

GOVERNING BODY

Minutes of the meeting of the Full Governing Body held at 17.00 on Wednesday 26 March 2025 via Teams

Members – Full Governing Board

Present

Dawn Stabb	External Governor
Richard Bevan	External Governor
Gaynor Castle	External Governor
Jon Price	Academic Staff Governor
Neil Sherman	External Governor
Julie McLeod	External Governor
Jon Walton	Student Governor
Kurt Hintz	Interim Principal and CEO
Hermione Copp-Williams	External Governor
Stephen Wells	External Governor
Leanne Macey-Withey	Business Support Staff Governor

In Attendance

Bill Blythe	Vice Principal (VP)
Jason Jones	Deputy Principal (DP)
Joanna Boardman	Director of Governance and Director of Executive Operations (DoG)
Alex Farmery	Executive Officer (EO) Minutes

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Pat Denham, Iain Springate, Lindy Stacey, Martin McNeill and James Wright.

It was reported that one of the Student Governors, Daisy Thynn had stepped down from her role as Governor and the Director of Governance will be seeking to recruit a new Student Governor as soon as possible.

2. Declaration of Interests

SW and BB both declared being a Director of PESL.

3. Confidential Items

No confidential items were declared other than on the agenda.

4. Minutes from previous meeting

24FGB42

The minutes from the meeting on 27 November 2024, 3 December 2024 and 11 February 2025 were approved with some minor amendments to the minutes from the 3 December 2024.

5. Items brought forward by the Chair.

There were no items brought forward by the Chair.

The interim Principal provided an update on the Exeter College collaboration. It was noted that the first decision-making point for the Exeter College collaboration is coming up in April. He will be visiting Exeter College on the 4th of April to present to their board, similar to a recent presentation by John Laramy (Exeter College Principal) to the Petroc Board. He emphasized the importance of presenting the college as a good going concern,

highlighting the positive progress made. The presentation will include slides showing the integration of activities and information about the college's progress. A collaboration involves close contact and regular meetings with John Laramy from Exeter College and they had been discussing the future of the Tiverton Centre becoming a transition centre for SEND students to transition to further education, employment, or supported living.

6. Student Union, Student Governor, Staff Governors and Interim Principal Updates

6.1 To Receive the Student Union President update

The Student Union President was unable to dial into the meeting, their presentation is attached [here](#).

6.2 To receive the Student Governors update

The Student Governor presented to the Board highlighting the recent collaboration event with Appledore Primary School and the Royal Society of Funding and Business Partnerships. He also mentioned the creation of a mobile living wall project involving HE and FE students.

Student Governor [presentation](#)

6.3 To receive the Staff Governors update

The Staff Governors provided an update, discussing the positive impact of the CPD days, challenges with learner behaviour, and concerns about the Exeter collaboration. They emphasized the importance of communication and addressing staff concerns.

Staff had found the recent CPD days very useful and relevant to their day-to-day activities and helping to improve the use of Microsoft suite functionalities and other skills. It was reported that the CPD days had a positive impact on staff.

However, it was reported that learner behaviour was increasingly becoming an issue for academic as well as support staff causing anxiety amongst staff. The need for consistent behaviour management and support for staff in dealing with disruptive students was emphasised.

Both Staff Governors expressed concerns about the Exeter collaboration, with some staff fearing a takeover. They stressed the importance of clear communication to address these concerns and ensure staff understand the benefits and implications of the collaboration.

The concerns over student behaviour were addressed by the Deputy Principal confirming that the issues were being addressed by:

- Regular Behaviour working group meetings
- Expectations set for staff and students
- Reinforcing the Learner Success Standards (LSS)
- Recruitment of a Student Liaison Officer
- Duty Manager Rota to ensure a Duty Manager is available at all times
- CPD for all staff on how to deal with challenging behaviour

Regarding the concerns on a merger, it was agreed that communications with staff in an All Staff Briefing at the end of April were crucial in order to reinforce to staff that this is not a takeover but a potential merger that benefits both colleges, not just one over the other.

6.4 Interim Principals Termly Report

24FGB43

The report was taken as read with the following points being highlighted:

It was noted that the Strategic plan and curriculum strategy had both been approved (awaiting final approval from the chair after some initial changes) and an update on the strategic plan is part of the report.

The report also highlighted the key performance indicators (KPIs) and stakeholder surveys, showing improvements in retention rates and employer satisfaction. However, it was noted that the parent satisfaction still needs improvement.

Another focus of the report was Tiverton and the proposal for a transition centre, meaning that all activities could be consolidated into one building giving the opportunity to dispose of other parts of the site.

Two other focus points of the report were the focus on pass rates, emphasising the importance of improving the colleges pass rates and teacher recruitment, where the college is struggling to recruit skilled teachers, particularly in construction and engineering.

Pass rates were at the top of the list currently, ensuring students complete and pass their qualifications.

The Interim Principal had recently employed 2 Teaching Improvement Managers who were working closely with teachers that had been on action plans helping to improve teaching practices across the college.

For Information

- Curriculum Strategy – final version* 24FGB44
- 18month strategic plan – final version* 24FGB45

7. Curriculum and Quality

The Chair of the committee presented an update from the previous meeting on the 25 February 2025 to the Board and alerted the Board to the following:

- That a full review of the HE tuition fee levels and associated offer as it aligns to the Access and Participation Plan had been requested of the college.
- A deep dive into High Needs and SEND provision was held at the meeting which discussed that there were some concerns around non-discrete-provision and so the college monitoring and support had been increased in those areas
- The HE provision had come under new leadership in August 2024, and it had been a challenging period since then dealing with ambitious forecasting and low student numbers. The completion of a HE Strategy and review of service is underway and will come back to the Board but is an area of enhanced monitoring

The Committee Chair assured the Board that the Deep dive gave assurance to the committee that discrete provision was being well managed and that confidence in new systems and simplified processes were supporting the demonstrable progress that was underway. There was still more to achieve, but the committee felt the right people were leading. Additional training for Ofsted inspections had been asked for and it was shared that it would take place.

The Committee Chair recommended the following actions for the Executive Team:

- Present a breakdown of the 'just off the press' Learner satisfaction scores and the current scores from the apprenticeships, to enable a trend review. Extra detail on low rated areas across surveys.
- Present a more results-informed view of the impact of learning walks and peer observations (either staff feeling more confident in pedagogic approaches, or observers view of heightened performance or mid-year results)
- Presentations moving forward should be benchmarked and presented in clear cohort sections.

For Information

Deputy Principals report*

24FGB46

HE Report*

24FGB47

To receive any minutes of the Curriculum and Quality committee held on 25 February 2025*

24FGB48

8. Finance and Resources

The Committee Chair presented an update from the previous meeting on 12 March 2025 highlighting the following points to the Board:

- The committee reviewed the 10-year forecast in detail ahead of the of Strategy Day on 14 March and discussed the 3-year element and associated impacts. This would be discussed in full at the Strategy Day in Kurts presentation.
- Potential breach of covenant with Barclays this year – impact of the delay in getting the Tiverton Land Sale away in time. Sports England delay in the field disposal. The college was asked to detail the steps being taken to mitigate that.
- Two bad debts had been approved for write off

The Vice Principal reported that the FEC had now stepped back from the support they had been giving to the college over the past few months, and they were satisfied with the college's financials. He also assured the Board of his confidence in the land sale at Tiverton progressing although having pushed back the income to August 2025.

The Board noted some inconsistencies in the Business Improvement plan which needed to be addressed by the Executive Team.

8.1 To receive an update on the 3-year financial plan

24FGB49

No comments were received, the Board received the 3-year financial plan.

8.2 To receive the Monthly Management Accounts – Month 6

24FGB50

No comments were received, the Board received the Month 6 Management Accounts.

8.3 To approve Bad Debt Write Off

24FGB51

The Bad Debt Write Off was approved by the Board.

8.4 To approve the Course Fee Policy

24FGB52

The Course Fee Policy was approved by the Board.

For Information

PESL accounts*

24FGB53

Annual Accounts of Petroc Student Union*

24FGB54

Project performance update*

24FGB55

Business Support QIP Update*

24FGB56

To receive any minutes of the Finance and Resources committee held on 28 November 2025*

24FGB57

9. People Committee

The Director of Governance presented an update from the previous meeting on the 5 February 2025 to the Board and alerted the Board to the following:

- Recruitment in specialist areas is still challenging, and employment agencies were also experiencing some challenges as well.
- It was shared that not all staff had been reporting absences and as such ground rules had been re-established and processes were going to be reinforced.

- Area reviews and efficiency/restructures were taking place across the college as part of the overall effectiveness reviews.

The Committee Chair assured the Board that:

- The college has an enhanced CPD strategy now and all newly appointed teaching staff have been signed up to the CertEd.
- Visibility and engagement from a senior level to all other levels in the college was viewed as strong

For Information

To receive any minutes of the People committee held on 5 February 2025* 24FGB58
 To receive the People Termly Report* 24FGB59

10. Audit Committee

The Chair of the committee presented an update from the previous meeting on the 11 March 2025 to the Board and alerted the Board to the following:

- There had been one RIDDOR report in Health and Safety where a member of staff slipped whilst taking a short cut down a grassy bank. Warnings and reminders now in place.

The committee Chair assured the Board of the following:

- The Committee oversaw and challenged two deep dives into top risks in Learner Outcomes and Progress as well as Financial Forecasting. In general, the committee felt well assured by changes and application of those. It was noted that the FEC had recently stepped back from its enhanced support that the Board and the Executive has requested – now pleased with the processes in place.
- Learner Outcomes and Progress – new external support where teachers have been highlighted as needing additional support or help through Lesson Observations. New trackers, reporting mechanisms, CPD days and additional training and development sessions, high risk students and appropriate interventions. Attendance/in year retention and learner satisfaction all up on last year.
- Financial Projections – now projecting out to 10 years understanding that it becomes less reliable further out and using forecasting models. Looking at securing investment not just cash flow, new processes at Manager and Faculty Manager level in budget setting, resource needs and staffing levels. College is much more proactive and detailed on realistic learner number projections and changes in policy or funding and the associated impact. Stronger use of Scenario Planning.
- Internal Audit reports on Learner Journey and Business Planning and cashflow forecasting did not show any cause for concern.
- The College Audit Monitoring Report has seen significant improvement in the reduction of outstanding areas and the committee gave thanks to those involved.

The Chair reported that following the presentations from Haines Watts (Validera) and Scrutton Bland who had been shortlisted through a tender process by the college, the Audit Committee want to submit Validera to the Board for Approval as the new internal auditors.

10.1 To approve the Strategic Risk Register 24FGB60
The Risk Register was approved by the Board.

10.2 To approve the Internal Auditors for 25/26 24FGB61
 The recommendation to appoint Validera as the new Internal Auditors from 2025/26 was approved by the Board.

For Information

IAS progress report* 24FGB62
 IAS Audit Reports *

- Learner Journey 24FGB63
 - Business planning and cashflow forecasting 24FGB64
- To receive the College Audit Monitoring Report * 24FGB65
- To receive any minutes of the Audit committee held on 27 November 2025* 24FGB66
- To receive any minutes of the Audit committee held on 11 March 2025* 24FGB67
- To receive any minutes of the Finance and Resource committee held on 12 March 2025* 24FGB68

The meeting concluded at 18.25