



SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE AND STROUD COLLEGE
FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION

Approved minutes of a meeting of South Gloucestershire and Stroud College
Further Education Corporation
Held on 2 July 2020, via Microsoft Teams

Present:	David Hagg	(Chair)
	Sophie Chester-Glyn	
	Lynne Craig	
	Mike Croker	
	Matt Davis	
	Carly Dyson	
	Phil Eames	
	Roger Ellis	
	Sophie Green	
	Kevin Hamblin	(CEO & Executive Principal)
	Martin Jones	
	Joe Lamonby	
	Dave Merrett	
Moyra Pascoe		
In Attendance:	Rich Aitken	(Head of Finance)
	Alicia Chappell	(Student Governor for 2020/21 academic year)
	Gavin Murray	(Vice Principal, Performance, Standards & Effectiveness)
	Jude Saunderson	(Chief Financial Officer)
	Sara-Jane Watkins	(College Principal)
	Sharon Glover	(Clerk)

Martin Jones (Vice-Chair of the Corporation) opened the meeting by welcoming Alicia Chappell, one of the newly appointed Student Governors for the 2020/21 academic year, to her first Corporation meeting.

1. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Moira Foster-Fitzgerald and Ben Short. Charlotte Argust and Juno Sharrock did not attend the meeting.

2. Election of Chair and Vice-Chairs

Martin Jones advised that as part of succession planning the intent was for David Hagg to take over from Moyra Pascoe as Chair of the Corporation. The Clerk reported that nominations had been received for David Hagg as Chair of the Corporation and Sophie Green as Vice-Chair of the Corporation.

- a) Moyra Pascoe proposed and Martin Jones seconded David Hagg's appointment as Chair of the Corporation and David Hagg was unanimously elected.
- b) Moyra Pascoe proposed and Carly Dyson seconded Sophie Green's appointment as Vice-Chair of the Corporation and Sophie Green was unanimously elected.

Members were informed that only one nomination was received for Vice-Chair of the Corporation and as there were two Vice-Chair positions it was proposed that the second position remained open and revisited next July or earlier if needed.

It was resolved:

- a) To appoint David Hagg as Chair of the Corporation with effect from 1 August 2020 to 31 July 2021.**
- b) To appoint Sophie Green as Vice-Chair of the Corporation with effect from 1 August 2020 to 31 July 2021.**
- c) To keep the 2nd Vice-Chair of the Corporation position open and revisit next July or earlier if needed.**

At this point Martin Jones handed over to David Hagg, as Chair designate, to chair the meeting. David Hagg congratulated Sophie Green on her appointment and reported that this would be the last meeting of Martin Jones and Joe Lamonby. Both governors were thanked for their commitment and contribution to the Corporation. Due to his extraordinary length of service as a SGS governor and formerly a governor at Stroud College Martin Jones received special thanks and a presentation from the Corporation.

David Hagg also thanked Moyra Pascoe for her time as Chair of the Corporation and was delighted that Moyra would be continuing as a governor.

Members were also informed that agenda item 17 would be un-starred as the recommendation in the report required discussion.

3. **Declarations of Interest**

The following declarations of interest were raised:

- As Directors of SGSCSL, David Hagg, Kevin Hamblin and Martin Jones declared their interests in agenda item 10 (SGSCSL report) and approval of the SGSCSL Financial Plan as part of agenda item 11 (Financial Planning).
- As Trustees of SGSAT, Phil Eames and Kevin Hamblin declared their interests in SGSAT Statement of Assurance (item 19).

4. **Other Items of Urgent Business**

There were no other items of urgent business received.

5. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held 4 June 2020 were approved for signing.

6. **Matters Arising From Those Minutes**

- a) Actions from the action log were monitored and updates provided. The CEO & Executive Principal reported that following guidance received that day a further update to the Health & Safety policy would be required for September and would need sign off before the next meeting. It was agreed that Chair's action is to be taken to approve any revisions and the policy presented at the next Corporation meeting for ratification.

7. **CEO & Executive Principal's Report**

The CEO & Executive Principal reported on the following:

- a) Following discussions at SGSCSL about two alternative models for the company it was felt that there was change for changes sake and in order to inform the Corporation of the wider benefits of the subsidiary company an annual report should be presented to Corporation. It was felt that if money was transferred from the John Huggett Engineering Hall and credited to SGSCSL this was just moving money between the Group. If this approach is acceptable to the Corporation it will be picked up as part of agenda item 10.
- b) Accommodation at WISE campus – The Challenger campus was intended to replace the A38 campus and to handle future growth. Although discussions continue with South Gloucestershire Council this project is considered to be a slow burner. Therefore, alternative development opportunities at WISE are being considered, one of these being student accommodation around the

attenuation pond. This concept is in its infancy and any such business case will be presented to Corporation in the first instance. Members questioned the change in direction for Higher Education as previous discussions have centred on the untapped HE potential in the area and asked whether any market research on the uptake had been undertaken. At this stage, the CEO & Executive Principal advised that from a master planning point of view different options are being explored, especially as there is insufficient accommodation for HE students in Bristol due to take up by UWE and Bristol University. Members were informed that pressure on FE funding will continue and with a rise in HE numbers predicted there are decisions to be made in relation to size of the HE market for SGS. Following discussion it was agreed that further detail is required on the broader context and strategic fit.

The report was noted.

8. **Principal's Report**

The College Principal reported on the following:

- a) Re-opening of the College, including staff well-being – The re-opening framework was provided at the last meeting. Working with the Unions and College leadership team continues and the College re-opened on 17 June 2020. There are 12 phases planned between now and September. Current year 12s were invited into the College and 50% of learners attended, in comparison to 40% attendance for schools. Some learners are in lockdown and public transport is the greatest barrier to get learners to the College. September applicants were also invited into the College and 35% of applicants attended. There has been a positive response from staff and learners in relation to the safety of the College. Construction students are on site to complete their end point assessments with Hair and Beauty having a phased approach. The government has issued policy documentation for a return of learners to a full time education programme by September. Every cohort will be delivered in a “bubble” with learners returning on site for one day a week for the first month combined with blended delivery. This will be increased to two days in October in consultation with the Unions. Following the issue of a staff survey there was over 95% completion rate and staff are positive about returning to work. Detailed analysis was appended to the report. The HR Team have contacted BME staff to offer further support and discuss the issues being raised in the press. A risk assessment for staff has been compiled with staff briefed and measures put in place. One of the Staff Governors echoed the statements made in that staff feel well supported. Changes made within the College had been

impressive and although the flow of movement has been restricted this has been well handled. Members congratulated the College on the number of learners who did attend College.

Members questioned whether there are any plans to make available examinations in the autumn for those learners not content with their assessments. The College Principal advised that if learners are not content then they will need to return to their original provider. However, the College's aim will be for learners to focus on their next stage of education rather than reflect on historical results. The Vice Principal reported that AQA and OCR intend to stagger GCSE's over October, with GCSEs in November as usual. The College has increased its physical capacity to support disadvantaged groups or those who can't return to their former school.

The Chair reported that regular meetings of the COVID-19 Group are taking place and the work undertaken by the CEO & Executive Principal and College Principal to re-open the College was exemplary and in advance of other institutions.

- b) Safeguarding – Appended to the report was a Safeguarding update. There are 22 learners that the College are concerned with over the summer and weekly safeguarding panels to support these individuals will continue. Thanks were attributed to Gavin Murray (Vice Principal) who had delivered 1000 days to vulnerable learners with staff volunteers.
- c) Annual Conversations – These stand at 97% completion which is a superb position to be in which is at least 6 months earlier than in previous years.
- d) Confidential Item.
- e) Level of engagement of learners – The College continues to actively engage with all learners and prospective learners are submitting work as required by the Prepared programme. Thanks were provided to the Vice Principal for the work undertaken. Members noted that the government are locking down certain areas of the country and asked whether the College receives sufficient government communication in this respect. The Principal confirmed that the College is working closely with WECA and Gloucestershire Local Authority and also receives Public Health England updates. Members asked whether the College will receive COVID-19 funding for building adjustments. Members were informed that there is no funding available however the Clerk had circulated a communication from the Secretary of State for Education in relation to £200m capital investment for the sector with further information expected to follow in the near future.

- f) Apprenticeship update – A number of furloughed construction apprentices have now returned to work. Great progress has been made with a 72% success rate forecast for 2019/20 with credit attributable to the Assistant Principal Apprentices and his team.
- g) Adult and Community – community learning has been paused and an assessment will be undertaken when further communication is received.
- h) Higher Education – Correspondence from the Office for Students continues to be reviewed. There is positive growth and the business plan has been achieved with weekly briefings taking place to HE applicants.
- i) AoC rebuild plan – The College has written to all 8 local MPs asking them to support the AoC’s rebuild plan. A positive response has been received with some MPs wanting to meet with SGS.
- j) College Collaboration Fund Programme – A bid has been submitted in partnership with City of Bristol College to enable the collaboration and sharing of good practice and provides an opportunity to co-design a unified apprenticeship offer. Due to tight timescales faced Chair’s urgent action was taken to sign off the application and ratification of Chair’s action was sought.
- k) Funding concerns – Adult Education Budget curriculum and delivery plan has been submitted to WECA together with a revised payment profile to help manage performance against WECA’s published performance regulations.
- l) Full-time 16-19 Application numbers – Application numbers remain ahead of last year and acceptances continue to look very positive. Converting applicants is key however public transport is proving the greatest challenge and is being discussed with WECA and Gloucestershire Local Authority. Members commented that numbers are looking healthy and whether there would be a need to limit numbers due to factors arising from COVID-19. The Principal advised that the business plan can accommodate up to 4,000 FE learners and there would be a need for exceptional growth to turn learners away. It is anticipated that learners will wait for their results and parents remain undecided on where their children should study. A growth in adult learners is expected due to future unemployment. The CEO & Executive Principal felt that students may stay on at school if taking A levels and if there is no apprenticeship provision then learners will need to be retained at College or they will become NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training). The College is trying to convince WECA of the need for “pop-up” centres in order to free up space within the College for young people. There is a risk that the College could see a late surge in numbers which is a concern as the College would not want to turn learners away. In order to support growth the need for the curriculum to remain responsive and agile was raised and the College is also looking into filming delivery for access by shielded learners.

Members raised that some learners are concerned about working in care homes and when asked confirmation was received that this has been considered and risk assessed.

Members asked whether there is contingency planning in place due to a reduction in apprenticeships in the construction industry. The Principal reported that the College is working with CITB and levy organisations. There is a planned reduction in the business plan and the delivery has been adjusted accordingly.

The report was noted and it was resolved:

To ratify the Chair's action taken to agree and sign off the bid for the College Collaboration Fund programme in partnership with City of Bristol College.

9. **Management Information**

- a) Management Accounts exception report - The Head of Finance reported a year end forecast surplus of £1.3m due to government income being secured earlier on and a reduction in operational spend. However, there is a caveat that some costs have been carried forward into next year but as much expenditure as possible has been brought forward to this year. There is no provision for a pay award in the budget and should a pay award be included a £1m surplus is forecast. New costs have arisen as a result of COVID-19 and £100k has been spent on PPE with stocks replenished for the summer and start of the new academic year. Members congratulated the College on the positive outturn and reference was made to the detailed management accounts in the document library on Convene which shows big movements in admin and central services but overall a good result. Members also questioned whether the cash was secure from Aaramark and confirmation was received that it was and overall it was a cash neutral position.

The report was noted.

At this point the Chief Financial Officer left the meeting due to connectivity issues.

- b) Primary Risk Registers (including SGSCSL) risk register – Mike Croker (Chair of the Audit Committee) advised that the Audit Committee had suggested that the Corporation receive the top 10 risks for ease of review and invited Corporations' view on the frequency of reporting. Following discussion it was agreed that the current termly reporting should remain however if a severe risk materialises the Corporation need to be made aware of this. It was also suggested that a summary table and summary of key points would prove useful.

Members raised that there are two risks relating to building conditions and maintenance and assurance was sought that there was sufficient in the budget to keep the estate in the required condition. The Head of Finance confirmed that there had been a 20% increase in the maintenance budget and each year there is a capital estates budget of £500k set aside. The College is currently looking at the prioritisation of this spend as there is uncertainty of additional modifications required as a result of COVID-19. Also recent government announcements of capital funding for Colleges need to be borne in mind.

The report was noted.

10. **SGS Commercial Services Limited**

Confidential Item.

11. **Financial Planning**

Confidential Item.

12. **Progress against the Improvement Plan, including Higher Education Improvement Plan**

The Vice Principal presented the report and apologised for a formatting issue in the improvement plan; which has now been rectified. It was reported that the plan has been linked to the College's strategic priorities and comes to an end in 2020. However, it is too soon to measure the impacts and some actions will continue into next year with progress becoming clearer as part of the annual self-assessment review. Members were also informed that completion of annual conversations now stood at 97%.

Members noted the low attendance in English and Maths and questioned whether there were other Colleges doing better that the College could learn from. The Vice Principal reported that the problem was exacerbated this year as there was a lead in period of up to four weeks to establish the groups but there is now a clear understanding of the starting points for September. One Corporation Member advised that although 75% wasn't considered to be good, most other institutions are only achieving 70% therefore in comparison with others SGS is doing very well.

In the light of Black Lives Matters, members asked about the British Values lessons and what is covered to ensure that it is wide ranging. Members were informed that teaching Fundamental British Values is a statutory education policy. Prior to roll out of this policy consultation was undertaken and the training materials were based on the Commonwealth's aims and outcomes matrix to support the historical analysis and not the Prevent Duty. The united values of SGS are then promoted and embedded through College policies.

The report was noted.

13. **Annual Voice of the Learner report, including review of the Stakeholder Engagement & Involvement Plan & Higher Education Students as Partners Strategy**

Following scrutiny of the report, members questioned whether the lower result of the percentage of learners who say their online lessons have been interactive and interesting is of concern. Members were informed that 56% is based on feedback pre COVID-19 and lockdown when interactive activity was not as high and there has been a far greater focus on interactivity post Covid-19 and lockdown.

Confirmation was received that the College had followed up and held a few (quite small) focus groups following that survey. The feedback relates to the fact that the College had moved into the assessment stage. For that reason, lessons were generally more focused on feedback and tutorial activities. The learners prefer more interactivity, and that is what the College switched to following the survey and cancellation of assessments. Weekly training sessions for staff were also implemented and a new Teaching, Learning and Assessment strategy for next year is being worked on, including consultation with learners and staff and working with JISC and some other Microsoft Colleges.

Learners have missed the social side of College and this has also driven the feedback. The College appreciates this is a critical area for next year with more blended learning to take place and will be a core theme in the new TLA strategy. Feedback is always welcome as the College is on a learning curve with online lessons and this feedback helps to make improvements.

One of the Staff Governors felt that over 50% of learners being happy with online learning is a great achievement when it was really alien to the College only a few months back. The other Staff Governor advised that if the same question was asked now the response would be different than when the students were originally asked. After lockdown more webinars with improved interactivity have taken place. Staff training has been provided which is gradual and constant and staff are also working together and being paired up, which is an improvement. One governor advised that having attended one Voice of the Learner event there had been mixed views on College communications.

One of the Corporation members who had attended a Voice of the Learner event asked whether the College had thought about break out rooms as in a large group it was difficult to ask questions. The Vice Principal reported that part of the next TEAMS update is break out rooms of approximately 8-10 learners.

Members also asked about the key messages arising from online lesson observations and were informed that the observation findings and discussions with the Union have informed the weekly training that was rolled out at the end of May. College policies are also being reviewed as Joint Lesson Observations on line are not currently covered in them.

Members asked that a further update is provided at the next meeting via the College Principal's report.

Members also asked whether there is any provision to support learners re: Black Lives Matters and feedback was requested for the next meeting.

**The report was noted and it was resolved:
To approve the SGS Stakeholder Engagement and Involvement Plan 2018-2022
and the SGS Higher Education Students as Partners Strategy 2018-2020.**

Action: College Principal.

14. **Strategic Property Group**

Minutes of the meeting held 10 Jun 20 were noted. Carly Dyson (Chair of SPG) reported that the Group had been very pleased with progress of the STEAM build at WISE campus.

15. **Audit Committee**

a) Minutes of the meeting held 11 Jun 20 were noted. Mike Croker (Chair of the Audit Committee) reported that two options for the proposed Governance and Risk Management audits had been discussed. The Committee had agreed that a counter fraud review would prove better use of resources however RSM provided assurance that the plan is flexible and can be adjusted if needed. There are some concerns about the outcome of the annual audit opinion and RSM are undertaking follow up audits.

b) Confidential Item.

**It was resolved:
To approve the Internal Audit needs assessment, strategic plan and
2020/21 annual plan.**

16. **Committee Membership**

The Clerk presented a report of the review of Committee membership in order to fill current and upcoming vacancies. Expressions of interest in filling some of these vacancies had been invited prior to the meeting.

The Clerk invited Corporation approval of the appointment of David Hagg, as Chair of the Corporation, to join the Search Committee. Expressions of interest were also invited to replace Martin Jones as Vice-Chair of the Search Committee and Sophie Chester-Glyn put herself forward. In the unfortunate event of receiving the resignation of Moyra Pascoe members were informed that Lynne Craig had indicated she would be happy to be appointed to this Committee.

The Clerk reported that, following the departure of Martin Jones, there will be one vacancy on the SPG and Lynne Craig had indicated that she would be happy to be appointed to this Group. The Clerk also reported that should Moyra Pascoe tender her resignation this will leave a future vacancy on the Strategic Property Group and there is currently no SPG Vice-Chair in place. Members agreed to carry forward the appointment of a Vice-Chair but if needed the Committee should appoint an external Corporation member to act as SPG Vice-Chair.

Members noted that there is a vacancy on the Remuneration Committee to replace Richard O'Doherty and Lynne Craig had put herself forward. The Clerk reported that David Hagg will continue on this Committee in the position of Chair of Corporation and there is one vacancy for the Vice-Chair of the Corporation to be appointed, which would be filled by Sophie Green. Members were also informed that should Moyra Pascoe resign this would leave a future vacancy and expressions of interest for succession planning purposes were sought. It was agreed to carry forward this request. The Clerk also reported that a Chair and Vice-Chair of the Remuneration Committee needed to be appointed. Dave Merrett put himself forward as Chair and it was agreed to carry forward the appointment of a Vice-Chair of the Remuneration Committee but if needed the Committee should appoint an external Corporation member to act as Vice-Chair.

The Clerk also proposed that the Chair of the Audit Committee is appointed and that Mike Croker had indicated his willingness to continue in this position.

The Clerk also invited expressions of interest in becoming a Director of SGSCSL to replace David Hagg, who would need to resign following his appointment as Chair of the Corporation. Dave Merrett put himself forward.

The Clerk reported that from 1 August 2020 there will be three vacancies on the Corporation and the Search Committee will be interviewing one prospective candidate in September and other search activity is taking place with a view to lining up two further candidates to interview.

The report was noted and it was resolved:

- a) **To appoint David Hagg, as Chair of the Corporation, to the Search Committee, with effect from 1 August 2020.**
- b) **To appoint Sophie Chester-Glyn as Vice-Chair of the Search Committee, with effect from 1 August 2020.**
- c) **If needed, to appoint Lynne Craig to the Search Committee, to replace Moyra Pascoe, in the event of receiving the resignation of Moyra Pascoe.**
- d) **To appoint Lynne Craig to the Strategic Property Group to replace Martin Jones, with effect from 1 August 2020.**
- e) **To appoint Lynne Craig to the Remuneration Committee, with immediate effect, to replace Richard O'Doherty.**
- f) **To note that David Hagg will continue on the Remuneration Committee but with effect from 1 August 2020 this will be in his position as Chair of the Corporation.**

- g) **To appoint Dave Merrett as Chair of the Remuneration Committee, with effect from 1 August 2020.**
- h) **To appoint Sophie Green, as Vice-Chair of the Corporation, to the Remuneration Committee with effect from 1 August 2020.**
- i) **To appoint Mike Croker to continue as Chair of the Audit Committee.**
- j) **To appoint Dave Merrett as a Director of SGSCSL, with effect from 1 August 2020.**
- k) **To confirm current membership of all Committees and Working Groups.**

17. **Careers and Employability Report**

Members received the report and noted that Corporation was invited to consider the allocation of a Governor remit for Careers and Employability for 2020/21. The College Principal suggested that one of the Staff Governors may wish to take up this role as they are on site and best placed to feed back to Corporation. Matt Davis (Staff Governor) offered to fulfill this role.

It was resolved:

To appoint Matt Davis as the Careers and Employability Advocate.

18. **Student Union Constitution**

The Corporation was presented with changes to the Student Union Constitution, effective from September 2020. The changes related to the addition of three new Student Union Executive Officers.

It was resolved:

To approve revisions to the Student Union Constitution.

19. **SGS Academy Trust Statement of Assurance**

Members noted that following the SGSAT Finance and Audit Committee meeting a minor change was requested to the SGSAT Statement of Assurance previously approved by the Corporation at its 4 June 2020 meeting. The revised SGSAT Statement of Assurance was presented for re-approval.

As Trustees of SGS Academy Trust, Phil Eames and Kevin Hamblin refrained from the following resolution.

It was resolved:

To approve the suggested amendment to the SGS Academy Trust Statement of Assurance.

20. **College Strategy 2020/21-2024/25**

Members noted that this item is to be carried forward.

21. **Confidentiality**

Members agreed that due to business sensitivities the SGSCSL report (item 10), Financial Planning (item 11), SPG confidential minutes (item 14), confidential Audit Committee minutes (item 15) and minutes 8d, 10, 11 and 15b are to be treated as confidential.

22. **Assessment of meeting**

A summary of feedback in relation to the meeting held 4 June 2020 was received. The Chair reminded Governors to complete and return these forms to the Clerk.

23. **Date of Next Meeting**

It was agreed that the next meeting scheduled for Thursday 8 October 2020 should start at 4pm and be conducted via Microsoft Teams.

The meeting commenced at 4.04pm
Moyra Pascoe left the meeting at 5.19pm (after item 8)
Alicia Chappell left the meeting at 6.09pm (during item 13)
The meeting closed at 6.37pm
The meeting was quorate.