

**STOCKTON SIXTH FORM COLLEGE
FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION**

Minutes of a meeting of the Corporation held at the College on 15 March 2010

MEMBERS PRESENT

Miss Zara Afsar, Mr Mark Barrett, Mr Paul Beach, Mr David Butler,
Mr John Carson, Mr Martin Clinton, Ms Catherine Hyde Wesson, Mr Ed Kirkham,
Mr Geoff Lee, Mr John Monkhouse, Mr Alan Nesbitt, Mr David Paxton,
Mr Charles Porter, Dr Peter Price, Mrs Judith Robson, Mr Paul Robson,
Mrs Sue Symington, Mr Tehleel Wahid.

Number of members present – 18 - the meeting was quorate throughout.

ALSO PRESENT Dr David Dodds, Mr Peter Fleck, Mrs Sue Knox

ACTION

BUSINESS ITEMS

106.1 ACADEMIC PRESENTATION – the meeting began with a presentation by Jo Parsons (Information Learning Technology Curriculum Development Manager at the College), after which Ms Parsons answered questions from members. The Chair thanked Ms Parsons on behalf of the members.

106.2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Mrs Ann Gill, Dr Toks Sangowawa.

106.3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were invited to declare any interests relevant to the business on the agenda. It was noted that declarations might be made at any point during the meeting if the relevance of an interest became apparent. No declarations were made.

106.4 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The minutes of the meetings of the previous meeting, having been corrected to note that Mr Beach was present, were approved and duly signed by the Chair.

106.5 MATTERS ARISING

106.5.1 Newcastle Medical School – the Principal confirmed that a partnership between the College and the Medical School had been established.

106.5.2 Fire alarm system – Dr Dodds reported that the fire alarm system had been inspected by the local fire safety officer and declared to be acceptable from a fire safety point of view; he went on to explain the operational difficulties stemming from the design of the current alarm system. It was generally agreed that the system was not acceptable operationally.

The Director of Finance described the options available, either to replace or to improve the system and proposed that a detailed study be carried out during the Easter holidays to establish whether the current system could be modified to operate effectively. The proposal was agreed.

PGF

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106.6 MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The minutes of the following meetings were noted:

106.6.1 Property Committee

106.6.1.1 8 January 2010

106.6.1.2 12 February 2010

106.6.1.2.1 Childrens' nursery – a request to negotiate the sale or lease of a piece of land at the north west corner of the site for the construction of a nursery was discussed. It was agreed to reject the request for the following reasons:

- the development would preclude the construction of the new College building in the foreseeable future
- the organisation of nursery provision would be of concern to the local Council and a decision to proceed should not be taken until the forthcoming new relationship between the College and the Council is established
- the financial benefit to the College was small, while issues arising from the project might detract from the focus on the College's core activities.

MTC

106.6.1.3 Building Extension Project

The Director of Finance advised that an application for permission to proceed with the project had been submitted to the LSC and that it was probable that permission would be granted in the next few weeks, with a programmed completion by September 2011. He outlined the likely implications of the reduced number of applications for entry to the College in September 2010 and invited members to consider whether the project should proceed in that context. Following discussion, it was agreed unanimously that, if permission is received, the project should proceed and the Property Committee was granted plenary powers to progress it.

PGF

The need to plan for a balanced budget within 2 years if the suggested downturn in enrolments happens was emphasised.

**MTC/
SMT**

Mrs Symington left the meeting

106.6.2 Finance Resources and Employment Committee, 1 February 2010.

106.6.2.1 Management accounts to the end of December 2009 – the accounts and commentary were noted.

106.6.2.2 Publicity – the Principal reported actions being taken to promote the College's public profile. Other suggestions were made, including better location of the College's advertisements and establishing the reasons why students who had applied subsequently chose another college. It was suggested that Mr Beach might join the College's publicity working group.

MTC

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ACTION

106.6 MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS (cont'd)

106.6.3 Audit Committee, 24 February 2010

106.6.3.1 Appointment of Internal Auditor – the recommendation to appointment of TIAA for the next audit cycle, subject to annual review and the possibility of termination at the end of each year without penalty, was approved by unanimous agreement.

PGF

106.6.4 Oxbridge Working Party, 22 February 2010 – the challenge posed by the relatively low GCSE grades of the students applying was noted.

Ms Hyde Wesson volunteered to join the Working Party and her offer was accepted gratefully.

PGF

106.7 PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

The Principal presented his report for the spring term, which was examined and discussed.

The disappointing increase in the percentage of students withdrawing from College in year was noted and the Principal explained the level of detailed attention given by the SMT to this issue.

It was noted that the level of applications for entry to university was the highest in the past 6 years.

The positive results from the NEVIC questionnaire of students were noted.

There was praise for the standard of Chemistry teaching at the College following the success of a former student at winning a place on a Proctor and Gamble sandwich scheme.

There was some discussion about the high number of students applying for degree courses with psychology as a major element ; the comparatively high standard of statistics and mathematics required for that subject at degree level was a cause for some concern.

Mrs Knox explained the apparently significant decline in applications from Eggescliffe School.

106.8 STUDENT COUNCIL REPORT

The student members presented the minutes of a Student Council meeting.

The issue of smoking on site was discussed at some length. It was agreed that the possibility of locating a designated smoking area more remote from the College's main entrances should be re-examined.

MTC

Mr Lee left the meeting

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106.9 RELATIONS WITH THE LOCAL AUTHORITY

The need for effective communications between the College and Stockton Council was noted. The Principal advised that the Council's Chief Executive had offered to speak to the next meeting of the Corporation and it was agreed that his offer should be welcomed and accepted.

MTC

It was suggested that a Council officer might be invited to attend Corporation meetings as an observer and subsequently as a member. Following discussion it was agreed that such an invitation was not appropriate at present.

MTC

106.10 GOVERNOR TRAINING

No governor training had taken place since the last Corporation meeting. The Clerk reported that training events at present seemed to focus on general FE, but that relevant opportunities would be advised to members as they arose.

106.6.2.2 SENIOR POSTHOLDERS PAY

Proposals recommended by the Finance, Resources and Employment Committee were approved by unanimous agreement.

106.11 OTHER BUSINESS – none.

106.12 ITEMS FOR EXCLUSION - none.

106.13 DATE OF NEXT MEETING - Monday 10th May 2010 at 5.30 pm

Chair

date