



Minutes of the Meeting of the **Governing Body** of
The City Literary Institute held on **17 March 2020, 8am**
Via telephone conference (Covid-19)

Governors Present:

Tim Bolderson
Edward Breen (Staff Governor)
Jane Cooper (Deputy Chair)
Jon Gamble
Moira Gibb (Chair)

Colin Jones
Mark Malcomson (Principal)
Michael Simmonds
Paula Smith
Jill Westerman

In Attendance: Phil Chamberlain (Executive Director, External Engagement); Paul Evans (Chief Financial Officer/Co-Managing Director); Julie Gilbert (Executive Director, People); Wendy McKaig (Vice Principal/Co-Managing Director).

Clerk: Katrina O'Sullivan

Standing items

20/25 Apologies for absence

There were apologies for absence received from Penny Allen, Eric Hadley and Raj Parkash.

20/26 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

20/27 Matters Arising Not Appearing Elsewhere

There were no matters arising not appearing elsewhere.

20/28 Covid-19 situation - *oral*

The Chair thanked the Governing Body for convening at short notice via telephone and confirmed that everyone was audible. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the rapidly changing and serious situation regarding Covid-19 and asked the Principal to update the Board on the current position.

The Principal explained that the number of students were declining by the day with students self-isolating and online activity was substantially down, which he did not find surprising – however, the College also had a large cohort of strong willed and loyal students who had expressed that they would continue attending City Lit as it was a large part of their lives.

If the College was told to shut by Government, the initial steps that Management had taken were that: Phil Chamberlain had been in contact with the ESFA to raise that the College would be in financial difficulty with reduced enrolments due to Covid-19 (as highlighted at the 10 March Board meeting); staff had expressed feeling more uncomfortable and Management had been considering different work patterns for staff ie, work from home if possible, shift patterns; and considering the potential to move some courses online and working with tutors about this - but some areas were more advanced in terms of delivering online courses.

Governors enquired whether accredited courses were being looked at and how the College could support the students on those courses. Wendy McKaig expressed that they would prioritise those courses and were monitoring all the awarding bodies for their guidance. Where courses could not be moved online the College would look at keeping those students engaged.

The Board asked Paul Evans to update the Board on the finances. Paul explained that, as mentioned previously, if enrolments ceased then the College would run out of cash by the end of June 2020, at the latest. A measure to mitigate against this would be to extend the current unused £2m overdraft to £5m. Another option would be to take a mortgage out on the building of circa £10m as the building was worth £70m - there was no debt secured against it presently, but significant cost savings would need to be made to service the repayments. Management had also been looking at the potential to temporarily pause the EC lease for next term as that contract was on a three month rolling basis which would save £40k; additionally the same could be done with International house. Paul would look at the College's insurance as there was the potential to claim £250k if the College was told to close, but the detailed terms would need to be reviewed. The Board agreed with Management's suggestion that Paul should seek to extend the overdraft to £5m to cover any potential loss in revenue due to the Covid-19 situation.

Governors asked if there had been any confirmed cases and Julie expressed that there were not any known cases amongst staff. With regards to students, unless the College is told it was difficult to know as some people may have suspected symptoms and be self-isolating without the College's knowledge.

A lengthy discussion ensued and governors shared measures that had/or were going to be taken in their businesses/other Boards and other Institutes of Adult Learning and felt that it was unsafe to allow City Lit's staunchly loyal students wanting to come in and risk the travel and contact with others, bearing in mind that many City Lit students were over 70 years old. There was also the duty of care as an employer for the Board to consider and it aimed to balance the financial risk with social responsibility. The Board acknowledged that it was highly probable that the government would need to close colleges at some point in the near future.

To that end, the Governing Body **agreed** that in order to protect staff and students: the College would remain open but cease face-to-face teaching by Friday 20 March. Teaching would move online, but the building be open to staff, who wished to come in, to support students – but all within the spirit of Public Health England and the Department for Education's advice. Other staff would be permitted to work from home. It was important to keep the cash coming in to the College and Paul would look at the terms regarding the £250k insurance money, seek to extend the overdraft to £5m, look at offering credit instead of refunds.

The Principal confirmed that he would communicating this to staff by holding a series of Town Hall meetings, the first being later that afternoon.

Chair.....

Date.....