

**BOSTON COLLEGE**  
**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CORPORATION ON 10 MARCH 2021**

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**1. PRESENT**

Peter Copley (Chair), Andy Atkins, Daran Bland, Ruth Catlett, David Earnshaw, Charlie Ellerington (during Point 6d), Claire Foster, Kelly Harris, Heather Lee, Chris Pett, Helen Rumbold, Ann Savage, Gerry Tawton, Paul Tomlinson (from the end of point 2) and Nick Worth.

Also in attendance: Janet Hemmant (Clerk to the Corporation), Richard Chambers (Head of Engineering and Technology), Jen Durrant (Interim Executive Director: People), Craig Gosling (Assistant Principal: Performance & Quality), Debbie Holland (Vice Principal: Finance & Corporate Services), Adrian Humphreys (Executive Director: Business, Innovation & Partnerships), Vicki Locke (Deputy Principal), Dawn Telford (Assistant Principal: Learner Experience) and Tim White (Assistant Principal: Curriculum).

In attendance for Item 3 only were Gill Bush (Head of HE), Donna Garrard (Employability Support Manager), Rachel Hunn (PAM, Access & A-Levels) and Linda Radford (PAM, English, maths & ESOL).

Apologies for absence were received from Kate Folling.

Meeting attendance: 88%

**2. MEMBERSHIP**

Members considered applications from two prospective members of the Corporation which had been reviewed by the Search and Governance Committee and were recommended for appointment. Having considered the recommendations it was agreed that both applicants should be appointed subject to DBS clearances with Paul Tomlinson's appointment taking immediate effect for a 2-year period and David Fannin's appointment commencing at the May Corporation meeting for a 4-year period.

Paul Tomlinson joined the meeting.

**3. PRESENTATION**

Members received a presentation on adult learners including employability and Higher Education from Rachel Hunn, Gill Bush, Donna Garrard and Linda Radford. The presentation outlined the College's provision and included a number of examples of adult learners' successful progression. It was agreed that the presentation should be circulated to members ●

Gill Bush, Donna Garrard, Rachel Hunn and Linda Radford left the meeting.

**4. ACTION LOG**

Members reviewed progress against items identified in the action log.

**5. MINUTES**

a) Corporation – 16 December 2020

The Minutes of the meeting held on 16 December 2020 were reviewed and approved as a correct record.

b) Corporation 18 January 2021

The Minute recording a written resolution made on 18 January 2021 was reviewed and approved.

c) Finance & Resources Committee – 8 February 2021

The Minutes of the meeting held on 8 February 2021 were reviewed.

In respect of a query regarding the lease of premises in Skegness, Debbie Holland advised that progress in terminating the lease had been delayed by the landlord's solicitors which affected the settlement figure but this was progressing. It was noted that costs had already been provided for in the College's accounts.

d) Search & Governance Committee – 8 February 2021

The Minutes of the meeting held on 8 February 2021 were reviewed.

e) Standards Committee – 10 February 2021

The Minutes of the meeting held on 10 February 2021 were reviewed.

Craig Gosling shared a summary of information from learner surveys. Further information on learners' comments is to be circulated to members. In response to a query from Gerry Tawton, it was confirmed that the full-time survey response rate was about 60%, just over 1,000 learners. Ann Savage asked whether the responses regarding safety on site were of Covid related, Craig advised that he could drill down into the data but many of these responses were Covid focussed. Craig explained the processes followed for the surveys and advised that for the HE survey the response rate was below 50%. Daran Bland asked where learners had an opportunity to see the effect of their suggestions for improvements, Craig explained that face-to-face working was preferred and outlined the work through focus groups, classroom visits and the Student Council.

## 6. REPORTS

a) Principal's

Members received a report from the Principal & Chief Executive on a number of sector and College issues.

Claire Foster advised that the paper had been written before the College re-opened after lockdown and the re-opening had gone exceptionally well. She advised that she was pleased with the corporate effort.

With regard to the Horncastle development, conversations are being held with East Lindsey District Council reflecting the College's condition of not being left exposed financially. In respect of the Towns Deal, the offer made to Boston had recently been confirmed. The Mayflower project sits within it within the Towns Deal bid as a landmark project and the business case will now have to be worked through.

Members noted that curriculum planning will include the green agenda. Nick Worth asked if there was any news about the University for Industry project bid. Claire advised that this was at an early stage and possibilities were being reviewed.

b) Finance

Members received a report from the Vice Principal: Finance and Corporate Services.

Information presented included the period 5 Management accounts and Debbie Holland advised that January accounts were now available on the governance software. The forecast deficit for 2020-2021 includes an estimated clawback for AEB and the College is working on closing the gap.

Peter Copley asked about the contribution being shown from the Hall of Residence and how this was able to make a contribution with learners not being able to be in residence. Debbie advised that there was still some learners in the Halls. Peter also asked about refunds and Debbie confirmed that there had been some but the second tranche of payments was most likely to be affected. A discussion took place about the College's position on possible refunds for students not in residence.

Peter Copley asked about the significant increase in debtors compared to last year which was also showing an average debt being higher. Debbie advised that higher HE fees were affecting this and that the debtors also included an invoice for significant grant funding from Boston Borough Council. Peter also asked about the higher rents shown this year to be received by Eastern Enterprises and members were advised that this comparison was incorrect due to an error in the preceding year.

In response to a query from Gerry Tawton, it was confirmed that the detailed re-forecast had an outcome very close to the top level re-forecast which had previously been carried out.

c) Climate Change Roadmap

Members received a report from the Principal and Chief Executive on the College's alliance to net carbon zero and commitment to a climate change roadmap.

Members discussed the proposals in the light of the presentation at the CPD event earlier in the day. David Earnshaw asked whether there was a timeframe for the net carbon zero target. Claire Foster confirmed that this was for colleges to decide.

Members agreed to support the approach taken to climate change and the proposed public declaration on this.

d) Safeguarding Update

Members received a comprehensive verbal update from the Assistant Principal: Learner Experience on dealing with vulnerable learners.

Dawn Telford advised that over 200 assessments were carried out in December relating to vulnerable learners' return to College at the start of term and that these had to be reviewed again following the decision to move back into lockdown. Dawn advised that approximately 70 learners had made use of the on-line learning hubs during the lockdown period and all vulnerable learners had a welfare check each week in addition to lessons. She advised that there had been 18 more referrals to Safeguarding in December and explained the arrangements for these.

Peter Copley asked what happens to laptops issued to learners after the pandemic and Dawn advised that they had not yet been called back in but this would start after Easter.

David Earnshaw asked about the impact on vulnerable learners of the lockdowns. Dawn advised that whilst some had liked it, others had been badly affected but the College was supporting these as well as it could. David asked whether any learners had suffered irreparable damage and Dawn expressed the view that this was the case for some young people who would face a long road to recovery.

Charlie Ellerington joined the meeting at this point.

Peter Copley enquired about access to support bubbles, Dawn advised that these worked similarly to those in schools and that foundation groups' bubbles were no larger than 4 learners.

It was reported that there had been no referrals to Prevent. Dawn confirmed that current priorities in the local profile were right wing terrorism which had seen a notable increase in

Lincolnshire, internet radicalisation, self-initiated terrorism and Islamist terrorism. A new risk assessment on this will be shared at the next meeting.

e) College compliance with OfS regulations and consumer law

Members received a report from the Head of Higher Education which was presented by the Deputy Principal. The report outlined the actions the College is taking to continue to comply with OfS requirements. Vicki Locke explained that OfS has 3 main expectations relating to reportable events, quality and compliance with consumer protection law.

Peter Cropley asked what was being done in respect of International learners but Vicki confirmed that there were no International HE learners this year.

f) OfS reportable events

Members received a report from the Deputy Principal on reportable events which outlined changes to reporting requirements. It was confirmed that the College has less to report and that ongoing requirements are at top level.

g) Estates Strategy and FE Capital Transformation Fund

Members received a report from the Vice Principal: Finance and Corporate Services on the Estates Strategy and Capital Transformation Fund.

Information was provided on the proposed Estates Strategy and it was noted that each part of the strategy was subject to funding approval. David Earnshaw, as Chair of the Property Committee, advised that the strategy is higher level with flexibility to take advantage of opportunities as they arise and the Property Committee is recommending its approval.

Chris Pett asked about alternative energy considerations in respect of the proposed boiler replacement. Debbie Holland advised members that a heat feasibility study had been carried out but not enough power could be based by solar energy leaving only biomass and gas options as viable. David Earnshaw commented that lots of things had been thought about to maximise opportunities.

It was noted that the Capital Transformation Fund bid required support from an up to date Estates Strategy. Debbie Holland advised that there is a viable opportunity to replace windows. Up to 50% match funding is required and the college is looking at Salix loans to provide the match. High savings potential was identified from the boiler replacement. In response to a query from Gerry Tawton, it was identified that the boiler replacement makes up 34% of the Capital Transformation Fund proposal. Daran Bland noted that in the past there had been variable success rates for applications for Salix grants and asked what the strategy would be if this was not successful. Debbie advised that the College would keep going back to review options within the Estates Strategy. Nick Worth commented on the dilemma that the windows would give higher savings than biomass but at a higher cost.

Members thanked Debbie for the work on the Estates Strategy which they agreed to approve along with the bid and match funding in respect of the Capital Transformation Fund.

h) Committee Membership

The Clerk to the Corporation advised on proposed changes to committee membership following new members' trial periods attending committees. It was agreed that Charlie Ellerington should be appointed to the Standards Committee and Kelly Harris to the Finance and Resources Committee. Ruth Catlett was also agreed to be appointed to the Property Committee.

The process of committee rotation pending choices was explained to Paul Tomlinson and other members were also invited to consider whether they wished to pursue any changes, particularly in light of the Search and Governance Committee's view on rotating membership.

**7. NEXT MEETINGS**

It was noted that the next meetings of the Corporation would take place on 12 May 2021 and 7 July 2021.