



Finance and General Purposes Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 22nd November 2023

Present: Jo Brownlee, Alan Foster (Chair), Bob Overment, Colin Peaks (Principal), Dr Hadiza Sa'ïd (virtual).

In attendance: Stewart Edwards (Assistant Principal) (virtual), Suzanna May (Deputy Principal), Gary Parkinson (College Business Manager), Laura Revill (Human Resources Manager), Laura Skarratt (Clerk to the Corporation).

16. Apologies for Absence (agenda item 1)

The Chair welcomed Staff Governor Jo Brownlee to her first meeting of the committee.

Resolved: Apologies for absence were received from Pat Mould (Chair of the Corporation).

17. Declarations of Interest (agenda item 2)

Resolved: No declarations of interest were received.

18. Minutes of the meeting held on the 27th September 2023 (agenda item 3)

Resolved: The minutes of the meetings held on 27th September 2023 were received and confirmed, the chair was authorised to sign.

19. Matters arising from the minutes / action schedule (agenda item 4)

Resolved: The matters arising from the minutes and action schedule are complete.

20. Health and Safety Termly Update (agenda item 13)

It was agreed that minute 20 should be classified as confidential in accordance with Clause 17 (2) of the Instrument of Government for a period of one year **(SEE SECTION B)**.

21. Freedom of Information Act 2000 and GDPR Requests (agenda item 15)

It was agreed that minute 21 should be classified as confidential in accordance with Clause 17 (2) of the Instrument of Government for a period of one year **(SEE SECTION B)**.

22. Management Accounts for the Period Ending 31 October 2023 (agenda item 5)

It was agreed that minute 22 should be classified as confidential in accordance with Clause 17 (2) of the Instrument of Government for a period of one year **(SEE SECTION B)**.

23. Cumulative Budget Transfers for the Period Ending 31 October 2023 (agenda item 6)

It was agreed that minute 23 should be classified as confidential in accordance with Clause 17 (2) of the Instrument of Government for a period of one year **(SEE SECTION B)**.

24. Student Union Annual Accounts 2022-23 (agenda item 7)

The Business Manager advised that there was zero expenditure and income for the Student's Union for 2022-23. He advised that as the union no longer sell student cards, and do not raise funds to spend the have not had any income or expenditure. He described the work of the union and the new ambassador programme at the College. The Chair queried the approval of the accounts and sought clarification from the Clerk. The Clerk advised that the Corporation must approve the budget for the union and accounts annually, even if this is zero. The Principal described the work of the ambassadors and other groups within College who receive funds for projects outside of the union, giving assurance that money is given to student projects, but these are not necessarily through the union. The Chair observed that if the union do not have a budget to manage they may miss out on development of this valuable skill and noted his disappointment. The Deputy Principal gave assurance that there are opportunities for development of this skill elsewhere within enterprise projects, this was discussed.

Recommended: The Student Union Annual Accounts 2022-23 were recommended to Corporation for approval.

25. Draft Member's Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 July 2023 (agenda item 8)

It was agreed that minute 25 should be classified as confidential in accordance with Clause 17 (2) of the Instrument of Government for a period of one year **(SEE SECTION B)**.

26. Final Audit Findings Report for the year ended 31 July 2023 (agenda item 9)

It was agreed that minute 26 should be classified as confidential in accordance with Clause 17 (2) of the Instrument of Government for a period of one year **(SEE SECTION B)**.

27. Two Year Financial Plan 2024-26 including student enrolments and income projections (agenda item 10)

It was agreed that minute 27 should be classified as confidential in accordance with Clause 17 (2) of the Instrument of Government for a period of one year **(SEE SECTION B)**.

28. Staffing Update (agenda item 11)

It was agreed that minute 28 should be classified as confidential in accordance with Clause 17 (2) of the Instrument of Government for a period of one year **(SEE SECTION B)**.

29. Teacher and Support Staff Salary Settlement 2023-24(agenda item 12)

The Principal reported to the members that both the teacher and support staff salary settlement for 2023-24 have been agreed. The College continues to abide by the SFCA guidance including moving the Support Staff Standards Payment to within the PayScale. Given the timing of this decision, the College has offered the SSSP to support staff as a final, one-off payment in November with salary deductions from January – July 2024. The Human Resources Manager confirmed that approximately 9 members of staff have taken this offer. The Chair agreed that many staff appreciate the SSSP bonus before Christmas, however there

are many colleges who do not pay this to support staff and after considerable discussion and agreement from the unions, the SFCA agreed that the SSSP would be included within the basic pay as it was felt that more staff would benefit from this change.

Resolved: The teacher and support staff salary settlement 2023-24 update was received.

30. Estates Strategy Termly Update (agenda item 14)

The Business Manager presented the Estates Strategy Termly Update report, reminding the committee that there have been significant improvements across the full site, with G Block being the only area left that requires considerable improvement. There are a number of projects for 2023-24 including; the planned electrical and fire safety project which is still in the planning phase. Two CIF bids will be submitted for further roof replacements and replacement of domestic water systems. Improvements to WI-FI across the site is now required to accommodate the increase in students numbers. Updates are required to blocks E, F, K and Q over the next two years. Finally, consideration is needed to reduce the carbon footprint of the College.

In addition to the updates as reported on the paper, the Business Manager advised that the surveyor for the reinforced autoclave aeriated concrete (RAAC) survey has requested the College provide photos for the two inaccessible areas. They will then judge if the College has an RAAC. A member of the estates team will complete the requested work and the College will provide the photographs to the surveyor as requested.

The Chair thanked the Business Manager for the update and noted the considerable work across the full site. The Principal advised that visitors to site are impressed with the modern feel of the campus.

Resolved: The estate strategy termly update was received.

31. Policies: for approval (agenda item 16)

a) Funding and Meal Allocation Policy

The Business Manager advised that the policy was approved by Corporation in July 2023, and agreed to be brought back to the committee in the autumn for further consideration of the bursary threshold and current enrolment numbers. The Business Manager advised that there has been a slight increase in uptake with about 35% claiming the bursary, however as 48% of learners live within the topmost deprived areas in the country it is assumed that there will some who are eligible but have not applied. He acknowledged that this means there is more work to be done to encourage learners and their families to access the funds and suggested this might be best achieved by targeted marketing. The committee heard that the bursary received by the College totals £295k this year, which is a decrease on 325k received in 2022-23. This means that spending the full bursary this year is more feasible and recommended to the committee that the threshold for the bursary is not changed for 2023-24. He sought discussion of the bursary threshold and spend.

Staff Governor Jo Brownlee reported that further to the increase in threshold last year, she and her team were able to offer the bursary to some parents who had originally been ineligible, and this was well received by parents.

Governor Bob Overment recommended that the College should ensure it advertises the bursary to parents and not via learners. The Business Manager gave assurance that the communication goes to parents as well as learners. The Business Manager spoke of the restrictions of spending the funds and the impact of this on the College's ability to spend the funds fully. The Chair spoke from his position on the SFCA board, advising that the difficulty in accessing and spending funds has been raised with Ministers. Staff Governor Jo Brownlee gave assurance that the College is doing its best to help families access the funds and noted that the College's application form is much more user-friendly than other institutions.

Governor Bob Overment questioned how the fund is carried forward and when it has to be repaid if not spent. The Business Manager confirmed that the underspend from last year is carried forward to 2023-24 and must be spent first, then this year's budget is spent. The Chair emphasized the importance of spending the bursary as fully as possible, this was agreed by the committee members.

The members were asked to consider if the threshold should be increased, and after discussion it was agreed that the Funding and Meal Allocation Policy should not be updated and no increase to the threshold would be recommended at present. It was agreed that this decision would be noted at Corporation, but the policy is not required to be recommended for further approval.

Resolved: The Funding and Meal Allocation Policy was considered, and no changes were required. No recommendation is made to Corporation.

32. Any other Business (agenda item 17)

Resolved: No other business was received.

33. Confidential Items (agenda item 18)

Resolved: It was agreed that minutes 20,21,22,23,25,26,27, 28 should be classified as confidential in accordance with Clause 17 (2) of the Instrument of Government and associated reports are therefore not available for circulation to the public, College staff or students (excluding senior post holders).

34. Date of Next Meeting (agenda item 19)

Resolved: The date of the next meeting is 6th March 2024.

Action schedule:

Min. no.	Title	Action by	Action
22	Management Accounts for the Period Ending 31 October 2023	GJP	Correction to paragraph 1 – 'period ended'
			Correction to non-pay budget as per minute
25	Draft Member's Report and Financial Statements for the Year ended 31 July 2023	GJP	Correction, T. Wray appointment date

Finance and General Purposes Committee

Confidential Minutes of the meeting held on 22 November 2023

It was agreed that the following minutes should be classified as confidential in accordance with Clause 17 (2) of the Instrument of Government and associated reports are therefore not available for circulation to the public, College staff or students (excluding senior post holders).

Approved

Confidential