

Draft Minutes of the Corporation (Part 1) meeting held in the Evolution Centre, St Albans Campus on Wednesday 2 July 2025, at 17.00.

Present

Peter Thompson (Chair)	Andrew Slade (Principal & CEO)	Rob Birkett (Corporation Member)	Layla Buchner (Corporation Member)	Deborah Caviel (Corporation Member)
Chris Ford (Corporation Member)	Philip Fulton (Corporation Member)	Sarah Furley (Corporation Member)	Vince Glover (Corporation Member)	Kevin Ibeh (Corporation Member)
Rob Payne (Corporation Member - online)	Jamie Stevenson (Corporation Member)			

In Attendance

Jacqueline Page (Deputy Principal, Curriculum Performance & Student Experience)	Claire Dolan (Deputy Principal, Strategy, Partnerships & Business Development)	Barbara Jones (Executive Director People and Culture)	Stephen Horrobin (Interim Chief Finance Officer)	David Lambert (Chief Technology & Infrastructure Officer)
Michael Wood (Interim Director of Governance)				

Apologies

Simon Counce (Corporation Member)	Jean Fawcett MBE (Corporation Member)	John O'Sullivan (Corporation Member)	Richard Whitehead (Corporation Member)
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Minute	ITEM DISCUSSED
52/24	WELCOME / CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS
52/24.1	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.
53/24	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
53/24.1	Apologies for absence were received from Simon Counce, Jean Fawcett, John O'Sullivan and Richard Whitehead.
54/24	CONFIRMATION OF ELIGIBILITY AND QUORUM
54/24.1	No notice had been received of any member becoming ineligible to hold office and the meeting was quorate.
55/24	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
55/24.1	There were no Declarations of Interest in relation to the matters to be discussed.
56/24	REQUESTS FOR URGENT BUSINESS
56/24.1	There was no urgent business.

57/24	MINUTES
57/24.1	The Minutes of the meetings held on 24 March and 22 May 2025 (Extraordinary) were approved as accurate records of the meetings.
58/24	MATTERS ARISING & ACTION LOG
58/24.1	There were no Matters Arising other than those items already on the Agenda. The Action Log was closed.
59/24	PRINCIPAL'S REPORT
59/24.1	<p>The Principal reported on the following key good news stories and developments since the date of the last meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the College had hosted the Skills Build Regional Qualifier event on 8 May, in partnership with the CITB and Go Construct UK; • the World School Games event was hosted on 20 June; • the recent Festival of Achievement Week (23-26 June) had been fully sponsored which was a testimony to the developing industry and partnership links that the College had established; • a former student and Hockey Academy Alumnus (John Bennett) had been selected to represent the Welsh Men's Senior Squad for the Nations Cup in Malaysia'; • the new High Sherriff of Hertfordshire, Nicholas Buxton, had toured the St Albans Campus on 8 May; • 'Darker Minds', a film written and produced by Media student Luke Bates, had made its Amazon Prime debut; • the College held its first charity 'Packathon' event on 2 June over 25 hours in partnership with Goods for Good, which resulted in 1,298 aid boxes being packed for Sierra Leone and Ukraine, raising almost £800; • the Lord-Lieutenant of Hertfordshire, Robert Vos CBE, had visited the College on 12 June; • the first ever Employer Awards event, sponsored by Live Tour Productions, had been held on 23 June and had been very well-attended. <p>The Corporation noted the report and the encouraging developments to date.</p>
60/24	NATIONAL POLICY UPDATES
60/24.1	The Corporation received an update in respect of National Policy developments, including increased 16-19 Funding, 2025/26, and legislation related to Planning, to Employment Rights and Children & Welfare, which was noted .
61/24	STRATEGIC GOALS, KPIs and Annual Operating Plan
61/24.1	The Corporation considered an update on the achievement of Strategic Goals, KPIs and the Annual Operating Plan (AOP). Arising out of discussion, it was noted that

61/24.2	<p>over the year, 892 new employer links had been established and that Curriculum Boards were benefitting from the direct input of business and industry representation.</p> <p>It was noted that the Digital Transformation Group had been re-established as part of the College's commitment to invest and make improvements in this area. New data dashboards had been introduced in Finance as a means of driving financial efficiencies and enhancing decision-making.</p> <p>The Corporation noted the report.</p>
62/24	RISK REGISTER
62/24.1	<p>The Corporation approved the College's revised Risk Register, as scrutinised by the Audit Committee at its meeting on 9 June 2025, no new risks having been added to the Register. In respect of the Risk related to Funding Audits, it was noted that the risk had now been downgraded following the College's recent DfE Assurance Audit.</p>
62/24.2	<p>With regard to Risk 43 (Implementation of new Finance System) and a Governor query, it was agreed that the wording related to the nature of the risk be re-considered by the Risk Management Group.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Action</p>
63/24	DRAFT BUDGET, 2025/26
63/24.1	<p>The Interim CFO presented the Draft Budget, 2025/26 for the Corporation's consideration, the following points being highlighted:</p> <p>a) the Budget was 'top down' and high level, being guided by six key principles/metrics, as discussed and recommended by the Finance & Resources Committee, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - pay to income ratio to be less than 70%; - teaching staff utilisation to be 97%; - Capital Expenditure (CapEx) to be £3.4m; - Non-pay expenditure to be £10.9m; - Cash at Bank to be £5m; - Financial Health Score to be 'Good' <p>It was noted that some of the above figures (eg CapEx and Non-Pay Expenditure) may change as budget assumptions were realised, although the key metrics would remain constant;</p> <p>b) the College would receive a £2.5m increase in core 16-19 funding for 2025/26, together with a contribution towards increased Employer NI costs;</p> <p>c) whilst pay costs would increase by £800k (including national pay awards and increments), planned savings of £2m were being implemented;</p> <p>d) within the planned CapEx of £3.4m, £1.4m would be in respect of Premises, and £800k for IT;</p> <p>e) departmental 'bottom-up' budgets were currently being finalised.</p>
63/24.2	<p>Arising out of discussion, it was noted that estates masterplan costs to date were the subject of on-going dialogue with auditors. The Principal stated that the College</p>

63/24.3	<p>needed to focus more on courses which attracted most funding in order to increase income moving forward.</p> <p>The Corporation approved the high-level Budget, 2025/26, subject to the final Budget being circulated to all Governors for endorsement later in July.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Action</p>
64/24	REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES
64/24.1	a) Finance & Resources Committee
64/24.1.1	<p>The Chair of the Finance & Resources Committee (FRC) reported on the meetings of the Committee held on 7 May and 18 June 2025 (Summary Minutes being noted for information), it being commented that the College faced challenges, but robust measures were in place to make substantial operational savings, to grow income and to implement a new Finance System which would greatly improve management reporting and monitoring.</p>
64/24.1.2	<p>Three Policies on Fees, 2025/26, Reserves and Financial Regulations (to which minor changes had been made), were recommended for endorsement by the Corporation. The Corporation approved these Policies, as revised.</p>
64/24.1.3	<p>The Interim CFO reported that non-pay expenditure remained the greatest area of risk, but close monitoring of all expenditure (pay and non-pay) was being undertaken by the SLT on a fortnightly basis. In addition, Governors were advised that there was no longer a requirement to retain a £500k provision within the Accounts in respect of overage payments, which was welcomed.</p>
64/24.1.4	<p>The Corporation considered a report on Subsidiary Companies, prepared by the Interim Director of Governance, and approved in principle the recommendation to establish the first of two subsidiaries (Insourcing and Non-Charitable Activity) with the Principal & CEO and the Chair of the Finance & Resources Committee being initial Directors. It was noted that the formation of a VAT Group may take up to six months to put in place and that the Search, Governance & Remuneration (SGR) Committee would oversee the governance arrangements in respect of the subsidiaries.</p> <p>The Corporation noted the report from the Finance & Resources Committee.</p>
64/24.2	b) Quality & Curriculum Committee
64/24.2.1	<p>i) Quality Report</p> <p>The Deputy Principal (CPSE) presented the Quality Report to the Corporation, the following key points being highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the new observation scheme which followed student experience had now been embedded and had received positive feedback from staff; • CFRs had been completed in respect of all curriculum areas and the intensive support programme for particular subjects was working well;



64/24.2.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• low attendance and the completion of registers continued to be a major focus, to be addressed at the Staff Development Day on 10 July. In response of a Governor query, it was confirmed that Ofsted did not include 'explained absences' when they observed classes, but did include students who were attending online;• the end-of-year student survey had revealed an overall satisfaction rating of 95%. <p>The Corporation noted the report.</p> <p>i) Summary Committee Minutes</p> <p>The Corporation noted the summary Minutes of the Curriculum & Quality Committee held on 11 June 2025.</p>
64/24.3	<p>c) People Committee</p> <p>64/24.3.1 i) Safeguarding Report</p> <p>The Committee noted the Safeguarding Report, which included reference to the recent Supreme Court Ruling on gender and the College's continued focus on mental health and well-being issues.</p> <p>64/24.3.2 ii) Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Report</p> <p>The Committee noted the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Report, it being reported that the College was continuing to address gaps in EDI statistical data and was progressing Investors in Diversity status.</p> <p>64/24.3.3 iii) Summary Minutes</p> <p>The Corporation noted the summary Minutes of the People Committee held on 21 May 2025.</p>
64/24.4	<p>d) Audit Committee</p> <p>64/24.4.1 i) Summary Committee Minutes</p> <p>The Corporation noted the summary Minutes of the Audit Committee held on 9 June 2025.</p>
64/24.5	<p>e) Estates & Infrastructure Committee</p> <p>64/24.5.1 i) Health & Safety Policy</p> <p>The Corporation approved the Health & Safety Policy, as recommended for approval by the Estates & Infrastructure Committee, with changes being highlighted.</p> <p>64/24.5.1 ii) Summary Minutes</p> <p>The Corporation noted the Summary Minutes of the Estates & Infrastructure Committee held on 15 May 2025. Discussion centred on the planning application in</p>

	<p>respect of the Taylor Wimpey development which had been delayed due to on-going discussions with local authorities. The Chair commented that an extraordinary meeting of the Corporation may be needed to be held over the summer in respect of progressing the planning submission. It was requested that the most recent report by Fusion Consultants be circulated to Governors for information.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Action</p>
<p>64/24.6</p>	<p>f) Search, Governance & Remuneration Committee</p>
<p>64/24.6.1</p>	<p>The Corporation considered a report on Membership from the Search, Governance & Remuneration Committee, the following matters being approved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that Simon Counce's period of office be extended by a further two-year term to 26 September 2027; • that Philip Fulton's period of office be extended by a further and final two-year term to 9 December 2027; • that Chris Ford would become Chair of the Audit Committee effective from 1 January 2026; • that Rob Birkett would become Deputy Chair of the Finance & Resources Committee from 1 August 2025, assuming the role of Chair of the Committee during 2026; • that John O'Sullivan (Corporation Chair-designate) would continue to chair the People Committee at least during the Autumn Term 2025/26; • that thanks and appreciation be extended to Kevin Ibeh who wished to retire from the Corporation in September 2025.
<p>64/24.6.2</p>	<p>The Chair commented that there were up to four External Governor vacancies that needed to be filled, ideally by candidates with Schools, EDI and IT/Digital skills and experience. Governors were invited to suggest the names of potential nominees from their own networks, which could then be considered by the Search, Governance & Remuneration Committee.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Action</p>
<p>64/24.6.3</p>	<p>In respect of Governor training, the Chair reported that he had contacted Governors individually to encourage completion of mandatory training, including Prevent and Safeguarding. It was noted that the new Chair of the Corporation would be reviewing the operation of the current Governor Link Scheme early in the new academic session.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Action</p>
<p>64/24.6.4</p>	<p>The Corporation approved the College's Annual Accountability Statement 2025, which had been circulated electronically for Governor comment prior to the meeting and in advance of the publication deadline of 30 June 2025.</p>
<p>64/24.6.5</p>	<p>The Corporation noted for information and reference the recent letter from the FE Commissioner and the report on Weston College which was a reminder of how important it is for colleges to have robust and transparent systems and processes of</p>

	governance in place, including defined maximum terms of office and Governor review mechanisms.
65/24	BUSINESS CYCLE & CALENDAR OF MEETINGS, 2025/26
65/24.1	The Corporation approved the Business Cycle and Calendar of Meetings, 2025/26.
66/24	ANY OTHER BUSINESS
66/24.1	This being the Interim Director of Governance's last Corporation meeting, the Chair thanked Michael Wood for his contribution to the work of the Corporation and its Committees over the past year.
66/24.2	This being the final meeting of the Students' Union President, the Chair warmly thanked Layla Buchner for her contribution to the work of the Corporation and especially to the Curriculum & Quality Committee.
66/24.3	The Principal & CEO made a presentation to the Chair of the Corporation as this was his last meeting, thanking him for his valuable and steadfast service to the College over the past eight years. The Chair of the Finance & Resources Committee echoed the Principal's comments on behalf of all Governors.
66/24.4	The Chair thanked the Principal and the Corporation for their kind words and wished the College every success for the future.
66/24.5	There being no further business, the meeting closed at 19.13, the date of the next meeting being confirmed as 22 September 2025 (Governors' Conference).