

MOULTON COLLEGE

CORPORATION

Minutes of the meeting held on 30th April 2020

Present: Mr D McVean (in the Chair), Mrs C Harris, Mr A Clarkson, Ms S O'Connor, Mr A Eastland, Mr B Hansford, Mrs P Hawkesford, Mrs S Ijewsky, Mr I James, Miss L Knapp, Mr C Matts, Mr T Neville, Mr M Pate, Mr A Thomson and Mr M Wakeford

In attendance: Mr D Aldridge, Miss A S Bruce, Mr G Davies, Mrs G M Hulley, Mr S Parkes (ESFA), Mr R Plantier and Mr J O'Shea

SECTION A – ROUTINE AND GOVERNANCE ITEMS:

- 20/17 Apologies for absence (Agenda item 1)**
Apologies were received from Miss L Watson.
- 20/18 Declarations of interest (Agenda item 2)**
Mr T Neville declared an interest in agenda items 8, 9 and 12. Mr A Eastland declared an interest in agenda item 16.
- 20/19 Minutes of last meeting (Agenda item 3, Paper A)**
The minutes of the meeting held on the 30th January 2020 were approved as a correct record and would be signed by the Chair after the meeting.
- 20/20 Actions outstanding from last meeting (Agenda item 4, Paper B)**
Action 154, Safeguarding:
Prevent was now fully integrated into the student induction and pastoral tutor programme. Where staff were concerned, training had been delivered in December 2020. Prevent was also part of the monthly induction programme for all new staff.
- Action 162, Learner voice – First impressions survey**
An action plan had been prepared in response to the findings of the recent first impressions survey. All actions had been addressed and follow up discussions with students confirmed issues had been resolved to their satisfaction. In response to a question about further developments for learner voice, a full programme of activity was scheduled for 2020-21 which had been mapped into the curriculum programme. This programme would be presented to the next TLA Committee in June 2020.

Consideration was given to the impact of the Department for Education's decision to cancel the FE Choices survey due to the Covid-19 outbreak. It was confirmed that a significant number of students from the College had completed the survey. It was agreed that a question would be raised with the ESFA's data team for any information that could be obtained from the system. Alternative plans were in place to capture learner voice from a number of internal surveys. Where the HE survey was concerned, the team was very optimistic about the results.

- 20/21a** **Chair's update (Agenda item 5)**
- a. **Meetings:** The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting; confirmed the arrangements for raising questions when using video-conferencing; and, explained that many of the reports had been prepared to provide the Corporation with the College's actions in relation to Covid-19.
- b. **Audit Committee:** The Audit Committee had met on the 9th March 2020 and agreed that the College should defer retendering the external audit services until the College was no longer in intervention by the ESFA and FEC. The recommendation of the Audit Committee to retain the services of the current financial statements auditor was approved by the Corporation.

- 20/21b** **Clerk's update**
- a. **College seal:** Members noted the College Corporation seal had been affixed to a deed of sale for the property known as 'The Bungalow' authenticated by David McVean, Chair of Corporation and Corrie Harris, Principal and CEO on the 19th March 2020. [
- b. **Written resolution:** Members noted the approval of a majority of members of the appointment of:
- Dr Peter Jones as an external member for a period of 4 years commencing 10th March 2020.
 - BDO as the College's internal auditors from August 2020 for a period of 3 years (and a further 2 years) subject to performance on the 13th March 2020.

Mr A Thomson joined the meeting.

- 20/22** **Health and Safety (Agenda item 6)**
- A detailed report had been presented to the Finance and Resources Committee who had met earlier in the week. A great deal of emphasis was currently directed at ensuring staff were safe in relation to Covid-19. Guidance had recently been issued to staff in relation to working from home. In response to a question about any potential liabilities incurred by the Corporation in relation to health and safety issues from students working from home, it was agreed that this was a potential risk and was something that required clarification (**Action 164** – CFO). Following discussion, *the Health and Safety Report was noted.*

SECTION B – PRINCIPAL'S REPORT:

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- 20/23** **Covid-19: College update (Agenda item 7)**
- The Principal confirmed that less than 20 staff were currently working on site (farm, security, animal care). Vulnerable students were being fully supported with daily telephone calls being made. Communication with the Council was very good with regular updates provided in terms of work being completed by these students. The importance of communication was emphasised. In addition to regular emails to staff, a meeting was held the previous day that 200+ staff attended remotely. There would be a financial loss as a result of Covid-19 and a separate report had been prepared to outline more detail. Positive feedback was received about information that had been shared to date with the ESFA. Looking ahead to September 2020, a marketing

campaign was in progress to support recruitment and promote the College's safe environment. There was currently no confirmation of when Ofsted inspections would recommence. Following discussion, the Principal's report on Covid-19 was noted.

20/24

Strategic Plan (Agenda item 8, Paper C)

The latest edition of the Strategic Plan had been circulated for information. A number of additional strategic documents that would underpin the Strategic Plan were in the process of being finalised. The Chair of Corporation emphasised the importance of measurable KPIs and a timeline for monitoring the plan to ensure the Corporation was holding the SLT to account. The Strategic Plan would be subject to further discussion at the Strategy Committee on the 21st May 2020. Following discussion, *the report on the Strategic Plan was noted.*

SECTION C – QUALITY AND STUDENT EXPERIENCE:

20/25

Recruitment, assessment and exams (Agenda item 8, Paper D) and Higher Education (Agenda item 11)

There was a small increase in FE applications compared to the same time last year. Internal progression numbers were in line with original projections. Where HE applications were concerned, these were in line with the figures from the same time last year. Improvements were linked to a successful social media campaign together with evidence of a positive student experience. Although very positive, the team acknowledged concerns around the lock-down and its impact upon recruitment. Governors agreed that any opportunity to promote the importance of FE and the College with local MPs would be beneficial.

Governors' attention was drawn to the work that had been completed in relation to student assessments. The report confirmed significant improvements with achievements including English and maths, pass rates and value added compared to the previous year. Extensive work had taken place to ensure that grades were accurate and could be substantiated. Awarding bodies would be contacted directly with details of the results and improvements. Ofsted had received an update from the Principal in March 2020 confirming the improved position. The FE Commissioner and ESFA had also been informed. The Landex Peer Review completed earlier in the week could also be used to substantiate the improvements. As it was unknown whether historical data would be used by awarding bodies to moderate submissions, it was agreed that a further communication would be sent to relevant parties to emphasise the College's improved situation. Following discussion, *the report on retention, assessment and exams was received.*

20/26

Online learning (Agenda item 9, Paper E)

The College had been able to quickly respond to the impact of Covid-19 in relation to online learning. A virtual template was in place on the first Monday of lockdown. Every member of staff had received training and IT systems were updated to enable the online delivery of the curriculum. The report included details in a series of tables on some of the analytics the team used to monitor uptake on all courses. Daily meetings of the Curriculum and Quality team provided further challenge to Heads of School to determine ongoing strategies for online delivery to their learners. The Chair of Corporation welcomed

the report and requested that the ILT strategy should be presented to the July meeting (**Action 165** – CFO). Following discussion, *the online learning report was received.*

20/27

Safeguarding (Agenda item 10, Paper F)

The report detailed how the College was fulfilling its safeguarding obligations in light of the Covid-19 and lockdown. Included was a safeguarding statement for Corporation approval. The College had 380 students with either High Needs, EHCP or a declared learning difficulty. Each of these students had been allocated a learning support assistant who made daily contact to offer academic and well-being support. This was in addition to support from their lecturers and course managers. In terms of impact, the College's predicted achievement rates had improved significantly this year. All had been supported by the interventions of the safeguarding team.

The Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality provided a detailed response to a number of questions that had been raised prior to the Corporation meeting. The link governor for safeguarding confirmed that the responses had been comprehensive. Where the report was concerned, he welcomed the section on impact and the level of detail confirmed that the safeguarding team had everything in hand. Following discussion, *the Corporation approved the safeguarding statement and received the report.*

20/28

Landex Peer Review (Agenda item 12, Paper G)

A 2-day Landex Peer Review had been completed earlier in the week. This was a wide-ranging review that included the curriculum, safeguarding, MIS, quality, preparation for Ofsted and governance. The process had been very robust. The over-riding outcome was the College had made significant progress including a change in culture and improved results. A report would be received within 2 weeks and shared with the TLA Committee in June 2020. Following discussion, *the report was noted.*

SECTION D – FINANCE:

20/29

Meeting of last Finance and Resources Committee (Agenda item 13)

The Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee provided a summary of the meeting held earlier in the week. Key discussion points or decisions taken to note were in relation to:

- **Health and Safety:** The Committee was satisfied that the procedures for 'Goods Inwards' had been reviewed and updated. The Deputy Principal agreed to contact the College's insurance company for further guidance in relation to recent Health and Safety Executive updates in relation to RIDDOR reporting of Covid-19 (FR72 – Deputy Principal).
- **Strategic key business performance indicators:** Confirmation was received that the Saudi bonds had been released.
- **HR quarterly report:** The number of days lost to sickness was too high; this figure should be less than 4.
- **Estates Strategy:** The Committee had considered the report and agreed that further work was required. The Corporation would discuss the report in more detail at the next meeting of the

Strategy Committee in May 2020.

In relation to Property Disposals, The Committee was informed that the College had been approached to sell a piece of land (0.25 acre) next to Boughton Lane. The value of the land was £75k and an offer for that amount had been received. Following discussion, members agreed that having received an assurance that there would be no negative impact on student experience, they agreed to recommend to the Corporation the sale of the land for £75k. *Following discussion, the Corporation approved the recommendation of the Finance and Resources Committee for the sale of 0.25 acre of land next to Boughton Lane for £75k and, received the report from the last Finance and Resources Committee.*

20/30 Finance update including impact of Covid-19 (Agenda item 14, Paper H)

The report outlined the financial implications of Covid-19 and the current situation in relation to cash flow. The finance team would continue to record all the costs and losses associated with the current situation and would provide feedback to the AoC and Landex as requested. Work had started on the budget setting process. Some costs will still need to be removed and this would be completed alongside the debt reduction strategy. Following discussion, *the Corporation received the finance update.*

SECTION E – RESOURCES:

20/31 Property Disposals (Agenda item 16)

In relation to the land next to the A508, a letter had been received from the prospective purchaser offering an assurance about the sale but there was still some outstanding information that was required. This issue was in the process of being resolved. June was a more realistic time for completion. With Little Bostocks, part of this required a land switch in terms of ownership of land. The Charities Commission had raised some questions most of which the College had responded to. The College had sought further clarification around one question on consultation. The Deputy Principal had been informed by the College Solicitors that this requirement was not required as it was a land switch and not a disposal. A significant delay with this sale was likely. A question was raised about the piece of land that had been put forward for development. Although there had been some engagement with another developer, it was agreed there would be a need to raise the profile of this piece of land with relevant parties. Following discussion, the report on Property Disposals was noted.

20/32 Staffing (Agenda item 17, Paper I)

A comprehensive report had been prepared outlining the various actions completed to date. This included: furloughing a number of staff from across the organisation; ensuring effective communication was maintained including commercial; and, identification of certain learning points from the current situation that could be taken forward to inform future working practices. Clarification was sought about the Job Retention Scheme in terms of eligibility. ESFA confirmed the College had interpreted the criteria correctly. In response to a question about forward planning, the College was currently in phase 3 of its continuity plan ie 'recovery'. Different scenarios for returning to College by staff

and students were being explored. Every manager had produced a return to work plan which included social distancing arrangements, PPE requirements and the use of screens. Daily meetings of the College Intervention Management Team would continue to take place. Following discussion, the Staffing report was received.

20/33

Marketing Plan and Website (Agenda item 18, Paper J)

Contact had been made with all of the commercial units. A number of cost savings had been and would be maintained to the end of the financial year. The website development project was progressing on schedule and was due to be launched at the end of May 2020. Arrangements were in place to ensure there were no issues during the migration period. The date for the first virtual open event on the 1st June 2020 with a potential 2nd event on the 27th June 2020. The application process had been simplified to include electronic acceptances. Clarification was sought about the actions being taken to any courses with gaps in recruitment numbers. This would involve further use of the Vector Tool to analyse data, close monitoring of offers and acceptances and using social media to promote specific courses (if required). Following discussion, *the Marketing Plan and Website reports was received.*

SECTION E – CLOSING ITEMS:

20/34

Any other items of business

- a. Strategy Committee: Date of next meeting 21st May 2020.
- b. Corporation meeting: Governors agreed that an additional Corporation meeting before July would be helpful to discuss the SLT's plans for re-opening the College once restrictions were lifted.
- c. The risk register would be a standing item on every Corporation meeting agenda.
- d. Roger Plantier, Director of Commercial and Enterprise was due to leave the College at the end of April 2020: The Chair extended his thanks on behalf of everyone on the Corporation for his contribution since he joined the College in autumn 2019.
- e. Gerald Davies, Deputy Principal was due to retire at the end of May 2020 following 30 years' service with the College in a variety of roles. The Chair highlighted a number of highlights from Gerald's extensive career before offering the thanks of everyone on the Corporation.

20/35

Date and time of next meeting

The Clerk to the Corporation would circulate a date via email for an additional meeting of the Corporation.

Mr D Aldridge, Miss A S Bruce, Ms S O'Connor, Mr G Davies, Mr A Eastlend, Mr M Pate, Mr R Plantier and Mr J O'Shea left the meeting.