

Minutes of the Extra-ordinary Corporation Meeting held remotely on Monday 20 April 2020

Present: -

- Mr Mervyn Jones (Chair)
- Ms Abigail Appleton (Principal)
- Ms Stevie Callender
- Mrs Peta Darnley
- Mr Daniel Fox
- Dr Mia Gordon
- Mr Joe Hedges
- Mr Clive Hodgeman
- Mrs Jennifer Hodgeman
- Miss Hannah Jones
- Mr Tim Newsholme
- Mr John Nicol
- Mr Mike Rookes
- Mr Scott Rolfe
- Ms Kay Sandford-Beal
- Ms Katie Seekings

In attendance: -

- Mr Ben Gamble (Head of FE)
- Mr Justin Gregory (Head of HE)
- Mrs Linda Watkins (Clerk to the Governors)
- Mr Tim Williams (Finance Director)
- Ms Kate Howe (Head of Marketing and Communications)

The meeting was quorate as 16 Governors were present for the meeting which was held by conference call due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Chair thanked everyone for joining the meeting explaining that officers would be asked to present items with opportunities for questions thereafter.

1. Process of the Meeting

- I. Apologies for absence were received from Professor Robin Baker.
- II. There were no declarations of interests.

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting

- I. The Board agreed that the Chair should sign the minutes of the Board meeting held on 10 February 2020 as a true record.
- II. Actions taken to address matters arising were reported in the action list showing progress. It was noted that some were void due to COVID-19 pandemic.

The Board agreed: -

- To approve the minutes

3. Principal's Report

- I. The Principal expanded on her written report explaining that the Incident Management Group was addressing issues arising from COVID-19. The College closure had been remarkably smooth with staff embracing online working and delivery of teaching and learning to students

supported by the IT team. Staff are using Microsoft Teams to communicate with students; there have also been meetings with student reps and regular staff meetings with high levels of attendance.

The College continues to support vulnerable students and is remaining open for a few FE students and supporting HE students who have remained locally in residential accommodation.

The Incident Management Policy (IMP) had been issued to Governors with suggestions to add guidance in the event someone needed to seek a medical opinion; the IMP stated that the College will follow Public Health England guidance. There was discussion about the role of the Chair of Corporation regarding consultation for College closure; it was agreed that this would depend on the reason for closure and potential timescale. Inconsistencies in the IMP regarding the Principal and SLT's authority to close the College would be amended.

ACTION: PRINCIPAL.

An action showing objectives to achieve academic aims, pastoral support, communications and financial sustainability was provided. This evidenced that opportunities resultant from COVID-19 are being identified.

Student recruitment is a priority. FE applications are significantly better than last year with interviews to commence this term. HE applications are similar to the previous two years. The HE offer is being reviewed concentrating on curriculum development and revalidation working with an external consultant. Workshops were piloted with staff which will be expanded to allow more staff, students and external employers to contribute ideas for exploration. Governors were invited to participate.

A summary of strategy implementation 2019/20 as at April 2020 was provided.

The Board agreed: -

- To note the Principal's report and appendices

4. Risk Register

The Finance Director outlined significant changes to the register since the last meeting.

As a result of COVID-19 OfS have allocated a member of staff to each institution. The College is liaising with UWTSD to agree new deadlines and submission requirements for HE courses. There have been some challenges delivering courses remotely, particularly for students who require access to workshops and assessment for HE level 6 students.

There was a successful meeting between NMiTE and SLT. Discussion continues with Herefordshire Council regarding student accommodation. The building contractors were ahead of schedule; however, there is uncertainty if the project will be completed in time due to lockdown.

COVID-19 had increased some risks, particularly HE recruitment, student outcomes, finance, staff and student wellbeing. SLT are addressing risks with mitigating actions where possible.

The Board agreed: -

- To note the risk register
- To note the risk register appendix identifying risks and proactive actions to address COVID-19

5. Finance Report [A confidential minute was recorded]

6. Marketing and Recruitment Strategic Update [A confidential minute was recorded]

7. Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures

The Head of FE explained that amendments to the policy had been prompted by COVID-19 and Herefordshire Council's safeguarding self assessment questionnaire. Updates relating to COVID-19, specifically vulnerable students, holidays and risk, the title of the policy had been expanded to incorporate child protection, updates to SEND and FGM.

A Governor asked if Zoom was being used as it was understood that there were some security issues. The Head of FE responded that staff have been requested to use Microsoft Teams with guidance provided on how to blur backgrounds and ensure family members are not in view of the camera.

The Board agreed: -

- To approve the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures

8. Points to raise from the AQ&S Committee and Audit Committee papers

Papers were issued for the above meetings which were subsequently cancelled as a result of COVID-19. The Chairs of AQ&S Committee reported that they had approved the Professional Conduct Policy using Chairs' action.

The Audit Committee Chair reported that a Committee member had raised points from the RSM internal audit reports. It was proposed an Audit Committee be arranged to focus on these points.

ACTION: CLERK TO THE GOVERNORS

The Board agreed: -

- To note reports from the Committee Chairs
- To ratify the AQ&S Committee Chairs' action to approve the Professional Conduct Policy
- To note an Audit Committee will be arranged

9. Any Other Business

- I. The Chair outlined discussion with the Principal regarding planning for imminent meetings proposing the F&GP Committee arranged for 27 April be deferred to 11 May to replace the Board meeting. This would allow officers sufficient time to prepare financial reports to embed option 2 which the Board had been agreed. The Clerk would arrange a Board meeting in June.
ACTION: CLERK TO THE GOVERNORS
- II. The Clerk had drafted dates for next year's Board and Committees proposing the February 2021 strategy meeting be held in January 2020 so that the Board could approve the IFMC for submission to ESFA by 31 January. This was accepted and dates would be issued.
ACTION: CLERK TO THE GOVERNORS
- III. A Student Governor raised discussion by final year students that some students who have young children would find it difficult to attend workshops if these are open in August. The Head of HE responded that access to

workshops would be optional for students. He reiterated that students can submit work at any point up to the deadline for their programme. It was accepted this would be a loss for some students. This would be considered further following lifting of lockdown. **ACTION: PRINCIPAL/HEAD OF HE**

- IV. The Chair thanked everyone for their contributions at the remote meeting.
- V. The Board congratulated SLT, staff and students on addressing COVID-19 issues promptly and continuing to participate in teaching and learning.

10. Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting was deferred to Thursday 4 June 2020 commencing at 4.30 pm [arranged post meeting]

Signed as a true record of proceedings

Chair: **Date:**