

**MINUTES OF THE GOVERNING BODY MEETING  
HELD ON 25 MARCH 2021 AT 4.30PM - Via Google Meet**

**PRESENT:**

Mr P Croke (Chair)  
Mr D J Finch  
Dr B Calvert  
Ms T D'Souza  
Mrs S Davies - Staff Governor - *joined at 5.30pm*  
Dr J Graystone  
Mr K Halabuda - Staff Governor  
Mrs K Lewis  
Mr T Lewis - Student Governor  
Mrs D Lewis-Whelan - *joined at 5.00pm*  
Mr H Llewellyn - *joined at 4.40pm*  
Mrs J Longville  
Ms A Morgan  
Mrs J Oak - *left at 6.00pm*  
Ms S Parkhouse - Student Governor  
Mr S Pirotte - Principal  
Mrs S Pryce

**IN ATTENDANCE**

Ms V Buckley (VB) - Deputy Principal  
Mrs R Edmonds-Naish - Head of Curriculum for STEM - *presentation only*  
Mrs N Eyre (NE) - Clerk  
Mr A Gibbs (AG) - Vice-Principal  
Mr C Long - Health, Safety and Sustainable Development Manager - *left at agenda item 6*  
Mrs S Morgan - Director of People  
Mr J Nottingham - Active Wellbeing Lead

The meeting commenced at 4.30pm with the Chair requesting approval for the policy for Centred Determined Grades required by the WJEC. Dr J Graystone and Ms S Parkhouse both declared an interest in this item as Dr Graystone chairs the Agored Cymru Awarding Body and Ms S Parkhouse is sitting her GCSE Maths exam this year.

There was one query in relation to special circumstances and whether the College would have its own process in place. The Deputy Principal reassured the member that the College has developed its own mitigating process that will be followed.

The Governing Body approved the policy for onward submission to the WJEC.

Presentation on STEM

Mrs Edmonds-Naish, Head of Curriculum for STEM gave a presentation to the Governing Body on her curriculum area. Mrs Edmonds-Naish provided some information about her

curriculum area and explained that the qualifications in Construction and the Built Environment have been significantly stream-lined following a review by Qualifications Wales. The result of this is that it will no longer be possible to obtain a trade just from studying full time in FE.

The excitement around the opening of the STEAM Academy from September and the ongoing work on the HEAT Academy was relayed to the members. Mrs Edmonds-Naish invited members to the HEAT Academy session that the College is hosting on decarbonisation that will be attended by representatives from the UK and Europe.

The Governing Body was informed that there are plans for new qualifications providing skill-sets for jobs that don't even exist yet in this area.

The Chair thanked Mrs Edmonds-Naish for the presentation and she left the meeting at 4.50pm.

#### Presentation from the Student Governors

The student governors gave a presentation focussing on three areas:

- How has it been up to now?
- What are your feelings on returning?
- What's next?

The Deputy Principal gave a brief reminder of the curriculum update provided at the February meeting and the number of learners that have been invited on-site since then. The Deputy Principal invited the feedback from the student governors.

#### How has it been up to now?

- Overall it has been difficult.
- Not being amongst fellow learners and teaching staff has meant less opportunities to discuss ideas and learn from each other.
- Some friends struggled with their IT capabilities at the start of the pandemic but their skills and confidence have now grown in this area.
- Tutors have been very busy themselves and therefore there has been a reluctance to ask for help. However, staff have been very helpful when asked.
- Studying at home has been challenging due to other distractions in the home.
- Studying at home has occupied time whilst being asked to stay at home.
- Caring responsibilities and home-schooling for children has taken time away from what would normally be spent on learning.
- One major benefit has been the development of skills for independent learning and study which will help when progressing to HE.

#### What are your feelings on returning?

- Excited!
- Can't wait!
- A combination of online and face-to-face teaching will be beneficial going forwards.
- Looking forward most to the interaction with fellow learners and teaching staff.

- The additional help and support that can be offered face-to-face will be really appreciated.
- The benefits of socialising with friends will be excellent and help with mental health.
- By returning to College, it means leaving the house more and this will also help with getting fresh air and getting more exercise.

*5pm - Mrs Lewis-Whelan joined the meeting*

The Deputy Principal displayed the timetable for submission of students' work and grades to awarding bodies. As deadlines have been brought forward this year, the result is that half a term of teaching has been lost.

The Deputy Principal invited the student governors of their next steps.

- Ms Parkhouse informed the members that she has an offer from her first choice university - University of South Wales (USW) to study Psychology and Criminology and is also hoping to seek some form of employment in the near future.
- Mr Lewis explained that he's planning to return to his second year of the Animal Care course with the longer-term aim of becoming a Veterinary Nurse.

The Deputy Principal thanked the student governors for their comments and stated how proud the College is of them. The Chair reiterated this thanks and wished them both well with their studies. A member stated that she's delighted that the pandemic hasn't dampened ambitions.

A member commented that the College has a whole breadth of provision and that there will be different challenges across this provision. The question of where the biggest challenges are was posed. The Deputy Principal explained that initially these were in Construction and Engineering, however, learners in this area are now being invited on site to complete their qualifications. The access courses are now presenting lots of challenges as there are minimal adaptations and the timelines keep changing. Health and Social Care, Childcare and Hair and Beauty courses continue to be significantly impacted by the Welsh Government (WG) restrictions. The Deputy Principal commented that there are concerns as these courses are dominated with female learners.

The Chair reiterated the thank you to the student governors for their brilliant contributions and wished them both well with their studies.

## **1. CHAIR'S WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Members had been welcomed ahead of the above policy approval and presentations.

Apologies for absence were noted from Mr J Greenidge, Cllr Dr C Smith and Mr J Baldwin (Assistant Principal Learner Journey).

The members wished for their condolences to be recorded for Mr J Greenidge on the loss of his mother on the weekend prior to this meeting.

## **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Ms S Parkhouse and Dr Graystone both made a declaration of interest in relation to the WJEC policy above. No other declarations were made.

## **3. MINUTES OF THE GOVERNING BODY MEETING HELD ON 11 FEBRUARY 2021**

The minutes of the Governing Body Meeting held on 11 February 2021 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

## **4. MATTERS ARISING**

### **4.1 Action Tracker**

Action 1 - (Governor training) - COMPLETED. The Clerk thanked the members for completing the mandatory training.

Action 2 (“Differences Made” section to be added to the Governing Body Activity Report) - this will be included in the 2020/21 Activity Report.

Action 3 (Consideration of adding Penybont Sixth Form College as a separate risk on the Risk Register) - COMPLETED. This was discussed as part of agenda item 8.

Action 4 (Engage ToR - amendments needed for changes agreed to the directorship of Engage) - COMPLETED. The ToR had been amended and recirculated to the Resource Planning Committee.

Action 5 (Invitation to Quality/CPD days) - COMPLETED. The two days (18/19 March) were being used as catch up days for staff and no new training was scheduled for these days.

Action 6 (Comparison of Covid cases compared with other Welsh colleges) - COMPLETED. This was discussed as part of agenda item 5.

Action 7 (Note about Governing Body minutes being provided bilingually in the next Welsh Language Annual Report) - this will be incorporated into the December 2021 report.

Action 8 (Arrangements for one-to-one meetings) - COMPLETED. The meetings took place during the week commencing 15 March. The Clerk had met with the Chair and Vice-Chair to discuss the initial findings. A report will be presented to the Search & Governance Committee in May.

Action 9 (Criteria for policy sign-offs) - COMPLETED. The SLT is in the process of drawing up a criteria for signing off policies.

Action 10 (the role of Qualifications Wales and awarding bodies). The Deputy Principal will advise on the appropriate time for this discussion.

The members noted the actions.

## 5. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT (INCLUDING COVID-19 UPDATE)

The Principal informed the Governing Body of the following:

- At the February meeting, a member had asked how the College compared with other Welsh FE colleges with Covid cases. The Principal had obtained information from the five other South-East Wales colleges and the College was in line with these. However, this was caveated with a note of caution as there may be different methods of recording cases etc. at the other colleges.
- Learners are continuing to be invited back to College; numbers are getting larger every week. During the week commencing 15 March, there were 889 occurrences on site (a learner could have attended more than one day). When compared to the other Welsh FE colleges, the largest number of occurrences was 1,800 during the same week and the smallest was 274.
- The following policies have been approved by the SLT since January 2021:
  - Appeals Policy & Procedure (6 January 2021) - this policy requires C&Q approval (on C&Q agenda for the meeting being held on 15 June).
  - TOIL Policy (20 January 2021) - no further approval beyond SLT required.
  - Onboarding Policy (27 January 2021) - no further approval beyond SLT required.
  - Social Media Policy (27 January 2021) - no further approval beyond SLT required.
  - Examinations Policy (presented to SLT on 24 February and updated policy shared via email 25 February) - no further approval beyond SLT required.
  - Malpractice and Maladministration Policy (10 March 2021) - this policy requires C&Q approval (on C&Q agenda for the meeting being held on 15 June).
  - Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure (10 March 2021) - this policy requires RPC approval (on the RPC agenda for the meeting being held on 10 June).
- The WG has provided exceptional financial support to the sector and the Minister has been very supportive.
- Partnerships:
  - The College and Valleys to Coast have jointly submitted an application to Academi Wales for a graduate placement.
  - Junior Apprenticeships - discussions are progressing well with BCBC on this and it is hopeful that an agreement will be reached very soon.
  - Penybont Sixth Form College Joint Committee - the committee resolved in its March 2021 meeting to invite Sue Roberts, Group Manager (School Support) at BCBC to become a member of the committee.  
The Governing Body approved this recommendation.
  - Twilight - this provision will transfer to the STEAM Academy from September.
- The achievements were highlighted, most notably, the Beacon Award and Mr Steve Jones, Careers and Employment Manager, jointly winning the Career Development Institute's Career Services Manager of Year award.
- Apprenticeships - the consortium, led by Pembrokeshire College, has secured another contract for the same amount of funding. There may also be opportunities to grow this provision further.

A member questioned whether the College is considering offering degree apprenticeships and the Principal confirmed that there is a meeting lined up with USW to discuss this.

The Governing Body NOTED the update.

## **6. ANNUAL HEALTH, SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT**

Mr Chris Long presented the report to the Governing Body.

The report focussed on:

- What work the Health, Safety & Sustainability team does.
- Awards and accreditations, including the gold and platinum Corporate Health Standard award.
- Key statistics - there have been no health, safety and environmental legal actions taken between 2014 and 2020 and there has only been a small number of accidents reported since 2017-18, none of which have been RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases, Dangerous Occurrences Regulations).
- What's new and what's on the horizon in this area. Dr Calvert expressed an interest in discussing the Sustrans active travel award with the College.

*5.30pm - Mrs S Davies joined*

The Chair asked if Mr Long felt that his team plays an integral part in the Estates Strategy. Mr Long confirmed that they'd been involved in the STEAM Academy from the outset and that they work closely with all departments to ensure health, safety and environmental standards are met. Mr Long stated that the support received from staff has been amazing.

The members noted the report and update.

## **7. GOVERNANCE MATTERS**

### **Items recommended for approval**

1. Appointment of a new Governing Body member - The Search & Governance Committee interviewed Mrs Judith Evans on 19 March and recommended that she is appointed on to the Governing Body and Resource Planning Committee for a four year term with immediate effect. The Clerk had emailed this recommendation to all members of the Governing Body after the meeting, together with a link to Mrs Evans' CV and covering letter. The Clerk had stated that she would be seeking approval for this appointment at the meeting.

The Governing Body approved Mrs Evans appointment as a Governing Body and Resource Planning Committee member.

It was noted that there is now a 50:50 gender split on the Governing Body.

2. Co-option on to the Audit Committee - the Chair and Clerk had met with Mrs Shelley Wyatt-Williams on 10 March to discuss the co-option opportunity on the Audit Committee. The recommendation from this meeting was that Mrs Wyatt-Williams is appointed as a co-opted member for a four-year term. The Clerk had emailed the

Search & Governance Committee members with this recommendation and asked that they approve this recommendation electronically. The members gave this approval and then the Governing Body members were informed of the recommendation and asked to approve the co-option electronically. This approval was obtained electronically and therefore the Clerk requested that the Governing Body ratify this decision at the meeting.

The Governing Body ratified the decision that Mrs Wyatt-Williams is appointed as a co-opted member of the Audit Committee for a four-year term.

3. Appointment of Vice-Chair from October 2021 - one expression of interest had been received - Mr J Greenidge. The Clerk explained that Mr Greenidge is an experienced senior leader in education, training and employment and is currently employed as the Director of Diversity by the ETF (Education and Training Foundation) and the AoC (Association of Colleges). Mr Greenidge has vast Board experience, both inside and outside the education sector.

The Governing Body approved the appointment of Mr Jeff Greenidge as Vice-Chair from October 2021 for a three-year term.

4. Audit Committee - Appointment of Internal Auditors/Extension of External Auditors' Contract - the Governing Body noted that the current Internal Auditors' contract (RSM) will expire on 31 July 2021 and that the tender process has started to appoint from 1 August 2021.

The Governing Body approved the extension of the External Auditors' contract (PwC) by a further year to 31 July 2022.

5. Calendar of meetings - the Governing Body approved the calendar of meetings for 2021/22.

#### **Items for noting**

1. Committee Co-option Process - the Clerk informed the members that this process was discussed by the Search & Governance Committee on 19 March and will be brought to the Governing Body meeting on 20 May for approval (**ACTION** - NE).

2. The Governing Body noted that the following policies were approved by the Resource Planning Committee on 11 March 2021:

- Code of Conduct
- Managing Performance

3. Designated Governor Responsible for Safeguarding - one expression of interest had been received from Mrs Dawn Lewis-Whelan.

The Governing Body approved Mrs Lewis-Whelan's appointment as the designated governor responsible for safeguarding upon Mr Finch's retirement in October.

Mrs Lewis-Whelan thanked the members and stated that she's delighted to be appointed.

*{Clerk's Note - the Clerk asked the Governing Body whether they wished for this to be included on the May's Governance Matters report for approval as it had been included in the noting section for this meeting due to the timing of the Search &*

*Governance Committee meeting and the issuing of papers for this meeting. The members were willing to approve the appointment at this meeting}.*

4. Investigation training - the Clerk informed the members that investigation training will be held early in the next academic year and asked the members to let her know if they are interested in attending.
5. Governance Development Programme offered jointly by the ETF and AoC - the Clerk had circulated details of this to all members and the Chair and Vice-Chair had recommended that the training and webinars will be beneficial to keep abreast of developments in the FE sector.
6. One-to-one interviews - this was covered in agenda item 4.1
7. Delegated authority - the Clerk explained that at the February meeting, it was discussed whether a delegated authority should be agreed for operational sign offs following the request from the Land Registry in relation to the gas supply for the STEAM Academy. After internal discussions and also a discussion at RPC, it was agreed that authority should be sought on a case-by-case basis.
8. Search & Governance Terms of Reference - the Clerk informed the members that these were approved by the Governing Body in February this year, however, when circulated to the Search & Governance (S&G) Committee members, it was suggested that it should be explicitly stated that the Chair of the Governing Body shall be the Chair of the S&G Committee and that the Vice-Chair should also be a member in order that he/she can deputise. The Clerk will amend the ToR for this and ask for approval at the May S&G and Governing Body meetings (**ACTION** - NE).

The members noted the information.

## **8. RISK REGISTER REVIEW**

The Vice-Principal explained that there had only been two key changes to the register since the previous review in June where most of the changes due to Covid were made:

- Removal of risk 5 - inadequate capital investment - the Vice-Principal explained that with the STEAM Academy, the potential town centre campus and the £xxxk [redacted] digital investment, it was felt that this risk could be removed from the register.
- Addition of risk 15 - Penybont 6th Form College partnership

The Vice-Principal informed the members about the discussions held by the Audit Committee on safeguarding and cyber security. The IT Manager is due to attend the June Audit Committee meeting to update the committee on IT risks and controls.

The Governing Body approved these two amendments.



## **9. COLLEGE POLICIES**

There was one policy requiring Governing Body approval - Data Management and GDPR Policy. The policy had reached its review date and therefore required a review and reapproval.

The Governing Body approved the Data Management and GDPR policy.

## **10. SUMMARY OF STAFF 'JUST CHECKING IN' SURVEYS**

The Director of People explained that two 'Just Checking In' surveys had been performed in May and September 2020; a third is due to go live soon. In May, of the 246 staff that responded, 96% stated that they were well or very well and 97% felt that the College was meeting or exceeding their expectations in terms of support offered. When the same questions were asked in September (229 respondents), these dropped to 87% and 89% respectively. When the reasons for these were analysed, it was discovered that there were many outside factors influencing this such as home-schooling and other family members being furloughed.

The survey also asked questions about productivity with over half of the staff that responded stating that they felt equally productive at home, 35% said they felt that their productivity had increased whilst only 15% felt less productive. The Director of People thanked the Governing Body for making the decision for the additional investment in devices to support the agile working that is now required. The support of the Digital Technologists and Teaching and Learning Coaches also enabled a smooth transition to remote working.

The Director of People informed the Governing Body that there are a number of reports showing that women have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic. The message from the College to all staff has been to just do what you can.

The benefits that staff have fed back on working from home were discussed and also the tremendous support given by managers. However, many staff miss the social interaction of being together on site.

The members were invited to ask questions and one member asked whether there was some anxiety about returning to campuses. The Director of People explained that most staff are excited but there are a minority who are nervous about returning. These are mainly staff who haven't been vaccinated or have underlying health conditions.

The staff governor thanked the SLT and her colleagues for how supported she felt during the pandemic. The number of wellbeing workshops, quizzes, virtual messages has allowed staff to connect and be together and how much she has appreciated this as the staff are a close-knit group of people. The other staff governor echoed this and the importance of finding ways to get people talking.

Another member asked about what new ways of working that will be adopted and the Director of People explained that work on this is ongoing. The sense of community amongst staff is very important and the College wants to maintain this.

The Chair thanked the Director of People for the very positive report and one member commented that most organisations don't even achieve these satisfaction scores in normal times.

## **11. MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS, QUARTERLY UPDATE AND FINANCIAL KPIS**

The Vice-Principal opened the presentation by displaying a table showing the additional funding received from the WG to help the sector and College during the pandemic. The Vice-Principal explained that during a normal year, the College would normally receive WG funding from seven different funding streams, this year the number has increased to 24 and could increase further. Of the additional £92million allocated to the sector, the College has received nearly £xmillion [redacted]. The impact of this is an improvement in the November Forecast of a deficit of £xxxk to a small surplus of £xxxk in the February Forecast [redacted].

The Vice-Principal stated that the sector needs to consider that some colleges may be posting large surplus for 2020/21 due to this extra funding and therefore, provide a rationale to the readers of the financial statements.

A member questioned whether it would be possible to provide for some of next year's cost in this year but the Vice-Principal explained that declarations have to be made demonstrating that the money had been spent in 2020/21. Without the learners being on site, there have been challenges in using this funding, however, the College has plans now that learners can return post-Easter.

The members noted the update.

## **12. CAMPUS DEVELOPMENT UPDATE**

The Vice-Principal provided the following update:

### STEAM Academy and Landbased Centre

- The STEAM Academy is due to be handed over on 29 June - 13 weeks away.
- Having visited the building, it is amazing.
- The workshop is 122m long with a footprint of 8,500m<sup>2</sup> (a football field is 7,000m<sup>2</sup>).
- The Landbased Centre is due to be handed over on 13 September but it is hopeful that this can be brought forward before the start of the academic year.
- The car park has been handed over.
- There is a small contingency which will cover any last minute issues.
- The KPIs are all on track.

### Town Centre Campus

- This is at the heart of BCBC's master plan for Bridgend town centre.
- Work is ongoing to secure the Police Station site at Cheapside.
- A Strategic Outline Case (SOC) was submitted to the 21st Century Schools Programme to meet the 4 March deadline. The Vice-Principal apologised for seeking retrospective approval for this but the College was keen to meet the final Investment Panel meeting prior to the May elections. The Governing Body gave their retrospective approval for the SOC.

- The Vice-Principal then displayed the letter received from WG stating that £x [redacted] of funding has been allocated to Bridgend College (for the STEAM Academy and the town centre campus) for Band B funding meaning that the town centre campus build has been brought forward from Band C to Band B.
- The next step is to submit an Outline Business Case to demonstrate affordability.

The Principal thanked the Vice-Principal for his considerable efforts on both projects and how his work will transform the College's estate for generations to come. The town centre campus will also be a catalyst for change in Bridgend town.

The need for an Away Day was highlighted to talk about this in detail (**ACTION** - NE).

The Vice-Principal thanked all of the SLT and the Governing Body for being forward-thinking to get the projects to these stages.

A member asked what are the next steps and when do decisions have to be made about Cowbridge Road. The Vice-Principal explained that a budget will need to be agreed and decisions made on what is moving to the town centre and what will remain on the Cowbridge Road site. A further question was asked whether all funding had to be spent on the town centre or whether some could be used on the Cowbridge Road site. The Vice-Principal commented that it depends on scale, budgets and affordability.

A member suggested that sometimes local authorities are able to lend money cheaply to public bodies and it may be worth discussing this with BCBC (**ACTION** - AG).

#### Land at Pencoed

- The work on the LDP is progressing slowly. More information will be provided when available.

#### Golygwyd

The Principal stressed that there is still a lot of work to be done to secure the town centre campus, however, it is very exciting for the College.

The Vice-Principal raised the question of affordability of the investment in the town centre but stated that another member of the SLT had questioned whether the College can afford NOT to invest in the new campus as the College needs to invest for the future.

The Chair, on behalf of the Governing Body, thanked the Vice-Principal for his tremendous efforts and stated that this is what the College deserves - a fantastic estate for a high achieving College.

### **13. CORPORATE KPIS**

The Vice-Principal explained that only two KPIS had changed since the February meeting:

- KPI 5 - Achieve a minimum of 2% turnover as operational surplus - even though this was still red, it had improved from xx% to xx% [redacted] due to the extra WG funding received.
- KPI 7 - Sustain staffing costs of no greater than 65% of income - this had changed from xx% to xx% [redacted].

These changes were due to the extra WG funding received.

The Governing Body noted the update.

#### **14. COMMITTEE MINUTES:**

##### **14.1 AUDIT COMMITTEE - 25 FEBRUARY 2021 (UNCONFIRMED)**

The members **RECEIVED** the minutes.

##### **14.2 CURRICULUM & QUALITY COMMITTEE - 4 MARCH (UNCONFIRMED)**

The members **RECEIVED** the minutes.

##### **14.3 RESOURCE PLANNING COMMITTEE - 11 MARCH (UNCONFIRMED)**

These minutes were not available in time for this meeting so will be included on the May Governing Body agenda.

#### **15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS (AOB)**

The Clerk informed the members that a letter had been received from the Minister for Education the day before the meeting about the Additional Learning Needs Code and associated regulations. This letter has been added to the Shared drive for this meeting.

#### **DEBRIEF**

The Chair commented that in the one-to-one discussions, it had been raised that some thought needs to be given to the debrief section to reinvigorate this. However, as it had been included on the agenda, members were invited to debrief on the meeting:

- Very exciting news about the awarding of funding for the town centre campus.
- Several members commented that they liked hearing from the student governors and really valued their comments.
- Hearing about the STEAM Academy is really exciting.
- It was pleasing to hear about the staff as it is important for the Governing Body to understand and appreciate what they're going through.
- The quality and volume of the work is exceptional.
- There is a lot to be positive about.

The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and the meeting closed at 6.44pm.