

Minutes of: Governing Board

Date: 14th October 2024 **Location:** A10, College Road Campus

Present	In attendance
Mervyn Jones (<i>Chair</i>) Abigail Appleton (<i>Principal and CE</i>) John Auckland Judy Balderson Clive Hodgeman Joe Hedges Ellie Bunston Kate Seekings Charlotte Semus (<i>Student Governor</i>) Myfanwy Page (<i>Staff Governor</i>) Oliver Cameron-Swan (<i>Staff Governor</i>) Caroline Sedilek (<i>Staff Governor</i>)	Justin Gregory (<i>Vice Principal HE</i>) Xaviere Hughes (<i>Vice Principal FE</i>) David Hawkins (<i>Vice Principal – Business Development and Student Experience</i>) Tim Williams (<i>Finance Director</i>) Abigail Boyce (<i>Clerk to Governors</i>)
Quoracy: meeting was quorate as stated in paragraph 1 below	Absent: Russel Roberts, Helen Hurford, Ian Axtell, Kate Mori, Nicola Hewitt, Jennette Arnold and Peta Darnley

1. **Quorum** – The meeting was duly constituted as a quorum of 12 members was present, representing 63.16% of the total membership. This satisfies the 40% quorum requirement set out in Article 13(1) of the Instrument of Government.
2. **Governance – Governor appointments for approval and appointment of Clerk**
 - a. **Ellie Bunston** - recommended by the Search & Governance Committee for AQ&S FE Committee and to join the Board as a new member. The Chair outlined Ellie's academic accomplishments and highlighted how her experience as Deputy Head will contribute to the Board's discussions.
Decision: *Board agreed to approve this appointment.*
 - b. **Nicola Hewitt** – recommended by the Search & Governance Committee for F&GP Committee and to join the Board as a new member. The Chair conveyed Nicola's apologies for her absence and provided a brief overview of her marketing expertise and experience with public sector initiatives.
Decision: *Board agreed to approve this appointment.*
 - c. **Appointment of New Clerk** – The Chair informed the Board of the appointment of Abigail Boyce as the new Clerk. The Chair provided a brief introduction to Abigail's legal background. The Chair also noted that the Department of Education needs to be informed of the appointment, and the Principal confirmed that this is being handled.

3. Apologies and introductions

- a. **Apologies for absence** – Apologies were received from Russel Roberts, Ian Axtell, Kate Mori, Nicola Hewitt, and Peta Darnley.
- b. **Declaration of Interest** – no new declarations of interest.

4. Minutes of last meeting

- a. **Approval of minutes of meeting held on 08th July 2024** – minutes were approved as a true and accurate record.
- b. **Matters arising** – all actions noted as complete or in progress.

5. Principal's Report

- a. **Principal's written report** - The Principal presented this report, and highlighted key areas:

- **Reflection on 2023's October Board Meeting (Ofsted and FE Ambition)**
The Principal reflected on last year's Outstanding Ofsted inspection, noting that the ambition for Further Education is being met. Highlights include real-world student experiences, like Applefest and a public exhibition, fostering community engagement. Further data on these experiences would be beneficial.
- **Safeguarding Regulatory Update**
The Principal noted the Office for Students' regulatory announcement on harassment and outlined conditions. There was a discussion on how some universities use Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDAs), though HCA hasn't used them. The aim is to develop a statement for students for an autumn survey, aligning with discussions on managing allegations while balancing transparency and data protection. The Vice Principal for Higher Education reviews the policy with Level 4 students, providing examples and emphasizing that only a few are aware of final outcomes. The Chair noted caution around potential conspiracy theories during investigations.
- **Annual staff wellbeing survey**
The Principal highlighted the annual staff wellbeing survey results, noting that staff lunches with consultation committees are also used to gather feedback. The Principal emphasised the importance of the SLT communicating that staff feedback is heard and taken seriously.
- **Lockdown Reflection**
The Principal noted actions taken during the October 4th lockdown and stated that a full reflection is underway. A meeting with other principals revealed that some of the responders seemed unaware that the colleges are three separate institutions. The college Principals are scheduling a meeting with the police to discuss this and other drills, as well as updates from the incident. The lockdown protocol was successfully implemented, with staff remaining calm. However, a stronger communication system across the institutions was identified as an area for improvement.
- **Other Points**
 - *Cyber Security*: The Cyber Essentials criteria must be met by 31st July 2025.

- *Government Green Paper*: The recently published green paper, Invest 2035, includes creative industries, showing the Government's growing focus on these sectors.
 - *Consultation Group*: The Principal has been asked to join a consultation group of education leaders on behalf of the Skills Minister, Jacqui Smith.
 - *Industry Engagement*: A review of industry engagement across courses will be presented to AQ&S.
 - *Summer Course*: A new strategy for short and summer courses is also being developed and will be brought to board committee in due course.
- **Enrolment - HCA Marketing and Recruitment Strategies**
The Principal outlined plans to enhance HCA's marketing and outreach to boost recruitment. It was noted how Hereford Sixth Form reported a shift to STEM subjects this year. The Principal acknowledged weaknesses in engagement at events and high recruitment team turnover. A Board Member enquired about strategies to engage Year 9 students and some outreach developments were discussed including a focus on visits to local high schools and extending careers evenings and open days.
 - **Higher Education Marketing and Application Process Updates**
The Principal noted disappointing Level 4 recruitment, but the launch of two new degree programmes is a positive move. Student intake missed targets, prompting a push for dynamic curriculum changes. UCAS data showed high withdrawals before interviews, possibly due to students receiving offers while waiting. HCA plans to remove the interview requirement, except for specific applicants, maintaining a personal approach. Changing attitudes and UCAS adjustments, like reducing personal statement sections, were discussed. The college will focus on swift application responses, despite staff pressures. Concerns were raised about AI-generated applications and portfolios; staff can currently identify such cases. Plagiarism remains a risk but can be managed through student discussions.

b. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and objectives for 2024/25

The Principal read out the KPIs and objectives and highlighted some key points:

- **KPIs and Strategy**: The KPIs and objectives align with the new strategy approved at the July 2024 Board meeting. The strategy will be published soon, pending design completion.
- **Development Culture**: Emphasis on embedding a dynamic development culture through specialist groups. Unlike larger universities, HCA doesn't routinely launch and close courses. Focus on enhancing market awareness and developing short courses by Christmas. Goal to attain TEF Gold status within three years.
- **Community Engagement**: Importance of student community engagement, focusing on external collaborations as part of a five-year plan. Emphasis on

skill sharing among students. A Board Member inquired about HCA's engagement with schools for community initiatives.

- **Typo Correction:** The Chair noted a typo on page 8 under Theme 3 to correct "September 2024" to "September 2025."
- **Theme 5:** Folly Lane's external signage is an important advertisement for prospective students. A Board Member noted that College Road also plays a significant role and should be considered.
- **Theme 3 Heading:** A Board Member suggested amending the Theme 3 heading to include "staff," which was acknowledged for review.

Decision: Board approved Objectives and KPIs

6. Finance reports

- Management Accounts to 31st July** – The Finance Director stated that the figures will be audited in the next few weeks. The College cash balance and balance sheet were strong. It was noted that there is good flow in the category. The Chair requested an amendment to refer to payroll as just the percentage figure and to remove the reference to "slightly lower" (on page 5 under the KPI heading), emphasising that it is a good figure.
- Current Budget Risks** – A quick review of the numbers indicated a negative trend, with current figures reflecting the situation. Actions are being taken to improve certain areas and short courses are targeted for more income. Growth in higher education (HE) hasn't materialised, with recruitment challenges noted. There is a commitment to improving HE numbers and increasing targets, with clear strategies focusing on reducing core costs. Cost control measures are being taken seriously, acknowledging this year was expected to be challenging.
- Risk Register** – Three changes were noted including the improved relationship with the University of Wales: Trinity St. David. The Chair emphasised the importance of HCA demonstrating a serious commitment to cost control.

Items 2, 3, and 4 on the register are marked in red, indicating areas that require attention. It was felt that these areas should potentially be lower risk. The Audit Committee will discuss these items further.

7. Annual Reports Discussed in Committees

- Sustainability** – The Principal presented key development areas, focusing on data records. The college should this year start to collect Scope 3 emissions data after achieving Scope 2 compliance. Recommendations from last year's energy audit are being implemented. A basic data feedback system for students and staff is to be put in place, with ongoing focus on sustainability and energy management.
- Health and Safety** – The Principal presented the report. A Board Member raised concerns about contractor incidents and the need for a code of conduct, which the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) is reviewing. The Principal will discuss these matters with the Health and Safety officer. It was also suggested to include defibrillators in safety protocols, and the Principal is exploring funding and has sent information to

the relevant manager. Training in the use of defibrillators for staff was also recommended.

- c. **Estates** – Significant work is ongoing with the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). The roof replacement is being upgraded with improved insulation, addressing waterproofing issues. A minor works process is being developed for smaller projects. The Department for Education (DoE) will conduct a conditions survey before funding input, with a visual inspection to identify and address relevant issues.

8. Policies for noting/approval

KCSIE24 updates to Safeguarding Policy – The Board noted the policy, with only minor changes including an amended definition, an emphasis on early intervention and referrals, and recognition of LGBTQ+ individuals. It was noted that the updated terminology enhances communication with parents. The goal is a more concise policy this year. The Chair's query on "Get Help" clarified it as the Early Help assessment, and the policy will be updated accordingly.

Decision: *Board agreed to approve the KCSIE24 updates to Safeguarding Policy*

Action: Clerk to publish updated Safeguarding Policy above

9. Committee draft minutes

- a. **Search and Governance (24th June 2024)** – the draft minutes were noted by the Board.
- b. **Finance and General Purposes (24th June 2024)** – the draft minutes were noted by the Board.

10. Any Other Business

- a. **Nicola Hewitt** – The Clerk is to send relevant papers to new Board Member Nicola Hewitt. The Chair and Principal will arrange a meeting with Niki to discuss the objectives.

Action: Clerk to send Board Papers to Nicola Hewitt

- b. **Search for a new Chair** – A board member circulated information regarding the recruitment of a new Chair, encouraging feedback. Although some feedback has been sent, it appears the recipient did not receive it in their emails. A Board Member suggested to examine effective Chairs at art institutions for the recruitment process.

Action: The Clerk/Principal to review and gather chair recruitment documents.

11. Close of Business and Date of Next Meeting

With no further business to discuss, the Chair adjourned the meeting at 6:53 PM. The next meeting is scheduled for December 16th, 2024, at 4:30 PM.

Minutes approved: Date: