

**Minutes of the Corporation Meeting held on Monday 25 January 2010 at 5.30 pm  
in Conference Room 1, the Astral Centre**

**Members Present:**

Mihai Apostol : Student Member  
Ken Applegate : Member  
Russell Baxter : Staff Member  
Alan Debenham : Members  
Evelyn Hicks : Member  
Kevin Howes : Member  
Bob Mee : Chair/Member  
Gwen Parsons : Principal  
Richard Perkins : Vice-Chair / Member (Acting chair)  
Sarah Smith : Staff Member  
Anne Swietlik : Member

**In Attendance:**

Phillip Belden : Vice Principal  
Teresa Miller : Vice Principal  
Ruth Harrison : Assistant Principal  
Jason King : Assistant Principal  
Tom Toolan : Assistant Principal  
Charles Reynolds: Clerk to the Corporation

**Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence had been received from Alistair King, David Matthews and Sally Simpkin. Bob Mee sent his apologies for lateness. In his absence Richard Perkins took the Chair.

Before the meeting commenced members received an update presentation on the Lowestoft 6<sup>th</sup> Form College development from Caroline Shepherdson and Trevor Castle.

**1) Disclosures of Interest**

Richard Perkins declared an interest with respect to agenda item 14, Kirkley Centre update, advising that he would leave the meeting whilst discussion on this item took place.

At this point Bob Mee arrived at the meeting but it was agreed that Richard Perkins continue as acting Chair.

**1a) David Elmes**

The Clerk advised members that it was with sadness that he had learned of the sudden passing of David Elmes, a previous and valued member of the corporation. Responding members requested that a letter of condolence be sent by the Clerk and on their behalf, to members of David Elmes family.

**Action**

**CR**

## **Part 1a) Open items: for noting and action**

### **2) Minutes of the last meeting**

The minutes of the Corporation meeting held on the 15<sup>th</sup> December 2009 were agreed to be a correct record and were signed by the Acting Chair.

### **3) Matters arising from the previous minutes and not agenda items**

#### **3.1) Draft Financial Statement (previous agenda item 8)**

The Clerk confirmed that the reference to the Lowestoft 6<sup>th</sup> Form college in the Management Letter had been amended as required by members.

#### **3.2) College self-assessment report (previous agenda item 9.1)**

The Clerk confirmed that the thanks of Corporation had been passed on to those who had supported in the production of the document.

### **4) Correspondence:**

#### **4.1) Modifications to the Instruments and Articles of Government and amendments to the Regulations – B.1.5**

#### **4.2) Suffolk Education Conference – Growing pains – Suffolk County Council**

#### **4.3) Review of Governance and Strategic Leadership – consultation days. AOC and LSIS**

#### **4.4) Letter of resignation – Sheila Keenan**

Members requested that the Clerk sent a letter of thanks to Sheila Keenan for her work and support as a governor and to wish her well for the future. It was noted that a Search Committee meeting was needed to review the vacancy situation.

It was noted that Sheila Keenan had been the nominee governor with respect to Safeguarding. Members agreed that Evelyn Hicks should fulfil this role.

#### **4.5) 'Equality, Diversity and Governance' and 'Learning to Balance Support and Challenge' – LSIS**

#### **4.6) Strategic Leadership of Technology & Governance – LSIS**

## **Part 1b open views for discussion and action.**

### **5) Health and Safety Annual Report 2008/09**

Presented by Teresa Miller who advised that the report had been the subject of a thorough review by the Estates and Finance Committee which had recommended it to corporation for acceptance. To this end members were invited to comment on the report.

Sarah Smith asked why there was no reference in the document to the work of the Health and Safety Committee or of the internal audit work carried out on its behalf.

**Clerk**

Responding Teresa Miller believed that there had been little to report regarding the Health and Safety Committee. She did however feel that the report reflected the significant amount of work done on health and safety matters well. With reference to the LSC assessment of the College as 'Good' but with potential to move to 'Excellent' Anne Swietlik asked how this was to be achieved. Again responding Teresa Miller advised that the College Health and Safety Manger had started to produce an action plan to introduce the required changes etc for such progress to be made. It was however important to remember how much progress the College had already made in a relatively small period of time since the arrival of the Health & Safety Manager. This was acknowledged.

**In the absence of any further discussion or questions it was proposed by the acting chair and seconded by Russell Baxter that Corporation accept the Health & Safety Annual Report 2008/09.**

**11 members voted in favour. 1 member voted against. The vote was therefore in favour.**

#### **6) Strategic Planning Monitoring report – first term**

Presented by the Principal who advised that the purpose of the report was to update members on the first terms progress in delivering the annual key performance targets for 2009/10.

Members were taken with care through the executive summary and the detailed Appendix which set down progress made, and any action being taken, for each key performance target. It was also noted if a Corporation Committee had also had the opportunity to review progress.

Important areas of concern were the need to monitor closely recruitment of adults where funding was strictly limited. The need for the College to be extremely responsive in meeting employer responsive targets and in general to use the resources available as effectively and efficiently as possible. Finally there was a need to control expenditure especially staff pay costs, as tightly as possible. The support of the unions in enabling the College to pay the current years pay award from February without back dating would help significantly to keep within budget.

The Principal finished her report by thanking Jason King and his team for providing accurate and timely data.

In the absence of any further questions as discussion members received the report with thanks noting that good progress was being made.

#### **7) College Annual Review 2008/09**

Presented by Tom Toolan who sought member's approval for the document as circulated and agreement on additions to the distribution list as set out within the executive summary paper covering the agenda item.

Responding to the content of the Annual Report it was Ken Applegate's view that as a review it was a really useful document. He did however feel that reference should be made to the financial challenges faced by the College as these were probably the most difficult to address. Responding the Principal suggested that this could be done in her statement at the beginning of the report. Members agreed that this was a good idea.

**GP**

**TT**

On the matter of the distribution list members felt there should be a greater number of public sector bodies. Tom Toolan agreed to action this.

**In the absence of any further questions it was proposed by the Acting Chair and seconded by Anne Swietlik that subject to the above additions, the Annual Report be approved.**

**Members voted unanimously in favour.**

## **8) Strategic Risk Register**

Teresa Miller reminded members that the strategic risk register was reviewed on an annual basis to ensure it appropriately reflected the College situation. As however there had been, and were going to be significant changes affecting the College it was the view of Audit Committee members that a complete overhaul was required. This process, which had involved the Senior Management Team and was from a sub-group of Audit Committee, had started and the following areas of risk were believed to cover the College need. These were Quality, Finance, Partnership, and Reputation.

Audit Committee would take the draft Strategic Risk Register, once formulated, review it and then make a recommendation to the Corporation for consideration. This was likely to be at the next meeting in March.

Responding to the presentation Bob Mee observed that the Corporation needed clear top level risks that could be reviewed at each Corporation meeting to demonstrate that it was doing all it could to mitigate the impact of risks identified.

The Principal suggested that the focus for the Corporation Strategic Development Training as identified at agenda item 16 could be to focus on this area. Members agreed this to be a good idea. The report was noted with thanks.

**Clerk**

At this point the acting chair suggested it would be appropriate to deal with agenda item 16.

## **16) Strategic Planning Event**

The Clerk was asked to contact all members to identify an appropriate weekend towards the end of March for this event and also to identify a suitable venue.

## **9) Marketing Strategy Update**

In presenting this agenda item Tom Toolan advised that the Senior Management team were fully supportive of the draft document which was very much 'work in progress'.

Members were referred to the executive summary document and specifically section 1 which clarified the need for further work with respect to a reputational benchmark and the intention to submit a final draft at a future Corporation Meeting.

Picking up on the point re reputation the Principal stressed the importance of having a good understanding of how the College was perceived by others before committing to any level of marketing spend which could, if the College were not careful, be focussed in the wrong areas or for the wrong things. The need to be very clear in the specification for such a piece of work was stressed and it was recognised that the cost would be significant at around £20,000 to £30,000. It was however an essential piece of work.

With reference to the appendices to the meeting paper the acting chair asked if the logos presented were intended just as examples of what was possible. Responding Tom Toolan confirmed that they were examples provided just to explore conceptually what could be done.

Ken Applegate believed the idea of continuity of image to be important and advised that this was still possible to achieve if there was a 'soft launch' which could be more cost effective and implemented over a larger time period.

Sarah Smith asked for more information on the work done to date re the College website. Tom Toolan advised that he was waiting for confirmation of dates from three possible providers to make presentations to the Senior Management Team. The samples provided of WebPages in the meeting papers however demonstrated that again this was an area of work in progress.

Bob Mee asked whether there were any 'dangers' to the College in not having a Marketing Strategy in place. The Principal responded by observing that she did not see this as an issue.

Returning to the issue of the website Mihai Apostol felt the current site was 'too heavy' and not welcoming. It was his view that the new web page, especially those aimed at the young person, needed to be designed to encourage them to stay on the site and explore. Again responding Tom Toolan made reference to the draft 'Digital Publications Strategy' and stressed that these important considerations would be taken into account. Student opinion would be very important in the development of the website. On this last point Ken Applegate stressed the importance of thorough testing and cost benefit analysis.

In the absence of any further discussion and in summing up the acting chair thanked Tom Toolan for the work put in to date especially as the College had grappled with a Marketing strategy for a long time.

The report was noted. At this point Evelyn Hicks left the meeting

## **10) Property Plan Update**

Presented by Teresa Miller who, in taking members through the meeting paper, advised that the Estates and Finance Committee had thoroughly reviewed the situation and had made a recommendation for action.

It was important in developing a new property plan for the Corporation to be clear of the option for development to be followed! Details on four possible options for development were provided by Teresa Miller and it was made clear that, following a thorough review of all four, Estates and Finance were recommending option 4 which was to refurbish the present site with the possibility of new build on or offsite.

The Principal added that, in light of the development of the new Sixth Form on site and the desire for partnership working, this was the most obvious option to choose. Bob Mee suggested that the preferred option should make reference to the possibility of occupying a building offsite, which may or may not be new. Members agreed this to be correct.

**To this end, and in the absence of any further discussion, it was proposed by Bob Mee and seconded by Kevin Howe's that Corporation approve option 4 which was to 'refurbish the present site with the possibility of occupying a building on or off site'.**

**Members voted unanimously in favour.**

### **11) Higher Education Strategy**

Presented by Ruth Harrison who informed members that, following a period of consultation involving institutions who provided HE provision, the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) had determined that all FE College offering HE provision had to have their own HE Strategy which covered all level 4 work and above. As the strategy had been circulated to members for comment prior to the meeting Ruth Harrison asked if there were any issues or concerns.

Ken Applegate asked whether the strategy considered the cost effectiveness of provision and the appropriateness of continuing with programmes that were losing College money. This was especially important in the light of changes in funding for the sector as a whole and particularly for the College. He would like this reflected in the paper. The Principal responded by stating that for some provision, especially that in Art and Design, there was a need for student accommodation to encourage students from outside the area. The programmes offered were high quality but had low numbers. The development of the new Sixth Form could provide 'feeder' courses that would help and there would be an element of cross-subsidy with programmes with healthy numbers of students. The College did set minimum class sizes however and co-teaching did take place.

**In the absence of any further questions it was proposed by Anne Swietlik and seconded by Ken Applegate that the HE Strategy be approved.**

**Members voted unanimously in favour**

### **12) Safeguarding and Volunteers Policy**

Presented by Phillip Belden who advised that the Safeguarding Policy had been reviewed by the Suffolk Audit Safeguarding Board and carried that organizations logo. The Volunteers Policy had also been reviewed as requested by members and both were being presented for final approval. Members were also provided with a threefold safeguarding card that would be provided to all staff and students.

The Principal reminded members that safeguarding was number 1 item for Ofsted and was not just for children but also for vulnerable adults.

Finally Phillip Belden confirmed that he had undertaken the relevant 'lead' training and that two other members of staff would also carry it out.

**It was therefore proposed by Bob Mee and seconded by Ken Applegate that Corporation approve both the Safeguarding and Volunteers Policies.**

**Members voted unanimously in favour.**

### **13) Employer Engagement Strategy**

Presented by the Principal who referred members to the meeting papers and especially the executive summary which provided a detailed explanation to the background to the document. It was stressed as important for the corporation to review progress made against the draft strategy which had been approved in 2008 and to ensure it was updated and relevant to future need, which she believed the new updated strategy was.

Members were taken through the detail of the document. Anne Swietlik observed that it was essential to know that employers were committed in supporting engagement and also to capitalise on what had been successful at the College already.

With respect to the changed funding situation Teresa Miller also observed that the College had spread and limited risk by engaging with sub-contractors to deliver. This of course did not prevent issues of reputation of the College coming to the fore if employer expectation could not be met even if it was by way of sub-contracts.

**Having thoroughly reviewed the document it was proposed by Alan Debenham and seconded by Anne Swietlik that it be approved by Corporation.**

**Members voted unanimously in favour.**

### **14) Kirkley centre**

As discussion on this would require the Acting Chair to leave the meeting it was agreed to defer it to the end of the meeting.

Part 1C open items: to be noted

### **15) Minutes of the Committees.**

#### **15.1) Audit Committee – Presented by Anne Swietlik**

The minutes for the meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2009 were received. It was noted that the key items from the meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2009 had been dealt with at the December Corporation meeting.

#### **15.2) Estates and Finance Committee – presented by Richard Perkins**

The minutes of the meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> October 2009 were received. The Key items from the 7<sup>th</sup> December 2009 meeting had been dealt with by Corporation in December.

##### **15.2a) management Accounts to the end of November 2009**

These were reviewed and received by members

##### **15.2b) Chair's Annual Report**

Presented by the Chair and received by members

#### **15.3) LOWES LTD – Presented by Richard Perkins**

The draft minutes for the AGM and Board meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> December were noted.

#### **15.4) Personnel Committee – presented by Kevin Howes**

The draft minutes of the meeting held on the 9<sup>th</sup> November 2009 were noted  
15.4a) Chairs Annual Report

Presented by the chair and received by members

#### **16) Strategic Planning Event**

This item had been dealt with earlier on in the meeting.

#### **17) Any other business**

##### **17.1) Update on appointment of new Principal**

The Clerk provided all members with an update copy of the advertisement used to promote the post and a key dates action plan. Members were reminded of the key dates for their involvement and advised that the selection panel would next meet with Stephen Gribble, AHC Publica LTD, on the 10<sup>th</sup> February 2010.

##### **17.2) Visit to UCS**

Members were reminded of the joint visit to UCS with governors from Gt Yarmouth College on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> January. The coach to depart the College at 3:30pm.

#### **Part 2 Confidential items**

The minutes for these items can be found in the Confidential Minutes book.

#### **19) Date and time of next meeting**

The next Corporation meeting will take place on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2010 at 5:30pm. The venue will be conference room 1 in the Astral Centre.

At this point Richard Perkins left the meeting and Bob Mee took the Chair.

#### **14) Kirkley Centre**

Teresa Miller reminded members that currently the College had a lease on the building with Flagship Housing. A letter had been sent to them to say that at the end of the August 2010 the College wished to come out of the building.

The building was being sold to Waveney Community Forum by Flagship and Richard Perkins was taking the 'lead' on the forums behalf on matters relating to the building, which included dealing with matters related to the lease.

Teresa Miller updated members on the content of negotiations to date, the legal situation as advised by the College Solicitors Steeles, and the importance of ensuring the College was not places in any worse financial position up until the end of August in its dealings with Waveney Community Forum that it would be with Flagship Housing, other than to comply with the terms of the lease.

Members agreed that the College should not be disadvantaged as a result of the sale of the building and agreed to authorise Teresa Miller to negotiate with Waveney Community Forum on the basis that any changes must not involve increased cost to the College, and failing agreement that the College would remain in the building until the break out date of August 2010 in accordance with the current lease agreement. **This was proposed by the Chair, seconded by Kevin Howes. Members voted unanimously in favour.**

DRAFT