

UNCONFIRMED MINUTES

GOVERNING BODY

Minutes of the meeting held at 2.00 pm on 3 April 2009

Present:

E. Milburn (Chairman)	A Gordon-Stables
J Bloomfield	D Hills
R Carter	S Leggo
S Cook	C Manning
P Dickie	R Millea
J Finn	J Roberts
S Gerber	B Smith
K Golding	E A Williams (Principal)
	R Windsor

In attendance:

- D Howells (Deputy Principal)
- P Thirkettle (Vice Principal, Curriculum & Quality)
- M Wagner (Vice Principal, Student and Business Services)
- D Chaplin (Chaplin Frobisher Welling, Acting Clerk)

The meeting was preceded by a presentation by Calvin Marshall on e-Individual Learning Plans.

	<u>Action</u>
<p>1. <u>Apologies</u></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from J Simmonds</p>	
<p>2. <u>Minutes</u></p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 6 February were confirmed and signed (Minute book pages L364-L369).</p>	
<p>3. <u>Matters arising</u></p>	

Leaders Forum (para 6) It was noted that the Leaders Forum was not yet in place. It was intended that the Forum would facilitate a stronger input from stakeholders such as HE and FE.

Governors Papers (para 21) It was noted that apart from minor teething troubles, the electronic transmission of agenda and papers had worked well, and all governors confirmed that they had the material in front of them on their Netbook computers.

4. Members' reports of representational activities

LSC Regional Council Jo Finn reported that there had been a report back from the Equality and Diversity workshop; she hoped this work would provide a useful legacy to successor bodies. She asked members to note that under the newly published Common Inspection Framework failure to achieve a good Equality and Diversity score would preclude achieving the "Outstanding" overall grade. There had been discussion of the response to the economic downturn required of EEDA, Job Centre Plus and the LSC.

AoC Chairs' Network. No meeting had taken place.

FE Strategic Forum. Andrea Hill, Chief Executive of Suffolk County Council had attended the recent meeting. It was important to build a stronger relationship between the FE sector and the County Council, and the Principal had undertaken to prepare key facts on behalf of all the colleges.

5 Student Governors' Report

Ryan Windsor reported on a recent presentation by the College's "Green team". Work had started in preparation for a major event in Sept 2010. He asked if more information about the activities of the Student Union could be included on the plasma screen displays. Discussions had been held with the catering manager on ways to reduce the cost of "healthy food".

6 Accommodation Strategy Committee

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 February 2009 were received and noted. (Minute book pages L370-

L372), although the Chairman reported that the collapse of the LSC funding programme meant that they were now irrelevant. The Principal's report (item 12) set out the current situation very clearly and it was agreed to leave further discussion until that point in the meeting.

7. Nursery re-development Project

The governing body was satisfied that by reason of its nature this matter should be dealt with on a confidential basis and a separate minute be prepared, in accordance with Clauses 17(2) (d) and 17(4) of the Instrument of Government of the College.

8 Quality Committee

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 March 2009 were received and noted (Minute book pages L377-L380).

It was noted that the final adjustments to the 2007/8 Self Assessment report (SAR) had been agreed by the Quality Committee.

It was proposed by R Millea, seconded by A Gordon-Stables and resolved unanimously, that the Governing Body endorse the 2007/8 SAR.

9 14-19 Developments

A report of the developments in Bury St Edmunds (successful Foundation Tier Pilot), Gipping Valley (a WSC staffed Skills centre will open at Stowmarket High School in September 2009), Haverhill (major development proposals in response to the LSC competition), North West Suffolk, Sudbury (creation of the Stour Educational Trust with College representation on the Board) and in Thetford (Breckland DC to provide town centre site at Thetford for a skill centre bid under the Building Schools for the Future programme) was received and welcomed. (Minute book pages L381-384).

Members also received a report on developments in the Diploma programme.

10 Curriculum and Quality Report

A report of current issues relating to curriculum and quality was received and noted (Minute book pages L385-

L388). As reported earlier the New Common Inspection Framework stressed the importance of “Every Child Matters” and Equality and Diversity.

11 Business Development & Student Services Report

A report of current issues relating to Business Development and Student Services was received and noted (Minute book pages L389-L392).

Members welcomed the very positive report. The Train to Gain programme was currently performing above contract profile, and despite the recession the full cost course programmes for employers were also on target.

The Principal praised the staff involved in the Ickworth Employers consultation breakfast which attracted 160 employers from across the region and beyond, and governors added their congratulations.

12 Principal's Report

The Principal's report was received and noted (minute book pages L393-L401).

The report provided an update on key performance statistics, (including the excellent WSC success rates all of which were more than 5% above the national average) and also detailed the numerous reputation raising activities and events undertaken. Governor suggestions for a keynote speaker for the Prize-giving on 29th June 2009 would be welcome.

Professor Bob Anderson had been visiting FE network colleges seeking contributions to the development of a coherent UCS Academic Strategy. It was agreed to invite him to address a Governors' seminar at a future date.

Turning to the situation created by the collapse of the LSC build- funding programme the Principal suggested that there were three questions:

- How did the sector get here?
- How did WSC get here?
- What was the way forward?

Some of the answers to the first question were contained in the Foster Report, which was now available on the governors' web-site. Recent AoC and LSIS conferences had made it clear that there could be no wholesale re-instatement of the programme, and that there was no certainty about if or when colleges' project planning expenditure would be recouped. She felt that there was little to be gained from an (inevitably expensive and long drawn-out) legal action. The April 23rd budget might provide some insight into government intentions.

The WSC accommodation strategy had originally been for a much needed but comparatively modest upgrade of a number of sub-standard buildings. The LSC had made it clear that such a piecemeal approach did not satisfy their wish to see "Icon buildings", and with the active support of the LSC Regional staff the current proposals had been developed. However, the College had been prudent in not awarding any long term contracts, and as the following agenda items would show, the College was still in a very healthy financial position. It was essential that the positive message about the College's excellent existing facilities and teaching continued to be stressed.

The Accommodation Committee would be reviewing the situation, and providing options based on the original starting position.

It was agreed that at the next Governing Body meeting at the end of May consideration of these options would be the principal agenda item.

13 Fee Policy 2009/10

A report setting out the Framework within which the College would set fees for the Academic year 2009/10 was received (Minute book pages L402-L406) and endorsed by the Governing Body.

14 Finance Committee

The minutes of the Finance Committee held on 24 February 2009 were received and noted (Minute book pages L407-L409).

Rob Millea drew members' particular attention to the outcome of the deposit rate comparisons (para 2 Treasury Management).

15 Finance Report

The Finance Report for the period ended March 31st 2009 was received (minute book pages L410-L420) and governors were pleased to note the continued favourable performance against budget, with an out-turn forecast of a surplus of £1m - £1.3m before any possible adjustments arising from a need to take the irrecoverable portion of the £2.8 capital spend into the current year's profit and loss account.

Cash at bank was £8m.

16 Human Resources Committee

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 March 2009 were received and noted (Minute book pages L421-L423).

17 Performance Indicators

A report of the Performance indicators recorded in February 2009 were received and noted (Minute book pages L424-L427).

18 Health and Safety Committee

The minutes of the Health and Safety Committee held on 11 March 2009 was received and noted (Minute book pages L428-L429).

19 Member's reports of training, induction, development or Faculty link activities

The Chair of the Accommodation Strategy Committee reported that he and David Hills had attended a meeting of the College Staff Representatives which had been very useful. He had noted that staff felt that Anglian Lane was not a good place for 16 -19 students because of the lack

of local facilities. It had also been suggested that Art students preferred the messier surroundings of the old building.

Sarah Leggo felt that it was important for governors to understand that she felt the quality of teaching was far more important to students than the state of the accommodation.

Details of two conferences on the Governor role in developing Strategy for HE in FE Colleges were distributed.

20 Time and Date of next meeting

29 May 2009 at 2pm

The meeting finished at 5.00 pm