

**GOVERNING BODY**
**Minutes of the meeting held at 2.00pm on 18 March 2016**

**Present:** R Carter (Chair) K Golding (Chair Designate)  
D Wildridge C Manning  
S Gerber A Maltpress  
S Clarke A Head  
R Inman C Higgins  
N Savvas, Principal K Heathcote

**In attendance:** M Wagner, Deputy Principal  
S Jones, Vice Principal, Finance and Resources  
L Johnson, Vice Principal, Curriculum and Quality  
A Whatley, Assistant Principal Learning Partnerships  
P Stittle, Head of Business Development  
R Kirk Assistant Principal Quality Improvement  
A Hicks (Acting Clerk)  
J Bridges (Clerk to the Corporation) – Virtual Connection

There were no interests relevant to items on the agenda declared by members.

**1 Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from S Daley, J Bloomfield and L Moody.

**2 Minutes of the meeting held on 11 December 2015**

The minutes of the meeting (minute book pages G651-G660) were agreed as a correct record subject to amending the third line of the penultimate paragraph of page 2 from “which was not been” to read “which has not been”.

**3 Matters Arising**

**From the meeting held on 11 December 2015**

The matters arising from the meetings were summarised in the report (minute book pages G661-G662) and all actions reported had either been resolved or, where appropriate, an update had been provided on progress elsewhere on the agenda.

**4 Summary Notes of the Governors’ Conference held over 14 & 15 January 2016**

The summary notes of the conference (minute book pages G663-G664) were agreed as a correct record.

**5 Matters Arising from Governors’ Conference**

The matters arising from the conference were summarised in the report (minute book page G665) and all actions reported have either been resolved or, where appropriate, an update had been provided on progress elsewhere on the agenda.

**6 Quality and Performance**

**6.1 Key Performance Indicators**

The report was received and **considered** by members (minute book pages G666-G677).

Governors noted that Funded Enrolments for 16-17 year olds were at 2,372 and not 2,390 as stated on the paper. They discussed new enrolments and agreed that the figures looked positive.

**Action**

JBridges

Members considered overall retention on classroom based courses and noted these as good and ahead of the same point last year.

Details of the actions taken to address inadequate observations reported in December were given. Since then one new qualified and an experienced teacher have been observed as a grade 4 and has subsequently left the College.

Members considered Workforce Performance Indicators and felt unable to identify any apparent trends or judge if the figures were positive or negative. It was agreed that the Senior Management Team would look at the format of the report and see where improvements could be made.

SMT

Vocational attendance for 16-18 year olds has increased by 1% in the last half term, however, 19+ attendance has decreased by 1%. Overall attendance is at the same level as the same point last year. Every student is risk rated (amber alert) for both their main qualification and their maths/English qualification. Assurance was received that those at high risk of not achieving their qualification have more frequent tutorials and support that is individualised to them. Students with low attendance in English and Maths have been targeted for one to one intervention, removed from their class and given English and Maths mentoring.

#### 6.1.1 **Financial Performance**

The report was received and **considered** by members (minute book pages G678-G681).

As at month 6, the College is on course to achieve the budgeted surplus position from trading operations. Although it remains difficult to predict with great accuracy the forecast year end position is for a surplus of £266K.

Members received assurances that all bank loan covenants are currently being satisfied. The Resources Committee has been monitoring the cash position and has concluded that changes to the banking arrangements would expose the College to unnecessary additional costs (see also minute 8.3 below).

#### 6.2 **SFA Financial Health**

The report was received and **considered** by members (minute book pages G682-G684).

Each year all FE Colleges are required to submit a financial plan and Finance Record. The SFA uses these documents to assess the financial health of Colleges and confirms the outcome of the assessment in writing. The College has just received this assessment and the SFA conclusion is that the College's financial health for 2014/15 is 'Good' and the underlying financial health grade is also classified as 'Good'. The letter also confirms the SFA's satisfaction with the College's financial control arrangements and members received assurance that despite the unfortunate wording of the letter the SFA had no concerns.

### 7

#### **Strategic Matters**

##### 7.1 **Principal's Briefing**

*Confidential item under paragraph 18(2) of the Instrument and Articles of Government*

The report was received and **considered** by members (minute book pages G685-G690).

P Stittle left the meeting at 3.45pm.

## 7.2 Update on Multi Academy Trusts (SAT and SENDAT)

The report was received and **considered** by members (minute book pages G691-G693).

The report provided the Corporation with an update concerning the activities of the two multi academy trusts; SAT and SENDAT. SAT has had approaches from various schools in the area regarding potentially joining the Trust. SAT Trustees are meeting on 21 March 2016 to, in part, discuss its future growth strategy.

SENDAT submitted an application on 2 March 2016 to open a new Alternative Provision Free School (Pathways Academy) offering 60 Key Stage 4 places for young people in Suffolk. It is currently in discussions with organisations with SEND provision who wish to join the Trust in line with its growth strategy.

Members noted the good progress of the projects along with the potential reputational risk to West Suffolk College should projects not be successful. They discussed the government strategy in respect of all schools becoming Academies by 2022 and considered the implications for the College. It was recognised that the Bury Free sixth form school could be a potential conflict of interest for some governors.

## 7.3 Draft 2016-19 Strategic Plan

The draft strategic plan was received and **considered** by members (minute book pages G694-G696).

Members were advised that the strategic vision, mission, values and objectives for the College have been updated to align with the strategic direction and goals set by the governors at the Strategic Conference held in January 2016 for the next three years. It was agreed that wording of the vision statement should be amended with the word 'deliver' being changed to 'lead' and that the aims to foster in students and staff should include 'confidence'.

The Corporation **approved**, subject to agreed amendments, the strategic vision, mission, values and objectives of the College for the next three years (2016 to 2019). **Proposed** by A Head and **seconded** by K Heathcote with all members in favour.

S Gerber left the meeting at 4.00pm.

## 8 Information, Discussion and Decisions

### 8.1 **Highlights Summary – Jan to March 2016**

The report was received and **considered** by members (minute book pages G697-G704).

Congratulations were extended to the Principal, staff and students for the success achieved during the period of the report. The activities were a testament to the dedication of the staff and much appreciated by the Corporation.

Members agreed it was a useful document and were advised that the College marketing team distribute a summary of the activities widely within the community including partners and potential partners of the College. The Student Governor agreed that the document captured the spirit of the College and he was particularly

NSavvas

impressed with the efforts of the team which designed the winning Logos for the newly formed Suffolk Academies Trust.

Students on the Health and Social Care L2 course and their teachers were congratulated for their outstanding results, with 100% student attendance to the exam and a 100% student pass-rate.

## **8.2 Financial Regulations**

The report was received and **considered** by the Corporation (minute book pages G705-G706).

The Financial Regulations are reviewed annually in order to ensure they remain relevant and up to date.

A review has been undertaken in March 2016 and the proposed changes to the regulations were discussed at the meeting of the Resources Committee held on 10 March 2016. The Resources Committee proposed some minor amendments to the changes and the document was approved for submission to the Corporation for consideration and approval.

With the exception of some small typographical changes and name/job title changes, the principal information to the financial regulations this year comprise changes to the section on capital projects (section 9.5) and around management of the budget (section 10.3).

The Corporation considered and **approved** the revised Financial Regulations. **Proposed** by S Clarke and **seconded** by D Wildridge with all in favour.

## **8.3 Committee Chairs' Summary Report**

The report was received and **considered** by the Corporation (minute book pages G707-G712).

### ***Appointments, Governance and Remuneration***

Members discussed the appointment of a Vice Chair of Audit Committee to succeed K Golding as Chair of the Committee in December 2016 when he takes the Chair of the Corporation. After due discussion the Corporation agreed to defer the appointment of a Vice Chair to the Audit and Risk Management Committee until the current governor recruitment process has been concluded.

The reappointments of A Maltpress and S Clarke were considered by the Corporation. Members agreed that both candidates should remain during the discussion but take no part in the discussion or vote.

The Corporation **approved** the reappointments of A Maltpress and S Clarke to serve a further term of three years. **Proposed** by D Wildridge and **seconded** by C Manning with all in favour.

### ***Standards and Excellence***

Those matters of particular interest or concern were considered and discussed.

### ***Audit and Risk Management***

There were no issues arising from the report raised by members.

**Resources**

The recommendation of the Resources Committee to establish a Task and Finish Group to progress the Vintens Project and College Property Strategy along with Terms of Reference for the group were approved earlier in the meeting by the Corporation (refer to minute number 7.1 above).

The Corporation considered and **approved** the recommendation of the Resources Committee not to pursue changing current College banking arrangements. **Proposed** by S Clarke and **seconded** by D Wildridge with all in favour.

**8.4 Safeguarding Board**

The report was received and **considered** by members (minute book pages G713-G715).

The Governor Lead of the Safeguarding Board confirmed there are no serious case reviews pending, however, she was aware that two LADO referrals have been made and reported confidence that these had been handled appropriately.

Members were pleased to note that the Suffolk Young Adult Carers Bronze Award has now been upgraded to Silver.

**8.5 Health and Safety Update**

The report was received and **considered** by members (minute book pages G716-G717).

Whilst members were pleased to learn of the work and progress of the newly reformed Health and Wellbeing Group concern was expressed that 1% of the workforce had cited stress as the reason for their absence for the period September 2015 to January 2016. Members received assurance that processes and procedures are in use by the College to manage stress and that 1% represented approximately 6 individuals of the whole College workforce. It was agreed that a detailed report on the effectiveness of preventative measures is to be reported at the next meeting of the Health and Safety Committee.

JBridges

**8.6 Equality and Diversity Board**

The report was received and **considered** by members (minutes book pages G718-G720).

It had been identified that some students come to College with a self-diagnosis of dyslexia but no documented evidence making it difficult to analyse if extra support is needed. It was confirmed that a member of staff is currently being trained in dyslexia support which will lead to improving the retention of learners with this learning difficulty.

Members highlighted the need to ensure that unconscious discrimination was not taking place at the College. They received assurance that the new Human Resources Director had been asked to complete a detailed analysis of the issue which would be reported to the Corporation in due course.

RSadler

**8.7 Risk Management Update**

The report was received and **considered** by members (minute book pages G721-G726).

The risk register has been updated to ensure that the key risks for the academic year are appropriate. The top three risks concern the impact of Area Reviews, Devolution and validity of data.

The Heat Map shows a decrease of high risks (red zone) between the months of November and February and 9 risks have now dropped into the green (residual) zone demonstrating a positive downward trajectory in risk level.

An analysis of risk movement was also provided in the report and it was noted that the Board Assurance Map has been subject to a full review to ensure that all lines of assurance are appropriately profiled and mapped against each risk on the register.

9

**Governance**

The report was received and **considered** by members (minute book pages G727-G731).

**9.1 *Governors' Strategic Conference Evaluation***

In order to assess the success of the Conference, governors were asked to complete a short evaluation form, the results of which were shared with the Corporation. This feedback will be used when planning the 2017 Conference.

**9.2 *Governance External Review (Mike Snell)***

The key aim of the Learning Board Programme was to provide the Corporation with a model and structured process by which to observe, validate and provide meaningful feedback on some key aspects of effective board performance, including performance as a team.

The programme was conducted by Mike Snell during the period 21 September to 16 December 2015. In summary governors suggested 34 ways in which the Board could improve practice and further recommendations and observations arising from individual interviews and observations of the Board were identified through the report received by members.

The Corporation considered and **approved** the proposal that the observations and recommendations, in the first instance, are to be reviewed and discussed by the Appointments and Governance Committee at its next meeting on 11 May 2016 to which an open invitation will be extended to all governors to attend. **Proposed** by K Golding and **seconded** by A Head with all in favour.

JBridges

**9.3 *Governors' First Hand***

Governors' First Hand Week takes place from Monday 18 to Friday 22 April 2016 and the programme of activities for the week was shared with the Corporation. Governors were encouraged to make their selection(s) of activities and notify the Clerk of their choices by no later than Monday 11 April 2016. The Chair extended his thanks to the Clerk and to all who had contributed to the programme.

Members

**9.4 *Student Engagement***

The report was received and **considered** by members (minute book pages G732-G735).

Members received details of a number of student engagement activities which currently take place between staff and students and fellow Governors were encouraged to attend whenever possible. Student Council meetings, which governors are welcome to attend, always take place at lunchtimes. Members'



attention was also drawn to the 'Prevent' notices that are currently on display around the College. These have been designed by the active Student Council and Representatives and should be commended.

**10 Governors' Reports and Information**

**10.1 Representational Activities**

Governors have attended and represented the College at a range of events including the Student Art Exhibition at the Cathedral Gallery, College Open Events, meeting with Jo Churchill MP and Nick Boles MP at the House of Commons, ACER Governor Network Meeting, Apprenticeship Week Gala Dinner, Conservatoire EAST production, Student Council meetings, Planning for Student Conference, English History Festival, Newmarket Mayors Reception, Priory Board and Building Growth which was very worthwhile and attended by members of the LEP and the construction industry.

**10.2 Training, Development and Governor Link activities**

Members reported their attendance at link activities including, Art and Design, Construction and Building, Foundation Studies and Student Support.

**11 Any other business**

The Chair paid tribute to Martyn Wagner, Deputy Principal who is retiring at the end of April after almost two decades of faithful service to the College. During his time Martyn had been given many challenges and faced them all with good grace. A lunch is to take place on the 26 April 2016 to mark the occasion and all were invited.

Martyn thanked the Chair for his kind comments and Governors for their guidance and support over the years.

**12 Review of meeting**

The Chair asked for Members' views on the new format of papers. It was agreed that papers were much more user friendly and succinct, links worked well and overall there was a better balance of the important issues.

**Date of next meeting**

Friday 15 July 2016 at 2.00pm. Room TG1.16

Meeting ended at 5.15pm.