



OAKLANDS COLLEGE

Minutes of an electronic meeting held at 1800 on 12 October 2020

Present	Christine Chisholm	Sue Grant (Chair)	Jesmin Haq
	Phillip Fulton	Zoe Hancock (Principal)	Neil Myerson
	John O’Sullivan	Rob Payne	Peter Thompson
In Attendance	Nicola Caiger (Dir I&P)	Ronnie Davison (Dir HR)	Ana Guimaraes (Dir Curr)
	Harpreet Nagra (DP)	Paul McCormack (FD)	Sian Williams (Dir Curr)
Apologies	Jean Fawcett	Kerry Hood	

A Corporation strategy session had been held immediately before the meeting, which had considered “The Data Pack” arising from a Curriculum Advisory Group (CAG) initiative and which would provide members with a comprehensive range of interlinked and correlated information both textually and graphically presented. The content was closely considered and discussed and several suggestions were made for improvement to the document, which when finalised would be brought to the Corporation at each meeting. The draft would be updated in the light of discussions and passed to the Audit Committee Chair for comment and considered by the QAG **(Action 1)**

PART ONE

01/20 ELIGIBILITY, QUORUM AND OPENING REMARKS

- a. 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.
- b. No students were present. Members noted Covid related difficulties and that elections were due shortly. New student members should be appointed and invited to the November meeting. The Chair has asked that feedback be sought during these times from students. **(Action 1)**

**The information was noted and received.
Actions had been identified (Register 13/20)**

02/20 STANDING ITEMS

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting and recorded thanks to the SMT and all staff for their continued professionalism and commitment. The meeting process was explained.

- a. The minutes from the Corporation meeting (Part 1 & 2) held on 6 July 2020 were confirmed for electronic signature. **(Action 2)**
- b. Matters arising. There were no matters arising.
- c. Actions. Actions from the last meeting were discussed and confirmed as all complete.

		Resp	Date
	See referenced minute for full detail	Clerk	wie
Action 1	111/19a. Last minutes (15.05.20 & 08.06.20) confirmed.	FD	
Action 2	111/19d. IAS Plan 2020/21 approved.	Chair	
Action 3	112/19b. College opening Plans endorsed.		
Action 4	112/19d(iii). Corporation Business Plan 2020.21 approved.		

Action 5	114/19f. SCFCP approved.	FD	
Action 6	116/19b. Meeting schedule 2020.21 approved.	Clerk	
Action 7	116/19c. Corporation Register approved.		
Action 8	116/19d. Corporation attendance target retained at 85%.	Dir(I&P)	
Action 9	117/19. All Policies approved.		

- d. Minutes of the Audit Committee (AC) (05.10.20). The AC minutes were explained by the Committee Chair. The two Internal Audit Service fieldwork reports were noted and the recommendation re the Risk Management (RM) Policy was also noted to inform Item 7. **(Action 3)** The Committee had also scrutinised the Financial Indicators in depth.

**The information was noted and received.
Actions had been identified (Register 13/20)**

03/20 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 noted and discussed it was too early in the year for meaningful analysis but stronger data would be available at the next meeting; information contained in other agenda items was signposted.
- b. Coronavirus Update. In response to a query it was confirmed that currently one staff member and 7 students had contracted the virus and 66 staff had been absent through self-isolation. The follow up processes were explained and noted. Active and prioritised technological support has been provided for the 400 students that had need and further arrangements were explained. The question of senior management contingency plans was raised, namely who would replace the Principal if she became incapacitated; As discussed with the Chair, it was confirmed that, the Deputy Principal (DP) and the Finance Director (FD) would assume the leadership. There had been a strongly favourable student response to personal support and remote delivery during lockdown and the imminent student survey would provide additional information including the enrolments process. Some consideration of the negative focused effect on individual "self-isolating" students whilst classmates continued as normal was raised and the process was explained, essentially there would not be a mixture of live and online teaching with an early decision to move to fully remote provision.
- c. FE Commissioner (FEC). The FEC termly letter was at Annex 2.
- d. Prime Minister's (PM) Skills Announcement. The text of the PM speech to Exeter College outlining amongst other matters, plans for the White Paper and establishment of the National Skills Fund was hyperlinked in the Report and was warmly welcomed.

The information was noted and received.

04/20 QUALITY UPDATE

The report updated on quality processes and impact, a comprehensive study examining six areas was discussed. The focus on staff observation, training and development had been further strengthened for the year; the process was detailed and noted. Queries which had emerged during considerations re the report included:

- a. Complaints. An analysis of received complaints, by Department and number was considered, there had been 61 during the year compared with 77 in 2018/19. A question regarding the Business Department showing 11 complaints but no mention in the previous year was considered; it was agreed to check the detail and advise **(Action 4)** but it was accepted there had been some challenges during last year, which had now been resolved. Complaints were promptly addressed with a 10-day maximum time frame; it was confirmed that the outstanding 2% had now been cleared up.

Curriculum Self-Assessment Reports(SAR). SAR results by grade had been tabulated overall and compared with the previous 3 years; the significant improvement was noted

and welcomed. The individual area results were then considered, these would inform the whole college SAR, which would be considered at the next Corporation meeting. The reduction of 3 “Grade One” assessments was explained as driven by the fact that learning was remote for a third of the year, the lack of data and the consequent decision to be prudent. Good evidence existed for the LIFE provision to continue to maintain its outstanding grade. Some concerns were raised about effects when an EAM bubble needed to isolate even if a few members of the class did not really need to self-isolate for example, if they were absent when the positively tested student was in class. Members requested that the provision of E&M in this fully online mode continue to be closely monitored especially in relation to attendance/engagement and performance. On-line delivery of EAM had recently been enhanced by recruitment of a specialist QIF, lessons were observed and there was no apparent reason why Members could not be invited to observe. The QIF was heavily involved but was excellent and was identifying students that needed additional or different support and developing internal practice.

- b. KPI. Restrictions on classroom observations and “pre 42-day point” enrolments shift meant that KPI would not be available until the next meeting.
- c. Teaching Learning and Assessment (TLA). The TLA Policy had been updated and was attached and received, an excellent staff handbook had been circulated and was also attached. Individual teachers were individually RAG rated and tracked for progress and individual training needs identified. Members discussed how best they could discharge their duties whilst visits to campus were limited. The leadership team undertook to explore how members could engage eg attending review boards, being a guest at online sessions, possible site visits.
- d. Progress. General start of year arrangements had gone smoothly, there had been some minor and expected new student behavioural issues, which had been satisfactorily resolved.
- e. Ofsted Visit. The process for the two day OFSTED visit in the Autumn terms was listed and noted.

**The information was noted and received.
Actions had been identified (Register 13/20)**

05/20 FINANCE REPORT

- a. Outturn 2019/20. The current financial report referencing the unaudited year-end position was then considered; the comprehensive document comprised a narrative informed by graphical and tabulated detail, including information on variances, which were explained and considered. It was also noted that these were considered in detail by the recent audit committee. The last accounts scrutinised by the Corporation were for the period to 31 May and had forecast an end-of-year deficit out-turn of (£297k), additional income and reduction in expenditure, had reduced that number and the latest figures now showed an out-turn of £196k; that however would be affected in the statutory accounts by pension adjustments and would show (£8,075k). That number although large, was noted as having no direct effect on the bottom line or the financial health assessment, which had again been provisionally graded as “Outstanding”. That position was clearly explained informed by full tabulated data and the variances were noted. Detail of expected funding for the current year had been tabulated and was closely considered and discussed by line, the forecast total was noted, and when consolidated with other funding sources stood at c£33m. When this was translated into the SOCI (Annex 1) the result was a forecast deficit out-turn of (£511k) compared to the £982K agreed in the original budget. which did include provision for a pay award but this would be subject to further discussion in the coming weeks due to the impact this year and next. As a consequence of this revised forecast approval was requested and granted to increase the in-year capital expenditure , noting that £500K was withheld for consideration at this meeting when setting the original budget. This was noted as separate from the major ST Albans capital development programme. The information was noted.

- a. Risks and Opportunities (R&O). A return to a break-even budget would be the aim for 2021/22; 3 High and 3 Medium risks, potentially totalling £2.2m had been tabulated, and were individually discussed. Five opportunities, potentially totalling £1.5m were also then considered. The R&O were noted.
- b. Purchase orders >£100k. Purchase orders for £100k and above were individually listed at Annex 2 and were noted. There were 4 items:
 - (i) Groundwork East was paid £115k on 04.08.20;
 - (ii) Progression 2 Ltd was paid £250k on 04.08.20;
 - (iii) Smartest Energy Ltd was paid £339,999.45 on 14.09.20; and
 - (iv) Blakedown Sport and Play Ltd was paid £101,634 on 01.09.20.

The FD would continue to report all purchase orders approved over £100k to the Corporation. The orders were noted.

- c. Risk Management (RM):
 - (i) Register. The Risk Register presented as a RAG rated table at Annex 3 had been reviewed by the SMT and SLT on 22 September and was planned for further review by the SMT on 20 October. It had also been fully scrutinised by the AC at the last meeting; (02/20d AC Minute 04/20) The “Heat Map” was discussed particularly the three red zone risks (C1, M1 & M11). The reduction in residual risk P4 from red to amber was discussed and after consideration it was agreed to adopt the senior leadership recommendation.. It was agreed that this was of fundamental importance and would still be subject to close scrutiny by Corporation. The Register was approved. **(Action 5)**
 - (ii) Policy. The RM Policy, at Annex 4 had been fully scrutinised at the last AC meeting and recommended for approval (02/20d AC Minute 04/20a) the Policy was approved. **(Action 6)**

**The information was received and noted.
Actions had been identified. (Table 13/20 below)**

06/20 RESIDENTIAL UPDATE

Term Time Only (TTO) residential provision for 79 students (57m & 22F) was provided in the new Homestead building where the standard of accommodation was exceptional; all rooms were en-suite and had underfloor heating. One student had withdrawn as he no longer wished to participate in sport and the family had been impressed by the support he had received. The students were all members of one of six Sports Academies and the provision was for 16 and 17 years old but with some “risk assessed” who would turn 18 in a year. Composition, operation, responsibilities and communication processes of the Residential Management Group (RMG) under the strong leadership of Garry Leask, were fully explained and noted. Regular meetings of the recorded student focus groups informed the RMG on student needs and reinforced outcomes of other informal meetings. Particular attention was paid to nutritional requirements and a wide range of enrichment activities was noted and welcomed. Full detail of induction arrangements and Covid measures was included in the paper and was welcomed. Key Strengths and Areas for Improvement were clearly explained in the paper and the self-assessed rating of “Good” was welcomed. The new cohort was settling in despite an early disciplinary incident involving some rugby students which had been quickly and firmly resolved. Members were invited to visit, tour the facility and share dinner with the residents and those wishing to do so should contact the Dir I&P beforehand to reserve a slot. **(Action 7)** The Dir I&P attended Covid related meetings at Hertfordshire County Council (Herts CC) held 3 times each week and the outcomes informed both residential and HAS matters.

**The information was received and noted.
Actions had been identified. (Table 13/20 below)**

07/20 PEOPLE ENGAGEMENT

The full People Engagement Report was considered and discussed. Human Resources (HR) staff continued close contact with all staff, particularly those on self-isolation, for all there was emphasis on mental health. The employee assistance programme. "LifeWorks" which now included a Covid toolkit was updated each day. General wellbeing amongst staff was good with improving confidence in working in college as experience was gained. Full detail in the Paper was explained and discussed with the following considered:

- a. World Mental Health day had been on 10 October and practical help on improving and sustaining mental health had been circulated to all;
- b. "Staff Voice" meetings would start electronically this month and their outcomes would help to inform and influence the SMT considerations;
- c. 'flu vaccinations would be offered to all staff through Lloyds Pharmacy;
- d. Investors in Diversity (IiD), the benefits associated with IiD had been previously discussed and the issue was progressing, a remotely conducted diagnostic staff survey was planned for November as the initial stage of the review by the National Centre, and the outcome would lead to an action plan;
- e. ongoing and supportive discussions re the pandemic working practices had been held, and agreements made, with UCU and Unison;
- f. staff turnover (ytd) was 1% against an annual target of 11%; and
- g. staff sickness noted as 0.3 days annually against the annual target of 5.6;

The information was noted and received.

08/20 HEALTH AND SAFETY (HAS) ANNUAL REPORT

The HAS Committee, in accordance with all relevant regulations met each half term and advised the Principal directly on associated matters. On request a full list of staff involved with the HAS organisation in College would be circulated. **(Action 8)** The SMT received a full report each month; the content, listed in the paper was noted as comprehensive. The full and clear annual report was then considered and discussed. The numbers of accidents, incidents and "near misses" during the year was compared with 2018/19 and as expected was lower since the college had been closed for a proportion of the time. Care was taken with analysis of near misses since the could be an indicator of susceptibility to a more serious breach of safety. Key risks identified by each Department had been RAG rated and tabulated and were noted, these risks informed individual action plans. It was noted that there was no overall action plan for the college as a whole. It was confirmed that fire drills had been held since the start of term and would continue in accordance with the schedule. During discussions it was confirmed that the majority of incidents occurred at the St Albans campus since the Welwyn environment was more classroom based. The new cohort had settled in well and there had been little evidence of unawareness, in particular smoking discipline was being followed. The procedure for informing the Corporation Chair of a serious incident was discussed and it was confirmed that she would be informed at the earliest opportunity once immediate safety actions had been completed.

**the information was received and noted.
Actions had been identified. (Register 13/20)**

09/20 POLICY APPROVAL

There was one annual report and one Policy for review. The Safeguarding Policy had been amended in September 2020 to reflect changes required by the recently updated "Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges". Members had also taken comfort that the Ofsted monitoring visit had again not raised any concerns about Safeguarding and Prevent. The Corporation nominee for Safeguarding was now Peter Thompson. The comprehensive Report was discussed, in particular the consideration of "looked after" children and criminal convictions; the nominee had some points that he would

discuss directly with the Dir I&P but he confirmed that they would not require the Corporation to reconsider the Policy, which was approved for immediate implementation. **(Action 9)**

**the information was received and noted.
Actions had been identified. (Register 13/20)**

10/20 GOVERNANCE

a. Regulatory Documents. The Regulatory Documents had not been substantially changed since the version approved for the previous year; the AC Terms of Reference (TORs) had been amended to reflect the recently revised Post 16 Audit Code of Practice and to incorporate AC and IAS recommendations. The Documents would be considered at the next meeting of the Search and Governance (S&G) Committee, and any necessary outcome would be reported to the Corporation **(Action 10)** The documents were:

- (i) Instrument and Articles;
- (ii) Code of Conduct;
- (iii) Committee TORs;
- (iv) Standing Orders;
- (v) Code of Good Governance for English Colleges; and.
- (vi) Senior Staff Remuneration Code. (Also, in (v) above)

The documents were all approved for implementation, the S&G Committee was authorised to amend at their discretion. **(Action 11)**

b. Corporation Self-Assessment Report (SAR). In accordance with the requirement in the Code of Good Governance, a comprehensive compliance review with the “Good Governance Action Plan” had been completed and RAG rated; the compliance ratings were not meant as performance indicators, the document, which would also be considered at the next meeting of the S&G Committee, was approved. **(Action 12)**

- a. **The information was received and noted.**
- b. **Actions had been identified. (Table 13/20 below)**

11/20 URGENT BUSINESS

There had been no urgent business requested.

12/20 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be at 1800 on 12 October 2020.

13/20 ACTION REGISTER

See referenced minute for full detail		Resp	Date
Action 1	Intro. Updated draft Data Pack to AC Chair for comment.	ZH	asap
Action 2	02/20a. Last minutes (06.07.20) confirmed for signature.	Clerk	wie
Action 3	02/20d. AC recommendation noted for Item 7.	Chair	
Action 4	04/20a. Complaints re Business Department to be resolved.	DP	
Action 5	05/20c(i). RR approved.	RD	
Action 6	05/20c(ii). RM Policy approved.		
Action 7	06/20. Visits to the Homestead to be reserved in advance.	Dir I&P	
Action 8	08/20. List of HAS staff to be circulated to members.		wie
Action 9	09/20. Safeguarding Policy approved.		asap
Action 10	10/20a. S&G Committee to consider Regulatory Documents.	Clerk	wie
Action 11	10/20a. Regulatory Documents provisionally approved.		
Action 12	10/20b. Corporation SAR approved. (S&G discretion).		