



**BRIDGWATER
& TAUNTON
COLLEGE**

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 2 JULY 2020

MEETING COMMENCED: 5.00 pm

MEETING ENDED: 7.30 pm

PRESENT: Derek Randall (Chair), John Alvis (JA), Andy Berry (AB), Gill Anderson, Barry Brown (BB), Andre Frullo (AF), Rebecca Coutts (RC), Thomas Harris (TH), Alan Hunt (AH), Nick Skyrme (NS), Andrew Smith (AS), Keith Stenning (KS), David Selway (DS), David Taylor (DT), Gill Slattery (GS), Louise Seymour (LS), Lyndon Brett (LB), Matt Cox (MC)

IN ATTENDANCE: Marcus Holder, (MH), Louise Rowley (LR), Mark Nettle (MN) (Clerk) and Katy Hockings (note taker)

G.03.35.20 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
Apologies were received from Claire Pearce (CP). Alan Hunt (left 7.02 pm), David Selway (7.05 pm) and Nick Skyrme (left 7 pm) left the meeting early.

G.03.36.20 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS
There were no declarations of interest relevant to the agenda of the meeting.

G.03.37.20 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 12 DECEMBER 2019
The minutes from the meeting held on 12 December 2019 were agreed as a true record of the meeting and were duly signed by the Chair.

G.03.38.20 MATTERS ARISING
There were no matters not covered on the agenda.

G.03.39.20 BOARD AND COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP
DR reported on a recent meeting of the Search Committee. He thanked GA for her contribution during her time as a Staff Governor, as her term comes to an end. DR thanked TH for his contribution and commitment to the Board as he steps down as FE Student Governor.

DR reported that BB has indicated his willingness to remain as a Governor until the end of the calendar year. AS will step down following this meeting. DR thanked AS for his contribution to the Board during his term as a Governor.

MN reported on the proposed appointment of two new Governors, Denys Rayner and Mike Westlake. LR and AB gave a summary of the relevant experience of both candidates. DR reported that he has met

with both candidates and would recommend them for election to the Board. RC asked how many vacancies there currently are on the Board. She expressed the view that we need to be more focused on equality and diversity within the membership of the Board. She suggested a proactive campaign to seek a more diverse membership on the Board. MN confirmed we are permitted a maximum of 17 Board members, meaning currently three vacancies. MN also reported on further work taking place to seek further appointments in the short term. MN reported he is sitting on an AoC committee focusing on equality and diversity on governing bodies. GS agreed with the points made by RC, and confirmed she is encouraged by work being done to appoint further members to the Board. GS said this is a high priority in her opinion. DR confirmed that there is a focus within the Search Committee on equality and diversity in its recommended appointments. DR invited recommendations for further Governor appointments from all members of the Board. KS enquired as to SK and her continued appointment to the Board. MN confirmed that SK remains a Governor, but has been deployed for her work which means she cannot attend meetings at the current time. MN confirmed that it is not ideal for Governors not to attend meetings regularly, but DR confirmed that at Search Committee it was agreed to seek ways to enable SK to attend meetings more regularly due to her unique skillset.

MN sought a proposer and seconder for these appointments to the Board. DR proposed Denys Rayner and JA seconded this appointment. AB proposed Mike Westlake and BB seconded this appointment. It was agreed that both Denys Rayner and Mike Westlake be appointed as Governors for the College.

MN confirmed that JA has now been appointed Vice Chair, the vote for which was taken remotely during lockdown. MN asked for approval that BB's term of service be extended until the end of the calendar year; that JA be elected for a further year, and that AF be elected for a further term. The Board approved to these proposals.

MN asked the Board to approve the re-election of DR for a further term as Chair. The Board approved this proposal.

MN thanked GA for her service as Bridgwater Staff Governor, as her comes to an end due to a move to Cannington for her new role. Following an election process, Luke Fielder, was nominated, and duly elected as Staff Governor for Bridgwater campus with effect from September. LF works with Foundation Studies students. MC and LS both have a further year to their terms as Taunton and Cannington Staff Governors respectively.

MN thanked TH on behalf of the Board for his service during the past year as FE Student Governor. Millie Harris, a Performing Arts and A Level residential student, will succeed TH from September 2020.

G.03.40.20

REGISTER OF INTERESTS

MN advised that the Register of Interests form will be emailed to all Governors, and he requested that all Governors complete and return the form to him as soon as possible. Where there is no change to circumstance, MN asked that 'no change' be clearly entered into the form. No physical signature is required on the document, as long as

the document is emailed to MN from Governors' usual email address, confirming in the body of the email that the document is a true and correct record.

G.03.41.20

2019/20 UPDATE

Principal's Update – AB provided a summary of the update which had been circulated to Governors prior to the meeting. He highlighted the work which has taken place over the past months since the Covid-19 pandemic to support both staff and students to work remotely and continue to learn effectively. AB reported that the new ways of working during lockdown have been extremely successful for a large number of students, and these new learning methods will continue to be utilised as we prepare for the new academic year, while ensuring that measures are in place to support students who have found online learning more challenging.

AB summarised planning for next year and invited LR to provide an update on next year's curriculum planning. LR confirmed that work is underway to ensure the College can operate effectively and within Government guidelines in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic. She highlighted key points regarding plans for study programme students and the opportunities to embrace and develop blended learning. Many of the new students starting in September will not have been within an educational setting for six months, and there may need to be additional support to enable these students to transition back into learning. LR highlighted that there currently is no additional funding available to support this. Level 1 students will attend College as much as possible, as for many of them learning on site face to face is the best learning method. Blended learning will be utilised where possible. The key priority with Level 1 students will be to prevent them becoming NEET, and the College intends to operate a BTC certificate to enable more flexibility to reintegrate these students, and also removes the requirements for formal awarding body assessment.

Level 2 students will be given skills and knowledge to enable them to progress to Level 3, alongside a slightly smaller qualification than previously. This should have the added benefit of greater retention at Level 3 as students who progress are more capable and confident to learn and engage. LR confirmed that these redesigned programmes meet funding requirements.

Level 3 students will study qualifications as previously, with the addition of practical employability, to support progression to the workplace. Students on Level 2 and Level 3 will attend College two days per week, and the other day per week will be delivered online. The timetable has been designed so that either larger or smaller class size can be accommodated. There will also be online learning resources to support the learning programme. AB invited questions and comments. RC asked about apprentices who are on furlough who may be made redundant in the coming weeks and months. AB reported there is a three month window following any apprentice being made redundant where the College can continue to claim funding, and work with the apprentice to complete their apprenticeship and seek employment. If the apprentice is within six months of completion, full funding, except the 20% achievement, can still be claimed. Apprentices within six to

twelve months of completion will be fully funded for 12 weeks. RC asked about contingency plans to protect the College financially if there is a significant drop in apprenticeship income. AB confirmed that prudent and cautious figures have been incorporated within the budget for 2020-21.

The Board noted the report.

Operating Plan 2019/20 Update – the Operating Plan had been reviewed and updated, and circulated to the Board prior to the meeting. LR provided a verbal summary of the current position, and highlighted key areas for consideration by the Board. LR summarised the robust process the College has utilised in order to ensure that predicted grades submitted to awarding organisations are accurate, and that evidence to validate these grades are in place. LR explained that due to the Covid-19 pandemic, there are more strategic objectives which have not been possible to complete. LR highlighted industry placements, which will not reach target now due to Covid-19. Next year's target is currently 30% of students on programme. LR highlighted 1.6.1 related to digital strategy, work on which has moved on more rapidly due to the need to shift to online learning during lockdown. Work will take place over the summer on developing the digital strategy further. LR highlighted that recruitment to T Levels programmes may not be as high as hoped. The current DfE position is that the employer engagement elements and work experience will continue to be a part of the T Levels programme. This may be challenging in the current climate. Parents and students who are interested in T Levels are more cautious and the national marketing campaign has not been fully deployed. However, the College is marketing T Levels over the summer. LR invited questions from the Board. GA asked for more detail on the digital funding received. LR reported that the funding awarded will be focused on infrastructure development. AB reported that the Government has just released £200m of capital funding to FE colleges across the country which will be a formulaic rather than bid based allocation. The Board noted the updated operating plan for 2019-20.

Management Accounts 31 May 2020 - DR explained that, due to the changing circumstances around the Covid-19 pandemic, and Government advice being updated on a daily basis, there have been additional challenges for the current year's budget. MH provided a summary of the management accounts for the period ended 31 May 2020. He highlighted key areas where outcomes have deviated from budget due to the pandemic. He explained that a number of staff have been furloughed which has enabled the College to claim pay costs from the Government for these staff. MH invited questions from the Board. AB thanked the MH and his team for their hard work in controlling costs in response to reductions to income due to the impacts of Covid-19. AS congratulated the College on its financial management during this period. KS commented on the non-pay costs, which have come out under budget. MH confirmed that actions have been implemented to reduce these where possible in light of the reduction in income. The Board noted the Management Accounts for 31 May 2020.

Strategic Planning Framework – DR advised that, due to the changing circumstances around the Covid-19 pandemic, the full draft of the strategic planning framework for 2020-23 will be presented to the Board Self-Assessment meeting in October 2020. AB explained that the additional priorities, the environment and higher education, identified at the Governor Strategic Planning Event, in January 2020, will be woven into the other four priorities, in order to ensure a coherent strategic plan. The Board noted the position.

Risk Register – AB highlighted key points on the risk register, which had been updated in light of Covid-19 and in advance of the Board meeting. AB invited questions from the Board. There were none. DR thanked the senior management team for a comprehensive risk review during the Covid19 pandemic. The Board noted the updated risk register.

Two Year Budget - MH highlighted and summarised the two year budget, which was circulated to the Board in advance of the meeting. He confirmed that this budget will be submitted to the ESFA in July, subject to Board approval. A revised budget will be brought to the Board in October, to provide more time to incorporate assumptions which take into account the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic more accurately. MH confirmed the budget for 2020-21, which he summarised in brief, will ensure that the College retains its 'good' financial health rating. MH invited questions. NK confirmed that the budget was reviewed in detail by the FP&GP Committee, and NK has provided input to MH in addition to this. NK highlighted concerns around the T Level programme income for 2020-21, and also on commercial income potential from September 2021, and whether these elements of the budget need further review. AB responded, confirming that the 16-18 year old funding is on a lagged basis, but with T Levels, LR confirmed that if we meet 40% of our target, the full funding will be guaranteed. AB reported that, with regard to commercial training, we have already begun work on restarting some of our commercial programmes, and these should be underway in many areas over the summer period. AB also confirmed that the College currently has around 200 more applications from school leavers than this time last year, and the budget for 2020-21 is cautious and prudent during difficult circumstances. AB thanked NK for his detailed input and feedback on the budget over the last few weeks. KS asked for clarification on the costs associated with any additional predicted income for next year. AB confirmed that, wherever possible, a growth in school leavers for 2020-21, would not have a huge impact on costs. AB highlighted that additional income associated with any extra study programme students have not yet been incorporated within the budget. MH requested approval of the two year budget, for submission to the ESFA. The Board unanimously approved the budget for submission as outlined.

FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

MH presented the revised financial regulations, along with a summary document which detailed the changes proposed for the current financial year. He reported that these had been approved for submission to the Board by the FP&GP Committee. KS highlighted on page three of the regulations, a slight amendment required to ensure the document is

absolutely clear. He also highlighted under 9.4 an additional minor amendment. These were noted and would be amended accordingly. The Board noted the proposed changes and the updated Financial Regulations were approved.

G.03.44.20

REPORT ON SUBSIDIARY AND ASSOCIATED COMPANIES

AB summarised the reports received and circulated to the Board prior to the meeting relating to subsidiary and associated companies. This report had previously been submitted to the FP&GP Committee and noted. The Board noted the report and the summary of key points provided during the meeting. KS highlighted a point within the report on NCfN regarding Covid-19 and HPC, and asked whether there are any implications for the College in this regard. AB confirmed that commercial training has stopped during lockdown, but demand from HPC has continued, and these programmes will commence again shortly, likely with additional numbers, at least in the short term. AB confirmed that careful budgeting within this area will take place. KS also highlighted the awards which NCfN has either won or been shortlisted for over the past year. BB asked for clarification on contracts relating to TCP. AB reported that he will continue as Chair of TCP for a further year, and the term of Chair will be extended from two to three years. The Principal of Wiltshire College, will take over again as Chair from September 2021.

G.03.45.20

ESTATES AND PROPERTY UPDATE

The Estates and Property update had been circulated to the Board and has been scrutinised by the Building Projects Committee and reviewed by the FP&GP Committee. T Level capital project for digital is on track and on budget. The IoT projects at the Welding Centre and at NCfN are on budget and on track. A stage two capital bid has been submitted for T Levels for improvements at the Taunton campus to develop it into a health and education provision for T Levels delivery. Plans for Canonsgrove continue to develop and progress. MH recorded his thanks to LB for his support and assistance with estates matters. AB echoed this thanks for invaluable support from LB. MH invited questions. BB asked for clarification regarding leases for Canonsgrove. AB provided clarification. AS recorded his thanks to David Harper, Head of Estates, for all his hard work. LB echoed this, and highlighted the extremely high quality of work that DH produces. MH to pass these thanks on to DH from the Board. The Board noted the Estates and Property Update.

G.03.46.20

REPORTS OF THE FOLLOWING SUB-COMMITTEE MEETINGS:

Building Projects Committee 19 May 2020 – the minutes had been circulated and were noted.

Health and Safety Committee 4 June 2020 – the minutes had been circulated and were noted.

Audit Committee 9 June 2020 – the minutes had been circulated and were noted.

Quality and Standards Committee 15 June 2020 – the minutes had been circulated and were noted.

Finance, Personnel & General Purposes Committee 23 June 2020 – the minutes had been circulated and were noted.

G.03.47.20

MEETINGS CALENDAR FOR 2020/21

College meetings and events relevant to Governors for 2020-21 had been circulated to the Board. The Board noted the dates, which included a full schedule of Full Board and Committee meetings for the next academic year.

The next meeting will be Thursday 8 October 2020, for the Governors' Self-Assessment meeting, and the next Full Board will take place on Thursday 10 December 2020.

G.03.48.20

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Staff Morale – GS recorded her thanks to AB and the senior management team for maintaining staff morale during lockdown.

The meeting closed at 7.30 pm