

**FINANCE & ESTATES COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**Tuesday 24 March 2021 at 5.00pm**  
**MINUTES**

***Meeting conducted remotely via Teams***

Chaired by: Steve Oldridge

Members Present: Ian Brabbs Mick Paxton Neil Hughes Phil Rumsey

Also Present: Lesley Clemmet – Director of Finance & Resources

Heather Campbell – Clerk to the Corporation

1 **Apologies for absence**

No apologies received and the meeting was quorate with 5 members present.

2 **Declaration of personal conflicts of interest**

None.

3 **Minutes of the previous meeting.**

a. **Agree Minutes**

Minutes of the Extra F&E Meeting of 19 January 2021 were approved at the 26 January 2021 Corporation meeting and signed by the Chair.

The Chair noted the minutes have been approved at the last Corporation and asked members if there were any matters they wanted to raise from the minutes and no matters were raised.

Lesley highlighted that at the point of the Corporation meeting she had not inserted the financial figures into the ESFA template. Once she had inserted them a financial rating of good was. This was consistent with what she had calculated and previously advised the committee that she thought would be the case. Lesley confirmed that the return to the EFSA had been submitted within the time limit prescribed.

Lesley confirmed that after the Corporation's approval of the Year End Financial Statement 31 July 2020 in January she had had to down load the accounts to the ESFA portal and at the same time down load the Audit Committee's Annual Report 2020 but the document was too large so she had to email it to the ESFA who had not acknowledged safe receipt but in the absence of any demand for the report it was assumed to have been received.

b. **Updates from Clerk or College Management – None**

**c. Review of actions agreed**

The Chair referred to Paper B and the following were noted:

- 10-Mar-2020 Item 9 Clerk to refer list of relevant policies to each committee for review when master schedule finalised by HR – the Clerk advised that this was still a WIP and HR manager was working on updating the list and once this had been completed the Clerk will add to each Committee agenda an item to consider the policies the Committees each oversee for consideration and approval.
- 10-Mar-2020 Item 10 Finance Director to prepare a report on review of banking arrangements – Lesley advised this will be covered below under Item 8 Lloyds Banking Mandate.

**d. Matters arising not covered in agenda – None.**

**4 Updates on Potential Changes in Provision, Staffing, Performance and Pay Issues**

**a. New Financial Risks or Opportunities**

Lesley advised members she was not aware of any new Financial Risks or Opportunities that she needed to raise with the committee.

**b. Pensions and Pay Awards**

Lesley advised that Pensions and Pay Awards are covered in her Commentary below under item 7 Financial Update.

**5 Standing items**

**a. Principal's expenses – actual and planned (for Chairman's approval)**

Phil advised that he did not have any actual or planned expenses.

**b. Approval of any issues relating to planned trips overseas**

- (1) Senior Staff – None planned
- (2) Family Members – None planned

**c. Reporting of issues relating to quotations/tenders**

Lesley advised there were none.

**d. Health & Safety Update (significant Estate related issues only)**

The Chair enquired if there were any Health & Safety updates relating to Estates.

Lesley advised there were no significant issues to report. She confirmed that Covid had not caused any health and safety issues other than the need for staff and students to take appropriate precautions.

The Chair asked Phil for an update on how the Covid Lateral Testing has gone since the College was able to return to face to face teaching in March.

Phil advised that having a lateral flow test was voluntary for both students and staff. The majority of the student cohort had booked in to have the test and had now completed their 3 supervised swab tests they had to have in College to ensure they were doing it properly. Going forward the students will test themselves at home twice a week and have been given Test Kits so they can do this. They then log their results on the NHS Track and Trace system.

The Chair asked if the College is required to check and log the tests carried out by students at home.

Phil observed that the College is not expected to check or log results of student's home testing, only the ones carried out at College and had to trust the students will continue testing until the government says it is no longer required. To date the College had had only 1 student test positive when tested in College which resulted in 3 members of staff and 36 students having to isolate as they had close contact with the student.

The Chair asked if there were any staff not coming on site to work.

Phil advised that he was aware of 4 staff that had received a letter advising them to shield until 29 March – 2 decided not to shield and are working in College and the other 2 are shielding and working from home. Otherwise all teachers are back in the classrooms teaching.

Mick highlighted that his grandson who is at the College has told him that his Maths tutor has been excellent in supporting the students both in remote lessons and now in live lessons.

Phil advised he will pass on the good feedback to the Maths department.

## 6 **Receive Estates Update**

The Chair invited Lesley to give members an update on the Estates and any projects that are planned.

Lesley advised that the CIF Project to renew the boilers will commence 29 March for 18 weeks and Ash Integrated Services have been appointed the contractors. The contractors will have their own secure base in the Sandybed Lane staff car park so they do not need to use the College facilities. The College has had to spend £18k to get the project underway.

As part of estimating the cost of the project the contractors had to explore heating pipes and discovered asbestos lagging of pipes in voids under the floors in the main block where there are two old valves that will need to be replaced as they might not be able to stand the pressure of the new boiler. She had discussed this with Phil and it had been agreed not to hold up the replacement of the boilers any longer and to go ahead with the removal of the asbestos lagging. The College has had a quote of £130k to remove the asbestos and re-lag the pipes. In view of the substantial cost Lesley was checking with the insurers to see if a claim can be made in respect of the cost and was also exploring if there was any CIF funding the College can put a bid in for. If neither of these routes is successful the College will have to use the College's cash reserves to meet the cost and if this is the case will need to go out to tender in view of the amount involved.

Lesley advised that the discovery of the asbestos lagging had highlighted the College Asbestos Register was very out of date so had commissioned a whole Site Asbestos Survey and a new up to date Asbestos Register prepared. In addition senior management and a number of key managers have now had training on how to identify asbestos when any maintenance or other works are being carried out to the College estate.

Neil asked if the removal costs of £130k was a case of doing it all or not doing it.

Lesley confirmed it was a case of all the asbestos as encapsulated asbestos is safe if properly identified and labelled it was felt that in this case it would be better to go for full removal because if the old valves were not replaced and they burst then that would give the College a bigger problem to sort.

Phil observed that CIF bids are more expensive as they incur a consultants management fee so we would go back out to tender if we have to pay.

Lesley advised members that the other project is the SALIX interest free loan for replacement of the whole site's lighting with energy saving lights. The tenders have come in for this and are currently being evaluated. Solar panels are part of the project which were originally going to be situated on top of B Block's flat roof but this is not strong enough so the contractor appointed will be instructed to find an alternative site for the panels.

The Chair asked if there were any further questions and none were raised.

## 7 **Finance Update**

*See confidential and restricted Minutes*

## 8 **Lloyds Banking Mandate**

*See confidential and restricted Minutes*

## 9 **Identify any discussion items as "Confidential & Restricted"**

Members considered their discussions and agreed the discussions under Items 7, 8 and 10 b) be classified as Confidential and Restricted.

## 10 **Any Other Business**

a) Phil advised that the College has a Staff 25 Years' Service Award under which they are given a letter, an engraved pen and £250. He felt that giving £250 to staff was no longer an appropriate use of public money, and therefore he proposed that the £250 be stopped and staff be given a letter and an alternative gift to the pen.

Neil noted that SBC's 25 Years' Service Award is £100 but it does incur tax and NIC deductions as it goes through payroll.

Members agreed it was appropriate to cease the £250 cash award and explore an alternative gift to go with the letter.

- b) *See confidential and restricted Minutes*
- c) The Chair asked Phil if he was able to update the Committee on what is happening with the summer exams.

Phil advised that the exam boards were not giving out much information but the government had stated that results will be teacher assessed grades on the work that the students have done since September including remote learning. But the College was at the mercy of the exam boards and he hoped to have an update for the next Corporation meeting. As far as exam fees were concerned it was unlikely that the Exam Boards would charge the same as last year but since the College has to enter students to obtain exam results some charge was inevitable.

Neil asked if the College was getting good student engagement on what they needed to do to get good grades this year.

Phil confirmed the vast majority of the students were engaged and this week the second year students were having mock exams which are being conducted under proper exam conditions with the results contributing to the teacher assessed grades.

11 **Date of Next Meeting – 29 June 2021**

*There being no further business the meeting closed at 6.20pm*