

**New College Telford
Corporation
Tuesday 10 March 2009
Minutes**

Present: Dr R Hargreaves (Chairman)
Dr S Ali
Miss J Almond (part)
Mr G Clark
Mr M Crowson
Mr V Davies
Mr J Dean
Mr J Dwane
Cllr I Fletcher
Mr D Hopkins
Mrs J Millington
Mr A Pickerin
Mr J Shaw
Mr S Walton

In Attendance: Mrs B Tyley
Mr P Taylor (Clerk)

1 Apologies

Mr I Woulds, Mr P Boulter.

2 Confirmation of Minutes

The open minutes of the Corporation meeting of 9 December 2008 were confirmed.

3 Declarations of Interest

Cllr Fletcher declared his interest as a member of Telford & Wrekin Council.

4 Corporation Matters

4.1 The Clerk referred the Corporation to the membership shown attached to the agenda, and noted the recent decision of Mr Woulds to resign from the Corporation with effect from 31 March 2009, referred to elsewhere in the agenda.

4.2 The Corporation resolved to appoint Mr Julian Dean as a Staff Member of the Corporation.

4.3 Mr Hopkins who had chaired the Search Committee meeting which took place immediately before the Corporation meeting reported on the Committee's advice on the matters before it:

4.3.1 He reported that the Committee had considered the matter carefully and recommended the appointment of Miss Julia Almond as General Member of

the Corporation. The Corporation resolved to appoint Miss Julia Almond as General Member of the Corporation.

[Clerk's note: at this point in proceedings, Miss Almond joined the meeting and Dr Hargreaves left the meeting].

4.3.2 Mr Hopkins reported that the Committee had considered the matter carefully and recommended the re-appointment of Dr Hargreaves upon the expiry of his current term of office.

The Corporation resolved to re-appoint Dr Hargreaves as a General Member of the Corporation upon the expiry of his current term of office on 12 April 2009.

[Clerk's note: at this point in proceedings, Dr Hargreaves re-joined the meeting].

4.3.3 The Clerk reported that Miss Brown had resigned from the Corporation on 16 December 2008, and as a consequence no further action in relation to her membership was contemplated.

[Clerk's note: at this point in proceedings the Chairman adjourned the meeting to allow the Corporation to enjoy a lively presentation by two New College students, Miss Amy Smith and Miss Rebecca Allen, on their recent exchange visit to Quebec, Canada).

The Chairman invited Miss Almond to introduce herself to Corporation members, and in turn each Corporation member introduced themselves to Miss Almond.

4.4 The Chairman recorded the Corporation's gratitude to Mr Woulds and Mr Davies for their long service and their significant contributions to the governance of the college.

The Clerk reported that Mr Woulds would attend the forthcoming Governor session on Strategic Planning, but that this was to be Mr Davies' final meeting of the Corporation. The Clerk paid a warm tribute to Mr Davies' work on behalf of the Corporation, and his considerable contribution over many years in the role of Chairman of the Audit Committee.

5 Appointments to Corporation Committees

5.1 Upon the recommendation of the Clerk after consultation with the Chairman of the Student Achievement and Standards Committee, the Corporation resolved that the total membership's number of the Student Achievement and Standards Committee shall be five members, with membership conditions adjusted accordingly.

5.2 The Clerk reviewed the current and forthcoming vacancies on Corporation Committees, summarising the membership requirements. After debate the Corporation resolved as follows:

- i. To appoint Mr Walton to the Audit Committee in place of Mr Davies.
- ii. To appoint Mr Pickerin to the Finance and General Purposes Committee for the time being.

- iii. To defer appointments to the Discipline and Suspension and Remuneration Committees until either circumstances required the appointments to be made, or new member appointments have been made to the Corporation.

6 Principal's Report

Mr Clark introduced the report (copy in minute book) for the Corporation noting that it considered the life and work of the College in recent months. He began by paying tribute to the work of retiring governors, Mr Woulds and Mr Davies, referring to their distinctive and significant contributions to College life, and he passed on his thanks to them from all at the College.

On the **economic context** he noted the immediate impact of the economic downturn felt by the College in terms of reduced investment income and increased referrals to the 'learndirect' centre.

Turning to **College life**, he referred to the effects of the recent poor weather and the outcome of the review of procedures undertaken in the aftermath of the experience. He noted the publication of an Ofsted report on good practice in the Arts and Media, and the fact that New College had provided a very positive case study cited in the report. He referred to the exchange visit to Canada, which members had received a presentation on earlier and particularly complimented the part played by Jo Evans in organising this and other events. He referred members to the progress being made in developing the International Baccalaureate and the intention to be in a position to offer it in autumn 2009.

In response to a question from Mr Dean, Mr Clark also referred to the College's leading role in a consortium developing a new level 3 creative diploma, commenting on its hybrid nature (academic/vocational) and its limited initial scale, involving just 24 students. In debate, Mr Crowson and others commented on the potential confusion for employers with the new diplomas being developed alongside existing more familiar qualifications such as BTEC Nationals and 'A' levels.

Miss Almond reflected that her council is making considerable efforts to support and develop the new diplomas with an expectation that they will offer useful alternative pathways for students, although she was aware that several issues remain unresolved. Mr Clark noted that the College's main imperative remained ensuring that any curriculum offering provided a valuable experience and outcome for students.

He congratulated a student, Heather Morris, on her representational selection for hockey. He referred to the exhibition of students' work in Oakengates. Mr Hopkins and Mr Walton reported that they had attended, and both commented on the high quality of work exhibited.

On **College developments**, Mrs Tyley drew members' attention to the College's participation in a peer referencing group, allowing colleges to work together in reviewing current practice and performance with the aim of improving quality.

Mr Clark summarised the main features of recent **sector developments** and referred particularly to the impending re-designation of sixth form colleges under the Bill currently before Parliament.

Turning to **Organisational Development** within the College, Mr Clark commented on the pressure being felt from an increased pace of external change impacting on the College, and noted the key elements involved. He summarised the changes made to College organisation with the introduction of three new areas of learning designed to provide a structure better able to withstand: growth as reduction in student numbers, changes in the mix and type of course provision, and significant curriculum development over time. He also summarised the work undertaken in equality and diversity, and referred to the new guidance on the role of further education in preventing violent terrorism.

Mr Clark concluded his report by referring to the positive manner in which the College is approaching the challenges presented by the change it faces.

The Corporation resolved to receive the report.

7 Accommodation Matters

Mr Clark introduced the report (copy in minute book) for the Corporation explaining that it provided information on the latest national developments in LSC capital funding. He reported on the recent moratorium on capital projects and the general difficulties now being faced by colleges seeking capital support. He noted the two national reviews undertaken and the uncertainty surrounding future capital approvals. He reported that even where approval has been given to projects recently, more phasing would be required leading to additional borrowing requirements. He noted that despite the uncertainties it would appear that the implications are that: existing projects will be slowed down; a more robust prioritisation framework will be introduced; and more modest or phased programmes of development are likely to emerge. He commented that these new conditions will not necessarily act to New College's disadvantage since the College's needs had been acknowledged in the 'Sector Review' and a phased programme would be better suited to the College's priorities.

Mrs Tyley summarised the work to date of the College's client advisor (AA Projects) on space utilisation and planned maintenance, noting particularly the latter significantly strengthens the case for substantial and urgent capital investment in the College estate.

Mr Clark referred to the next stages in the process, anticipating a series of further surveys and reports and the development of an educational rationale for development proposals, all contingent upon further consultation with the LSC regional property advisor once the outcome of the national review is clear. In debate on the matter in response to questions from members, Mr Clark and Miss Almond confirmed that a potential College move to Telford Town Centre was not contemplated.

The Corporation resolved to receive the report.

8 **Audit Committee Matters**

Mr Davies, Chairman of the Audit Committee, introduced the report (copy in minute book) for the Corporation, and provided a succinct summary of the Committee's work. He drew members' attention to the changes in the scheduling of the internal audit services' programme for 2007/08, the Risk Management Update and the progress with implementing previous audit recommendations.

The Corporation resolved to:

- I. Confirm that the internal audit reviews relating to Strategic Planning and Curriculum Planning should be re-scheduled for 2009/10; and
- II. Receive the report.

9 **Finance & General Purposes Committee Matters**

Mr Hopkins, Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee, introduced the report (copy in minute book) for the Corporation, explaining it summarised matters considered at the Committee's recent meeting, and included an overview of College planning and development and the latest management reports and mid year update for 2008/09.

He prefaced his summary of the Committee's work by noting the considerable efforts made by the Committee in examining the details of the matters brought to the Corporation. He paid particular credit to the work of Mr Woulds in providing a detailed scrutiny of financial reports.

Mr Hopkins drew the Corporation's attention to key areas of the report, firstly the revised **Employment Protection Scheme** (included as Appendix 1), which had been amended as a result of the Committee's scrutiny.

The Corporation resolved to approve the revised Employment Protection Scheme.

Turning to the **Management Reports** he drew members' attention to the major variations in the income and expenditure account for the six months to 31 January 2009, and referred to the satisfactory key performance indices shown in the report. The Corporation resolved to receive the management reports for the period to 31 January 2009.

On the matter of the **Mid Year Update 2008/09** he referred the Corporation to the key assumptions upon which the original budget was based, and summarised the principal change emerging in the Mid Year Update. He referred to the increases in pay and non pay expenditure and on the income side drew the Corporation's attention to the anticipated sharp fall in income from investments consequent upon the fall in money market rates. He concluded by noting the modest unallocated contingency, and the uncertainty which surrounds the possibility of late actuarial adjustments to pensions (FRS17).

The Corporation resolved to approve the mid Year Update 2008/09 and to receive the report.

10 **Student Achievement and Standards Committee Matters**

Mr Pickerin, Chairman of the Student Achievement and Standards Committee introduced the report (copy in minute book) for the Corporation explaining that it summarised matters considered at the Committee's recent meeting.

He referred to the **Annual Quality Report 2008** (shown as Appendix 1 to the report) and the overview of progress and achievements of the College in 2007/08. He noted the overall positive picture emerging, and referred to the good student recruitment, rising success and achievement rates, and higher grades. He also referred to improvements in the standards of teaching and learning and value added measures. He drew members' particular attention to particular elements in the Quality Report including: the Self Assessed Grade Profile (and the changes for Art, Design & Media, and Computing & ICT), and the College Success Rates, Pass Rates and Grade Profiles.

Turning to the other matters set out in the report he summarised the key features of his observation of teaching and learning, the 'new improvement agenda', and the areas of concern considered by the Committee.

He concluded his remarks by referring to the challenging questions posed by Committee members and characterised the Committee's work as that of a 'critical friend'.

The Corporation resolved to:

- I. Receive the Annual Quality Report 2008 and
- II. Receive the Report.

11 Dates of Next Meetings

The Chairman referred members to the dates of future meetings set out in the agenda, drawing attention to the fact that the meeting in March 2010 will take place on 9 March, not 10 March as indicated.

[Clerk's note: at this point in proceedings, Mr Clark and Mrs Tyley left the meeting].

12 Senior Staff Salaries

[Clerk's note: in accordance with the Corporation's policy on confidentiality and the requirements of the Instrument of Articles of Government, this item was dealt with in confidential session and a separate record of proceedings made].