

## West Herts College Corporation Board Meeting

Wednesday 4 December 2024

Watford (DA114)

5pm – 7pm

### MINUTES

#### Attendees:

<b>Governors</b>	<b>Role:</b>	<b>Other Attendees</b>	<b>Role</b>
Tony Breslin	Chair of Corporation	Gary Dixon	Deputy Principal West Herts
Gill Worgan	Principal & CEO	Emma Doree	Director of Student Experience
Guy Ainsley	External Governor	Cath Gunn	Principal of Barnfield College
Zoubair Aouam	Student Governor	Sarah Knowles	Deputy Principal
Laura Dawson	External Governor	Eamonn McCarroll	Director of Finance (outgoing)
Wendy Donovan	External Governor	Tammy Nuthall	Deputy Principal (Barnfield)
Irina Kendix	External Governor	Nidha Patel	Director of Finance (incoming)
Mariam Hassan	Student Governor	Amanda Washbrook	Deputy Principal
Richard Lewis	External Governor	Shachi Blakemore	Buzzacott (remote 5pm – 5.20pm)
Chris Nicholls	External Governor	Anne-Marie Kinsella	Governance Professional
Stuart Ord (remote)	External Governor	<b>Apologies</b>	<b>Role:</b>
Martin Sidders	External Governor	Phil Berry	External Governor
Paul Thompson	External Governor	Jason Smith	External Governor
		David York	Staff Governor

## 10/24 1. GENERAL BUSINESS

Please note: Item 5 was taken as the first agenda item to allow the external auditor to leave before Corporation Business.

### 1.1. Apologies for absence and quoracy (start time 5.20pm)

Apologies were noted and accepted, and the meeting was quorate.

The Chair welcomed Charles Chidom, new staff governor for teaching and introductions were made.

### 1.2. Declaration of pecuniary interests

There were no declarations.

### 1.3. Requests for Urgent Business

There was one request for urgent business.

## 11/24 2. PREVIOUS MEETING

### 2.1. Approve Minutes of previous meeting (09 October 2024)

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record and approved for electronic signature.

### 2.2. Action from previous Corporation meeting

Ref	Summary of Actions	when
	There are no outstanding actions for this meeting.	

## 12/24 3. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

The report included the provisional Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) which will go to the next Quality and Curriculum Committee (QCC) Meeting along with the College's Annual Self-Assessment for scrutiny. The report also highlighted the proposed new funding allocations for colleges in the budget; the Homebuilding Skills Hubs; an update on the Barnfield College Phase 2 building, which will complete on

the 6 December; a recent safety event organised in partnership with the neighbourhood police, the College's input on special educational needs and disabilities at the recent Association of College's annual conference; the College's involvement in the Gatsby Charitable Foundation, where the College will form part of a delegation conducting a number of international technical education study visits to several countries, to inform policy and practice in England and the College hosting a number of Hertfordshire Skillmaker employers at a celebratory event at the Watford campus in recognition and appreciation for the work they do to support students to prepare for employment.

In response to questions, the Board were assured that College leaders and managers had received training in response to a new duty placed on employers regarding the prevention of sexual harassment in the workplace.

The Principal confirmed that Practical Completion (PC) of the new Barnfield College Phase 2 building is scheduled 6 December, on time and on budget. The Corporation noted that very few capital projects complete on time and within budget (0.4%). This means, the sale of the Enterprise way campus will be able to complete mid-late February which is in advance of the current contractual agreement and viewed positively by the College and the purchaser.

The Board praised the College on the work and effort involved in selling and decanting Enterprise Way, acknowledging that this is a significant operational task.

The Principal explained that students studying at Enterprise Way would not be moved to the new building until after their exams in January as it would be less stressful for students to take exams in familiar surroundings.

It was agreed that the next Corporation meeting would be held at Barnfield, and tours of the new building would be arranged for governors before the meeting if they are unable to attend the official opening on the 6 February 2025.

The Board discussed in more detail the potential defunding of BTecs, the inclusion of Colleges in the delivery of Homebuilding Skills Hub project and the proposed allocation of the any potential skills capital funding.

The Board congratulated Zoubair Aouam (student governor) who had received 2 awards for his contribution to the community at the Luton Community Awards.

The report was noted.

#### **13/24 4. RESPONSIBILITY & ACCOUNTABILITY**

##### **4.1. Finance Report**

*Confidential item, please see separate minutes (part 2)*

#### **14/24 5. REGULARITY COMPLIANCE**

##### **5.1. Audit Committee Annual Report 2023-24**

The Chair of the Audit Committee explained that the purpose of the Annual Audit Committee Report was to provide assurance to the Corporation that the College's various procedures and systems of internal control are effective and efficient. It covers not only the financial systems but all areas of the College's business including, for example, but not limited to Value for Money (VFM), property, subcontracting, HR, learner numbers, anti-fraud measures, legislation compliance and quality management.

The Chair thanked the Audit Committee for providing the Corporation with their assurances.

The report was noted.

**5.2. Post Audit Report 2023-24 - This item was taken as the first agenda item.**

*Confidential item, please see separate minutes (part 2)*

### **5.3. Annual report and Financial Statements**

*Confidential item, please see separate minutes (part 2)*

### **5.4. Corporate Risk Register**

The report provided the annual “full” Risk Register, which had been updated in line with the Risk Management Policy. The register was scrutinised by the Audit Committee at its meeting on the 19 November 2024.

The DoF highlighted the number of risks and any changes since the last report and informed the Board that the risk related to T-Levels would be updated once the outcome of the ‘Pause and Review’ report was published.

The report and register were noted.

**DECISION:** The Corporation approved the Risk Management Policy.

## **15/24 6. BOARD & ORGANISATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS**

### **6.1. Feedback from Learning Walks**

PT attended a learning walk at Barnfield College. He observed a self-assessment review on careers education, which was described as exemplary practice, comprehensive and the consistent across all 3 College sites.

CN attended a learning walk at Hemel Hempstead. He observed good quality teaching and learning in an A-Level Biology lesson, Level 2 Car Mechanics and Year 4 apprentices in Plumbing and Heating. Students were very positive and enthusiastic. CN also attended a Stepping Stones session in English and Maths and confirmed the reality of the challenges the College face, as outlined in the various reports to the Board. Despite this the lesson was well attended and well taught.

RL attended a learning walk in Watford and observed lessons in Maths, Sports Science, Hairdressing, Architecture and Interior Design. RL reported that the quality of the teaching was good and the atmosphere at College was ‘buzzing.’

TB also attended a learning walk at Watford and observed lessons in Hair and Beauty, Dance, English, Maths and Public Services. Student engagement and attendance was good, and TB noted that the work on exam technique was ‘fantastic.’

All governors expressed their appreciation to the College for giving up their time, asserting how beneficial and worthwhile the learning walk had been.

### **6.2. Update on Corporation membership**

#### **Terms of Office due to expire:**

6.2.1 Laura Dawson – 31 December 2024 - Laura has completed one term of office and wishes to be re-appointed for another term of 2 years.

6.2.2 Stuart Ord – 31 December 2024 - Stuart has completed one term of office and wishes to be reappointed for another term of 2 years.

**Resignations:**

6.2.3 Jason Smith – As requested by Jason last term, he will be resigning at the end of this term, this is Jason’s last Corporation meeting.

6.2.4 Paul Thompson – Paul has offered his resignation due to work commitments and relocation and will leave with immediate effect. This is Paul’s last meeting.

**Vacancies**

6.2.5 From 01 January 2025 the Board will have 15 members, which is the minimum requirement as per the Corporation Instrument and Articles of Government and therefore no vacancy will be recorded on this occasion. Terms of Office that are upcoming in 2025 will generate potentially 3 vacancies and plans for recruiting any potential vacancies are in hand. The search and governance Committee will give an update at the February meeting.

**DECISION:** The Board unanimously approved the re-appointment of Laura Dawson and Stuart Ord for another 2 year term of office.

**6.3. Update on External Review Action Plan**

The Board reviewed the actions in the plan and were happy with the progress made to date.

**16/24 7 URGENT BUSINESS**

The Chair reported that he had used the College Seal to sign off 3 documents:

- i. Deed of Variation
- ii. Lease for Playing Field
- iii. Building Contract

**DECISION:** The Board supported the use of the Seal.

**17/24 8 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Wednesday 12 February 2024, Barnfield - 4pm - Tour of new building, 5pm - Meeting

Meeting closed: 6.40pm

**Minutes approved by the Corporation on the 12 February 2025**

Ref	Summary of Actions	when
14/24/5.3	The Chair of the Corporation to sign off the Annual Report and Financial Statements	ASAP
Ref	Summary of Decisions	
14/24/5.3	The Board approved the following items: i. West Herts College Annual Report and Financial Statements 2023-24. ii. West Herts College Regularity Self-Assessment; Questionnaire 2023-24 iii. West Herts College Letter of Representation 2023-24	
14/24/5.4	The Corporation approved the Risk Management Policy.	
15/24/6.2	The Board unanimously approved the re-appointment of Laura Dawson and Stuart Ord for another 2 year term of office.	
16/24/8	The Board supported the use of the Seal for: i. Deed of Variation; ii. Lease for Playing Field; iii. Building Contract.	