

**REASEHEATH COLLEGE BOARD**

**Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 23 March 2017 at 9.45 am  
Room FF27, cHEST Building, Reaseheath College**

<b>Present:</b>	Karol Bailey	independent
	Colin Baxter	independent, Chair Audit Committee (items 1- 18)
	Malcolm Burns	independent
	Meredydd David	Principal
	Jon Furber	independent, Vice Chair, Chair Finance and General Purposes Committee
	Dr Ian Graham	independent, Chair Higher Education Committee
	Dr Elizabeth Harrison	independent
	Hannah Holwell	student
	Anne McKay	staff
	Jeremy Nicholls	independent
	Richard Ratcliffe	independent, Chair and Chair Search and Governance Committee
	Emily Thrane	independent, Vice Chair, Chair Quality and Standards Committee
	Kerri-Anne Williams	student
	Charlie Woodcock	independent

**Attending:** Matt Gower, Assistant Principal, Quality and Learner Services  
 Dave Kynaston, Vice Principal  
 Graeme Lavery, Director of Finance and Resources  
 Jackie Schillinger, Clerk

**PART A**

item	Content	Action
1.	<p><b>Apologies for absence</b></p> <p>Apologies were received and accepted from Sonia Belfield, Robert Icke, Edwina McQueen, David Pearson, Gillian Richards, Eddie Sims, Alastair Taylor and Professor Tim Wheeler DL. Senior team attendees Rachel Ellis Jones, Jo Maher and Louise Woodman sent their apologies.</p>	
2.	<p><b>Declarations of interest</b></p> <p>The following interests were declared:            Meredydd David, DART Limited director, University of Chester Council member; Richard Ratcliffe, DART Limited director; Jon Furber, DART Limited director, North Shropshire College (NSC) governing body member; Emily Thrane, DART Limited director, University of Chester Council member; Elizabeth Harrison, NSC governing body member; Jeremy Nicholls, NSC governing body member; Charlie Woodcock, University of Chester Senior Management Team member.</p>	

	There were no items of discussion or decision-making that required any of the above members to leave the meeting.	
<b>3.</b>	<b>Minutes and matters arising</b>	
3.1	Part A of the minutes of the meeting held on 8 December 2016 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.	
3.2	Part A of the minutes of the special meeting held on 27 January 2017 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.	
3.3	No matters arising were raised.	
<b>4.</b>	<b>Principal's Report</b>	
	The Principal presented his report on overall college activity and performance from November 2016 to March 2017. He reported in summary on academic performance, FE and HE applications and demand, capital projects progress, the federation with North Shropshire College, the University of Chester strategic alliance and the strategic objectives for 2017-18 resulting from the strategic planning days in January involving college managers and governors. Members welcomed the update report and noted that the key items would be considered further against the relevant agenda items. In relation to upcoming events, a member wondered whether the RHS Chatsworth show in June 2017 was factored into the Horticulture curriculum area plans. The Principal agreed to check following the meeting and revert to the member.	<b>MD to check RHS Chatsworth show plans</b>
<b>5.</b>	<b>College Strategic Plan 2016-17</b>	
	The Principal presented a progress update and KPI monitoring report and members considered progress against the current strategic plan for 2016-17. The summary report requested that members note the good solid progress made in delivering the 2016/17 Strategic Plan and KPIs. Members discussed the three red rag rated areas: 16-18 enrolments and HE enrolments, income generation and ICT infrastructure, which had not met target this year. They also considered the KPIs in English and Maths that were not achieved in 2015/16 and the reasons why the target KPIs for these in 2016/17 will need to be adjusted so that they are realistic and challenging.	
<b>6.</b>	<b>Tuition Fees</b>	
6.1	FE Tuition Fees: The Director of Finance and Resources explained that, at the current time, the College awaits the publication of the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) fees matrix and is therefore unable to provide a full breakdown of the proposed FE tuition fees for the academic year 2017/18. However, the recommended approach is to increase FE tuition fees in line with the SFA's funding matrix, as the College did last year, with a full update provided once the matrix is published.	<b>GL SFA Fee matrix to next meeting</b>
6.2	<b>RESOLVED: To approve an increase in Further Education tuition fees for the 2017/18 academic year in line with the SFA's fees matrix, to be confirmed at the next board meeting.</b>	

<p>6.3</p>	<p>HE Tuition Fees: The Principal presented the recommendation for the HE Tuition Fees for the 2018/19 academic year. He explained that from 2018/19, all providers who achieve a ‘Gold’, ‘Silver’ or ‘Bronze’ rating in TEF Year Two will be able to increase their undergraduate tuition fees in line with inflation. This would include Reaseheath College. The proposal recommended to members was that governors support this approach, based on the following detail:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For full time students, the Principal noted that this would mean fees would be £7860.00 for a Foundation Degree (FdSc) and £9250.00 for a Bachelor of Science (BSc). He further explained that students will not, for the duration of their course, be subject to any increase in the fee beyond that indicated in the College’s proposed Access Agreement for 2018/19, which is due to be submitted to the Office for Fair Access (OFFA) by the 26<sup>th</sup> April 2017. In addition, students completing Foundation Degrees at Reaseheath College in July of 2018, who are progressing and continuing straight onto a BSc Top Up programme within the institution, will be charged the same tuition fee that they were for the Foundation Degree. First time entrants to Reaseheath on BSc Top Up programmes will be charged the full fee listed in the ‘proposed fees’ table. Students who commence a HE programme in 2018/19 which includes a one year sandwich placement, will normally undertake the sandwich placement in 2019/20. Students will be subject to a fee of £1,000 for the sandwich year, which reflects the reduced contact between student and academic staff during that year.</li> <li>• In relation to part time fees, the Principal confirmed that the college will ensure that it is in line with the fees regulations, as outlined by OFFA and the Government’s stipulated tuition fee limits for part time students.</li> </ul>	
<p>6.4</p>	<p><b>RESOLVED: To approve an increase in Higher Education tuition fees for 2018/19 academic year in line with inflation, as set out in the Fees Table accompanying the HE Tuition Fee Report.</b></p>	
<p>6.5</p>	<p>Members discussed in detail the potential future impact of the TEF from 2019/20, whereby if a college receives a Bronze rating it will be able to raise its maximum tuition fee by 50% of the forecast rate of inflation, rather than the full rate for those with Silver or Gold ratings. Members noted the uncertainty over the link between the TEF proposals and tuition fees, as the new HE Bill is still being debated between the Commons and the Lords. In summary, the meeting concluded that the only current certainty is that the college will be able to increase undergraduate tuition fees in line with inflation if the college is successfully TEF Year 2 rated. It is likely that all HE providers will have to amend their OFFA agreement once there is clarity regarding the bill’s contents and its impact on fee setting. The Principal confirmed that the OFFA Access Agreement will be finalised and provided to the governing body at its next meeting.</p>	<p><b>REJ HE OFFA Agreement to next meeting</b></p>
<p>7.</p>	<p><b>Chair’s Report Search and Governance Committee</b></p>	
<p>7.1</p>	<p>The Committee Chair presented his report on the outcome of the meeting and the minutes were shared for information. His report highlighted that the Committee had considered the membership, structure and effectiveness of the board and recommended the approval of:</p>	

<p>7.2</p> <p>7.3</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Calendar of meetings 2017/18</li> <li>• Cycle of business 2017/18;</li> <li>• Updated Committee Structure;</li> <li>• Governor Conflicts of Interest Policy.</li> </ul> <p>The Committee Chair also passed on thanks to the senior team, endorsed by those members present, for all its hard work in the past year working to implement the area review recommendations as well as managing the usual business of the college.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED: To approve the following:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Updated Committee Structure</b></li> <li>• <b>Governance Forward Plan of Business 2017/18</b></li> <li>• <b>Governor Conflicts of Interest Policy</b></li> <li>• <b>to defer approval of the Calendar of Meetings 2017/18 to the next meeting once the potential date clashes with the University of Chester Council meetings have been checked.</b></li> </ul>	<p>JS check calendar for next meeting</p>
<p>8.</p> <p>8.1</p> <p>8.2</p>	<p><b>Chair’s Report Quality and Standards Committee</b></p> <p>The Committee Chair presented her report on the outcome of the meeting and members received the full minutes for information. She reported that the splitting of the Quality and Standards Committee into FE and Apprenticeships and a separate HE Committee had worked well this year. She confirmed that the Committee had considered the effectiveness of the quality strategy and received detailed reporting on the following key areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2015/16 performance data update including the Qualification Achievement Rate (QAR) data and the new DfE data dashboard;</li> <li>• Monitoring progress against the 2016/17 Quality Improvement Plan and KPIs;</li> <li>• Maths and English improvement strategy, which will remain a focus at each committee meeting;</li> <li>• Teaching and learning performance and progress of the new quality strategy.</li> </ul> <p>She asked members to note the following outcomes from the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New DfE dashboard data is nationally produced and will be changing as it develops, but that there is a threat within the data, which is showing that we are not doing as well as we could do;</li> <li>• English and maths remains a challenge;</li> <li>• The Self-Assessment Report will be updated with reference to the QAR data;</li> <li>• The committee wishes to keep a close eye on performance against the data dashboard and has requested reports each term on QAR data developments and college actions to address the challenges that it presents.</li> </ul> <p>Members agreed to defer approval of the Physical Intervention Policy to the next meeting, as even though work has progressed, further input was required from the college and the designated safeguarding governor, who had sent apologies for the meeting. Members took assurance from the Vice Principal confirming that the existing policy had been in place as part of the reviewed policy framework at the previous care standards inspection. Members were content to allow further time ‘as a work in progress’ to ensure that the new policy is as comprehensive as it can be.</p>	<p>JS – Policy to next meeting</p>

<p><b>9.</b></p> <p>9.1</p> <p>9.2</p> <p>9.3</p> <p>9.4</p>	<p><b>Chair’s Report Higher Education Committee</b></p> <p>The Committee Chair presented his report on the outcome of the meeting, with the full minutes provided for information. He reported in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The requirement for the board to approve the approach to tuition fees, which had been covered earlier in the meeting and the impact of a TEF bronze rating;</li> <li>• The risk factor on the HEFCE preliminary assessment due to the metric on part-time student satisfaction, with the response letter provided to the meeting in the next agenda item;</li> <li>• The close eye that the committee will keep on student satisfaction/feedback on course management the speed of improvement.</li> </ul> <p>He also reported on the appointment of a further external co-opted member of the committee and the cycle of business, for approval.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. <b>Approval of Francesca Francis as co-opted member of the HE Committee for a period of three years</b></li> <li>ii. <b>Approval of committee cycle of business.</b></li> </ol> <p>Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) Year 2 Provider Submission: The Principal shared the college TEF submission and explained the rationale behind the proposed bronze grading, with a number of elements considered as warranting a silver grading within the overall rating. Members discussed the reasons for the proposed rating and the two indicators that are a challenge for the college (impact on land-based specialist colleges of the destination data metric and the part-time student satisfaction metric). Members discussed the developing policy picture of the TEF and the actions the college is putting in place to tackle these areas, with part-time satisfaction showing significant improvement this year.</p> <p>Members considered the college response to the HEFCE Annual Provider Review preliminary assessment area of concern. The Principal explained the area flagged up is the part-time student satisfaction and he took members through the main points in the college response letter. The Principal gave his view that he expected the letter of response to comprehensively deal with any concerns and that the college can show a strong improvement this year on part-time student satisfaction. Members took assurance from the actions now in place as a result of focus groups and student feedback that have seen positive change, evidenced by the Pulse survey results. A member questioned the viability in terms of quality as well as finance of courses with very small numbers, which had been a contributing factor to the poor satisfaction of this small number of students, compared to the whole. The Principal confirmed that senior management were looking at viability in detail and taking both factors into account.</p>	
<p><b>10.</b></p> <p>10.1</p>	<p><b>Chair’s Report Finance and General Purposes Committee</b></p> <p>The Committee Chair presented his report on the outcome of the meeting and the minutes were shared in full for information. The Committee confirmed that it had considered the areas of college activity within its remit and that there were no matters to recommend for formal approval. The Committee Chair highlighted the financial risks of the changes to apprenticeship funding and the significant shift in funding streams in general due to the changing external environment, which the Committee was satisfied is being anticipated and well managed by senior management within prudent financial planning. He also</p>	

	highlighted the pleasing reduction in staff turnover to 16%. The Vice Principal provided an update in the meeting on the short term impact of the apprenticeship funding system and the expected income that indicated the college will be close to fulfilling its application this year.	
10.2	The Management Accounts to period 6 for budget monitoring were presented by the Director of Finance and Resources and considered by the meeting.	
<b>11.</b>	<b>Chair's Report Audit Committee</b>	
11.1	<p>The Committee Chair presented his report on the outcome of the meeting and the minutes were shared in full for information. The Chair confirmed that the Committee had considered the areas of college activity within its remit and had received reporting on the college subsidiary company, DART Limited. He highlighted the following key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The recommended approval of the Whistleblowing Policy (provided in the papers and considered by board members in the meeting)</li> <li>• A very helpful sector update from RSM received;</li> <li>• The new gender reporting requirements should be considered at the next Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting, with a report on progress</li> <li>• A risk management workshop session be held at the next board development day</li> <li>• The Board considers Reaseheath/NSC risk management at its meeting</li> <li>• Substantial assurance can be taken from the internal audits reported to the meeting</li> <li>• A prospective external co-opted member with audit experience has been identified and the Chair of Audit Committee, Principal and Clerk will arrange a meeting and progress this opportunity.</li> </ul>	<p><b>JS Circulate RSM handout to board</b></p> <p><b>JS to arrange meeting</b></p>
11.2	<b>RESOLVED: Approve the Whistleblowing Policy.</b>	
12.	<p><b>Items for approval:</b> <b>RESOLVED: Approve the Data Protection Policy.</b></p>	
13.	<p><b>Report received for information:</b> Members received the following reports for information: Link Governor Visits feedback reports.</p>	
14.	<p><b>Any other business</b> There was no other business to report.</p>	
15.	<p><b>Date of next meetings</b> The dates of the next meetings were confirmed as: Thursday 18 May 2017 - Development Day Thursday 13 July 2017 - Board meeting</p>	

*A PART B meeting followed.*

SIGNED:

DATED: