

**Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting**

**on Tuesday 4 May 2021 at 5.30pm**

**Via Microsoft Teams**

**Present:** Jonathan Langdon (Chair), Guy Adams and David Griffin.

**In Attendance:** John Abbott (Chief Executive Officer), Paul Lonsdale (Chief Finance Officer (CFO)  
Stuart Trott (College Travel & Access Lead) for item 4 only

**Clerk:** Bettina Walker (Clerk to the Corporation)

**\*Denotes paper circulated in advance of the meeting**

**MINUTES**

**1. MEMBERSHIP AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

**FGP 35** The Committee noted that Karuna Tharmananthar had stepped down as a member of the Corporation and therefore of this Committee. Following a recent reshuffle of membership of the Corporation's committees, Dave Tomaney had moved to the Audit Committee. This meant that the membership of F&GP was now reduced to three.

The Committee noted that although three members constituted a quorum, the College's Financial Regulations specified that there should be four members of the F&GP Committee. The Committee discussed this in the light of the forthcoming changes to governance structures as the College moved towards becoming an Academy, and suggested that the Search & Governance Committee should propose a governor who could temporarily join the F&GP as a member in the intervening time.

Apologies were received from Emma Fielding.

**FGP 36 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

John Abbott and Jonathan Langdon declared an interest in agenda item 5 due to their dual membership with Richard Huish Trust.

**3. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING**

**FGP 37 3.1 \*Minutes of the Meeting of the 22 March 2021**

**RESOLUTION:** The minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 22 March 2021 were agreed as a true record. The confidential minutes marked in red would be redacted before publication on the website.

**3.2 \*Matters Arising**

The Committee noted the Matters Arising that had been completed. Other matters arising were on today's agenda.

**Matter Arising Minute FGP7 – Update on Oak House Dispute**

*The minutes for this item were kept confidential*

### **Matter Arising Minute FGP17 – ESFA Capital Improvement Fund Bid**

The CFO reported that the outcome of the bid to the ESFA Capital Improvement Fund had not yet been received and was not now expected until June.

### **Matter Arising Minute FGP32 – Marketing Oak House Accommodation to UK Boarders**

The Committee was pleased to learn that the marketing of Oak House accommodation to UK based students from September 2021 had been successful with 32 enquiries. The College would now need to review how many rooms needed to be reserved for international students this year and into the future.

## **FGP 4. \*TRAVEL PLAN UPDATE**

**39** Stuart Trott, was the College's Adviser on Travel and Access and was currently engaged on a half day a week basis fixed term contract to September to prepare the Travel Plan, after which the engagement might be extended for the implementation phase.

Stuart reported that the Travel Plan had started to be reviewed in January 2021 focusing on two main areas: Evidence & Data and User Engagement.

The Committee welcomed the development of the Travel Plan, which would be useful going forward to consider mitigating the College's traffic and parking impact on the locality, climate change considerations as well as being an essential document for other areas such as planning applications. The Committee noted the evidence and data collected so far from staff and student surveys, but that more detailed data was being sought on future demand and perceived barriers.

Stuart had started to engage various local authorities and organisations about current plans and was involved in discussions to inform local authority policies for travel and transport as well as health, climate change, investment and other strategies. He had found that the College was sometimes overlooked as a destination and as a major employer with a large population of students with transport needs. The local Councils had welcomed the College's engagement, and the College was potentially seen as being a major contributor to policy in Taunton. Key engagements were with Somerset County Council, Somerset West and Taunton Council, other authorities as well charities such as On Your Bike

The CFO reported that there were substantial funds available, for example, the majority of bursary funding from the ESFA, around £175K, was for supporting students with transport, and with an additional allocation from the College of £50K this meant that around £225K was available. However, the take up of travel bursaries by students at the College was poor, even in non-pandemic years. The Committee discussed some potential areas where this funding might be used including:

- Park and Ride schemes – the two existing and possibly at the Taunton Racecourse
- Park and Bicycle schemes – or e-Scooters, e-Bikes or Park and Walk from Town Centre
- Electric charging points in the College's car park
- College putting on buses, for example to and from Chard – other colleges were trialling such schemes and Stuart would look at the outcomes of these as part of feasibility considerations

The Committee noted that not all schemes would be viable or practical, and much more research and evidence was needed to explore these. Key to the research for deciding which scheme or schemes to invest in would be the findings of the research on student and staff behaviours around transport such as convenience versus cost.

The aim was for the Travel Plan to help put in place and implement some new practices in line with supporting student travel as well as reducing the College's traffic impact locally and some climate change consideration in time for the new academic year from September 2021.

## **FGP 5. FINANCIAL REPORTS**

**40** \*Management Accounts to March 2021 and Forecast Outturn 2020-21

The Committee reviewed the Management Accounts to March 2021, and noted the current forecast outturn was a £36K surplus after allowance of FRS102 pension deficit adjustments. The forecast outturn for the year remained in the ESFA "Good" category.

**FGP 6. HEALTH AND SAFETY UPDATE**

**41** The Committee noted the positive outcome of Health & Safety Audit Report prepared for the College by Peninsula.

**7. RISK ASSURANCE REPORT**

**FGP 7.1 \*Monitoring of College Key Risks allocated to Committee**

**42** The Committee noted update on the four risks delegated to it for monitoring and agreed that the current risks levels were correct.

**7.2 \*Monitoring of COVID-19 Related Risks**

**FGP 43** The Committee noted the updates on the risks and the continuing efforts to mitigate against the transmission of COVID-19 in the College.

**FGP 8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS AND DATES OF MEETINGS 2020-21**

**44 Any Other Business – Land at Ash Meadows (the former Rifle Range)**

The CEO reported that one of the factors that may delay the academisation process was the complexity around the mixed land and building ownership of the College and the Richard Huish College Foundation. In that context, the Committee discussed the parcel of land at Ash Meadows that had been purchased by the Foundation. Ash Meadows has a right of access to the adjacent land that, if exercised by a third party, would have severely restricted the possible uses of Ash Meadows. The decision to purchase the land was taken on that basis. Recently the Huish Tigers Rugby Club, working with the college, have started to clear the area of land with a view to extending Ash Meadows such that a second adult rugby pitch/training area can be established. The CEO and CFO agreed to compile a paper for presentation to the Foundation at their next meeting that outlined options that they would like to be considered, namely

1. The college purchase the land from the Foundation at the value of their initial investment (£25K)
2. Retain ownership of the land and enter into a formal lease with the college at the original agreed level of rent return (5% PA on £25K)
3. Retain ownership of the land and consider a lease directly with Huish Tigers Rugby Club, independently of the college

The Committee noted that the next meeting would take place on 21 June 2021 at 5:30pm  
With no further business the meeting concluded at 6.50pm

The minutes were agreed and signed

Chair.....

Date.....