventry University;
- Gill Roache was Chairman of Stratford-on-Avon District Council.

3. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The Chair sought confirmation that the minutes of the meeting held on 10 December 2009 reflected the comments made at the meeting.

It was resolved **THAT:**

The minutes of the Corporation meeting held on 10 December 2009 be regarded as correct and signed by the Chair of the Corporation.

4. MATTERS ARISING

4.1 Item 7, Yvonne Rose

The Chair was pleased that WCC had agreed that Yvonne Rose could continue as an observer at College Corporation meetings and stressed that she should not be put in any embarrassing situations relating to her new job role.

4.2 College Students at Birmingham Hippodrome

Jenny Andrews reported that she had seen Matthew Bourne's Swan Lake on 9 February, the evening that Stratford-upon-Avon College students gave a performance at the start of the event. This was an excellent opportunity for the students to perform, was good exposure for the College and Further Education, and she had been very proud of their performance.

5. COMMITTEE REPORTS / MATTERS ARISING

5.1 General Purposes Committee

Elaine Rowlands, the Committee Chair, introduced the minutes of the General Purposes Committee meeting held on 26 February 2010 and drew attention to the Equality and Diversity presentation, highlighting the main items discussed.

It was resolved **THAT:**

The minutes of the General Purposes Committee be received by the Corporation and the action endorsed, in particular, that Royston Hollyer be the Governor Health and Safety Champion.

5.2 Standards and Performance Monitoring Committee

Jenny Andrews, the Committee Chair, introduced the minutes of the Standards and Performance Monitoring Committee meeting held on 4 March 2010 and reminded the meeting that the Committee was about quality and the student experience, a matter which should not be overlooked when so much debate is around finance at the present time.

A watch was being kept on the Grade 3 Maths and Science and a real improvement had been seen in Construction and Engineering. The data now being presented to the Committee showing comparisons with previous years made the Committee's job much easier.

It was resolved **THAT:**

The minutes of the Standards and Performance Monitoring Committee be received by the Corporation and the action endorsed.

5.3 **Search Committee**

David Kent, the Committee Chair, introduced the minutes of the Search Committee meeting held on 4 March 2010.

A prospective Governor had met with the Committee; however, as there was a potential for a conflict of interest, it had not been possible to move this forward and the Committee would continue to search for a Governor from the Voluntary Sector.

Governors wishing to put forward views for incorporation into the response to the Review of Governance were requested to forward them to the Clerk to the Corporation by 31 March 2010. It was considered that the Governor's role was high level and should have a light touch.

Attention was drawn to the need for succession planning for the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Corporation roles, as the Vice-Chair had indicated that he would be standing down this summer and the Chair would not be seeking re-appointment to the post in 2011. The Corporation discussed the merits of having two Vice-Chairs, following which,

It was resolved **THAT:**

- a) The minutes of the Search Committee be received by the Corporation and the action endorsed;
- b) Any nominations, with approval of the Governor concerned, or offers to take on the role of a Vice-Chair of the Corporation be put to the Clerk to the Corporation with a view to seeking the appointment of two Vice-Chairs at the July Corporation meeting.

5.4 **Audit Committee**

Geoff Thompson, the Committee Chair, introduced the minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held on 10 March 2010, particularly the Risk Management Report and Action Plan to which Safeguarding would be added at the next up-date.

Governors' attention was drawn to the merger of RSM Bentley Jennison, the College's Internal Auditors, with Tenon Group plc, to be known as RSM Tenon. No significant issues had been identified in this year's completed audits.

The Committee was now up to strength in numbers with Lyn Anslow having joined the Audit Committee.

It was resolved **THAT:**

- a) The minutes of the Audit Committee meeting be received by the Corporation and the action endorsed;
- b) The up-dated Risk Management Report and Action Plan be approved.

5.5 **Finance Committee**

John Latham, who chaired this meeting, introduced the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on 12 March 2010, together with the Management Accounts for the period 1 August 2009 to 28 February 2010. Payment by the new funding authority was discussed. Clarification was provided on a number of matters arising.

It was resolved **THAT:**

- a) The minutes of the Finance Committee be received by the Corporation and the action endorsed;
- b) The Management Accounts for the period 1 August 2009 to 28 February 2010 be approved by the Corporation.

6. OVERVIEW OF RESPONSIBILITIES IN NEW 14-19 LEARNING SYSTEM

The Principal reported on the letter received from Warwickshire County Council giving an overview of responsibilities in this area in advance of the significant change in responsibility for securing education and training provision from April 2010. It was noted that Yvonne Rose's title had not been finally agreed.

It was resolved **THAT:**

The report be noted.

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was resolved **THAT:**

The Corporation meet again on **Thursday 22 July 2010 at 1.30pm.**

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

PART TWO – STRATEGIC ISSUES

9.1 Strategic Planning Group

Alan Richardson, the Chair of the Group, introduced the minutes of the Strategic Planning Group meeting held on 8 January 2010.

It was resolved **THAT:**

The minutes be received and noted.

PART THREE – CONFIDENTIAL MATTERS

Staff and Student Members were asked to withdraw for this item of confidential business.

10.1 Finance Briefing

The Principal outlined to members the latest funding for 2010/11 and information that had come to light since the meeting of the Finance Committee on 12 March 2010, all of which had implications for the preparation of the 2010/11 Budget. He highlighted the implications of changes associated with funding, student numbers and timing of payments, potentially around Train to Gain, 16-18, and Adult students.

He went on to explain the potential impact of the decision of the County Council to no longer subsidise transport and the knock-on effect of withdrawing the subsidy for the Solihull service.

Overall, the College was seeking to reduce its expenditure by £1.4 million compared with 2009/10. Whilst recruitment was looking healthy at the moment and current estimates would suggest we could deliver £8 million of Government funded 16-18 provision, income would only be received for £6.8 million.

Satnam Bhogal left the meeting.

A revised structure for the College was presented and the Principal highlighted those areas of provision currently at risk, including Holistic Therapies, Public Services, Vocational Computing, Community Venue provision, Quality unit, together with limited A2 and AS subjects and some specialist core provision. Additionally, some members of the Support Staff were also at risk.

A timetable for potential redundancies was discussed, together with redundancy payments and an estimate of costs was provided. The Principal responded to a number of questions and matters of clarification.

Gill Roache left the meeting.

It was resolved **THAT:**

- a) The Corporation support the principles upon which the 2010/11 Budget will be developed, namely:
 - To reflect a reduction in Government funding;
 - A recognition that there will be cuts in the educational provision that will impact upon the character and educational make-up of the College that will, in turn, impact upon the community which the College serves;
 - Desirability of achieving an increased surplus by year-end to restore the College's cash reserves and enable investment in capital renewal;
 - The withdrawal of the transport subsidy for first year students travelling from the Solihull area;
 - The cessation of all non-priority work;
 - Dialogue continue urgently with appropriate agencies;
 - Any positive outcomes taken into account in the budget preparation.
- b) A revised structure followed by recognition that this could lead to redundancies at the statutory date plus one month's notice in exchange for a compromise agreement.

10.2 Stratford-upon-Avon Tourist Information Centre

The Principal indicated that he understood the Tourist Information Centre in Stratford-upon-Avon was in danger of being closed. He went on to say that he believed that, if the opportunity presented itself, the running of the Tourist Information Centre would provide a realistic working environment for Apprentices and would enable the Gallery to be relocated (it was currently on notice at the Leisure Centre). After further discussion,

It was resolved **THAT:**

If the opportunity presented itself, the Corporation support in principle an application by the College to take on the running of a Tourist Information Centre in Stratford-upon-Avon, subject to a business plan. Approval to proceed would be delegated to the Finance Committee.

10.3 Confidential Minute of 10 December 2010 Corporation meeting

It was resolved **THAT:**

The confidential Minute of the Corporation meeting held on 10 December 2009 be approved by the Corporation. It was noted that the revised arrangements would take effect from 1 June 2010.

Signed :(Corporation Chair)