

## WEYMOUTH COLLEGE CORPORATION

### Minutes of the Virtual Board Meeting held on 19 January 2021

<b>Members Present:</b>		<b>In attendance:</b>	
Richard Noah	<b>Chair</b>	Sue Ratcliffe	Clerk to the Corporation
Nigel Evans	<b>Chief Executive</b>	Jenny Stiling	Associate Member
Jane Nicklen		Phil Templeton	Vice Principal
Steve Webb		Julia Howe	Interim Principal
Andy Matthews		Kelly Bush	Vice Principal
Lyn Bourne		Rob Cole	Director of Finance
Rod Davis		Natalie Merry	Director of Employer Services
Peter Vowles			
Jacqui Gerrard			
Megan Barnes			
Louise Matthews			
Ian Bates			
Jack Dickson			
Chris Brook			
Lucas McCallum	Student Governor Apologies		
Jade House	Student Governor Apologies		

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, which all agreed to be held virtually. All members were present using audio and visual facilities via MS Teams. Members agreed to record the meeting to aid minute taking. The recording to be deleted when minutes are approved.

#### **Apologies for Absence**

01/2021 There were apologies from the student governors.

#### **Declarations of interest**

02/2021 Members had nothing to declare.

#### **Notification of Any Other Business**

03/2021 There was three items of other business notified:

- a) Board Members invitation to speak at staff Development events;
- b) Review of Principal's Financial Limit.
- c) Update on the appointment of Principal/Chief Executive if time permits.

#### **Minutes of the Meetings held on 8 December 2020**

04/2021 The minutes of the meeting held on 8 December 2020, including the Confidential minute, copies having been previously circulated, were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair. The Chair in the current circumstances is retaining signed copies.

Matters arising:

- It was confirmed that Apprenticeship Week will be a virtual event in February 2021.
- Finance (min 74/2020) The Chair highlighted a resolution made at the last meeting in respect of sharing the minutes with the ESFA with a covering letter so that they were aware of the Boards feelings in respect of the £340k advance of funds. It was agreed to revisit this resolution in the future to agree any further action. Members noted the next ESFA meeting is on **10 February 2021**.

The Director of Finance highlighted the importance of considering the bigger picture and especially cash flow, when making the decision regarding any action. The P5 report will show we can repay, but we are in the pandemic with significant risks to cash flow and our future financial position.

### **Financial Report**

05/2021 i) The Board received the P4 Financial Report, previously circulated and noted the P5 report would be ready in the next few days and would then be uploaded to the GVO.

The Director of Finance gave a verbal update on the current financial position using both the P4 and P5 reports. Members noted:

- The P5 report takes an Initial look at how the 3<sup>rd</sup> lockdown has affected the overall position.
- The budgeted EBITDA was reported as £687k. P4 shows an EBITDA of £667k and P5 projects an EBITDA OF £628k This reduction in EBITDA, from P4 to P5 is due to the closure of college buildings and activities, especially the impact from lack of commercial income at Redlands and Weyco Catering. Adding the outstanding advance of funds repayment of £340k brings a total commitment of over £900k.
- Job Retention Scheme income from 95 furloughed staff, initially until 12 February, brings an estimated £95,000 and there will be some savings as well. However, this is as yet no clear return date. This helps but does not completely match the shortfall.
- The debt repayment is greater than the EBITDA and in the pandemic situation, it is not possible to increase income, so this is about savings!
- Important to divert our attention to cash flow. Especially in March and July. It remains relatively stable, as we have been in a position to respond to the pandemic turbulence and manage creditors.
- At present we forecast balance of £220k in March and £300k in July, but we have a good few weeks until July but in a risky lockdown situation. However looking forward to 2021-2022 with the full benefit of the Poundbury exit and hopefully finalising Redlands and with our capital projects the future is looking manageable.

*Natalie Merry joined the meeting*

Members also noted that the College is maintaining regular meetings with colleagues from Dorset Council regarding the future liabilities of Redlands. Currently work is progressing on the preparation of a joint options paper, which will be presented to the Council and the College Corporation. It is looking at the viability of indoor and outdoor provision and future liabilities. Members agreed it was important to understand what was the intention for any future use of the building, as this would influence any future liability.

*Megan Barnes joined the meeting*

### ii) Solar Panel Proposal

The Board received a report, which had been uploaded to the GVO for review. Members had made a number of supportive comments and well as some points of caution. Members noted that there had been previous proposals to install solar panels on certain college buildings, which had not been progressed mainly due to the condition of the roof. This has now been resolved and colleagues feel it is the right time. A review has resulted in an improved offer from two local companies. Dorset Community Energy and Eden have presented proposals that provide a financial benefit to the College and improved technology. Full details and cost benefits are contained in the report.

Members questioned whether there should be a 3<sup>rd</sup> option, but agreed that on this occasion to obtain a further quote would mean we miss out on the maximum benefits to be obtained from the forthcoming Spring and Summer months. It was agreed three quotations should be sought, where possible, for future procurement exercises..

Members welcomed the proposal and accepted it is something staff and students have been proposing for some time, and it will be well received. The proposal was unanimously supported and it was **RESOLVED** to proceed with the installation of Solar PV panels with **Dorset Community Energy**. With an expected timescale after Installation with a “ go live” in week commencing 5th April 2021. Vote unanimous.

### **Chief Executive/ Interim Principal’s Update**

06/2021 The Board received a written report from the Interim Principal, previously circulated. The following matters were highlighted:

- The College response to the instruction by the Government announced on Monday 4th January, to close educational establishments, with curriculum teams having to switch to remote learning but still providing some on-site delivery for a small number of students (starting with 12, reducing to 5), and The College Nursery is still operational with reduced numbers.
- Mass Lateral Flow Testing - Following a trial, the testing is currently being rolled-out on a small scale for staff and students on-site. It is a difficult and time-consuming process. The full NHS Instruction booklet has been uploaded to the GVO.
- The decision to cancel VTQ Examinations - With changing government guidance, particularly between central government and the DfE, this was a difficult decision for the College. There is a consultation, in which we will be involved.
- Strategic Planning – following the Visioning Day in December, all staff having contributed to the College’s new strategy in particular the Mission/Vision/Objectives and Values, by submitting team responses. These were considered as part of the SLT Strategy Day held on Thursday 14th January 2021. A timetable was confirmed ready for final presentation to the Board in March 2021.
- Draft Report from FE Commissioner – SLT looking at preparing Action Plan even though the final report has not yet been received.
- Successful start to the Management Essentials Training Programme launched today.

*Chris Brooke joined the meeting*

*Lyn Bourne joined the meeting*

### **Higher Education Self-Assessment Report 2019-2020**

07/2021 The Board received a report, which had been uploaded to the GVO for review. Members had made a number of comments, which had been actioned, and the revised final Report uploaded. Members confirmed a continuing self-assessment of “Good” .

The Chair reported he had reviewed the Report as the HE Link and recommended it to the Board.

Members noted:

- The foundation degrees, FDA and FSc required an element of work placement, they had been well received by local employers and most of the students were employees. They would go on to get their degree through our partner universities.

- 13 students had been recruited to our first cohort for BSc Honours in Health and Social Care validated by Plymouth University.

*Rod Davis and Jack Dickson joined the meeting*

**RESOLVED** that the report be accepted and approved for submission. Proposed by the Chair, vote unanimous.

### **Report and Recommendations from the FE Commissioner**

08/2021 Confidential Item

### **Any Other Business**

09/2021 Corporation Member Matters

i) Resignation of Rosie Darkin-Miller

The Clerk reported the resignation of Rosie Darkin-Miller, Vice Chair, with effect from 31 December 2020. Members were disappointed to receive this resignation and noted letters of thanks had been written to Rosie.

ii) Appointment of Vice Chair

The Chair reported receipt of two nominations for the position of Vice Chair. One from Jacqui Gerrard and the other from Andy Matthews. After consideration and discussion with the nominees, he proposed to the Board that they appoint two Vice Chairs for the remaining period, until July 2021, when the two-year term of office for both the Chair and Vice Chair ends and new appointments will be made.

**RESOLVED** that both Jacqui Gerrard and Andy Matthews be appointed Vice Chair until the July Board Meeting in 2021.

iii) Changes to Declarations of Interest/backfill arrangements for Interim Principal.

a) The Board received an update on the changes made to responsibilities of the members of the Senior Leadership Team to facilitate the backfill arrangements for the Interim Principal including the appointment of Natalie Merry as a member of the Senior Leadership Team. Members noted these arrangements were working well.

b) Members also agreed and confirmed a change to the Declarations of Interest for two Board Members on a temporary basis to provide additional backfill support for the Interim Principal.

1. Jacqui Gerrard has agreed to provide voluntary mentoring support to the HR Manager. Jacqui will begin monthly support starting on 13 January. 2021
2. Lyn Bourne will oversee and lead the quality of education team for a total of 20 days during the interim period.

Because of the temporary nature of these arrangements, individual declarations will be updated and if there are any possible conflicts or where decisions need to be made, these members will be asked to withdraw.

iv) Staff Development Days Speaker request – Members were asked to contact Lyn Bourne if they are able to help.

v) Appointment of Principal/Chief Executive – Confidential Item

vi) Principal's Financial Limit – After discussion and in the light of current capital works, it was agreed to increase the Individual purchasing limit from £20,000 to £50,000. However,

members agreed a regular report of expenditure over £20,000 is to be provided to the Corporation. The EL4 Policy to be amended accordingly.

**Confidential Items**

10/2021 The report on the FE Commissioner's visit , because the report will not be published, and the update on the appointment of the Principal/Chief Executive will remain confidential.

**Date of Next Meeting**

11/2021 The next meeting was confirmed as 2 February 2021

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Chair

Virtual Meeting – 2 February, 2021