

CORPORATION BOARD MEETING

CONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 02 JUNE 2020 AT 4:00 PM, VIA SKYPE

Present:

Andrew Barnes (Chairman), Corrienne Peasgood (Principal), Jill Lanning, Noel Bartram, Andrea Blanchflower, Emily Staley, Jonathan Barnard, Bree Sherwood, Denise Troughton, Philip Richardson

Attendees:

Jerry White (Deputy Principal), Martin Colbourne (NES MD), Julia Buckland (Vice Principal, FE Curriculum and Quality), Clare Johnson (Clerk to the Corporation), Sue Millions (Administrator)

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Nikki Gray and Sophie Gray. Aiden Little was not in attendance.

2. Declaration of Interest

In the interest of transparency and in accordance with the Standing Orders of the Corporation, all Governors of the Corporation Board are asked to make a written declaration of relevant pecuniary interests on appointment. Governors were requested to make known any relevant pecuniary interests relating to any items on the agenda and it was noted that all declarations will be recorded.

There were no new declarations of interest given at the meeting.

3. Unconfirmed Minutes of the Previous Meetings held on 05 and 19 May 2020

(Papers 02-03)

The minutes of the meetings held on 05 and 19 May 2020 were agreed as a true record of the meetings and will be signed by the Chair at the next available opportunity.

4. Unconfirmed Confidential Minutes of the Previous Meetings held on 05 and 19 May 2020

(Papers 04-05)

The confidential minutes of the meetings held on 05 and 19 May 2020 were agreed as a true record of the meetings and will be signed by the Chair at the next available opportunity.

5. Unconfirmed Minutes for Approval from Board / Committee Meetings (Papers 06-13)

The following minutes, in draft / unconfirmed, held over from meetings before regular Skype meetings were introduced in March 2020, were approved as a true record of the meetings and will be signed by the appropriate Chairs at the next available opportunity.

- Audit and Risk – draft minutes from the meeting held on 29 November 2019.
- Audit and Risk – draft confidential minutes from the meeting held on 29 November 2019.
- Curriculum and Standards – unconfirmed minutes from the meeting held on 28 January 2020.

- Curriculum and Standards – unconfirmed confidential minutes from the meeting held on 28 January 2020.
- Business – draft minutes from the meeting held on 4 February 2020.
- Business – draft confidential minutes from the meeting held on 4 February 2020.
- Board – draft minutes from the meeting held on 11 February 2020.
- Board – draft confidential minutes from the meeting held on 11 February 2020.

6. CEO's Report

(Paper 14)

The CEO Report, previously distributed, was fully discussed at the meeting and the Principal informed the Board that the report is aimed to keep governors up-to-date with important changes in how the College is operating during the Coronavirus outbreak and inform them of risks and mitigating actions.

The following information was discussed and highlighted:

City College's nursery was opened to all children from Monday 1 June. The usual capacity is for 30 children and it was noted that the nursery can safely offer childcare for up to 16. Currently 10 children are in attendance. The Principal informed the Board that she visited the nursery today and the children were in their designated bubbles and working well.

The Government's updated guidance for further education and skills providers, received last week, contained information about re-opening and stated that for further education settings, colleges should plan on the basis that from the week commencing 15 June, they can broaden the number of 16 to 19 learners attending on site delivery. It was noted that remote education should remain the predominant mode of learning and the key element of the DfE guidance is that the number of learners attending at any one time will be limited to a quarter of those on the first year of a two-year 16 to 19 study programme.

The Principal informed Governors that the information received is for guidance only and individual colleges must do what is right for their students in the context of the college's community. The College will therefore be prioritising vulnerable young people and children of key workers attending currently and those vulnerable young people who staff have raised concerns about; those students and apprentices who need to complete Delayed assessments in order to gain their qualification; any students who need to come onto site to complete Adapted Assessment and students and apprentices who need some face-to-face teaching now in order to secure their progression and achievement next year. Online working will continue. Numbers, and an update on those attending, will be made available at the next meeting.

Members asked how the College can assess and evidence how well the online delivery is working? The Principal informed Governors that managers are auditing the delivery processes such as the Progress Tracker, attending online lectures and liaising with students and staff. She also said that the student voice is also a powerful tool as students are always willing to say when they are not happy with something. It was noted that the Regional Director of Ofsted have asked New Anglia College how best to use the spare capacity of their Inspectors and it has been suggested that they could be working with colleges to share their expectations of and proposals for what colleges could be doing during this time.

The Principal informed the Board that the updated DfE guidance, released two days ago, has a 40-point checklist on re-opening to work through. Many of the points have already been considered, however it was agreed that the Senior Management Team will complete their responses to all points on the checklist and this information will be shared with Governors at the next.

All GCSEs and A Level entries have now had Centre Assessed Grades (CAG) and Rankings assigned to them which have been signed off by the FE Awards Board.

Data packs are now with the Principal for final approval before being submitted to the Awarding Organisations. The response to the Ofqual consultation on Vocational and Technical qualifications was published on 22 May and as a result, the College have c3500 students (70%) on qualifications being awarded using CAG, c1200 (25%) having Adapted assessments and c250 (5%) with their assessments Delayed. All Functional Skills are in the CAG category. Students have been informed as to which category their main, and any additional qualifications fall into. The Chair asked for his thanks to be passed to all members of the exam teams for their support.

Welfare checks and support for vulnerable students continue. Regular updates are received from Helen Richardson-Hulme and regular meetings take place to discuss staff concerns and issues surrounding students. The question was asked to whether any students are “falling through the cracks” and the Principal reiterated that vulnerable students are being well cared for and regular catch ups with Heads of Area are also taking place and the FE Leads, for individual programmes, capture any additional students who they believe are at risk.

The Chair informed Governors that he had a meeting with Helen Richardson-Hulme this week and it was highlighted that the college is unsighted to neglect and self-harm, which can often be sensed when face-to-face with a student, but it was recognised that the Safeguarding Team are doing their best. Norfolk County Council have highlighted their campaigns through the media, to “see, hear and report” any concerns or issues noticed by the general public through lockdown. It was agreed that there is always a limit to what staff can do, but they are all well versed in reporting any concerns to the Safeguarding Team.

It was noted that the report states that “Easton staff have seen a lot of mental health related concerns for under 18's and an increase in adult learners requiring support and signposting for accessing housing advice due to comments made to tutors” and Governors asked for clarity. The Principal informed them that the safeguarding officer at Easton had signalled an increase in requests for advice relating to housing potentially to allow individuals to move from their current location.

The Principal explained that the College is to open for more staff and students, as per the Government's guidance from 15 June, although more staff are now back on site, with around 70 on site each day this week. For staff this means that if they can't work from home and can carry out their usual role in college then they should come back to work; e.g. technicians, also if staff members believe that they can work better from college than they can at home then they have been advised that they can come back to work for all or some of the time. As discussed, at the last meeting, managers will assign staff and students to a red or blue team or 'bubble', attend college on alternate weeks to reduce the number of contacts individuals have and to help track and trace should someone contract COVID-19. It has been agreed that some staff will be required to be on site each week and they will be assigned to a purple team and receive a briefing to help to scrupulously practise social distancing, especially with red and blue teams.

Governors questioned whether all young people on site will be adhering to social distances rules and the Principal confirmed that returning students will all be asked to confirm that they have been practicing social distancing and will receive a pocket guide on arrival and will remain in their designated bubbles throughout the time they are on site. They will receive further guidance and reminders of the importance of social distancing etc. from managers when they first return.

Full details of the steps taken can be viewed in the CCN and NES COVID-19 risk assessment, previously distributed to Governors, via Passageways. The risk assessment only relates to the rest of this term and the summer break and will be reviewed regularly as more staff and students are on site. The assessment has been shared with Union representatives for their comments. These have responded to (in the meeting papers) and the final version discussed at the regular Union meeting last week. Union engagement continues and the third Union meeting to be held during lockdown, which took place on 26 May, focussed on the general college COVID-19 risk assessment. The minutes will be available at the next meeting.

The college risk assessment is being supplemented by further risk assessments by site, building, room, staff or student group and / or individual student or staff member as necessary. Health and safety colleagues have prepared guidance notes for managers and individuals to work through to create these supplementary risk assessments and will be available to support them where needed. The Principal informed Governors that if they have any additional questions, Julie Jarvey is available to speak to them at the end of today's meeting.

Governors asked what the plan is if too many students need to return to the site and with social distancing measures in place, the College runs out of space. The Principal informed Governors, that this is definitely next week's challenge as the identification of students needing to return to college and the parameters for on-site delivery of courses and lectures and assessment is reviewed. As no additional funding will be made available to colleges, discussions need to take place on how small groups can be brought on site with larger groups accessing sessions online.

It was noted that if the R number goes up, the Director of Public Health for Norfolk will instruct educational establishments to close and the Governors agreed that the College should follow this advice and close if requested to do so.

The Principal reported that the college's approach to compiling the Covid-19 Risk Register had been subject to an internal audit by Scrutton Bland who had made one low risk recommendation that recommended some further areas of potential risk which now be given further consideration. An updated Register will be brought to the next meeting for discussion, where necessary.

Following discussion, the Governors confirmed their support for the steps taken to date to address the risks associated with bringing more students and staff into college campuses. They noted that the position will continue to change and that the Risk Assessment will need to be kept under constant review and that, in due course, a new assessment will be needed for the position from September.

The full content of the report was received and noted.

The Chair thanked the Principal for her full and comprehensive report.

7. Financial Update and Emerging Picture (Paper 15)

Please see the confidential minutes.

8. Chairman's Update

The Chair informed Governors that the transfer of both Attleborough and Fakenham Academies has been completed and they are now under Sapiientia Trust as of 1 June 2020.

A road map is now in place for the winding-down of Norfolk Academies. The Chair thanked Martin Colbourne and his team for all the hard work involved.

The Chair thanked Governors for their continuing support and asked if anyone has any concerns or comments and whether they are content with the process being followed in relation to Board meetings through the current situation. Governors confirmed that they are happy with the arrangements that have been put in place and that they have confidence in the actions being taken by the senior team.

Jill Lanning asked if Governors could have access to all committee minutes and papers and it was noted that new folders are being prepared on Passageways and all committee information will be made available to all Governors when finalised. Draft minutes will also be posted for Governors to view.

9. Minutes of Meetings

9.1 Minutes of the Meeting between Principal, NES MD and Union Reps (Paper 16)

The minutes from the Meeting held between the Principal, NES MD and Union Reps, which took place on 28 April 2020, were previously circulated and the full content noted.

9.2 Minutes of the Norwich Staff Forum Meetings (Papers 17-19)

The minutes from the Norwich Staff Forum Meetings, which took place on 09 October 2019, 11 December 2019 and 18 March 2020, were previously circulated and the full content noted.

9.3 Minutes of the Paston Staff Forum Meetings (Papers 20-22)

The minutes from the Paston Staff Forum Meetings, which took place on 08 October 2019, 17 December 2019 and 10 March 2020, were previously circulated and the full content noted.

10. Any Other Business

Noel Bartram asked that the implications of Brexit remains on the College's radar and it was agreed that this will be reviewed at the next available CCN Business Committee Meeting, supported by any information received from either the AoC or Government at the time.

Philip Richardson asked if some HE courses will be partly delivered online from September, whether this will affect the fees payable and whether these will be reviewed? The Principal informed the Board that the College is currently working through the OfS information and students will be given clear guidance in the coming weeks. It was expected that fees will remain as they are as a mixture of online and face-to-face deliveries will take place. Andrea Blanchflower informed the Board that the universities' position has been misrepresented and most students will be receiving small group face to face sessions but with lectures for larger groups of students delivered online.

Student Numbers from September – following discussions, it was agreed that Jerry White will provide the current numbers expected across all three sites and provide a report at the next meeting, with papers, taking place on 30 June. It was noted that provisional numbers are up on last year at Paston and a "virtual" Open Evening is taking place on 17 June. It was recognised that this year's recruitment is subject to additional volatility but that significant activity on social media, news media and direct communication with prospective students is being undertaken.

Confidentiality

It was agreed that agenda item 7 will remain confidential.

11. Date of Next Meeting

The next CCN Board Meeting is scheduled to take place on Tuesday 16 June 2020 at 4:00pm, via Skype. This will be in the form of a verbal update. A Skype invitation will be issued prior to the meeting.

All business having been concluded; the meeting closed at 5.25 pm.

Signed **Date**
(Chairman)