WM College: Working Men's College Corporation Board

Minutes of meeting on 28 March, Crowndale Rd

	Appointed Governors			Attendance
1	Susan	Corby		Y
2	Fran	Fahey		Y
3	Neil	Garner		Y
4	June	Jarrett		Y
5	Samata	Khatoon		Y
6	Ben	Lonsdale		Y
7	Lukas	Mandangu		Y
8	Alexi	Marmot		Y
9	Tom	Robins		Y
10	Alice	Rubbra		Apologies
11	Guy	Shackle	Chair	Y
12	Jon	Sibson		Y
13	Max	Silver		Y
	Nominated Governors			
	Dipa	Ganguli	Principal	Y
	Staff Governors			
	Amanda	Blinkhorn		Y
	Monica	Kinasiewicz		Y
	Student Governors			
	Peter	Knowland		Y
	Officers Attending			
	Diana	Teesdale		Y
	Korede	Obasaju		Y
	Bill	Barker		Y
	Others Attending			
	Joanna	Davidson		Y

1	**Welcome** Bill Barker (BB, Clerk) opened the meeting. He was pleased to see that almost everyone was in attendance and advised that he had moved the room to accommodate numbers. Particular welcome to Joanna Davidson (Chair designate) and Korede Obasaju, VP. Apologies for absence: Alice Rubbra. Declarations of Interest None <u>Chair's Introduction</u> Guy Shackle (GS, Chair) presented a set of slides from the opening of the relocated Mary Ward Centre, now in modern premises in Stratford, East London. He reminded governors of the recent arrangements for Chair of the College: Janet Whitaker, Ruth Silver, Selwyn Midgen, Tom Schuller, and of the principalship of Satnam Gill from 1999 –2014. This period had been one of significant and lasting change for the College. GS remarked that his term as Chair was bracketed by Ofsted inspections in 2018 and 2024. The College had been assessed as a "good" provider on both occasions. The College had weathered the Covid period well – the move to on-line learning accomplished on a robust IT platform, and subsequent recovery in terms of learner /enrolment volumes and fee income. GS thanked Helen Hammond, Martin Jones and Maria Rosenthal for their resilience during the Covid period and the immediate aftermath. He was pleased to have been the Chair at the time of the appointments of the new Principal in April 2023 and Diana Teesdale as Deputy Principal. He made reference to a number of buildings related issues that had been addressed, partially addressed or not yet addressed. He thanked Alexi Marmot for her work leading the oversight of the Mixed Mode Heating and Ventilation (MMHV) works. He made reference to the works that remained to be done and offered to help in any way that the new Chair and Principal might want.	
2	**Principal's Report:** Dipa Ganguli (DG, Principal) introduced her report thanking governors for their recent work supporting the College: Library opening, Strategy Day and Ofsted.	

	DG advised that Targeted Learning the new name for Community Learning – the implications of learners having to declare one of two reasons for participation may reach beyond a simple change in name to impact on future funding. Learner destinations / progression – no longer to be tracked through ILR Meeting with GLA £30k for Free Courses for Jobs (FCfJ) for 2024/25 - not consolidated. Development of room 802 to host re-located printing and etching Development of 004 to provide a CAD suite: base funding from GLA, part-matched from LSIP funds, but still £25K required to complete the match. Governors agree this £25k transfer from reserves. Marketing: DG advised that Fiona Carthy had recently died. The future of Carthy Associates was still to be determined. The College might wish to bring the management of the function (web site, course guide, social media, advertising, press releases etc) in-house. <u>Appendices</u>: Ofsted report: Diana Teesdale (DT, Deputy Principal) advised that Ofsted had assessed all areas as good, but none as outstanding: she explained that Ofsted would only assess an area (EIF element) as outstanding if **all** its constituent parts were outstanding. There two areas where the College would make particular efforts to implement changes: SEND Dean House Studios (Kentish Town): DG thanked governors who had driven the move to leave Leighton Place and to arrange for the displaced courses to take place at Deane House Studios or, in the case of printing, at Crowndale Rd. DG advised that the College had made a payment of c£34k in response to an urgent request for legal fees from fraudulent solicitors. Governors asked about arrangements that were in place or would be put in place to strengthen the College's IT, financial and employee awareness codes so as to diminish a recurrence. Tom Robins (TR, Chair of Audit Committee) advised that arrangements were in place: the payment had been made as a result of a combination of the normal safeguards not being properly observed and the absence of senior staff in post or on site to provide oversight. Disciplinary warnings had been issued. No further disciplinary investigation was proposed. This was agreed.	

3	**Strategy** **Strategic Plan draft and consultation.** DG introduced the 3 year Strategic Plan: August 2024 –2027. This remained a draft subject to consultation with College partners, supporters and stakeholders. The Board on 10 July would agree the Plan and measures for monitoring of progress on its implementation. Themes: what makes the College special Diversification of funding to ensure funding for mission core provision (cross-subsidy) (Draft plan separately published -????? Consultation **Funding and Accountability Statement (FAS) process:** The (FAS) would follow the format of last year. It would be informed by the Skills report provided to Ofsted. Detailed scrutiny at the CQSC and circulated to governors for comment by exception. To be submitted by end of June. **AoC Code of Good Governance 2023 – for adoption at July meeting** BB, Clerk, advised that this was recommended by the AoC for adoption in advance of the 2024/25 college year. He advised that there were some implications for the members of the Board that might be considered most productively in the light of the External Board Review. BB advised that he would prepare a paper for the Board in July that would bring together actions recommended of Board members so as comply with the AoC Code and the EBR outcomes.	
4	**Minutes of the December 2023 Meeting** **Matters arising not part of the current agenda** **The minutes were agreed.** **Update from actions:** **External Board Review** **BB advised that he had approached Stone King and HFL Education (HFLE). Stone King were fully committed and so unable to take on additional work. HFLE had met with DG and JD to revise the scope of their standard process.**	

	Survey: week beginning 22 April **Meeting with Chair, Principal, Vice-Chairs and Safeguarding governor 30 April (MS Teams on-line)** **"Findings / Facilitation meeting" 05 June before CQSC, Crowndale Rd.** **Summary and Plan to be published on website** **Cost: £1,600 + VAT:** **The appointment of HFLE was agreed and the cost approved.** **All these compliance matters would be in place for "FE Commissioner" - Strategic Conversation in August / September:** **(Strategic Plan, Adoption of AoC Code, EBR review and actions)**	
5	**Financial Monitoring** Management Accounts to January 31, 2024 (Q2 – 6 months) Korede Obasaju (KO, VP) introduced the management accounts which had been considered at the FPDC. He advised that at this stage in the year there were no reasons to anticipate an outturn at variance from the budget. The additional funding of £155K from the GLA presented an opportunity to reduce the year-end deficit. Staff cost as a percentage of income remained high in comparison with sector norms. In-year and longer-term restructuring plans are to be developed as envisaged in the Strategic Plan. DG advised that direct comparisons should be reviewed with caution: the WMC staff cost ratio to income was high as WMC employed staff directly for services which were outsourced in other colleges On June 19 the FPDC would consider a draft budget 2024/25, which as amended would be presented to the Board for approval in July. DG and KO advised that setting of service and delivery department budgets would be more accurately prepared and scrutinised for 2024/25	
6	**Staff governors' report** **Amanda Blinkhorn (AB, teacher governor) and Monika Kinasiewicz (MK, Support staff governor) reported n the recent staff forums.** **Items considered:**	

	How to improve communications (learners, staff and governors) **Governor link arrangements: could be better defined and arranged.** **Marketing: not informed by staff – not targeted** **Governors thanked AB and MK for organising the staff forums and for this report.** **DG welcomed this report and the fact that the forums were taking place.**	
7	**Reports from Committees (minutes introduced by Committee Chairs)**	
7.1	**Audit Committee:** Tom Robins (TR, Chair of Audit) advised that the Committee had welcomed the accreditation for Cyber Essentials. He advised that this certification was a first significant achievement. He looked forward to future opportunities to inform the Board of additional measures to secure the College IT environment.	
7.1i	**Appointment of Buzzacott as Financial Statements Auditors for year ending 31 July 2024 – for agreement. This was agreed.** The Board agreed that the work should be re-tendered for the year ending 31 July 2025. The AC did not consider a further appointment of Buzzacott would not be good practice. **Re tendering of Financial Statements Auditors for Julu 2025 agreed.** The arrangements for professional advice to the AC would be reviewed. The AC was keen to diversify the advisors so as to achieve the best advice. **He would report to the Board in July with recommendations.**	
7.2	**CQSC:** Jon Sibson (JS, Chair of CQSC) reported that the performance (delivery) to contract was satisfactory and not over-achieving. The Committee had welcomed a report from DT about the Ofsted inspection (above). The Progression event had been well attended. The College would bring forward a report on employer engagement and learner progression to employment for the Committee in June. The Funding and Accountability Statement would be considered at the Committee in June: it would be in a similar format to last year, updated by the Skills Statement prepared for Ofsted delivery initiatives to enhance skills development, especially the strengthening of employer engagement.	

	The Statement would be circulated to all members to all members of the Board for approval prior to submission to the ESFA. **This arrangement was agreed.**	
7.3	**FPDC:** Max Silver (MS, Chair of FPDC) reported to the Board commenting that some of the items - management accounts and enrolments / funding – had been considered at an earlier stage in the meeting. MS advised that £155k additional funding had been received for the current year: this was not consolidated though an element £35k for Free Courses for Jobs had been confirmed for 2024/25 - not consolidated beyond. Staffing arrangements were under review with all opportunities to reduce costs being considered. Savings would be achieved through re-structuring and review of staffing as vacancies arise. <u>Financial Regulations.</u> The regulations had been amended to achieve greater efficiency whilst maintaining the overall control framework. <u>Estates</u> Works at 44 Crowndale Rd – positive developments to be further considered in the summer. Leighton Place and Deane House: MS welcomed the work that the executive had done on the viability of provision at Deane House. (LP exit costs, and lease off-set for DH provisioning) **Business Model** In the autumn the FPDC would review the College's base business model and how this would support the College's mission. This assessment would inform the progress and evaluation of the Strategic Plan	
8	**Risk Register: re-assignment of risks to Committees** (aggregation of risks for AC to consider and make proposals)	
9	**Governance:** Board Membership: New Members: Joanna Davidson, Peter Knowland:	

	agreed 3 year terms reviews: Max Silver: agreed Election of Chair and Vice Chairs: June Jarrett (JJ, Chair of the Search Committee) advised that the Committee was recommending that Joanna Davidson assume the role of Chair with effect from 29 March 2024. **This was agreed** JS and MS vice chairs. BB advised that JS and MS had indicated that they would present themselves for continued office for a period sufficient for the new Chair to determine future Board structures and organisation. **This was agreed.** RFSA nominee: Alexi Marmot to continue for a further period of at least a year. **This was agreed.**	
10	**Dates for summer term.** Date of next meeting: **change to 10 July (17:30 at Crowndale Rd) - agreed.** Budget 2024/25	



Signed: _____

Joanna Davidson, Chair of Governors

10 July 2024