CORPORATION BOARD

CONFIRMED MINUTES FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 24 MARCH 2026 AT 4:00PM PASTON COLLEGE, ROOM PC02

Present:

Marcus Bailey	MB	Chair
Jerry White	JW	Principal and Governor
Jill Wade	JWa	Governor
Joe McNeill	JMc	Governor
Lucy Sydney	LSy	Governor
Noel Bartram	NB	Governor
Phil Gormley	PG	Vice-Chair
Philip Pearce	PP	Governor
Phillip Belden	PB	Governor
Sarah Appleton	SA	Governor
Sean Green	SGn	Governor *(remote via Teams)*
Laura Stewart	LS	Staff Governor *(until 5:55pm)*
Shirley Barker	SB	Staff Governor *(remote via Teams until 7:10pm)*
Lacey Ross	LR	Student Governor, SU President *(until 6:38pm)*
Lillian Rackham	LRa	Student Governor *(until 6:30pm)*

Attendees:

Chris Caddamy	CC	Executive Director Data Digital and Transformation *(until 7:10pm)*
Jen Eves	JE	Chief Operating Officer *(until 7:10pm)*
Jodie Mitchell	JM	Director of Governance and Legal
Martin Colbourne	MC	Chief Finance Officer *(until 7:10pm)*
Seb Gasse	SG	Chief Learning Officer *(until 7:10pm)*
Claire Harber	CH	Governance and Legal Officer

Apologies:

Freddie Simpson	FS	Student Governor
Jock Downie	JD	Governor

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1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence

Apologies were noted as above.

2. Declaration of Conflicts

No declarations were made.

3. Unconfirmed Minutes of the Board Meeting Held on 10 February 2026

The unconfirmed minutes of the meeting held on 10 February 2026 were amended slightly and agreed as a true record of the meeting and will be signed by the Chair at the next available opportunity.

4. CONFIDENTIAL - Unconfirmed Confidential Minutes of the Board Meeting Held on 10 February 2026

4.1 CONFIDENTIAL - Unconfirmed Confidential Minutes of the Board Meeting Held on 10 February 2026 (Set 1)

The unconfirmed confidential minutes (set 1) of the meeting held on 10 February 2026 were agreed as a true record of the meeting and will be signed by the Chair at the next available opportunity.

4.2 CONFIDENTIAL - Unconfirmed Confidential Minutes of the Board Meeting Held on 10 February 2026 (Set 2)

The unconfirmed confidential minutes (set 2) of the meeting held on 10 February 2026 were agreed as a true record of the meeting and will be signed by the Chair at the next available opportunity.

5. Matters Arising

Board 6 Action 3: Link Strategic Targets with the budget for Governors when producing these for 2026/27 (MC/JW). ACTION ONGOING (Due: May 2026)

Board 1 Action 1: Consider resources on sustainability and agree on an appropriate method of communication to Governors (JW/SG). *It was agreed this action would be closed having considered with SG the work being undertaken on the Climate Action Plan and Sustainability Newsletter.* ACTION COMPLETE

Board 2 Action 2: ACTION COMPLETE
Board 3 Action 1: ACTION COMPLETE
Board 3 Action 2: ACTION COMPLETE

Board 3 Action 3: Link in with SU President when preparing transport proposals (JW). ACTION ONGOING (Due: May 2026)

Board 3 Action 4: ACTION COMPLETE

6. Chairman's Remarks

The Chair made the following comments:

- Looking forward, two important themes for focus are the five-year plan and Governor recruitment.
- It is vital to ensure the Board retains key skills, particularly on the Business Committee.
- Key issues for focus are staff sickness and site safety.

7. Principal and CEO Report

The Principal and CEO Report was circulated prior to the meeting and taken as read. The Board were advised that the images referred to in the paper would follow.

ACTION 1: Circulate images referred to in the Principal and CEO Report (JW).

The following points were highlighted:

- The College are hosting AgroChallenge 2026, supported by the Royal Norfolk Agricultural Association and the Norfolk County Council. A sponsor is yet to be found but discussions are ongoing.
- The Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) will be in control of apprenticeships and adult funding from April. The Chartered Management Degree Apprenticeship will be defunded. This has been this being a successful programme for the College (the College has been nominated for provider of the year), so the news is disappointing.
- The indication that the DWP intends to focus on early career apprenticeships may benefit the College due to its high percentage of early career learners (82% versus a national average of 59%).
- The Curriculum and Assessment Review set out plans for new V Levels (equivalent to A Levels), additional T Levels subjects, as well as simplification of Level 2 offerings.
- Although the final funding statement for next year is still awaited, the national 16-18 funding uplift for next year is below that previously indicated by Government which will add cost pressures.

- The leadership team are keeping a close watch on behaviours on site. Extra resources and measures have been implemented at the Norwich site with good effect. Other colleges are seeing similar rises in behavioural issues.

Governors expressed concern over the financial and workload impacts of making the changes outlined in the Curriculum and Assessment Review and asked that the College's response to the consultation be shared with them. It was noted that updates will be presented to the Curriculum and Quality Committee.

ACTION 2: Circulate the College's response to the Curriculum and Assessment Review (JW).

Governors noted that behavioural and site safety issues have been reported at every committee due to the variety of ways the issue is impacting the College and asked for an analysis of root causes, patterns and trends.

ACTION 3: Send JW a prompt on what behaviour data should be included in his response to Action 4 (PG).

ACTION 4: Prepare an analysis on root causes, patterns and trends of the behavioural issues across the College, taking into consideration the prompt received from PG in response to Action 3 (JW).

ACTION 5: Include an update on the behavioural risk in future Risk Review papers (JW).

In response to an action from the Business Committee, the FE Commissioner letter issued to colleges in February was circulated prior to the meeting. The Board noted the letter and the Principal's summary. It was noted that the themes mentioned, such as capital cash reporting, Senior Post Holders and Board Assurance Framework, are likely to be on the agenda for the forthcoming annual strategic conversation. It was agreed that a report summarising the conversation would be presented at the next Board.

ACTION 6: Present a report summarising the annual strategic conversation at the next Board (JW).

ACTION 7: Add Annual Strategic Conversation to the May Board agenda (JW/JM/CH).

8. CEFSS Report and Action Plan

The CEFSS Report and Action Plan was circulated prior to the meeting.

The Board were informed that the College requested an FE Commissioner Curriculum Efficiency and Financial Sustainability Support (CEFSS) visit to assess the planning and efficiency of the curriculum. The visit led to sixteen actions. It was agreed that the full CEFSS action list would be reported to Committees going forward and that each action would be allocated a committee for monitoring.

ACTION 8: Add CEFSS Action Plan Update to Schedule of Business for each Committee (CH/JM).

ACTION 9: Categorise actions in the CEFSS Action Plan by Committee (JW)

ACTION 10: Work with the Transformation PMO in relation to relevant CEFSS actions (JW).

ACTION 11: Consider how to amalgamate the various active action plans (JW).

ACTION 12: Arrange CEFSS follow-up visit (JW).

9. Risk Register Review

The Risk Register Review was circulated prior to the meeting. The following points were highlighted:

- The risk register is now held on a spreadsheet and has been considered by the Audit and Risk, Curriculum and Quality and Business Committees. Due to the proximity of the Board meeting to the Business Committee, Business Committee comments are yet to be reflected.
- Approach to risk appetite and risk tolerance need to be established.

A discussion took place as to where the site safety risk should appear. It was agreed that it should be removed from reputational risk and that consideration would be given whether to include it within the safeguarding risk or to create a separate risk. There was a discussion on whether the risk should be considered a strategic risk, but it was noted that it is likely to remain a high operational risk.

Governors stressed the need for a risk appetite and risk tolerance framework to enable proper assessment of risk.

It was noted that there has been a negative movement in the industrial relations and staff sickness risks.

Governors expressed concern that risks that catch organisations out are often those which are less documented and therefore there needs to be full analysis of all risk, particularly emerging risks. It was noted that emerging risks resulting from the geo-political situation, such as transport and energy prices, were discussed at the Business Committee. It was agreed that sections on emerging risks and high operational risks would be included in the Risk Review Updates to Board.

ACTION 13: Include sections on emerging and high operational risks in next Risk Review paper (JW).

10. Strategic Target Monitoring

The Strategic Target Monitoring paper including the full performance dashboard was circulated prior to the meeting. The following points were highlighted:

- Three additional targets associated with the Quality Improvement Plan have been amalgamated into the dashboard.
- The team are monitoring and acting to address ‘red’ areas.

Governors asked for an executive summary for the performance dashboard to include areas of greatest improvement, actions being taken, and more context around targets, for example, why partnerships are considered a risk.

ACTION 14: Include executive summary for performance dashboard (JW).

11. Student Voice

The Students’ Union update was circulated prior to the meeting and was taken as read. The following additional points were made:

- The Sustainability Festival was a success and attracted a good number of students. Activities included planning for a student garden at Easton, upcycling workshops and a sustainability dance.

- No major issues were raised at the recent Student Parliament and all officers submitted reports. Students indicated that the lesson cancellation and PEEPs issues previously highlighted at the parliament had improved.
- Elections are open for the 2026-27 SU President role and applications are starting to come through.
- Draft results from the student survey suggest a slight improvement on last year.
- The survey asked whether students feel safe on site; 91% responded positively, compared to 92% last year. Further questions on safety will be included in the summer survey. Historically, the main reason cited for not feeling safe has been travelling to and from the college.

The Board recognised the good work carried out by Students' Union and said 'well done' to the Students' Union President.

12. CONFIDENTIAL – Transformation Programme

The discussion was confidential and is recorded within the confidential minutes (set 1).

LS left the meeting at 5:55pm.

The Committee took a break at 5:55pm and reconvened at 6:15pm.

13. Key Updates and Approvals from Committee Meetings

13.1 Audit and Risk Committee Update

The Audit and Risk Committee Chairs Report along with the unconfirmed minutes from the meeting held on 3 March 2026 were circulated prior to the meeting.

The Board were informed that the Committee considered the strategic risks. The Committee alerted the Board that whilst the strategic risk relating to financial health has improved, there is a concern that this may be short term and additionally, the work in relation to risk appetite and tolerance remains outstanding.

The Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee reminded Governors to respond to the request for feedback on the internal audit plan for 2026/27 circulated by email. It was noted that the Committee asked for a full tender for the internal audit contract to be carried out next year.

13.1.1 Whistleblowing Policy

The draft update to the Whistleblowing Policy was circulated prior to the meeting. Governors were informed that the policy has been updated to reflect key updates in legislation and has been considered by the internal auditors and Director of People. Governors were informed that the Committee left the decision whether to change the name to Freedom to Speak Up (Whistleblowing) Policy to the Senior Management Team who recommend not to make the change for the reasons listed in the paper.

CC and JE returned to the meeting after the break at 6:19pm.

Governors commented that the process is more clearly set out in the new version and that the policy is well written and, as recommended by the Audit and Risk Committee, approved the Whistleblowing Policy.

13.1.2 CONFIDENTIAL – External Audit Tender Approval

The discussion was confidential and is recorded within the confidential minutes (set 1).

13.2 Curriculum & Quality Committee

The Curriculum and Quality Committee Chair's Report was circulated prior to the meeting along with the unconfirmed minutes from the meeting on 10 March 2026. The following points were highlighted:

- The Committee considered the curriculum planning framework and were satisfied that the framework demonstrates that there is a robust process.
- Additional discussions took place surrounding behavioural issues and funding reductions.

LRa left the meeting at 6:30pm.

The Board were informed that the Committee considered whether a SEND Link Governor should be appointed as recommended in guidance and requested that expressions of interest (EOI) be sought. It was confirmed that no EOI have been received. The Board discussed the benefits of a Link Governor, and it was noted that due to the significant changes to SEND ahead, the expectations set out in the new Ofsted toolkit, and that vulnerable learner groups are in the spotlight, it may be beneficial to have a dedicated Governor. As no Governor can take on the role at present, it was agreed that unless a Governor has a specific interest in taking on the role and subsequently comes forward, reporting to the Curriculum and Quality Committee would instead be enhanced. It was noted that the Board retain collective responsibility for SEND regardless of whether there is a Link Governor.

13.2.1 Local Needs Duty

The Local Needs Duty paper was circulated prior to the meeting. The Board were informed that the College has a duty to complete a local needs review every three years.

LRo left the meeting at 6:38pm.

Governors asked whether the exercise shows that the College meets the requirement adequately and were informed that the framework is loose but has been mapped against the response and that the Curriculum and Quality Committee have scrutinised the report and are satisfied. It was noted that a request from the Curriculum and Quality Committee to include additional information on how the College works with partners has been added.

As recommended by the Curriculum and Quality Committee, the Board approved the Local Needs Duty review.

13.3 Business Committee

The Business Committee Chair's Report along with the draft minutes from the meeting on 17 March 2026 were circulated prior to the meeting. The Chair's Report was taken as read. The following points were highlighted:

- There has been an increase in the expected surplus for 2026/27 but there is still a shortfall of c.£600k against the savings plan.
- The geo-political situation has been identified as a risk to the surplus.
- Income generating activities through the commercial plan should sit with the Transformation and Commercial Growth Committee rather than Business so that Business can focus on 'business as usual'.
- The Committee recommend to Board for approval the Gender Pay Gap Report.
- The Committee recommend to Board for approval the Fees Policy, with the caveat that discretion should be exercised when considering competition. The

Committee noted that the increase of 5% is high but were reassured that the uplift reflects true cost pressures.

- Due to the change in classification, cash proceeds from asset sales are now restricted.

The Committee wish to highlight that in relation to the sale of the Easton land previously, it was agreed by the Board at the time that (although the transaction took place prior to the change in legislation requiring proceeds to be restricted) the proceeds would be ringfenced. The Committee stress therefore that £4m of the College's cash is theoretically restricted.

13.3.1 CONFIDENTIAL – Finance Update

The discussion was confidential and is recorded within the confidential minutes (set 1).

SG left the meeting at 6:44pm.

13.3.2 Gender Pay Gap Report

The Gender Pay Gap Report was circulated prior to the meeting. The Board were informed that there are minor fluctuations from last year. There is a gap which is predominantly due to the College having a high number of females in term time and support roles, which tend to be lower paid. However, there has been an increase in females in managerial roles. Governors asked for a breakdown in pay within management roles.

ACTION 17: Provide anonymous breakdown of pay in management roles by gender (MC).

As recommended by the Business Committee, the Board approved the Gender Pay Gap Report for publication.

13.3.3 Fees Policy

The Fees Policy was circulated prior to the meeting.

SG returned to the meeting at 6:48pm.

Governors asked whether research has been carried out to assess affordability and were informed that the household income threshold for funding has increased, so more students are eligible for full funding. It was noted however that students on leisure programmes are not eligible for funding.

It was stressed by those presenting the paper that as core funding is often static, without fee increases there would be a risk of deteriorating provision and discontinuation of courses. It was agreed that this would be expressly referred to in future years.

ACTION 18: When drafting the Fees Policy for 2026/27, ensure that reasons for fee increases are clearly demonstrated (JW).

As recommended by the Business Committee, the Board approved the Fees Policy, noting the use of discretion up or down as discussed under item 13.3.

13.3.4 CONFIDENTIAL – Business Continuity Policy

The discussion was confidential and is recorded within the confidential minutes (set 1).

14. Other Urgent Business

No matters were raised under this item.

15. Meeting Review and Summary

This item was not taken.

16. Date of Next Meeting

The next Corporation Board Meeting is scheduled to take place on 19 May 2026 at 4:00pm.

SB, CC, JE, MC and SG left the meeting at 7:10pm.

17. CONFIDENTIAL Item

The discussion was confidential and is recorded within the confidential minutes (set 2).

All formal business having been concluded; the meeting closed at 7:20pm.

Signed ………………………………………………….. Date ………………………
(Chair)