

CORPORATION BOARD MEETING

CONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 19 MAY 2020 AT 4:00 PM VIA SKYPE

Present:

Andrew Barnes (Chairman), Corrienne Peasgood (Principal), Jill Lanning, Noel Bartram, Andrea Blanchflower

Attendees:

Jerry White (Deputy Principal), Martin Colbourne (NES MD), Julia Buckland (Vice Principal, FE Curriculum and Quality), Hilary Bright (Director of HR Services), John Pollitt (Deputy Managing Director), Sue Millions (Administrator)

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Emily Staley, Nikki Gray, Bree Sherwood, Jonathan Barnard, Philip Richardson, Sophie Gray, Denise Troughton and Clare Johnson (Clerk to the Corporation). 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 Meeting held on 05 May 2020 (Paper 02)

It was agreed that the minutes from the last meeting will be confirmed at the full Board Meeting taking place on 02 June 2020.

4. Unconfirmed Confidential Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 05 May 2020 (Paper 03)

It was agreed that the confidential minutes from the last meeting will be confirmed at the full Board Meeting taking place on 02 June 2020.

5. Verbal Updates from

5.1 Hilary Bright

The Chair welcomed Hilary Bright, Director of HR Services, to the meeting and she gave the following updates:

Furloughing of Staff – it was noted that 23 staff, 11 of those from CCN, have to date been furloughed. Regular contact has been maintained with those involved through emails and social media and their roles are reviewed on a regular basis. It was noted that the 20% of salaries not covered by the Government furloughing funds will be paid to those staff involved.

Testing for COVID-19 – Self referral is available to all staff and members of their household if they have symptoms. HR is unaware of the number of staff who have self-referred, but no information has been received to say that staff are self-isolating due to a positive test result.

Staff Well-Being – following the analysis of the Staff Well-Being Survey, online resources, both work and fun related, have been made available via the learning platform. It was noted that Governors can pick up all information via their CCN email address link. Staff have been offered the opportunity to talk with Occupational Health, via a confidential phone in if they have any questions or concerns and would like to talk in confidence about issues relating to Covid-19. The opportunity was offered to staff on 7 May and only two members of staff took up the offer. Five slots were again made available on 21 May and the slots were filled quickly with 21 on the waiting list. The Occupational Health Nurse has kindly agreed to arrange appointments for all 21 members of staff and all phone-ins will have been completed by the end of next week.

5.2 John Pollitt

The Chair welcomed John Pollitt, NES Deputy Managing Director, to the meeting and he gave the following update:

Laptops for Disadvantaged Students – the Bursary Fund has been used to purchase 50 laptops and arrangements are being made for these to be collected by those identified students this week. The resourcing of the laptops had proved difficult. It was noted that Colleges are able to use bursary fund monies, alongside the Government scheme, in a more flexible way than schools and this has proved invaluable.

Easton Integration – the cataloguing of IT equipment is currently taking place at Easton College, following social distancing guidance, as part of the integration of IT systems. It was noted that this involves a significant amount of work, including the introduction of the cashless catering system which is in the process of being implemented ready for when students return to site.

5.3 Martin Colbourne

Martin Colbourne updated Governors on the following:

IFMC Confirmation and Financial Health Grades – Martin Colbourne informed Governors that the IFMC submission was completed and submitted by last Friday's deadline. An automated email response was received following receipt. It was noted that the IFMC return was submitted with no validation errors, which was an excellent result. It was also noted that the submission indicated a Good financial health rating for this year and next. The Principal passed on her thanks to Martin Colbourne, Karen McIntosh and Clare Harber for all their hard work and commitment to complete and submit the IFMC by the deadline.

Martin Colbourne informed the Board that the Financial Team will now set a timetable to complete the full budget setting for 2020/21.

PPN Guidance for Colleges – the DfE have now released additional guidance on the Procurement Policy Note which sets out information and guidance for Colleges on payment of their suppliers to ensure service continuity during and after the current coronavirus. It was noted that the update gives more flexibility to Colleges to defer and vary payments to commercial contractors. Martin Colbourne, Jon Bonham and Jodie Mitchell are in discussions to make some contract variations, if necessary.

Digitech Factory – please see confidential minutes.

5.4 Julia Buckland

Julia Buckland updated Governors on the awarding of qualification grades for GCSEs and A Levels to FE students and the following was noted:

The FE team have been given access to and have completed the spreadsheets for the Centre Assessed Grades and Ranking of students for A Levels and GCSEs. This has been a complicated process; one which staff have completed in a professional and robust manner. The submitted grades are reviewed by the Heads of Area prior to submission to the FE Award's Board, chaired by Julia Buckland. This has met twice to date to consider A Level grades which included reviewing samples from 25% of those grades submitted. Data packs have been prepared for the Board Meetings and will inform the sign off by the Principal prior to submission to the Awarding Organisations. It was noted that this three-stage process has been more robust and exceeds Ofqual's expectations and the Leadership Team have been very reassured.

Julia Buckland noted that the biggest challenge to date has been determining grades for Maths' students at Easton and Matt Scott is bringing evidence to FE Award's Board Meetings to assist in their considerations.

Governors asked if positives can be taken away from the process and whether guidance has been made clear regarding the appeals to awarding bodies. It was noted that it is expected that individuals will appeal to the awarding body and not their College. It was noted that students will be able to sit their examinations again in September. The Awarding Organisations' processes such as statistic modelling once they receive the grades is out of the College's control but it was agreed that, if a challenge does come back from the Awarding Organisations, the College is confident in the robustness of the college processes in order to respond to any challenge.

The preparation of GCSE and vocational and technical qualifications grades will take place this week, using the experiences learnt from completing the A Level assessment grades. For the Technical and Vocational qualifications final guidance from Ofqual has not yet been published by the Awarding Organisations have provided frequent updates to the college.

5.5 Jerry White

Jerry White was asked to provide an update and the following detail was highlighted:

College Nursery – from 1 June 2020, nurseries are asked to consider taking back all children. It is expected that to serve all parents who wish their children to return would see a maximum of 16 children returning. This is less than normal capacity. The complex requirements are being reviewed in relation to the guidance provided to make the Nursery COVID secure.

HE – delivery on-line to all students continues including assessments and support and the Hardship Fund has been used to secure IT equipment for vulnerable students and thanks were passed to John Pollitt and his team. Liaison is continuing collaboratively with UEA colleagues across areas of challenge. Awards Boards, including External Examiners, have been held.

Apprenticeships - Jerry White informed Governors that the College is not seeing redundancies as expected and currently the financial outcome is not as negative as originally suggested.

Some employers are now thinking about restarting their apprenticeship programmes, which is a positive step. A prudent approach on budgeting of income is being followed.

NTTC – Governors were informed that Jacqui Waring, the new role as Head of Centre, and her team are in the process of calculating the Pass / Not Pass grades for their trainees in line with their trajectory to date and related evidence. The process is similar to that used for FE and will support the defence of gradings if appeals are made.

Staff and trainees are working together to stretch and challenge projects through the final term and some students are working and engaging with their link or employing schools.

Staffing – successful interviews have taken place for the vacant position of Head of Marketing and Events, following the resignation of Jon Holland, who will be taking up a new role in the Midlands. An offer has been made to an experienced candidate who has previous experience in HE and the wider public sector. Both Corrienne Peasgood and Martin Colbourne were involved in the interview process alongside Jerry White and Julia Buckland. It was noted that 74 applications were received, which far exceeds normal processes. Governors thanked Jon for his great work for the college and wished him all the best in his new job.

5.6 Corrienne Peasgood

The Principal updated Governors on the following:

Re-opening Plans, Risk Assessments and Risk Register – the College is working through all of the actions which need to be taken, following the DfE guidance, on what is right for staff and students in order to open the college sites to more staff and students to return from 1 June 2020, providing the government give the go ahead for this on 28 May. The Principal noted that the College has flexibility on how to do this. Which additional students should return to college such as, those who are vulnerable or need to complete assessments, will be reviewed and the site adapted accordingly. It was noted that FE teachers have been asked to think about which groups of students need to be in college, even if it is only for a short time, to secure the skills they need to progress and achieve, and to discuss this with their Head of Area.

The College's COVID-19 risk assessment has been updated and Norfolk County Council's risk assessment checklist has also been completed and both are now with Union colleagues for their comments. Once these have been received and responded to, the risk assessment will be circulated to all staff and governors for information. Additional layers of risk assessment by site, building, room and individual students and staff will then be undertaken as necessary once it was been agreed and confirmed which additional staff and students will be on site after half-term. It was confirmed that any risk assessments put in place for the next half term will need to be updated and carried forward into September. Staff and students may be allocated to Red or Blue teams to manage their attendance at the college. There may need to be a Purple team if complete separation into teams is not possible. Social distancing will be adhered to with floor markings to reinforce this, including in workshops, so practical assessments can take place. Teams would be allocated a set time to visits Edwards and Blake to purchase food and refreshments and staggered arrival and departure times will be put in place.

Positive weekly meetings are taking place between the Principal, Chris Nix, Jon Bonham, Martin Colbourne and Julie Jarvey, the new Health and Safety Manager, who has brought considerable experience and authority to the discussions.

It was noted that, as Scrutton Bland are unable to complete their scheduled internal audits on retention and recruitment, they have switched their resource to audit the Covid-19 Risk Register, and initial feedback from both Leisyen Keane and Paul Goddard has been positive.

6. Chairman's Verbal Update

The Chair thanked Governors for their continuing support and asked that if anyone has any concerns or comments that they please contact him.

TEN Board Meeting – please see confidential minutes.

7. Any Other Business

The question was asked if the Principal had received any concerns from staff on the possibly re-opening of sites and it was noted that she had not and had received more feedback following the release of the photo of the Rainbow banner displayed on the front of the main CCN building and staff asked if they could use this on their email signature. A JPEG copy was sent to all staff to use.

8. Confidentiality

It was agreed that agenda items 5.4 (DigiTech Update) and 6 (TEN Board Meeting update) will remain confidential.

9. Date of Next Meeting

The next CCN Board Meeting is scheduled to take place on Tuesday 02 June 2020 at 4:00pm, via Skype. A Skype invitation will be issued before the meeting, with full details available on the agenda on Passageways.

All business having been concluded; the meeting closed at 5.05 pm.

Signed **Date**
(Chairman)