

**Minutes of the Corporation (Part 1) meeting held at Welwyn Garden Campus on
16 December 2024, at 16.00.**

Present

Peter Thompson (Chair)	Andrew Slade (Principal & CEO)	Rob Birkett (Corporation Member)	Layla Buchner (Corporation Member)
Kalell Catling (Corporation Member)	Simon Caunce (Corporation Member)	Deborah Caviel (Corporation Member)	Jean Fawcett MBE (Corporation Member)
Chris Ford (Corporation member)	Phillip Fulton (Corporation Member)	Katy Henderson (Corporation Member)	Kevin Ibeh (Corporation Member)
Neil Myerson (Corporation Member)	John O'Sullivan (Corporation Member)	Rob Payne (Corporation Member)	Richard Whitehead (Corporation Member)

In Attendance

Claire Dolan (Deputy Principal, Strategy, Partnerships & Business Development)	Barbara Jones (Executive Director People and Culture)	Stephen Horrobin (Interim Finance Consultant)	David Lambert (Senior Lead for MIS, Estates and IT)
Jacqueline Page (Deputy Principal, Curriculum, Performance & Student Experience)	Michael Wood (Interim Director of Governance)		

Apologies

Sarah Furley (Corporation Member)	Vince Glover (Corporation Member)	Jamie Stevenson (Corporation Member)	Prof Mairi Watson (Corporation Member)
--------------------------------------	--------------------------------------	---	---

Minute	ITEM DISCUSSED
7/24	WELCOME / CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS
7/24.1	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.
8/24	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
8/24.1	Apologies for absence had been received from Sarah Furley, Vince Glover, Jamie Stevenson and Mairi Watson.
9/24	CONFIRMATION OF ELIGIBILITY AND QUORUM
9/24.1	No notice had been received of any member becoming ineligible to hold office and the meeting was quorate.
10/24	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
10/24.1	There were no Declarations of Interest in relation to the matters to be discussed.

11/24	REQUESTS FOR URGENT BUSINESS
11/24.1	There was no urgent business.
12/24	MINUTES
12/24.1	The Minutes of the meetings held on 23 September and 23 October 2024 (Extraordinary) were approved as accurate records of the meetings.
13/24	MATTERS ARISING & ACTION LOG
13/24.1	There were no Matters Arising other than the items already on the Agenda. The Action Log was noted , all Actions being closed.
14/24	PRINCIPAL'S REPORT
14/24.1	<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 was continuing to deliver its major strategic objectives, including the next phase of the capital Estates masterplan; the new Construction Centre had been opened on 15 November by Daisy Cooper MP; two Open Events had been held in November which had attracted 1500 and 3000 visitors at WGC and St Albans, respectively; the College's new branding across all digital platforms, including a new website, had been launched on 10 October; the Government had announced its 'Five Missions' for the next five years, with education and training being a core part of the national strategy. This had been positively welcomed by the AoC on behalf of the sector; as part of establishing a College Education Group to include a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT), different governance structures would be explored early in the New Year; a Staff Awards and Celebration Event would be held on 20 December. <p>The Corporation noted the report.</p>
15/24	NATIONAL POLICY UPDATES
15/24.1	<p>The Corporation received an update in respect of National Policy developments, including the proposed de-funding of 150 BTEC Level 2 courses and the introduction of the Employment Rights Bill, which was noted.</p> <p>The Principal commented that as a consequence of local devolution, circa £20m would be moved from the ESFA for adult AEB provision to Herts County Council, through Herts Futures. The detail on this had yet to be finalised. It was confirmed that there was no news on additional funding for 16-19 growth, unless this was related to T-Levels.</p> <p>In respect of the DfE's buildings conditions survey, it was reported that the College would be querying the previous assessment of some of its buildings, including Mansion House. The College was carrying out its own survey and would be sending this back to the DfE and to Daisy Cooper who has been supporting.</p>

16/24	RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY
16/24.1	The Corporation endorsed the revised Risk Management Policy, as previously considered and approved by the Audit Committee.
17/24	STRATEGIC GOALS, KPIs and Annual Operating Plan
17/24.1	The Corporation considered an update on the achievement of Strategic Goals, KPIs and the Annual Operating Plan (AOP). Key matters reported included a 90% Employer of Choice rating (compared with a target of 87%); Achievement Rates of 88% (compared with a target of 86%) and a strong performance in respect of Outstanding Contribution to Skills. It was proposed that a system of RAG-rating should be included in future reports for ease of reference
17/24.2	Arising out of the AOP, it was reported that the Apprenticeship provision had now come out of intensive support and had been assessed as Good. The curriculum planning process for 2025/26 had already commenced and there would be a focus on an enhanced enrichment programme for students. In respect of student recruitment, the College had enrolled 247 additional 16-18 year old students, though would not find out about additional in-year funding until next March 2026.
17/24.3	<p>The Staff Survey had received a 50% response rate and it was hoped that there would be more staff feedback following the Staff Development Day on 20 December. A key focus was on the health and well-being of staff, including their working environment (eg staff rooms).</p> <p>The Corporation noted the report.</p>
18/24	REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES
18/24.1	a) Curriculum & Quality Committee
18/24.1.1	<p>i) Self-Assessment and Performance</p> <p>The Deputy Principal (CPSE) presented a report to the Corporation on the recent College-wide SAR process and referred Governors to the final Self-Assessment Report (SAR) contained within the papers for the meeting which had been the subject of detailed scrutiny by the Curriculum & Quality Committee on 27 November. It was reported that most curriculum areas had been self-assessed overall as Grade 2, with Business and LIFE areas being assessed as Grade 1. Motor Vehicle had been assessed as a Grade 3 and was an area which was receiving intensive support.</p> <p>Student Attendance remained a key issue of focus across the College, particularly in English and Maths. As part of student enrichment activity, overseas visit to Italy (Florence) and South Africa were planned for 2025.</p> <p>With regard to HE provision, this had been measured against the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) and all areas had received a 'Good' rating, with improvement being required in respect of recruitment and access.</p> <p>Governors welcomed the revised format of the SAR and the transparent reflections and planned actions for improvement contained therein.</p>

18/24.1.2	<p>The Corporation approved the Self-Assessment Report.</p> <p>ii) Admissions Policy</p> <p>The Corporation approved the revised Admissions Policy for the College, as presented by the Deputy Principal (SPBD).</p>
18/24.1.3	<p>iii) Summary Committee Minutes</p> <p>The Chair of the Curriculum & Quality Committee reported on the work of the Committee referring to summary Minutes from 2 October and 27 November 2024. It was noted that the Committee had been impressed by the quality of the work undertaken by an enthusiastic curriculum team in reviewing all curriculum areas and requiring higher performance and quality standards. The College's achievement rates were now in the top quartile for the sector.</p> <p>Student Governors were invited to comment on how the Student Voice was being heard, it being commented that all SU roles had now been filled with the exception of the Residential Officer.</p> <p>The College had achieved Matrix accreditation with regard to its Careers provision which was a welcome development.</p> <p>The Corporation noted the report.</p>
18/24.2	<p>b) Finance & Resources Committee</p> <p>18/24.2.1 i) Annual Report & Financial Statements, 2023/24</p> <p><i>This item is confidential and is available in Part II minutes</i></p> <p>18/24.2.2 ii) High-Level Forecast, 2024/25</p> <p>The Interim Finance Consultant presented a High-Level Financial Forecast, 2024/25, it being noted that it was anticipated that cash reserves would be in the region of £2.5 to £4.5m for the year.</p> <p>18/24.2.3 iii) Management Accounts</p> <p>The Interim Finance Consultant presented Management Accounts and Cashflow Forecasts for the period ended 30 September 2024. It was noted that pay costs had increased to 72% as a ratio income, largely due to the need to source Maths staff via agencies, as these were national subject shortage areas. The Principal commented that 250 additional students had been recruited overall and that lag funding would hopefully be received in-year in respect of these students in 2024/25, which made the staff cost to income ratio worse. These 250 learners would gain full funding in 2025/26.</p> <p>18/24.2.4 iv) New Finance System</p> <p>It was reported that a new Finance System would be procured for implementation in August 2025 as the current finance system would no longer be supported beyond 2025.</p>

18/24.2.5	<p>v) Subsidiary Companies</p> <p>The Finance Consultant advised the Corporation that initial discussions had been held with legal advisers in respect of establishing up to four subsidiary companies for the purposes of corporation tax, VAT and non-commercial activities. The Finance & Resources Committee would consider a progress report on proposed subsidiaries at its next meeting, and would report to the Corporation thereafter.</p>
18/24.3	<p>c) People Committee</p>
18/24.3.1	<p>i) Safeguarding (inc. Prevent) Child & Vulnerable Adult Policy</p> <p>The Chair of the People Committee presented a revised Safeguarding (inc. Prevent), Child & Vulnerable Adult Policy which had been updated in the light of minor statutory updates relating to online email usage and which had been subject to detailed scrutiny by the Committee.</p> <p>The Corporation approved the Safeguarding (inc. Prevent), Child & Vulnerable Adult Policy, subject to it being amended to include reference to the audit compliance process (eg Part 2 reports, Ofsted reports and internal audit reports).</p>
18/24.3.2	<p>ii) Summary Committee Minutes</p> <p>The Chair of the Committee presented summary Minutes of meeting held on 23 October 2024 which the Corporation noted.</p>
18/24.4	<p>d) Audit Committee</p>
18/24.4.1	<p>i) Data Protection (GDPR) Policy</p> <p>The Corporation approved a revised Data Protection (GDPR) Policy for the College, as scrutinised by the Committee.</p>
18/24.4.2	<p>ii) Counter-Fraud Strategy</p> <p>The Corporation approved a revised Counter-Fraud Strategy for the College, as scrutinised by the Committee.</p>
18/24.4.3	<p>iii) Audit Committee Annual Report, 2023/24</p> <p>The Chair of the Committee presented the Annual Report of the Committee, 2023/24, required as part of the College's overall control framework of regulatory and risk compliance. Arising out of detailed discussion, it was noted that, exceptionally, the Head of Internal Audit had provided their opinion in three parts: Risk Management (Green/Amber); Governance (Green/Amber) and Internal Control (Amber/Red). Nonetheless, the Committee expressed its comfort in the corrective action that has been instituted in response to audit findings and recommendations, which had been accorded high priority by management in terms of follow up.</p> <p>The Corporation noted the Committee's Annual Report, 2023/24 and approved the Committee's Terms of Reference.</p>

18/24.4.4	iv) Internal Audit Plan, 2024/25	The Corporation approved the Internal Audit Plan, 2024/25, which had been the subject of detailed scrutiny by the Audit Committee.
18/24.4.5	v) Summary Committee Minutes	The Corporation noted the summary Minutes of the meeting of the Audit Committee and the Minutes of the Joint Meeting of the Audit and Finance & Resources Committees, both held on 25 November 2025.
18/24.5	e) Estates & Infrastructure Committee	
18/24.5.1	i) Health & Safety Policy	The Corporation approved the Health & Safety Policy, which had been the subject of detailed scrutiny by the Committee.
18/24.5.2	ii) Tender Waiver Report	<p>The Chair of the Committee introduced the Tender Waiver Report commenting that this matter dated back to June 2024 and the subsequent need for the Corporation to homologate a decision taken at its July 2024 meeting in respect of the appointment of advisers which had not been subject to external tender, given urgent time constraints. It was noted that a detailed tendering policy and procedure was now in place which was being strictly adhered to.</p> <p>The Corporation approved the Tender Waiver Report.</p>
18/24.5.3	iii) Summary Committee Minutes	The Corporation noted summary Committee Minutes of the meeting held on 15 November 2024.
18/24.6	f) Search, Governance & Remuneration Committee	
18/24.6.1	i) Membership Report	<p>The Chair of the Committee presented a schedule of current Corporation Membership. It was commented that with impending retirements, the number of female Governors would reduce from three to two. The Chair stated that this was an important matter that was under active review. The College had Government funding to increase the diversity on the Board through a National recruitment company, but this had not had the required impact.</p> <p>The Chair wished to record his sincere thanks to Neil Myerson on behalf of the whole Corporation for his valuable contribution to the College over the past eight years, in his capacity both as Deputy Chair and latterly as Chair of the Search, Governance & Remuneration Committee.</p>
18/24.6.2	ii) External Board Review Update	The Corporation noted the update to the External Board Review Action Plan.

19/24	BUSINESS CYCLE, 2024/25
19/24.1	The Corporation noted the Business Cycle, 2024/25, it being proposed that the date of the Corporation meeting might be subject to change. The date for the Corporation Strategy Day in May 2025 also needed to be confirmed.
20/24	ANY OTHER BUSINESS
20/24.1	<p>The Chair, on behalf of the Corporation, sincerely thanked Katy Henderson for her contribution to the Corporation over the past five years and wished her well for the future.</p> <p>There being no further business, the meeting closed at 20.11.</p>