

**MOULTON COLLEGE**  
**CORPORATION BOARD**

**Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 31<sup>st</sup> January 2019 at 9.30am**

**Present:** Mr R Thompson (in the Chair), Ms A Turner, Mr A Clarkson,  
Mr L Howarth, Mr I James, Ms L Knapp, Mr C Matts, Mr D McVean,  
Mr T Neville, Mr R Sadler and Mr A Thomson and Mr M Wakeford

**In attendance:** Mr G Davies, Miss A S Bruce, Mrs G M Hulley and Mrs J Matthews

**SECTION A – ROUTINE AND STANDING ITEMS:**

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**19/01 Apologies for absence (Agenda item 1)**

Apologies were received from Mrs K Delamain-Blunt, Mr A Eastland,  
Mr B Hansford, Mrs P Hawkesford, Mrs H King and Mr M Simmons

Members were informed that Mrs J Matthews had been delayed due to  
problems on the motorway.

**19/02 Declaration of interest (Agenda item 2)**

Mr T Neville declared an interest in agenda items 5, 12 and 13. Mr L Howarth  
declared an interest in agenda items 8, 9 and 14.

**19/03 Minutes of previous meeting (Agenda item 3, Paper A)**

The minutes of the meeting held on the 6<sup>th</sup> December 2019 had been  
circulated previously and were approved as a true and accurate record.

**19/04 Actions outstanding from the last meeting (Agenda item 4, Paper B)  
8<sup>th</sup> November 2018, 18/215, Safeguarding**

An action to complete a small piece of research would be considered when  
year-on-year data was available. This was likely to be in the next academic  
year (2019-20).

All other items were closed. Mrs J Matthews arrived.

**SECTION B - PRINCIPAL'S UPDATE:**

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**19/05 Strategic Plan update (Agenda item 4, Paper Ci) and Key Performance  
Indicators (Agenda item 5, Paper Cii)**

The report was outlined and discussed. It provided the Corporation with an  
update on a range of actions that had been taken by the College in relation to  
each of the aims set out in the strategic plan 2016-22. A separate paper  
reported on the College's actual performance against a number of agreed  
KPIs (Key Performance Indicators). The Corporation also received a copy of  
the latest feedback from the learner views' survey from the Ofsted website.  
The survey comprised of 10 questions and learners had the option to strongly  
agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree. The combined responses  
(strongly agree, agree) for 8 of the questions were over 91%. The other 2  
questions scored just under 90%.

**Governor questions:**

- a. Governors may like to know that there is a similar area on the Ofsted  
website that captures employer views. There is a similar positive

- response from our employers. *These are very positive stories and we will ensure that they are reported on our website.*
- b. What can be done to improve subjects at Level 3 where retention is below target? *We have commented previously on the issues for last year which meant that retention was poor during the first year. This year's starters on Level 3 programmes are not included in this data as they will not complete until 2020. Retention for first year Level 3 students at the moment are in the 90s.*
  - c. It would be helpful to have sight of the data that projects forward. Is this possible? *The Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee will receive data in relation to the first year of 2-year programmes to make sure the number of students we are retaining is far greater than those shown here.*
  - d. It is pleasing to note that we have got better retention but one of our issues historically has been around large numbers of agency staff. How are we doing on the balance between permanent staff because one of the complaints has been around continuity? *We still have agency staff but a much smaller proportion. We give agency staff a contract for one term. This helps with consistency and gives us sufficient time to recruit a permanent member of staff.*
  - e. What percentage of agency staff do we have? *Less than 10%.*
  - f. So that we can monitor and track numbers, can we include agency staff numbers in the KPI report? *Yes, this will be included in future reports.*  
**(Action 109 – Principal)**
  - g. Can you provide more context to the recruitment data and associated ratings? *As far as next year is concerned, the number of acceptances for HE (Higher Education) is higher than last year and that is after the first closing date from UCAS (The Universities and Colleges Admission Service). We also held an internal progression event last week where all Level 3 students could come along and find out about HE. FE (Further Education) applications are marginally down at the moment. The number of acceptances is up on what it was last year by approximately 50 students. We have another open morning on Saturday and this one is usually fairly quieter than normal. We would expect 100 people to register but we have over 200 who have registered. I can also report that when we have visited local schools, the conversion rate for applications as a result of those visits are very good. We are also being more robust with our approach to recruitment and ensuring that we get the right people on the right course.*
  - h. It would be helpful for the Board to have a breakdown of the recruitment via Programme area to get a better insight into what is happening. *We can certainly bring this to the next board.* **(Action 110 – Principal)**

Following discussion, *the report was noted.*

## **SECTION C – TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT:**

**19/06**

### **Safeguarding training for Governors**

The Director of Curriculum and Quality Improvement reminded governors of the need to comply with their safeguarding duties under legislation. In addition, they must ensure that the policies, procedures and training in their College was effective and complied with law at all times. An activity had been designed around the responsibilities placed on Governing Bodies as identified in the Common Inspection Framework. Governors initially worked in pairs to agree a definitive set of priorities prior to sharing ideas with the wider group.

**19/07 Minutes of the TLA Committee meeting (Agenda item 6, Paper D)**  
The Chair of the Committee welcomed the changes that had occurred in the TLA Committee in the last academic year. Committee reports now contained a greater level of granularity which in turn, resulted in more in-depth discussions and challenge by the Committee members. Following discussion, *the minutes were noted.*

**19/08 Quality improvement plan 2018-19 (Agenda item 7, Paper E) and College self-assessment report (Agenda item 8, Paper F)**  
The self-assessment report (SAR) reported on the period April 2018 to present. The report followed a standard format that governors were familiar with. Detailed analysis of a range of data was included together with information about the student body. The format of the quality improvement plan (QIP) had been updated and improved to accommodate previous feedback. The Corporation sought assurances that the format was acceptable to Ofsted. This was confirmed. The Corporation welcomed the latest version of both documents and acknowledged both were work in progress. Further recommendations for improvements included (**Action 111 – Director of Curriculum and Quality Improvement**):

- Explicit references to HE.
- Any proposed capital investment should be part of the QIP.
- Maths and English should be reviewed to show all aspects of risk have been identified and addressed.

Following discussion, *the report was received.*

**19/09 Safeguarding (Agenda item 9, Paper G)**  
The report provided a summary of safeguarding issues at a particular point in time. It was presented in a format during the last 6 months that had been familiar to the Committee. The report had helped Members to develop a good understanding of the issues at the College. Future reports would be presented half-termly and would include comparative data with the previous year. The report would also include more data analysis. This approach would address concerns previously raised by the Committee in relation to now needing to understand about the impact of the information that was being presented. The Corporation was informed of further measures that had been taken by the College including the role of a Community Support Officer. Following discussion, *the report was noted.*

## **SECTION D – FINANCE**

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**19/10 Minutes of the Finance Committee (Agenda item 10, Paper H)**  
The draft minutes of the meeting held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2019 had been circulated prior to the meeting for information and were taken as read. Following discussion, *the minutes were noted.*

**19/11 Management Accounts (Agenda item 11, Paper I)**  
The Chief Finance Officer (CFO) updated Members with details of movements since Period 4. The report had been scrutinised earlier in the week by the Finance Committee. Pay costs were being closely monitored and the forecast was currently on budget with efficiency savings being balanced with the increased cost of agency staff. The cost control process introduced in the previous year remained in place to manage non-pay costs. Only essential spending was being approved. The College had now received the SCIF (Strategic College Improvement Funding) from the ESFA (Education and

Skills Funding Agency). Provision had been made for payment to Abingdon and Witney College for their contribution to the project. There were 4 areas of risk that were being actively reviewed by College management. The Chief Finance Officer outlined a number of actions that were being taken to manage the risks. A table had been included in the report showing progress with planned property disposals. Good progress had been made. The Corporation was also updated on the latest information in relation to the College's financial health score and bank covenant. Governors emphasised the need for a wider discussion in relation to the commercial enterprises and the student experience. A review of the commercial enterprises was planned and this would identify the actions that were needed. Priority could then be given to a full Board discussion about the wider educational use and associated benefits of the commercial enterprises. Following discussion, the report was *noted*.

19/12

**Tuition Fees 2019-20 (Agenda item 12, Paper J)**

The proposed changes were outlined and discussed. The CFO (Chief Finance Officer) highlighted a number of changes that had been made which were generally increases in line with inflation. Care had been taken to benchmark fees within the document with similar organisations. The CFO emphasised the importance of ensuring information in relation to fees, transport and bursaries would be available early to inform the decision-making process. Following discussion, *the Corporation approved the tuition fees for 2019-20.*

**SECTION E – RESOURCES**

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19/13

**Health and Safety (Agenda item 13)**

**a) College report**

Governors were informed of the range of Health and Safety training that had been delivered. This was part of a rolling programme of training and included existing managers with different levels of responsibility as well as managers who had recently joined the College. A 1-day training course was also planned for staff with operational responsibilities. There had been a very positive response from staff who had expressed an interest in becoming a Health and Safety champions. The Link Governor champion would also undertake this role. A training pack to support this role was currently being prepared. The Health and Safety Committee had met earlier in the month. Members of that Committee were in the process of completing a piece of work around culture change and the findings from this would be included as an agenda item at the next meeting. The Deputy Principal and Health and Safety Advisor continued to meet on a weekly basis to discuss any accidents that had occurred. In response to a question about 'near misses', these were also being reported on a weekly basis. An independent audit of Health and Safety was completed in January 2019. The verbal feedback shared with the College Principal was very positive about the audit findings. The report would be circulated to all governors once received (**Action 112 – Clerk**). Following discussion, *the report was received.*

**b) Link Governor Champion**

Mr M Wakeford reported very positively on his recent attendance at the Health and Safety Committee. Governors' attention was drawn to the commitment by the College to change the culture around this important priority. The proposed Health and Safety champions were a crucial element to this strategy and based on his experience at the Committee to date, Mr Wakeford had every confidence that the College was making good progress in relation to culture change. The Board welcomed the update and requested

clarification about student involvement in the process. The Deputy Principal confirmed that the Committee had agreed that there should be student Health and Safety champions. The Assistant Director of FE Curriculum (ADFEC) was taking this action forward (**Action 113 – ADFEC**). The Corporation also recommended that the Committee should be proactive in identifying evidence of impact of the culture change. This could be reported as part of this standing agenda item at Corporation meetings (**Action 114 – Deputy Principal**).

19/14

**Annual Farm Report (Agenda item 14, Paper K)**

The report was outlined and discussed. A lot of operational changes had taken place in the last 12 months since the Farm Manager had been in post. Members sought clarification around a number of points within the report including the impact of exceptional payments on year-end figures, contractor costs, crop yields and improvements made to the beef unit. Although governors welcomed the report, feedback was provided on a number of further improvements that could be made. It was agreed the Mr C Matts would have a separate discussion with the Deputy Principal to clarify the points (**Action 115 – Deputy Principal**).

The report prompted the Board to have a wider discussion around the vision for the farm in the next 5 to 10 years. It was agreed that a farm strategy was required and in order to move this forward, a group should be convened. Membership of this group would include governors and local farmers. (**Action 116 – Vice Chair and Clerk**) This work would also contribute to the full College strategic review which would also be required. This review would be completed by the new College Principal with contributions from governors. A final recommendation for all commercial reports was to raise the profile of the student experience within commercial reports. (**Action 117 – Assistant Director, Commercial Enterprises.**)

**SECTION F – GOVERNANCE**

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19/15

**Governance Development Day (Agenda item 15, Paper L)**

The proposed programme for the Governor Development Day was discussed. It would take place at Moulton College and include a Corporation Board meeting at the end of the day for any urgent actions requiring approval. The programme had been developed so that governors could:

- Develop a shared understanding of the current College risks as well as consider the 'risk appetite' for the foreseeable future.
- Consider the characteristics of a College that is at the cutting edge of the FE sector and agree the necessary actions that are needed in order to be successful.
- Complete a review of the current governance structure in order to develop a more effective and efficient model.

The afternoon session would be facilitated by an external facilitator with significant experience in the sector. The programme also included a visit to the Food and Drink Innovation Centre after lunch. Following discussion, *the report was noted.*

**SECTION G – CLOSING ITEMS**

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19/16

**Any other items of urgent business (agenda item 20)**

There was no other business.

19/17

**Date and time of next meeting (Agenda item 21)**

Thursday, 28<sup>th</sup> February 2019 at 9.15 am in Kelmarsh at the Management Centre