

## SOUTH WEST COLLEGE GOVERNING BODY

Minutes of a meeting of the **Governing Body of South West College**  
held on Wednesday 8 September 2021 at 5:30 pm  
via Microsoft Teams

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**PRESENT:**

- Ms Siobhan Breen
- Mrs Deborah Brown
- Mrs Margaret Martin
- Mr Michael McAlister (Chief Executive)
- Mrs Patricia McCaffrey
- Mr Seamus McCaffrey
- Mrs Gillian McDowell
- Mrs Monica McGeary
- Mrs Joanne Moore
- Dr Nicholas O'Shiel (Chairman)

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

- Dr Jill Cush, Deputy Chief Executive
- Mrs Fiona McCauley, Secretary to the Governing Body
- Mr Mark Sterritt, Boardroom Apprentice

**APOLOGIES:**

- Mr Peter Archdale
- Mr Michael McGuckin
- Mr Gerard O'Hanlon
- Mr Michael Skuce

### **1.0 PRELIMINARIES**

Dr O'Shiel welcomed all present to the meeting. He extended a particular welcome to Mr Sterritt, Boardroom Apprentice, on his first attendance at a Governing Body meeting. Mr Sterritt then introduced himself and thanked the Governing Body for the support provided to date.

Dr O'Shiel also acknowledged Mr McAlister's last attendance at a Governing Body meeting before his retirement on 30 September 2021 noting that restrictions had prevented the Governing Body from coming together to mark the occasion.

### **2.0 APOLOGIES**

Apologies were tendered on behalf of Mr Archdale, Mr McGuckin, Mr O'Hanlon and Mr Skuce.

### **3.0 CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS**

No conflict of interest declarations were made.

### **4.0 MINUTES OF AND MATTERS ARISING FROM A MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BODY HELD ON WEDNESDAY 30 JUNE 2021**

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 03 Minutes of a meeting of the Governing Body held on Wednesday 30 June 2021.

**AGREED: on the proposal of Mrs McGeary and seconded by Mrs Martin, that the above minutes be accepted as a true and accurate record. These minutes were subsequently digitally signed on behalf of the Chair of the Governing Body.**

## **5.0 CHAIR'S BUSINESS**

Dr O'Shiel noted that he had no business to raise under this item.

## **6.0 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S BUSINESS**

**Budget** – Mr McAlister reported good financial performance for the year to 31 July 2021 adding that income was ahead of target for most programmes and that Covid restrictions had resulted in some savings. He advised that affordability issues and associated student debt was under constant review and noted that problems had arisen in-year due to the introduction of the new student information system, EBS, which were now resolved. In response to a query, Mr McAlister commented on the financial support offered to students and confirmed that any further funding available will be directed to students.

**Enrolments** – Mr McAlister reported a steady daily growth in enrolments, provided current enrolment statistics and noted that these are broadly comparable with 2020/21 figures. Dr Cush then made the meeting aware of the focused marketing currently taking place and, in response to a question, detailed the marketing methods used by the College, noting in particular the emphasis on social media advertising.

**Covid-19** – Mr McAlister provided statistics on Covid-19 diagnoses in the College community in the previous month and in the previous year, noting a recent spike in cases in the College and in the region. He advised that the move to stage 5 of the Framework for the Safe Resumption of On-Site Educational Provision and Related Activity had allowed a full return to on-site learning but explained that in practice on-site activity has been staggered. He also detailed the mitigations still in place and noted that a review will be undertaken in late October. In response to a query on contingencies, Mr McAlister advised that adaptations may be required on a case by case basis, that a return to remote learning may be necessary in certain circumstances and that supervisors and part-time lecturers are available to support classes where a lecturer is required to isolate. He also made the meeting aware of the requirement for a cohort of staff to isolate due to their close contact with an external trainer who had been diagnosed with Covid-19.

## **7.0 CORPORATE OBJECTIVES / COLLEGE DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 06 2020/21 CDP Progress Report.

With reference to paper 06, Dr Cush provided an overview of performance against the 2020/21 College Development Plan. She highlighted achievement of enrolment targets in all areas with the exception of part-time further education and full-time higher education. She explained that restrictions had limited the delivery of Confucius and Community Education provision which led to the shortfall in part-time further education and that although the full-time higher education target for 2020/21 had not been met an 11% increase in prior year enrolments had been achieved. She drew attention to the achievement of employer engagement and social inclusion targets as well as to the good performance in overall retention and success targets. She noted

the slight shortfall in the overall achievement target and explained that this was largely due to underperformance in Essential Skills which was replicated across the sector. She added that a recent change in the awarding body for Essential Skills may address the issue in this area in the current year.

In response to questions, Dr Cush spoke of the increased competition for students from schools and universities, of the popularity of the College's apprenticeship provision and of the sustained growth in the College's higher education enrolments due to the continuous evolution of the higher education offer to meet emerging needs. Mr McAlister also advised that new DfE funded programmes provide opportunities for mature students to enhance and diversify their skills.

## **8.0 ERNE CAMPUS PROJECT UPDATE**

Mr McAlister confirmed that formal takeover of the Erne Campus had taken place. He listed the main items outstanding at takeover and provided an update on their current status noting that the G99 License remains outstanding and that work continues with NIE to progress the matter. He explained that calculation of the final account is nearing completion with an expectation of a within budget out-turn. He added that plans for a socially distanced launch on 22 September 2021 are well advanced and that contingency plans are in place for a virtual event should circumstances necessitate it.

The achievement of Mr McAlister and the Erne Project Team in the successful construction of the Erne Campus was highlighted and congratulations were extended to all involved.

## **9.0 ONE PLANET LIVING**

Dr Cush explained that the action plan for the implementation of the One Planet Living principles is the delivery framework for the College's Sustainability Strategy. She commented on the extensive engagement of staff with the development process and advised that the action plan would be scrutinized by the Finance & General Purposes Committee in the first instance and approval then sought from the Governing Body for its submission to Bioregional with a view to gaining One Planet Living Leadership status. In response to a query, the meeting was provided with assurance on the commitment of staff to the One Planet Living approach and was advised that progress would be monitored by the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

## **10.0 POLICY REVIEWS**

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 09.01            Standing Orders
- Paper 09.02            Proposed Amendments to Standing Orders
- Paper 09.03            Code of Conduct for Governing Body Members
- Paper 09.04            Procedure for Election of Student Governor.

With reference to paper 09.01, Mrs McCauley explained that an amendment was proposed to reflect the transition to Microsoft Teams as a platform for virtual meetings. She noted that no amendments were proposed to the Code of Conduct for Governing Body Members and that adoption of the Procedure for Election of Student Governor would initiate the student governor election process.

**AGREED: adoption of the Standing Orders, Code of Conduct for Governing Body Members and Procedure for Election of Student Governor presented.**

#### **11.0 REGISTER OF INTERESTS**

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 10 Register of Governors' Interests.

The Secretary to the Governing Body drew attention to the register of governors' interests contained in paper 10 and requested timely notification of any changes in governors' interests during the 2021/22 year.

#### **12.0 MANAGEMENT STATEMENT & FINANCIAL MEMORANDUM**

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 11.01 Management Statement & Financial Memorandum
- Paper 11.02 Appendices to Management Statement & Financial Memorandum.

It was noted that the Management Statement & Financial Memorandum must be tabled annually for the information of members at a meeting of the Governing Body.

#### **13.0 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR OF THE AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE**

Nominations for the position of Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee were invited by the Secretary to the Governing Body.

**AGREED: on the proposal of Dr O'Shiel, seconded by Mrs Martin, that Mrs McCaffrey be re-elected to the position of Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee.**

#### **14.0 GOVERNANCE KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 13 Proposed 2021/22 Key Performance Indicators.

**AGREED: adoption of the proposed 2021/22 Governance Key Performance Indicators presented.**

#### **15.0 DECLARATION OF HOSPITALITY OR GIFTS RECEIVED OR OFFERED**

No declarations were made under this heading.

#### **16.0 REVIEW OF OUTSTANDING ACTIONS**

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 15 Outstanding Actions.

It was noted that the action listed had been superseded by the update provided on One Planet Living.

#### **17.0 ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS**

Ms Breen commented on the reflection of staff on the review of the College's culture and structure and noted that a communication to staff on the conclusions of the review would be appreciated. Mrs Brown echoed the sentiments of Ms Breen. Dr O'Shiel thanked both staff governors for their comments.

**18.0 REFLECTION ON EFFECTIVENESS OF MEETING**

Members noted their content with the proceedings of the meeting.

*Ms Breen, Mrs Brown and Mr Sterritt withdrew from the meeting at this juncture.  
The meeting then went into confidential session and concluded at 8:15 pm.*

**CONFIRMED BY THE GOVERNING BODY AT A MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 17<sup>TH</sup>  
NOVEMBER 2021**

**CHAIRMAN**



**DATE**

17/11/2021