

**Minutes of the Full Corporation meeting held on
14 May 2009**

09.58 Membership

- Ap Cllr J Bosnjak
Mrs J H Chambers
Mr J Connolly
Mrs L Coombes
Mr S Darby
- Ap Mr K Green
Mr R Holden
Mr M Lloyd
Mr K McKoy
Ms D Needham
- Ap Ms A Neilson (Vice Chair)
Cllr D Pressley
Mr R Rowley
Mr J Savage
Mr J Sephton (Chair)
Mr J Shephard
Mr L Stone

In attendance:

- | | | |
|----|---------------|--|
| | Mr M E Murphy | (Clerk to the Corporation) |
| | Ms A J Oaks | (Deputy Clerk and College Secretary) |
| Ap | Ms G Saville | (Deputy Principal) |
| | Mr J Neal | (Assistant Principal) |
| | Ms C Leonard | (Director of School - Item 09.60 only) |

09.59 Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Bosnjak, Mr Green and Ms Neilson.

The Clerk confirmed that Mr Saha had tendered his resignation from the Corporation with effect from 12 May 2009 but had expressed a willingness to continue as a Director of North Notts CREATE Ltd. The Search Committee had considered this request and recommendations would be put to the Corporation at the next meeting.

Mr Saha joined members of the Corporation to pass on his regards to colleagues and wish the College well for the future. The Chairman thanked Mr Saha for the contribution he had made to the Governing Body over the past four years, commenting that his expertise and business acumen had been highly valued. Mr Saha left the meeting.

09.60 Briefing from the Director of School for Business

Ms Leonard was welcomed to the meeting. Governors had received the report prior to the meeting, which highlighted progress against key performance indicators for retention, success rates and lesson observations within the areas of Hair & Beauty, Business & IT and Sports, Leisure and Catering. Governors were aware from the Deputy Principal's reports that Hair & Beauty was the top performing area in the College and had been very close to achieving a Grade 1 in the recent inspection. Ms Leonard was pleased to report that since she last reported to the Governing Body in 2007, major improvements had taken place in all three areas, particularly in Hair and Beauty which had self assessed itself as a Grade 1. Whilst the team had been slightly disappointed with the Grade 2 at inspection, they had accepted the reasons behind this and were now working on an action plan to address areas for improvement.

Retention in the three areas was reported to be 91%, 90% and 89% respectively, all of which were well above benchmarks. Success rates were also well above benchmark at 88%, 71% and 81%, Sport Leisure and Catering showing a 21% improvement over the last year. Ms Leonard reported that inspectors had been impressed with the distance travelled over the last year.

Ms Leonard continued, stating that there were accommodation issues at Retford to be addressed to ensure students were provided with facilities comparable to those on main site and plans were being established to improve resources. In terms of the facilities at main site, inspectors had commented on the size and utilisation of the salons which were up to capacity. Governors had been made aware through the Deputy Principal's monthly reports that there were attendance issues in Hair and Beauty and Ms Leonard confirmed that this was something that was being proactively addressed through advice and guidance procedures.

Performance in the area of Business and Office Technology had remained static with no improvement evident over the last three years. Whilst this area had not formed part of the recent inspection, Ms Leonard advised Governors that success rates in two of the subject specialist areas contributing to this programme area – IT and Business Admin & Law, were falling short of targets. Ms Leonard added that part of the action plan would include the offer of one year courses to improve retention rates and provide progression.

It had been acknowledged by Governors that sports facilities on the main site, which were described by inspectors as poor, would have been addressed by the new build; however there was now a degree of uncertainty as to how this would be addressed until availability of funding for the capital programme was known.

Ms Leonard emphasised that in order to achieve a Grade 1 by 2012, staff in the area were fully committed to the challenges ahead of them. The acquisition of Retford College and subsequent improvements to quality control systems would contribute to the achievement of clear targets that had now been set.

The Chairman commented that the School of Business had very impressive results which the recent inspection report had confirmed. He added that the commentary in the report indicated quite clearly the excellent performance particularly in Hair and Beauty Therapy.

Ms Leonard left the meeting.

09.61 Declarations of interest

Mr Murphy declared an interest in item 09.67.1 in terms of the due diligence report which was being prepared by Ilett & Clark Solicitors.

09.62 Unconfirmed Confidential Minutes of the meeting held on 12 February 2009

The Confidential minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record and were signed by the Chairman.

09.63 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

09.64 Unconfirmed Minutes of the Full Corporation meeting held on 25 April 2009

The Minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record and were signed by the Chairman.

09.65 Matters Arising

09.65.1 (Re 09.51 – Tuition Fees Policy)

The Principal indicated that the impact assessment of the Tuition Fees Policy was still awaited and that Governors would be informed of progress in due course.

09.65.2 (Re 09.52 Principal's Report)

At the request of Governors at the previous Full Corporation meeting, an analysis of expenditure to date on the new build project, prepared by the Director of Finance & Resources, was tabled to Governors for consideration. The paper was deemed confidential for commercial reasons and a separate confidential minute recorded.

09.66 Unconfirmed Confidential Minutes of the Full Corporation meeting held on 25 April 2009

The Minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record and were signed by the Chairman.

09.67 Matters Arising

09.67.1 (Re 09.50)

Mr Murphy declared an interest.

The Principal reported that further to appointing KPMG and Ilett & Clark Solicitors to undertake due diligence reports, a meeting had been arranged to meet with both next week to consider the information provided. Further to this a meeting would be arranged with the vendor to finalise the arrangements and the Due Diligence Report brought forward to the next meeting of the Corporation for consideration. It was agreed the matter should remain confidential for commercial reasons until such time as determined by the Corporation, as stated at the previous meeting.

09.68 Performance Monitoring – Student Data

In the absence of the Deputy Principal, the Assistant Principal presented the Report. Whilst the retention data for April indicated a very slight drop since March, the trend continued to show that the expected outturn for the end of the year would be better than in previous years. Achievement data indicated further improvements which would be reflected in the success rates at the end of the year. Attendance followed a similar trend, however as explained earlier in the meeting by the Director of School, attendance patterns in Hair and Beauty reflected the diverse mix of students and a strategy was currently being developed to address this.

In terms of teaching and learning, classroom observations were close to the targets set. As indicated by the Deputy Principal at the last meeting, it was proposed to further refine the Lesson Observation policy for the next Academic year, details of which would be brought forward to Governors in due course.

The Report was received.

09.69 Provider Financial Assurance

Following the audit by the LSC's Provider Financial Assurance team in parallel with the Ofsted inspection, the draft report indicating the findings and opinion had been received and circulated to Governors. The opinion on the effectiveness of the College's financial management and governance frameworks was Grade 1 – Outstanding.

The Clerk commented that in terms of the findings, the Report highlighted many areas of strength and only two minor areas of weakness that merited attention. Governors acknowledged the findings of the Report, commenting favourably on the strengths identified.

One of the recommendations related to Mr Savage's membership of the Audit Committee. A recommendation had been made for Governors to consider whether Mr Savage's membership of the Committee was appropriate in respect of his role and responsibility as this could be seen to influence the audit strategy over his own budget. The Search Committee had considered the recommendation at its meeting on 31 March 2009 and agreed that Mr Savage's membership on the Committee was not compromised by his position as Director of the NFPC. The Committee's recommendation was endorsed by the Full Corporation on 25 April 2009.

The second recommendation made by the PFA related to the financial KPI's for current ratio and cashflow included in the management accounts where it was suggested the target was too easily achievable and therefore insufficiently challenging. It was recommended Governors consider the adequacy of the current KPI's. The Principal confirmed that the Director of Finance & Resources had responded to the LSC confirming that targets had been set substantially below those currently being achieved, particularly cash days in hand, due to the expected impact of the new build project. This would be addressed within the 2009/2010 budget setting process, including additional KPI's in terms of best practice identified within the financial reporting guidance issued by the LSC.

An action plan had been prepared for submission to the LSC, following receipt of which the final report would be issued.

The Report was received.

09.70 Corporation Self Assessment Journal

The Clerk explained that the Corporation self assessment journal identified action points arising from meetings and development events over the last year to enable Governors to monitor progress on a regular basis. The journal was consistent with the format used by all areas within the college and would inform the College self assessment report produced at the end of the year.

Governors asked for clarification of the points relating to succession planning for Chair, Vice Chair and Chairs of Committees. The Principal reminded Governors that the decision taken last year to rotate the term of office of Chair and Vice Chair provided an opportunity for Governors to learn more about the responsibilities involved in the role. Whilst there was no expectation that as Vice Chair one would automatically become Chair, it provided a development opportunity that was essential to succession planning. Ms Neilson's office as Vice Chair would end in July and Governors were invited to advise the Clerk if they were interested in the role for the next academic year.

The Report was received.

09.71 Feedback from the residential Development Event held in April 2009

The evaluation of the residential training and development event had been circulated with papers. The Principal was pleased to report that based on feedback, the event had provided the opportunity for Governors to contribute to the overall governance strategy within a more productive and relaxed environment. Presentations had been well received, although in terms of content, relevance and impact, slightly less so for the presentation made by the Regional Director of the LSC which focused on the future of the LSC and the transition towards commissioning and funding through the YPLA and SFA.

Governors noted that based on the comparison of costs to delegate fees for similar external events, the development event provided extremely good value for money. The Principal was keen to facilitate more Governor involvement in such events and proposed consideration be given to arranging a half day event later in the year, perhaps for the self assessment event in September, to increase the level of participation.

09.72 Minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held on 18 March 2009

The Minutes of the Audit Committee meeting were noted and received.

09.73 Item of further business

With the approval of the Chairman, Governors were requested to consider a further item of business that required approval.

The Principal explained that since incorporation in 1993, downloading bank account transaction details and inter-account transfers had been carried out using Bankline software via a modem. This service was being withdrawn from 31 May 2009 to be replaced by internet banking via a card reader, and in order to continue accessing banking information on a timely basis it was necessary for new mandates to be completed and certified by the Board.

In terms of the risks associated with security fraud, the actions being taken by the College to mitigate these were noted and accepted. Ms Needham's comments with regard to additional aspects of confidentiality when accessing the online service were noted and received with thanks. It was therefore: -

RESOLVED 09.73 That the Principal and the Director of Finance & Resources are authorised to complete and sign the National Westminster Bankline Plc mandate in the form attached, for provision of internet banking services and accept the Bankline terms on behalf of the Board.

09.74 Equality and Diversity

No new issues had been raised during the meeting.

09.75 Governance Risk

Risks noted within the College Risk Register continued to be well managed. It was noted that the LSC's opinion of outstanding for the financial management and governance arrangements at the College provided a great degree of assurance over the systems currently in place including risk management.

Reporting on project costs within the management accounts would be improved to provide more clarity, and to ensure the Board had sufficient appreciation of the key risks to financial performance.

09.76 Confidentiality

Minute 09.62 was deemed confidential for commercial reasons in accordance with Inst 17(2)(d) as agreed at previous meetings in January and February 2009.

The paper tabled at Item 09.65.2 and the minute recording the discussion was deemed confidential until negotiations and funding were resolved.

09.77 Date and time of next meeting

Thursday 11 June 2009 at 6.15 pm.

Signed _____ Chairman

Date _____