

REASEHEATH COLLEGE BOARD

**Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 22 March 2018 at 9.45 am
L3/L4, Philip Leverhulme Centre, Reaseheath College**

Present:

Karol Bailey	independent
Colin Baxter	independent, Chair of Audit Committee
Malcolm Burns	independent
Sonia Belfield	independent (<i>items 1-19</i>)
Meredydd David	Principal
Professor Chris Gaskell	independent
Dr Ian Graham	independent, Chair of Higher Education Committee
Dr Elizabeth Harrison	independent, Vice Chair, Chair of Finance and General Purposes Committee
Luci Newell	student
David Pearson	independent, Vice Chair, Chair Quality and Standards, Chair Remuneration Committees
Angela Potter	independent
Richard Ratcliffe	independent, Chair and Chair of Search and Governance Committee
Alastair Taylor	independent
Eleanor Thomas	student
Prof Tim Wheeler	independent
Charlie Woodcock	independent

Attending:

Peter Green, Governor Designate
 Matt Gower, Assistant Principal, Quality and Learner Services
 Rachel Ellis-Jones, Assistant Principal and Dean of Higher Education
 Sarah Houghton, Assistant Principal, Curriculum
 Graeme Lavery, Director of Finance and Resources
 Paul Spearritt, Assistant Principal, Curriculum
 Kenny Nolan, Careers and Work Placement Manager
 Louise Woodman, Director of Human Resources
 Jackie Schillinger, Clerk

PART A

item	Content	Action
1.	Apologies for absence Apologies were received and accepted from Jon Furber, Robert Icke and Anne McKay. The meeting was quorate.	
2.	Declarations of interest The following interests were noted:	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meredydd David, director of DART Limited and member of the University of Chester Council; • Dr Ian Graham, member of the University of Chester Council; • Angela Potter, employee of Barclays Bank PLC; • Prof Chris Gaskell, University of Winchester Council Member; • Prof Tim Wheeler, University of Chester Vice Chancellor; • Charlie Woodcock, University of Chester Senior Management Team member; • Richard Ratcliffe, director of DART Limited; • Dr Elizabeth Harrison in relation to item 8.3, for which she declared a potential conflict of interest and left the meeting for that item, taking no part in the discussion or decision. <p>Except as set out above, no conflict of the declared interests arose in relation to the content of the agenda items.</p>	
3.	<p>Minutes and matters arising</p> <p>Part A of the minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2017 were approved as a correct record.</p>	
4.	<p>Principal's Report</p> <p>The Principal gave his report, with a summary of key financial and academic performance indications as to the likely final outturn position. He reported on further education, apprenticeship and higher education academic performance, financial performance, capital projects and people matters. Members thanked him for his clear overview and summary of the current college position and noted that a number of the areas would be picked up in more detail in the meeting agenda.</p>	
5.	<p>College Strategic Plan 2017-18</p> <p>The Principal presented the strategic plan progress report 2017/18, providing an overall context for progress so far this year and an update on performance against targets. The report presented the RAG rated current position on the delivery of the 2017/18 Strategic Plan and KPIs, and is the second of three monitoring reports in the year. Further commentary was provided in the full Strategic Action Plan and KPI monitoring report on the key areas to take forward in relation to each of the objectives. Members were assured that the Amber KPIs are showing good progress at this stage in the academic year, with elements achieved or planned within the timescale. They noted that there are no Red KPIs currently, but there are two new Red areas to note in the 'Key areas to take forward'. Discussion focused on these, with members seeking further information on the changes since the last report, progress and actions in place.</p>	Clerk – final report July meeting
6.	<p>Strategic Planning 2018-19</p> <p>6.1 The Principal provided a presentation on external drivers for strategic planning for 2018-19. A discussion and question session followed, with governors initiating further discussion on apprenticeships, the detail of the sensitivities in the ten year forecast in terms of the development of apprenticeships and higher level apprenticeships and other fee income, responsiveness to change and the need to question what we are currently doing as well as looking at new opportunities and the challenges of ensuring a responsive workforce to meet changing employer skills needs.</p>	

<p>6.2</p> <p>6.3</p>	<p>The Student Governors and the Careers and Work Placement Manager presented a student focus session on the College’s developing careers strategy. They shared the work that they had been doing together on employability and careers advice from the student’s perspective. They explained that this project is supported by the Student Association and is aimed at both ensuring that the student view is central to developing the careers strategy and to promoting the careers service at College more effectively to the student body. Members found the presentation very informative and a discussion followed, which included the further strategy development with reference to the Gatsby Principles, the improvements in place that will have a positive impact for students such as the recent increased resourcing of careers provision to create the Careers Team, improvements to the BeReady programme for FE students, the planned specific HE careers fair, the proactive outreach approach now being taken by the team and the Student Association support in working closely with the team to create an effective social media presence. The huge amount of work ongoing on the extended work placement pilot project was also discussed and it was acknowledged that this should put the College in a strong positive position to enhance its careers support further and is expected to have a very positive impact on improving the employability of students going forwards. Members agreed that the careers link governor role should be separated from the current student services link role and become a more distinct role to better support the careers strategy. Members gave their thanks for the presentation and the Chair thanked the Student Governors for their excellent presentation and significant contribution to supporting the Board in its focus on improving the quality of provision for students.</p> <p>The Executive Team presented the draft 2018-19 strategic objectives that had been developed following the college strategic planning day in January. Members noted that they had agreed in the December 2017 meeting that the strategic plan should this year be updated and refreshed rather than re-planned in depth, due to the change in leadership. They considered each of the draft updated objectives, key areas to take forward and success measures, which were presented by the relevant member of Executive. In relation to one of the FE performance success measures discussed, members welcomed the news that college FE performance data for 16-18 provision for 2016-17 is indicating 5% above National Average. They welcomed the approach taken and looked forward to receiving the draft strategic consultation document for approval and strategic plan summary for approval later in the term.</p>	<p>Clerk - seek interest in careers role link and in place in summer term 2018</p> <p>Clerk- Consultation document to 24 May meeting</p>
<p>7.</p> <p>7.1</p>	<p>Chair’s Report Search and Governance Committee</p> <p>The meeting received the Committee Chair’s report and the unconfirmed minutes for information. The meeting had focused on governor recruitment and succession planning. Following a very successful recruitment campaign targeted at commercial farming experience and financial management expertise, the Committee was very fortunate to have a number of high quality applicants interested in being involved in governance. An afternoon visit and interview process was arranged for the 30 January and the Committee reported to the Board a number of recommendations for appointment. The Report confirmed that these are Andrew Fletcher, Mike Gorton and Louise Young. Andrew, Mike and Louise bring current agriculture and land-based sector knowledge, experience and industry engagement to the Board. Andrew and Mike are farmers and employers and Louise is local NFU Group Secretary working closely with local land-based employers. All are very engaged and active in the farming industry and its needs now and</p>	

<p>7.2</p> <p>7.3</p> <p>7.4</p>	<p>looking ahead to the future and are keen to support the college in continuing to identify and meet these needs. In order to accommodate expertise from the very successful recruitment campaign and to support succession planning, the Committee Report recommended a new category of 'Associate Member' be approved, by amendment to the Instrument and Articles of Government, set out below.</p> <p>The Committee recommended the amendment of the Corporation Instrument to allow for the appointment of up to three 'Associate Members'. The Committee reported that, provided the Board is content that the proposed changes are in the interests of effective governance, no further wider consultation is required in this case. This is because the changes do not impact on the existing membership categories nor provide any additional decision-making or voting rights to alter the current profile. These members will have full attendance rights and access to papers, including confidential papers, in the same way as any governor, but they will not take part in decision-making and do not have voting rights or count in the quorum for meetings. These roles are intended to be for members who can provide expertise/advice that the College needs and where an association with the Board as an Associate Member is beneficial for succession planning (for a future governor role when vacancies arise for example) or because the member can offer key expert advice, input or engagement, but not necessarily in the way that a full governor role operates. This is a role that a number of other colleges have introduced and have been using for some time, with very positive feedback. The Associate Members would be required to confirm that they will follow the Governor Code of Conduct, declare any interests and have a DBS check, as required of all Members. The Board considered the recommendation and confirmed that it is content that the proposed changes are in the interests of effective governance and that no further wider consultation is required in this case. It also welcomed and considered the recommendations for appointment provided to it.</p> <p>RESOLVED: Approval of the following wording amendments to the Instrument of Government with immediate effect:</p> <p>2. Composition of the Corporation</p> <p>2.1 The Corporation shall consist of:-</p> <p>.....</p> <p>e) up to three members who appear to the Corporation to have the necessary skills and expertise to act as advisors to the Corporation ("Associate Members"). The following rules shall apply in respect of the role of Associate Members:</p> <p>Associate Members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • may attend meetings of the Corporation and its committees and are permitted to speak solely for the purpose of providing advice on any matters which are the subject of consideration at that meeting; • shall not be included as a member for the purposes of calculating the number of members present at a meeting; • shall not be permitted to take part or vote on any decision which is made at any meeting of the Corporation or its committees. <p>RESOLVED: Approval of the following Board appointments</p> <p>i. The appointment of Andrew Fletcher as a Member of the Governing Body for a period of 3 years from 23 March 2018</p>	
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	<p>ii. The appointment of Louise Young and Mike Gorton as Associate Members of the Governing Body for a period from 23 March 2018 to 31 July 2019, to be reviewed at that stage</p> <p>7.5 The Committee further reported that it recommended that a governor skills audit is carried out in the summer term 2018 to refresh and update the skills profile and aid further succession planning over the next couple of years.</p> <p>7.6 In relation to meetings and the cycle of business, the Committee recommended that an additional board meeting be added in the autumn term each year to focus on college performance and quality matters. This will be intended to provide all governors with a clear idea of the College’s academic performance across its various provision for the previous academic year, its strengths and weakness and its key areas for improvement in the forthcoming year. The Committee reported that this meeting would be after the half term each year, leaving the later Board meeting in December for the year-end financial matters that require scrutiny and approval at that time of the year. The additional meeting had been added to the calendar of meetings for 2018-19, for approval at the current Board meeting. The Committee also reported that it supports a move to bring the Finance and General Purposes Committee and Audit Committee on to the same day in the autumn term, so that there can be an overlap of both committees when they consider year end reporting, in order to improve efficiency, level of contextual understanding and debate (again, set out in the calendar of meetings for approval). The Board welcomed and agreed with the recommendations put forward.</p> <p>7.7 RESOLVED: To approve the Calendar of Meetings 2018-19</p> <p>7.8 RESOLVED: To approve the updated Board Committee Structure as provided in the Board papers.</p>	
<p>8.</p> <p>8.1</p> <p>8.2</p>	<p>Items for Approval</p> <p>The Board agreed to postpone the FE Tuition Fees agenda item to the next meeting as the ESFA fees matrix had not yet been published.</p> <p>Rachel Ellis-Jones presented the HE Tuition Fee strategy for 2019/20 approval. She confirmed the factors that had been taken into account in setting the fees, including the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF), market research and competitor analysis. She presented the proposed fee table confirming that fees remain the same for 2019/20 as already agreed for 2018/19; Higher Nationals (HNs) are charged at the same rate as Foundation degrees but as the provision starts in September 2018/19, approval is sought for 2018/19 as well as 2019/20 at this level; teacher training fees are recommended at £2995. In considering the proposals for the new provision in 2018/19 and all provision in 2019/20, the meeting took the following into account:</p> <p>The College has decided to run some new programming at short notice for 2018/19, so fees will need approval and advertising;</p> <p>Governors had already approved the proposal for 2018/19 meaning that a full time students fees would typically be: £7860.00 for a Foundation Degree and £9250.00 for a BSc. The proposal for 2019/20 is to hold fee levels and not increase them;</p>	

Students will not, for the duration of their course, be subject to any increase in the fee beyond that indicated in this access agreement of their first year of study;

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 fee 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 lecturer in that year;

In relation to part time fees, 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;

Bursary provision for Access students will be brought in line with all other level 3 programmes, so that the College will award Access students the Aspire Bursary if they progress internally from Level 3 to HE. In addition a new bursary is proposed to increase access to students who have been identified by the Higher Education Support Team as requiring a formal assessment, in order to speed up access to DSA funding. This will be known as the Diagnostic Assistance Bursary (DAB).

8.3 RESOLVED: To approve the Higher Education tuition fees for the new provision in 2018/19 and for all provision in the 2019/20 academic year as set out in the Fees Table accompanying the HE Tuition Fee Report, and following clarification in the meeting, that the teacher training fee will be set at £2995.

8.4 *Dr Elizabeth Harrison left the meeting for this item.*

The Clerk reported that the Finance and General Purposes Committee, chaired by Malcolm Burns has considered and recommended the approval for some project work that the College is undertaking on student recruitment, market research and customer relationship management and for which it was intending to commission the services of Dr Liz Harrison. The Clerk explained that the proposal involved payment being made to the governor for her work and set out details of the proposed payment. The Board papers had provided the constitutional and charity law considerations required when considering payment to a governor for work that is over and above that expected as part of the normal voluntary governor role. The Vice Principal had explained to the Committee the reasons for the project work and the reasons that the work is proposed to be carried out by the particular governor in relation to her skills and experience and the CFO and Director of Resources had confirmed that the value for money requirements in relation to procurement of services and quotations as set out in the College Financial Regulations were being followed, which provide assurance that the proposed payment is reasonable and provides value for money. The Committee had considered the requested approval and decided that the recommendation was in the best interests of the College, that charity law and College regulations would be met and that approval for the project work and consequent payment to the governor should be given. The committee confirmed this recommendation to the Board for consideration. The Board considered the recommendation and received assurance that the necessary agreement and safeguards required by charity law guidance were in place. The Board decided that the

8.5	<p>recommendation was in the best interests of the College, that charity law and College regulations would be met and that approval for the project work and consequent payment to the governor should be given.</p> <p>RESOLVED: To recommend approval for the three projects (student recruitment market research; scenario planning for developing Horticulture and Countryside programmes in an uncertain external market; and customer relationship management project work) to be undertaken and for the consequent payment, as detailed in the meeting, to be made to Dr Elizabeth Harrison, and for the amount of such payment to be declared as a related party transaction in the College Group end of year accounts.</p>	
9. 9.1	<p>Chair’s Report Quality and Standards Committee</p> <p>The meeting received the Committee Chair’s report and the unconfirmed minutes for information. The Report confirmed that it had considered the effectiveness of the quality strategy and had received detailed reporting in key areas. In particular, the Committee highlighted the following to the Board:</p> <p><u>Preparation for the new curriculum and assessment framework and T levels:</u> The Executive team and relevant managers are well connected and involved in the right forums to be able to access the latest developments in a timely way. The risk of moving to the new framework and the development of T levels is recognised and monitored in the College strategic risk register, and the College has a sound strategy for implementation, including pilot projects, which takes into account student impact. The committee will monitor progress with an update report at its next meeting in June 2018.</p> <p><u>2016-17 College Performance against sector benchmarks:</u> A positive story on the strengths of the Colleges technical level 2 and 3 delivery, which is its core delivery and also on the improvements seen in English and maths now above national averages and particularly strong in relation to maths performance and when benchmarked against other land-based providers. College destination data is very strong but this is not reflected in the national data due to the specifics of that methodology combined with the land-based industry context. Therefore the College is taking steps to provide its own externally assured survey data to evidence continued very strong progression of students to positive destinations. The Committee recommends a report and development session on college performance against benchmark measures and an Ofsted preparation report for all governors to be provided at the meeting and development day on 24 May 2018.</p> <p><u>2017-18 in year performance and Quality Improvement Plans:</u> In year performance reporting confirms overall solid performance in terms of retention and applications so far this year. College wide quality improvement plan progress was monitored as well as individual areas of English and maths, Engineering and Reaseheath Training. Progress in embedding English and maths across curriculum areas was also reviewed. Detailed discussion in the meeting provided assurance on actions in place to tackle weaker areas and each of these reports will be updated to provide greater clarity for the June 2018 meeting to provide assurance that actions are in place and impact can be measured.</p> <p><u>Safeguarding Update Report:</u> The Report indicated that the current key issues of focus for the team in relation to actions and education/support for under 18 students are disorderly behaviour and a slight increase in bullying issues. In relation to over 18 students, the key areas where the team is working to provide education/support and</p>	Clerk – agenda May develop-ment day

	actions in partnership with appropriate external agencies is self-harm, sexual behaviour and consent, excessive noise and alcohol use. Incident reporting and referrals to outside agencies were considered. The Committee reported that it took assurance on the continued good work of the safeguarding and wellbeing teams at College, with the increasing complexity of the challenge, and that the College continues to seek to work in partnership with local external agencies to maintain effective safeguarding practices to ensure a safe environment for students.	
10.	Chair's Report Higher Education Committee	
10.1	The meeting received the Committee Chair's report and unconfirmed minutes for information. The reporting that the Higher Education Committee had received and discussed provided a good assurance level to the Reaseheath College Board on the areas within the committee's delegated authority. The minutes indicated areas of risk that were discussed and that are identified on the College risk register relating to the new HE regulatory regime and the increased impact of the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) going forwards.	
10.2	The Chair's Report provided assurance to the Board on the overall positive picture on higher education student retention in 2017-18 and student applications for 2018-19. The minutes highlighted the discussion on the continued challenge on internal progression from further to higher education as well as the welcome widening participation strategy introduced at the meeting. The Report confirmed that it will monitor progress in these areas.	
10.3	The Chair's Report confirmed that the Committee considered and now recommends for approval the higher education tuition fees, as provided in full and proposed for approval on the Board agenda.	
11.	Chair's Report Finance and General Purposes Committee	
11.1	The meeting received the Committee Chair's report and unconfirmed minutes for information. The Report confirmed that the Committee had received and discussed reporting that provided a good assurance level to the Board on the areas within the committee's delegated authority. The Committee minutes indicated the areas of risk that were discussed and identified on the College risk register relating to staff recruitment and retention in some areas of provision and actions on staff sickness absence. The Committee report confirmed that it will continue to monitor progress against these areas.	
11.2	The committee recommended approval of an item on the commissioning of some project work from a current governor, which was presented as a separate agenda item in the current meeting.	
11.3	The Board had received the Management Accounts budget monitoring reporting with the Board papers and had no concerns to raise at the meeting.	
12.	Chair's Report Audit Committee	
12.1	The meeting received the Committee Chair's report and unconfirmed minutes for information, with confirmation that the Committee considered the areas of college	

	<p>activity within its remit and received good assurance on the areas reported to this committee meeting including:</p> <p>Internal Audit Progress Report</p> <p>Internal audit recommendations tracking report</p> <p>Residential bursary funding – ESFA risk and assurance audit</p> <p>Internal Audit Service Benchmarking Report</p> <p>General Data Protection Regulations – Advisory Audit Report</p> <p>Consideration of updated risk register and reports from other committees.</p>	
12.2	The Committee report highlighted the appointment of Evelyn Davies-Jones as an external co-opted member of the Committee for a period of 3 years, with legal, commercial and FE sector audit and risk management experience to contribute to the Committee.	
12.3	The report also confirmed that the College strategic risk register had been updated following the Committee and was provided to the Board.	
13.	Reports for information/assurance	
13.1	Link Governor visits feedback reports had been circulated with the meeting and were received for information.	
13.2	The FE Commissioner Termly Letter February 2018 was received for information.	
14.	Any other business	
	The Principal thanked the Assistant Principal and Dean of Higher Education for her contribution over the last seven years at College as she moves on to a new role elsewhere and all members expressed their thanks and wished her all the very best in her new role.	
15.	Date of next meetings	
	The dates of the next meeting were confirmed as: 24 May 2018 - Development Day 12 July 2018 - Board meeting	

The meeting closed at 12.30pm

A PART B meeting followed.

A development session took place in the afternoon from 2pm to 4pm in the Committee Room: Further Education Governance: Induction and Refresher, led by an AoC National Leader of Governance.

Signed:

Dated: