

Newbury College Corporation

Minutes of a meeting held remotely on Monday 30th March 2020 at 3pm*

*(NB Newbury College switched to on-line delivery on 23rd March 2020 following government guidance regarding COVID-19)

Present			
	Name	Role	Attending
1.	Mike Farwell (MF)	External Member	Via Microsoft Teams
2.	Matt Grimston (MG)	Student Governor (19+)	Via Microsoft Teams
3.	Geoff Knappett (GK) - Chair	External Member	Via Microsoft Teams
4.	John Knight (JK)	External Member	Via Microsoft Teams
5.	Jonathan Hopson (JH)	External Member	Via Microsoft Teams
6.	Jane West (JW)	Staff Member	Via Microsoft Teams
7.	Iain Wolloff (IW)	Principal	Via Microsoft Teams
8.	Sue Wood (SW)	External Member	Via Microsoft Teams
Apologies			
1.	Sally Osmond (SO) - Vice Chair	External Member	
2.	Tom Rossiter (TR)	External Member	
3.	Sandy Fernandez (SF)	Student Governor (14-19)	
4.	Glyn Howells (GH)	External Member	
In Attendance			
1.	Gill Parkinson (GP)	Clerk to the Corporation	Via Microsoft Teams
2.	Cathy Wright (CW)	Director of HR	Via Microsoft Teams
3.	Jackie Heggs (JHe)	Teaching & Quality Manager	Via Microsoft Teams
4.	Jo Houghton (JoH)	Director of Business & Partnerships	Via Microsoft Teams
5.	Jayne Steele (JS)	Director of Finance & Resources	Via Microsoft Teams
6.	Lee Hunt (LH)	Deputy Principal	Via Microsoft Teams
Quorum:			
7 required		8 present (at start), meeting quorate	

PART 1

NON-CONFIDENTIAL MATTERS

		ACTION
1.	<p>Apologies for absence</p> <p>SO, TR and SF had sent apologies. Simon Thompson arrived at Item 14 (Confidential Minutes). Chris Boulton was still on three-month leave awarded due to a conflict of interests regarding campus development.</p> <p>GP confirmed that Eversheds had advised the SE Clerks network that meetings by video conferencing (e.g. Microsoft Teams) were allowed where the Instruments & Articles had been amended to allow this – see Instrument 14 Para 1 amendment approved by the Corporation on 1st July 2019.</p>	

2.	Declarations of interest There were no declarations of interest.	
3.1	Minutes of the Previous meeting The Non-Confidential minutes of the meeting held on 16 th December 2019 were approved. These would be signed by the Chair.	GK
3.2	Matters arising from the minutes All outstanding items had been addressed and there were no matters arising.	
3.3	Corporation Appointments There were currently two vacancies for members of the Corporation Board. The Chair of Corporation and Principal had met with Derek Peaple, retiring headteacher of Park House School, a local secondary school, to discuss how his experience and skills could meet the current needs of the Board. Derek has significant experience in the leadership and management of successful education providers and showed strong commitment and motivation to join the Board. He was retiring from his role as Headteacher at the end of the Summer term and felt able to commit the necessary time to the role. SW and JH strongly supported this appointment and GK had been very impressed on meeting Derek. The Corporation approved the appointment of Derek Peaple as a Governor as at a date tbc.	
3.4	Principal's Report IW presented his report. Key points for the Corporation to note were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Covid-19 Pandemic – DfE guidance and College response; • Implications of the recent Budget for FE; • The opportunity to bid for the College Collaboration Fund; • Summary of key College developments, including the UCN, Foundation Learning, Apprenticeships and the Primary School; • College Events and Activities. IW noted this was a good illustration of how situations change rapidly, as the Covid lockdown had occurred since the paper was written. There were no questions.	
3.5	Student Governor Report MG commented on the smooth transition to Microsoft Teams on course delivery and communication to students. He thought most students found little difficulty in working from home. His personal experience in Engineering had been very positive as all on-line interactions were automatically documented on Teams and he had no end assessment to contend with.	
4	Curriculum & Quality	
4.1	Report from the Curriculum & Quality Committee SW reported on the C & Q Committee meeting held on 9 th March. Highlights were:	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of student applications. Current position/expectations for internal and external students – much work was underway to progress more students internally; • The HE SAR report (see Item 4.3) was recommended; • Pearsons – changes suggested; • Review of QIP; • TLA considered; • The Equality & Diversity Annual Report was noted; • The Complaints report was considered. <p>JK had found the Committee format extremely useful and the focus on items educational. IW agreed this demonstrated the wisdom of moving to the Committee model.</p>	
4.2 4.2.1	Curriculum Developments Report on planned developments in the FE curriculum offer <p>LH had provided a written update on planned FE curriculum developments. He confirmed that the need to deliver a modern and diverse offer that supports the needs of the local community and regional economic growth would be reprioritised soon.</p>	
4.2.2	Briefing on Apprenticeship standards <p>JoH had provided a written briefing on Apprenticeship standards. Governors asked the following questions: How much is on hold in the present climate? The College was trying to keep all learners learning. Would employers delay learners for one year? Not in Engineering, however other areas may delay recruitment of apprentices. The College was able to deliver its part but was reliant on employers.</p> <p>JoH emphasised the need to provide value to employers - GK thanked JoH.</p>	
4.3	HE Self Evaluation Report <p>SW confirmed this had been reviewed by the Curriculum & Quality Committee and recommended in its current form.</p> <p>The Corporation approved the HE SER for 2018/19.</p>	
4.4	University Centre Newbury <p>JoH's paper provided an update on the Phase 1 development of the UCN. Key points included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employers had been engaged effectively in the project and are supporting the provision; • Good progress was being made with the redevelopment, to ensure that the UCN is open for September 2020; • A range of programmes for September had been agreed and prudent recruitment forecasts were included in the recent Integrated Financial Model for Colleges (IFCM); • Staffing was in place to deliver the planned programmes. An HE Course Lead for Digital technologies was yet to be appointed, but was in hand; • Key risks to the project had been identified and actions taken to mitigate the risks. 	

	IW noted it was likely that some previously planned higher apprenticeships wouldn't now commence in Sept 2020. The UCN was moving ahead and confirmation had been received from the LEP that funds were still available, and they wouldn't necessarily be holding the College to outputs re student nos etc. Flexibility was essential from all parties.	
5	Audit	
5.1	<p>Report from the Audit Committee</p> <p>GH was unavailable to present this, but Audit Committee feedback had been received from SO who was also unable to attend.</p> <p>JS explained that the Internal Auditors had prepared one report in 2019-20 on credit control. Others had been due to take place in the previous week and in April, and these had been postponed until the College returns to the building. Governors discussed whether it would be better for these to be performed remotely with MF maintaining that remote audits being regularly monitored may be the best way forward. It was agreed that JS would meet the auditors and seek a way forward whilst recognising that some areas could be difficult to audit remotely.</p> <p>SO had noted that the Audit Committee had met on 24th February and all Governors were in attendance.</p> <p>Feedback was provided by Mazars on the last of their internal audits, Credit Control and Debtor Invoicing, with an 'Adequate Assurance' being given – see Item 6.3. The Committee acknowledged the controls now in place to manage long-term bad debts. At the time the tender process for internal and external auditors was due to commence shortly.</p>	JS
5.2	<p>Risk Management Report & Risk Register</p> <p>IW noted the Covid pandemic had been included in this register but had increased in importance since.</p> <p>The Risk Register had been reviewed by the Senior Team and key areas had been identified in which planned actions were either making 'positive progress', or were 'on track', or where 'limited/no progress' had been made. This analysis provided a summary of the some of the key risks which were being addressed and those which continue to provide the most significant challenges.</p> <p>There were no questions from Governors.</p>	
6.	Finance & Resources	
6.1	<p>Report from the Finance & Resources Committee</p> <p>MF noted that the Finance & Resources Committee met on 2nd March and the main points discussed were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Covid plan; • Consideration of the ICT report with Richard Elwell joining the meeting to take questions; • Disaster recovery plan – MF had not yet seen this; 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marketing issues. 	
6.2	Monthly Management Accounts JS presented the January Management Accounts (NB Finance & Resources considered the December 2019 management accounts). GK highlighted that the operating deficit did not include the land sale. With the land sale there was a £607.6K surplus. There were no further comments.	
6.3	Approval for bad debt write-off JS explained that the Corporation was required to approve the write-off of individual debts exceeding £500 under the financial regulations. These totalled £134K and dated back as far as 2011. Together with debts of less than £500 totalling £11K the write-off totalled £145K of bad debt which was covered by a provision of £157K in the accounts. Some of this debt related to non-attendees or withdrawn students and would be very difficult to collect at this stage. MF noted the potential write-off had been discussed and investigated thoroughly and wouldn't affect financial results as it had been fully provided for. The Internal Auditors had noted their satisfaction with the process and controls now in place to chase withdrawn students would give a better assurance. The Corporation approved the write-off of old uncollectable debts from the Sales Ledger against the Bad Debt Provision to the value of £134k.	
6.4	Gender Pay Gap Report The Corporation approved the annual gender pay gap report. This had already been considered and recommended by the Finance & Resources Committee on 2 nd March and had not changed since then.	
6.5	Health & Safety Report A Health & Safety report covering the six months from August 2019 to February 2020 had been tabled by the Director of HR. There were no questions.	

Confirmed as a correct record:

Date Signature of Corporation Chair