



Governors Present:

Penny Allen	Colin Jones
Tim Bolderson	Mark Malcomson (Principal)
Edward Breen (Staff Governor)	Raj Parkash
Jane Cooper (Deputy Chair)	Michael Simmonds
Jon Gamble	Jill Westerman
Moira Gibb (Chair)	

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

Clerk: Katrina O’Sullivan

Standing items

20/29 Apologies for absence

There were apologies for absence received from Eric Hadley and Paula Smith. The Chair confirmed that everyone was audible via the teleconference facilities. She thanked the Governing Body and Management for convening at short notice during the Covid-19 crisis. The Chair thought it timely for the Board to receive an update from Management on what had been taking place since the Board last convened two weeks prior, prior to the College ceasing face-to-face teaching - and then subsequently Government mandating Colleges to shut.

20/30 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

20/31 Minutes of the Meeting

There were no minutes to consider at this meeting.

20/32 Matters Arising Not Appearing Elsewhere

There were no matters arising not appearing elsewhere.

20/33 Covid-19 update

The Principal explained that the team had managed to move 80% of classes online for the remainder of Term 1 and plans were underway to get as many of the Term 3 classes online also. After Easter, the Principal and his team would think about the long term future of City Lit and identify threats and opportunities; but he was not at that point yet but concentrating on the immediate and urgent issues facing the College: the fee income and the wellbeing and safety of all staff and students.

The Principal asked each member of Management to give governors a high-level overview of their particular area.

Phil Chamberlain explained that he was undertaking considerable engagement with the ESFA and Mayor's office to ensure that they were fully informed of the College's situation regarding the finances, specific to City Lit, and also by leading on behalf of the other Institutes of Adult Education. Support packages would be offered but nothing had been stated, as yet, about loss of fees. He had been liaising with the AoC/HOLEX who were supportive of the College's messaging. Thought was being given to the College's Fellows and key partners messaging also.

Paul Evans stated that he had made a request to Barclays bank to extend the overdraft from £2m to £5m. The bank was in discussions with the ESFA and DfE about what support would be given to the sector. His biggest concern was the College running out of cash and had approached the ESFA for emergency financial support. Verbal assurance had been given to Paul that either the bank and/or ESFA would support the College. One issue he highlighted were the student refunds as the Board and Management did not want money to leave the College, however, after seeking legal advice the College would be obliged to pay refunds if requested. The College would offer credit first and then a refund if asked for - Management was looking at the messaging to students about this. Members questioned whether students who were enduring financial hardship could easily obtain their refund; the Principal confirmed that those students had been thought of and given their refunds quickly already. Governors enquired what the maximum exposure was regarding refunds and what that meant for the cash situation. Paul explained that it was potentially £1.7m and if the College had to pay all of that then the cash would run out in May, if it were not the full amount then the cash would be depleted in June 2020. Paul added that building works at Kean Street had come to a halt, primarily because the contractor had a supply chain issue due to the situation. He was looking at deferring the HRMC costs for one year and looking to temporarily pause the EC lease – these were helpful measures but the bigger fix would be needed. Governors enquired whether the pension contributions made the College vulnerable and Paul explained that the teachers' pensions were a government scheme and the London Pension had second charge on the Keeley Street building, so there was not a pension risk for City Lit and its staff.

Julie Gilbert updated the Board regarding the furlough scheme. It was still unknown if the sector would be eligible as differing advice was being given and the College was awaiting a definitive answer from Treasury. The challenge around the scheme may be that the College had 40% funding and 60% commercial income. Management was working on multiple iterations regarding how the College could apply the scheme to staff in the event of being able to apply. Julie explained the terms and dates of the scheme to the Board. The Principal added that there was a moral and reputational issue regarding tutors' pay for Term 3 as the College is unable to confirm to them yet what is happening and tutors were beginning to be concerned.

Governors asked about staff coronavirus cases and also the information given to staff who had concerns. Julie confirmed that a specific Covid-19 email had been created for staff to use if they had any worries and, from that, HR would be able to identify any health problems and were following up with weekly wellbeing calls and ascertain who was ill, or who were caring for ill relatives/dependants. All staff emails were being sent regularly and a Q&A live document was on the website for staff and students. Julie confirmed that one staff member had been confirmed as having Covid-19, 15 people displayed mild symptoms; 30 staff members were self-isolating for 12 weeks due to them or members of their household being vulnerable.

Wendy McKaig expressed that the Schools were working hard on the potential delivery of online courses. Term 3 courses with students on accredited courses/progression courses were being prioritised. Students who already knew and studied with City Lit were also being targeted. The programme was being finalised and currently it was looking like 750 courses out of a possible 2500 were possible. The survey of online courses that ran last term had been very helpful and the average score had been 3.6 (normally 4.6 out of 5), Wendy felt this was a good score considering the circumstances but the feedback had been fed into the Term 3 preparation. City Lit was providing ongoing training/mindfulness courses for tutors in delivering online courses. Governor queried whether that, as well as securing current students, there would be the opportunity for new students who were seeking online courses and testing pricing for online courses. Wendy explained that in May/June they could look to push this out to new students but currently were,

in the first instance, concentrating on delivering a quality student experience for the students mentioned.

Rachel Johnson updated the Board that, in terms of the Centres of Expertise, the team had been contacting the College's learning disabilities students and their parents/carers to ensure that they were ok and assessing their technological capabilities in order to be able to tailor the courses appropriately. Her team were trialling different mediums such as Zoom, Google handouts and ascertaining what was possible for the students, particularly City Lit's BSL/lipreading and ESOL students. The team had also been staying connected with the Deaf education students and had been making BSL videos.

The Board discussed the intricacies of the points in the oral update and commented that an amazing amount had been achieved by Management in a short space of time; governors were assured that steps were being taken to seek clarity around the ESFA/bank support – which was of vital importance.

The Principal thanked the Board for its support, it had been a help for Management to have governors as a sounding board as well as a Governing Body in these unprecedented times. The Board also counselled that it was important for Management to take of their own wellbeing.

DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

20/34 The date of the next scheduled meeting was 19 May 2020 but the Board agreed that it should convene regularly, when appropriate, either for updates or when there were decisions to be made.

Chair.....

Date.....