

MOULTON COLLEGE

CORPORATION

Minutes of the Corporation meeting held on Thursday, 25th April 2024 at The Barn, Moulton College, 1.00pm

Present:	David McVean (Chair)	Independent Governor
	Charles Matts	Independent Governor
	Ashley Clarkson	Independent Governor
	Pauline Hawkesford	Independent Governor
	Lucille Knapp	Independent Governor
	Prof. Elaine Limond	Independent Governor
	Suzanne Ijewsky	Independent Governor
	Andy MacCaig	Independent Governor
	Dr Mohamed Saeudy	Independent Governor
	Alastair Thomson	Independent Governor
	Mark Wakeford	Independent Governor
	Corrie Harris	Principal
	Michael Knibbs	Staff Governor
	Karen Squires	Staff Governor
	Ivy Knowles	Student Governor
	Megan Smith	Student Governor
In attendance:	Faye Williams	Vice Principal
	Alicia Bruce	Chief Operating Officer
	David Aldridge	Executive Director of Human Resources
	Matt Smith	Executive Director of Skills and Business Development
	Catherine Duro	Head of Governance
	Helen King	Audit Committee Co-optee
	Oliver Symons	Principal Designate

SPECIAL ITEM

24/23 Confirm Principal Appointment

The appointment of Oliver Symons as Principal and CEO was confirmed, with a start date of 8 July 2024.

Oliver was welcomed to the meeting, as an observer.

SECTION A – ROUTINE AND STANDING ITEMS:

24/24 Apologies for absence (Agenda item 1)

Apologies for absence were received from Prof. Shan Wareing, Craig Ablett and George Crick.

24/25 Declarations of interest (Agenda item 2)

There were no declarations of interest.

24/26 Minutes of last meeting (Agenda item 1, Paper A)

The minutes of the meeting held on **Thursday, 25th January 2024** were approved as a true and accurate record.

24/27 Actions from last meeting (Agenda item 4, Paper B)

There were no outstanding actions.

It was asked that governor turnover be added to the risk register **(Action AB)**

Carbon baselining has begun to define the baseline figure for 2022/23. It was asked if this included the farm, it was confirmed that it did. It was agreed that the first report must be produced by 3rd June 2024 to be considered by the F&R Committee for Corporation approval on July 4th.

SECTION B – TRIANGULATION – STUDENT AND STAFF FEEDBACK

24/28 – Link Governor Visits (Agenda Item 6, Paper C, and Verbal)

The link governor for quality's report was received. The possibility of advertising in trade magazines for new staff was **discussed**. The Executive Director of HR detailed the wide and varied approach used to recruit, bespoke to the many different areas across the college, It was explained that for each industry the best approach was considered after taking feedback from staff. Governors were **reassured**.

The Health and Safety link governor's feedback was received in their absence. Their commitment to triangulation was acknowledged.

24/29 – Staff Governor Feedback (Agenda Item 5, Verbal)

A staff governor reported a mixture of excitement and apprehension amongst the staff population with the change in leadership upcoming. Sustainability remained a key staff priority. OFSTED becoming due was frequently in staff conversations, the involvement support staff in Ofsted awareness preparations was raised as a matter for attention. **(Action FW)**

A query was raised regarding the mechanism for picking up learners who were behind in completing their course and achieving excellence. It was confirmed that markbook tracked the percentage of completion to highlight issues for staff and students to address in a timely and structured way. It was explained that assessment strategies were in place to manage the assessment burden. The Corporation asked that the TLA Committee ensured scrutiny of the student trajectories. **(Action)**

24/30– Student Governor Feedback (Agenda Item 5, Verbal)

The student governors had no broader feedback to share on this occasion. They were asked to share their own experience.

They reported that whilst they were happy at the college and enjoying their courses some of the support services needed improving for the Wilson Centre. It was acknowledged that the facilities were available from main site but for students with mobility issues it wasn't always easy to get to them between lessons.

Governors asked that feedback be sought from students accessing all college sites to report to the TLA Committee. **(Action FW)**

It was requested that at every PMB the question be asked if all students were able to access the support they need. It was recognised that some students needed more support, including the silent majority who were not so easily identified as they were not on a safeguarding register or being considered for an EHCP. **(Action FW)**

SECTION C – PRINCIPAL’S UPDATE

24/31 Strategic Plan and Operating Plan Update (Agenda Item 7, Paper D)

The Principal’s update was received.

Staff utilisation was challenged. Anecdotally governors were hearing staff were stretched in some areas, with a reliance on agency staff in some departments, but there wasn’t a KPI measure demonstrating this.

It was explained that this regrettably remained work in progress as a quantifiable KPI the system could collate. It wasn’t included in the report as SLT were not confident that the measure was entirely accurate. The Principal confirmed though that it was an SLT priority which was discussed in detail, the figure was believed to be around 94%. Work would continue to provide an accurate measure which could be monitored. **(Action AB)**

All agreed that employer voice, apprenticeships and local skills needs must be addressed more explicitly by TLA **(Action CD)**.

SECTION D – CORPORATION MATTERS

24/32 Feedback and Actions from the Governor Development Day 25th April 2024 (Agenda item 8, Verbal)

A thought-provoking workshop on risk management had been attended by governors, who were assured that their current practices were good but could be refined further through SMARTer actions and tighter definitions of risk, cause, and effect.

An OFSTED update briefing was shared, reminding governors of the framework and the level of detail OFSTED would be seeking from governors.

An engaging safeguarding workshop, with real case files to analyse and heighten governor awareness of what was initially graded ‘low level’ issues from the anonymised examples provided (not from Moulton College).

24/33 Risk Management Review (Agenda Item 9, Paper E)

The risk management report was taken as read.

Building on the morning session all agreed that the strategic risks should be about the risk of not achieving the strategic plan, with more operational risks managed at by the Senior Leadership Team.

The board were first challenged to reflect if it was satisfied with the current strategic plan. A robust discussion took place. It was agreed that whilst the plan remained largely relevant the broader situation had changed, and with a new Principal coming in the next term would be the opportune time to begin the process to refresh or rewrite the strategic plan. The full review of the strategic risks register, risk appetite and risk management framework would be the second phase of this exercise. **(Action All)**

The current risk register would be reviewed by the Senior Leadership Team for comment at the next round of committee meetings. **(Action SLT)**

24/34 Capital Plan (Agenda Item 10, Paper F)

Priorities for available capital funding were discussed, including the estate, health and safety, and student experience. IT would also continue to be developed, including business systems with modern and up-to-date software to drive efficiency and free up resources.

It was confirmed that managers would continue to seek grant funding to bridge the gap, no government funding was expected in the next year due to the election, but it was hoped funding would become available in 2025/26 which we needed to be prepared to bid for.

Governors were also assured that in areas where funding was more challenging to secure managers were seeking to expand partnerships to seek investment and resourcing.

Questions were invited. The board was reassured the plan had been scrutinised by the Finance and Resources Committee.

Following the refinancing, the board asked that a reserves policy be developed for approval by the F&R Committee. **(Action AB)**

24/35 Estates Strategy Update (Agenda Item 11, Verbal)

It was advised that a longer-term strategic estates plan had been seen by the F&R Committee. The next phase had begun, which involved detailed planning of projects to be shovel ready to address strategic priorities and risks, when funding became available.

Considerations of land use and mineral rights were discussed. Once values around these were known this would come back for governors to consider.

Information was shared on a restructure of the estates department.

The Vice Chair shared that a report detailing the general improvements around the estate had been received by the F&R Committee who had greatly appreciated the update and information, and in particular the demonstration of prioritising student experience in the activity undertaken.

SECTION E – COMMITTEE REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR APPROVAL

24/36 Feedback and Minutes from TLA Committee Meetings (Agenda Item 12, Paper G)

The summary report and minutes from the meetings held on the 6th February and 18th March 2024, were received including recommendations.

24/37 Curriculum Plan 2024/25 (Agenda Item 12, Paper H)

The Committee Chair explained that whilst it was unusual to bring a work in progress to the Corporation, this current plan is the most inclusive TLA have ever seen, shows some heads of school level discussions, the courses that are being run and why. Constructive criticism was invited, at this consultative stage, before a final plan was developed and budgeted for, for approval at the next round of meetings. The approach was **celebrated** as a comprehensive, ambitious and inclusive approach giving heads of schools' accountability.

The process for turning this initial plan into a business plan was questioned and explained, with the use of 4cast being implemented.

A governor asked if it was possible to see the 2023/24 forecast against actual numbers. **(Action FW)**

Some areas confirmed to be capped due to staffing challenges, quality must be prioritised over quantity.

Governors sought ongoing visibility of the college's ambition and limiting factors, what is our aspiration, what could we deliver, what should we deliver and what will be delivered so that a gap analysis and appropriate actions could be debated. **(Action FW >TLA)**

Governors understood that the college priority for sustainability had been embedded into the curriculum but challenged why it could not be seen in any individual discrete programmes. It was explained that whilst this would be 'nice to have' there were not enough hours available in study programmes currently to enable this.

24/38 HE Strategy (Agenda Item 12, Paper I)

The final strategy was shared for approval, having been discussed at length in January, before the final draft was scrutinised by the HEBoS Committee and shared with TLA who now recommended it for approval.

Resolved that the HE Strategy be **approved**.

24/39 Audit Committee (Agenda Item 13, Paper J)

The Chair of audit fed back on the recent audit committee meeting and the performance of the new audit firms. Governors were assured that all auditors were forming strong relationships with the college.

The recent internal audit findings were shared and governors informed of the strong assurance provided on measuring student experience. Governors were assured that the Health and Safety report had been scrutinised in detail, and there were no issues.

It was confirmed that: the individual audit partner had changed within the external auditors, the interim external audit was being planned, there were four days of internal audit floating after the ESFA had undertaken a funding audit removing this need from the internal audit plan - it was agreed that these be carried into the new year to address the new risk register, Final accounts will be audited for approval in December.

24/40 Finance and Resources Committee (Agenda item 14, Paper K)

The feedback report and minutes were received from the meeting held on 25 March 2024.

IT was known to affect the student experience. A significant detailed report had been scrutinised, with a Gantt chart showing plans and progress. The Committee was extremely satisfied that good progress was being made, within the constraints of available funding and resources, significant improvement had been made since January. It was confirmed that the work happening was improving staff morale.

Sustainability was reported to be firmly on the agenda though the level of student engagement with sustainability activity was queried. This priority would continue to be challenged and monitored by the committee and its working party.

SECTION F – GOVERNANCE & POLICY

24/41 (Agenda Item 15) There were no policies due to review.

SECTION G – CLOSING ITEMS

24/42 Any other business (Agenda item 16, Verbal)

There was no other business raised.

24/43 Impact of Governance (Agenda Item 17, Verbal)

- An engaging development morning driving improvements in risk management and having eyes opened to potential safeguarding cases, giving governors the knowledge and information they need to appropriately scrutinise reports.
- An efficient meeting with feedback from committees assuring adequate scrutiny was in place
- An inclusive opportunity to determine the future through capital and curriculum plans presented in draft for input not just approval.

24/44 Date of next meeting (Agenda item 18)

Thursday 4th July at 9.30 am.

All members of staff and student governors and observers left the meeting before the confidential part began.

Meeting closed 14.30