

GOVERNING BODY**Minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body held at 17.00 on Tuesday 19 July 2022 (Hybrid)****Present:**

Andrew Jackson	Chair
Lindy Stacy	Vice Chair
Sean Mackney	Principal and CEO
Rob Nicholls (virtual log-in)	External Governor
Chris Williams	External Governor
Richard Bevan	External Governor
Iain Springate	External Governor
Katerina Kolyva (virtual log-in)	External Governor
Andy Champion	External Governor
Andy Willis	External Governor
Pat Denham (virtual log-in)	External Governor
Mark Rogers	External Governor
David Chalmers	External Governor
Rosanna Toleman	Student Governor
Harrison Burke	Student Governor
Neil Tanton	Staff Governor
Lee Thommen	Staff Governor
Joanna Boardman	Governance Advisor and Head of Executive Office

In Attendance:

Bill Blythe	Vice Principal Finance and Resources
Sheena Murphy- Collett	Director of HR and Organisational Development
Craig Litster	Interim VP Curriculum and Quality

1. Apologies for Absence

1.1 Apologies received from Deborah Watson and Andy Champion

2. Declaration of Interests

2.1 No declarations were made

3. Confidential Items

3.1 One to be added regarding a letter of concern from the Unions

4. Minutes and Actions**21FGB22/i**

4.1 The minutes from the meeting of 30 March 2022 were approved.

5. Items brought forward by the Chair

- 5.1 The chair explained that they had received a letter of concern from the Unions and covered the overarching areas mentioned within it.
- Staff Morale
 - Loss of staff expertise
 - Changes in working practice
 - New Curriculum
 - Future Stability
- 5.2 The Chair also noted that the Executive had already prepared presentations focused on the past year in review and the year to come and asked to defer full conversation of the letter until the end of the meeting. This they stated would provide the management context as well as the concerns for discussion.
- 4.3 It was noted that the Board had been aware and informed of major developments and had approved the business case leading to the changes and understood that it would create a lot of disruption across the organisation.
- 4.4 The Chair spoke to the matter that they had resigned their role on Board having given 6 months' notice and would be leaving formally on 31 July 2022. The Governance Advisor had run the nomination process for a New Chair and Potential Vice-Chair and the Board was asked to vote on the nominees.
- 4.5 Lindy Stacey as the nominee for Chair and the Executive members were asked to leave the room and the remaining governors voted on the matter. Lindy was unanimously voted in as Chair. Lindy returned to the room and was informed of the result.
- 4.6 Pat Denham as the nominee for Vice-Chair stepped out of the virtual meeting and the remaining governors voted on the matter. Pat was unanimously voted in as Vice-Chair. Pat and the Executive members returned to the room, and all were informed of the result.
- 4..7 The Chair noted that the year had been a challenging and difficult one for the college and that the meeting would be a good opportunity to both reflect and look forward.

6. Principal and CEO

- 6.1 The principal presented a slideshow on three key areas

The Tiverton Transformation Programme

- 6.2 The principal reflected on the process whereby a series of options were consulted upon through various activities and the Board enacted the Strategic Review Committee to review the progress of the project in detail. It was noted that the programme at this stage is where it is expected to be. There is a more focused curriculum offer with pathways and routes right through and new courses being promoted in the community.
- 6.3 There is a task over the summer to create discussion with adults in the community with an ESOL offer for several Ukrainian Adults and family learning camps. The principal is meeting with local stakeholders and networks regularly and will be meeting with Tiverton Town Council and the end of the summer.
- 6.4 The estates transformation elements are on track with a new café and social and digital hubs with AI/VR facilities. Students on the recent Taster Days were very happy with their experience.

- 6.5** The cultural changes within the business case have resulted in SM-C being nominated as a dedicated Executive member for the Tiverton campus as well as appointed a campus manager. It was noted that this work is an ongoing activity and that there is work to do with staff to lift morale and show appreciation to the staff.
- 6.6** It was noted that the project will show some decreased recruitment as the offer initially narrows, however focused growth should still be expected in the future.
- 6.7** The Board questioned if there were any programmes which were of concern at this stage in the new offer and Tiverton and it was reported that there was one T-Level in Business which will need some more focus as it is not yet at expected levels of applications.
- 6.8** The Board asked where the recruitment figures were at currently for the Tiverton campus and it was reported that around 207 applicants had been noted which was in line with expectations. The college commended the Transformation Project Group for their commitment and attitude in making things happen.
- 6.9** The Board asked the college what the biggest concern now would be and student recruitment and the conversion of those to enrolments was the response. A lower intake was to be expected with the changes however marketing and a strong focus next year is expected to make a positive impact on this in the future.
- 6.10** Board queried how many staff were lost from Tiverton in the restructure. HR confirmed around a dozen though the process, voluntary redundancy, and resignation. A discussion was held around some people making good choice moves for their careers and that refreshing a culture can be aided by fresh ideas.
- 6.11** The college confirmed that there will be a formal re-launch on 15 September 2022 at the Tiverton campus to which the Board is invited.

2021-2022 Year in Review

- 6.12** The Principal and CEO spoke to the presentation and which key factors had played a part in the running of the college across the 2021/2022 year
- Learning post-lockdown
 - Challenging behaviours
 - Alternative provision for non-mainstream
 - Mental health issues
 - Anxiety
 - Lack of confidence
 - Attendance and retention issues
 - Difficulty in staff recruitment
- 6.13** It was noted that this had been a busy year for educators with lots to take on board from external agendas set against a context of internal change.
- 6.14** The college had implemented changes in working practice through an update flexible working policy and the introduction of a hybrid working policy for staff to help balance out some of the challenges that people had faced. These had been well received and a recent survey showed that staff would be more than happy to continue with the new hybrid opportunities.
- 6.15** The Executive acknowledged that they were aware of the level of pressure and stress that major restructuring and other changes can cause and that this was

being reflected in staff morale and feedback through the staff surveys. Strengthened messaging, engagement and communication in the future is planned.

- 6.16** There has been significant change on the national and regional front this year, however, much does not progress through to a reality and a lot of wasted energy is being expended by staff trying to sift through the priorities.
- 6.17** The curriculum overhaul this year has reshaped the college and aligned the provision to the college strategy to provide relevant courses for the region and to provide a high-quality experience to the learners.
- 6.18** The Board commented that they had seen a lot of positive initiatives this year and some good progress has been made although they acknowledged that there was still much to do in the coming year.
- 6.19** The Board asked what the impact would be on the college if applications drop further and if there was indication on internal progression at this stage.
- 6.20** It was answered that progression rates are up on last year and stronger in certain areas than others, although it is not yet where it needs to be for success. With regards to applications any significant drop below plans would need careful monitoring and would be a cause for concern for the current business plan. The college will keep Board informed.
- 6.21** The Board commented asked about the Higher Education provision progress and the college stated that that there is a clear focus on HE currently although the sector is extremely volatile now. Competition with Universities and other colleges as well as the potential changes that a new Prime Minister could bring all have impacts on the future.
- 6.22** Opportunities for collaboration were asked about and it was answered that the college works in collaboration with Plymouth university and Exeter around programme delivery however sharing staff would present more challenges due to the differential in pay and conditions. Further collaboration is being worked out in Higher Technical Qualifications with Plymouth to work with Truro and Penwith.
- 6.23** The perception of the college within the wider community was questioned especially around the changes this year and the principal shared that they had done a lot of work with schools and other stakeholders which had been very positive. The view across parents is more varied. In a small community where the college is the second biggest employer lots of people know someone who is at risk and the results of that can be quite negative.
- 6.24** The Board commented that there is never enough that you can do to work on perception and connecting with your community and stakeholders. They recommended that current processes are reviewed, and the college works on positive messaging, shout about Petroc and why the curriculum has changed and what benefit all the changes will bring. Showcasing how Petroc is different and desirable and to avoid stagnation. It recommended that college get out into the community as much as possible at all levels.

2022-2023 Year

- 6.25** The Deputy Director for Academic Studies who joins at the end of this year comes with a background of college and multi-academy trusts amongst other things and will help the Executive form a stronger team. There is confidence in a stronger and more resilient senior management team.

- 6.26** There will be a focus on quality and consistency in the curriculum with and expected Ofsted inspection.
- 6.27** Recruitment and growth will be a key focus as numbers are needed to improve across the college. Adult provision has dropped and 16-19 funding is critical to the future of the college and whilst income is lagged for 12 months the immediate future does have longer term impact.
- 6.28** The budget will remain challenging in the face of the above as is maintaining motivation and continuing to develop whilst at the same time contracting in certain areas.
- 6.29** Stakeholder partnership will be vital moving forward with Devon Devolution and the increase expectation of collaboration. The college is positioned as an anchor and being seen as that by our partners.
- 6.2** Questions and Discussion points from the presentation

7.0 Curriculum and Quality

2021-2022 Year

- 7.1** The Interim Vice-Principal presented slides which spoke to the previous year and noted that some items had already been spoken to by the Principal and CEO.
- 7.2** The major change has been the new Curriculum Strategy which was worked through at the Curriculum and Quality committee and approved at Board. Change of this nature was recognised as often hard for staff to adapt to, however it is in the best interests of the learners, and it has many supporters amongst the academic staff.
- 7.3** It was noted that during the process of implantation all managers took a very sober Look at academic performance and interrogate the data available to make evidence based decisions. Some people enjoyed interrogating the data more than others, but further support and training will be available, and everyone is moving in the right direction.
- 7.4** Attendance was recognised as below ideal levels, but it is not in decline.
- 7.5** The recent Ofsted review was a success in that they supported the direction that the academics were travelling in and the design of the programmes. Additionally there has been a significant improvement in the National Student Survey results which puts Petroc above the National Average.
- 7.6** There was a periodic review with Plymouth this year which was very successful and supportive. Any areas that they identified for improvement had already been picked up by the College which was reassuring.

2022-2023 Year

- 7.7** It was recognised that the impact of the following improvements will not be seen until 2023-2024.
 - Petroc will be delivering a new level 1 with an improved educational focus as well as the new T-Levels.

- The new structure will be embedded with most employer/employee students based in a new technical area with a designated Faculty Manager for apprenticeships.
- The HE curriculum will be redesigned with, the college will be preparing for an OFSTED Inspection

7.8 The Board noted that the presentation illustrated the scope of ambition and scope and have some empathy for staff that an Ofsted inspection will follow soon after the college changes. Board wanted to recognise the staff for all the work they had put in so far and recognise the challenge and work ahead that was still needed.

7.9 Minutes

8.2 No minutes were presented due to the loss of the data by the Governance Advisor through a technical error.

8.3 To approve the Study Programme 21FGB23

8.4 The Board noted that the study programme appeared academically valid and draws down the appropriate level of funding.

8.5 The Study Programme was approved.

8.6 To note Apprenticeship Quality Paper 21FGB24

8.7 The paper was submitted after a request from the Quality and Curriculum Committee for further detail on a report on low quality provision.

8.8 The board noted the update and agreed to the actions but wanted to note the key risk in apprenticeships take up and student feedback.

8.9 To approve the Access and Participation Plan 21FGB25

8.10 All institutions were asked to make an amendment to this year's plan which has been written into this version and Board were asked to approve. There will be a full re-write next academic year.

8.11 Board approved the amendment for submission to the Office for Students

8.12 To note the Higher Education Paper 21FGB26

8.13 The Interim Vice-Principal presented the paper containing highlights from the Head of Head Development on activity in HE. It was noted that there was more detailed information on each item if any of the Governors wanted it.

INSERT INFO FROM PAPER HERE

8.14 To approve The Safeguarding Policy 21FGB27

8.15 The paper was taken as read and Board approved the policy

Recommendations from the Committee

8.16 To receive the Annual Safeguarding Summary Report* 21CQ12

8.17 To receive a Quality Improvement Plan Update* 21CQ13

8.18 To receive the Student Satisfaction Report* 21CQ14

8.19 All above starred papers were taken as read with no questions or comments

9.0 Finance and General Purposes

9.1 Presentation from Vice-Principal Finance, Resources and Regional

9.6 No questions were brought forward, and the report was noted

9.7 Property Strategy

21FGB15+i

9.8 The Vice Principal Finance and Resources was asked by the committee chair to briefly talk through the strategy and walk the Board through the updates that had been made since the committee meeting. It was noted that there is still much more analysis to be done on long term options, but the strategy was commended by the Board.

9.9 More detail had been requested by the committee on carbon neutrality which had since been included.

9.10 Questions and Discussion points from the presentation

- **It was asked if the options contained adequate space for teaching especially within the performing arts.**
- The college acknowledged that the questions was a critical one and at this stage it was felt that the opportunity was there, however it recognised that deeper consultation would be needed with subject specialists at the right stage in any development.

It was further shared by the college that formal planning strategies today do not generally allow for the amount of space that the college currently has, requires more thought in micro mobility, public transport, and sustainability. The DFE holds metrics against which colleges are judged.

- The Board discussed the importance of appealing to students and ensuring that the communications align well.

**9.11 Digital Strategy
21FGB16+i**

9.12 The Vice Principal Finance and Resources was asked by the committee chair to briefly talk through the strategy and walk the Board through the updates that had been made since the committee meeting.

9.13 Questions and Discussion points from the presentation

- **The Board asked if the strategy could emphasise security more than it currently did and if the college used ISO or Cyber Essentials?**
- The college confirmed that it uses Cyber Essentials and were looking into Plus, but that ISO was considered too constrictive to provide a useful effective system for students and staff. In general, the view now is that a cyber breach should be expected, and organisations should focus more on minimising the impact of such an event and ensuring that your reputation is secured.

The college agreed that cyber security was vital, and it had been woven through the security, but it can be brought more to the front of the strategy. It was noted that the college had to undertake cultural change and capability as well as engagement across staff and students alike.

- The committee commended the college for the updates following the discussion at the last meeting and all challenges had been answered.

9.14 Board commented that both strategies now showed that they had been developed in consideration of the other and showed much greater detail around finances and clarity and alignment to Petroc 2025.

9.15 The Board asked that the operational next step after approval looks at the interdependencies and priorities and challenged the college to consider if it had enough specialist resource in place to achieve the aims.

9.16 Both strategies were approved by Board

**9.3 To approve Management Accounts
21FGP08+i**

9.4 No questions were brought forward, and the report was approved

**9.4 To approve Subcontracting Fees and Charges and Supply Chain
21FGP12+i**

9.5 No questions were brought forward, and the proposal was approved

**9.5 To approve the Course Fees Policy
21FGP12+i**

9.6 No questions were brought forward, and the policy was approved

10 Audit Committee

10.1 Minutes

21AC13

10.2 The minutes of the meeting held on 23 November 2021 were discussed and approved.

**10.3 To note the Risk Management/Board Assurance Termly Report
21AC18+i**

10.4 The committee chair discussed the report noting that continuous improvement in risk management was happening and that more work would be done at the Board Away Day in May.

10.5 One of the staff governors asked how the risk on failing to retain staff was going to be managed. Concerns around anxiety of staff and staff morale during this period of high change.

10.6 The college acknowledged that it was a difficult time for staff, during a period of change where there was a need to make efficiencies and position the college for the future. HR stated that the team was always available to talk to people, aimed to provide clear communication and wellbeing support where they could. However, it was agreed that there was no 'quick fix' available, and the college would seek to mitigate loss wherever possible.

The Director of HR and Organisational Development added that they were on regional and national boards and across the country the term 'the great resignation' is being used as the sector is facing the same challenges.

10.7 A discussion was held around the offer for managers and staff in coaching and mentoring and if that could be developed further to help support staff and the college supported that idea. The college currently provides a Leadership and Development programme but is keen to look further in coaching.

10.8 HR was commended by a staff governor for the way in which they support staff who are struggling with issues.

**10.9 To approve the Appointment of the Financial Statements (external) Auditors
21AC18+i**

10.10 The Chair of the committee recommended the proposal as presented to Board to approve Mazars as the financial statements (external) auditors for a period of 3+1+1 years.

10.11 It was described that the three proposals were presented to the committee with the college and the governors having the opportunity to ask questions. Mazars were asked how they would provide a fresh perspective as they were acting as the external auditors currently. They stated that the key people would be rotated as well as on site auditors usually rotating as normal procedure.

10.12 It was confirmed that the process followed a formal tender framework, with seven companies approached, four applying and three being seen.

10.13 The Board approved the recommendation

The student and staff governors as well as members of the executive stepped out of the meeting for the remuneration committee discussion. Minutes are held as confidential.

11 Remuneration Committee (held as confidential)

The student and staff governors were invited back into the room, whilst the four external governors who are noted in the Board Recruitment and Memberships Matters proposal for extension recommendations.

12.0 Governance

**12.1 To approve Board Recruitment and Memberships Matters
21FGB20**

12.2 The board discussed the extension proposals for DC/IS/RN and DW as presented by the Governance Advisor. Increased engagement post pandemic and quality chairing for two of the governors was noted.

12.3 The proposals were approved.

All governors re-entered the meeting

**13. To receive the Termly Student Governors Report
21FGB18**

13.1 The Student Union president delivered the report to the Board highlighting work in particular being down around learner wellbeing. At the current point wellbeing was described as not being where it should be, and the Union is working with the Safeguarding team to try to combat this.

13.2 The Board commended both the report and the working being done

13.3 A comment from a student governor suggested that when learning was split in a class between online and in person all the learners struggle as the educator's attention is divided.

13.4 A governor asked what was being done around exam anxiety for those learners who had not sat these previously due to the pandemic. The college assured Board that it was aware of the issues and initiatives were being put into place to help support learners. This included physical practice sessions and mental wellbeing support

13.5 A governor suggested that curriculum areas can be used to support each other such as offering health/beauty and massage sessions or learning new skills. These things can help in both enrichment and be used as relaxation or distraction techniques for anxiety.

13.6 The college welcomed the suggestions

14 To approve updated GDPR Policy 21FGB21/i

14.1 The amendments were noted, and the policy was approved

15 To approve updated Privacy Statement 21FGB21/ii

15.1 The amendments were noted, and the policy was approved

12 AOB

12.1 There was no other business, and the meeting was concluded

Date of Next Meeting – 19 July 2022

Note: * items – These are items which the board were asked to note, but would not be normally discussed at the meeting, marked with an asterisk on the agenda. Such items will not be discussed at a meeting unless the chair is informed by 9am on the day before the meeting that the member of board wished to discuss a particular item.