

SOUTH WEST COLLEGE GOVERNING BODY

Minutes of an online meeting of the **Governing Body** of **South West College**
held on **Wednesday 11 November 2020 at 5:30pm**

PRESENT:

Mr Peter Archdale
Ms Siobhan Breen
Mrs Deborah Brown
Mrs Margaret Martin
Mr Michael McAlister (Chief Executive)
Mrs Patricia McCaffrey
Mr Seamus McCaffrey
Mrs Gillian McDowell
Mrs Monica McGeary
Mr Michael McGuckin
Mrs Joanne Moore
Mr Gerard O'Hanlon
Dr Nicholas O'Shiel (Chair)
Mr Michael Skuce

IN ATTENDANCE:

Dr Jill Cush, Deputy Chief Executive
Ms Tracey McElroy, Boardroom Apprentice
Mrs Sharon McGrath, Head of Services (item 13 only)
Mr Sean O'Donnell, Head of Finance (item 6 only)
Mrs Shirley Patterson, Secretary to the Governing Body
Mr Alan Strong, SMART Region Collaborative Officer (item 13 only)

PRELIMINARIES

Dr O'Shiel, Chair of the Governing Body, opened the meeting by welcoming all present. At the outset, the Chair explained that the meeting would be recorded for minute taking purposes and that this recording is available on Microsoft Teams for 20 days, he noted the confidential section of the meeting would not be recorded.

The Chair commented to thank Mrs Lucas, whom has now ended her term as Staff Governor, and noted she has been an excellent board member and great contributor. He then extended a welcome to Mrs Brown, newly appointed Support Staff Governor and noted a Student Governor has been nominated. He also welcomed back the Boardroom Apprentice Mrs McElroy. He then commented to acknowledge this as the last meeting for Mrs Patterson, he thanked Mrs Patterson and noted she has done a tremendous job in an extremely capable manner and it has been greatly appreciated. The Chief Executive commented to agree with the Chairs comments and thanked Mrs Patterson on behalf of the senior management team.

1.0 APOLOGIES

None.

2.0 CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS

No declarations were made under this heading.

3.0 MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 03 Minutes of 16 September 2020 Governing Body Meeting
- Paper 03.01 Hardship Return 19/20

With reference to paper 03.01 and outstanding action 3 from the minutes, Dr Cush provided a summary overview of the hardship return for 2019/20. She noted the hardship fund allocation was £258k and that expenditure was £141k, noting a surplus of £117k. She informed the meeting the hardship fund is promoted digitally and in person through student services. She further noted that 313 students applied for the Fund and 50 of those were refused support. She commented on the challenges of the fund and noted the Department has a review underway.

AGREED: on the proposal of Mr Skuce and seconded by Mr Archdale, that the minutes of the Governing Body meeting on 16th September 2020 be accepted as a true and accurate record. These minutes were not signed as the meeting was conducted online.

4.0 CHAIR'S BUSINESS

The Chair noted the purpose of this meeting was twofold, firstly, to receive an update from the Chief Executive, and secondly, an update in the context of Covid-19. He commented to provide assurance that the college is doing everything possible to look after staff and students. He also noted at a high level the college's budget is okay, and provided an assurance on job security. The Chair then noted he would appreciate speakers to summarise key messages within their reports to enable a productive meeting. With reference to Staff Governor, Mrs Brown, the Chair proposed she join the Education, Quality and Performance Committee and the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

AGREED: on the proposal of Mr McCaffrey, on seconded by Ms Breen that Mrs Brown be appointed to the Education, Quality & Performance Committee and the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

5.0 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S BUSINESS

5.1 Covid-19

With reference to the four week circuit breaker, the Chief Executive noted the majority of staff and students are working remotely. He apprised the meeting the plan is to have more on-site activity next week, and that staff and students will be required to complete a health declaration form in advance of return to campus. He noted, from the beginning of September, 11 members of staff and 29 students have tested positive with Covid-19. He further noted, in comparison to the six colleges South West College is at the lower end of positive cases. Following a query from Mr McGuckin regarding

self-isolation, the Chief Executive noted staff and students whom require to self-isolate have been able to work remotely.

5.2 Framework

The Chief Executive commented on a framework document which has been used to regulate Covid-19 restrictions across the sector. He noted the framework was developed by the advisory and oversight group and the document is comprehensive and detailed. He then informed the meeting the framework is at a mid-point review stage and feedback from across the College and sector will be reviewed. He informed the meeting this may introduce new rules and regulations.

5.3 Belfast Educational Services (BES)

The Chief Executive informed governors that BES have flagged a slight issue regarding income in terms of the catering provision. He acknowledged that BES have worked closely with the college to implement the new Covid-19 regulations, and that since September the footfall has fluctuated between 10% to 60% of the previous year. He informed governors discussions are ongoing and at this stage the impacts are unknown, he apprised the meeting this issue is sector wide. Mr Archdale commented to note that it would be useful to involve the student voice, the Chief Executive agreed, and noted once the impacts are identified this will be communicated to students.

5.4 Higher Education

With reference to Higher Education, the Chief Executive informed Governors of £700k additional funding due to growth. He informed the meeting this amount is 40% of what was available to the sector and commented on the strategic decision to grow Higher Education as positive progress.

5.5 Further Education Leaver Survey (FELS)

The chief executive provided a summary update of the FELS. With comparison to 2018/19, he noted retention in 2019/20 as 92% compared to 90.4% in 2018/19, achievement in 2019/20 as 81% compared to 82.5% in 2018/19, and success in 2019/20 as 74.4% compared to 74.6% in 2018/19. He informed the meeting the results were a mix of calculated grades, adaptive assessment and additional workshops over the summer period. In conclusion, he noted this as an excellent result for students and the college.

5.6 Northern Ireland Awarding Organisation

In relation to awarding organisations, the Chief Executive explained that across the sector colleges are working with between 39 and 49 awarding organisations. He noted the reason colleges have found themselves in this position is due to no awarding organisation providing the spread of disciplines required in a Further Education College. He noted the cost of this is 7.3 million across the sector. He then commented that to bring this in house and streamline the provision would mitigate issues experienced. Mrs McGeary commented to note the sector should be mindful of the perception of colleges to self-assess and regulate qualifications. In response, the Chief Executive assured governors that this will be looked at over a long period and one option may be to partner with an existing awarding organisation. Mr Archdale, also commented to note the perception from employers.

6.0 ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 06 – Draft Annual Accounts and Financial Statement

Mr O'Donnell, Head of Finance, joined the meeting at this juncture

With reference to the annual accounts and financial statement (paper 06) the Chief Executive informed the meeting normally they would be presented to this meeting for approval. He noted the accounts have been audited and there are no issues, however, PwC have advised the sector that the position with regards holiday pay accrual must now change from a contingent liability to a provision. He apprised the meeting this amendment within the accounts will require a revisit of paper 06 before it can be presented for approval. The Chief Executive then invited Mr O'Donnell, Head of Finance, to provide an overview of the accounts.

Mr O'Donnell noted it is estimated £400k will be required for the provision in relation to the holiday pay accrual, he noted the methodology on back dating data prior to 2009/10 is to be agreed. With regards the accounts Mr O'Donnell summarised the 2019/20 accounting year as very good, he noted the accounting deficit was £3.4M, however, when adjusted for non-cash items it becomes a cash surplus of £846k. At a high level he noted income was ahead of budget by £1.6M. With regards expenditure, he noted the college was slightly over budget for staff costs by £547k when you exclude the NILGOSC charge, he further noted part time lecturing costs are down by £791k on the previous year. Mr O'Donnell then proposed to present the adjusted accounts to represent the holiday pay accrual provision to the Chair, Chief Executive and Chair of Finance and General Purposes Committee for approval.

AGREED: on the proposal of Mr McGuckin and seconded by Mrs McCaffrey, the annual accounts and financial statement are approved subject to changes in relation to the holiday pay accrual.

Mr O'Donnell was thanked for his presentation and left the meeting at this juncture.

7.0 ERNE CAMPUS DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 07 Erne Campus Finance Report

The Chief Executive provided an update on the Erne campus development, he noted the total spend to date is 86.5% of the approved project and the completion date as the 14th of January 2021. He informed Governors the contractor has flagged a potential two week delay but this has not been agreed. With reference to rock, he noted discussions are ongoing to resolve the issue. In conclusion, he noted the project is on programme and within budget. Mr Skuce commented on the recent press regarding the traffic impact of the new campus. The Chief Executive noted the College are aware of this and will work through issues if they are raised. With relation to the marketing of the new campus, the Chief Executive advised an update will be provided at the January Governing Body meeting.

8.0 UPDATE ON BUDGETS

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 08 College Budgets 2020-21

An update on college budgets was provided by the Chief Executive, he began his report by noting income to date is 12.3% and expenditure to date is 13.3%. With reference to the summary of income, he noted the initial allocation was £27.3M. He informed members £448k additional funding for Covid-19 was received and a bid of approximately £500k has been submitted for the remainder of Covid-19 funding. He apprised the meeting £691K has been received for the increase of Higher Education provision and in terms of the legacy short falls for the sector, he noted these have been baselined.

9.0 FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE REPORT

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 09.01 Minutes of 07 October 2020 F&GP Meeting
- Paper 09.02 F&GP Committee Terms of Reference

In presenting the report of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on Wednesday 07 October 2020, Mr McCaffrey, Committee Chair, began by providing a summary of the meeting. He outlined the key strategic issues, in particular he noted a bid for Covid-19 funding; a commitment to keep a strong presence within the EU network; an update on Erne Campus; the College Development Plan; and an update on the PFI deed of variation. In relation to the management report he noted no issues. He also apprised members of a presentation on the financial performance of the Professional and Social Science Faculty, and drew attention to the key issues as a focus on the student experience and feedback in relation to the impact of Covid-19. With reference to the Finance & General Purposes Committee Terms of Reference he recommended them for approval by the Governing Body.

AGREED: on the proposal of Mr McCaffrey seconded by Mr McGuckin, adoption of the minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting and the recommendations therein. These minutes were not signed as the meeting was conducted online.

AGREED: on the proposal of Mr McCaffrey, seconded by Mr McGuckin, adoption of the Finance and General Purposes Committee Terms of Reference.

10.0 STAFFING COMMITTEE REPORT

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 10.01 Minutes of 30 September 2020 SC Meeting
- Paper 10.02 Staffing Committee Terms of Reference
- Paper 10.03 Student Internship Policy

- Paper 10.04 Equality Progress Report

Reporting on the Staffing Committee meeting held on Wednesday 30 September 2020, Mrs McDowell, Committee Chair, provided an overview of the presentation received on Resource Planning and Workforce Development in the Automotive, Computing and Engineering Faculty. She noted Mr McNamee has been invited to return to the Staffing Committee meeting in December to update the Committee on progress. Mrs McDowell went on to apprise the meeting of the Committee's discussion on the annual sickness data, and the college probation procedure. She also drew attention to the ratification of the appointments, staff requests, fixed term contract recommendations and other resource issues detailed in the minutes as well as the Committee's recommendation for adoption of the Staffing Committee Terms of Reference and approval of the Student Internship Policy. In response to a query regarding status for Investors in People, Mrs McDowell informed the meeting Investors in People has been extended for 12 months and a decision on the way forward will be taken after the structure and culture review.

AGREED: on the proposal of Mrs McDowell seconded by Mr Archdale, adoption of the minutes of the Staffing Committee meeting and the recommendations therein. These minutes were not signed as the meeting was conducted online.

AGREED: on the proposal of Mrs McDowell, seconded by Mr Archdale, adoption of the Staff Committee Terms of Reference and approval of Student Internship Policy and Equality Progress report.

11.0 EDUCATION, QUALITY AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 11.01 Minutes of 21 October 2020 EQP Meeting
- Paper 11.02 EQP Committee Terms of Reference
- Paper 11.03 Policy for the Promotion of Positive Student Behaviour
- Paper 11.04 Mobile Device Management Policy
- Paper 11.05 Student Attendance Policy
- Paper 11.06 Memorandum of Understanding Between Camphill Community Clanabogan, Northern Ireland Housing Executive and South West College

In commencing her report of the Education, Quality & Performance Committee meeting held on Wednesday 21 October 2020 the Committee Chair, Mrs Moore, provided a summary of the key strategic issues. She detailed the key strategic issues as a focus on online teaching and learning; the quality of teaching and learning; the curriculum, with a particular focus on the 14-19 agenda; safeguarding; and Covid-19. Moving on to the management report, she drew attention to the Policy for the Promotion of Positive Student Behaviour; Mobile Device Management Policy; and Student Attendance Policy and Education, Quality and Performance Terms of Reference and noted they are presented for approval. Mrs Moore then went on to provide an overview of the marketing and communications strategy presented at the meeting, she noted the key objectives of the strategy is to engage, encourage and enrol. She then referred to the presentation on the performance and strategic plans of the Centres for Excellence. She further commented on the memorandum of understanding Between Camphill Community Clanabogan, Northern Ireland Housing

Executive and South West College, she noted it will provide shape and structure and recommended it for approval.

AGREED: on the proposal of Mrs Moore seconded by Ms Breen, adoption of the minutes of the Education, Quality and Performance Committee meeting and the recommendations therein. These minutes were not signed as the meeting was conducted online.

AGREED: on the proposal of Mrs Moore, seconded by Ms Breen, adoption of the Education, Quality and Performance Committee Terms of Reference and approval of Policy for the Promotion of Positive Student Behaviour; Mobile Device Management Policy; and Student Attendance Policy

AGREED: on the proposal of Mrs Moore, seconded by Ms Breen, approval of Memorandum of Understanding Between Camphill Community Clanabogan, Northern Ireland Housing Executive and South West College.

12.0 AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE REPORT

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 11.01 Minutes of 04 November 2020 ARC Meeting
- Paper 11.02 Freedom to Speak Up: Raising a Concern Policy
- Paper 11.03 Audit Committee Annual Report

Mrs McCaffrey, Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee, began her report of the committee meeting held on 7 November 2020 by referring to the annual accounts and financial statements, she noted a meeting had taken place with the Head of Finance and commended the finance team, particularly in relation to the success of the audit requests whilst working remotely. In reference to the audits she noted a terms of reference will be received in advance of the student engagement audit. She then apprised the meeting that a board assurance framework was presented to the Committee, she commented the management team will review this in terms of added value and resources. She informed the meeting no fraud or whistleblowing was reported and a presentation of the risk register was received. With reference to the Freedom to Speak Up: Raising a Concern Policy and Audit Committee Annual Report, she presented these for approval.

AGREED: on the proposal of Mrs McCaffrey seconded by Mrs McGeary, adoption of the minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee meeting and the recommendations therein. These minutes were not signed as the meeting was conducted online.

AGREED: on the proposal of Mrs McCaffrey, seconded by Mrs McGeary, approval of Freedom to Speak Up: Raising a Concern Policy and adoption of Audit Committee Annual Report.

13.0 SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 13.01 Sustainability Strategy
- Paper 13.02 One Planet Living, Concepts & Application

Mrs McGrath and Mr Strong joined the meeting at this juncture.

With reference to paper 13.01 Sustainability Strategy, Mrs McGrath informed Governors this has been a collaborative piece work through the sustainability strategy group. She noted the group included representatives from Curriculum; Business Development; Estates; SMART Region; Erne Campus; Governing Body and Senior Management Team. She noted the paper is a proposed sustainability strategy for 2021 to 2025 and our journey towards a sustainable, smart and healthy college through One Planet Living. She explained the purpose of this presentation is for endorsement and support of the strategy. She referred to the One Planet Framework and noted that the sustainability strategy group strongly believe the framework will support the college in achieving the aims and objectives within the sustainability strategy. Mr Strong then provided an overview of the One Planet Living approach, he outlined the 10 guiding principles as health and happiness; equity and local economy; culture and community; land and nature; sustainable water; local and sustainable food; travel and transport; materials and products; zero waste and zero carbon energy.

The Chair thanked Mrs McGrath and Mr Strong for their presentation and noted the key message as One Planet Living, he also noted appreciation to Mr Archdale for his commitment to the development of this strategy. Mr Archdale commented to note he has tested the One Planet Living approach and noted this is the destination and that the next step will be to develop the road map. Mrs Martin commented to congratulate the group on this development and remarked she can identify with the strategy and is very impressed. Mr McGuckin also commented to champion this strategy and note the journey is important. Dr Cush commented on the appropriate timing of this strategy, and noted the senior management team fully support the methodology of One Planet Living. The Chief Executive, supported Dr Cush's comments and commended the team on the development of the strategy and thanked Mr Archdale for the continued drive to move the strategy forward. Mrs McCaffrey then commented to note the importance of this message for young people, and the importance sustainability represents to this age group and congratulated the team on the work. Mrs Brown commented to commend Mr Strong and Mrs McGrath, she noted from a student perspective this area is very engaging, productive and inclusive as an engagement tool and noted this will be an asset to the college. Ms Breen echoed Mrs Brown comments, noting she is excited to see how this will fit into the curriculum and college life. Mr Strong thanked everyone for their comments and noted the passion of the staff and students to create this legacy. Mr Archdale also thanked everyone for the comments and noted the appropriate timing of the strategy. The Chair thanked Mrs McGrath and Mr Strong for their presentation, he noted it has been a very focused presentation and great response.

AGREED: on the proposal of Mr Archdale, and seconded by Mrs McCaffrey, approval of the Sustainability strategy.

Mrs McGrath and Mr Strong left the meeting at this juncture.

14.0 DECLARATION OF ANY HOSPITALITY OR GIFTS RECEIVED OR OFFERED

No declarations were made under this heading.

15.0 ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS

The Chair informed the meeting of recent correspondence received from a parent, he apprised the meeting the email was received from Ms M McStay in relation to her daughter Claire McStay, a student in Omagh Campus, STEP Programme. He noted the appreciation and gratitude from Ms McStay in relation to the teams commitment, particularly during Covid-19 closure and to caretakers, admin staff and other lectures whom have supported the programme in ensuring they have a safe and secure area in the college.

In relation to the Governing Body self-assessment analysis report, the Chair commented to acknowledge the report and noted the board would take learnings from the report.

The meeting concluded at 7:20 pm.

CONFIRMED BY THE GOVERNING BODY AT A MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 13 JANUARY 2021



CHAIRMAN _____

DATE 13/01/2021

SUMMARY OF OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

	Meeting Date	Minute Ref	Action
1	16/09/2020	5.6	An update of the current status of the College Development Plan is to be presented to the Governing Body later in the year.
2	11/11/2020	7.0	Update on the Erne Campus Marketing Plan to be provided at the January Governing Body meeting.