

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CORPORATION HELD AT 3 PM ON TUESDAY 30 MARCH 2021 VIA ZOOM

Present: Alan Aston, Steve Jones, Bernard Lovatt, Martin Earnshaw, Karen Dobson, Lesley Rollason, Simon Leech, Francis Tunney, Gareth Jones, Jim Rowley, Jeff Dutton, Jeremy Pert

In attendance: Craig Hodgson (Vice Principal), Shelley Brown (Director of Curriculum and Performance), Andy Bailey (Head of Compliance and Governance), Lesley Morrey (Director of Student Engagement and Partnerships), Ian Hookway (Director of HR and Communications), Lisa Saville (Group Accountant), Joy Smith (Deputy Clerk)

As Simon Leech had indicated that he would be late joining the meeting, it was agreed that Gareth Jones should chair.

Part One

21.1.1 Membership

Andy explained that Francis Tunney's term of office had very recently expired. Francis has confirmed that he is happy to continue as a Corporation member and, after consideration, all members approved his re-appointment.

Francis Tunney was, therefore, reappointed to the Corporation for a further four year term with no recorded break in service.

21.1.2 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Thomas Degg.

21.1.3 Declarations of Interest

Gareth Jones, Karen Dobson and Craig Hodgson declared an interest as non-remunerated directors of Gradbach Ltd and Axia Solutions Ltd. It was noted that this declaration would also apply to Simon Leech upon joining the meeting.

21.1.4 Chair's Action

Members approved the action by the Chair taken in relation to the payment of increments to eligible staff, which had been communicated and approved by the Corporation by email.

21.1.5 Minutes of the Meeting held on 15 December 2020 - Part 1

Approved as a true record of the meeting.

21.1.6 **Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

21.1.7 **Minutes of the Committee Meetings**

- Education & Standards Committee: 24 March 2021

Lesley advised that the meeting had commenced with a presentation on the College's approach to teacher assessed grades this summer. The College's normal quality systems are strong, however, significant steps are taking place to ensure that comprehensive and robust evidence is gathered to give all students the best opportunity to get the best grades possible. In addition, all information is shared transparently in order to ensure that there are no surprises with the final grades awarded. Deadlines are tight with information to be submitted to the awarding bodies by 18 June, followed by a 2 week period of possible queries. The results days have been brought forward to two weeks earlier than normal which cuts into staff holidays at a time when they do need a break.

Members had also considered the latest Learner Data Report and had been very pleased with attendance, retention and anticipated achievements along with strong performance in English and maths.

Members had considered the latest survey outcomes, noting that the questions about remote learning and progress made in lockdown had created a negative result, however, since returning to face to face teaching it has become apparent that this was a perception issue for students rather than a reality and the true position is actually stronger.

Members had noted that applications are currently lower than last year and had considered some of the reasons for this along with the steps the College is taking to remedy the situation. Bernard particularly queried the impact on recruitment of not allowing potential students in to College and Karen advised that onsite activity will be arranged as soon as it is possible.

The Committee had also considered the excerpts from the latest Risk Register which fell under the remit of the Education and Standards Committee as a result of lockdown.

Jeremy Pert join the meeting at this stage.

21.1.8 **Principal's Report - Part 1**

1.1 Lockdown

Karen again commended the staff for all their work throughout this second College lockdown along with the students for their very positive approach to the new delivery methods and initiatives. She added that work is now underway with students to catch up in any areas required in order to ensure they are more confident in their progress.

1.2 College Re-opening

Karen advised that the latest Re-opening Strategy, dated 8 March, mirrored the approach taken from September to December with some tweaks to programming in order to provide everyone with some face to face learning every week. One further significant change is that masks are also required to be worn in classrooms.

Karen referred to some of the comments made at the Student Conference relating to remote lessons and advised that a programme of guest speakers and enrichment activities had subsequently been developed. She added that the take up of speakers who had agreed to help with remote Q&A sessions etc had been very pleasing. Members also noted the enrichment activity information presented in Appendix 1.

1.3 Staff and Student Testing

Karen explained that she had been very pleased with how the testing had gone although it had represented a significant demand on staff time. Marquees had been hired to house the testing and a rota of staff, both full time and casual, had been devised. Home tests for students have now been distributed from the huge amount of equipment delivered to the College over the past few weeks.

1.4 Exams and Awards Summer 2021

Members noted that work is ongoing to ensure there is a solid evidence base by 18 June to support the decisions taken and grades awarded. Karen indicated that we have received technical information on how our quality assurance processes should work and we are confident that we already have robust systems in place.

KPI meetings with curriculum teams over the past couple of weeks have highlighted some anxieties in staff and we are working to provide support where required.

Simon Leech joined the meeting at this stage.

1.5 Awards Season 2021

Karen advised that discussion has taken place about the approach this year and it has been agreed to hold the main Student Celebration event in early/mid-September, with a Staff Awards event on site towards the end of the summer term. HE awards will also be planned as a face to face activity and we are hopeful that this can take place in the Performing Arts Centre in early July.

Karen then referred to the planned virtual open events in May and June and explained that we are looking to move these to the end of June which will allow us to operate them in person. The 2 teaching weeks after 18 June will be used to run a period of on-site taster activities with a view to improving applications.

Gareth asked about possible access to the guest speaker recordings and Karen agreed to make the links available where possible.

21.1.9 **NSCG Re-opening Documentation : March 2021**

Ian Hookway drew members' attention to the documentation which had been agreed with the Health and Safety Committee/Trade Union representatives for operation up to the Easter break. It had also been shared with the Governor Sub-Committee earlier in the month. Ian was pleased to confirm that the arrangements had worked well with the mask wearing and testing requirements quickly becoming part of normal routine.

After consideration, the re-opening documentation March 2021 was approved.

Ian confirmed that the running total of positive cases at NSCG now stands at 198 across both sites, with 13 reported since 8 March.

He advised that attention is now turning to the operational arrangements for the first half of the Summer term which will incorporate all the latest guidance from the Government and which will be shared with the Governor group for consideration once it has been internally agreed.