

Item	Report	Appendix	Lead	For
6.1	Opening of Meeting and Apologies for Absence	Verbal	Chair	Information
Procedural Matters				
6.2	Declarations of direct or indirect interests in any of the agenda items and Register of Interest	6.2	Chair	Information
6.3	Board Appointments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appointment of Vice Chair of Corporation Appointment of Chair of Corporation 	6.3a 6.3b	Chair Vice Chair	Decision Decision
6.4	Part 1 minutes of previous Corporation Board meetings: 8 Dec Part 1, 30 Jan Part 1, 9 and 15 March	6.4	Chair	Decision
6.5	Matters arising from the minutes	6.5	Chair	Information
Presentations				
6.6	Verbal progress update on the Salix Project			
6.7	Governors' Training – Health & Safety - Tina Bates, H&S Consultant			
Standing Items				
6.8	Principal's Report	6.8	VB	Discussion
6.9	Student Governors' Report	6.9	SGs	Discussion
Recommendations from Curriculum & Standards Committee				
6.10	a. HE Report – TEF submission and APP	6.10a	JH	Information
	b. HE Annual Review Report – University of Surrey	6.10b		Information
	c. Termly Safeguarding Report	6.10c		Information
Recommendations from Audit Committee				
6.11	a. Internal Audit Services Reports	6.11a	JF	Approval
	b. Risk Register 2022/23	6.11b		Information
Recommendations from Finance & General Purposes Committee				
6.12	a. Termly Financial Summary	6.12a	FO	Information
	b. Financial Forecast	6.12b		Information
	c. Health & Safety Policy	6.12c		Approval
	d. Student Transport – discussion paper	6.12d		Information

Items to be taken as read – draft Committee Minutes

6.13	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• C&S minutes 9th March 2023• Audit minutes 13th March 2023• F&GP minutes 16th March 2023	6.13	Chair	Information
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Confidential Committee minutes with restricted circulation were tabled in a separate confidential meeting held before this one.

Other business

6.14	Any other business <i>(Please submit questions in advance to the Clerk)</i>	Verbal	Chair
6.15	Additional Board date to approve the Accountability Agreement: Friday 26 th May 2023 at 8am Next Main Board: Thursday 6 th July 2023 at 8am	Verbal	Chair

Following the meeting photographs will be taken, and then dinner will be served in the Gallery Restaurant at 6pm

Farnborough College of Technology

Corporation Board

Minutes of meeting held on Thursday 30th March 2023

Present:

Dr F Oduneye – Chair – not present for item 6.3b
Mr D Axam
Mrs S Chapman – not present for item 6.3a and Chair for item 6.3b
Mrs G Christie
Mrs R Etebar (via video conference) - from mid item 6.7
Mr J Francis (via video conference)
Ms J Houzer (via video conference) – until late item 6.12d
Professor O Khan
Mr H Malins – (via video conference)
Mr J Sparkes
Ms K Yeomans
Ms V Barrett – Principal

In Attendance:

Mr R Rendel - Associate Governor
Mr I Graham – Vice Principal Curriculum Development & HE
Mrs R Jenkins – Vice Principal Safeguarding, Pastoral & Performance Excellence
Mr P Makwana – Director of Finance & Corporate Services
Ms K Morris – Director of Quality
Ms T Bates - Health & Safety Consultant – until end of item 6.7
Mr S Hunt – Associate Director of Marketing & Learner Services – from item 6.13
Ms C Gillam – Clerk to the Corporation

Quorate: Yes

The meeting opened at 4.44pm

6.1/22.23 Opening of meeting and apologies for absence

The Chair noted that this was the Board's first in-person meeting since December 2019. Apologies were received and accepted from Professor Earwicker, Mr Crippa, Mrs Ebblewhite, Ms Morris and Ms Percival. In the absence of Professor Earwicker Dr Oduneye took the Chair. The Chair welcomed the Health & Safety Consultant Tina Bates to the meeting to present item 6.7.

6.2/22.23 Declarations of direct or indirect interests and Register of Interests

No interests were declared. The updated Register of Interests was noted.

6.3a/22.23 Board appointment of Vice Chair of Corporation

Mrs Chapman left the meeting.

The Chair explained that at the December 2022 Board meeting the Corporation approved a recommendation for Governors to put themselves forward for nomination as Vice Chair of Corporation and a nomination was received from Mrs Chapman. Governors were therefore asked to consider and vote on her election as Vice Chair of Corporation for a two year period of office.

The Board appointed Mrs Chapman as Vice Chair of Corporation for a two year term to run to the date of the Spring 2025 Board meeting.

Mrs Chapman returned to the meeting.

Mrs Chapman thanked the Board for her appointment as Vice Chair.

6.3b/22.23 Board appointment of Chair of Corporation

The newly appointed Vice Chair took the Chair for this item.

Dr Oduneye left the meeting.

The Vice Chair explained that at the December 2022 Board meeting the Corporation approved a recommendation to put forward Dr Oduneye as the named nomination for Chair at the March 2023 meeting. Governors were therefore asked to consider and vote on his election for a two year period of office.

The Board appointed Dr Oduneye as Chair of Corporation for a two year term to run to the date of the Spring 2025 Board meeting.

Dr Oduneye returned to the meeting and resumed as Chair of the meeting.

Dr Oduneye thanked the Board for his appointment as Chair of Corporation.

6.4/22.23 Minutes of the previous Corporation Board meetings

The Corporation Board minutes for the 8th December 2022 (Part 1), 30th January 2023 (Part 1) and 9th and 15th March 2023 meetings were all accepted as true and accurate records and would be signed by the Chair.

6.5/22.23 Matters arising from the minutes

All actions had either been completed or were underway. The Board noted the detail provided for accelerated fast track and traditional 3 year degree programmes.

6.6/22.23 Verbal progress update on the Salix Project

The Principal advised that there were no further updates following the Board meeting on 15th March to approve the Salix project.

6.7/22.23 Governors' Training – Health & Safety

The Principal introduced Ms Bates, Health & Safety Consultant and the College's former Health & Safety Officer, for a training session. Ms Bates explained that she is NEBOSH qualified with extensive experience in the health and safety field. She set out the duties of employers to employees under the Health & Safety at Work Act and the different ways in which employers must ensure so far as reasonably practicable the health, safety and welfare of all employees. Ms Bates added that employers also have duties to safeguard those not in their employment such as members of the public, contractors, visitors and students. She highlighted the importance of health and safety arrangements for College events such as open days, parents' evenings and concerts.

Q. How are hybrid working/studying at home arrangements covered?

A. Ms Bates explained that the College is responsible for providing suitable equipment and a comfortable work station for staff working at home. No such duty applies to students studying at home.

Ms Bates then gave some examples of recent Health & Safety Executive (HSE) court cases that had led to prosecutions and fines. She stressed that in all the incidents no one had intended malicious conduct, rather they had acted to 'get the job done' without considering health and safety. She added that the HSE wants to support organisations, not to take them to court. Starting with an incident at a London Girls' School, Ms Bates outlined how despite a health and safety policy being in place and the presence of a health and safety e-learning tool which included a module on working at height, there was a serious fall from a ladder. The school was found to have inadequately risk assessed working at height and failed to provide the staff training outlined in its H&S policy. The e-learning tool was only made mandatory after the incident. The school was fined £2000. Ms Bates then explored another case at a college where a supervisor had witnessed previous unsafe practice but failed to take action, and an employee

was subsequently severely injured. The college was fined £20,000 and ordered to pay the employee costs. Finally, a fire breach at a Yorkshire school highlighted a common misconception that someone needs to be injured for a prosecution to be brought. The school was fined £10,000 and ordered to pay costs for failing to take general fire precautions including obstructing escape routes and an exit door. The school had been issued with advice following a fire inspection and yet did not resolve these issues during two subsequent inspections. It was also noted that the school employee who had conducted the fire assessment also received a personal fine. Ms Bates informed Governors that she completes all the fire assessments for FCoT.

Ms Bates continued her presentation by explaining the differing ways in which both criminal and civil law apply to workplace health and safety, the four point check for any insurance claims made against the College, and noting that the HSE deliver legislation updates twice a year.

Mrs Etebar joined the meeting.

She advised that of upcoming changes to legislation resulting from the Grenfell fire such as the Building Safety bill which is likely to come into effect late 2023/early 2024 and will likely change the way in which new buildings and refurbishments are managed.

Concluding the presentation Ms Bates noted that the health and safety focus areas in the College were: safety training; events safety information and capacity figures and fire marshal provision; slips, trips and falls; near miss reporting. Working at height was also a focus as this was the main reason for fatalities in the workplace.

Governors' questions and comments

Governors enquired how health and safety responsibility applies to Governors. The Principal replied that they have vicarious liability but in reality any HSE prosecution would be made against the Principal and the Chair of the Corporation. Governors noted that not having attended a Board meeting onsite for three years it would be advisable to start any such future meetings with a safety briefing to remind attendees of fire procedures and the rally point. Governors asked Ms Bates if she had any comments on the recent RIDDOR that had been reported by the College. Ms Bates commented that the incident had been well investigated and well supported with all resulting recommendations put in place. She added that Mr Rab, the Health, Safety and Security Supervisor had performed very well and that she was always available to provide support as required.

The Chair thanked Ms Bates for an informative training session.

Ms Bates left the meeting.

6.8/22.23 Principal's Report

The Principal noted that the College had made its Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) submission and also that it had put itself forward for an Ofsted review of how tuition funding was used in Maths and English.

6.9/22.23 Student Governors' Report

The unavoidable absence of both Student Governors was noted, and questions invited in response to their written reports. Governors observed that the cost of living crisis and its impact upon students was a key concern.

Curriculum & Standards Committee papers

6.10a/22.23 HE Report – TEF submission and APP

Ms Houzer noted that the C&S Committee had spent time discussing the TEF submission and noted that whilst the quality of the College's Higher Education offer was worthy of a gold award,

the TEF process could be difficult for smaller providers and thus a bronze award was possible, whilst a silver award would be viewed as a fair outcome. The result would be known in May and then the Committee would receive and monitor an action plan to work on moving the College to the next tier at the next TEF submission. Turning to the Access and Participation Plan (APP) Ms Houzer explained that the College was not meeting some of its very difficult targets and had unsuccessfully tried to amend the targets with the OfS.

6.10b/22.23 HE Annual Review Report – University of Surrey

The Board received the report for information.

6.10c/22.23 Termly Safeguarding Report

The Board received the report for information.

Finally Ms Houzer drew the Board's attention to key discussions at the Curriculum & Standards Committee which included a recommendation to look through an equality, diversity and inclusion lens at areas such as underperforming courses and the risk register. In particular the Committee had recommended that the College's EDI Committee review the risk register for their insights. Another key discussion was held regarding apprenticeships and a recommended shift in the way that the College focuses upon employers. Moving to a client relationship management approach had been suggested and Governors noted that such an approach would also help to provide early warning of any emerging apprenticeship issues.

Audit Committee papers

6.11a/22.23 Internal Audit Services Reports

Mr Francis noted that the Staff Utilisation internal audit had received reasonable assurance, whilst both the Staff Wellbeing and the Budgeting and Financial Planning audit assignments had received substantial assurance. A minor point had been raised in the Staff Utilisation report regarding over utilisation whilst the Budgeting and Financial Planning report observed that there were strong financial planning processes in place and good budgeting.

The Board approved the Internal Audit Services Reports.

6.11b/22.23 Risk Register 2022/23

Mr Francis presented the risk register update noting that there were 14 top level risks: 9 curriculum risks and 5 financial risks. 2 of the curriculum risks which had begun the year rated as red had now been reduced to amber. These were C3 (retention rate concerns) and C6 (cost of living crisis). 2 of the finance risks had been reduced from amber to green. These were F4 (Sustainable Transformations Strategy) and F5 (lack of capacity). Risk mitigations and controls were felt to be working effectively.

F&GP Committee papers

6.12a/22.23 Termly Financial Summary

6.12b/22.23 Financial Forecast

Dr Oduneye took both papers together and drew the Board's attention to a forecast surplus of £136k against a budgeted surplus of £303k. To mitigate a shortfall in income the College was successfully managing expenditure despite the cost of living crisis and rising inflation. The College also has a total of £400k in pay and non-pay contingency. The delayed delivery of the Hart College has a net zero effect on the bottom line. FCoT retains its outstanding financial health.

Governors' questions and comments

Governors noted that the financial forecast was based upon the January Management Accounts and requested an update on the current financial outlook as of March. The Director of Finance & Corporate Services advised that the College was still on the same trajectory as outlined in the forecast and that expenditure continued to be closely monitored. The next forecast would be in May and the College would continue to provide Governors with the monthly Management Accounts. The Principal added that there was a reduction in adult funding income as increasingly adults were seeking employment rather than study. The College was therefore exploring opportunities for additional courses for adult learners. The Vice Principal Curriculum Development & HE (VP CDHE) explained that programmes were being developed to respond to local community needs such as GP assistants. After Easter the College would be launching a bespoke programme to assist Ukrainian professionals improve their English and 50 learners were interested in the course. The Principal added that Ukrainian professionals such as doctors and lawyers would improve their employment prospects with better English skills. The VP CDHE added that new shorter programmes for adults addressing Maths and English and digital upskilling were to be launched.

Governors requested an update on the future of DfE funding for the College. The Principal advised that FCoT was one of only 16 colleges which did not receive any category condition funding despite having category B buildings. There was a concern that the College's outstanding finances may have been a factor, and this made the case for a Treasury Management Strategy even more pressing. The Principal added that the College had also not received industry capacity funding, and that whilst its 16-18 allocation had grown by 7% funding for next year would be cut by 250 learners whilst an increase of 400 T Level learners was sought. The Principal has queried whether this is an error as it appears to be against funding rules. The Director of Finance & Corporate Services added that the College's ESFA bursaries allocation has been reduced by 58%. Governors expressed their concerns and noted that the reduction or loss of such Government funding was an important strategic issue for the Board. The College must act now to deploy some of its reserves to the benefit of the College. The Principal agreed and added that the Treasury Management Strategy would set out how the College's £16m reserves were committed for areas such as pensions liabilities and buildings. Governors requested refresher training in funding sources and the Principal agreed that this would be included in a future away day. Finally, it was noted that the financial year would be realigned to the end of March as a result of the public sector reclassification of colleges.

6.12c/22.23 Health & Safety Policy

Dr Oduneye noted that the policy had been updated to refer to best practice from the HSE. The Board approved the Health & Safety Policy.

The Associate Director Marketing and Learner Services joined the meeting. The agenda order was re-arranged as follows.

Items to be taken as read

6.13/22.23 Draft Committee minutes

The Board received the draft minutes.

6.12d/22.23 Student Transport

The Associate Director Marketing and Learner Services presented the paper which covered areas such as the £2 bus cap for students which has been extended until June 2023 and is good value for occasional users, and the College's own subsidised annual and termly bus passes which provides better value for more frequent use. A survey held post lockdown showed how students travel to College with the majority using public transport, cycling or walking. Unlike

Farnborough VI Form, FCoT does not charge for student parking. Many students also have access to bursary funds to assist with travel costs. Hampshire County Council (HCC) provided a discretionary grant to the College to support learners with the cost of living and a second HCC grant has been made to support learners who have arrived as Ukrainian refugees.

Governors' questions and comments

Governors noted that this paper had been the subject of extended discussion at the F&GP Committee meeting and that the Committee acknowledged that during the cost of living crisis transport was expensive and could be a bar to access for lower income families and learners. FCoT is an outstanding college in a region without many outstanding colleges and it was suggested that it should do more through bursary provision or providing its own transport to facilitate learners travelling to College. It would also make good business sense to make it easier for more learners to attend College. Governors praised the steps already taken by the College as set out in the paper but were keen to explore what more could be done. The Principal advised that feedback from learners had suggested that the College invest in a bus and this was being explored with the Director of Finance & Corporate Services in discussion with London Transport regarding the potential purchase of a bus. Governors also suggested the provision of e-bikes, or a shared bus service with the VI Form. Governors observed that if you lived outside Rushmoor you may have poorer education choices locally but a difficult journey to access outstanding provision at FCoT. The Associate Director Marketing and Learner Services advised that means testing for travel support has a ceiling of £25k income but Governors felt that this was a low ceiling given that families on higher incomes were struggling. *Ms Houzer left the meeting.*

The Principal suggested that the College should look to where its financial support could be used most effectively. She advised that Engineering was both a growing area and a specialist provision and that perhaps the College should consider how to facilitate access in such specialist areas. Less specialist provision could be accessed by learners at their local colleges.

6.14/22.23 Any other business

No other business was received.

6.15/22.23 Date and time of next meeting

It was noted that there was a date recently agreed for an additional meeting on 26th May 2023 for the Board to approve the Accountability Agreement, and following that the next main Board meeting would be Thursday 6th July 2023.

The meeting closed at 6.00pm

Minutes agreed as being a true and accurate record by the Chair.

Signed:.....

Dated:.....