

**MINUTES OF THE GOVERNING BODY MEETING  
HELD ON 16 FEBRUARY 2023 AT 4.30PM  
STEAM ACADEMY CONFERENCE ROOM AND VIA GOOGLE MEET**

**PRESENT:**

Jeff Greenidge - Chair  
Judith Evans - Vice-Chair  
Emma Adamson  
Dan Biddle  
Lisa Dobbs - Staff Governor  
Marion Evans - Staff Governor  
Dawn Lewis-Whelan  
Hayden Llewellyn  
Ruby Llewelyn - Student Governor  
Joshua O'Sullivan Woodward - Student Governor  
Simon Pirotte - Principal  
Satwant Pryce  
Helen Verity

**IN ATTENDANCE**

Joe Baldwin - Vice Principal (Learner Journey, Systems and Inclusive Practice)  
Viv Buckley - Deputy Principal  
Nicola Eyre - Clerk  
Andrew Gibbs - Vice-Principal (Resources)  
Matt Rees - Assistant Principal - Learning, Curriculum and Student Experience (Observer)

The meeting opened at 4.30pm

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

The Chair formally welcomed everyone to the meeting and a special welcome was given to Helen Verity and Dan Biddle at their first Governing Body meeting. A round table introduction was held.

Apologies for absence were received from Trish D'Souza, Claire Marshall, Joanne Oak, Stephne Puddy and Joe Stockley (Observer - on a Graduate Placement with the College).

Joanne Oak attended the Reserved Business meeting.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **3. MINUTES OF THE GOVERNING BODY MEETING HELD ON 8 DECEMBER 2022**

The minutes of the Governing Body meeting held on 8 December 2022 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

### **4. MATTERS ARISING**

#### **4.1 Action Tracker**

There were five actions on the Action Tracker - one green, one amber, two blue and one on hold. The Clerk provided updates for each of the actions.

It was noted that the two governor learner walks planned for earlier this month had been postponed. Emma Adamson informed the members that she has plans to meet with the Skills team soon.

### **5. PRINCIPAL'S UPDATE**

The Principal gave a brief update highlighting that the funding challenges and the town centre campus are the current focuses for the SLT.

### **6. TEACHING & LEARNING UPDATE**

The Deputy Principal said that she's delighted that a teaching and learning update is now a standing item on the Governing Body agenda.

The Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy was presented and the key objectives were explained.

A member questioned what the lasting impact of COVID on learner behaviour and resilience is as her perception is that the demand for support is greater than ever before but the capacity to support is lessening due to the reduced funding being available. The Deputy Principal explained that the landscape is changing and learners are less resilient than they were previously. The following information was provided:

- The College is at xx% [redacted] of its enrolment target and overall, the Welsh FE sector is over-funded by £5 million.
- The initial enrolment was at xx% [redacted] of target but xxx [redacted] learners were lost after the 56-day cut-off.
- There are currently xxxx [redacted] full-time FE learners enrolled which is the lowest number for a very long time.
- The College is trying lots of ways to engage and keep learners as there are a number at risk of dropping out.
- There was significant financial support provided by the Welsh Government (WG) during the pandemic which allowed the College to employ extra support staff on fixed-term contracts. When these fixed-term contracts end, there is still the need to provide support and teaching costs may need to be cut in order to keep the level of support that learners need.

A member queried what impact the cost of living is having and whether the College is seeing pressure for learners to leave College and to go to work. The member also asked about how the College is working with disengaged young people who are not in employment, education or training. The Deputy Principal said that there is evidence that some learners are leaving to join the workplace and some learners didn't return in September for their second year. The Learning and Progression Coaches are in regular contact with these learners. The College is also trialling the use of Purlos, a WhatsApp platform for post-16 learner engagement, and there have been some early successes from this. It was noted that the College is having to work harder than ever to recruit and retain learners.

Another member asked what percentage of the xxxx [redacted] leavers have additional learning needs (ALN) as there is a danger of these learners living in abject poverty. (**ACTION - JB** to provide this data). The Deputy Principal explained that over 50% of learners on enrolment declare an ALN with approximately 25% being statemented. It was noted that the learners with ALN out-perform non-ALN learners and this something that the College is very proud of. The members noted that the College has just recruited School Transition Leads who will start working with Year 10 pupils in schools to inform them of all the learning opportunities available to them.

A discussion about learners leaving College early to take entry-level jobs that require no qualifications was held and how this might benefit them financially in the short-term but not being in their best interest in the medium or longer-term. A member commented that learner numbers are falling despite the significant support in place and said that this picture could be a lot worse if the support wasn't available. The Principal added that all colleges in Wales are facing the same problems and that the social consequences will be felt for years to come.

The student governors were asked to give their feedback on whether they felt the College was focussing enough on the learners and their needs. The following information was given:

#### Ruby

- The College is supporting her well.
- It is expensive to attend College and the Financial Contingency Funding is not much.
- She has considered leaving due to the costs and her ability to earn money if she doesn't attend College.
- Some of her friends on her course have left to take up employment. However, Ruby said that her tutors have been excellent in convincing her that her studies are a long-term investment and to stay on to complete her course as her earning potential will be a lot greater with a qualification.
- The College could better promote the support and resources available. Ruby's lecturers have made her class aware of these but friends on other courses have not been given the same information {this was raised at a previous Governing Body meeting}.
- Some apps that are needed for coursework are not compatible with chromebooks and therefore, the work has to be done in College rather than at home. This can be an added expense if she needs to come into College on a day when she doesn't have any lectures.

## Joshua

- The degree-level course that Joshua is studying is well funded.
- There appears to be low drop-out rates in Land-based Studies.
- There is a strong bond with the lecturers on the course. However, his brother who is studying an IT course at the College does not have such a close connection with his lecturers.

The teaching staff governor explained that full-time Access to HE courses have no funding entitlements and therefore enrolments have been lower and a few have left the courses mid-year. As a result, flexible courses have been introduced to allow learners to work alongside their studies and uptake on this has been strong.

The Deputy Principal informed the members that the College is working to re-engage learners and the aim is to have happy learners who feel safe. The qualifications will naturally follow on from this.

The Governing Body noted the update.

## **7. GOVERNANCE MATTERS**

The Governing Body RATIFIED the following:

- The appointment of Dan Biddle, Stephne Puddy and Helen Verity onto the Governing Body for a term of four years.
- The appointment of Dan Biddle onto the Resource Planning and Curriculum & Quality Committees.
- The appointment of Stephne Puddy onto the Curriculum & Quality Committee.
- The appointment of Helen Verity onto the Audit Committee.
- The appointment of Paul Davies as a co-opted member of the Resource Planning Committee.
- The appointment of Emma Adamson and Trish D'Souza onto the Search & Governance Committee.
- The appointment of Mazars as the College's external audit providers for a period of three years (2022/23 to 2024/25) with the option to extend this by up to a further two years.

The Governing Body APPROVED the calendar of meetings for 2023/24.

## **8. CAMPUS DEVELOPMENTS**

**Town Centre Campus - STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL**

[Redacted]

## **9. FINANCIAL UPDATE**

### Update on 2022/23

The Vice-Principal (Resources) presented the table in the paper showing additional WG funding made available in January of approximately xxx [redacted]. The impact on the

November Forecast of this additional funding is approximately xxx [redacted] which should result in xxx [redacted].

The members noted that [redacted] is for capital projects [redacted]. The recommendation within the paper was for the value of the contract with Kier for the Sustainable Garden project to be increased by xxxx [redacted]. This would allow the project to be completed as originally planned and it would be 100% funded by the additional [redacted] funding. The project had previously been down-scaled due to costs. **The Governing Body APPROVED the increase of the purchase order value for the Sustainable Garden by xxx [redacted].**

#### Update on 2023/24

The Vice-Principal (Resources) presented the tables within the paper that showed the core funding allocations from the WG for 2023/24 for the FE sector. It was noted that Bridgend College is one of four colleges having a funding cut when compared with 2022/23. It was also noted that within the allocations, the WG has included an allowance for a 3.5% pay award for 2023/24 which makes the situation even worse. However, there is a one-off transition adjustment for 2023/24 to spread the impact of the funding cuts over two years.

A member questioned how some colleges are receiving a funding uplift and yet four are due to receive a funding cut. The Vice-Principal (Resources) explained that it is based on planned delivery levels. Another member queried whether the deprivation uplift can be challenged and the Principal said that this is something that he has raised many times with the WG as Bridgend has many areas of social deprivation. This issue of colleges in areas where the Welsh language is spoken more e.g. Grwp Llandrillo Menai receiving a Welsh Medium Allowance of £2m compared with Bridgend College receiving £30k was highlighted once again.

[Redacted]

The Governing Body noted the update.

### **10. CORPORATE KPIS**

The Vice-Principal (Resources) presented the current set of Corporate KPIS which hadn't moved since the previous Governing Body meeting.

The Deputy Principal presented the proposed KPI Tracker and the Governing Body agreed that they would like to introduce this as a standing item (**ACTION - NE**).

It was noted that every department in the College has its own Quality Improvement Plan, Self Evaluation report and KPIS as well as there being curriculum and SLT KPIS that are monitored monthly.

### **11. COLLEGE COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS**

The Governing Body noted the compliments and complaints which were very small in number. It was agreed that if there isn't a legal requirement to report these to the

Governing Body, there was no need to present these in the future. The Clerk is to look into the legalities on this (**ACTION - NE**).

A discussion took place about whether staff receive a commendation for compliments received. It was noted that staff who have gone above and beyond are invited to meet the Principal for him to pass on his gratitude but there isn't an agreed procedure in place.

## **12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Principal gently reminded the Governing Body of their invitation to the Wales Skills celebration event taking place on 9 March at 6pm and asked if they could kindly respond to the invitation.

### **VALUES CHECKER**

The two new members said that they'd had a very favourable first impression of the Governing Body. The quality of the reports was excellent and there felt a real honesty and openness in the answers given to the questions posed. One of the members said that despite not having a working knowledge of the College and the Governing Body, she felt safe. The other member commented that the meeting gave him confidence that the College is moving in the right direction and that there is a real commitment and impetus amongst the SLT for both the learners and staff.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and the meeting closed at 5.56pm.