



WEST NOTTINGHAMSHIRE COLLEGE
CORPORATION BOARD

Minutes of the Corporation Board meeting held on Thursday 19th December 2024 at 17:00

GOVERNORS

PRESENT:

Kate Truscott, Chair
Nick Butler
Andrew Cropley, Principal and Chief Executive Officer
David Gillies
Charles Heaton (from 17:45)
Theresa Hodgkinson
Neil McDonald
Ben Owen
Jane Peacock
Edward Rawson
Kit Salt
Rob Simcox
Keith Spiers
Paul Wheeler
Scott Smith, Staff Governor: Academic
Andrew Spencer, Staff Governor: Business Support
Flynn Bainbridge, Student Governor

ALSO IN

ATTENDANCE:

Louise Knott, Vice Principal: Communications, Engagement & Student Experience
Diane Booth, Vice Principal: Curriculum & Quality
Jon Fearon, Finance Director
Gavin Peake, Director: IT, Estates & Learning Resources
Sian Geeson, Director: Human Resources & Organisational Development
Eloise Hopkinson, Clerk to the Corporation
Megan McQueen, Teacher: A-Level Law and Politics (observer)

		ACTION by whom	DATE by when
1	<u>WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</u> Apologies for absence were received from Arina Borscakova and Kudzai Muzangaza. The chair offered a note of thanks to governors, the college, and Neil McDonald for the recent support given by all.		
2	<u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</u> The chair reminded everyone present to declare any interests that they may have on matters to be discussed. Ben Owen declared an interest in item 3 of the agenda, but no other specific declarations were made. Standing declarations were noted.		

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(Ben Owen left the meeting.)

3 APPOINTMENT OF THE CORPORATION BOARD VICE CHAIR

The clerk to the Corporation informed governors that Ben Owen had expressed an interest in the role of vice chair of the Corporation Board. Governors were invited to vote on this appointment by way of a show of hands. The vote was unanimously in favour of appointing Ben Owen as vice-chair of the Corporation Board.

AGREED: to appoint Ben Owen as vice-chair of the Corporation Board.

(Ben Owen re-joined the meeting.)

4 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 17TH OCTOBER 2024

The minutes were reviewed, and it was agreed that they were an accurate record of discussions.

AGREED: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 17th October 2024.

There were no matters arising.

5 ACTION PROGRESS REPORT

The board were happy to note the content of the update provided.

6 SCENE SETTING

The chair briefly set the scene for the meeting. Governors were reminded that papers would be taken as read to enable focus as appropriate. The agenda was described as containing a number of important items, but the key areas were the approval of the SAR, in addition to the members report and financial statements and associated yearend finance items. Governors were informed that it was important to flag up key items, but chairs' reports would otherwise be taken as read with a focus on board actions emerging from the committees.

7 BALANCED SCORECARD AND ANNUAL KPIS – 2024/25 IN-YEAR

The principal presented his report, reminding governors that they would be very welcome to contact the director: IT, estates and learning resources to arrange a meeting if they had any queries in respect of the approach which was taken to finalising this document.

One matter specifically pointed out to the board was that maths and English attendance has remained a challenge for WNC, as for colleges across the country. The chair acknowledged that this was certainly one of the most challenging issues at the current time. The vice principal: curriculum and quality detailed the recent activity which involved all students who were not present in maths and English lessons receiving a text message from the college to enquire as to their whereabouts. This

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improved attendance by 2%. This will not be repeated every week as this would reduce the impact, but it will take place periodically throughout the year, including during the first week back after the Christmas break.

One governor observed that it was very positive to see how much the college is doing in order to improve attendance.

One governor queried the reasons for non-attendance. Governors were informed that feedback through learner voice has indicated the following:

- Students feel that they lack ability in maths and English.
- Students perceive themselves as having enrolled to the college to study a specific subject, not maths and English.
- Some students were not motivated to study maths and English at school, and they have brought this forward into Further Education.

Senior leaders indicated that there was further work to do, particularly in maths. The principal informed governors that he asked some of the resit students to write about their experiences within school, and the outcomes of this exercise were often shocking. The college must ensure that its lessons are progressive and inspirational to drive engagement, but improving students' attendance is key as they will otherwise not have the positive experience of attending these lessons. The vice principal: curriculum and quality informed governors of the work undertaken with Loughborough College in relation to 'the perfect story', where students continue to work on and improve a single piece of creative writing as part of their exam practice. She also indicated that the college is working with feeder schools and other colleges to try to improve.

Referring to the point that some students do not see the relevance of English and maths in relation to their vocational subject, the chair indicated that more must be done to improve this and show students how maths and English relate to their course and aspirations.

AGREED: to note the content of the report.

8

QUALITY AND STANDARDS

The committee chair presented his in-depth report. He recommended that governors aim to look at the 'Keeping Children Safe in Education: Helping Families Thrive' document, which had been uploaded in its entirety to the governors' portal. At the last committee meeting, members of the Standards Committee talked in depth about the overwhelming amount of work with which the Safeguarding team gets involved. Members were particularly disappointed to hear of a local county council disbanding its early assessment team, as this will create further demands upon the college and its staff. The committee also

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discussed the growing number of additional exam access requirements and the general complexity of the challenges encountered.

The academic staff governor asked whether there was a way to monitor whether an apprentice is on target to achieve high grades. The vice principal: curriculum and quality explained that there is a similar process to that seen in classroom-based learning, but this is managed through OneFile for apprenticeships. This enables the college to report on whether or not students are on track in terms of meeting target grades and in terms of completion.

Talking Heads – A Levels

Comments made by those students who took part in this video included the following:

- Students appreciate being treated more like adults, in comparison to when they were at school.
- While some subjects can be challenging, lessons are engaging and the curriculum is well-structured, enabling students to prepare.
- Staff are supportive and helpful, and they encourage students to push themselves to do their best.
- Students are encouraged to think about their aspirations.
- The atmosphere on campus is positive and the social element is welcomed by some students.
- An area for improvement was largely agreed to be tutorial. Students feel that these sessions should be more tailored to students' needs and should include topics such as neurodivergence awareness, how to handle finances (e.g. mortgages and university finances) and general life skills.
- Another area for improvement was that the learner voice Teams meetings can be somewhat disorganised, and many students do not engage with these appropriately. One student indicated that it is not widely known who the area's learner reps are, and this needs to be more widely publicised.

It was observed that the comments made by the A-Level students who were present in the earlier student panel meeting chimed with this feedback. The vice principal: curriculum and quality expressed confidence that tutorials do offer a good range of topics and that there is flexibility within the framework, but some topics must be covered by a certain point within the year in order to be effective and/or meet requirements (e.g. UCAS). The student governor observed that some students grow impatient with repeated topics, although it is understood that this is sometimes necessary. He suggested that the whole framework could be shared with students, and staff could make it clear when the college is unable to choose not to deliver a certain tutorial topic. More transparent communication would be helpful.

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Governors agreed that the point raised in relation to some students not knowing who their learner reps are needs to be fed back as appropriate. The vice principal: communications, engagement and student experience suggested that this comment could have related to the Your Voice meetings, which can be quite chaotic.

The clerk to the Corporation informed governors that a manager from the A-Level department had requested to be put in touch with Mansfield Building Society in relation to finance-related sessions for students, so actions were already being taken in respect of that particular item of feedback.

AGREED:

- to note the content of the summary report
- to note the content of the minutes of the meeting
- to note the content of the QIAP report
- to note the balanced scorecard/KPIs report
- to note the content of the combined safeguarding/Prevent, EDI, and priority groups report.

9 SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT 2023/24

The vice principal: curriculum and quality presented the Self-Assessment Report (SAR) 2023/24 for the Corporation Board's approval.

The Standards Committee members were very happy in relation to the college's position. There was some debate around leadership and management, but members were very pleased with the detail and the content of the SAR.

The vice principal: curriculum and quality indicated that there had been significant improvement in vocational teaching. High grades were good: during the external validation meeting with Lincolnshire and Loughborough Colleges, the external invitees communicated that they were impressed by WNC's technical high grades. It was agreed that the college is not far away from 'outstanding'. The only reason for leadership and management having not been assessed as outstanding was that more remains to be done to improve English and maths, A Levels, and apprenticeships. Apprenticeships was agreed to be moving forward, and it was acknowledged that the position has improved, but length of stay on some apprenticeships has had an impact.

The college is very inclusive and is likely to become even more so for 2025/26. This time next year, it is hoped that more vocational areas will have improved to be 'outstanding'. Some areas have moved to outstanding this academic year, including computer science and the football academy provision, and these are in addition to those areas which have been 'outstanding' for a number of years. Other areas have moved into a more positive position, even if they are not yet grade 1.

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Following a trial, the college moved forward with a different awarding organisation for GCSE English in 2024/25, for which students sit only two papers rather than three. The college moved forward with this but then was impacted by the change to the grade boundary by 11 marks. Due to this, 199 learners who would have achieved a grade 4 had did not do so. It is not possible for the college to foresee changes such as this, so this was very unexpected.

Following some challenges earlier in the year, A Levels was in a better position by the end of the year following a restructure. However, the vice principal indicated that it takes a full academic year to see improvements.

One governor observed that the SAR validation process was really positive, as was the support offered by peer colleges. These meetings really gave the college the opportunity to challenge itself. The chair agreed that robust challenge can be evidenced, and it was very good practice to have the peer colleges present to review the self-assessment. The college can be recognised within the document presented, and it is clear that the self-assessment is very honest.

The chair of the Standards Committee observed that the college has really made progress in the last year, and the SAR is felt to be a strong and accurate document. He expressed the opinion that the college has really made a strong move forward towards outstanding, and he congratulated staff in relation to this.

The chair of the board communicated her thanks for the effort and work that has gone into this document and the continuing progress. She acknowledged that the college is never complacent – there is always evidence of scrutiny and a willingness to improve.

AGREED:

- to approve the Self-Assessment Report 2023/24, once the amendments requested by the Standards Committee have been incorporated.

10

AUDIT AND RISK

The committee chair presented his report, highlighting the following key points:

- The college website has been under observation for some months. The matter was not yet sufficiently progressed to be passed to other committees for scrutiny, but good, swift progress was being made. This was presented to the Audit Committee as a red risk, and work has been initiated. At the appropriate time, the issue will be reported on to the Standards Committee and then to the Finance and Estates Committee, before going to the Corporation Board. Until that time, it will continue to be monitored by the Audit Committee.

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- The audit plan is on target – the committee was awaiting two more audit briefs and was expecting the audits to all be completed in-year.
- The Audit Committee's annual report presented – was subsequently updated at a request from the committee members in order to make it clear that the board had recruited diversely in its last round of governor appointments.

Governors agreed that the website issue was crucial and remained a key issue of focus which the college needed to resolve.

AGREED:

- to note the content of the chair's report
- to note the content of the minutes of the meeting
- to note the 2024/25 risk register
- to note the internal audit progress report
- to note the Audit Committee's Annual Report to the Corporation Board 2023/24.

11 JOINT MEETING OF THE AUDIT AND FINANCE AND ESTATES COMMITTEES

The committee chair presented his report, particularly highlighting the fact that the audit report was clean, which meant that the meeting went smoothly. Governors were informed that this year marked the first time in a while that the audit report was clean at the first attempt.

Thanks were given for the work which has gone into this output, and governors agreed that it was good to see improvement in these important areas.

AGREED:

- to note the content of the summary report
- to note the content of the minutes of the meeting and the recording (available via ShareFile)
- to approve the 2023/24 Financial Statements Audit Management Letter, Audit Completion Report, and Letter of Representation.

12 2023/24 FINANCIAL YEAREND

The finance director presented the 2023/24 financial statements for Corporation Board approval. Governors were informed that a newer version of the financial statements had been uploaded quite soon before the meeting following the amendment of an error in how surplus and deficits were displayed. He confirmed that this was the only difference between the most recent version and the one which governors had seen prior to the meeting.

- The approach to how the indicators are reflected within the statements has been updated, and KPIs are now shown over a period of time to show the trend over three years.

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- The college has generated a surplus and the EBITDA was £1.7m. The finance director informed governors that the ESFA recommends a surplus of 80%; however, it is difficult to generate a surplus of more than £3m. Growth holds back revenue and causes colleges to have to spend money. Pay pressures and energy costs have also continued to increase. However, the college's current energy price per unit was confirmed to be lower than for residential households.
- It was confirmed that the college continues to stay solvent and pay off its debt to Lloyds Bank. The college also continues to pay £60k per year for enhanced pensions for some teachers who left in the 1990s. This leaves around £5m to reinvest into the operations. The finance director has been trying to keep a small amount back, but the feedback he has received is that the majority of this needs to be spent on IT and infrastructure in order to ensure the college remains up to date.
- The finance director assured governors that the college would not compromise on quality and deny opportunities which would benefit its students just to maintain a higher surplus figure.
- Overall, 2023/24 was a positive year, and there is confidence that the college remains in a strong position in comparison to other colleges.
- In summary, the college remains a going concern, and the cashflow position supports this despite the purchase of the Old Brewery.

One governor observed that the level of growth and the strong position of the college were a testament to the whole management team, considering the position seen four years ago. It was acknowledged that the senior team and the Corporation Board bring a lot of strengths to the table. This was agreed to be particularly evident when considering the results from the audits, with six out of seven having achieved strong assurance. The accuracy of the management accounts has meant that there were no end-of-year surprises, which has really helped in maintaining a positive and healthy position. Overall, the college's finances remain in a solid, safe and realistic position. The chair agreed with these points, adding that it would be even better if the college had been able to do more in terms of pay, but it was understood why this was not possible.

Finally, the finance director indicated that the purpose of the regularity self-assessment questionnaire was for the college to self-declare to the ESFA any issues, concerns or areas of deficiency. In-year assurance from the internal control work showed no issues of significance for reporting to the ESFA. This document has been presented to the Audit Committee, and members were reassured.

AGREED:

Signed: Kate Tiscott Meeting Chair

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- to approve version 21 of the 2023/24 Financial Statements as presented
- that the chair of the Corporation Board should sign the Regularity Self-Assessment Questionnaire as presented.

13 **FINANCE AND ESTATES**

The committee chair presented his in-depth report as read.

Following the decision not to move ahead with the Debenhams project, the college was looking for more alternative accommodation for staff which would present a more permanent option to the current Four Seasons shopfront. The lease of several rooms within Mansfield Town Hall has been identified as a good opportunity for the college. This will come with some limitations, but the building is very robust and has recently been refurbished. This will provide a good stepping stone towards the move to the Beales building as part of the Connect project. As this latter will not be ready for around three years, the college requires an interim option.

The finance director indicated that, by the time the Connect building opens, it is hoped that there will be real strong connectivity and a relevance to the government's drive to address economic inactivity. It has taken a lot of negotiation with the council for the college to secure the right location within the Connect building and at the right price, but this location will allow real connection with the Department for Work and Pensions, as the Jobcentre Plus office will be very close by.

The Corporation Board were happy to approve the leasing of the rooms within the Town Hall to replace the current accommodation within the Four Seasons shopping centre.

AGREED:

- to note the content of the chair's report
- to note the content of the detailed minutes of the meeting
- to note the Management Accounts for October 2024
- to note the content of the capital projects and estates update
- to approve the leasing of accommodation in Mansfield's town hall for the Community team as an alternative to the Four Seasons premises.

14 **PRINCIPAL'S REPORT**

The principal presented his in-depth report, and key matters particularly highlighted within the meeting were:

- Many white papers are currently emerging from the government, such as the Youth Guarantee announcement, T Levels/Level 3 reviews, and Ofsted changes. The principal encouraged governors to feed back if they wish to know more

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about any particular issue, and the senior team can produce a paper or a meeting to provide information can take place accordingly.

- The chief executive officer of Mansfield District Council recently resigned, and the name of his replacement was due to be announced. The college will need to build a relationship with this new chief executive officer, which the principal will work to do.
- The Chamber of Commerce has asked whether the increase to the National Minimum Wage and employers' National Insurance contributions will affect apprenticeship recruitment. It was confirmed that these issues will definitely have an impact, and the college will need to work through this. The college is gradually moving toward being a lower volume, higher value apprenticeship provider, looking more at engineering and green skills options as opposed to customer service and business administration. It is likely to be an ongoing trend to focus on those subjects for which the college is a unique provider.
- The principal informed the board that he recently gave the Chamber of Commerce a tour of the college, and this was shared with a visit from the Barclays Eagles. The latter would be interested in taking some space in the Future Tech Centre. While this would not on a permanent basis, it could be an interesting opportunity.

Governors were provided with a verbal update by the vice principal: curriculum and quality in relation to the implications of the government's announcement on the de-funding of qualifications and what this means for the college. A link to the announcement itself was also shared with governors shortly after the board papers were issued.

- Early years is the only area where the alternative Level 3 offer is definitely going to be de-funded. There will be alternative Level 3 qualifications in all other subjects in which the college currently offers T Levels.
- T-Level Onsite Construction has been removed as there has not been enough interest nationally. The college did not run this qualification in 2024/25 as it was not viable due to low student numbers. This announcement means that the college can now offer an alternative route for 2025/26.
- The college has acted quickly to arrange a Level 3 information evening on 15th January for all subject areas except early years. This will enable young people and their parents to come to the college and understand the different routes available to them.
- The college has also arranged an additional open evening at the end of January, aimed at all levels of study, to raise awareness of the alternative routes which are now available. It is hoped that this event will be useful for those individuals who were perhaps put off from applying to college before due to the narrow range of choice.

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- Overall, it was felt that this was a good outcome.
- The only T Level with which the college will not move forward is the creative design option. The senior team have identified that the career routes for this qualification are not commonly available within the local area and would not necessarily be relevant to the college's students.

The principal continued with the remainder of his update:

- It was agreed to be important for the college to build strong relationships with the East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA), which will have ownership of the adult skills fund (ASF). EMCCA representatives were impressed by what they saw during their visit to the college.
- Further consultation has commenced in relation to the strategic skills plan and how this should be taken forward. A meeting will take place on 4th February to look at indicative allocations for 2025/26.
- The principal recently had a positive meeting with a member of the EMCCA Business Advisory Board. This person was a college governor some years ago and is now being invited to become a friend of the college. He has also been invited for a tour of the college, and the principal will wrap him into the Mansfield Place Board to demonstrate how the local partners work together. This will be a very positive relationship, and it is believed that the Business Advisory Board will further grow in importance.
- The principal has been invited to an event to look at how skills can support some of the emerging technology, e.g. the STEP fusion project.
- Another positive visit took place, this one involving the Chamber of Commerce. Again, representatives were very impressed by the college, and the Chamber is going to draft a proposal for a proper strategic partnership between it and the college. Nottingham Trent University will also be engaged in this conversation.
- The principal indicated that it has been powerful to see how these high-profile visitors responded to the college's facilities and what it has to offer. Governors were invited to let the principal's PA, Freya Stokoe, know if they would like to join any of these tours so that she can provide them with the dates. The principal indicated that he would feed back the outcomes of these visits in future briefings and reports.
- In relation to the dates of interest provided at the end of the principal's report, governors were encouraged to attend as many of these events as they can. These events were described as opportunities to see the college and its students in action.

The principal provided an additional verbal update that he recently attended an event at Westminster wherein he raised the point that there are a lot of good local partnerships in place, but the partnership

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between the Government and those on the front line does not always work. Subsequently, he invited Tony Foot, director general for strategy at the Department for Education, to visit the college. The director general has accepted this invitation, and Julia Kinniburgh – director general for skills – will accompany him. Overall, the principal indicated that there are some very positive and exciting things taking place.

The chair was pleased to see that key people and organisations wish to visit the college and witness what it has to offer. She indicated that it would be even more positive if it were possible to influence other local colleges to participate, building these collaborative partnerships further and creating centres of excellence which would provide even more value for students and for the colleges themselves. The principal was confident that the mayor of the East Midlands would drive some progress and movement in this regard. It was observed that those who do not collaborate will miss out, and the more collaborative organisations will become the key influencers.

The chair thanked the principal for his positive and detailed report and expressed the hope that governors also benefit from the newsletter circulated during those months without Corporation Board meetings.

Mission, vision and values

The principal explained that it would be good to look at reviewing these again. The vision previously implemented had been invaluable in terms of the college's decision making. However, he felt that the college was close to achieving this vision and, as an organisation's vision should be something which is in reach but only just, he would like to create a new one in consultation with stakeholders.

Firstly, the principal asked governors to agree that this activity should move forward. If governors agreed, this would take up the focus of both strategy days in March and June 2025. There would also be an exercise involving external partners, employers, staff and students. He presented governors with a suggested timeline for their approval.

The chair observed that the college was ahead of the game in terms of self-assessment and the external governance review. A high performing organisation should look at its vision, mission and values sporadically to ensure they are still applicable and review them if needed. This was about identifying how to grow to the next level of performance. It was also necessary to take into account the changing political climate, e.g. the new combined authority, and the impact which this would have on the college and its strategy.

One governor indicated that it was pleasing to see the number of stakeholders to be included in this activity. He indicated that, although this would make the process very large, it was key to ensure that all those affected were going to be involved in the consultation.

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Stakeholders had already bought into the previous vision, so taking them along and bringing them on board with the new one would be imperative. In general discussion, all agreed that the previous exercise was very well received by staff.

The principal indicated that the college now has stronger external partnerships than were in place at the time of the previous review exercise, and these partners need to be engaged too. Governors agreed that collaboration is key. As part of this review, it will also be important to celebrate the college's successes.

In general discussion, it was agreed that stakeholder impact would be crucial over the next five years, and any method of gaining their feedback would be absolutely key to this process. It was observed that the COVID-19 pandemic had an impact on the college and its operation, and this should also be taken into account. A further point of agreement was that the college's culture has very much improved within the past five years. The chair also observed that many governors are employer representatives, and she invited their views on this next step. One governor indicated that it was quite exciting and would hopefully shape continued success within the local community. It is key for the college to have the buy-in of the next generation, and the strategy will be a key part of this.

AGREED:

- to note the content of the update and attachments provided
- to agree the process of the vision, mission and values review as described.

15 **GOVERNANCE UPDATE**

The clerk presented this report and its appendices.

Instrument and Articles of Government

The chair thanked the working group for their part in this review – the document is key to good governance, and it desperately required a review.

The working group met twice to discuss and agree an updated document for approval by the board. The version presented at this December meeting included comments and requests made by the board in October. The board was invited to consider and discuss the document presented, and governors were happy to approve the amended Instrument and Articles.

Link governor protocol

Feedback from existing link governors has been largely in favour of this slightly different approach from the previous model. The aim was to achieve a more formal approach to the links, to include brief

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reports/updates to committees and the board so that outcomes and impact could be measured.

Two existing link roles were vacant: EDI and careers. As these were strongly recommended by various bodies, Ofsted and the Department for Education included, governors were invited to put themselves forward. A suggestion from one existing link governor was that the links could be rotated yearly, if this would make taking on the roles more viable for governors. The intention was to fill the roles in order of priority, with the two strongly recommended roles to be the focus first, followed by digital.

Governors were informed that, if they were in favour of adopting this protocol in favour of the previous approach, the former list of links with specific curriculum or support areas would be closed down to enable focus on the areas shown within the new protocol document. However, links with specific areas, including visits, could still be assigned on a project basis as specific areas of interest or focus emerge.

Should this protocol be adopted, the effectiveness and impact of the links would be evaluated annually via the 1:1 process, and the protocol itself will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains fit for purpose.

Governors were invited to consider and discuss the document presented.

Feedback from the principal was that the careers link could be made broader – to involve looking at the careers framework, for example – in order to make this a broader and more interesting function. He also suggested that link roles could be shared between two governors, if this would aid them in taking on the extra work.

The chair observed that this referred back to good governance and how the board assures itself that what governors are being told is accurate, as well as providing governors with opportunities to see processes in action.

Alison Griffiths agreed to take on the link role for EDI. Other governors agreed to give consideration to the remaining roles and respond to the clerk by the end of January 2025 if they would like to undertake any of them.

AGREED:

- to approve the Instrument and Articles of Government as presented
- to approve the link governor protocol as presented, to be reviewed at the end of the academic year.

17

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Signed: Kate Tiscott Meeting Chair

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The academic staff governor raised the matter of zero tolerance to bullying within the college. He explained that, due to incidents that have occurred during the past couple of months, there is a rumour among staff as well as students that action is not being taken. He did not feel that the disciplinary system was at fault, but he suggested that some managers do not understand the process. He mentioned that there have also been incidents involving drugs on site, and the vice principal: communications, engagement and student experience clarified that this was suspected but has not yet been proven. The principal stated that the Executive team was aware that there have been some behavioural issues, and there have been discussions at meetings with the Executive team and the assistant principals. Actions have already been put in place to try to improve the situation, and this could include a reminder to heads of department of the process and how they should handle instances of bullying and/or unacceptable behaviour.

Governors were assured that the challenge had been identified and the college had subsequently put actions and changes in place. They indicated that it was necessary to give this time to improve.

The vice principal: communications, engagement and student experience advised that there have been some incidents of unkind behaviour between students. The college has seen some immature behaviours which are leading to bullying. The current cohort of students were heavily impacted by COVID during their early secondary school years, which has affected their social behaviour. She confirmed that the college will enlist an external speaker to deliver sessions to students about behaving appropriately.

The chair indicated that she would expect any issue relating to student behaviour to go through the Standards Committee first and then be reported to the Corporation Board to raise governors' awareness of the issue and assure them of the actions being taken to address it. It was agreed that the Standards Committee would monitor this via the reports from the vice principal: communications, engagement and student experience.

One governor indicated that some of his colleagues have been delivering tutorials to students, and he asked whether it would be useful if he could obtain some feedback in relation to behaviour during those sessions. This helpful suggestion was gratefully received and accepted.

There were no other items of urgent business.

18

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting was agreed as Thursday 27th February 2025 at 17:00. It will be preceded by a student panel at 16:00 and followed by the Friends of the College meal in Refined.

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Staff governors left the meeting at 19:00.

The meeting closed at 19:10.

Signed: Kate Tiscott Meeting Chair

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