

Minutes of the Meeting of the Corporation [CORP0809-1]**held on Monday 22 September 2008 in Room H201****Action****Present:**

Guy Adams	Chair, Foundation Member	Peter Avery	Principal
Tim Davison	Foundation Member	Hollie King	
Paul Grant	Parent Member	John Rudge	
Matt Mears	Student Member	Garry Charles	
John Peart	Student Member	John Lockwood	
Gill Turner	Foundation Member	Ann Helsby	
Mary Tighe			

In Attendance:

Jane Scott	Clerk to the Corporation
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The meeting opened at 5.33 pm and was quorate throughout.

PART 1: MEETING FORMALITIES**1. Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from the Mayor of Taunton Deane (Honorary Member); Penny James; Dominic Lynch; Alison Mackenzie (Staff Member); Rosemary Viant; David Wood (Foundation Member). Members noted that Jef Collingwood had resigned from the Corporation with effect from 1 August 2008.

2. Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of financial interest in the business of the meeting.

PART II: ISSUES FOR THE CURRENT MEETING**1. Principal's Presentation on College Performance 2007-08**

Full details of the Principal's presentation to the Corporation are included in the papers for the meeting.

Overall, 2007-08 had been a very good year, with an outstanding OFSTED inspection early during 2007-08 providing a sound starting point. A number of changes to the sector as a whole were progressed during 2007-08, both at curriculum and the funding level, resulting in a period of considerable change and transition for the College in the coming period. The College will need to give its full consideration to the likely impact of the changes to ensure that core activity maximises its full potential and ensures the continuing success of the College in the longer term.

Members gave significant consideration to the provision afforded by the Faculty for Business and Professional Development. As a Faculty, its activity and the income which it generates is much more subject to external influences/factors than other areas of activity. Income is largely earned on a monthly basis through the year, much of it through repeat business and highly successful operations. However, more accurate financial forecasting associated with the different activities is now a critical requirement.

Intrinsic to the growth, development and success of the College in the longer term is a requirement for the activity of the Faculty for Business and Professional Development to be grown and progressed. In consideration of that requirement, the following points were noted:

- Although currently a successful area of activity, accountancy does not have the potential for substantial additional growth in the longer term. There may be some merit in consideration of a training course for chartered accountants and for wider dissemination of information about College achievement in accountancy qualifications.
- Work Based Learning (WBL) is an area primed for expansion, with the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) keen to augment the apprenticeship scheme by provision of additional funding.
- Although Learn Direct activity in the College has been at unprecedented levels, some of the targets were not matched due to the different funding mechanisms in place. Similar impetus will be given to activity in the coming year, but with more focus on achieving appropriate targets in terms of funding.
- The College no longer has any activity directly associated with its CoVE status. The benefits of the project were worthwhile, with a legacy of purpose-built accommodation.
- Train to Gain (T2G) activity presents a significant challenge for the College in terms of achieving targets. The College has not hitherto offered the kind of courses appropriate to the 19+ market at which the activity is aimed, with the target market being those in employment and requiring vocational courses.
- Sports Academies provide a small income for the College, along with the kudos and positive reputation which the different activities have gained.
- Recruitment of international students in the area of accountancy is developing and provides additional income.
- Conference provision, although generating significant income and providing a substantial marketing opportunity for the College, cannot be relied upon in the longer term.
- The College has a desire to work towards significant development of its higher education (HE) activity. This would contribute towards expansion. Existing HE arrangements with the University of the West of England (UWE) achieved good results, although retention was not maximised - additional measures have already been put in place to improve this with this next cohort. It is anticipated that further links will be developed with UWE.

In consideration of 16-19 activity, the College achieved the best ever value added factor, but not best headline figures. In analysis of the overall results, the most significant concern was performance at AS level and the 62% minimum target grade match. In detailed analysis, a number of factors seem to have influenced the overall results, and with huge variation across the subjects. This is set against the College having put in place a number of different strategies at different levels to underpin improved performance. Strategies included those at cohort, departmental, resource, class and individual student level. The College is currently investigating a number of discrepancies in performance at individual subject level, including Biology, English, and Psychology.

The AS cohort which has now progressed to A2 level in upper sixth is now of major concern. Subject choices were curtailed by pass rates, although very few students with U grades have progressed to study U grade subjects at A2. Some 30 AS students left the College as a result of their examination performance, making the current A2 cohort relatively small. There will be additional concerns at the time of the January A2 modular examinations when students will be under significant pressure through the increased workload associated with resits.

The following was also noted in discussion:

- Recruitment of 16-18 students is flattening, necessitating additional growth in the Faculty for Business and Professional Development.

- Work towards the capital bid is progressing through the work of the appointed managing consultants, Gleeds.
- Plans to develop an academy through Saint Augustine's school are still at discussion stage and the Principal will make appropriate representations for the College as the discussion develops.
- The College will prepare a submission in respect of its enrichment activities for the Queen's Anniversary Prize, with the potential to achieve additional accreditation.

Recruitment for 2008-09 is currently 1813 students, against the target of 1858. Although there had been around 1k applications to the lower sixth, these had not converted into students taking up places. Figures for the upper sixth had been compromised through AS performance. Overall targets for the Faculty for Business and Professional Development require robust activity.

There is a requirement for significant strategic discussion around the issue of curriculum provision. This will be particularly timely in the light of a number of pending changes: diploma provision and the pilot of the AQA baccalaureate; the government is currently placing significant emphasis on the acquisition of vocational skills; uptake of university places is becoming more financially unviable for many students, impacting on the relevance of A2 level study. Overall, the College needs to give consideration to its academic/vocational profile to ensure that it continues to retain its distinctive place and leadership in the local and wider market.

2. Arrangements for the Governor Strategy Meeting February 2009

The meeting was presented with a number of potential options relating to the Governors' Strategy Meeting scheduled to take place on 6 February 2009. Members noted that the current guide costs were broadly similar for a number of venues. In the light of the success of the previous year's Strategy Meeting, it was agreed that a booking should be secured at the Mount Somerset Hotel.

It was agreed that further investigation should be done into a potential venue for a separate dinner, including the Mount Somerset Hotel.

Full details of the agenda for the meeting will be discussed and agreed in due course.

3. Any Other Business

(a) Members were reminded of the various training opportunities currently available for governors and that the Clerk to the Corporation would be pleased to discuss any training requirements.

(b) Members were reminded of the need to complete governance Self Assessment Questionnaires in order to inform the governance self assessment process.

There was no other business.

4. Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting is 8 December 2008.

The meeting closed at 7.31 pm.

Signed.....

Date.....