

Askham Bryan College Corporation

Corporation Meeting

Minutes of the meeting held Monday 15 December 2014 – 3.00pm – 6.45pm Committee Room A, Askham Bryan College, York

The meeting was preceded with an optional tour of the Animal Management Centre.

Unfortunately, due to ill health the Health and Safety Session was deferred until the next meeting. In order to ensure themselves that all is in order with regard to the Health and Safety report, the Governors asked whether a revised report could be provided to include the following:

- What timescale do the Accident Statistics cover?
- Comparison data for the accident statistics for ABC from previous years
- Detail on the RIDDOR accidents
- A list of what “other” accidents includes

Regarding the Health and Safety Policy, Governors asked for clarity on what is meant by “reasonably practicable” under point 3, page 5

- Point 4.1, page 5 Specific Responsibility of the College – the Corporation will ... to demonstrate and assist with their understanding of how this is done
- Point 5.1, page 6 – Detail who is on the Health and Safety Committee
- Detail who undertakes external health and safety audits
- Point 9.1 – Flesh out with when, etc

28. Attendees

Present: Alan Bowe (AB) – (Newton Rigg Committee Chair), Ian Brown (IB), Andrew Cobb (AC), Alun Davies (AD) – (Corporation Vice Chair/Search Committee Chair), Jane Downes (JD), Philip Grant (PG) – Staff Governor, Alex Rippon (AR) – Student Governor, Peter McKenzie (PM) – (Audit Committee Chair), Liz Philip (EJP) – (Executive Principal), Ian Snowden (IS) – Staff Governor, John Williams (JW), Ian Youdan (IY) – (Corporation Chair).

In attendance: Tim Englefield (TE) – Deputy Principal FE, Ian Harmer (IH) - Deputy Principal Finance and Resources, Wes Johnson (WJ) - Campus Principal, Newton Rigg, Jane Tupper (JT) – Deputy Principal Quality and Standards, Tim Whitaker (TW) – Campus Principal, York, Judith Clapham (JC) - Clerk to the Corporation.

TW was welcomed to his first meeting.

29. Acceptance of apologies for absence: Jennifer Bartram (JB), David Black (DB), Helen Swiers (HS).

30. Declarations of Interest

There were no changes to the standing declarations of interest as detailed below:

- IB, EJP and IY declared an interest as Directors of Askham Bryan College Company Limited.
- AB declared an interest with regard to property matters in relation to H&H Land and Property Ltd (Chartered Surveyors, Land Agents and Valuers).
- IY declared an interest as a consultant to Brown & Co.

- AC declared an interest as Emeritus Professor of Plant Sciences, Harper Adams University and as being contracted to the UK Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) to scrutinise applications for Degree Awarding Powers.
- IY declared that his wife Judy Youdan is doing some voluntary dressage coaching for the College.

New Declaration of Interest

- AB declared that the H&H group Planning Department is involved in advising local Parish Councils on their local plans.

It was agreed amongst those present that these conflicts of interest did not preclude anyone.

31. Minutes of the meeting held 8 October 2014

Resolved: Following amending living to learning at the top of page 4, the minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record and signed by IY as Chair.

32. Matters arising from the minutes/action schedule

Governors were reminded to complete their safeguarding training.

33. Strategy – presented by EJP

Principal's Report inc KPI and Strategic Plan Monitoring

Members agreed that aspects of minute 33, should be classified as confidential on the grounds of commercial sensitivity and reviewed in one year. The minutes and associated reports are therefore not available for circulation to the public, college staff or students (excluding senior post holders).

EJP presented her Principal's Report to Corporation – December 2014, with detail as in the report and highlighted the following:

- There is much uncertainty in the FE sector.
- Across the College, admissions are buoyant.
- The largest grant for 16-18s has been exceeded by 159 full time students, with further monies due from the Princes Trust, which will help build the 15/16 allocation and future proof the College.
- HE admissions are reasonably strong with recruitment of 167 first year students, only 2 short of the top of the student control tolerance, but there has been a drop on three programmes and there is work to be done on internal progression. It is hoped that 30% internal progression can be achieved. It was noted that Bradford has 80% progression.
- Apprenticeships are buoyant, although due to how funding is now claimed will reduce.
- The FE adult grant is over by £750k, predominantly due to Princes Trust programmes with consideration being given to sub-contracting or Traineeships.
- Social areas, accommodation and car parking are under pressure due to the impact of growth at York. SMT aim to present a strategy for how to deal with this and make it future proof at the Strategic Planning event in March. It was noted that social space development is unlikely to attract a grant.
- It was noted that the management structure is starting to take shape, but the impact of change is massive and has caused a degree of confusion which needs clarifying.
- Central services (Q) is beginning to function well.
- Dr Tim Whitaker has commenced his role as Campus Principal, York.
- Dr Jane Sullivan has been appointed as Director of Newton Rigg and will start in January.
- Nick Barnes has commenced his role as Director of the North East.

- Alastair Philip continues his role as Director of Agriculture, Engineering and Horticulture at York. The remaining two vacancies, Director of Animal Management and Director of Equine and Sport are out to advert.
- Angela North, Director of College Development leaves to take up her new role as Principal of Henshaws College.
- John Laird, Director of North East retires at Christmas, but will remain as a consultant for two days a week to oversee the Stewart Park transfer.
- John Glahome, Director of Finance retires at Christmas. Carol Butterill has commenced her role as Head of Finance.
- Farm income has taken a hit through a drop in milk and cereal prices, but it is anticipated the accounts will be on budget due to staff savings made elsewhere with delayed appointments.
- Partial handover of the Wildlife and Conservation building has now happened and the official opening will happen in May where it is hoped Michaela Strachan will be present. It was noted that the metal zebra sculpture, mentioned in a weekly update, has been purchased.
- Newton Rigg campus demolition is complete.
- Newton Rigg Equine and Low Beckside are in planning.
- Agri Tech has been submitted to the North Yorkshire LEP for final approval, anticipated to be in February.
- A new system of KPIs has been adopted which though in their infancy are already beginning to provide clarity.
- Following the self assessment process, 5 out of the 12 curriculum areas are rated as Grade 1 – outstanding and the College gives an overall grade of 2 - good.
- English and Maths are areas for development which is in hand.

34. Students, Quality and Standards

Self Assessment Report 2013/14

Consideration was given to the Summary of College Self Assessment Report 2013/14. It was noted that validation of the report had taken place on 26/27 November 2014, with representation on the panel including IY and AD, a Landex Quality Advisor and a Senior Manager from Abingdon and Witney College.

It was noted that:

- the report is in line with the Common Inspection Framework and the full report is available on Moodle.
- Five sections are rated as Grade 1 – outstanding which are Adventure and Outdoor Learning, Agriculture (York), Animal Management York, Scarborough and Wakefield, Animal Management Bradford which was the most notable in terms of outcomes, Equine (York).
- Guisborough has a Grade 2 – good for outcomes for learners, but there are other issues, which makes it an overall Grade 3.
- English and Maths is recognised as an area requiring improvement, with an action plan in place to resolve this.
- At Newton Rigg the Departments are Grade 2 – good with some nearly at Grade 1.
- The College is judged to be a 'Good' College with overall College grades being 2 – good for overall effectiveness, outcomes for learners, quality of teaching, learning and assessment and effectiveness of leadership and management.

The key strengths and areas for development were discussed, as detailed in the report, along with the Quality Improvement Plan, in terms of what needs to be done to move forward.

Governors queried whether it can be identified as to what makes teaching and learning good and whether this can be linked into the Quality Improvement Plan. Making staff developments more explicit was thought important.

It was noted that the full report will be uploaded to the Provider Gateway.

The amount of work involved in pulling everything together was recognised and JT was thanked for doing a “brilliant job”.

Resolved: The Corporation approved the Self Assessment Report 2013/14.

IH left the meeting.

Maths and English Update

Consideration was given to the Maths and English Report, provided to update the Corporation on progress with the English and Maths Strategy.

It was noted that an internal audit of ‘Readiness for English and Maths’ has been carried out by Grant Thornton, which has not resulted in any surprises, due to the huge changes in the Maths and English agenda.

In the self-assessment process English/Maths was judged to require improvement. Whilst the overall result was generally below benchmark, there was some good practice evidenced in Apprenticeship Functional Skills and GCSE English and the action plan to address the issues is providing confidence that the provision is improving.

IH and JG joined the meeting. It was recognised that it was JG’s last Corporation Meeting before retiring. Grateful thanks were expressed for everything he has done for the College and he was given well wishes for the future and presented with a gift.

35. Finance and Resources

It was noted that the next five items on the agenda had been scrutinised by the Finance and General Purposes Committee and Audit Committee and recommendations made from both Committees that the reports, financial statements and letters should be approved.

Members’ Report and Financial Statements 2013/14

Consideration was given to the Members’ Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 July 2014 and reconciliation of changes in the reported figures. It was noted that due to a change in FRS 17 and gain on sale of assets, the retained surplus is £768k. This was recognised as an excellent result for the College considering a deficit was predicted. It was noted that there had been a change in the way the auditors represented asset disposals in the accounts which was out of the College’s control.

ABC Co Ltd – Directors’ Report and Financial Statements 2013/14

Consideration was given to the Directors’ Report and Financial Statements for year ended 31 July 2014. It was noted that there is a loss of £7,371.

ABC Enterprises Ltd – Directors’ Report and Financial Statements 2013/14

It was noted that due to this being dormant there is no change.

Letter of support from ABC to ABC Co Ltd

Consideration was given to the letter of support from ABC to ABC Co Ltd confirming continued financial support to the company.

Letters of Representation/Management Report from Baker Tilly

Consideration was given to the letters of representation on the Financial Statements and Regularity audit which were thought acceptable.

Resolved: All agreed that:

- The ABC Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 July 2014 was approved and the Chair and Principal were authorised to sign on behalf of the Corporation.
- The Governors approved the Letter of Representation to Baker Tilly re ABC and authorised the Chair and the Principal to sign on behalf of the Corporation.
- The Letters of Representation were approved and the Chair and Principal were authorised to sign on behalf of the Board.
- The Directors of ABC Co Ltd received a Letter of Support from the College and approved the ABC Co Ltd Directors' Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 July 2014 and the Chair was authorised to sign as a Director on behalf of the Board.
- The ABC Enterprises Ltd Directors' Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 July 2014 were received and the Principal, as Director and the Clerk, as Company Secretary were authorised to sign on behalf of the Corporation.
- The Management Report from Baker Tilly was received.
- The Letter of Support from ABC to ABC Co Ltd was approved and the Vice Chair was authorised to sign on behalf of the Corporation.

Latest Management Accounts to 31 October 2014

Consideration was given to the October Management Accounts Update Report provided for members to update them on the College budget position for 2014/15, following the production of the management accounts for October, providing an executive summary, college summary, income and expenditure with any variances, balance sheet and key risks which were identified as Adult Apprenticeships and Farming Income ,as detailed in the report and attachments.

Currently the expected outturn is a surplus of £71k, with an overall financial health score of Good.

It was noted that capital charges have a favourable variance, due to the College continuing to hold substantial cash balances and not having to draw down the remainder of the approved loan, which has resulted in ongoing savings against the interest payable.

JG left the meeting.

Capital Project Update

Members agreed that this minute, should be classified as confidential on the grounds of commercial sensitivity and reviewed in one year. The minutes and associated reports are therefore not available for circulation to the public, college staff or students (excluding senior post holders).

Fees Policy

Consideration was given to the G48 Fees Policy and report to propose fees for 2015/16 and HE 16/17, as detailed in the report.

It was noted that schools work has not been raised for four years and the increase will bring it to a break even point.

With regard to the adult classroom learning budget, it was noted that it is over-subscribed for the funding available, so the College is now in a position to charge the SFA recommended 50%

assumed fees to all adults who are not eligible for fee remission, which will increase fees from £900 to around £1740 for a full time learner per year.

Commercial fees for learners will be increased by 30%, unless local market forces prevent this.

Higher Education courses will increase from £7k to £7,500 per year in 2016/17 (subject to HEFCE approval), based on an analysis charged by other Colleges. The report suggested that recruitment to HE courses is not price sensitive. Governors queried this and asked if this is the case why is the College not charging £9k. It was felt that as the fees are currently £6k, to increase to £9k would be too big a jump. There was a discussion regarding being bold and charging more based on the new facilities being built. Concern was expressed that if the fees are raised too quickly, the market may not be able to bear it and if students are lost from some of the lower number courses then the course will not be viable, plus it was also felt that the current facilities do not reflect an HE campus which makes it a different experience.

Resolved: The G48 Fees Policy for the Academic Year 2015/16 and HE 16/17 were approved.

36. Governance

Electronic Governance

Consideration was given to electronic papers report to enable a discussion on the practicalities of the introduction of electronic papers.

Working through the questions, Governors agreed to the introduction of electronic papers. All members present have internet access at home.

Members would:

- Prefer tablets (doesn't have to be iPad) instead of laptops due to size and some are happy to use their own machines
- Be happy with remote access and a confidential shared network. Dropbox was also suggested.
- Like to see the different file types – some would like files in their original format so they can interrogate them, others in one long pdf with annotated capability so will need to initially make both available so they can see the different methods

It was recognised that the timescale will be dependent on a number of factors, including finding the right functionality, IT's availability, delivery time on tablets, but it was felt that if it could be in place for the March Away Day that would be ideal.

JW who has experience of using the facility for another organisation had found that for that organisation, the pay back had been less than a year, when all factors had been considered, including time, postage etc and a cost benefit analysis was suggested.

It was recognised that good governance is about good decision making following discussion, regardless of the means of delivery.

EJP stated that her preference was to remain with hard copies in meetings.

Resolved: IY proposed the introduction of electronic papers on the above basis. JW seconded, all agreed.

Meeting Minutes and Recommendations

Consideration was given to the summary of recommendations and minutes from the following meetings, which Governors were asked to approve and adopt:

Finance and General Purposes Committee 3 December 2014

The Corporation approve the:

- Report and Financial Statements 2013/14
- ABC Co Ltd – Directors Report and Financial Statements 2013/14
- ABC Enterprises Ltd – Directors Report and Financial Statements 2013/14
- Letter of support from College to ABC Co Ltd
- Opening of an account with Barclays Bank to facilitate the introduction of their mobile payments system – Barclays Ping-IT an on-line and contactless payments to improve the service to students and staff alike. The College will look to trial similar payment systems from the other leading banks as and when they become available.
- A single tender for Uniware Systems Limited for the two catering operations at Newton Rigg and York due to the current system no longer being supported by G4S

Audit Committee 3 & 9 December 2014 inc Risk Register

The Corporation approve the:

- Internal Audit Annual Report 2013/14
- Internal Audit Plan 2014-15
- Rolling Implementation Plan of Audit Recommendations at ABC
- Letters of Representation for Baker Tilly
- Report and Financial Statements 2013/14
- ABC Co Ltd – Directors Report and Financial Statements 2013/14
- ABC Enterprises Ltd – Directors Report and Financial Statements 2013/14
- Regularity Audit Self Assessment
- Letter of support from College to ABC Co Ltd
- Audit Committee Annual Report for financial year ended 31 July 2014

Keeping risk in focus was felt important.

Resolved: The above recommendations were proposed for approval and adoption, all agreed.

37. Annual Report of the Audit Committee

Consideration was given to the Final Audit Committee Report for Financial Year ended 31 July 2014, which it was noted the Audit Committee had recommended be approved.

It was noted that the Audit Committee is able to confirm a belief that after assessment, based on the scope of reviews undertaken and completed during the period, it is able to provide the Corporation with an opinion that during the whole year Askham Bryan College had adequate and effective audit arrangements, framework of governance, risk management and control and processes for the effective and efficient use of resources, the solvency of the institution and the safeguarding of its assets, subject to the recognition that this assurance can never be absolute and is based on the reassurances provided by the Internal and Financial Statements Auditors, plus health and safety reports and Self Assessment Report.

Resolved: The Audit Committee Report for Financial Year ended 31 July 2014 was approved and the Chair of the Audit Committee authorised to sign it.

38. Conflict of Interest Policy

Consideration was given to the Policy and Procedure for Conflicts of Interest – QA15. It was noted that the Policy had been revised from the original, in line with a revised version from

Eversheds, plus some additional extras, specific to the College, which Eversheds had checked and amended to ensure they are compliant. It was also noted that an earlier version prior to the one presented here had been shared with the SMT. WJ stated that all are acutely aware of public funds and the need to ensure best value and to demonstrate best possible practice.

It was suggested that a draft Corporation agenda be sent out two weeks in advance of meetings, to enable members to declare an interest on any item on the agenda, to enable papers not to be sent in respect of that item. It was recognised that the agenda may change prior to the final version.

It was confirmed that on page 3 in the first paragraph it was the Chair of Corporation, but it was wondered whether it should be the Clerk that manages it.

There was a request to change trustees to governors, on page 3, in three places under Benefits for Corporation members.

With regard to the Benefits for Corporation members, it was felt this section needed to be discussed further in relation to everyone around the table unless a line was being drawn as to the position now and it only applied to new Governors.

In essence it was felt it was a common sense judgement in line with the basic principal that declarations are made for the Corporation to make a decision on how to deal with them and whether they are manageable or not and would need to be made on a case by case basis.

Clarification to be sought on page 5 to be in accordance with the policy and Financial Regulations regarding gifts and hospitality received.

It was agreed that the above changes be made to the Policy and for it to come back to the next meeting.

39. Confidential items

Resolved: It was felt that aspects of minute 33 and 35 should be classified as confidential on the grounds of commercial sensitivity and reviewed in one year. The minutes and associated reports are therefore not available for circulation to the public, college staff or students (excluding senior post holders).

40. Any other business

AR requested whether another Student Governor could be elected as Dean was unable to attend. This was thought possible as the documentation only specified the President needed to be a Student Governor so was agreed by Governors.

Resolved: A new Student Governor to be elected.

JW requested an update on the Election of Chair and Vice Chair.

It was noted that JC had been working on a process. It was felt that discussion was important and agreed that a secret ballot would be better in the process. It was thought that a statement about why someone would want to be considered should be included.

IS left the meeting.

It was felt that the Vice Chair and then Chair should Chair the process.

EJP requested that as the Chair is also the Principal's Line Manager, that it would be courteous for her to be informed if someone is putting themselves forward.

IS rejoined the meeting.

If there is only one candidate it was queried whether there needed to be an election.

It was queried whether it was possible to recruit specifically for the position of Chair by advert. EJP explained that this had happened previously.

It was suggested that JC circulate the draft process for comment so it can be amended prior to submitting to 25 February meeting for approval.

Date of next meeting

Resolved: Wednesday 25 February 2015 at 3.00pm, ABC, Bradford

Action Schedule

Date Action Raised	Minute No	Action required	Action by	By when
Current				
15/12/14		Email John Freel re Health and Safety	JC	ASAP
15/12/14	36	Work with IT to have a demonstration ready for electronic papers at the February Corporation Meeting and implementation for all Governors at the March Away Day	JC	Feb/March
15/12/14	38	Amend the Conflicts of Interest Policy in line with suggestions	JC	25/02/15
15/12/14	40	Elect a new Student Governor	AR	25/02/15
15/12/14	40	Circulate the draft Election for Chair and Vice Chair process for comment	JC	25/02/15
Pending				
8/10/14	20	Complete Safeguarding Training	All	09/01/15
8/10/14	20	Corporation/Committee Meeting Schedule for 15/16 to be reviewed in the new year	JC	25/02/15
8/10/14	20	Arrange for Jo Gibson to present the Marketing Strategy to Governors. Revised to Away Day	JC	25/02/15
8/10/14	24	Governors to receive feedback on the staff survey	AT	When ready
27/08/14	5	Governors to consider whether they would like to take on the role of Safeguarding Link Governor	All	8/10/14
27/08/14	8	Review the number of times Committees are meeting to ensure the structure is fit for purpose	All	Jan '15
27/08/14	8	Consider further how student and staff views can be captured by Corporation	Governance Working Party	Their next meeting
19/03/14	34, 41 & 45	Review the Governor Self Assessment process	Governance Working Party	July 2014

11/12/13	26	Record whether complaints are from separate individuals or individuals making multiple complaints, plus recording compliments	JT	When next report due
Cleared				
8/10/14	23	Send the Maths and English Strategy to Governors	JC	
27/08/14	5	Write to Dan Ramsden	IY	
27/08/14	6	Add Safeguarding and political issues to the training plan for Governors to be implemented at the Away Days	JC	
27/08/14	8	Look into the different options for sending papers electronically and present a paper to the Governance Working Party	JC	
27/08/14	10	Arrange Departmental Briefings visits	Governors and Clerk	
27/08/14	11	Prepare a session for the November Strategic Away Day on the Strategic Risk Map and Corporation Risk Appetite	PM & AC	
07/05/14	51	Consider reviewing the HE fee and researching why students chose ABC.	AN	
07/05/14	53	Share video from TLA Day at a Governors Meeting.	JT	
19/03/14	34, 41 & 45	Review the election process, succession planning, Governor Self Assessment, away days and Governance in the North East	Governance Working Party	
11/12/13	26	Organise online Safeguarding Training for new Governors	JC	
09/10/13	16	Annual report on Health and Safety Cycle and legal framework	JC to organise	
22/05/13	Pre meet	Health and Safety to be discussed by Audit Committee	JC to organise	
22/05/13	Pre meet	Check status of Incident/Accident Policy	JC	
16/07/14	60	Search Committee to consider the vacancy on the Corporation and Audit Committee	Search	
16/07/14	64	To write to thank Michael and Dan, the Student Governors	IY	
16/07/14	64	EJP and IH to review large social/staff space in the College	EJP & IH	
16/07/04	64	Consideration to be given to collapsing the timetable for whole days for sporting events	EJP	
16/07/14	66	Implement the changes to the Financial Regulations and ensure they are tidied up and reports appear at F&GP as detailed in the minute	IH	
16/07/14	68	Follow up the legality with regard to Data Protection of the telecommunications clause in the new contract	AT	

I certify that this is a true and accurate record of the meeting held 15 December 2014 and agree to them being made public on the Askham Bryan website.

Signed
Chair

Date