

Minutes of: HLNSC Governing Board

Date: 4pm 10th December 2024 Location: Dove House, Ludlow Campus

| Present | Attending |
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| Alan Layng (Chair) Dave Williams (Principal) Peter Houghton Mark Roberts Zachary Owen (Student Governor) Joe Davey Julia Evans Tony Bramley (online via Teams) Toby Kinnaird (online via Teams) Ben Greenwood (Staff Governor) (online via Teams) Quoracy: Meeting was quorate | Ed Gwillim (Director of Finance) Jo Ricketts (Deputy Principal) Vicki Bushell (Director of HR) Clare Perez (Head of Finance; incoming Director of Finance) Rebecca Semple (Clerk to Governors) |

1. Apologies for Absence - Apologies were received from Jeremy Nicholls, Laura Johnston, Gillian Herbert

2. Declarations of Interest - no new declarations

3. Minutes of last meeting

- a. **Minutes of meeting held 8th October 2024** - minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record
- b. **Matters arising** – no matters arising not already on the agenda

4. New Appointments to the Board (recommended by Search & Governance Committee)

The Board agreed to appoint the following Governors to the Board:

- Peter Houghton (Independent Governor), for an initial 1 year term (ending December 2025)
- Zachary Owen (Student governor)

5. Report from Principal

The Principal presented his report, and highlighted key areas, including:

Educational partner meetings with:

- FE advisors from Further Education Commissioner, as part of engaging in review process next term, noting the FEC's increasingly supportive approach
- A triumvirate of schools in Powys, as part of early conversations regarding working together to develop their vocational offer
- A current validating partner for degree courses, regarding altering relationship from delivery partner to feeder-college

Other meetings reported to the Board included discussions with a local charity (moving towards a more collaborative approach to funding a college programme of work) and building of relationships with two new local MPs.

Finally, the Principal highlighted some recent impacts of this year's change of government on development of Skills England, ongoing qualification reforms, future FE funding and English and Maths provision.

Board Members asked about upcoming changes to ESFA (and its relationship with Skills England), the opportunities and challenges presented by the governmental changes to the college's development and key messaging, and the background to the new FEC approach. The Principal responded to these questions, and wider discussions were held around each point raised.

6. Report from Curriculum and Quality (C&Q) Committee

The Acting Chair of today's C&Q Committee Meeting gave a brief verbal update to the Board, following the postponed 27th November C&Q meeting having been held immediately preceding the Board Meeting. The Board heard that issues had been raised around attendance and an increase in student mental health and anxiety issues affecting students' ability to come in to the classroom. An increase in Stage 3 and 5 behavioural/safeguarding incidents occurring outside of classroom (but part of the college remit under KCSIE) was also highlighted. Board Members asked members of the Executive Team about the college's response to these particular challenges.

The C&Q Committee recommended that the Board approve the Self-Assessment Report, but due to the lack of time available to review this before the meeting, the Board agreed to give the Chair authority to approve this following a three-day time period for any Governor to approach Chair with any concerns.

The C&Q Committee recommended that the Board approve the updated Safeguarding Policy, and the Board were reminded about Governors' requirement to read KCSIE annually following updates.

The Board heard that Governors are invited to the upcoming Staff Development Day in January 2025, and asked the Clerk to circulate details.

Action: Principal to ask Bev to send updated KCSIE to Governors to confirm read

Action: Chair to update Board regarding approval of Self-Assessment Report at next meeting

Decision: *the Board approved the updated Safeguarding Policy*

7. Report from Finance and Employment (F&E) Committee

a. **F&E Summary Report to Board** – The Committee noted the report presented by the Chair of F&E Committee, highlighting issues around staffing, finance (accounts ended the year close to as expected) and capital works that are largely coming to close. Board members asked about underlying patterns for staffing issues and approaches to seeking and responding to the staff voice, and Director of HR outlined some initial areas of concern and approaches to tackling these.

b. **Recommendation to adopt Going Concern basis for Financial Statements**

Decision: *the Board agreed to approve adoption of Going Concern status*

c. **Members Report and Financial Statements for year ending 31st July 2024**

This report and financial statements were recommended by both F&E and Audit Committee for approval.

A Board Member asked about the possibility of a summary of this document, and the role of monthly management accounts (particularly the narrative in the July management accounts) and the audit process in assurance was explained and discussed.

Decision: *the Board agreed to approve the Members Report and Financial Statements for year ending 31st July 2024*

d-h. The Board noted the updated FY24 Financial Regulations Policy, Staff Development Annual Report, Annual Treasury Management Report, Annual Estates Report and F&E Committee 27th November draft minutes.

Decision: *the Board agreed to approve the FY24 Financial Regulations Policy*

8. Report from Audit Committee

a. Audit Committee Summary Report to Board

The Chair of Audit Committee presented the summary report, highlighting the internal audit process and focus for internal auditors going forward, a new set of Global Internal Standards, and the Board Assurance Framework progress

b-f. The Board reviewed the External Auditors Report, Internal Auditors Report, Forvis Mazars' Management Letter for the year ended 31 July 2024, Internal Auditor's Annual Plan, Audit Committee's Annual Report and Value for Money Annual Report to 31 July 2024.

The Chair of Audit Committee highlighted that the five days currently allocated to auditing Stakeholder Engagement (in the Internal Audit Plan for 2024/25) was currently being further discussed.

Decision: *the Board agreed to approve the reports above, and*

Decision: *The Board approved Audit Committee's recommendation for F&E to receive the Value For Money report in future*

Board Members asked the Chair of Audit Committee for the Committee's level of satisfaction with TIAA as internal auditors (which was confirmed as good, after a transitional year) and asked the HR Director about the delivery of statutory Health & Safety training in the college in the light of the 'limited' level of assurance given.

The Board also noted the Annual Risk Management Report, ACOP regularity self-assessment and the draft minutes of the 2nd Dec 2024 Audit Committee meeting.

9. Report from Search and Governance (S&G) Committee

a. S&G Committee Summary Report to Board

The Board noted this summary report presented by the Chair of S&G Committee.

b. Committee Membership changes

The following additions to Committees were recommended by S&G Committee to the Board:

- i. Julia Evans to join Search & Governance Committee
- ii. Mark Roberts to join Curriculum & Quality Committee
- iii. Ian Scott-Bell to join Finance & Employment Committee

Decision: *the Board agreed to approve the Committee appointments above*

c. **Audit Committee call for Board support to strengthen the Committee by the addition of at least one member** – this was noted by the Board, with no immediate offers made by Governors in attendance.

The Board noted the AoC Code of Good Governance Action Plan (updated Nov 2024) and the draft minutes of the S&G Committee meeting of 27th November 2024.

10. Any Other Business: The Board thanked the outgoing Director of Finance for his hard work and wished him a happy retirement in March 2025.

11. Date and time of next meeting: 4pm 8th April 2025 (following the 2.30pm Governors Workshop)

A Confidential section of the Board meeting was then held, for which Student and Staff Governors left the meeting.

Minutes approved:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "AJ Leyng".

Date: 25/09/2025