

MINUTES OF THE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION OF BURTON AND SOUTH DERBYSHIRE COLLEGE HELD ON 20 JANUARY 2021 (BY ZOOM)

PRESENT

Everton Burke (Chair)
Keith Buckley
Jo Lang
Rajinder Mann
Sarah Marshall
Charlotte Moore
Chris Prosser
Sarah Sandle
Dawn Ward (Principal and Chief Executive)
Ben Webster

IN ATTENDANCE

John Beaty
Gary Chin
Ryan Halford
Yvonne Orton
Keith Scribbins (Clerk)

PART 1

21.1 CONFIRMATION OF QUORUM, APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

(i) The proposal to hold the meeting by electronic means had been made by the Principal and agreed by the Chair.

The Chair wished all members a Happy New Year.

(ii) Apologies for absence had been received from Hadia Rashid.

(iii) There were no new declarations of interest and existing declarations were continued.

21.2 MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

The Principal and Chief Executive indicated that the original determination (as to the size and composition of the Corporation) allowed for two student members. Hence, it was possible for Eliazs Lata to join the Corporation as a full member. The Corporation **RESOLVED**

that: Eliasz Lata be asked to join the Corporation as the second student member.

21.3 MINUTES OF PART 1 OF THE MEETING HELD ON 9 DECEMBER 2020

- (i) The minutes were **RECEIVED** as a true record
- (ii) ***Confidential item with respect to the Saudi Project***

21.4 STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK AND DISCUSSIONS ARISING FROM POLICY UPDATES

The paper from BSDC's Principal and CEO covered the following updates.

- (i) **National Lockdown** – Parliament had approved the third lockdown on 6 January 2021. It is characterised by a push on schools to offer significant levels of remote learning. The critical worker and vulnerable student lists are long this time round.
- (ii) **Exams and assessments in 2021** – Key points are the use of teacher assessed grades, two-week Ofqual consultation, a range of evidence to be used (eg classroom observations), no grade inflation.
- (iii) **March 2021 Budget Submission**

The paper covered the economic forecast from the Office of Budget Responsibility, tax and benefits plans for 2021-22 and (probably) longer term plans. The paper concluded with outlining short-term plans (eg 16-19 growth, 20,000 college learners) longer term plans (eg Teachers' Pension Scheme funding circa (£130m) and Capital considerations (eg to remedy the condition of some colleges).

This report stimulated a good deal of debate which included

- The claw back mechanism
- The closure plan
- The need to clarify the exam situation to students and others
- The quality assurance of assessments
- The complexity – and need for refinement – of assessments
- The White Paper (to be covered in detail in the forthcoming Development Day on 5 February 2021). In essence two points were made: first, there was a determination to tackle poor College finances and leadership. Second, this could include arranged mergers.

21.5 UPDATE ON SAUDI PROJECTS (CONFIDENTIAL)

CONFIDENTIAL

21.6 REPORT FROM STUDENT MEMBER

The report prepared by Charlotte Moore and Elias Lata was considered by the Corporation. Its key features were the effects of COVID.

- The diversity project had been put on hold.
- Positive feedback on the student council page. Plans developed to change the homepage header and writing in a more engaging style.
- Plans for a virtual tour.

In discussion the attempts to make communications web based and work to compensate for remote communications were discussed in detail. The Corporation applauded the work of the student members in what are difficult times. The report was **ADOPTED**.

21.7 REPORT OF AUDIT COMMITTEE 24 NOVEMBER 2020 AND 12 JANUARY 2021

The Chair of the Committee, Keith Buckley, reminded members that a list of resolutions from 24 November 2020 had been received at the 9 December meeting of the Corporation. He now presented a list of resolutions from 12 January 2021 Audit meeting. This covered:

- Audit findings for year ended 31 July 2020 – thought to be excellent.
- End of period altered to end January 2021 – expected to be unqualified opinion.
- Staffordshire Local Government Pension Scheme – outside College control.

The Clerk pointed out that all the bullet points from 24 November 2020 and 12 January 2021 would be consolidated into one set of minutes of the Audit Committee and presented to the next Corporation meeting.

The Chair concluded his report by referring to the praise for the College's finance staff from the External Auditors. The Auditors also praised the College for its financial strength.

Members **ADOPTED** the financial statements, the Auditors' report and the letter of representation. It was confirmed that the deadlines for a submission would be met.

21.8 QUALITY AND PERFORMANCE REPORT

Members discussed the quality and performance report introduced by Ryan Halford and John Beaty.

The content of the report was:

- Executive Summary
- Areas of concern
- External Quality Assurance
- Skills
- Standards
- Partnerships
- The Governor Dashboard
- Appendices (CSFs)

The new format was praised by members and discussion concentrated on

- (i) The difficulty for learners of exam alterations.
- (ii) Work experience etc postponement.
- (iii) Further development of online learning (widely praised).
- (iv) Staff development on digital learning very successful.
- (v) Deferring of some items until next year.
- (vi) Monitoring attendance (80%+ which is excellent in current circumstances).
- (vii) The effects of no exams on motivation.
- (viii) Control systems and COVID absences.
- (ix) BSDC level up funding and its use.
- (x) Review of College's apprenticeship and Business development approaches, recruitment events and other items eg learners skills development.
- (xi) Business development and employability dashboards.
- (xii) Joint bid with colleges in South Korea.

A theme running through the discussions was how are staff coping? The reply was that in spite of evident pressures, goals were being met. It was felt that teachers were supported by management and they were responding well to technological challenges.

Members praised the resilience of staff and extended the Corporation's thanks to them.

21.9 FINANCE AND BUSINESS REPORT

This report, introduced by Gary Chin, had significant appendices as follows:

- The Finance Record
- The Treasury Management Policy (TMP)
- The TMP Equality Impact Assessment
- Report on Investment of Surplus Cash (Barclays, Coutts and HSBC)

The Finance and Business Report itself covered:

- Headlines
- Financial Highlights
- Key Performance Indicators
- Executive Summary
- Statement of Comprehensive Income
- Cash Flow, Balance Sheet, Health Score
- Property Matters

Key statistics and trends were as follows:

- £6K above budget
- ESFA £21 K above budget but other income (due to COVID) £20K below
- HE on budget
- The previous investment in 'thin client' technology paying dividends
- Future impacts of COVID uncertain but the areas (eg adult education) of concern are clear
- Expenditure assumed to be as plan pending any further government support for FE
- The paper showed income and expenditure variances in detail and consequent cash flow variances
- Financial health remains 'good'. Cash days in hand very good compared to others.

Following questions and discussion the Corporation **APPROVED** the Finance record, the letter of representation and the auditor's report (see also 21.7).

The Finance Report continues to show a high degree of solvency and spending plans were confirmed as on track. The recently announced grant would be spent!

Confidential item

21.10 ANNUAL SAFEGUARDING REPORT

John Beaty represented this report which covered:

- The effectiveness of safeguarding
- The assurance that safeguarding complies with statute and expectations of key stakeholders
- The details of the safeguarding team
- Local safeguarding priorities
- Statistics
- Prevent
- Referrals
- The Pandemic

Members discussed issues of stigma (eg 'free school meals') and steps taken to minimise any stigma. The safeguarding report was **APPROVED**.

21.11 MEETING FEEDBACK FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 9 DECEMBER 2020, CORE VALUES AND GOVERNOR LINKS

The Clerk presented his report. The key features were:

(i) The large number of strongly agree comments in the evaluation section (59 out of 68).

(ii) The large list of the 'best aspects' items (eg informative reports, due diligence, involvement of student member – 16 items altogether).

(iii) The only negative point was about timing – do we need a longer meeting?

(iv) It was suggested that after the pandemic there should be some refresher training/development sessions eg on the Saudi project.

The feedback report was **ADOPTED**. It was felt that all core values had been covered. Due to COVID there were no reports on governor links (e.g. walks) but it was felt that links were as positive as possible in the circumstances.

21.12 DATE OF NEXT MEETING, ANY OTHER BUSINESS AND CONFIDENTIALITY

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Wednesday 24 February 2021. There was no additional business. Birthday wishes were extended to Charlotte, Rajinder and Hadia. The Saudi project was the only confidential item.