



# OAKLANDS COLLEGE

Minutes of an electronic meeting held at 1430 on 15 May 2020

<b>Present</b>	Christine Chisholm	June Cory (86-88/19 only)	Jean Fawcett
	Phillip Fulton	Sue Grant (Chair)	Zoe Hancock (Principal)
	Kerry Hood	Ginny Kerridge	Neil Myerson
	John O'Sullivan (Item 87/19c on)	Rob Payne	Peter Thompson
<b>In Attendance</b>	Laina Baftjari (Dir Curr)	Nicola Caiger (Dir I&P)	Ronnie Davison (HR)
	Ralph Devereux (Clerk)	Ana Guimaraes (Dir Curr)	Harpreet Nagra (DP)
	Paul McCormack (FD)(Items 62-64 only)	Sian Williams (Dir Curr)	
<b>Apologies</b>	June Cory (Early departure)	Tinshe Mutanhu	Victoria Robertson

## PART ONE

### 86/19 ELIGIBILITY, QUORUM AND OPENING REMARKS

The apologies were accepted. No notice had been received of any Member becoming ineligible to hold office, the meeting was quorate and there had been no interests declared.

#### a. The information was received.

### 87/19 STANDING ITEMS

- a. The Chair welcomed all to the meeting and recorded thanks to the SMT and all staff for their professionalism and commitment throughout these challenging times, which had enabled the current high cross-college engagement levels. Compliments were also recorded to the Principal for the outstanding interview broadcast on Radio Verulam the previous day. The meeting process was explained.
- b. The minutes from the Corporation meeting (Part 1 & 2) held on 9 March 2020 and 3 April (special) were confirmed for electronic signature. **(Action 1)**
- c. Minutes of the Search Committee (SC)(20.04.20). The minutes were explained by the Committee Chair:
  - (i) the recommendation at 07/19 was unanimously accepted and John O'Sullivan was appointed as a general member for 2 years; John then joined the meeting. **(Action 2);**
  - (ii) June Cory would retire from the Corporation at the end of this academic year and Peter Thompson had volunteered to replace her as the Corporation safeguarding nominee; that was approved. **(Action 3)**
- d. Matters arising. There were no matters arising from either meeting.

09.03.20 See referenced minute for full detail		Status
<b>Action 1</b>	62/19b. Exchanges with student detail to Chair.	<b>Complete</b>
<b>Action 2</b>	63/19a. Last minutes (10.2.20) confirmed for signature.	
<b>Action 3</b>	63/19b. Confirmed minutes posted to web after 9 months.	
<b>Action 4</b>	65/19c(iii). Curriculum Mapping to Strategy meeting Training May	
<b>Action 5</b>	65/19c(iv). Sequential "data menu" to be considered.	

<b>Action 6</b>	65/19c(iv). On line data detail for remote information tbc.	
<b>Action 7</b>	66/19d. PM thanked for contribution and wished well.	
<b>Action 8</b>	67/19. Wider detail of the college ethos to be informed.	
<b>Action 9</b>	68/19c. Revised Interview Evening format to Corporation.	
<b>Action 10</b>	68/19c. Enrolment processes to be further considered.	
<b>Action 11</b>	70/19a. HAS Annual Report presented at end of academic year.	
<b>Action 12</b>	70/19b. HAS Policy approved.	

<b>03.04.20.</b> See referenced minute for full detail	<b>Status</b>	
<b>Action 1</b>	76/19c. Meeting procedure agreed.	<b>Complete</b>
<b>Action 2</b>	78/19. Amended Child & Safeguarding Policy approved.	
<b>Action 3</b>	80/19a. Apprenticeship report to next meeting.	
<b>Action 4</b>	81/19. Discover Centre cladding work to proceed.	

Actions. There were no actions outstanding from the previous meetings. Re Action 1. (09.03.20) The acting Chair had received feedback from the meeting with students and he would update to a future meeting and, re Action 3 (03.04.20) the apprenticeship report was included in the next Item.

- a. **The information was noted and received.**
- b. **Actions had been identified (Register 98/19)**

#### 88/19 **QUALITY UPDATE**

The report updated on work during the Covid-19 restrictions, the progress with students and apprenticeships and update on Ofsted preparations. The lockdown had impacted considerably and importantly on process particularly with practical programmes and apprenticeships and possibly on staff and student wellbeing. The comprehensive paper explained student engagement, Teaching Learning and Assessment (TLA), and apprenticeship arrangements.

- a. **Student Engagement.** The content led into a general interactive discussion of how the arrangements were working in practice. Staff were working well remotely perhaps with unfamiliar but necessary IT equipment, post lockdown support with access and troubleshooting had been working well. Managers were in regular contact with staff, both sides were making extensive use of on-line meetings (Microsoft Teams) and the full range of social media to keep in touch. The Quality Advisory Group (QAG) at the last meeting had considered the quality of working and what was “liked and disliked” with the arrangements, feedback indicated that the work was appreciated and mostly the students enjoyed keeping busy. Regular 1:1 sessions continued with teachers and student advisors working effectively; a wide range of “Microsoft Teams” presentations and webinars had proved effective. GCSE were still running despite the cancellation of the summer examinations and there were indications that several students planned to take exams in the Autumn. Students were aware that on-line work would not be taken fully into account during assessment of qualification under the recently Ofqual announced arrangements; these arrangements were fully explained in the report. Most of the 14-16 year old (yo) students were enrolled on vocational courses. Some students who were progressing the following year had started “front loading” on their future syllabus. In response to a query it was explained that students who formally did not need to engage due to exams being cancelled, the college was working hard to continue to engage in particular, supporting those who would be moving into HE and those progressing to the next level within the college. The college was maintaining and checking standards and monitoring and reviewing of online provision was a good one. Staff had responded to student feedback when online lessons have not been seen as sufficiently challenging.
- b. **TLA.** The most recent observations had shown 83% of tutors had met expectations compared with 77% at the same point in the previous year. The overall annual total of observations (including re-observations) stood at 309 of which 44 (14%) had not met expectations; details of the latter, individually listed in the paper, were individually explained. Observations still outstanding would be completed when the College re-opened.

c.

Quality Response to Covid-19. Quality Improvement Facilitators (QIF) were fully supporting teachers including newcomers; areas for improvement from completed observations and audits had informed individual department bespoke training. Future key QIF focus for the coming term were under preparation and examples of good practice observed during closure were explained.

- d. Apprenticeships. Apprenticeship training had continued and many (including the 30% on furlough) were making sound progress, details of the five on a “Break in Learning” were noted and the number was likely to rise should lockdown be extended. The new Head of Work-Based Learning (WBL) had taken up post and was heavily involved in preparation for a possible increase in demand for places and had been in touch with the MD of Together Training (TT) where a closer working relationship was anticipated. There had been 28 completions since closure and 2 staff assessor qualifications had been achieved. There had been 82 remote interviews resulting in 73 offers, equivalent to 38% of the total last September and the 76 “no-shows” would be re-contacted. In response to a comment the corporation were reassured that TT good practice in apprenticeship provision was shared with the college.
- e. Qualification. Guidance on assessments had now been published by Ofqual and was noted. These assessments would not count towards Ofsted results or league tables in the coming year.

a. **The information was noted and received.**

**June Cory left the meeting.**

## **89/19 FINANCE**

- a. Management Accounts. The management accounts (Annex 1) accurate to 31 March 2020 were considered and discussed; the accounts were noted as in scope. At this point in the year the situation was favourable with an overall variance of £499k against budget; income was unfavourable to date by c£356k with all variances clearly tabulated, mostly reduced “high needs” funding; payroll expenditure was positive c£365k, again mostly “high needs” related non-payroll costs were positive by c£482k; again all variances were clearly tabulated. The balance sheet remained positive with a strong cash balance. Capital expenditure was £770k/£1m. The full-year detail and the negative outturn (c£26k) was considered. The Management Accounts and the updated numbers were **noted**.
- b. Re-forecast. The Covid-19 prompted re-forecast (Annex 1) and had been tabulated clearly showing the individual impacts; a total of c(£450k). The reduction in commercial income was offset to some degree by “furlough” staffing (24 individuals) arrangements in these areas and some general expenditure reductions. The end-of-year reforecast was a deficit of c(£479k) which was noted. Tight expenditure control would be introduced and invoices would be scrutinised for integrity reductions on charges through “furlough” arrangements with that proviso it was noted that invoices would be settled in accordance with PPN 02 (Procurement Policy Note - Supplier relief due to COVID-19) and required full payments if the charge was due from grant funding. The detail was **noted**.
- c. Key Performance Indicators (KPI). The recently revised KPI schedule (Annex 2) reflected the Covi-19 associated impact. The downward revision for outturn had moved the Financial Health to “Good” for the current year. The information was **noted**.
- d. Risk Management (RM). The Risk Register, at Annex 3, had recently been reviewed by the SMT (21.04.20) and would be considered by the Audit Committee (AC) on 18 May; the scoring methodology leading to the residual grades summary on the “Heat Map” was explained in the document. The “Heat Map” was then scrutinised and the changes were explained and noted:

- (i) Curriculum 1 (C1) the challenges associated with work placements had been exacerbated by the lockdown and had been promoted to Red; and
- (ii) Curriculum 3 (C3) Covid-19 cross-college associated disruption had prompted a new risk, which was sufficiently complex to have prompted a dedicated Risk Register (Annex 5), which was also **noted**.

There were currently 24 Risks associated with the Strategic Themes, 5 Red, 15 Orange and 6 Green, the information was noted. The RAG ratings were discussed and the RM detail was **noted**.

- e. Purchases over £100k. There were two purchases **noted**, for
  - (i) £103,950 to Smartest Energy (St Albans electricity); and
  - (ii) £181, 263.60 (Cladding)
- f. Quarterly Investment Report. Members were reminded of the Investment Strategy and it was noted that the present position, which was clearly detailed in the accompanying paper, compared favourably with the strategic cash reserves requirements. Each investment element was clearly listed and were explained individually and the information was **noted**.
- g. Financial Regulations. The Regulations last approved in February 2019 had been updated, the associated changes were highlighted in yellow in the document and were listed in the report. References for overseas travel in the document related to educational visits. There was some consideration of the authority to open bank accounts vested in the FD individually, this was acceptable since any transfer of funds required two signatures. The document would be reviewed to ensure consistency with other policies, in particular the whistleblowing section needed to be aligned with the approved policy. **(Action 4)** The Regulations were approved. **(Action 5)**

- a. **The information was received.**
- b. **Action had been identified (Register 98/19)**

## 90/19 PRINCIPALS REPORT

The Principal's Report updated on points not included on the agenda or considered elsewhere, the report had been circulated well in advance of the meeting and was received but of note were:

- a. Key Performance Indicators (KPI). The KPI (Annex 1) were studied and discussed; individual performance movements were explained in the report.
- b. Covid-19 Update. Covid related updates had been provided in their respective Agenda Items. An update from HR was included in the report and was welcomed. The number of staff reporting virus symptoms continued to decline and those who had suffered were contacted regularly. "Safeguarding" for the remote situation had received close attention, and practical help and advice was available for all. Mental health awareness had been and remained a key priority. There was no doubt that the early comprehensive pre-emptive planning for the lock down had proved invaluable and had been the major contributor to the current success. Nonetheless, and as expected, challenges emerged but they could be met. Looking at the College re-opening, challenges remained with practical, craft based qualifications and these would be prioritised during the phased return to College expected to start in June excepting the remote campuses. Working patterns would remain flexible and appropriate arrangements would be made for the 3 NHS "shielded" categories and social distancing and other safety measures were being introduced. The Principals weekly updates were a valuable and welcomed source of information, Thanks were recorded for the individual and collective leadership and the commitment of all staff.

**The information was received.**

## 91/19 HIGHER EDUCATION (HE) ASSURANCE

The Office for Students (OfS) required annual assurance that the Corporation had fully considered action for continuous improvement of student experience and outcomes through appropriate methodologies; these assurances would then be scrutinised as part of the OfS Assurance Statements. RSM had completed a full scrutiny on behalf of the OfS (Attached); such testing did not lead to a formal assurance level or opinion but the report based on performance against expected behaviours from OfS documents had identified five exceptions; all of which had now been included. Comprehensive detail, listed below, fully explained the HE arrangements at Oaklands and each item was considered and discussed. The Report, which concluded with a Summary of Key achievements and Areas for Development was noted together with:

- a. the OfS Regulatory Checklist (Appx 1), which was noted;
- b. OfS Letter approving the student protection plan, which was noted; and
- c. OfS internal Audit.

**The information was received.**

#### **92/19 TOGETHER TRAINING (TT)**

An update on the position at TT was discussed. The joint venture with West Herts College (WHC) was progressing well, both with apprentice numbers/finance and in standards. The comprehensive report explained the national position and the revised funding arrangements, which would benefit TT as Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) were now able to participate fully in the scheme. Care had been taken with setting targets for the year which were:

- a. contract value £2m (previous year £1m);
- b. income £930k (previous year 500k); and
- c. apprentice starts 288 (previous year 155).

Apprentices were engaging well and 96% were progressing as expected with 78% achieved the English and Maths (EAM) qualification at their first attempt. Members took comfort from the information.

**The information was noted and received.**

#### **93/19 STUDENT**

- a. Inclusion and Progression. The wide ranging report updated the Corporation on student voice, safeguarding, well-being, careers and the residential provision. The relatively newly appointed Safeguarding and Wellbeing Manager who would also be the "Deputy Designated Safeguard Lead" together with the Student Advisor and Safeguarding Officer at the Welwyn Garden City (WGC) campus and would form an effective team. There were 118 "looked after" or recent care leavers on roll and their retention was commendably at 98%. Full detail of the wide range of activity and initiatives was included was in the report. Safeguarding concerns by type were graphically presented at Annex A and were explained and led into a general discussion of the issues. The work was hugely proactive and the understandable rise in client "panic days" and spike in mental health concerns was noted. The whole team had, and continued to, show very high commitment and professionalism and the Corporation noted an additional record of thanks to all involved in this critical area and asked for that to be passed to the team. **(Action 6)**
- b. Numbers and Targets. Detail of student recruitment was fully explained in the report which also gave information on the marketing activities, which aimed to promote the College, raise recruitment and engage pro-actively with successful applicants until enrolment. The decision to cancel all live Open Events and revise the application/interview process had been taken in March, the revised process, including the virtual presentation of events was explained. A 4 week pilot marketing scheme with a specialist company was underway and radio advertising had been added to the publicity inventory of all social media. At the end of April there had been 2391 applications, full information by section and comparing the

last 2 years was at Annex 1, firm acceptances to the same parameters were at Annex 2 and internal progression was at Annex 3. Progression was only possible if there was a route available and for students who had shown less commitments or who may find the scope too challenging the initial 6 weeks were treated as probationary. Members were encouraged to view the virtual open days and provide feedback

- c. Stakeholder Engagement. Close engagement with stakeholder groups continued with virtual meetings clearly the main medium. Full detail of groups concerned and the associated activities was noted and welcomed.

- a. **The information was received.**
- b. **Action had been identified (Register 98/19)**

**94/19 POLICIES**

There were 2 Policies that required approval the:

- a. Data Protection Policy (DTP), now version 3 had been amended to include changed job titles for Data Controllers (Policy S9); and
- b. Freedom of Information (FOI) Annex 2 to the annual report of FOI requests included one change at para 5.4, reducing costs for applicants from £50 to £25 ph on the advice of the College solicitors.

Both Policies were approved and the FOI annual report was noted. **(Action 7)**

- a. **The information was received.**
- b. **Action had been identified (Register 98/19)**

**95/19 GOVERNANCE**

- a. Corporation Register. A draft register of membership and appointments was at Annex 1, there were some minor necessary amendments, which would be incorporated and the final version circulated to members. **(Action 8)** Several changes would be necessary for the coming year with the departure of June and Ginny and the addition of new members; as requested by Members these would be discussed personally by the Chair with those concerned. **(Action 9)**. Arrangements for induction and possibly 'buddying up' were discussed and the chair would welcome feedback on these issues.
- b. The Chair had discussed her term of office with the Vice Chair, her current end date was 7 July, given the COVID situation she had offered to extend her term of office to provide for continuity. This would be reviewed in a year's time and that was agreed. **(Action 10)**
- c. The schedule of meeting for 2020.21 was considered, the Corporation meeting scheduled for 8 February was rescheduled for 1 February (AOC Conference) Members noted and supported the continuing training sessions and noted that these would include preparation for Ofsted and 'speed dating' with students; further suggestions would be welcomed by the Chair and the programme was approved. **(Action 11)**

- a. **The information was received.**
- b. **Action had been identified (Register 98/19)**

**96/19 URGENT BUSINESS**

There had been no urgent business requested.

**97/19 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting would be the Strategy Day at 1430 on 8 June 2020.

**98/19 ACTION REGISTER**

See referenced minute for full detail		Resp	Date
<b>Action 1</b>	87/19b. Last minutes (09.03.20 & 03.04.20) confirmed.	Clerk	wie
<b>Action 2</b>	87/19c(i). J O'S appointed general member for 2 years.		31.07.20
<b>Action 3</b>	87/19c(ii). PT to be safeguarding nominee 2020.21.		

<b>Action 4</b>	89/19g. FR checked against other Policies for consistency.	<b>FD</b>	<b>wie</b>
<b>Action 5</b>	89/19g. Financial Regulations approved.		
<b>Action 6</b>	93/19a. Appreciation passed to safeguarding/welfare team.	<b>DirIP</b>	
<b>Action 7</b>	94/19. DTP & FOI Policies approved.	<b>FD</b>	
<b>Action 8</b>	95/19a. Updated Corporation Register to be circulated.	<b>Clerk</b>	
<b>Action 9</b>	95/19a. Committee membership to be personally discussed by Chair.	<b>Chair</b>	<b>31.07.20</b>
<b>Action 10</b>	95/19b. Chairs term extended by 1 year.	<b>Clerk</b>	<b>07.07.20</b>
<b>Action 11</b>	95/19c. Meeting Schedule approved.	<b>Clerk</b>	<b>wie</b>