



*Mission Statement: Inspiring learning, developing character, building futures*

## **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CORPORATION OF BLACKPOOL SIXTH FORM COLLEGE**

**Date: Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> July 2020 at 5.00-6.40pm  
Virtual meeting**

**Present:** Ms W Middlemas (Chair)  
Ms J Gray (Principal)  
Cllr D Clapham  
Ms D Taaffe  
Ms C Coyne  
Cllr C Baxter  
Reverend S Haskett  
Mr C Simkins OBE  
Ms J Mannino  
Ms A Newton-Leeming  
Mr N Webster  
Mr A Burr  
Mr M Hellewell  
Mr J Saunders

**Together with:** Ms G Yeadon (Deputy Principal)  
Mr A Lloyd (Vice-Principal: Information Systems and IT)  
Ms T Cooper (Vice Principal: Vocational)  
Ms S Benson (Vice-Principal: Academic)  
Mrs S Hawitt (Governance Administrator-FCAT)

### **06.2020 Preliminaries**

The meeting took place using Google Hangouts

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. She noted the size of the agenda and the number of papers and asked that directors focus their attention on 'Centre Assessment Grades' and 'lost learning'

There were no apologies.

#### **Farewells**

The Chair took the opportunity to thank Stephanie Benson (Assistant Principal: Academic) for all her hard work and attendance on the board, she wished her the very best in her future role as Head of Teaching and Learning at the college.

The Chair noted the retirement of the Upper Sixth Student Director, Matt Hellewell and thanked him for his positive contribution to the governing body. She noted he had been an excellent student director and brought real value to the board and wished him well for the future. A gift had been sent to him.

The Chair also took the opportunity to bid farewell to Alan Lloyd (Vice Principal: Resources) who is retiring from the college in August. She particularly thanked him for all his work project managing the college build over the years and more, recently, supporting directors with IT. Directors had arranged a gift for him to thank him for all his hard work and service to the governing body.

And lastly the Chair congratulated the college on winning the prestigious National BTEC College of the Year Award. This is a real accolade for the college and is the result of much hard work.

**07.2020 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**08.2020 Consideration of any items of urgent business.**

There were no items of urgent business to discuss.

**09.2020 Confirmation of Quoracy**

It was noted the meeting was quorate.

**10.2020 Minutes of the meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2019**

Minutes of the meeting (via email) on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2019 were approved.

**11.2020 Matters arising from the minutes not covered elsewhere on the agenda**

There were no matters arising from the minutes not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

**12.2020 College Action Plan**

Directors received the College Action Plan (paper 7.1) presented by the Deputy Principal (DP). She noted it was pleasing to see how much had been achieved despite of the 'lockdown' and wanted to thank the staff for all their hard work, especially moving into a virtual world and the way they have supported the students.

**13.2020 Learning and Development**

Directors received an update on Learning and Development (paper 8.1) presented by the DP and were invited to ask questions, there were no questions to answer, however directors noted that the report was excellent.

**14.2020 Compliments, Concerns and Complaints (CCC)**

Directors received a summary of the CCC report for the year 2019/20 (paper 9.1) presented by the DP. She highlighted the fact that that due to the current Covid-19 situation the report does not give a full picture due to college closure, however the report gives an idea of how staff deal with complaints which is effective and there are no particular concerns at present.

It was noted that a number of surveys had gone out during the lockdown period and the response had been excellent. The student survey received nearly 400 respondents which noted that they are

really happy with their learning level and the contact they had received from staff.

### **Questions from Directors**

In response to a question about staff complaints rising from 2 to 5 from the previous year it was noted that there are sometimes small fluctuations depending on how the complaint has been categorised, there would only be cause for concern if we start to see a 3-year trend. Directors asked about zero rating for compliments for teaching and learning and why compliments received are not recorded in this report, it was noted that only external compliments are recorded in this report due to the fact there are so many internal compliments. The DP agreed to consider this for future recording.

### **15.2020 Directors CPD-Centre Accessed Grades presented by Alan Lloyd (Vice Principal: Resources)**

Directors received a brief overview of the new system for centre assessed grades used by the college presented by the Vice-Principal (VP) he highlighted the following;

Centre Assessment Grades are based on data already in the system including, mock data, the last three key assessments and professional judgement of teaching staff on students' performance. This information helped staff to give an overall assessed grade for each subject the student studied.

To make sure grades are fair between schools and colleges exam boards will put all centre assessment grades through a process of standardisation using a model developed by Ofqual.

College assessment grades went through a number of internal steps to quality assure the grades which included, subject teachers and their Heads of Department (HoD) looking at the data for each student and discussing the centre assessed grade awarded and why they had arrived at this grade.

The next step was a meeting between the HoD and their SLT link who quality assured the grades questioning grades for each student and making adjustments or justifications as required.

The final quality assurance measure was a meeting between the Principal and the SLT link to discuss the grading. Therefore, directors can be reassured that a robust and very fair process has been undertaken. The final stage was the Management Information Systems and Exam (MIEX) team uploading the data to the relevant exam board. The Principal as Head of Centre then was required to confirm each student's grades with each awarding organisation.

Directors were informed that the process for assessing BTEC grades had been much more difficult and time consuming. Centres have been asked to provide unit grades for completed units and also predict a grade based on the most likely grade students would have achieved for units due to be completed between March and July. In addition to this exam boards required year one data despite the students not completing their qualification until the following year.

Colleges were then required to rank in order each student within each grade, e.g. A\*1, A\*2, A\*3, etc. They were also required to rank BTEC students by grade but combining both year 1 and year 2 students together making the process extremely difficult.

The Principal informed directors that it had taken many weeks to get the data right but with the system created by the VP made the process so much easier and more efficient.

### **Questions from Directors**

In response to a question about what's next and how the college will prepare for any appeals or complaints about predicted grades, it was noted that the Head of MIEX had completed training with lawyers from the Sixth Form College Association (SFCA) in preparation on how to deal with such complaints should they arise.

In response to a question about who will sit on the appeals panel and are we ready for any complaints it was noted that the Department for Education (DfE) have been very strict on appeals, appeals can only be logged against statistical data error and not teachers' professional judgement.

In response to a question about the facility for ex-students to sit exams in the Autumn term it was noted that the intention for students wishing to re-sit exams can do so at their original centre.

In response to a question about a resit grade below the original predicted grade it was noted that the student can claim the higher of the two.

Asked about displaced learning and how this will be covered, it was acknowledged that the next few months are going to be challenging; however, students are saying they have made progress using the online facilities available. It was stated that college have a duty to cover the full syllabus.

It was noted that SLT are working to find opportunities for more teaching time in the next academic year by adjusting the December mock exams and redesigning the exam structure as requested by Ofqual.

Asked about how the year one ranking for BTECs will be used if a similar CAG process is required next year, it was noted that colleges have been reassured that the predicted rankings will not be used. It was noted that staff are pleased that students will receive a predicted grade for units not completed.

In response to a question about feedback from the exam board regarding data sent, it was noted that this won't be known until results day when they may down/upgrade as they see fit, however results look to be in line with the previous 3 years with no dramatic changes.

Directors thanked the team for rising to the challenge and providing a thorough example how to collect and scrutinise data.

In response to a question about how results will be delivered it was noted that results will be emailed out to all students, however some face to face and telephone conversation will be provided should the students require this level of support.

Some students will be asked to provide interesting stories and will be interviewed remotely to ensure college can collect some footage for marketing purposes.

In response to a question about how much thought had gone into dealing with student appeals from school, it was noted that the government had acknowledged that enrolment will be a tricky time for some students. Blackpool Sixth will carry out enrolment online, face to face and at home. The Principal stated that staff had been really creative in their approach to enrolment and there have been some wonderful ideas to ensure a smooth transition/induction period for students. Diagnostic testing is taking place early in the term to identify any gaps in learning so that teaching can plan accordingly.

#### **16.2020 Student Support Report**

Directors received and considered the Student Support report, June 2020 (paper 11.1) presented by the DP. Directors were asked to provide any feedback on the new format of the report and were invited to ask questions.

##### **Questions from Directors**

Directors asked if the safeguarding team had sufficient resources to deal with any expected spikes in safeguarding referrals due to the pandemic once students return to every day education. It was noted that the team have sufficient resources and are already planning how to support students on their return to college including a student survey to find out how situations have changed and what support is required. Directors were informed that in addition to the team a mental health worker will be in post for one day a week.

#### **17.2020 Student Director Report**

Directors received the student director report (paper 12.1) presented by the upper sixth student and were invited to ask questions, there were no questions to answer. The Principal thanked the student director for his commitment and said how fantastic he had been and it had been a pleasure working with him.

*SLT left the Google meet*

#### **18.2020 Strategic Development Plan**

Directors received the Strategic Development Plan 2020-2025 (paper 13.1) presented by the Principal, she noted that the strategic priorities had changed ever so slightly since the directors' annual conference in January. It was noted that any changes directly linked to Covid-19 had been recorded on a separate risk register. Directors were invited to ask questions.

There were no questions to answer.

**18.2020 D1 Resolved: Directors approved the Strategic Development Plan**

## **19.2020 Professional Support**

The Principal gave a verbal update on professional support for staff, directors were informed that two members of staff on professional support had worked exceptionally hard, however due to the current pandemic situation and no exam results it was agreed based on strong evidence of student support over the year to take both members of staff off professional support. Directors were also informed that all staff will not be judged or held to account for their data during their personal development reviews in the next academic term both internally and externally.

## **20.2020 Principal's Report**

The Principal presented her report (paper 14.1) to directors, she gave further updates since the report was written which included, 76 more student applications compared to this time last year. The market share is -1.4pp compared to last year, however the gap had closed to 2pp since June. Directors were informed of a very successful new student day where 634 students joined in the virtual event. It was noted that there had been a 3-year decline in applications from the three Blackpool FCAT schools. These figures had been shared with FCAT directors, it was agreed this is possibly down to aspirations and requires a change of culture.

Directors were informed of a generous donation from the will of Gordon Halliwell, a long-standing friend of Blackpool Sixth. It was noted that a committee had been formed including two directors to discuss potential projects.

The Principal highlighted some key college achievements which included;

- Achieving 1st place the UK Colleges Social Media Rankings (out of 486 colleges) for June 2020. The college was 7<sup>th</sup> in May.
- Staff survey had been completed with an exceptional response rate of 83% a 12pp increase on last year. One of the key areas of focus in recent years to improve communications and this had increased by 10pp to 88%, which was a fantastic achievement. The Principal will share the full report with directors in the Autumn term

Directors were informed that the sponsorship of FCAT is now going through the process of dissolution, it was agreed this is a celebration of how much FCAT has improved, the college will still continue to support all schools within the Blackpool area.

### **Questions from Directors**

Asked if the decline in numbers from Blackpool schools is related to students going onto higher education in schools, it was noted that destinations are not tracked the same in schools therefore this information is not clear.

In response to a question about the new structure of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), the Principal gave an update of the roles and responsibilities of SLT.

**21.2020 Report on Chairs' action since the last meeting**

The Chair gave a verbal update on how she had kept in touch with the Principal over this tricky period, she also highlighted one of the training webinars that had been really useful, especially in ways to improve the self-assessment (SA) framework for directors something she will work on with the chair of the SA committee. She informed directors that she had visited the college to look at the adaptations made in preparation for when the students return and was pleased with how well plans have been implemented.

**22.2020 Safeguarding**

Directors received the minutes of the FCAT Safeguarding Board meeting (paper 15.1) held on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> February 2020

### **Committee Meetings**

**23.2020 Standards Board held on 5<sup>th</sup> May 2020**

Directors received the minutes of the Standards Board meeting for approval (paper 18.1)

**23.2020 D1 Resolved: to receive the minutes of the meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> May 2020**

**24.2020 Governance Self-Assessment held on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2020**

Directors received the minutes of the Self-Assessment meeting for approval (paper 19.1)

**24.2020 D1 Resolved: to receive the minutes of the SA meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2020**

**25.2020 Search and Governance held on 15<sup>th</sup> June 2020**

The Chair of the Search and Governance committee gave a summary of the meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> June 2020 and presented various committee issues for approval. He informed directors that a vacancy had arisen on the board for a financial expert and asked for their help in recruitment

**25.2020 D1 Resolved: to receive the minutes of the meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> June 2020**

**25.2020 D2 Resolved: approve the appointment of Jed Saunders Upper Sixth Student to the Administration and Finance committee**

**25.2020 D3 Resolved: to approve the extension to the term of office for the Chair of the Corporation for a further two years**

**25.2020 D4 Resolved: to approve the extension to the term of office for the Vice-Chair of Standards Board for a further two years**

**25.2020 D5 Resolved: to approve directors' calendar of meeting 2020/21**

**26.2020 Administration and Finance held on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2020**

Directors received the minutes of the Administration and Finance meeting (paper 21.1) and various financial reports for approval. The Chair of the A&F committee gave a summary of the discussions that

took place at the meeting particularly around the draft budget held on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2020

It was noted that no confirmation had been received from the ESFA in regards to pension funding continuing beyond March 2021 therefore no income had been included in the budget for the last 4 months of the year. If funding was confirmed it would move the budget closer to a balanced position.

The Chair reiterated for directors the agreement to approve a deficit budget over 6 years and the agreement of the £750K from reserves which may need to be increased, it was noted that it is difficult to plan ahead during these uncertain times and that budgets are constanly being reviewed.

**Questions from directors**

In response to a question about the Brexit deadline looming and what that may mean for colleges in terms of price increases from suppliers, it was noted that the SFCA are fantastic and send weekly updates on current situations.

In response to a question about colleges applying for government loans during the Covid-19 pandemic, it was noted that there are no loans available for colleges, however if the bursary funding is spent the college can apply for top up funds to pay for free meals.

**26.2020 D1 Resolved: to receive the minutes of the meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2020**

**26.2020 D2 Resolved: to approve Directors Financial Report for the period ending 30<sup>th</sup> April 2020**

**26.2020 D3 Resolved: to approve the draft budget 2020/21**

**27.2020 A.O.B**

There was no other business to discuss

**28.2020 Identification of any new or amended risks**

No identification of new or amended risks

**Date and Time of next meeting**

1<sup>st</sup> December at 5pm

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_