



# **Newbury College Corporation**

# Minutes of a meeting held on Monday 29<sup>th</sup> March 2021 at 3PM via Microsoft Teams

| Members        | Name                 | Present | Role  |  |
|----------------|----------------------|---------|---|--|
| 1.             | Mike Farwell (MF)    | *       | External Member   |  |
| 2.             | Matt Grimston (MG)   | *       | Student Governor (19+)  |  |
| 3.             | Glyn Howells (GH)    | *       | External Member– Vice Chair   |  |
| 4.             | Javaid Iqbal (JI)    | *       | External Member   |  |
| 5.             | John Knight (JK)     | *       | External Member   |  |
| 6.             | Rachel McCleary (RM) | *       | Student Governor (16-19)  |  |
| 7.             | Sally Osmond (SO)    | *       | External Member – Chair   |  |
| 8.             | Derek Peaple (DP)    | *       | External Member   |  |
| 9.             | Sue Richardson (SR)  | *       | Staff Member (Support)  |  |
| 10.            | Tom Rossiter (TR)    | *       | External Member – from Item 3.3   |  |
| 11.            | Simon Thompson (ST)  | *       | External Member   |  |
| 12.            | Shelly Van Meter     | *       | Staff Member (Teaching)   |  |
| 13.            | Iain Wolloff (IW)    | *       | Principal   |  |
| 14.            | Sue Wood (SW)        | *       | External Member   |  |
| 15.            | Sam Dibas (SD)       | *       | External Member – from Item 3.2   |  |
| 16.            | Nick Fox (NF)        | *       | External Member – from Item 3.2   |  |
| 17.            | Martin Hamer (MH)    | *       | External Member – from Item 3.2   |  |
| 18.            | Peter Lambert (PL)   | *       | External Member – from Item 3.2   |  |
| Apologies:     | None                 |         |   |  |
| In Attendance: | Jo Houghton (JH)     | *       | Director of Business & Partnerships   |  |
|                | Lee Hunt (LH)        | *       | Vice Principal  |  |
|                | Jayne Steele (JS)    | *       | Director of Finance & Estates   |  |
|                | Gill Parkinson (GP)  | *       | Clerk to the Corporation  |  |
|                | Cathy Wright (CW)    | *       | Director of HR & Services   |  |
| Quorum:        | 7 required           | *       | 14 present at start, 18 present after approval of new members - meeting quorate |  |

|     |   | ACTION |
|-----|---|--------|
| 1.  | APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE   |        |
|     | There were no apologies.  |        |
| 2.  | DECLARATION OF INTERESTS  |        |
|     | There were no declarations of interest made. Glyn Howells (GH) noted that he and Nick |        |
|     | Fox (NF) work at the same Trust with no reporting line. All present agreed to the     |        |
|     | meeting being recorded with the recording being deleted following Iain Wolloff (IW)   |        |
|     | and Sally Osmond (SO)'s review of the minutes.  |        |
|     |   |        |
| 3.  | GOVERNANCE  |        |
| 3.1 | Proposal to increase Board Membership   |        |
|     | SO noted that Jonathan Hopson had left the Board having completed his third term on   |        |
|     | 24th February and a formal letter of thanks for his service would be sent by her. The | SO     |

Corporation would seek to bring the retired governors into a social meeting when Covid restrictions allow.

The advertisement for Governors placed in the Newbury Weekly News by Gill Parkinson (GP) had been extremely successful, generating many highly qualified candidates four of whom had been interviewed by IW and SO, and subsequently recommended by the Search & Governance Committee. To this end the Committee was also proposing to extend Board Membership by one extra member which would also allow more flexibility when appointing Committees. All four would bring differing and additional skills, experience, and attributes to the Board.

ACTION: The Corporation approved increasing the Board by one additional member to 18.

# 3.2 Appointment of new Board Members\*

**ACTION:** The Corporation approved four new members:

- Peter Lambert
- Sam Dibas
- Martin Hamer
- Nick Fox

Who then joined the meeting and introduced themselves:

- Peter Lambert (PL), a resident of Newbury, has a degree in Engineering, is a qualified ICAEW accountant and worked in HR for 25 years and now retired.
- Sam Dibas (SD) lives in Newbury, works for Vodafone, heading Technology Markets, is a qualified Engineer, and is involved in Climate Change technology.
- Martin Hamer (MH) lives locally with a degree in Engineering and a
   Doctorate in Management studies. Whilst retired he is currently Chair of a
   Charity, but his working life was in Higher education in the UK and across the
   FU.
- Nick Fox lives in Somerset and works in North Bristol NHS Trust in Estates with a focus on PFI, facilities management and capital project management.

GP sent the new Governors the Corporation papers for this meeting. **ACTION: SO to subsequently meet the new Board members and introduce to potential Chairs of Committees.** GP to complete the Induction process.

SO/GP

Tom Rossiter (TR) joined the meeting and was welcomed by SO.

# 3.3 Report from the Search & Governance Committee

SO noted that two other strong applications were received who had agreed to go onto a reserve governor list and to participate in sub-groups if requested. Diversity remains an important consideration but the skill set is well balanced and diversity is improving. After Easter SO would meet all Governors to discuss skills, training needs and succession planning.

All Governors are encouraged to undertake training and GP was currently looking at purchasing a suite of modules from the ETF. Compulsory training on the College website (e.g. Prevent) needed to be refreshed regularly by Governors.

Cathy Wright (CW) thought it would be good to plan for the year ahead.

Governors should inform GP of any training undertaken so she could update training records.

Each meeting would focus on one training area and this meeting's session would be on the Skills for Jobs White Paper.

# 3.4 On-going Governor Training TOPIC: The Skills for Jobs White Paper (January 2021)

IW gave an overview:

- 5 main themes employers, higher level technical qualifications, flexible learning, reforming funding, and encouraging excellent teaching.
- Some key ideas are driving the agenda levelling up, skills led recovery, recruitment challenges (EU/pandemic), levelling up between Colleges and Universities.
- Employers are at the heart of the system with a real determination to ensure skills and courses meet employers' needs.
- Higher technical skills investment should be delivered via Colleges.
- Commitment to IoTs & T levels
- 4 years of funded post-18 education to be guaranteed and broadened.
- Strengthening of "Baker" clause ensuring students are aware of opportunities.
- Simplifying funding.
- Changing the accountability structure.
- Determination to strengthen Governance.
- Supporting excellent teaching.
- Focus on post-18 albeit lack of focus on 16-18s and some areas of adult skills.
- Long lead-in times e.g. lifelong learning loans.
- Little new money has been made available.
- Staff pay was not addressed.

**PL** asked how College Business Centres would interact with LEPs? IW replied that Chambers of Commerce were emphasised. The College had recently made a LEP bid for the Business Centre – the College are already planning for this and funding may become available at some later point.

Matt Grimston (MG) asked whether Principals had a high degree of confidence in the outcomes? IW replied that most White papers do not make it to legislation in their entirety, but Principals felt there was a high commitment and colleges were understood to be high on the Government's policy agenda.

John Knight (JK) asked what employer standards means regarding teacher training? IW replied that colleges are the key employers for FE teacher training, therefore, would be able to guide the content of the training.

SO thanked IW.

| 3.5 | Minutes of the previous meeting SO noted that the minute on the Pay discussion from the last meeting should not be sent to staff as they had left the meeting for this item. They had received the remaining Confidential minutes.  ACTION: The Board approved the Non-Confidential minutes of the meeting held on 14 <sup>th</sup> December 2020 ACTION: The Board approved the Confidential minutes of the meeting held on 14 <sup>th</sup> December 2020   |    |
|-----|---|----|
| 3.6 | Matters arising from the minutes/Action log The Action log was working well with shaded items relating to actions from this term not yet actioned. ACTION: GP would enlarge this paper for the next meeting as it was difficult to read.  | GP |
|     | <b>There were no matters arising. ACTION:</b> SO to sign and return both sets of minutes to GP.   | so |
|     | GH noted he had checked all items in the Risk Register were covered in Audit Committee meetings. <b>ACTION:</b> GP to update the Action log.  | GP |
| 3.7 | Remuneration Committee*  SO noted that she had redrafted Terms of Reference. It had been pointed out that each Committee should nominate a member to Remuneration rather than inviting all Chairs as in some cases this would be GH or SO who were not allowed to sit on the Committee. ACTION: SO to change the terms of Reference to reflect this.  Sue Wood (SW), JK and Derek Peaple (DP) had agreed to join the Committee and would be augmented by one or two of the new Corporation members.  GH asked whether the appointment of SPHs should be agreed by the Corporation first? SO replied it would but pointed out that a new member of SLT was not necessarily a SPH and this responsibility lay with the Principal. GH also asked who would clerk the meeting? IW noted that it was usual for the Clerk to take the minutes and leave when their pay and conditions are considered. Javaid Iqbal (JI) asked whether | so |
|     | there should be a link between any pay award and the timing of meetings? Yes, and SO had shared a timetable with Committee members. Performance also needed to be discussed regardless of the ability to make a financial reward.  All approved the membership and the terms of reference of the Remuneration Committee, subject to the change which would be made and resent.  |    |
| 3.8 | Strategy Day Update SO stated that this would take place remotely and would be a review of Strategy rather than the Strategic Plan. IW added that this was a good time to review this. The process had been started and the ideas arising from this would be brought to the Strategy Day.   |    |
|     | IW noted the ESFA had confirmed they wanted an annual strategic conversation with each College. This would involve staff from the ESFA and the FE Commissioner's office meeting with the principal, members of the SLT and Chair and potentially, some other  |    |

Governors to discuss the strategy of the College and implications for the ESFA and DfE. No date had been set.

It was agreed that the current Strategic Plan would be circulated prior to the strategy day.

**ACTION: SO/IW.** 

SO/IW

There was a short break.

#### 4. **COLLEGE REPORTS**

# 4.1 Principal's Report\*

For the benefit of the new members, IW explained that the report's purpose is to highlight the key issues for the sector and for the College since the last meeting. Key points from the written report were:

#### Sector issues

- Pandemic guidance.
- Budget, which had minimal impact on Colleges.
- AOC Annual Conference, which had been useful.

# College issues

- Pandemic Response students had mainly returned from 8<sup>th</sup> March onwards. The College had to put in place the facility to carry out Lateral Flow Testing for asymptomatic staff and students - IW thanked all external and internal volunteers. A total of 1,874 had been carried out with no positives. IW thanked CW and the team.
- Student numbers showed good growth for 16-19s in 2020-21 with
  additional funding received this year and more modest growth for adult
  loans and apprenticeships. AEB and ACL numbers, conversely, had been
  adversely impacted by the pandemic. Since the paper was written the ESFA
  had announced a new threshold for AEB, with a potential clawback for the
  College of £240K this year. The entire sector was active in opposing this.
- Student applications were very healthy for next year. Part of this was the College's enhanced reputation but there is also a rise in the demographic and the effect of the pandemic.
- Finances & Cashflow were in a poor position this year this had improved but unfortunately the clawback would push the deficit back if allowed.

  There is a plan in place in terms of long term cashflow see Item 7.4.
- Most students were being assessed as usual. Concerns were around disrupted learning and the comparison of BTECs to A Levels which could have inflated grades again this year, which would put BTEC students at a disadvantage. Functional skills student also had to take exams which led to a sense of unfairness.
- Primary School the College is the Academy sponsor and it had been confirmed since the paper was written that the funding agreement had been signed by the Secretary of State. There were 25 first preference applications for 30 places.
- The College website and social media outlets continued to promote a range of events, activities, and successes this term.

Mike Farwell (MF) asked whether the Primary School had to be consolidated in the College accounts? Jayne Steele (JS) replied no but she would recheck this.

JI asked whether apprentices are excluded in applications data? IW replied that apprentice applications tended to come in from March. Also 19+ data did not include UCN applicants. JH added that for apprentices numbers were not reported until they were closer to being signed up but were recorded on a "sales" sheet. LH added that apprentice applications were received throughout the year.

MH asked what the College response was to refusal of LFD tests by students and staff. IW replied that LF tests were not compulsory which was Govt policy. Other measures such as social distancing etc. were in place.

# 4.2 Student Governor Report\*

SO explained that Rachel McCleary (RM) and MG make a significant contribution to the Board and represented 16-19s and 19+ respectively. RM updated Governors on key student issues:

- Overall students were being supported well.
- Mental Health services were well-signposted around the College.
- Plans to find individual spaces around the College were underway including the Student Hub which could encourage students in undertaking their own research.
- Outdoor spaces were being improved.
- Enrichment was ongoing.

#### MG added that:

- The needs of the two student age groups were very different as 19+ students were usually in work.
- Students had felt supported through the lockdown.
- The Covid testing worked well.
- Progress was good in student performance terms with no dip from lockdowns.
- Students could attend the UCN if required with uptake low which MG thought reflected the quality of distance learning, which he was keen should continue.
- Discussion tailoring enrichment to adult learners was needed.
- The College had facilitated access to higher powered computers for CAD and the OfS hardship fund.

Lee Hunt (LH) thanked RM and LH for their responsiveness. He thought enrichment and making students feel part of the community was key. **DP asked MG if there is a sense of what enrichment would look like?** MG thought this was difficult but should be tied into particular courses.

**SD** asked whether classes in the College were happening? IW replied that younger students were currently attending onsite for a round 80% of their study programme, with 20% of learning being online. This compares positively with the current requirement for young people to be onsite for more than 50% of their time. The Government guidance permits greater flexibility in attendance for adult students and this was being arranged according to the needs of the students and their learning.

MH thought the student report was instructive, incisive and positive, having seen many in his working life and he congratulated both Student Governors.

### 5. CURRICULUM & QUALITY

# 5.1 Report from the Curriculum & Quality Committee

SW explained to the new Governors that the Committee reviews courses, plans, quality of delivery, how that is monitored, actions proposed, and the Quality Cycle – actions across the year culminating in the Self Assessment Report.

There were three meetings across the year with themes being Intent (Summer), Implementation (Spring) and Impact (Autumn), which reflected Ofsted considerations withing the current framework.

SW had provided a written report of the work of the C&QC. She explained that the Committee had considered the Renewables Centre, Business Centre, Football Academy, T Levels, the UCN and partnerships, followed by the QIP.

The impact of lockdown was considered on student progress particularly Maths & English, enrichment, and work placements.

The Equality and Diversity Report and the Complaints Report were discussed and noted.

MG asked whether there would be a move back to in-person Covid testing at the College from home testing? CW noted that this had not yet been decided by Govt. Home testing was being monitored and would be done on-site if students struggle.

# 5.2 Curriculum Developments

LH outlined the College's emphasis on "Careers not Courses." He explained his position and role as Deputy Principal. JH oversaw the UCN and apprenticeship provision.

LH explained the paper looked at curriculum developments and areas of focus. Potential improvements were:

- Approval to deliver T-Levels (L3) from 2022, and a potential transition pathway in 2021. These are as academically robust as A-Levels and the College is part of Wave 3 providers.
- New courses in renewable energy in the Renewables Centre.
- Bid submitted for the pilot 'Business Centre' for Berkshire.
- Development of the Foundation Learning course offer 120 high needs students (young adults). 3 clear pathways – Connect, Focus, Engage – into independent living.
- Further expansion of sport provision through the development of the football academies in Oxford and in Newbury.
- Validation had been achieved with the University of Northampton, to enable
  delivery of additional degree programmes to meet employer needs and
  which fit the College ethos. In the future this would include an MBA top-up
  and Health & Social Care. JH explained that there was a current partnership
  with the University of Reading and Bucks New University from September

LH added the portfolio was developing with agility and openness to opportunities including future pathways were key elements. **MF asked about the new sports facility next to the College (planned by Newbury Town Council).** JS replied that discussions had been held with the Council and there was more than enough demand locally.

**SW** asked how the 3 new degrees fit into the UCAS system? JH replied that the offer was too small at present to make viable as this had a cost.

SO noted that the SLT were proficient at generating income via grants etc.

#### 6. AUDIT

# 6.1 Report from the Audit Committee

SO highlighted that the Audit is the only mandatory Committee. GH summarised:

- There was an update on the ESFA funding audit, which reported an error rate of only 1.8% and there were 20 recommendations.
- Management progress on audit recommendations was considered.
- The updated risk register was reviewed.
- OfS monitoring report it was noted that some students were taking legal action at other providers regarding poor quality provision during the pandemic. The Committee were assured that the standards of teaching and student assessment were high.
- The Equitix Health & Safety Compliance Audit was reviewed for the first time
   Health & Safety would be a standing item now it had moved from Finance
   Resources.
- Not all Mitie related issues had not yet been resolved, due to the pandemic delaying training which the Committee thought was unacceptable. Following the meeting JS had raised this and Mitie were now undergoing training.

There were no questions.

# 6.2 Risk Management Report & Risk Register

JS provided a top-level commentary. The SLT review and identify new risks and mitigations. New risks exacerbated by the move to remote working were cyber security and the safeguarding of assets (e.g. laptops) that are loaned to staff and students. The SLT felt that safeguarding including the pandemic and water safety and mitigations on student welfare, cashflow and income generation are the current priorities for the team. The Environment was being considered utilising the Climate Roadmap for FE colleges.

MF asked whether adaptation to changes coming out of the pandemic were covered.

JS replied the College is following Govt guidance, which would be reflected in the register. Items such as blended learning would be included in the curriculum plan.

SO thought agility in response was key and this could be added as a standing item for the SDC. ST thought agility was already there in the way the College had responded to the pandemic. JS agreed as evidenced in the comparison with schools being slower to move into direct online teaching. MF added there are opportunities as well as risks arising from the pandemic.

MG thought Cyber security should be rated more highly. JS explained that it was scored as a 2 with mitigations. This would be discussed at the next SLT Risk register discussion.

MF thought consideration of EDI issues should be included on the Risk register. There were no further questions. 7. **FINANCE & RESOURCES** 7.1 **Report from the Finance & Resources Committee** MF provided a verbal report of the work of the F&RC. Issues considered included: The statutory accounts signing off, which was necessarily delayed by the ESFA funding audit. Positive student numbers, including lagged funding. Management accounts – potential clawbacks had since arisen. The land sale. FE Commissioner benchmarks – key of which was salary % to income which should be < 65% and would be challenging. Cashflow. HR – staff turnover was comparatively high but mainly related to support staff in Foundation Learning. Gender pay gap report – see Item 7.3. Marketing There were no questions. 7.2 **Monthly Management Accounts** JS provided an update. She would discuss this further with the new governors as part JS/IW of the induction process, to explain the position more fully. Highlights of the report The Management Accounts reported a deficit for the first half of the year of £788K vs a budgeted deficit of £477.5K with the forecast deficit for the full year being £1.264M. This is an improvement on the 'worse case' forecast of £1.6M reported to Governors in December and was discussed in detail by Finance & Resources. • £206K growth funding received for additional 100 16-19 students this year – this is in addition to the increase in the lagged funding allocation for 2021/22. Some PFI charges on the I&E had been moved into capital, because of the ESFA accepting £100k of the £220k capital grant as an enhancement to the building. Negative impact on high needs income (-£100K for year) where some learners had not returned. Cost savings – the pandemic had adversely affected income but there had been some cost upsides particularly around staffing costs, reduction in staff mileage and premises cost reductions. • Some additional funding was contingent on continuation of additional work with 16-19s. There could be a clawback related to the AEB allocation during the pandemic (£240K maximum) – see Item 4.1. There were no questions. 7.3 **Gender Pay Gap Report** The Gender Pay Gap Report had been considered by the F&R Committee, who now recommended approval by the Board. **ACTION:** The Gender Pay Gap Report was approved by the Corporation.

| 8   | STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE  |                                     |  |                              |  |  |  |
|-----|--|-------------------------------------|--|------------------------------|--|--|--|
| 8.1 | Report from the Strategic Development Committee (SDC)  |                                     |  |                              |  |  |  |
|     | SO had provided a report on the work of the SDC. This had covered the Strategic  |                                     |  |                              |  |  |  |
|     | Plan update, Campus development both short and longer term, uses of the  |                                     |  |                              |  |  |  |
|     | campus, external funding, and bids, the PFI and facilities management, the   |                                     |  |                              |  |  |  |
|     |  |                                     |  |                              |  |  |  |
|     | Climate Roadmap, and a climate friendly curriculum.  |                                     |  |                              |  |  |  |
| 9.  | ANY OTHER BUSINESS   |                                     |  |                              |  |  |  |
|     | There was no other business and the meeting ended at 6.11pm.   |                                     |  |                              |  |  |  |
|     | There was no other hilsiness and the   |                                     | There was no other business and the meeting ended at 0.11pm.   |                              |  |  |  |
|     | there was no other business and the  | meeting end                         | ed at 0.11pm.  |                              |  |  |  |
|     |  | meeting end                         | eu at o.11pm.  |                              |  |  |  |
|     | Dates of future meetings   | meeting end                         | eu at o.11pm.  |                              |  |  |  |
|     |  | Day                                 | Date   | Time                         |  |  |  |
|     | Dates of future meetings   |                                     | ·  | Time<br>Time                 |  |  |  |
|     | Dates of future meetings  SPRING TERM  | Day                                 | Date   |                              |  |  |  |
|     | Dates of future meetings  SPRING TERM SUMMER TERM  | Day<br>Day                          | Date Date  | Time                         |  |  |  |
|     | Dates of future meetings  SPRING TERM SUMMER TERM Strategic Planning Day   | Day<br>Day<br>Monday                | Date Date 10 <sup>th</sup> May 2021  | Time<br>12.00                |  |  |  |
|     | Dates of future meetings  SPRING TERM  SUMMER TERM  Strategic Planning Day  NEW - Strategic Development Committee                                    | Day Day Monday Monday               | Date Date 10 <sup>th</sup> May 2021 24 <sup>th</sup> May 2021  | Time 12.00 16:00             |  |  |  |
|     | Dates of future meetings  SPRING TERM SUMMER TERM Strategic Planning Day NEW - Strategic Development Committee Audit Committee                       | Day Day Monday Monday Monday        | Date Date  10 <sup>th</sup> May 2021 24 <sup>th</sup> May 2021 14 <sup>th</sup> June 2021                            | Time 12.00 16:00 16:00       |  |  |  |
|     | Dates of future meetings  SPRING TERM SUMMER TERM Strategic Planning Day  NEW - Strategic Development Committee Audit Committee Curriculum & Quality | Day Day Monday Monday Monday Monday | Date Date  10 <sup>th</sup> May 2021 24 <sup>th</sup> May 2021 14 <sup>th</sup> June 2021 21 <sup>st</sup> June 2021 | Time 12.00 16:00 16:00 16:00 |  |  |  |

| Confirmed as a correct record: | Signature of Corporation Chair |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Date                           |                                |