

STRATFORD-UPON-AVON COLLEGE CORPORATION

MINUTES OF CORPORATION MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 21 JULY 2011

Present:	Alan Richardson	Chair
	Lyn Anslow	Governor
	Mike Atkins	Governor
	Satnam Bhogal	Governor
	Imogen Cork	Student Observer
	Royston Hollyer	Support Staff Governor
	Cedric Irankunda	Student Governor
	Tony Jefferson	Governor
	David Kent	Governor
	Jeremy Moore	Governor
	Martin Penny	Principal
	Kayleigh Pitts	Student Governor
	Elaine Rowlands	Governor
	Geoff Thompson	Governor
	Andy Tyers	Teaching Staff Governor
In attendance:	David Jackson	Clerk to the Corporation
	Norman MacDonald	Vice Principal Finance
	Hazel Skwirzynska	Vice Principal Corporate Services

PART ONE - ROUTINE BUSINESS

1. WELCOMES / APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Gill Roache, Charles Anderson and Yvonne Rose. Belated apologies were received from Sinead Ouillon.

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 Alan Richardson was Chair of Governors at Coventry University.

3. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

It was resolved **THAT:**

The minutes of the Corporation meeting held on 7 April 2011 be regarded as correct and signed by the Chair of the Corporation.

4. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

5. ITEMS FROM THE CHAIR

(a) Warwickshire College/City College Coventry

The Chair informed the meeting he had been approached by the Chairs of City College Coventry and Warwickshire College with a view to joining their proposal to form a federation/merge. He reported that he had listened carefully to the proposals being put forward but felt that there was no compelling reason to join them. He considered that on balance much would be lost and he considered the College would be less able to meet the needs of its learners. He informed them, after consideration, that he did not wish to pursue or have our name attached to any proposals that may come forward in respect of City College Coventry or Warwickshire College but that we would continue to work with them whenever appropriate. He stressed to the meeting the importance of the College's financial position and its success rates and that if these had been weaker then the situation may have been looked at very differently.

The Governors asked a number of questions and clarification was sought on what benefits the College may have missed out on by refusing the

offer to join in the discussions. The Chair responded that as far as he was aware none had been identified. All of the discussions had been around cutting costs and rationalisation. From the Sigma 6 work it was clear there were no major benefits for Stratford. The position of the Heart of England International Academy was also raised, the Principal responded by saying that the proposals would not impact on the international academy, and indeed Warwickshire College may join the academy in due course.

The Chair ended by saying that although an announcement had been made that City College Coventry and Warwickshire College were exploring more formalised working arrangements, the outcome was not certain.

It was resolved **THAT:**

The Corporation support the Chair in the actions he had taken in relation to City College Coventry and Warwickshire College.

(b) **LSIS Student Governor of the Year Award**

On behalf of all members of the Corporation, the Chair formally congratulated Cedric Irankunda on being awarded LSIS Student Governor of the Year at a ceremony in London earlier in the month and wished him every success for the future.

6. COMMITTEE REPORTS / MATTERS ARISING

6.1 Audit Committee

The Chair of the Committee, Geoff Thompson, presented the minutes of the Audit Committee and drew particular attention to discussions that surrounded the report on procurement and the need to become more strategic in this area as opposed to operational. He then went on to talk about the Bribery Act and the proposed internal audit programme for 2011/12, in particular the IT audit. He closed by drawing attention to a Benchmarking Report prepared by RSM based on all of its FE clients which showed that the College was ahead of the average.

It was resolved **THAT:**

- (a) The minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held on 5 July 2011 be received by the Corporation and the actions endorsed.
- (b) The updated Risk Management Report and Action Plan be approved.
- (c) The Internal Audit Strategy for 2011/12 – 2013/14 be approved on the understanding that the strategy would be reviewed at the end of the 2011/12 Academic Year.
- (d) The Anti-Bribery Policy be approved.
- (e) The Corporation agree with the Audit Committee's conclusion that the response to the Bribery Act is proportionate to the level of risk.

6.2 Standards and Performance Monitoring Committee

The Minutes of the Standards and Performance Monitoring Committee meeting held on 28 June 2011 were introduced by the Chair of the Committee, Jeremy Moore. He commented on the Committee's disappointment that the internal review of Performing Arts had come out at Grade 2, particularly given the comments at the previous meeting. The Committee discussed the reasons why this had taken place and the assurance given by the Deputy Principal that by year end the area would have returned to Grade 1. He went on to draw attention to the Learner Conferences which were very beneficial and appreciated by the learners and urged his fellow Governors to attend future conferences, the dates of which had been included in the College calendar. At the end of the presentation the Chair commented that it was obvious some robust discussions had taken place in the Committee, reflecting the importance of this Committee in the work of the College.

It was resolved **THAT:**

- a) The Minutes of the Standards and Performance Monitoring Committee be received by the Corporation and the actions endorsed;

- b) The responsibility of the College Charter transfer to the General Purposes Committee and the terms of reference for both Committees be revised accordingly.

6.3 Search Committee

Addressing the Minutes of the Search Committee David Kent, the Committee Chair, asked that Governors look to friends and business acquaintances and encouraged them wherever appropriate to put themselves forward as Corporation Members.

It was resolved **THAT:**

The minutes of the Search Committee be received by the Corporation and the actions endorsed.

6.4 Finance Committee

The Chair of the Committee presented the minutes of the Finance Meeting held on 12 July and outlined the discussions that had taken place in the meeting of the Finance Committee held earlier in the day to discuss the Three Year Financial Forecast.

As Chair of the Finance Committee the Chair of the Corporation, Alan Richardson, highlighted the considerable work undertaken in the Finance Committee, both in terms of monitoring the Management Accounts for the current year and setting the College budget for 2011/12. He indicated that there had been robust questioning during the course of the year to ensure that the College ended the year with a surplus. He went on to outline the significant challenges facing the College in 2011/12 and the challenges associated with meeting the income targets in paragraph 2.2 of the report, particularly the desire to over-recruit full time students and to recruit in-house apprentices in Hospitality and Catering and the challenges posed by sub-contracting. He responded to questions from Governors on a number of points of detail before,

It was resolved **THAT:**

- a) The Management Accounts for the period 1/8/2010 – 31/5/2011 be approved by the Corporation;
- b) The College budget for 2011/12 be approved by the Corporation;
- c) The Corporation approve the 3 year financial forecast;
- d) The Corporation formally approve the issue of a Contract with Tomlinsons for the erection of the Construction Academy in the sum of £682,000.

6.5 General Purposes Committee

When introducing the Minutes of the General Purposes Committee Elaine Rowlands drew attention to leaflets on Equality and Diversity which had been circulated with the Agenda and outlined the consideration that had been given to Equality and Diversity issues during the meeting. She commented on the need for the Search Committee to keep these issues on their Agenda when considering recruitment in the future.

It was resolved **THAT:**

The minutes of the Finance Committee be received by the Corporation and the actions endorsed.

7. GOVERNOR REVIEW FEEDBACK

The Chair of the Corporation presented the report giving feedback on the discussions that had taken place with Governors and the Chair, Principal and Clerk. He commented that the feedback was mostly positive and always constructive and felt that the exercise had been of great value and should go ahead in future years. There was general agreement amongst Governors that the first few months are difficult for Governors and in addition to the actions already taken the Search Committee be asked to look at the Induction Programme for New Governors.

It was resolved **THAT:**

- (a) The Corporation concur with the summary report;
- (b) The exercise be repeated in future years;

(c) Governor induction be reviewed by the Search Committee.

8. REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS

Governors were invited to consider their effectiveness over the previous 12 months. They considered that their effectiveness was good with some outstanding features. However, some concern remained around attendance and at times the lack of a quorum. The Principal commented that it was frustrating when a great deal of work had gone into preparing a report, only to find that it was presented to one or two Governors. Taking the work of Committees as a whole there was undoubtedly robust discussion in a number of the Committees contributing to the overall effectiveness of the Corporation.

It was resolved **THAT:**

The Corporation considered on balance they had been effective over the year and that they would regard themselves as a strong Grade 2.

9. CORPORATION MEETINGS CALENDAR 2011/12

A revised meeting calendar for 2011/12 was tabled at the meeting to reflect comments made by members prior to the meeting.

It was resolved **THAT:**

The Corporation Meetings Calendar as tabled at the meeting, for 2011/12, be approved.

10. ANNUAL CALENDAR OF CORPORATION BUSINESS

It was resolved **THAT:**

The Annual Calendar of Corporation Business for 2011/12 be approved.

11. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

The Clerk reported that nominations had been received and seconded in respect of Tony Jefferson and Jeremy Moore to take on the role as Chair. The Chair invited both candidates to make a brief presentation to the Corporation following which a secret ballot was taken.

It was resolved **THAT:**

Jeremy Moore be appointed Chair of the Corporation for the period 1 September 2011 to 31 August 2013.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

12.1 Certificates of Attendance were presented to the Student Governors and the Student Observer in respect of their attendance at the LSIS Annual Student Conference and concluded with the Chair thanking Cedric for his contribution to the work of the Corporation over the last 2 years. Cedric responded by saying that he considered it both a privilege and honour to work with the Governors and thanked them for the support and respect that they had shown him during his time on the Governing Body.

12.2 The Student Governors drew attention to a proposal to establish a Students' Union at Stratford-upon-Avon College which would be discussed with the General Purposes Committee in the Autumn term.

It was resolved **THAT:**

The report be noted.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was resolved **THAT:**

The Corporation meet again on **Thursday 13 October 2011 at 1.30pm**

PART TWO – STRATEGIC ISSUES

14. STRATEGY

14.1 Strategic Plan 2011-2015

The Principal reminded members of the discussions that have taken place previously in relation to arriving at the Strategic Plan 2011-2015 and on the

progress against targets under the previous plan which had been discussed at an earlier meeting. The Corporation recognised the difficulties that the College had faced in strategic terms, given the upheaval on the national scene and monitoring progress.

The Principal went on to explain that a lot of time had gone into preparing the plan and considered that a key strength of the College was getting known and recognised nationwide as a safe, friendly and small College. He drew attention to the Wolfe Report and indicated that many of the recommendations made in that report the College had anticipated. The question of Studio Schools was explored, both in terms of locality and the plan as well as the need to look at primary school clusters.

He explained that the vision for the College went beyond the current plan and the targets had been written by the Managers not the Principal. He then turned the Committee's attention to international and the reliance placed by the College on this work. He reminded the Corporation that the College was in danger of running out of both academic and residential accommodation and delivering the Estates Strategy will be crucial. He reminded the meeting that 2011/12 will be the hardest year the College has faced for some time in financial terms and there would certainly be other external challenges during the course of the year.

The Principal then responded to a number of questions from Governors which covered matters such as improving satisfaction rates amongst students, improved success rates, project funding and the environment for HE students. After further discussion,

It was resolved **THAT:**

- (a) The Strategic Plan 2011-2015 be approved;
- (b) Delivering Excellence 2011-2015 be approved by the Corporation.

14.2 **Principal's Up-date**

The Principal then proceeded to update the meeting on a range of issues affecting students, staff and the College in general. He highlighted in particular the excellent IQER report affecting Higher Education provision, the Construction Academy which was now underway, the temporary lease of the Inland Revenue site, the desirability of formulating the College's Accommodation strategy, establishment of the Pupil Referral Unit on the site, LEP, Stratford Vision Group and Amforht membership. He closed with an update on the Tourist Information Centre and the National Skills Academy Joint Bid.

Chair's closing remarks

The Chair, making reference to his last meeting as Chair, indicated that it had been a privilege to work with Corporation members and he had found it had been personally rewarding and interesting. He indicated that he always encouraged the Principal to have options and not to pursue things to the bitter end when there was no future. He commented that he felt that local employers did not support the College and that employer engagement was missing and this would be a challenge for the new Chair. He urged the Corporation to step into the void that would be left in HE provision and for the College to concentrate on what it did well. He concluded by wishing the Corporation and the College well for the future.