

CORPORATION BOARD MEETING

CONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 03 NOVEMBER 2020 AT 4:00 PM, VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Present:

Andrew Barnes (Chairman), Corrienne Peasgood (Principal), Jill Lanning, Noel Bartram, Andrea Blanchflower, Philip Richardson, Denise Troughton, Bree Sherwood (in attendance for agenda items 1-5), Nikki Gray

Attendees:

Martin Colbourne (NES MD), Jerry White (Deputy Principal), 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 Emily Staley and Jonathan Barnard.

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 Meeting held on 20 October 2020 (Paper 02)

The unconfirmed minutes of the meeting held on 20 October 2020 were amended and agreed as a true record of the meeting and will be signed by the Chair at the next available opportunity.

4. Unconfirmed Confidential Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 20 October 2020 (Paper 03)

The unconfirmed confidential minutes of the meeting held on 20 October 2020 were amended and agreed as a true record of the meeting and will be signed by the Chair at the next available opportunity.

5. CEO's Report (Paper 04)

The CEO Report from the Principal informed the Board how the College is continuing to operate through the Coronavirus pandemic. The following information was discussed and highlighted:

DfE / Ofsted: The Principal informed Governors that Gillian Keegan MP, Minister for Apprenticeships and Skills made a virtual visit to CCN on 22 October. The visit was mainly about T Levels although a variety of current challenges were also covered. Publicity was found in EDP, on Look East and a follow-up article in the TES. Full details of the email message received after the visit was highlighted in the CEO Report.

It was noted that Ofsted have announced that their visits will continue online through the second lockdown. Clarification on residential visits is awaited.

COVID: as of today, a further two staff have tested positive for COVID-19; both are not onsite, one is a new member of staff who has not yet commenced their employment and the other has been self-isolating following her husband's positive test result. As of this morning, 4 additional students have tested positive for COVID and consequently, 50 additional students are self-isolating. Communications continues with Norfolk County Council via email. It was noted that the College is now informing them of any new cases rather needing to consult with them.

The Principal informed Governors that she has communicated key messages to students to inform them that the College will remain open between 5 November and 2 December and lessons will continue to be delivered as in the first half of the term. A video message will also be produced for teaching staff to use to reinforce the message to all students. Further guidance is awaited from Government and students will be updated, via email, if changes will be made. The College has been informed that people who are classed as Clinically Extremely Vulnerable are advised to work from home (WFH) for the duration of the second lockdown. Currently it is unclear whether CEV students will be asked to stay at home.

It was noted that the DfE requires colleges to deliver the vast majority of classes face-to-face and this cannot change without express permission. The Principal reported that concerns have been raised from students, staff and parents with some asking that their children remain at home rather than attend College. It was noted that it is a difficult thing to manage but parents have been reminded that the official guidance has informed education establishments to remain open. Governors noted that this was a tough call for the Principal to deliver and asked if there was anything they can do to help and the suggestion of a letter home to parents, signed by both the Principal and Chair of Governors was made. It was noted that most cases have not resulted from students attending the college, but from community transmission.

Weekly Site Safety and COVID Response Team meetings continue monitoring compliance with the College's control measures continue and electronic inspection forms, which managers can complete to feedback on their observations have been launched on Blackboard. These are reviewed weekly by the Health and Safety Manager and actioned accordingly.

Staff Survey: The Principal informed Governors that a second snap staff survey on control measures and well-being has been communicated to staff and the online survey will close at 5.00 pm on Friday of this week. It was agreed that a summary of results will be prepared for Governors.

Examinations: Approximately 854 entries for GCSE Maths and English resit exams are taking place this week across all three sites and it was noted that on Monday, 1000 less students were on site with their classes being delivered online to enable the exams to run in a COVID secure way using classrooms across the sites. The process has presented an enormous logistical challenge and a risk assessment is in place to ensure full social distancing measures throughout all the exams as students will not be in their usual bubbles. The Chair and Governors agreed that this is adaptability at the highest level and a remarkable achievement.

Policing Curriculum: Following the long term aspiration of the College to support the Norfolk Constabulary and intense joint work undertaken over the last six to nine months, the new policing curriculum was launched on 23 October with the announcement

of a pre-join policing degree and an Access to Policing course, running jointly with the UEA. It was noted that the new courses will be taught at Easton College and delivered on the commitment in the merger submission to build on the Public Services curriculum. Positive publicity was noted from the Deputy Chief Constable and the Police and Crime Commissioner, giving their support.

Estates: The first seven Town Deals were announced by the Department for Housing, Communities and Local Government last week with Norwich securing £25 million. This includes funding of £1.5m for Digi Tech and £3.1m for an Advanced Construction and Engineering (ACE) centre at Ipswich Road. The College now has some work to do on the business cases for both projects and will keep Governors updated on progress. It was confirmed that local sign off is required by the local Towns Deals Board.

The Principal informed Governors that a small team, led by Jerry White, is now working on the Institute of Technology (IoT) tender submission and further details will be brought the next Business Committee meeting. Jill Lanning asked if a verbal update could also be provided to the next Curriculum and Standards Committee Meeting and this was agreed.

Aviation Academy – please see the confidential minutes.

Land Sale at Easton – please see the confidential minutes.

Association of Colleges: The Principal gave an update on the Independent Commission on the College of the Future which has launched its UK wide final report last week. The report sets out the UK wide recommendations and will be followed later this year by reports for each of the four nations, setting out nation-specific recommendations in further detail. The report sets out eleven recommendations for reform and renewal of the college systems and the recommendations in the report are likely to be reflected in the forthcoming FE White Paper.

Risk Register: The COVID 19 Risk Register has been reviewed and the full review is outlined in the table attached to the CEO Report. It was noted that two risks, re Cyber security and the cost of COVID-19, have increased; three have decreased; one risk has been added and one has been archived. It was noted that the risks in Red are above Governors' Risk Appetite and those in Green, below. The Red risks include the new risk regarding summer exams 2021.

Jerry White reported that the position regarding the Summer 2021 exams remains unclear given the continued disruption to learning as a result of COVID-19. Ofqual have proposed to the DfE that there should be A level and GCSE exams in 2021 but it is understood that a number of options are being considered such as a single paper per subject. Governors discussed the likely employer and HE reaction to another year of disrupted exams. Julia Buckland confirmed that staff were concentrating on the core elements in each course including those that we know are valued by our employers. She said that staff are also ensuring that evidence of student's achievement in being carefully recorded in case the Centre Assessed Grades are used again in 2021. It was agreed that a final decision needs to be made by the Government quickly and the guidance currently available does not allow staff to plan the curriculum. The Principal informed Governors that she will be attending an AoC Meeting next week and will push for clarification.

Governors asked if the dates in the document could be updated and the Principal agreed to liaise with John Pollitt and amend and update the Register accordingly.

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

Bree Sherwood left the meeting at 5.10 pm.

6. Finance Update

(Paper 05)

The Finance Update to the Board, provided by Martin Colbourne, was previously circulated and the following highlighted:

- The July Management Accounts have now been converted into the statutory year end format and are currently being audited by KPMG with four main technical accounting points, which are: Fair value of the Easton estate – it is hoped to have a final update by the end of this week; Fair value of the investment in the land sale (the costs) – please see agenda item 5 (Estates) for full details; Alignment of accounting policies – agreed with KPMG as correct to proceed; Pensions accounting and the treatment of the shared liabilities with SNC - agreed with KPMG as correct to proceed. Norfolk Pension Fund has now provided values.
- Cash balances continue to remain strong and will be closely tracked over the coming months.
- Debts – it was noted that there are no significant updates other than during the month of October the two planned instalments of monies from the Student Loan Company were received. This was c£2m of receipts. Housekeeping on this will follow and full details will flow into the next Business Committee Meeting.
- The audit process of the EOC stub accounts to 31 December 2020 is nearly completed and the updated wording of the audit opinions are awaited from KPMG and once received, the draft accounts will be updated and Suffolk New College will be asked to review and approve. Once confirmation has been received, review and approval will be sought from the CCN Board. The accounts will then be submitted to the ESFA.
- ESFA – Martin Colbourne informed Governors that the College has again been selected for a full ESFA funding audit. It was noted that this selection is the sixth time in eleven years.
- KPMG external audit - please see the confidential minutes.
- The Scrutton Bland payroll audit has been completed and a strong assurance / green opinion has been received and no recommendations raised.

The Chair congratulated everyone involved and thanked Martin Colbourne and his team for their continuing hard work and commitment on finance.

The full content of the Financial Update noted.

7. Chairman's Update

The Chair again thanked everyone for their continuous commitment and support of both students and staff, with many challenges continuing as the country enters a second lockdown and he noted that it was uplifting to see the progress being made.

8. Any Other Business

The Chair asked if any Governors had a question for the College's management team and the following questions were discussed and answered:

Jill Lanning asked if recruitment for September was as planned and it was noted that the final figure is a little below target, but students are still enrolling. The ESFA Return is due for completion next week.

Philip Richardson asked to see the background of the IoT bid and the Principal agreed to circulate the Expression of Interest to governors.

9. Confidentiality

It was agreed that part of agenda item 5 (Aviation Academy and Land Sale at Easton) and the KPMG external Audit (part of agenda item 6) remain confidential at today's meeting.

10. Date of Next Meeting

The next CCN Board Meeting is scheduled to take place on Tuesday 17 November 2020 at 4:00pm, via Microsoft Teams.

All business having been concluded; the meeting closed at 5.45 pm.

Signed **Date**
(Chairman)