Minutes

Full Governing Body
Minutes

Meeting Time and Date	**17:30 on Wednesday 15th July 2026**
Meeting Location	**In person**
Members in Attendance	Joanne Roxburgh (Corporation Chair), Darrell DeSouza (Corporation Vice Chair), Ralph Luck OBE, Alex Lane, Alex Kent Jones, Aaron Davis, Lorna Fitzjohn, Sarah Moreland MBE, Sheila Cunningham, Dennis Hone CBE, Sabri Ozaydin
Participants	Paul Wakeling (As part of the AoC External Board Review), Paul Smith (Deputy Principal & COO), Heather Marks (Deputy Principal, Curriculum & Quality) Ayda Anlagan (Student Governor), Milana Uginciute (Student Governor applicant)
Director of Governance	Jennifer Swift

	Matters Arising
1. Welcome and Apologies 1.1. Governors were welcomed to the meeting. 1.2. Milana Uginciute (Student Governor applicant) was welcomed to the meeting. The Search, Governance & Remuneration Committee will be reviewing the appointment process for student governors at their next meeting and had invited interested applicants to the meeting. 1.3. Apologies were received from Stephen Way, Aziz Ahmed, Joe Howarth & Mei Lim. 1.4. Paul Wakeling was welcomed to the meeting. 1.5. The Chair confirmed that a confidential item would be heard at the end of the meeting. Staff and students would be asked to depart the meeting at this point.	
2. Declaration of Interests 2.1. There were no interests declared in relation to any agenda items.	
3. Minutes (Decision) 3.1. A correction was required to minutes 7.4, following clarification from the Deputy Principal & COO that it was letters of intent which had been signed rather than contracts for the recent building projects. 3.2. It was requested that minute 7.5 should be reworded to make clear that governors advised that if a contract were signed as a deed rather than underhand, it would not require a seal. The Director of Governance would be advised of the appropriate wording to capture this. **Resolved to**	**Governance** **Governance**

3.3. **Approve the minutes of the Full Governing Body meeting held on 25 March 2026 as a correct record and authorise the Chair to confirm them.**	
4. Matters Arising (Information) 4.1. An update on all matters arising from the last meeting was provided to the Board. 4.2. A governor queried that HE strategy had previously been a matter arising which was no longer featured on this document. It was explained that this item will now feature under the business of the Academic Committee to ensure more detailed discussion and updates could take place.	
5. Report of the Principal 5.1. This report provided an overview of key College developments, including those not already covered by the recent round of Committee meetings and minutes. 5.2. The Principal thanked the governors who had attended the recent Staff Awards, an event which celebrated the hard work that colleagues had put in over the past year. The Principal reported that it had been a joyous occasion where staff celebrated the record-breaking year in terms of results, enrolments and the Ofsted inspection. <u>Estates Developments</u> 5.3. The Principal provided a brief overview of the estates projects and reminded governors that due to the nature of some campuses and the tenure, some of these projects need to be fully funded via fundraising. 5.4. The Principal outlined that the development at Regents Park may receive a contribution of £6 million which would allow the College to fund the development of a new campus. As a result of this news, conversations could now take place with the planning department to consider what developments would be allowed at the premises. 5.5. A governor queried when it is expected that the Gunnersbury Park lease agreement would be finalised and noted that it is now several months behind schedule. The Principal & Deputy Principal and COO explained that there are still outstanding issues being dealt with by solicitors but that these have reduced from over thirty to two and it is therefore hoped to be resolved soon. <u>Year-end performance headlines</u> 5.6. The Principal reiterated what had been reported by the Director of Marketing, Admissions & Recruitment during the governor briefing, where it was reported that achievement and enrolment levels are likely to be higher than last year's figures. 5.7. At the recent Academic Committee meeting it had been queried how these figures compared with national averages and whilst the information was not available at that point in time, it had since been shared with the Chair of the Academic Committee.	

5.8. The Principal highlighted that the College is above all national averages for 16-18-year-olds and adults, and that the College now sits second in the league table for land-based Colleges. 5.9. A governor queried if the planned building works at the Crystal Palace campus would have any impact on the amount of enrolments the College could accommodate at that site. It was also queried if there has been any indication of a decline in applications due to the uncertainty of provision during the building works. The Principal confirmed that there are no constraints currently as the project cannot begin without GLA securing appropriate funding and planning consent. It is expected that should the project get to this stage, the College would continue to be able to provide for existing numbers via the creation of temporary classrooms at the farm site. 5.10. The Principal referred to the challenges faced by the College such as unexpected estates expenditure that had meant the College was unable to deliver as great of a financial surplus as had originally been anticipated. 5.11. Another key focus for the year ahead is to better cope with unplanned sickness and absence which has an impact on the student experience. The College is hopeful that its learning hub model will reduce the dependency on agency staff and therefore ensure that learners are supported by well qualified and capable staff in these instances. 5.12. A governor queried the cost of this learning hub model, given that this year's surplus was slightly compromised last year. It was confirmed that this has been funded mainly through staffing restructure and study programme efficiencies and that this cost has already been factored into the three-year financial plans. 5.13. A governor asked how the hub would work given the logistical challenges of being a multi campus College. It was confirmed that this hub of 8 staff would be a dispersed model so that all campuses would benefit. <u>Strategic Objectives 2026-29</u> 5.14. The proposed Strategic Objectives for the College's next Strategic Plan had been shared with the Board. This document was produced following previous Board meetings in July and December 2025 and the Strategy Day in March 2026. 5.15. The Principal explained that the Strategy had been set at three years so that it is aligned to the three-year financial forecast and associated budgets/targets. 5.16. A governor queried whether the College should attempt to better match government funding priorities through its provision of blue skills, given that much of government funding is targeted towards construction related qualifications. The Principal acknowledged that the priority sectors do not align with the land-based agenda and the College is considering how best to approach this. 5.17. A governor queried whether future curriculum planning has considered things such as climate change and the potential for	

additional funding being provided for areas such as these. The Principal confirmed these factors are considered as part of the curriculum planning process.	
5.18. Another governor suggested that as part of this continued drive for excellence, the College has given more thought to applying for national awards that would serve as a kudos amongst peers. The Principal confirmed that the Executive team are currently working on a programme which would ensure all staff are aware of what the College is going to commit to so that learners can be supported in these types of competitions and that this is reflected in the Strategic Objectives.	**Principal**
5.19. Another governor suggested that creating some KPIs would be helpful to ensure that these strategic priorities are being monitored and progress tracked.	**Principal**
5.20. In regard to the strategic objective relating to Investing in People, it was queried how this would be reported to the Board. The Principal confirmed that the Director of HR would provide a standing agenda item update at Finance & Resources Committee and attend Board meetings if appropriate for any additional reasons.	
<u>Accountability Statement</u>	
5.21. The Board was presented with the final Accountability statement and asked to approve the document. This version had incorporated any feedback that had been provided via the recent Committee meetings.	
5.22. A governor requested that given that Gunnersbury Park is jointly owned by Hounslow and Ealing Council, that Hounslow should be added to the catchment area. It was also highlighted that there are a few spelling and grammatical errors that need to be corrected in the document. The Principal agreed to make these corrections to the Annual Accountability Statement.	**Principal**
<u>Capel Graduate Programme & Passport</u>	
5.23. The Board was informed of the proposed introduction of a programme of activities designed to provide a structured, rounded enrichment experience for Capel students, supporting their personal development and future employability goals. The Deputy Principal, Curriculum & Quality explained that this had been developed following previous Board discussions around student representation at Board meetings and other engagement.	
5.24. The scheme is designed to develop student confidence so that Capel graduates leave College well qualified but are also able to demonstrate leadership, professionalism, resilience, communication skills and social responsibility.	
5.25. A governor queried whether this proposal had been shared with students for feedback. The Deputy Principal, Curriculum & Quality confirmed that students reported that this would help build their resilience and that Level 1 learners need more support around confidence and talking to strangers.	
5.26. It was queried whether this would add workload to students, especially when they are approaching the end of their course and	

trying to complete assignments. It was confirmed that much of this scheme includes factors already within the curriculum and existing enrichment activities. 5.27. It was queried whether this scheme had been shared with employers for feedback and whilst it hadn't, their previously shared views were considered during the scheme's development. 5.28. A governor asked if there was potential for this to be extended to an EPQ. The Deputy Principal, Curriculum & Quality confirmed that there is potential for this but that this would be given consideration following the first year of its implementation. 5.29. The Deputy Principal, Curriculum and Quality also explained that this scheme can help learners achieve merit or distinctions in this course and will further develop standards. 5.30. A student reported that any activities that involved group work or competitions are appealing to learners and they would be grateful for increased opportunity for this. 5.31. It was noted that the scheme refers to having 3 or 4 student governors, but that Governing Body membership currently allows for three student governors. It was suggested that this is amended in the scheme. <u>The Harington Scheme</u> 5.32. The Principal explained that the College had been approached last year with a proposal for partnership working by The Harington Scheme, a charity supporting SEND students with close links to horticulture via onsite gardening activities, a supported internship-style commercial gardening operation and 2 charity shops. 5.33. The Principal updated the Board on the meetings that had taken place whilst this scheme was being considered. The College felt that given the progress it has made and the journey it is still on, that the College was not in a position to proceed any further with this proposal. It was also noted that potential conflicts of interest could arise with existing College employers engaged in gardening services provision and that this could create additional challenge, whilst additional challenges may be posed by the forthcoming sector reforms within SEND. 5.34. Whilst the Board agreed with the proposed stance regarding the scheme, it was suggested that the College could maintain a relationship with them so that it could support them in other ways if needed, down the line. **Resolved to** 5.35. **Agree the CMC Strategic Objectives for 2026-29.** 5.36. **Approve the Annual Accountability Statement.** 5.37. **Resolved not to pursue a merger or partnership with the Harington Scheme**	**Deputy Principal, C&Q**

5.38. **Note the introduction of the Capel Graduate Programme & Passport.**	
6. Update from the Chair of Search, Governance & Remuneration Committee 6.1. In the Committee Chair's absence, the Director of Governance provided an overview of the discussions and recommendations that had taken place at this meeting. <u>Governing Body Membership</u> 6.2. Lorna Fitzjohn's term of office expires in September 2026 and Lorna was invited to serve an additional term in which she accepted. 6.3. Sarah Moreland had originally agreed to a shorter two-year term of office in December 2024 and would reconsider extending this in summer 2026. Sarah had confirmed she would extend her second term of office to serve a full four-year term. 6.4. The Committee had recommended the Board approve the reappointment of Lorna Fitzjohn and Sarah Moreland. <u>Independent Member of Audit Committee</u> 6.5. Tony Young who serves as the independent member of the Audit Committee and informed the Director of Governance of his intentions to step down at the end of the academic year. As a result, the College had advertised for this role. 6.6. Following shortlisting and interview, Karen Mason was appointed by members of the Search, Governance & Remuneration Committee and the Chair of the Audit Committee. <u>Terms of Reference</u> 6.7. The Terms of Reference had been reviewed by the Committee and no changes were proposed to these. <u>Review of Governance Policies</u> 6.8. The Governor Recruitment Policy and Governor Development Policy were reviewed by the Committee. 6.9. A few minor amendments had been suggested by the Committee and updated in the version presented to the Board for approval. **Resolved to** 6.10. **Appoint Lorna Fitzjohn for a second term of office, ending in September 2030** 6.11. **Extend Sarah Moreland's second term of office to a full four-year term, ending in December 2028** 6.12. **Adopt the Search, Governance & Remuneration Committee's Terms of Reference** 6.13. **Approve the Governor Recruitment Policy and Governor Development Policy**	
7. Update from the Chair of the Academic Committee	

7.1. The Committee Chair reported that the Committee had been pleased with the College's Academic Performance this year and the strong set of results that had been shared and verified with benchmarked data. Terms of Reference 7.2. It had been suggested that point one of the key areas of activity should be expanded to capture that the Committee would have oversight of the continued drive for improvement. This had been included in the version being presented to the Board for approval. HE Strategy 7.3. The Committee had discussed the proposed HE Strategy and it was agreed that the Board would receive an update on this at the December 2026 meeting which would focus on the financial viability of the proposal. 7.4. For the purpose of new Board members it was explained that both the Deputy Principals are focused on the financial sustainability and curriculum efficiencies in this area. In addition to this, competitor analysis is also being considered, and the Board will be presented with a very clear three to five-year pipeline around growth for subjects such as horticulture, in addition to animal management. 7.5. The Deputy Principal, Curriculum & Quality referenced the renewed marketing approach for HE learners that would be needed to support growth. 7.6. A governor queried whether the proposed HE programmes would be new programmes that would need validating from scratch and it was confirmed that although this is the case and is time consuming, a new HE curriculum manager would be driving this. English and maths 7.7. The Board acknowledged that English and maths results are still below College targets and that it is hoped that the strategies to improve these would have greater impact next year. The Deputy Principal, Curriculum & Quality explained that the bi-weekly pulse meetings would now take place weekly to improve this drive for exceptional. 7.8. A conversation took place around different types of learning strategy and how the College is moving towards a student led approach to learning to help encourage creativity. Academic Policies 7.9. It was confirmed that the AI policy is still in development and will be represented to the Board for approval once it is complete. 7.10. There were four policies presented to the Board for approval: Fitness to Study Policy, Attendance Policy, Student Conduct and Academic Progress Policy and Compliments, Concerns and Complaints Policy. 7.11. Prior to the meeting, several governors had fedback on these policies with suggested amendments. A governor referenced their	

suggestion that there are some elements of overlap within the policy and that it felt the balance of some aspects such as the compliments versus complaints needed more attention. **Resolved to** 7.12. **Adopt the revised Terms of Reference for the Academic Committee** 7.13. **Adopt the following policies, once the suggested amendments had been made:** **A) Fitness to Study Policy** **B) Attendance Policy** **C) Student Conduct and Academic Progress Policy** **D) Compliments, Concerns and Complaints Policy**	
8. Update from the Chair of Audit Committee <u>Audit Strategy</u> 8.1. The Committee Chair explained that the strategy had been presented by Buzzacott which included the regular items such as financial statements, regularity report and the teachers' pension certificate. In addition to these areas, Buzzacott would also be focusing on the software migration and the impact of assessing the transfer of data to the new finance systems as well as income and debtors. 8.2. Internal audits would also be completed by RSM on the new finance system which would provide another point of triangulation to ensure all is working as well as intended. The Board was also informed that the DfE will be carrying out an income audit in the autumn term. <u>Terms of Reference</u> 8.3. The Committee's Terms of Reference were presented to the Board for approval. 8.4. Whilst no changes were proposed, the Committee Chair did highlight that one of the Committee's responsibilities is to ensure members knowledge and skills are up to date and reminded governors that there are many training opportunities available to them. Governors were reminded to contact the Director of Governance to book any training they wished to undertake. <u>Risk Register</u> 8.5. The Committee had a long and robust discussion about the Risk Register, including the process in place for the Executive team to update this. 8.6. One red risk remained on the register relating to Sustainability and the Estates Committee have oversight of this area. It was confirmed that the Audit Committee would be checking this area at	

each meeting to ensure adequate progress is being made to mitigate this risk. Internal Audit Reports 8.7. The Board was updated on the internal audit reports that had taken place. The follow up audit reports on apprenticeships and funding compliance had confirmed that the College is making good progress in these areas. 8.8. The Board was informed that the audit plan areas for 2026-27 include staff utilisation, commercial income, purchase and payroll and recruitment. 8.9. The Committee noted that governance was an area that had not been internally audited in some time. Whilst some consideration was given to this, it was pointed out that governance is addressed within all audits as well as having an annual Board review and three-yearly External Board Review. Therefore, the Committee felt satisfied that this was not a priority area at this point in time. **Resolved to** 8.10. **Adopt the Committee's Terms of Reference.**	
9. Feedback from the Chair of Estates Committee 9.1. The Committee Chair explained that the Committee had discussed both current and planned projects, paying particular attention to the issues at the Crystal Palace campus. 9.2. Both the Enfield and Mottingham projects are due to complete within budget, despite having some additional challenges presented along the way, such as an issue with the lift manufacture at the Mottingham Campus and an issue with the utility provider at the Enfield Campus which has added an additional three weeks to the programme. 9.3. It had been agreed at the Committee that the update on the farm plan that was due to be shared with the Finance & Resources Committee was also circulated to the Estates Committee. The Committee Chair commented that this had not happened to date. The Director of Governance confirmed all governors have access to all Committee papers on OneAdvanced and that this request to share would be picked up as a matters arising ahead of the next Estates Committee meeting. However, the Director of Governance would circulate via email the link to this specific paper following this meeting. 9.4. **Resolved to** 9.5. **Adopt the Terms of Reference for the Estates Committee.**	**Governance** **Principal**
10. Update from the Finance & Resources Committee Chair 10.1. The Committee Vice Chair who had Chaired the meeting provided an update to the Board.	

10.2. The Committee had received updates from the Head of Employer Skills, Innovation and Growth and Head of HR, and governors were encouraged to read these papers to receive updates on these areas.

10.3. A governor acknowledged that income for distance learning courses had been evolving and queried whether there was potential for the Academic Committee to receive an update on the quality of provision of this area. The Principal confirmed that this is presently a small provision and whilst there is crossover and review from the Curriculum team, as this grows there would need to be a more detailed focus on this.

10.4. A governor queried the discrepancy between the forecast and actual figures in the management accounts and whether the methodology for next year is more realistic. The Deputy Principal & COO explained that the main cause for the discrepancy was due to the phasing of the forecast and this is being reviewed more carefully for next year. The new finance system should also support this.

10.5. Another governor commented that a reducing forecast, follows a similar pattern to the year before and queried what has been done to ensure the forecast is more accurate for the year ahead. The Deputy Principal & COO explained that there is now better data available for the Business Development Unit and apprenticeships which will help with more accurate forecasting. The College has also made some additional provision for unexpected costs and this will be tracked through scorecards and management accounts.

10.6. It was also explained that there has been a refinement of risk, budgeting and forecasting on new activities whilst funding streams are waiting to be confirmed.

10.7. It was also noted that the Board has taken an informed decision to have an EBITDA figure of 3-4% rather than the recommended 6%, with the decision for this to enhance the quality of the learning experience. However, it was suggested that perhaps it could be made clearer what the level of risk is with this and what could potentially happen by allowing this figure to fall short of recommended levels. The Deputy Principal & COO reminded the Board that this figure of 6% is a guide rather than a requirement and provided an example of the planned 1% increase not being implemented if it did wish to be closer to the recommended EBITDA figure. The Deputy Principal & COO also reminded the Board to consider the context of the College and its journey.

10.8. The Principal reiterated this thought and referenced the clawback from T Levels and that this would be pertinent when introducing V Levels.

<u>Terms of Reference</u>

10.9. Minor changes were requested to the Terms of Reference which were shown in a tracked change version of the document presented to the Board. **Resolved to** 10.10. **Adopt the Terms of Reference** 10.11. **Approve the proposed budget for 2026-27, forecasts 2027-28 & 2028-29 to be submitted to the College Financial Forecasting return to the DfE by 31 July 2026**	
11. AOB 11.1. None.	
12. Date of Next Meeting 12.1. The next Full Governing Body meeting will take place on Wednesday 23rd September at the Enfield Campus.	

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