

Colchester Institute Corporation

**Minutes of a Virtual Meeting of the Corporation Board
held on 3rd June 2020**

Present:

Kevin Prince, *in the Chair*
Alison Andreas
Lisa Clampin
Mark Davies
Pam Donnelly
Patrick Giddings

Liz Goodall
Irene Kettle
Jasmin Patel
Terry Smyth
Richard Wainwright

In Attendance:

Hazel Paton Clerk to the Governors

1. **Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Lizzy Ellam.

2. **Declaration of any conflicts of interest**

None.

3. **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 19th February 2020 (CIC/20/2/1) were received and confirmed.

4. **Matters arising from the minutes**

None, other than on the agenda.

5. **Governance Coronavirus Committee**

CIC/20/2/2, Governance Coronavirus Committee Terms of Reference, was received, considered and APPROVED. The Committee had been established as a task and finish group in line with the guidance from the DfE on the role of governors during the coronavirus pandemic. The Board APPROVED the membership which had been proposed by the Corporation Chair:

Jasmin Patel (Chair)
Alison Andreas
Lizzy Ellam
Kevin Prince
Terry Smyth

The Board welcomed the inclusion of the Teaching Staff Governor and the designated Governor for Safeguarding on the Committee.

6. **Re-appointment of Auditors**

On the recommendation of the Audit and Compliance Committee the Board APPROVED:

6.1. The re-appointment of Scrutton Bland as Financial Statement Auditors for the next three years.

6.2. The re-appointment of RSM as Internal Auditors for the remaining year of the five year contract that will expire July 2021.

6.3. **Resources Committee**

CIC/20/2/3, Proposed amended to the Committee Title and terms of reference, was received and considered. The Board AGREED to rename the Resources Committee the Finance and Resources Committee and APPROVED the revised terms of reference, which better reflect the work of the Committee.

7. **Reports from Committee**

7.1. **Audit and Compliance Committee**

The Minutes of the Audit and Compliance Committee held on 11 March 2020 (CIC/20/2/4) were received and presented by the Committee Chair.

The Committee had received a presentation from the Director of Information and Learning Technologies on the College's cyber security controls. This will be a standing agenda item for the Committee going forward. The other areas of focus at the meeting had been the findings of the internal audit review of apprenticeship funding, and risk management.

It was reported that the Risk Management Committee had met earlier that day. The Corporation Chair had attended the meeting in the absence of the Chair of the Audit and Compliance Committee. The focus of the Committee had been on the plans for the partial re-opening of the College campuses in June and the safety of students and staff.

7.2. **Resources Committee**

The Chair of the Committee gave an oral report on the meeting of the Resource Committee held on 14th May 2020. The minutes of the meeting will be uploaded to the Governors Portal with the papers for this meeting once finalised and approved by the Committee Chair.

7.2.1. **Lennartz Appeal**

It is hoped that there will be a positive outcome to the Lennartz appeal communicated before the end of July 2020.

7.2.2. **Staff Wellbeing**

The Committee had received the Wellbeing Annual Report, and had been pleased at the range of staff wellbeing activities, particularly during the period of disruption as a result of the pandemic. A review by the College's Internal Auditors had found that a lot of systems were in place to support staff mental health and wellbeing.

7.2.3. **Sickness Absence**

It had been reported that although sickness absence was fairly static, stress had moved from first to third in the list of reasons for absence in the second reporting quarter. The Committee had questioned this as it had previously been noted that a number of reasons for absence could be stress related. To help Members monitor this, the Committee has asked for future reports to provide data for all categories used to record sickness absence.

7.2.4. **Single Central Record**

Although the single central record is substantially complete, a small number of staff still need to provide identification documents as part of the "right to work" checks. Because of concerns over the length of time some of these checks have been outstanding the Committee asked for the names of the non-compliant staff to be passed to the College Executive. The Principal confirmed that the relevant CE member is chasing up missing documentation from four members of staff.

7.2.5. **Local Government Pension Scheme**

As requested at the last Board meeting, the Executive Vice Principal: Finance and Corporate Development had been in negotiation with the pension fund representatives over the

request for increased deficiency payments. They had offered to reduce the deficiency payments from £308k to £113k pa if the College's provides security. .

7.2.6. Management Report and Accounts

There was a wide ranging discussion on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the College's financial position, and the mitigating actions taken and being considered by the College Executive. The details are recorded in a separate confidential minute.

7.3. Curriculum and Quality Committee

In the absence of the Committee Chair the Principal gave an oral report on the meeting the Curriculum and Quality Committee held on 27th May 2020. The minutes of the meeting will be uploaded to the Governors Portal with the papers for this meeting once finalised and approved by the Committee Chair.

The main focus of the meeting had been on the actions that had taken place to ensure that students are not disadvantaged by the current disruption and the arrangements for the awarding of qualifications this year. A large number of qualifications are being awarded through teacher calculated grades. Around three quarters of the College's students will receive grades calculated by their tutors. Groups of staff were currently in College (with social distancing measures in place) working as a team to moderate the grades awarded. Where teacher calculated grades are not possible, qualifications will either be adapted or delayed. Guidance on those qualifications that will be adapted or delayed is just emerging and is being worked through to identify what delivery staff need to do. It may be that work can be done remotely, or that a small number of students will need to return to College in June and July.

In response to a recommendation arising from the last FE Commissioner Diagnostic Assessment monitoring visit the Committee had discussed Governor involvement in the College self-assessment process. It is proposed that Governors are invited to attend meetings at which the self-assessment and grades at area level and at overall College level are discussed. It is envisaged that the meetings will be held virtually. Meetings to consider area self-assessments will be held during July, and the overall College self-assessment in the autumn. Governors welcomed this opportunity.

The Board discussed how the new way of working as a result of the pandemic could be embedded into normal practices. There was support for using technology to enable Governors to talk to students via virtual meetings in the longer term. It was also agreed that in the new academic year at least one of the committee meetings should be a virtual meeting. It is hoped that this will make it easier for some Governors to participate.

8. College Re-Opening Plan

The Chair of the Committee gave an oral report on the meeting the Governance Coronavirus Committee held on 28th May 2020. The minutes of the meeting will be uploaded to the Governors Portal with the papers for this meeting once finalised and approved by the Committee Chair.

The Committee had considered the plans for the partial re-opening of the College in June. A number of documents have been produced, including guidance on first aid and cleaning and risk assessments. Specific risk assessments will have taken place for each activity. Signage and other equipment has been ordered to establish one way systems for entering, leaving and moving around the College. A member of staff will collect students from Receptions, and the students will leave campus when the activity is complete. The arrangements will be kept under review and adapted/revised as appropriate to the circumstances.

Planning for a wider re-opening in September will need to start in June. This will be challenging as it is not known what the requirements will be in September.

The Committee will meet again on 18th June to review the experience from the first three days of opening.

The Principal updated the Board on the latest position. All Health and Safety documentation has been uploaded to the Portal and a link to the guidance was included the last weekly briefing to staff.

When the Government announced the re-opening of colleges, the effective date was expected to be 1st June. This was subsequently put back to 15th June. The guidance relates to students on the first year of a two year A Level programme, who will be taking examinations next year. This does not apply to the students at Colchester Institute, who are largely on one year programmes. The College priority is therefore those students who will not achieve this year if they do not come back into College. These will normally be students who have to demonstrate competence in practical areas. The current expectation is that there will be around 50 students in motor vehicle, a smaller number in Engineering, plumbing and electrical, and a larger number of accountancy students that will need to be on campus. The arrangements will be coordinated centrally so the number of students on site at one time can be managed. Students will be brought in as discreet groups, with start, finish and break times staggered. New sanitizer stations will be setup across the College. A risk assessment will be carried out for every activity, from the point of arrival in the classroom/workshop. A copy of the risk assessment will be posted on the door of the room where the activity is taking place where it can be accessed by the duty manager.

Guidance for staff includes overseeing students on breaks and managing student behaviour. It has been agreed that if a student's behaviour is creating an unsafe situation for others the sanction will be that they are no longer able to come into College and achieve their qualification.

Governors asked if the College now had the information it needed from awarding bodies on the assessment protocols. It was reported that City and Guilds had started to release information the previous Thursday. Since the information has been released there has been two substantial changes based on feedback from the sector. The College is still waiting for information relating to salon studies.

The focus will shortly turn to arrangements for September. It is unclear how the College will be able to offer qualifications in areas where there is personal contact such as hairdressing, beauty therapy and dance.

A member asked whether the College knew how many staff or students did not feel able to return to College because of the pandemic. It was reported that there was very little feedback from students. In respect of staff, they were currently being surveyed on whether they are in a clinically extremely vulnerable or clinically vulnerable category, or living with someone who is one of these categories. A relatively small number (about 5%) of staff are extremely clinically vulnerable or living with someone who is. It will be difficult to ask these staff to come into work. A proportion of staff will be clinically vulnerable or have caring responsibilities for someone in this category. There is no sense on the volume of staff that may just feel uncomfortable and not wish to be at work. The College is working on some guidance for management and frequently asked questioned for staff.

9. Date of Next Meetings

The next meeting of the Corporation Board is on Tuesday, 28th July 2020 at 4.30pm.

10. Any Other Urgent Business

10.1. The Corporation Chair congratulated Lisa Clampin on being awarded a certificate from the High Sheriff of Essex in recognition of her service to the community during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Part II

These minutes are not confidential, but the supporting papers are confidential.

11. **Minutes**

The Part II and Part IIB Minutes of the meeting held on 19th February 2020 (CIC/20/2/7 and CIC/20/2/9) were received and confirmed.

12. **Audit and Compliance Committee**

CIC/20/2/8, Part II minutes of the meeting of the Audit and Compliance Committee held on 11th March 2020, were received and noted.

13. **The Minories**

The decision not to reopen the Minories is now in the public domain. Staff have been advised, and communications have been sent to key stakeholders and partners in the community. A press release was sent to local newspapers the previous day. The College is hoping to work with the Victor Batte Lay Trust, who owns the site, to help them identify a replacement tenant as quickly as possible.