

**MINUTES OF THE GOVERNING BODY MEETING
HELD ON 7 APRIL 2022 AT 4.30PM
HYBRID MEETING - BRIDGEND BOARDROOM AND VIA GOOGLE MEET**

PRESENT:

Mr Jeff Greenidge - Chair
Ms Emma Adamson - *left at 5.30pm*
Ms Trish D'Souza
Mrs Lisa Dobbs - Staff Governor
Mrs Judith Evans
Mrs Marion Evans - Staff Governor
Dr John Graystone - *left at 6.41pm (power cut)*
Miss Esmie Guild - Student Governor
Mrs Dawn Lewis-Whelan
Mr Hayden Llewellyn - *left at 6.08pm*
Mrs Julia Longville - *joined at 5.15pm*
Ms Alwena Morgan
Mr Joshua O'Sullivan-Woodward - Student Governor
Mrs Joanne Oak - *left at 6.33pm*
Mr Simon Pirotte - Principal
Mrs Satwant Pryce

IN ATTENDANCE

Ms Viv Buckley - Deputy Principal
Mrs Nicola Eyre - Clerk
Mr Andrew Gibbs - Vice-Principal
Mr Jon Nottingham, Active Wellbeing Lead (supporting the student governors)
Mr Andy Baker - Rio Architects (Town Centre presentation only)

The meeting opened at 4.30pm.

1. CHAIR'S WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

All Governing Body members were present at the meeting. Mrs Longville had advised the Clerk that she would be late arriving. Apologies for absence were noted from Mr Joe Baldwin (Assistant Principal, Learner Journey).

The Chair gave a special welcome to Marion Evans and Lisa Dobbs, the two new staff governors, at their first Governing Body meeting.

FEEDBACK FROM ESTYN INSPECTION (PRINCIPAL AND DEPUTY PRINCIPAL) CONFIDENTIAL
Item Redacted

TOWN CENTRE CAMPUS PRESENTATION
Item Redacted

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations.

3. MINUTES OF THE GOVERNING BODY MEETING HELD ON 17 FEBRUARY 2022

The minutes of the Governing Body meeting held on 17 February 2022 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

4. MATTERS ARISING

4.1 Action Tracker

There were ten actions on the action tracker - four green, four amber, one blue and one without an agreed timeframe yet.

The Clerk provided updates for each of the actions.

It was questioned what the outcome of the meeting between Ms Emma Adamson and Mrs Carys Swain (Head of Welsh) was. It was agreed that this would be fed back on at the next meeting (**ACTION - NE**).

5. ANNUAL HEALTH, SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT 2021

Mr Chris Long, Head of Health, Safety and Sustainability gave an overview of the work being done in this area and the many positive outcomes that are being achieved. Mr Long caveated the report by saying that it is not directly comparable with previous years due to the pandemic.

Mr Long informed the members of the awards that the College had received the following awards:

- Winner of the Green Gown Award for 2030 Climate Action (Small Institution).
- Healthy Working Wales Visionary Commendation for Sustainability.
- Platinum Award - Welsh Green Travel Plan.
- Platinum Award - Corporate Health Standards.
- Highly commended - Health and Safety by the South and West Wales Safety Group.

The recent internal audit on sustainability and well-being had also concluded that “substantial assurance” could be placed on the work being done in this area.

The members were informed that since September 2021, learners are working towards ‘Action for Sustainability’ core skills and digital badges to equip them with the knowledge to make informed decisions about climate action and sustainability.

The Governing Body was updated on the discussions taking place with the local community on how this work can be disseminated more widely as the College is an anchor institution.

The College’s next steps in this area of work were explained:

- Three e-learning modules are being developed on net zero carbon (WG funded).
- The College's Carbon Task Group is doing amazing work.
- The House of the Future (former Principal's house on the Pencoed campus) will provide excellent opportunities.
- New international links with Canadian educational institutions are being developed.
- The aim is to bring forward the net zero carbon date from 2040 to 2030 as the College has already exceeded its 25% carbon reduction target by 2025 (currently at 37%).
- Learners will need a different skill-set as society moves to low/zero carbon.

A member questioned the sustainability of the reduction in travel, consumables etc now that campuses have opened back up. Mr Long stated the importance of using IT and digital resources to continue to maintain/achieve further savings. The messages around agile working and the use of fewer resources needs to be reiterated to staff.

The Chair thanked Mr Long for the presentation and the work being done and said that the triangulation of robust data, awards received and internal audit assurance was very reassuring for the Governing Body.

5.47pm - Mr Long left the meeting

6. WHISTLE-BLOWING POLICY

The HR Manager informed the Governing Body that the Audit Committee had reviewed this policy and requested some amendments to the policy. The policy presented to the Governing Body includes these amendments.

Feedback was given about the use of Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDAs) as this was raised at the Audit Committee meeting. The HR Manager explained the College does not use NDAs regularly and when they are used, it is not to protect commercial sensitivities but in settlement agreements.

Another question that was raised at the Audit Committee meeting was the interaction of this policy with the Dignity At Work Policy. The HR Manager explained that the College doesn't have such a policy as the Grievance, Disciplinary, Bullying and Harassment and Citizenship Code policies cover this. These policies are referenced in the Whistleblowing Policy.

A member requested that section 1.3 is reworded to be more positive as it doesn't align with the College's culture (**ACTION - CL**).

Another member questioned whether there are separate staff and learners complaints policies or whether they are conjoined. The Deputy Principal explained that there are two different procedures that are followed for staff and learners.

The Governing Body approved the Whistleblowing Policy subject to section 1.3 being reworded.

7. EQUALITY REPORT 2020/21

The HR Manager highlighted the key information from the report:

- The College is on a journey with Equality/Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.
- More sensitive data is now being collected.
- Staff are more willing to share sensitive data.
- The Gender Pay Gap has fallen by 1.3%.
- The 17 Well-being Advocates are settling in well to their roles.
- The Inclusive Companies report on EDI is helping shape the work in this area.

A member questioned whether the EHRC (Equality and Human Rights Commission) could help. The HR Manager explained that the College is horizon scanning for ways to improve. The Principal added that there is now a lot of data held and that he is keen to establish the Governing Body's view on where efforts should be concentrated in this field. A member responded by saying that she felt heartened by the report and suggested that the College may be doing itself a dis-service as it is listening to its staff and taking measures to continuously improve. The member said that this is a powerful indicator of a successful organisation.

A discussion was held about the SLT driving the EDI agenda and how this is creating an inclusive environment. The Principal stressed the importance of the "feel" of the EDI work amongst the staff and learners and how the Estyn framework could be strengthened to include this.

The Chair thanked the HR Manager for the report and added that he had spoken with some ESOL learners earlier that day and they had said that they felt like they belonged at the College.

The Governing Body noted the report.

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

The Principal highlighted the following from his written report:

- Covid - case numbers are increasing weekly and this is causing disruption.
- The Principal drew the members' attention to the policies that had been approved by SLT.
- The project with Weston College that had previously been withdrawn is now back live.
- Workload - work is ongoing to address pressures on staff, however, additional WG funding is set to be withdrawn which will present challenges for the College.
- Achievements - the Day Nursery has been shortlisted for the Nursery of the Year Award.
- Viv Buckley, Deputy Principal is a finalist in the Outstanding Educator category in the World Federation of Colleges and Polytechnics (WFCP) 2022 Awards of Excellence.

The Principal provided further information about the Labour Party campaign launch held in the STEAM Academy earlier that week. Sir Keir Starmer, Mark Drakeford MS and Jeremy Miles MS were amongst the party members that attended. The Principal explained that there were internal discussions about getting involved in politics but the profile and traction that the event has given the College has been significant.

The Chair asked the staff governors about workload. It was commented that Covid is continuing to cause operational problems but staff are passionate and still very positive.

The Governing Body noted the update.

9. GOVERNANCE MATTERS

Items recommended for approval

- 2022/23 Calendar of meetings - the Governing Body approved this.

Items for noting

- Postponed Away Day - the Clerk informed the Governing Body that a new date will be circulated soon to check for availability.
- Recruitment of Governing Body members - it was noted that a person has been invited for an interview at the Search & Governance Committee meeting on 5 May.
- Policies - it was noted that there hadn't been any policies approved at committee level.

The Clerk extended an invitation to the members to the launch of the new ALN Hub in Tregoes House on 26 April at 12pm.

10. EXTERNAL AUDITOR'S APPOINTMENT

The Governing Body approved the recommendation to extend PwC's contract by a further year after only receiving one expression of interest in the recent tender process.

The Governing Body noted that the tender for 2022/23 onwards will commence in the summer term.

11. UTILITIES SUPPLY - CONFIDENTIAL

Item redacted

12. RISK REGISTER REVIEW

The Vice-Principal explained that the Risk Register had been thoroughly reviewed by the Audit Committee. The recommendations are that two risks are removed from the register (loss of WBL contract and the completion of the STEAM Academy) and two risks are added (town centre campus and cyber security).

After a discussion, the Governing Body approved the amended Risk Register.

13. ESTATES STRATEGY

The Vice-Principal informed the Governing Body that the Resource Planning Committee (RPC) had undertaken a detailed review of the 10-point Estates Strategy and the feedback from this had been incorporated into the strategy presented.

The Governing Body discussed and approved the Estates Strategy.

6.30pm - Mrs Jo Oak left the meeting

14. 2020/21 SELF EVALUATION REPORT (SER)

The Deputy Principal explained that in previous years the College had to submit this to the WG. This is no longer a requirement but the College has continued writing the SER as it ties together the Quarterly Improvement Plan (QIP), Risk Register, KPIs and the Strategic Plan in one document.

The SER was presented and discussed in the March Curriculum & Quality (C&Q) Committee meeting along with the QIP. At the C&Q meeting, it was agreed that the QIP will be a standing item on the agenda.

The Chair of the C&Q Committee asked what Estyn's views were of the SER. The Deputy Principal said that initially they thought it was too reliant on the narrative, however, they faced the same challenge when drafting their inspection report as there is no verified data available. Therefore, at the end of the two weeks, they did understand the challenges and were satisfied with the SER.

The Governing Body noted the update.

15. MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS, QUARTERLY UPDATE AND FINANCIAL KPIS

The Vice Principal presented the bridging table in the Management Accounts which showed a small deficit forecast of (£xxxk) [redacted]. This had improved from the November Forecast of (£xxxk) [redacted] and the original budget of (£xxxxk) [redacted]. The main reasons for this was additional WG funding streams to support the learners during the pandemic. An in-depth explanation was given at the March RPC meeting.

It was explained that it is hopeful that a balanced budget will be delivered at the year-end.

A very healthy cash position of just over £million [redacted] at 31 January 2022 was highlighted and this is forecast to be £million [redacted] at the year-end.

It was questioned how much of a risk is the clawback threat and the Vice-Principal replied that the only risk is to the part-time FE funding which is being regularly monitored; all other clawback targets have been suspended because of the pandemic. The year-end target is

97.5%, the current position is xx% [redacted] and the College is confident that the target will be achieved.

The Governing Body noted the update.

16. CAMPUS DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

This item was covered in the presentation at the start of the meeting and the members noted that a more detailed update will be given at the Away Day.

17. CORPORATE KPIS

Three out of the ten KPIS had changed since the last meeting and the Vice-Principal gave explanations for these:

- KPI 1 (90% successful completion rate) - there has been a 1% decrease to xx% [redacted]. The target was put in place prior to the pandemic when targets for teaching and learning were different. There is a similar picture across the sector.
- KPI 5 (minimum of 2% turnover at operational surplus) - turnover has improved since January and hence the improvement in the target. However, it may not reach the 2% target.
- KPI 7 (staff costs as a percentage of income to be no greater than 65%) - this has improved from xx% (red) in January to xx% (green) [redacted] due to a release of additional WG income during the year.

A member queried about the bank loan covenants that had been discussed at previous meetings. The Vice-Principal explained the three covenants and that the earlier breach is no longer relevant. It is planned for the Barclays loan for the Construction Academy to be paid off before the year-end

The Governing Body noted the update.

18. COMMITTEE MINUTES

18.1 AUDIT COMMITTEE - 10 MARCH 2022

The members **RECEIVED** the minutes.

18.2 CURRICULUM & QUALITY - 17 MARCH 2022

The minutes were not available at the time of the meeting.

18.3 RESOURCE PLANNING - 24 MARCH 2022

The minutes were not available at the time of the meeting.

19. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None

DEBRIEF

- The Chair commented that the meeting had over-run.
- There are lots of successes and things to celebrate.
- There is a clear thread of inclusion feeding through all of the discussions with well-being and support being front and centre in everything the College does.
- Something very positive is happening and this is running through the lifeblood of the College.

The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and the meeting closed at 6.49pm.