

# Northumberland College Corporation

## Governing Body

### Minutes of meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2007 at 5.30pm at Ashington

**Present:**

Peter Elliott (Chairman)	M Rossi
J Carlin	L Scott (to GB07/054 only)
P Sample	N Hall (to GB07/057 only)
R Ellis-Jones (Principal)	I Todd
L Ions (Chair Designate)	M Jeans
P Pratt (Vice Chairman)	D Wearmouth
D Ratliff	D Fleming

**In Attendance:**

- C Taylor (Clerk to the Corporation)
- C Saint (Acting Finance Director)
- H Wright (VP Curriculum)
- I Holmes (VP Finance)
- J Wayman (LSC) (to GB07/047 only)
- A Crookson (to GB07/049 only)
- P Caudren (to GB07/050 only)

#### **GB07/042 Preliminaries**

The Chairman extended a warm welcome to DW, IH and JW and to staff members AC and PC.

#### **GB07/043 Apologies**

Standing apologies were given for Eric Fisher. Apologies had been received from Sharon Barlow.

#### **GB07/044 Winnie Lowes**

The Chairman sadly informed the Corporation of the recent death of Winnie Lowes, a governor of the College for a number of years. He advised that he and other governors had attended the funeral. After a few words of tribute a minute's silence was observed.

#### **GB07/045 Declaration of Interests**

None

#### **GB07/046 Confirmation of Quorum**

The Chairman confirmed that the meeting was quorate (the members present exceeding the minimum requirement of 8).

#### **GB07/047 LSC Presentation on demand led funding by John Wayman**

JW of the LSC went through a presentation on demand led funding touching upon issues, concerns and the challenges that lie ahead. Questions were raised and after discussion it was **agreed** by the Corporation that it should look at employer engagement, optimising competition, improve the present position relating to specialisation and other related issues.

JW was thanked for his presentation and left the meeting.

**GB07/048 Student Data**

AC presented the paper highlighting key areas. It was noted that centralising timetabling would be effective for the next academic year. The £55k favourable benefit arising from the revised “achievement factor” was noted. LI commented that at a recent LSC meeting she had noticed that the College was performing well but that this report showed a different position. It was agreed that AC and LI would share and cross check their information.

AC/LI

The paper was received.

**GB07/049 Recommendation of pay award -**

PC presented the salient parts of the paper it being noted it had already been considered at the last F&P meeting. For clarity the Chairman of F&P confirmed further points which had been raised by F&P. After discussion and subject to some amendments the report was approved. Governors were happy to agree that the issues about criteria were left with PC - the Principal and DR to conclude.

PC/REJ/  
DR

**GB07/050 Minutes of Governing Body Meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2007**

The minutes were **approved** as a true record and duly signed by the Chairman subject to the inclusion of DR as an apology.

**GB07/051 Matters arising (not otherwise covered)**

- GB06/180 – trustee for Ashington High School partnership was still outstanding. The Principal confirmed a meeting was scheduled for next week to discuss what the position entailed. It was agreed to wait the outcome of that meeting.
- GB07/031 Marketing Strategy – it was noted that the Principal would be interviewing for an external communication manager.
- College bulletin – Principal to check the position.

REJ

REJ  
REJ

**GB07/052 Risk Management**

The Principal confirmed the paper had previously been seen by Audit and subsequent amendments approved. After discussion Governors **agreed** to adopt the policy subject to the inclusion of trend analysis and an indication of ownership for each risk.

**GB07/053 Learning Park update – CONFIDENTIAL**

**GB07/054 Development of the College Estates**

The Principal and VP Curriculum presented the report seeking overall direction from Governors. After a lengthy debate it was **agreed that:-**

- the report be approved in principle but a report on costings was required;
- the new build committee, due to their depth and breadth of knowledge have terms of reference amended to include wider college estate issues and meet to discuss this further when costings were available;
- expenditure on the library should be approved as soon as possible; and
- once drafted the paper on costings should be considered by F&P.

**GB07/055 Development Plan Progress**

HW, together with the Chairman of Standards, presented on this topic with reference to

the recent Standards Committee meeting. crossing referring to GB07/060. Areas where the College was over and under performing were highlighted. Overall it was noted that student achievements had improved and the Corporation should take comfort from this. IT quantified the progress made in respect of qualifications at the various levels with due regard to national benchmarks.

The Development Plan was noted with amendments.

#### **GB07/056 Minutes of the Standards Committee Meeting on 29.3.07**

The minutes were received to the meeting.

#### **GB07/057 Student Feedback Survey**

HW presented the survey touching upon the relevant sections. The Clerk was asked to email the summary of questions to Governors as this was not attached. Limitations of the current process were noted as no benchmark had been included. It was very important that staff speak with students to hear any concerns. After discussion it was **agreed** that QPD should be commissioned to start the process in September.

#### **GB07/058 Information on the Gateway regarding new diplomas**

HW reported the position as it was important for Governors to be fully aware of the new diplomas. It was **agreed** that the paper highlighted areas where the College was not performing particularly well, eg partnerships. After discussion the paper was received.

#### **GB07/059 Proposed bid for Regional Food Group**

The Principal declared an interest as her husband was part of the Regional Food Group team. It was proposed that should this matter be taken forward then the Principal would step down and SMT would deal. The salient parts, risks and advantages were discussed and Governors expressed their support for the bid and the opportunities which could unfold. It was noted that this was a business/development initiative for the College which would add value going forward.

#### **GB07/060 Governance Self Regulation debate**

The Clerk explained the rationale behind the self regulation sub group and its intentions. Governors attention was drawn to the need to join in the debate although this was voluntary (at this stage).

#### **GB07/061 Management Accounts – March 2007**

CS introduced IH, the new FD. As the accounts had been discussed by F&P CS comments were limited in scope highlighting that there were improvements and generally matters looking much better with data capture improving.

After brief discussion areas relating to LCS targets and staff remuneration were highlighted and IH was asked to look into this further.

IH

The Chairman expressed a debt of gratitude to CS as he had contributed significantly to the achievement of the accounts during the last academic year. Thanks were also expressed to BH for his help with the College.

The accounts were received and Governors were pleased with the variable variances.

#### **GB07/062 Minutes of the Membership and Governance Committee held on 13.3.07**

The minutes were received to the meeting but the recommendation on formal policy to

appoint Governors had not been attached. This to be carried forward to the next meeting.

Clerk

**GB07/063 Minutes of Audit Committee held on 20.3.07**

The minutes were received to the meeting.

**GB07/064 Minutes of Finance and Personnel Committee held on 17.4.07**

The minutes were received to the meeting.

**GB07/065 Formal handover of Chairship**

The Chairman expressed his appreciation of the support from colleagues over the years of his chairmanship, confirming that Governors had worked as a team and he believed he was leaving the College in very capable hands. The Chairman then stepped aside and handed over to LI.

Governors confirmed that PE should feel a sense of pride as he had been instrumental in improving the position generally and in particular with regards to: finances, data management, LSC relationships and SMT structure.. Governors collectively expressed their gratitude and heartfelt warm appreciation.

**GB07/066 Future sub-committee membership and chairing**

LI noted to Governors where gaps now occurred within the various sub-committees due to her appointment as Governing Chair. After discussion it was **agreed** that:-

- IT would chair the Standards Committee;
- Sharon Barlow would be asked to chair the Audit Committee in the event that no other Governor came forward;
- LI chair the Finance and Personnel Committee and the Remuneration Committee.
- David Fleming to chair the New Build sub-committee
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LI

**GB07/067 Report on Regional LSC Meeting**

LI gave feedback to Governors on the LSC dinner indicating the nature of the business which include demand led funding, partnerships and college ambition. There was a further dinner scheduled for next month which LI would report back on.

**GB07/068 Any other Business**

PE was asked to leave the meeting by PP who confirmed that it was customary to provide a gift when a Chairperson stepped down. The Corporation was asked to approve the gift and a figure was agreed in line with college policy.

PE returned to the meeting. Governors again express their gratitude and the great commitment PE had shown over the years together with his control and leadership qualities in managing the Governors. DR was personally pleased that PE was leaving on a good note and sincere thanks were expressed.

**GB07/069 Designation of items as confidential**

Pay Award  
Learning Park  
College Estates; and  
Regional Food Group Bid until the next round

**GB07/070 Topics for the next Corporation Meeting**

Kirkley Hall Feasibility Study  
Learning Park  
Summer Capital Work

**GB07/071 Date of future meeting**

The next meeting would be held on 10<sup>th</sup> July 2007.