

# WQE & Regent College Group

## Corporation Meeting

### MINUTES

11 November 2020 at 17:00, via Zoom

#### Members of the Corporation present:

Stuart Dawkins, Chair

Wayne Allsopp, Jasmine Andean, Joyce Black, Jo Cooke, Bernadette Green, Jash Maadhavji, Neil McGhee, Nisar Navsariwala, Ing'utu Palmer, Philip Parkinson, Amrik Singh, Paul Wilson, Aaron Winterton & Jimmy Zachariah

#### In attendance:

Tim Cullinan, Carolyn Davies, Andrew Jackson,  
Sarah Oldfield, Donna Trusler & Rachel Middleton

#### Apologies for absence:

Jim Phillips, Alistair Lockhart-Smith

## PART A MINUTES

### 1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting, and in particular the new Student Governor, Jash Maadhavji. All attendees introduced themselves and outlined their role within the governance structure

Apologies were received from Jim Phillips and Alistair Lockhart-Smith.

### 2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

### 3. Minutes and matters arising– Paper 001

The minutes of the Corporation meeting held on 14 October 2020 were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting. The Chair will sign the minutes at the next available face to face meeting.

The following matters from the action list were completed between Corporation meetings:

- Provide any queries or feedback on the Permanent Exclusion Policy – *this policy has now been approved*
- Provide any queries or feedback on the Admissions Policy - *this policy has now been approved*
- Make arrangements for Walija Fatima's end of tenure as Student Governor

Actions were removed from the action list, where included in papers or tabled for discussion at this meeting.

The following actions were updated:

- Vaughan Fund - report on fundraising – to be reported at the Vaughan Committee meeting on 11 November 2020.

The Chair of the Vaughan Fund Committee summarised the size of the investment portfolio and gave an overview of the income generated annually.

The Committee convened to review the applications received from alumni for a grant from the Vaughan Fund. On this occasion there were no applicants for the Thornton Fund, which, due to the stipulations within the endowment, can only be given to those studying an undergraduate degree in Maths.

The Committee reviewed the applications and unanimously voted on an award of £300 to be issued to each successful applicant.

The Maths department will be contacted to recommend a student with known difficult financial circumstances, who has progressed to undergraduate study. The student will subsequently be encouraged to apply for the Thornton Fund, and the Committee will liaise outside of the meeting cycle, to approve the application for a grant.

The Committee identified the need to grow the capital base of the fund to enable more grants to be offered in subsequent years. The starting point will be to raise the profile of giving with the Old Wyggestonians, and in time to reinvigorate its membership to recruit members from younger generations.

**Action PW:** to update the Corporation on ways of generating more funds in Spring 2021.

Governors asked whether grants were offered on the basis of need or prior achievement. The Committee Chair confirmed that grants were made at the discretion of the Committee, but students had to outline their background. The Principal also made recommendations based on student commitment to College, academic achievement and attendance whilst studying at WQE.

- Strengthen the Curriculum Policy's reference to student employability  
This work has been completed but needs to be cascaded to Governors. **Action TC**
- Follow up completion of Safeguarding training by Governors  
Three Governors are still outstanding. And need following up. **Action DT/RM**
- Outside of the meeting, a Governor had submitted a question to the senior team about the types of student who had been identified to access support from the Tuition Fund.

This was confirmed as likely to be based upon the c. 200 students who had grade 3 or below in either Maths or English and who had concerns highlighted through data

about performance in initial assessments at subject level. Work on identifying subject areas on which to focus further targeted support is ongoing.

## OVERSIGHT OF STRATEGIC DIRECTION

### 4. Principal's Update

Paul Wilson

*Some confidential items have been redacted.*

Presentation summary:

**Student numbers update** - formal census data will be submitted soon.

3,541 students in the 16-18 age bracket.

The Principal provided a comparison with numbers on roll at this time last academic year.

#### **Estates & Finance Task & Finish Group convened**

Risk and challenge: Covid-19 impact on timelines and planning processes and third-party availability.

Financial planning: delays in government announcements of capital funding deadlines, but there were potential bid opportunities

Task & Finish Group remains committed to long-term Estates Strategy and has reviewed potential solutions to the current circumstances, including in terms of rephrasing and repackaging developments that were in the pipeline, prioritising the most achievable elements of these to summer 2021 and where there is the greatest impact on the reconfiguration within the initial phase.

Due to the fact that funding deadlines are yet to be announced the tentative date for the next Task & Finish Group meeting should remain in diaries, but is likely to be moved to early in the new calendar year, once the funding deadline has been announced.

**New website launching tomorrow** - new and exciting developments. Any feedback from Governors is welcomed.

**Virtual open event** – significant interest in the event.

**Marketing** - Significantly increased resourcing of marketing and investment in digital advertising. Targeted at particular age profiles etc. The metrics reveal that the impact of this is already breaking through, and there is a high level of interest in the virtual open event.

**Remembrance service** conducted today with representation from the Wyggeston Foundation. Silence in classrooms instead of outside.

Governors asked whether they could be involved in writing content for the new website. DT confirmed there were opportunities to write blogs.

**Action PW:** to let governors know about the website and the opportunities to engage.

**Action DT and RM** to pursue opportunities for live Governor web content.

**5. Covid-19 Risk Register – Paper 002**

Paul Wilson

The Link Governor for Wellbeing updated Governors about the Staff Well-being Group. Overall, he reported there was an increase in staff anxiety working in the current pandemic.

**Action CD:** to promote opportunities for teaching staff to join support staff on the Well-being Group

**Action CD:** Provide periodic updates to feature in the Principal's Update, in order to keep Governors apprised.

The Chair confirmed that an annual update on staff well-being will be presented to the Corporation in keeping with the business plan.

The Chair thanked staff for their commitment to work in this area.

Governors continue to affirm:

'That the Corporation:

- i. recognises the continued thoroughness of the process followed and the reasonableness of the additional controls identified;
- ii. endorses the submitted document, whilst accepting that it is dynamic and will continue to change and evolve over time;

**6. Strategic Development Plan – Paper 003**

Paul Wilson

The Principal reminded Governors that at this time of year they receive a summary update on the Strategic Development Plan.

Growth in the student body has not followed the pattern expected. The College overshot capacity the previous two years. There are not obvious capital funds available to expand the college significantly at present.

Governors asked whether the College would likely be under pressure from agencies or other stakeholders to grow.

This is unlikely in the near future as a new free school in the area had been approved and has still got capacity.

Due to the pandemic and the specific context affecting Leicester there had been a shift this September towards more local choices of post-16 education, and potentially to avoid public transport etc.

Whilst a short term impact on this year, these choices may impact Estates and student recruitment strategies in the medium-term if repeated in future years. However, a broadly stable student number is now expected and being planned.

A Governor queried reference to improving student employability within the curriculum section and PW agreed that this could be aligned to the curriculum intent statement presented at a previous meeting.

**Action PW:** to amend wording accordingly in relation to student employability (akin to the change made to the Curriculum Policy).

## OVERSIGHT OF STUDENT OUTCOMES & EXPERIENCES

### 7. Prevent

Donna Trusler

#### 7.1 Prevent Strategy update – Paper 004

DT provided an update on the referrals the College has made to Prevent and gave a comparator to last year. Awareness of right-wing terrorism and lone actors is a new driver for the post-16 sector to monitor.

DT confirmed that the national terror threat has been further heightened today and that this was reflected in the College's own Prevent Risk Register.

Equality and diversity forum will take place next week – Governors are welcome to attend.

#### 7.2 Prevent Risk Register and half-year report – Paper 005

*Confidential items have been redacted.*

Governors noted the Prevent Risk Register.

### 8. Contemplation & Prayer Policy - Paper 006a

An addendum has been included referencing provision/access during the pandemic.

#### 8.1 Prayer Room/Multi-Faith/Contemplation Space Policy (Nov 2020 addendum) –

Paper 006b

Donna Trusler

Governors noted the revised addendum and policy, with a two-week window now in place to move the policy through the approval process.

**Action Governors:** to feedback or raise queries.

### 9. Student Outcomes

Performance of disadvantaged groups  
Sarah Oldfield

SO highlighted the revised definition of disadvantaged groups on slide two of her presentation.

She affirmed that students may fall into multiple categories of disadvantage, but only need to fall into one to be designated as disadvantaged.

Governors queried the term 'learning difference'.  
This was confirmed as a difference in learning style or ability for a specific reason.

### **Priorities for the Student Outcomes Task & Finish Group**

The group will drill down into each category, outlining changes which need to be implemented to boost student outcomes.

SO identified the categories of students who will be looked at in detail by the Student Outcomes Task & Finish Group. These can be referred to ongoing in the presentation which Governors will receive post-meeting.

SO confirmed that groups whose performance had dropped over the last year would be discussed by the Task & Finish Group, a strategy for intervention would be identified and reports to the Corporation on impact would follow in subsequent meetings.

Governors commented that support needed to kick in quickly given the date and noted that disadvantaged groups were likely to have been more adversely impacted by the effect of lockdown.

Governors asked about provision of laptops to vulnerable students.  
All of the vulnerable students requesting laptops are being issued these via IT Services and this was an ongoing process of evaluating individual circumstance and need.

Governors queried the support for students with mental health conditions with the aim of retaining students to the end of their studies.  
Last academic year the Fitness to Study Policy was refreshed. Additional resources had been committed to this area and new mental health advisor has been appointed, who will be able to manage multi agency referrals.  
The Student Executive are planning their own campaign about mental health and were supporting awareness raising.

### **10. Work experience update – Paper 007**

Andrew Jackson

The Capacity Development Fund consists of extra funding to colleges to develop extended work experience for identified groups of students on vocational programmes. The commitment to experience that has to be in the workplace equates to an average 350 hours for students across an academic year. This equates to roughly 50 days of work experience through an academic year. This is focused on students undertaking vocational courses at Level 2 and 3.

Covid-19 made work experience inadvisable presently and therefore very challenging to actually deliver fully this year. This challenge was recognised by the DfE and funding agencies, and the requirements for work experience were suspended last year with the funding retained. This year the College has reduced the percentage targets and the commitment is likely to be extendable across the whole two- year course rather than in a single year.

There is a financial risk if the College does not manage to comply this year and of the funds are recouped (£44k).

More generally, 1 or 2 weeks of work experience is a priority for students following vocational programmes.

Students planning to go out at the end of last academic year, could not.

Some virtual work experience developments were providing opportunities and an alternative focus during this year, with a focus on employability as part of this.

A Governor queried whether students could complete some virtual voluntary work experience in their own time?

AJ responded that the Careers department is trying to facilitate this. They usually run a volunteering fair where agencies come in and are looking to replace this with a virtual fair instead.

For the Capacity Development Fund the College is also committed to keep in touch with employers and extending these links. They are maintaining a list of contacts and ready to release students to do work experience later in the year, if possible.

## **OVERSIGHT OF FINANCE, RESOURCES & ASSETS**

### **11. Monthly management accounts (Sept 2020) – Paper 008**

Carolyn Davies

Governors were asked to note that the budget for 20/21 was collated in May/June with lots of change occurring since this point. This is reflected in the variances. CD is working on a re-forecasted budget, which will come to the next Corporation meeting. ESFA introduced a series of new financial returns for 2021, the first to be submitted at the end of November. This will come to the Corporation for information.

## **PAY AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE**

### **12. Pay Policy – Paper 009**

Carolyn Davies

Update of previous Pay Policy – 3 yearly refresh. This has been shared with the trade union group. It was supported and there were no additional comments received. It has been re-organised but there are no substantive changes.

Section 7 is new – this codifies what happens with senior management pay.

The policy was approved subject to the fortnight policy approval process.

**Action all Governors:** to provide feedback or queries

## EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE

### 14. Governor training and development needs

SFCA webinar series already underway. Two sessions have already been delivered.

The Clerk is letting governors know when the sessions are and issuing the link to recordings and the slides.

The Clerk has identified a one-day conference for Staff Governors and will shortly come out to Aaron and Ing'utu in relation to that

Following the Student Governor induction, the Clerk will be refining some of the content to provide an additional glossary of terms outlining some of the abstract terms such as 'accountability', 'conflict of interest' etc. to further strengthen the induction.

### 15. Update on External Governor recruitment

Rachel Middleton

There have been no statements of interest received.

We have one prospective governor who is an alumnus and is not yet available to become a governor, because he is setting up his own consultancy, but may have capacity in 6 months' time. NMcG has spoken to the candidate outside of the meeting and confirmed he remains committed to becoming a Governor.

**Action RM.** Ask the candidate to submit a statement of interest. Discuss process with the Chair.

## ROUND-UP

### 16. Any Other Business

- Parent of one of the Columbine shooters is a keynote speaker at a virtual event – looking at identifying triggers and understanding mental wellbeing in young people. This opportunity was open to Governors also.

**Action DT/ RM:** to cascade on event details to Governors.

- An Ofsted Report on the impact of Covid-19 on education had been published  
**Action PW/RM:** to cascade on to Governors
- Studio 79 and LCPA virtual shows for Christmas. If Governors want to join these remotely they can do so. **Action SO:** to issue details.
- Principal's Performance Management Review – The Chair will write to all Governors (except student governors) to provide comment on his performance. JB and PP will assist the Chair with the appraisal process.

The Remuneration Committee will convene in December immediately before the Corporation meeting to ratify. **Action: Governors**

- The Clerk to the Corporation has reached the mid-point of her probationary period. An email will come out to all Governors asking for feedback. This will be fed into a review conducted by the Chair, with the Principal in attendance as Observer. **Action: Governors**
- A Governor queried whether the College had been approached to be a mass Covid-19 test pilot. The Principal confirmed this was not the case but reported that there were no instances of staff or students not being able to access tests.

### **17. Confidentiality**

Subject to discussions during the meeting, the Corporation considered the following matters to be confidential.

- Detail of Covid-19 numbers
- Prevent referral numbers
- Detail on student outcomes

### **18. Next Meeting**

5.00pm, Wednesday 16 December 2020, via Zoom

At this meeting the Corporation will discuss how it continues to meet, and this will be informed by national guidance ongoing.

The meeting closed at 19:07

**Chair of Governor's Signature:** ..... **Date:** .....

## Action List

	<b>Actions arising from 23 September Corporation Meeting</b>	<b>Who is responsible?</b>	<b>Date for completion</b>
1.	Arrange a time for SD to sign the Corporation minutes	RM and SD	19 November 2020
2.	Sign the Provider Review	SD	19 November 2020
	<b>Actions arising from 14 October Corporation Meeting</b>	<b>Who is responsible?</b>	<b>Date for completion</b>
3.	Report to the Corporation on student employability	AJ/PW	16 December 2020 Corporation meeting
4.	Update the Corporation on the Institute of Technology Bid	PW	Rolled forward to December Corporation meeting
5.	Strengthen the Curriculum Policy's reference to student employability-  Issue revised reference to Governors	TC	asap
6.	Follow up completion of Safeguarding training by Governors	DT/RM	asap
	<b>Actions arising from 11 November Corporation Meeting</b>	<b>Who is responsible?</b>	<b>Date for completion</b>
7.	To inform Governors about opportunities to engage with the website	PW	
8.	To pursue opportunities for live Governor chat on the new website	DT and RM	
9.	To promote opportunities for teaching staff to join support staff on the Well-being Group	CD	
10.	Provide periodic updates on the work of the staff well-being group through the Principal's Update, in order to keep Governors apprised.	CD/PW	
11.	Provide feedback on Contemplation & Prayer Policy during two-week review period	Governors	
12.	Provide feedback on Pay Policy during two-week review period	Governors	
13.	Ask the Governor candidate to submit a statement of interest. Discuss process with the Chair.	RM and SD	
14.	Ofsted Report– the impact of Covid-19 on education - cascade on to Governors	PW and RM	
15.	Issue details on the virtual performances to Governors: Studio 79 and LCPA virtual shows for Christmas	SO	
16.	Feed back to Chair on Principal's performance	External and Parent Governors	
17.	Feed back to Chair on Clerk to the Corporation's performance	All Governors	