

**Minutes of the meeting of the Corporation
Southport College Conference Room
Wednesday 19th October 2022 at 5.30pm (with training from 5.00pm)**

Present: Christine Bampton (Chair to the Corporation)
Mark Aberdein (Independent Member)
Heather Austin (Student Governor)
Laura Bell (Independent Member) (from item 5.2)
Margaret Boneham (Independent Member)
Michelle Brabner (Principal)
Catherine Durr (Staff Governor)
Rob Firth (Independent Member)
Tom Rowe (Staff Member)
Paul Walker (Vice Chair of the Corporation)

In Attendance: Paris Bonwick (AP MIS and Apprenticeships)
Maura Cummins (Deputy Principal)
Lisa Farnhill (Clerk to the Corporation)
Stephen Musa (AP Student Experience and Welfare)
Victoria Wickington (AP Teaching, Learning and Quality)
Kevin Williams (Director of Finance and Facilities)
Jodie Marcucci (Training only)

Apologies: Diane Hutchinson (Independent Member)
Alex Kenny (Independent Member)
Mo Kundi (Independent Member)
Katy Robinson (Independent Member)
Alex Gamil (Independent Member)

Absent: Susannah Porter (independent Member)

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| C.23.01 | <p>Pre-Meeting Training – Safeguarding Ahead of the meeting, comprehensive safeguarding training was delivered. This provided members with a summary of the 2022 changes to KCSIE guidance, along with an overview of prevalent and changing issues in 2021/2022 with details of the college response. Plans for further developing the support for students in 2022/23 both in response to KCSIE and local issues was provided and considered comprehensive by members.</p> |
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Members were assured by the range and availability of internal support, complemented by the use of external agencies, both for student intervention and staff training, which was responsive to the issues presenting locally and staff needs and requests.

Members thanked the team for their diligent and thorough approach, highlighting how the increase in incidents and interventions showed that staff were aware of and responding to the needs of students.

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| | <p>Members acknowledged the significant overhaul of the KCSIE guidance, including Part B, and resolved to support the request of the Chair of the Corporation for all governors to read, and confirm they have read the whole document including Part B by the next meeting of the Corporation.</p> | |
| C.23.02 | <p>ITEM 1: WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE The Chair thanked members and attendees for their attendance. The Clerk provided details of the apologies listed, including notification of a late arrival. These were all accepted by the Corporation. Members agreed for the Clerk to contact the absent member to ascertain the reason, confirming they would accept retrospective apologies. Members noted the diary issue at the next meeting, and this was accepted and retrospectively updated to be listed under apologies.</p> <p><u>Item 1 accepted:</u> The Corporation noted and accepted the apologies detailed above.</p> | |
| C.23.03 | <p>ITEM 2: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST No declarations of interest were made.</p> <p><u>Item 2 noted</u></p> | |
| C.23.04 | <p>ITEM 3: MINUTES FROM THE 6TH JULY 2022 With no corrections or additional matters arising, the minutes were approved.</p> <p><u>Item 3 – Approved:</u> The Corporation approved the minutes if the meetings of 6th July 2022.</p> | |
| C.23.05 | <p>ITEM 4: MATTERS ARISING AND CONFIDENTIALITY The clerk outlined the key points from the action summary report, with members discussing the progress to date in relation to the data dashboards. It was agreed that the available dashboards would be presented to the Standards Committee ahead of their next meeting, with feedback to be provided on the content and usability ahead of making it available to all members.</p> <p>All other actions were summarised with no comments or questions received. It was confirmed there was nothing to be redacted from the minutes, and agreed that all items within the Part B agenda needed to be reviewed without the presence of staff or students.</p> <p><u>Item 4 – Noted:</u> The Corporation noted the details of the report.</p> | Clerk/Standards Cttee |
| C.23.06 | <p>ITEM 5: GOVERNANCE MATTERS</p> <p>Item 5.1: Chair’s Report</p> <p>The Chair of the Corporation summarised for the Corporation the activities and attendance at college events on behalf of the Governing Board. This included attending on results day, presenting at the graduation celebrations, conducting the Principal and Clerk’s appraisals, being a member of the Vice Principal recruitment Panel, supporting with the assessment and interview activities for the role, as well as regular meetings with the Clerk, Principal and Chairs network.</p> | |

The Chair was thanked for the time she had given to the role in the first half term and her dedication to the College.

Item 5.2: Link Governor updates

Link visits in relation to MIS, GDPR, apprenticeships, student progress and guidance, HE, HR and finance were outlined. Members highlighted the success of the staff-initiated approach and positive outcomes of the visits, which were described as mutually beneficial, with governors confirming follow up meetings were already scheduled.

The Lead Link Governor confirmed that the protocol as circulated was the version amended over summer. It was noted that further revisions were planned, confirming administrative support was available to format the document, with members acknowledging that the document would need to be reissued if revisions were significant.

Item 5.3: Training Update

The Clerk confirmed that there was a new link available for the recording of 22/23 training. Members noted that training requests for the first half term were those accessed via the smartlog system, with modules on safeguarding and GDPR mandatory for all members and staff.

Members were informed that in addition, there had been additional optional opportunities targeted to link governors including safeguarding, EDI and HR.

Item 5.4: Nominations for the post of Chair to the Corporation

The Corporation Chair confirmed, as had been notified by email, she intended to retire from her post at the end of the year. The Chair stated how much she had enjoyed being a part of the Governing Board, especially the student-centred aspects, noting she would particularly miss attending celebratory events.

The Corporation was assured that the resignation was for personal reasons, with the Chair offering to discuss the role further with any interested member. The Clerk summarised the appointment process, confirming the intention to appoint in December. Members were informed the Governance Committee had reviewed and supported the ongoing use of the existing Chair Role Description, which could be found in the standing orders and would be circulated with the newsletter. Members resolved to support an external recruitment process should this be necessary, noting that interim arrangements may be necessary if an external appointment was required.

Item 5 – Resolved: Members resolved to accept the updates, committing to completing the required training ahead of the December meeting. Members agreed to consider their suitability for the role of Chair and notify the Clerk of their interest.

C.23.07

ITEM 6: PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

The Principal summarised the report.

Members noted the success of results and recruitment activities which had been unrestricted by the Pandemic yet benefited from online advancements made throughout the previous two years, supported by onsite support and interaction. Recruitment was summarised, including positivity around 16-18 enrolment data with members encouraged to review the new prospectus.

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Members were assured that all summer building works had been completed on schedule ahead of induction, with artwork used to give unique identities to different areas, with members encouraged to visit to see the updates.

Sector issues summarised included staff pay, recruitment and retention as well as the ONS review.

Members noted more local issues including short term staff absence, with it hoped this would be alleviated by the extended half term break.

Open evenings were described as well attended and positive, with existing students proud to offer their support.

Staff training was outlined, including Markbook, OneFile and observation training, with staff already utilising training with observations underway. Members noted the use of external support for training on managing disclosures and managing challenging behaviour. Members were advised of the increased pressure on the learning support department, noting this trend was reflected throughout the sector. Members were assured by additional transition support and a request to the local authority for increased funding for high needs learners.

Other activities in the first few weeks of term included the new staff induction event, for the thirty new staff that had joined over summer.

Members were assured that all new courses planned had been recruited to and commenced.

Early issues with the rollout of the new timetable structure had been resolved, with the structured format considered to be an adjustment for staff at the Southport site. Members were assured this was now considered to be an effective change, resolving issues relating to common breaks and reducing trapped time.

Members were given details of the successful introduction of Unifrog to support careers progression planning, as well as Cyber Essentials recertification and the migration to Office 365.

IT issues causing short term loss for some systems were detailed, with weak points identified and addressed, with further work planned around network resilience.

The item concluded with the Principal expressing her gratitude for the dedication and hard work of the HR team, for extensive recruitment activity as well as ongoing support for existing staff, with a summary of the employee assistance programme provided.

Members commended all staff for their work throughout the busy first half term, asking if momentum was being maintained and new staff fully supported. Governors were assured by the new structures, providing support at all levels, with the extended half term providing the opportunity for a break after this busy half-term.

Members noted how well success was celebrated, thanking the Principal and her team for this, noting the disappointing impact of the short term absences.

The item concluded with members discussing the success of the enrichment programme, providing new opportunities for students in addition to supporting with transition.

Item 6 – Noted: The Corporation resolved to accept the update, expressing their gratitude to staff for their hard work and support of students and one another throughout results, recruitment and the first half term.

C.23.08

ITEM 7: STRATEGIC PLAN HEADLINE TARGETS FOR 2022/23

The Deputy Principal summarised the targets, with members discussing at length the impact of working towards targets that were higher than this year's outcomes in every area, yet lower than the targets set in the previous year. Members expressed concern over the impact of results on staff morale, and although accepted targets appeared realistic, acknowledged it was difficult to ascertain to what extent they struck a balance between aspirational and realistic without comparison data. Members were advised this would be available in March for the first time since 2019/2020.

Staff governors were asked how they felt staff had been impacted by the outcomes and proposed strategy for improvements, and were told that staff were enthused and motivated, with morale remaining high.

The Standards Committee assured the Board that the outcomes had been fully interrogated, adding they were assured by staff efforts and interventions in place, with the tracking described as robust, enabling issues to be pre-empted ahead of formal results.

Members were assured by significant resources to support quality improvement, along with more realistic target setting based on students entering college with externally assessed and moderated results rather than CAGs or TAGs, resulting in predicted grades that were evidence based.

Members asked how progress would be monitored, with the monitoring and intervention strategy outlined, further supported by more reliable data and the data dashboards.

Members questioned whether previous targets were overestimated, with members advised that the normal target setting process had been used yet was based on CAG and TAG data. Members discussed the detrimental impact of grade boundaries for the 2021/2022 exam series, which had been imposed on students that had not had the opportunity to sit formal exams in the past. Members also accepted that the grades had been further impacted by students having gained places on level 3 courses with TAG/CAG outcomes, that may not have been able to study at that level if they had been externally assessed.

Whilst acknowledging that the targets were stretching in all areas, with the Pandemic still impacting knowledge gaps and exam preparedness, members agreed targets needed to be challenging, both to ensure they were raising aspirations for students and to prevent external criticism.

Members were reminded that the targets presented were headline and would be broken down for each area. Members noted that although overall results had been disappointing, there had been some good outcomes, with all staff motivated by clear ideas and targets with robust strategies to support staff and prevent a repeat of any of the issues seen in the previous year.

The item concluded with unanimous support being given for the targets, with the Principal confirming these would be included in the strategic plan approved by members in July.

Item 7 – Approved: The Corporation resolved to approve the headline targets.

C.23.09 ITEM 8: WEBSITE COMPLIANCE

The AP MIS and Apprenticeships informed the Corporation that compliance against statutory and DfE publication requirements had been reviewed. Members noted that although improved, there remained areas of non-compliance, with most being communication issues, with the required policies having been drafted and approved but not uploaded.

It was clarified that links to performance tables were not included as they had not been published during the pandemic, with these expected to be available in March.

Members clarified the responsibilities and accountabilities in relation to the website, and asked that internal procedures were tightened, with policies uploaded within a month of governor or SLT approval.

SLT

Item 8 – Noted: The Corporation resolved to accept the update provided internal procedures are updated to ensure all policies are uploaded to the website within a month of approval.

ITEM 9: COMMITTEE UPDATES

ITEM 9: COMMITTEE

**C.23.10 Item 9.1: Governance Committee Update
Item 9.1.1: Committee Update**

A summary of the discussions and work of the Committee was outlined by the Committee Chair, highlighting the Committee's commitment to ongoing improvements in all aspects of governance. Members were advised that the resignation of the Corporation Chair had been reviewed by the Committee, with the Clerk's support highlighted as a strength in supporting the Chair. Members interested in the role were encouraged to speak to the Clerk ahead of the next Corporation meeting, with the Committee recommending the use of an external recruitment agency if there was no internal interest, with the Corporation supporting this.

All members

Members were assured by the progress made in relation to risk appetite, with members asked to self-nominate to the working party.

All members

The Committee confirmed they had intended to put forward a new governor appointment for approval, however, the application had been withdrawn.

The Committee presented the following items for information and/or approval:

C.23.11 Item 9.1.2: Governance SAR and Governance Development Plan (for approval)

The Clerk advised that initial evidence gathering had concluded, with the Governance Committee recommending for approval areas for improvement and development plans for 2022/23. The Clerk advised that the next step was for the approved information to be incorporated into a formal public facing report, outlining the strengths and areas for development which would be

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| | presented for approval in December. The Corporation Chair thanked the Clerk for her work in relation to the SAR process, with the draft information given the approval of the Corporation. | |
| C.23.12 | <p>Item 9.1.3: Governors Handbook 2022/23 (for approval) The Clerk confirmed that in approving the Handbook, members are reapproving and committing to the code of conduct for 22/23, with members unable to attend provided with a link to confirm they have read and will commit to the code. The Corporation offered their approval for the handbook and reaffirmed their commitment to the Code of Conduct.</p> | |
| C.23.13 | <p>Item 9.1.4: Evaluation of the Chair (for information) The Committee advised the Corporation that this had been covered within the SAR survey and further supported by a review meeting undertaken by the Vice Chair. The Corporation agreed that an additional survey was not necessary, noting overall improvements in processes for ongoing self-evaluation and reflection.</p> | |
| | <p><i>Item 9.1 – Approved: The Corporation resolved to accept the Committee update and approved the areas for development in the SAR and GDP, along with the handbook for use by governors in 2022/2023.</i></p> | |
| | <p>Item 9.2: Standards Committee Update</p> | |
| C.23.14 | <p>Item 9.2.1: Committee Update</p> | |
| | <p>The Committee Chair summarised the work of the Committee, highlighting earlier discussions in relation to outcomes, targets, and improved processes for quality improvement.</p> | |
| | <p>The Corporation was informed of the current practice by the committee of continual self-evaluation and feedback, asking for other committee's to consider adopting this best practice.</p> | All Cttee's |
| | <p>The Committee informed the Corporation of a request for additional training, on understanding Alps, which would take place after their Committee meeting on 6th December, noting the intention for this to be after 5pm so that other members of the Corporation could attend. The Clerk confirmed an invitation had been issued to all governors.</p> | |
| C.23.15 | <p>Item 9.2.2: FE Outcomes and Targets (for information) The Deputy Principal highlighted the detailed scrutiny by the Committee and again under item 7, asking members if they had any further questions. With no further questions or comments, members accepted the update.</p> | |
| C.23.16 | <p>Item 9.2.3: GCSE Outcomes and Targets (for information) The Deputy Principal summarised the English and maths results for 2021/2022, as reviewed in detail by the Standards Committee, inviting questions and comments.</p> | |
| C.23.17 | <p>Item 9.2.4: HE Outcomes and Targets (for information) The Assistant Principal, Teaching, Learning and Quality summarised the HE results for 2021/2022, with the Corporation noting there would be a full review of the offer to be presented to the Standards Committee in March.</p> | |
| C.23.18 | <p>Item 9.2.5: Apprenticeship Outcomes and Targets (for information) The Assistant Principal MIS and Apprenticeships invited questions and comments on the paper as circulated.</p> | |

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| C.23.19 | <p>Item 9.2.6: Annual Safeguarding Report (for information) The Committee presented to the Corporation the 2021/2022 annual safeguarding report as essential information. The AP Student Experience and Welfare summarised the key information, with the Corporation Chair extending her gratitude to the team for their work as summarised in the earlier training.</p> | |
| C.23.20 | <p>Item 9.2.7: Safeguarding Policy (for approval) The Corporation accepted the recommendation of the Committee and approved the 2022/2023 safeguarding policy. Members were asked to confirm they had read and understood the policy by making the declaration through the Smart Log training system, noting how this had been a full revision and not an update.</p> <p>Members were reminded that the policy was a working document, with in-year revisions where necessary, encouraging members to provide details if further amendments or improvements could be made.</p> | |
| | <p><i>Item 9.2 – Approved: The Corporation resolved to accept the outcomes papers and safeguarding update and approved the safeguarding policy.</i></p> | |
| C.23.21 | <p>Item 9.3 - Resources Committee Item 9.3.1: Committee Update</p> <p>The Committee Chair summarised the work of the Committee, including the estates working group which had met ahead of the meeting of the Committee. The Corporation was informed the Estates Strategy would be reviewed and recommended for approval in December, with a focus on student-centric works, alongside necessary repairs.</p> <p>The Corporation was informed that staff pay had been reviewed at length, with a recommendation to be made in December once union negotiations conclude.</p> <p>Members were assured by a thorough interrogation of the financial position, noting that the ‘outstanding’ financial health for 2021/2022 was as a result of clawback provision prudently withheld, with forecasts indicating a return to ‘good’ in 2022/2023, although there remained cash flow concerns in two years if numbers do not improve.</p> | |
| | <p>The Chair confirmed that the Committee presented for information and/or approval the following items of key importance:</p> | |
| C.23.22 | <p>Item 9.3.2: College Financial Forecasting Return (CFFR) and Market Oversight Team (MOT) Returns The Committee presented the updated CFFR and MOT reports as essential information, with the Dir Finance and Facilities summarising key points, including the intention for a full half year revision to include the census enrolment figures. The Corporation were informed of the detailed discussions in relation to enrolment and anticipated census data.</p> <p>Members were given a summary of the financial impact of enrolment, and concerns were documented relating to energy costs, with the prudent increase of £140,000 now expected to need to double based on the September utility bill.</p> <p>Members discussed alternative delivery models used by some colleges to address energy cost increases, including a four-day week.</p> | |

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The item concluded with members being reminded that the staff pay award incorporated into the forecast was less than the anticipated outcome of negotiations with the unions, with work now being done to project the impact of the potential agreed award, with this likely to result in the need for cuts, to be built into the January reforecast.

C.23.23

Item 9.3.3: HE Tuition Fees and Refund and Compensation Policy 2023/24

As recommended by the Committee, the Corporation approved the policy, noting recruitment had paused in 2022/23, with the fees presented being for the following academic year. Members noted that the HE offer for 2023/2024 was under review, yet were assured this would not be impacted by the fee levels included in the policy presented for approval, noting that these were largely externally driven.

Item 9.3 – Approved: The Corporation resolved to accept the updated CFFR and MOT returns, and approved the HE fees for 2023/24.

C.23.24

ITEM 10: DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The next meeting was confirmed as 14th December, at 5pm. The Chair extended her gratitude to the staff and student members as they withdrew for Part B.

Item 10 – Noted: The Corporation noted the information

C.23.25

CLOSING COMMENTS

The Corporation Chair asked if there was anything to be raised ahead of the staff and students departing. With nothing raised, Part A closed at 6.50pm.

Part A closed at 6.50pm

Staff and Student Members withdrew for Part B