

Minutes

Full Governing Body
Minutes

Meeting Time and Date	17:30pm on Wednesday 24 th September 2025
Meeting Location	H1, The Manor House, Capel Manor College, Enfield Campus
Members in Attendance	Joanne Roxburgh (Chair), Darrell DeSouza OBE, (Vice Chair), Ralph Luck OBE, Sarah Moreland MBE, Alex Lane, Aaron Davies, Lorna Fitzjohn, Zoe Halfyard (Staff Governor), Aziz Ahmed, Dennis Hone CBE, Guy Jones-Owen, Peter Doble, Sheila Cunningham, Mei Lim
Participants	Paul Smith (Deputy Principal & COO), Heather Marks (Deputy Principal, Curriculum & Quality), Cllr Sabri Ozaydin
Director of Governance	Jennifer Swift

	Matters Arising
1. Welcome and Apologies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1. Apologies were sent by Stephen Way, Alex Kent Jones, Joe Howarth and Nikki Barker. 1.2. Cllr Sabri Ozaydin was welcomed to the meeting. 1.3. Darrell DeSouza and Sheila Cunningham would be leaving the meeting at 7pm and apologised for any inconvenience. 	
2. Declaration of Interests <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1. No interests declared in relation to any agenda items. 	
3. Minutes (Decision) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.1. A governor suggested a change of wording in minute 1.3, which was agreed. 3.2. A governor asked whether the Board would receive updates on the 'Get Ready for Capel' initiative designed to keep potential learners enthused. The Principal confirmed that an update on this would be provided at a later meeting. 3.3. A governor queried the 3% pay rise that was discussed in minute 5.9 and highlighted that the AoC has recommended a 4% pay rise. The Principal confirmed that these figures would be reviewed in the upcoming Committee meetings. 3.4. A governor asked that minute 11.8 states that the EBITDA recommendation was made by the FE Commissioner at the AoC conference. 3.5. In relation to minute 11.12, a governor asked if the figure stated for the Enfield Hessayon project cost of £4.440 million was correct. The Deputy Principal & COO confirmed that this was the correct figure. 	Governance Principal

<p>3.6. A governor highlighted that in minute 8.4 the word should be changed from 'internal' to 'external'.</p> <p>Resolved to</p> <p>3.7. Approve the minutes of the Full Governing Body meeting held on Wednesday 9th July 2025 as a correct record and authorise the Chair to confirm them.</p>	<p>Governance</p>
<p>4. Matters Arising (Information)</p> <p>4.1. In relation to the matter concerning retention rates of 16-18 year-olds (GB July 2025, 5.15) it was requested that this information be made available as soon as it is prepared rather than waiting until the Committee meeting. This is to ensure governors have the information in the event of an Ofsted inspection taking place before the Committee meeting.</p> <p>4.2. A governor requested that the Finance & Resources Committee also receives the update on whether the College meets the criteria to receive an uplift.</p> <p>4.3. A governor enquired about the Farm Steering Group as it is felt there hasn't been an update on this. The Principal confirmed that the College has made great progress at the farm and has been successful in stemming the losses. It is planned that the Farm Steering Group will reconvene once the meetings with planners and potential funders have been completed and the draft Masterplan is ready for the Steering Group to review.</p> <p>4.4. The Chair also asked what action is being taken to address the Governors' low response rate to the annual EDI survey and asked this be added as a matter arising so this can be monitored.</p> <p>4.5. A governor thanked the Deputy Principal & COO for his work rewriting the Financial Regulations.</p>	<p>Deputy Principal, C&Q</p> <p>Deputy Principal & COO</p> <p>Principal</p> <p>Governance</p>
<p>5. Report of the Principal</p> <p><u>Enrolments</u></p> <p>5.1. The Principal confirmed the College is ahead of last year's figures and positive momentum is now building as can be seen in the upward trend in enrolments.</p> <p>5.2. The Principal explained that a key priority for this year is to ensure that learners stay on their courses and appropriate support and scaffolding will be put in place to ensure lower withdrawal numbers.</p> <p>5.3. It was explained that last year's funding was based on 918 learners which represented an uplift of 8% on the prior year. Current enrolment figures for 2025/26 are at 1091, significantly ahead of last year's numbers.</p> <p>5.4. Although these results are pleasing, the College will not become complacent over the coming weeks. Current withdrawals stand at 28 and the Board was informed that last year's withdrawal figure was 70.</p>	

<p>5.5. A governor requested that enrolment data across campuses is shared with the Board. The Principal confirmed this information will be shared with governors after the half term once student movements and enrolment has ended.</p> <p>5.6. A governor queried the information that had been presented and queried no learners being enrolled for Business and Future Skills. The Principal confirmed that this course is being reviewed and may not run in the way it was anticipated.</p> <p>5.7. A governor asked of the potential implications for staff if this course does not go ahead and the Principal confirmed that some staff members may be at risk. It is expected that a clearer picture on this will emerge by the October half term.</p> <p>5.8. The Principal referred to Annex B on his report which highlighted the upward trajectory and demonstrates a good position on enrolments, which are projected to be at their highest level in the College's history.</p> <p>5.9. In addition to the organic growth in numbers (and hence finances) now being achieved, it was explained that Sam Black (AP Employer Skills, Innovation & Growth) has been recruited specifically to secure growth in other areas, including apprenticeships, boot camps and online learning and updates on these fronts will be provided to future Finance & Resources Committee meetings.</p>	<p>Principal</p>
<p><u>Achievement</u></p> <p>5.10. The Principal shared the progress that has been made in achievement over the past few years and pointed out that achievement of 16–18-year-olds is now above national average which was a key priority following the Ofsted inspection grading it an area that required improvement.</p> <p>5.11. The Principal had highlighted that there were only a few instances over the past 10 years where higher achievement rates occurred compared to this year's results, where all key elements (overall achievement, 16-18, adults, apprenticeships) were well above national averages.</p> <p>5.12. The Principal confirmed that there is far more consistency and rigour being applied and has confidence that this continuous improvement will be maintained.</p> <p>5.13. A governor commented on the solid set of data and especially the positive progress on 16–18-year-old achievement.</p> <p>5.14. The Board is interested in seeing the variation in achievement rates across campuses and curriculum for assurance that nothing is out of kilter and asked that this be presented at a future meeting.</p>	<p>Principal</p>
<p><u>Apprenticeships</u></p> <p>5.15. The Principal confirmed that huge improvements have been made this year in transforming the Apprenticeships offer. During this period, recruitment was paused in order to review and improve the learner & employer journey. It is expected that continuous improvement in achievement will be seen in this area.</p>	

<p>5.16. A governor suggested that consideration needs to be given to the College's skills contribution now that there is a smaller cohort and to ensure the College continues to meet its target.</p> <p>5.17. The Principal confirmed that the cohort this year is expected to be at the same level as last year's and that the College's responsiveness to employers' skills needs, as set out in the summary recently shared with the Board, is further supplemented by the new Skills Boot Camp offer, which provides immediate solutions for employers' workforce needs.</p>	
<p><u>Staff Survey Results</u></p> <p>5.18. The headline results from the staff survey were shared with governors and it was noted that these results differed greatly from the staff survey findings that were gathered a few years ago, proving to be a good headline indicator.</p> <p>5.19. The Principal explained that the themes and action plans that have developed from these findings are being shared during the campus briefings and will be presented to the Board via the Finance & Resources Committee.</p> <p>5.20. The participation rate was around a third of staff and the College would like to see this figure improve over time. Consideration will be given to the point in the term when these are sent out in future so that staff have the time to complete the surveys.</p> <p>5.21. A governor asked if the qualitative data presented any insights that the College was not aware of. The Deputy Principal & COO confirmed that there were no surprising findings and that pay, benefits and work life balance were emerging themes.</p>	
<p><u>Safeguarding</u></p> <p>5.22. Governors had been presented with a Safeguarding update ahead of the meeting.</p> <p>5.23. A governor commented that the Safeguarding Policy on the website needs updating, and the Director of Governance confirmed she would speak to Executive Support about this. (Governance).</p>	
<p><u>Buildings Update</u></p> <p>5.24. A governor commented that the Enfield Project states that the demolition will take place in mid-November but this is no longer the case as the demolition will not take place until the planning is approved.</p> <p>5.25. The Deputy Principal & COO confirmed that demolition is now planned for the end of the year or beginning of 2026, avoiding the Christmas break.</p> <p>5.26. A governor queried if there would be a risk of lost funding if there are programme delays, and the Deputy Principal & COO confirmed that he is confident we will be able to mitigate this risk and meet funding requirements.</p>	
<p>6. College Strategic Plan Refresh</p>	

<p>6.1. For the benefit of new governors, it was explained that the College had key fundamentals to resolve when the current Strategic Plan was developed, with the resultant focus over the past 2 years upon improving Quality, Curriculum Planning, People strategies, the College Finances & 16-18 student recruitment. Great improvements had been made in these areas and now the College is looking ahead to the next phase of its evolution in terms of the curriculum offered and partnerships with its stakeholders and employers. The College is however keen to ensure the progress made on the underlying fundamentals is continued, hence the reference to targets and objectives to 'Strategic Enablers' including further improvements to the People proposition.</p> <p>6.2. The Strategic Plan refresh is intended to review the College's focus for the next 5 years, looking at the areas the College will aim explore and excel in. The Strategy is draft, for comment and input by Governors and builds upon previous dialogues from the Governor's Strategy Day. The draft Strategy will be shared and discussed with staff via the monthly campus briefings, via the Board Committee meetings through the autumn term and culminating in the final version being firmed up for Governors' approval at the December meeting.</p> <p>6.3. The Principal provided more detail around the new strategic objectives and explained that these will be underpinned by operational plans designed to achieve these.</p> <p>6.4. Governors were asked to contribute to the plan so that there is a broad consensus of endorsements about the direction of travel. The proposed strategy refresh will be discussed at the upcoming Committees.</p> <p>6.5. A governor queried the extent in which the deliverables in the strategic plan refresh are being delivered currently and whether the College does have capacity to deliver in the areas for improvement.</p> <p>6.6. The Board also enquired about how the College would get objective accreditation stated to become the national centre for excellence.</p> <p>6.7. The Principal confirmed that the College is currently delivering on some of the areas and the focus is now on where it can improve and/or extend others, such as the blue skills and building on partnerships with employers.</p> <p>6.8. A governor asked which member of staff has oversight of partnerships and whether this is managed by one person or a team. The Principal confirmed that this is integrated through several different roles, but the new Assistant Principal for Employer Skills will ultimately lead and provide oversight on this area.</p> <p>6.9. Another governor suggested that as the College has the resources to carry out its own research consideration should be given to this, allowing Capel to build a reputation of being a leader in this field.</p>	
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<p>6.10. A discussion took place around potential awards that the College could apply for and that the College may benefit from being a niche provider.</p> <p>6.11. Cllr Ozaydin invited the College to have a display at the annual careers day which had 1,000 visitors last year and the Principal welcomed this offer.</p> <p>6.12. A governor queried who the intended audience is for this document and whether a student could engage with this. The Principal confirmed that there would be different version produced for different audiences and the student perspective would be included in this approach.</p> <p>6.13. Governors held a detailed discussion about the green and blue skills referred to in the strategic plan and how these can be developed. The College is already involved in work that meets elements of the blue skills target and the intention is to grow this over time.</p> <p>6.14. A governor queried if the College had the financial capacity to support their plans and referred to the guest speakers that are mentioned, which in their experience often come at a large cost. The Principal agreed that the cost of the plans do need to be quantified and as enrolments are growing, the College will be in a better financial position to support these plans, whilst the guest speakers in mind were industry figures and not expected to charge a fee for sharing their expertise.</p> <p>6.15. The Principal confirmed that the approach being taken with regard to the new delivery area of Skills Bootcamps would be representative of the approach to be taken on investments needed, with this proposal reviewed by the Assistant Principal, Employer Skills, Innovation and Growth, the Deputy Principal and Principal to ensure the risk/reward profile was reasonable. An overview of appropriate risk assessment criteria was discussed and this will be covered when the performance of the Skills Bootcamps project is reported on via Finance & Resources Committee. It</p> <p>6.16. It was suggested that the College needs to decide the position it is taking on its sustainability strategy and referred to the potential conflict with developing its AI tool and the net zero approach. (Principal)</p> <p>6.17. A governor suggested that an addition be made to the strategic enablers to include financial stability or creating the headroom to achieve the strategy.</p> <p>6.18. Zoe Halfyard left the meeting.</p> <p>6.19. A governor asked about the alumni network and the Principal agreed this must remain an area of focus. Governors discussed that it would be great to see examples of colleges that have a strong alumni network that can inspire Capel's approach.</p> <p>6.20. A governor queried if the College has built any relationships with businesses such as the construction companies who are carrying out building works and asked if there is anything in our procurement process that requires them to collaborate with the</p>	
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<p>curriculum. The Councillor attending the meeting confirmed that this is common practice on planning applications in the local Council. The Executive team agreed to give this area further thought. (SLT)</p> <p>6.21. It was also suggested that the College should consider the involvement of other Colleges to free up resources as the Strategy is developed. (Principal)</p>	
<p>7. Report of the Director of Governance</p> <p>7.1. This paper provided an update on governance related matters.</p> <p><u>Link Visits</u></p> <p>7.2. The link visit process which was approved by the Board in the summer of 2023 has been updated with staffing changes. Governors were reminded to be proactive in arranging their visits.</p> <p>7.3. Governors were reminded to complete their link visit summary forms to they can be shared with the Board (Governors)</p> <p>7.4. A governor commented that there are some staff who have several roles in the College and wants assurance that multiple link visits will not add too much pressure to their workloads. (Principal/Deputy Principal).</p> <p><u>Chair's Action</u></p> <p>7.5. Two Chair's Actions were completed over the summer holidays, and the Board was updated on these. Governors had no queries on these actions.</p> <p><u>Chair's Appraisal</u></p> <p>7.6. The Vice Chair of Corporation updated the Board on the Chair's Appraisal which had taken place in the summer term. Governors were thanked for their contributions to the process in line with FEC guidance and ETF competency framework for chairs of FE college corporations.</p> <p>7.7. Governors were asked to feedback on the process, and it was suggested that the survey could be refined next year. It was also requested that an option is given to provide more qualitative feedback on next year's survey. (Governance)</p> <p><u>Governor Training</u></p> <p>7.8. Governors discussed the recent training issue where their training records were lost during the move from Moodle to iHasco. Governors are being asked to repeat training they have already completed as gaps are showing on their records.</p> <p>7.9. Governors recommended that others download their training certificates to avoid any future issues such as this.</p> <p>7.10. Sheila Cunningham and Darrell DeSouza left the meeting.</p>	
<p>8. P12 Management Accounts</p>	

<p>8.1. The Deputy Principal presented the draft results for the last academic year and asked the Board to note these.</p> <p>8.2. It was confirmed that there is a small operating surplus of £130,000 and the EBITDA is in line with the forecast, a positive position to be in, representing the 3rd year of surpluses following previous years of deficit budgets.</p> <p>8.3. The Deputy Principal & COO also referred to the College being able to invest in quality, people and capital projects over the last few years.</p> <p>8.4. The Deputy Principal responded to a governor's query about the EBITDA being lower than the FE Commissioner's suggested benchmark of 6%. It has been explained at a previous Finance & Resources Committee meeting, now that the College finances have been stabilised, a trend of operating surpluses re-established and the decline on 16-18 enrolments reversed meaning the forward, lagged funding outlook is positive, the intention is to shift the focus now towards increasing financial returns in order to move away from the relatively slender operating surplus margins currently seen. This intention was behind part of the recent management restructure (the creation of the Assistant Principal role focused upon new business tenders/bids and new income stream developments). A plan is being presented to the Finance & Resources Committee in November covering a range of areas which will contribute to this objective.</p> <p>8.5. A governor queried that the budget has assumed a 3% pay award which is lower than the AoC (Association of Colleges) recommendation. It was confirmed that once the final student numbers are more settled, the Executive Team will review the proposed pay recommendations and report back to the Board on this area.</p> <p>8.6. A governor queried the £750,000 of outstanding debt and asked what type of debt this was. Concern was raised about the length of these debts as there is a risk that they may have to be written off.</p> <p>8.7. A governor asked if there is a policy in place where students must clear any debts to receive their qualification, which is common practice at universities. The Deputy Principal confirmed this is not a requirement but agreed that consideration should be given to this. (Deputy Principal & COO)</p> <p>8.8. It was requested that chasing these outstanding debts is marked as an urgent action. The Deputy Principal & COO confirmed these are being manually chased and that the new financial system will make these easier to track in future. (Deputy Principal & COO)</p> <p>8.9. The Chair of the Audit Committee confirmed that he is aware of the reconciliation problem with the finance system which has contributed to the lack of traction in this area and that by the time the audit is complete there will be confidence in the numbers being presented.</p> <p>8.10. The Chair of the Finance & Resources Committee added that this is an issue that he has been raising for the last 3 years and is</p>	
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<p>trusting that evidence can be provided that this money can be retrieved.</p> <p>8.11. A governor asked if greater assurance can be given to the Board on the fluctuations being observed in the figures. The Deputy Principal & COO explained that the fluctuations observed are often on the funding lines, these are relatively small and the College monitors its funding against the ILR (Individualised Learner Record).</p> <p>8.12. The Deputy Principal & COO agreed that there is a need to improve some aspects of the system's ability to enable more timely reconciliations and believes that this will happen with the implementation of the new finance system.</p> <p>8.13. A governor queried the operating surplus which was originally estimated to be £30,000 and now sits at £130,000. It was explained that the variance in this figure is due to depreciation and the knock-on impact from changes in the timeline for some of the College's capital projects. It was requested that in the next Finance & Resources Committee meeting that this is covered in greater detail so that this governor can improve their understanding of the variances. (Deputy Principal & COO)</p>	
<p>9. AOB</p> <p>Notes</p> <p>9.1. The Chair explained that the Senior Post Holder (Principal and Director of Governance) Appraisal Process will take place on Thursday 2nd October and that governors will be asked to provide feedback to aid this process.</p>	
<p>10. Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>10.1. The next Full Governing Body meeting will take place at the Gunnersbury Park Campus on Wednesday 10th December at 5:30pmGovernors are invited to attend the Governor Briefing session from 4:00-5:00pm.</p> <p>10.2.</p>	

APPROVED MINUTES		
CHAIR:		DATE:
APPROVAL:	Remote confirmation:	
	Or signed:	