

MOULTON COLLEGE

CORPORATION

Minutes of the Corporation meeting held on Thursday, 25th January 2024 at The Barn, Moulton College, 09.30am

Present:	David McVean (Chair)	Independent Governor
	Charles Matts	Independent Governor
	Craig Ablett	Independent Governor
	Ashley Clarkson	Independent Governor
	Pauline Hawkesford	Independent Governor
	Lucille Knapp	Independent Governor
	Prof. Elaine Limond	Independent Governor
	Sue Ijewsky	Independent Governor
	Andy MacCaig	Independent Governor
	Dr Mohamed Saeudy	Independent Governor
	Alastair Thomson	Independent Governor
	Mak Wakeford	Independent Governor
	Corrie Harris	Principal
	Michael Knibbs	Staff Governor
	Karen Squires	Staff Governor
	Ivy Knowles	Student Governor
Megan Smith	Student Governor	
George Crick	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
	Sarah Bunny	Director of Finance
	Louise Fletcher	Head of School Land-based and Equine
	Jack Marlow	Assistant Farm Manager

SECTION A – ROUTINE AND STANDING ITEMS:

24/01 Apologies for absence (Agenda item 1)

Apologies for absence were received from Prof. Shan Wareing.

24/02 Declarations of interest (Agenda item 2)

There were no declarations of interest.

24/03 Appointment of Student Governor (Agenda item 3)

The nomination to appoint George Crick as HE Student Governor was received.

George was welcomed to the meeting and the Corporation Board

SECTION B – GUEST SPEAKER – HE STRATEGY

24/04 Draft HE Strategy Presented (Agenda item 4, Paper B)

- a) Olivia McLaughlin, Think! Consultancy was welcomed to the meeting.
- b) The draft HE Strategy was presented to governors for review and discussion ahead of the final draft being presented to HEBoS and the TLA Committee for recommendation.

- c) The creation of HEBoS was **discussed** and its title and coverage debated. It was **agreed** that Higher Education should include all higher-level skills and apprenticeship programmes.
- d) A number of matters were flagged for HEBoS to consider. These included the impact of awarding bodies on the lead time to launch new qualifications and industry accreditation as an alternative – governors supported the notion that new curriculum development could be implemented within 6months, and that enterprise support was looked on favourably.
- e) HEBoS were asked to consider what does good HE look like, how will we know we have succeeded, and to consider if we are being ambitious enough in our targets and to challenge what was financially sustainable as an HE offer. The use of partnerships and employers should also be encouraged to provide physical resources and specialist equipment.
- f) Governors were assured that significant detailed planning had gone into the draft HE Strategy which would be expanded on with HEBoS. It was agreed that that college had one opportunity to get it right.
- g) Olivia advised the board further on the external climate around HE, which was impacted by the costs of living crisis, causing students to behave differently. The college needed to consider all options, including hybrid and distance learning, stackable and modular programmes, HTQs and apprenticeships.
- h) Olivia would continue to support HEBoS and the college as it finalised its HE strategy and development plan.
- i) Olivia was thanked for sharing the strategy with governors at this stage.

SECTION C – ROUTINE CONTINUED

24/05 Minutes of last meeting (Agenda item 5, Paper C)

The minutes of the meeting held on 11TH November 2023 were approved as a true and accurate record.

24/06 Actions from last meeting (Agenda item 6, Paper D)

There were no outstanding actions.

SECTION D – TRIANGULATION – STUDENT AND STAFF FEEDBACK

24/07– Student Governor Feedback (Agenda Item 7, Verbal)

Student governors shared that their experience and belief was that the student experience was good. They reported that students enjoy being at Moulton.

24/08 – Staff Governor Feedback (Agenda Item 7, Verbal)

- a) The staff governors provided an update on staff voice; Governors were assured that the pay award had been welcomed and staff appreciated that the AoC recommendation had been met.
- b) The appointments of the new SLT members had been well received, with positive comments being shared about the early impact and changes being delivered.

- c) Governors were informed that sustainability was high on staff agendas, so this priority area of governance fit well with staff's personal and college values.
- d) Governors understood that staff were awaiting a review of remission. The negative impact of staff shortages on staff morale was also discussed and understood.

24/09 – Link Governor Visits (Agenda Item 8, Verbal)

- a) The Health and Safety Link Governor shared positive feedback, reporting that the health and safety committee was well run, well attended and contributory. Governors were pleased to hear of a downward trend in accidents. Thanks were given for the Health and Safety Manager spending time to update the governor.
- b) There were no updates from the Safeguarding link governor.
- c) Governors were aware that a student had sadly taken their own life the previous week. Management were asked if anything more could have been done to avoid this tragedy. Governors were informed that all due processes had been followed, and resources were in place, The safeguarding team were doing a difficult job well. Governors **asked if any lessons could be learnt** and were **reassured** to hear that work would be done to increase the visibility of the safeguarding team and mental health first aiders across all sites as a proactive measure. The Safeguarding link governor would review this on her next visit. **(Action SI)**

SECTION E – PRINCIPAL'S UPDATE

24/10 Strategic Plan and Operating Plan Update (Agenda Item 9, Paper E)

- a) The Principal's report had been received and questions were invited.
- b) An update was given on the ESFA audit. Governors understood there would be some minor points, which would be resolved. When the report was in it could be decided if a further internal audit was needed this year or if the resource was better spent on a different area.
- c) **Thanks** were given to Alicia and the finance team for their hard work over a number of years to enable the college to formally record a financial health rating of Requires improvement. The Chair reiterated that this meant that in a meeting with the DFE and ESFA it had been made clear that in keeping with its Notice to Improve letter, this board now expected that notice to improve to be removed and the college to move into the PIMS phase of support, an important difference.
- d) All agreed that the data dashboard shared with governors needed a refresh for the new year. The new KPI's must include sustainability. **(Action Executive Team)**
- e) Independent Skills Boards (ISB) links to the TLA Committee and the Board need to be clarified. **(Action HoG/EDS&BD)**
- f) Governors **challenged** how the college would manage expansion. They were assured that lessons had been learnt and contingency plans were in place, with a focus on overstaffing a couple of unique, challenging, critical areas.

SECTION F – CORPORATION MATTERS

The Finance Director and Farm Managers joined the meeting

24/11 Risk Management Report (Agenda item 10, Paper F)

The risk management report was received. Governors were **assured** that activity was moving in the right direction. All agreed that the college situation had now changed. The April development day would be used to review the risk appetite and strategic risks facing the college.

24/12 Farm Report (Agenda Item 11, Paper G)

- a) Governors received an update on the land and farm estate and curriculum. They were **reassured** to hear of the progress being made and the curriculum involvement in all areas of the farm,
- b) The KPI's were **challenged** as being low. The reasons for these were discussed and comparison against the industry benchmarks and commercial farms debated. Governors understood the reasons and hoped to see these higher for the following year.
- c) Governors asked about the financial impact of the farm and were assured that the farm had its own P&L for visibility but fed into the college accounts. It was asked that financial KPI's also be set for the farm to bring clarity and accountability.
- d) Governors were updated on the livestock, drilling success, Agri web software and crop yield.
- e) Governors asked that the farm become a standing item at TLA and F&R Committees to bring governors closer to all aspects of this important resource and curriculum area.
- f) Thanks were given for an honest and informative presentation, and congratulations for the progress made so far.

24/13 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Objectives (Agenda Item 12, Paper H)

The objectives were received for information. Governors were assured that good progress was being made in delivering these.

24/14 Sustainability Strategy (Agenda Item 13, Paper I)

- a) The Sustainability Strategy was received for information. Governors were pleased this was now published on the website and that activity had begun with a well-attended operational committee with around 15 members, a link governor was invited. The governance sustainability working group would need to link closely with this committee to provide a positive impact.
- b) Governors agreed that the lack of baseline data was an issue and must be prioritised to be in place by year end. **(Action EDS&BD)**
- c) It was asked where our expertise was being drawn from. AoC support from the FE Climate roadmap and toolkit was summarised and would be expanded on further at the development day. **(Action HoG)**
- d) A governor encouraged college membership of BRIME, which would support delivery.
- e) Governors were informed that Moulton would be hosting the finals of a sustainability competition during Earth Week, for students from across the county, showing we are centre to the sustainability action.

SECTION E – COMMITTEE REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR APPROVAL

24/15 TLA Committee (Agenda item 14, Paper J)

- a) The Committee report and minutes were received.
- b) The recommended SAR was discussed. It was asked, we have self-assessed as a grade 2, what do we need to do to become a grade 1. The executive shared actions demonstrating that the few areas of concerns were known, managed via the PMB's prioritising on areas of need.

- c) Governors asked that a drop in the OFSTED grade be put on the risk register, as a number of colleges had unexpectedly dropped to RI since September, and we should be mitigating against this. **(Action FW)**

24/16 Finance and Resources Committee (Agenda Item 15, Paper K)

- a) The key points from the two F&R committee meetings were shared via the update report.
- b) The Finance Director took the governors through the detail of the financial statements, bringing their attention to key matters.
- c) Thanks were given to Sarah for her significant hard work, which was appreciated, and her personal efforts were valued.
- d) The recommendation to approve the disciplinary policy was received without objection.

Resolved that:

- a) the draft Financial Statements 31 July 2023 be approved.
- b) the disciplinary policy be approved.

24/17 Audit Committee (Agenda item 16, Paper L)

- a) The key points from the audit committee meeting were shared via the update report.
- b) The clean audit report was reviewed. The 1 minor recommendation was understood. The recommendation to approve this was received.
- c) All documents recommended for review, information and approval were taken as read and questions were invited.
- d) A governor asked that the bribery policy be amended to be reviewed annually. **(Action HoG)**
- e) Thanks were offered to Lucille Knapp for excellent and diligent chairing of the audit committee.

Resolved that:

- a) The external audit management letter be approved.
- b) The letter of representation be approved.
- c) The audit self-assessment questionnaire be approved.
- d) The audit committee annual report be received.
- e) The board assurance framework report be received.
- f) The anti-fraud and bribery policy be approved.
- g) The decision regarding the continuation of the SWAP arrangements be ratified.

24/18 Search and Governance Committee (Agenda item 17, Paper M)

The Chair gave verbal feedback on the discussions that had taken place in the Search and Governance Committee earlier that day:

Resolved that:

- a) The HEBoS terms of reference be approved.
- b) The Sustainability Terms of Reference be approved.
- c) The External Review of Governance be approved.

SECTION F – GOVERNANCE

24/19 Written Resolution (Agenda item 18, Paper N)

“The Board of Governors approves entering into the Professional Services Contract with Turner and Townsend and delegates authority to execute as a deed by affixing the Common Seal of Moulton College and for the Principal and Chair of Governors to sign the agreement on behalf of the Board.”

Resolved that the approval, by written resolution, to sign and seal the deed be **ratified**.

SECTION G – CLOSING ITEMS

24/20 Any other business (Agenda item 19, Verbal)

There was no other business discussed.

24/21 Impact of Governance (Agenda Item 20, Verbal)

Governance had been positive –

- The farm report was timely and informative – governors would like to develop this knowledge to further scrutinise the use of this important resource.
- Governors’ flexibility had supported and enabled the rescheduled sign off of the accounts.
- Governors were actively involved in determining the shape of Moulton’s HE provision.

24/22 Date of next meeting (Agenda item 21)

Thursday 25th April at 9.30 am.

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

Meeting closed 12.35.