

Cirencester College Corporation Meeting Minutes

Meeting:	Corporation 6	Chair:	Fiona Galbraith (FG)
Date:	23 rd June 2025	Clerk:	Suzanna Miles (SM)
Location:	T105		
Time:	17:11 - 19:14		
Corporation members (with voting rights):	Fiona Galbraith (FG), Libby Reed (LR), Brendan Brown (BB), Mikey Ezewudo (ME), Ping Li (PL), Susie Richards (SR), Andrew Tubb (AT), Gay Wales (GW), Catherine Simpson (CS), Nikki Webster (NW), Matt Reynolds (MR), Mike Cadman (MCad), Sara Sharkey (SS), Erika Badea (EB)		
Guests (no voting rights):	SLT: Giles Robinson (GR), Matt Couzens (MCou), Mahalah Glead (MG)		
Apologies:	None		
Meeting theme:	National exemplar		
Pre-meeting training:	'AI and the Curriculum?' session led by Matt Reynolds Presentation to be circulated with minutes of meeting		

All meeting papers were circulated in advance of the meeting via the Corporation SharePoint.

ITEM	MINUTES	ACTION												
1.	<p>Welcome:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Introductions: FG welcomed Erika as student governor.No apologies for absence: All Corporation members were present at the meeting.Reminder of confidentiality FG reminded attendees of the requirement for confidentiality and that decisions are made collectively.Declaration of interests (as related to the agenda): No conflicts of interest were declared.Note end of tenure (CS/SR/NW) FG thanked Catherine Simpson, Susie Richards and Nikki Webster for their contributions during their tenures as governors with this being their last meeting.													
2.	<p>Approve minutes of the last meeting on 12th May 2025</p> <p>The minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.</p>													
3.	<p>Matters arising from 12th May 2025</p> <table><tr><th>ITEM</th><th>ACTION</th><th>LEAD</th><th>STATUS</th></tr><tr><td>3</td><td>Explore options for digitising self-assessment forms 2024/25</td><td>SM</td><td>Complete</td></tr><tr><td>3</td><td>Finalise approved amendments to standing orders</td><td>SM</td><td>Ongoing – this will be project work for the summer period</td></tr></table>	ITEM	ACTION	LEAD	STATUS	3	Explore options for digitising self-assessment forms 2024/25	SM	Complete	3	Finalise approved amendments to standing orders	SM	Ongoing – this will be project work for the summer period	SM
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Our purpose is to ensure every student has the skills, knowledge and qualifications
to prepare for their place in a changing world.

	4	Write to members of Student Forum to thank them for their contribution	FG	Complete	KF/ SM
	4	Consider student forum feedback and pick up any necessary operational actions	MR	Item 21	
	6	Review audit of safeguarding team in relation to reduction of safeguarding referrals	LR	LR commented that this question was raised at the last meeting as MCad was not in attendance. During the last focus governor visit, it had been noted that the number of safeguarding referrals had reduced this year. LR asked if MCad had any concerns that this was because students are unaware of how to make a referral. MCad confirmed he is confident that this is not the case. An audit of the team has also been completed to ensure compliance with processes.	
	7	Push back target date for KPI 2.2a	MR	Item 6	
	11	Review college performance report template	KF	Carry forward as part of the work for next year on Corporation reporting	
	17	Add Accountability Statement to meeting agenda for 23rd June	SM	Item 10	
	17	Focus governor to meet with MR to discuss Accountability Statement	CS/ MR	Complete	
	18	Confirm how the gender pay gap report compares to sector benchmarks	MG	Complete MG has provided benchmark information. Governors to review and contact MG directly with any questions. BB to email his question linked to why the gender pay gap is lower now than three years ago.	
	21	Add confirmation of appointment of student governor to meeting agenda for 23rd June	SM	Item 23	
4.	Chair's Report to Corporation The report was noted. FG recommended the recent SFCA seminar on developing a strategy, which can be found here: Developing a strategy - webinar with R. Hill, University of Stirling				
5.	Focus Governance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff wellbeing/ HR (SR): Noted and no further comments. Student feedback Ahead of the meeting, FG had invited EB to collate views from her peers both at 				

	<p>Cirencester College and at other institutions, with the following questions in mind: “What is done especially well at Cirencester College?” “What is done better in other colleges?”</p> <p>EB reported that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students here like the campus environment. • Students like the atmosphere around college. It is a clean environment. The security team were cited as being friendly. Students would like more inside seating areas for use in more inclement weather. • Some students struggle with a lack of support from some lecturers, particularly when students are dealing with issues external to college. At another college, tutors send students regular messages through Teams to remind them of the support available and to encourage mutual understanding. • Students particularly like the diversity of the college. • Resources for lessons are good, and the cost of supplies and books is reasonable. 	
6.	<p>Principal’s Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MR formally thanked college staff for their engagement and hard work, resulting in the very positive Ofsted monitoring visit. • The exam period has now ended with 6,000 sittings. • A new approach towards recycling has been implemented with central bins in place. • The risk register has been reviewed and the Principal’s report will now note any significant changes for governors’ awareness. <p>In response to the action from the last meeting regarding KPI 2.2a, MR explained that money has been set aside to launch a research grant. This will be released in the next academic year, and the report will be updated to show that this will be ready around November 2025.</p> <p>ACTION: MR to update report to reflect new timelines</p> <p><i>Questions from governors:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Is any help required to achieve the final outstanding actions, for example the Apple project?</i> MR confirmed that at this stage no additional support is required. 	MR
7.	<p>Feedback from Ofsted monitoring visit, closure of Project Apollo and approach to Project Artemis (Governors to listen to the recorded presentation in advance of the meeting.)</p> <p>FG congratulated the SLT and college staff on the exceptional results from the monitoring visit. The report was circulated earlier today, and all governors encouraged to read it. MR commented that no further actions were given, and Ofsted agreed with our planned ongoing actions.</p> <p><i>Questions from governors:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Was the information in the recording also given to Ofsted?</i> MR confirmed that the timeline was used during the monitoring visit. - <i>What does “team around the student” mean?</i> Lots of work has been done as part of Project Apollo to encourage all areas of college to work collaboratively together. This has proven to be a successful way of working and “team around the student” is how this will be developed further as part of Project Artemis. For example, this will include new intervention systems, new ways of enrolling, new methods of communicating as well as developing the interactions and relationships between teachers and Learning Support Workers (LSW). 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>What is required to enable this?</i> This will be resource-heavy, so the priority is to work smart and look at workload and capacity. - <i>As part of this ethos of 'team around the student', how will we communicate any changes to students so that they know what is available, considering recent feedback from some students that they are not always clear on how to ask for help?</i> MR commented that this needs to be curated: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) To ensure that the college environment does not feel like school 2) To ensure that there is a safety net to ensure that everyone is treated with respect and issues are managed and resolved 3) To provide a comprehensive and expansive offer - <i>Is the onus on the student to find this support, as it would in the world of work?</i> MR noted that each student has three named members of staff as points of contact, and this works well. However, he noted that more clarity on how this works is required, and next steps will be to look at what is understood by students and how we can avoid confusion. MCad added that this is covered in induction, which is always reviewed each year and adjusted each year based on feedback. EB commented that students are aware of the pastoral support but may not want to ask if they can go. - <i>Do all students access support in the same way, irrespective of course or year?</i> Yes, there are three different ways to access support. - <i>Was the Focus Governor approach to Project Apollo helpful?</i> CS and MR agreed that this had worked well as a reporting mechanism. FG explained that GW has agreed to take on the Focus Governor role for Project Artemis. - <i>Has the Ofsted report been shared with parents yet?</i> The report is not yet published but will then be shared with students and applicants and added to the website. It was suggested that the report also be sent to feeder schools. 	
8.	Update and discussion on the approach to the Strategic Plan, including timetable for implementation FG explained that MR has taken the strategic goals and created a draft strategy document. The next step is to add measurable outcomes. The draft version will be shared with governors in good time to allow for detailed review at the September strategy meeting. ACTION: SM to add to the meeting agenda	SM
9.	Approve Accountability Statement and Action Plan on skills CS noted that she had reviewed the document as Focus Governor and made three minor changes. DECISION: Unanimously approved by Corporation ACTION: MR to ensure the document is added to the website before 31/12/2025.	MR
10.	Public Value Statement (Standing Order appendix 30) MR commented that this document is required by colleges to show that public money is being correctly spent. Governors asked that the repeated text be removed from the document before publication. DECISION: Unanimously approved by Corporation (subject to the removal of duplicate text) ACTION: MR to arrange for this to be amended and published on the website A discussion followed regarding the similar statement within the annual report and whether the two reports could be merged, unless there is a reason this report is reviewed in June.	MR

	<p>DECISION: Governors unanimously agreed that this document be merged with the statement in the annual report, subject to confirmation regarding timing.</p> <p>ACTION: GR to confirm that there is no reason that prevents this from being added to the financial statement and annual reports.</p>	GR
11.	<p>Receive and discuss results of parent survey</p> <p>MCou shared the highlights of the survey:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 16 out of the 17 questions received 'outstanding' responses. - The most positive areas were quality of teaching, high expectations, extracurricular activities and safety on off-site trips. - When answering the question about why they had chosen the college, reasons such as 'reputation' and 'wanting our young person to have a different environment to school' came highest. <p>MCou has created an action plan and will report on progress against these actions.</p> <p><i>Questions from governors:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>The question about quality of support for students progressing to employment/apprenticeship has been reported as red for several years and has reduced again this year. Why is this?</i> This is the same every year and reasons can be difficult to gauge but is often linked to low attendance in tutorial. - <i>Is there a benchmark against other colleges?</i> Yes, attendance at tutorial here is 78% and 62% in other colleges. MCoU added that reviewing the answers to similar questions provides an interesting view: "Is the tutor session valuable?" = 70% agreed "Do you feel supported?" = 90% agreed Tutorial support in colleges is always difficult to land as highly as teaching. 	
12.	<p>Receive and discuss results of staff survey</p> <p>MCou shared the highlights of the survey:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 27 out of the 30 responses to questions were in the 'exceptional' bracket. - Staff recommend College as a positive place to work - Staff agree that senior managers tackle issues as they arise. <p>Actions have been added at the end of the report and will be reviewed.</p> <p><i>Questions from governors:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Do you have external providers to train staff in challenging unprofessional behaviours?</i> Yes, there was a communication and language course last year and we will be looking at more training in this area. New teacher training is also provided in different streams depending on levels of experience. MCoU added that support staff are being invited to join these sessions as well. - <i>Can you find out what suggestions could be implemented from those who said that the current training programme does not meet needs?</i> MG explained that the evaluation system has recently changed to include a questionnaire after the session, as well as an automated message six weeks after the session to understand what staff found useful and what has been implemented because of the training. 	

	<p>MG added that low satisfaction rates have occasionally been caused by the session being incorrectly advertised, meaning it is not necessarily an appropriate course for the staff member who attended. More work on the wording of adverts can be done.</p>	
13.	<p>Receive HR report, to include recruitment, staff retention, development and performance management</p> <p>MG reported that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A wellbeing group is being added to the common interest groups to take forward the issues raised in the staff survey by building a wellbeing plan. - The team continues to work hard on employee relations with some time-consuming complex cases. - I-Recruit has been in place since February half term. The team continue to support managers and are working through teething issues. Better technical support is now being received, and I-Recruit has been adopted for flexible working and change of contracts. - The HR audit has been received and is very positive. <p><i>Questions from governors:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>As a project, has I-Recruit now been delivered?</i> MG confirmed that very encouraging progress is being made but she is not yet able to sign off. MR added that this has been a significant piece of work as the previous processes were entirely paper based. It was agreed to be a huge improvement. - <i>Has the project cost more than planned?</i> MG confirmed that it has not. I-Recruit have recognised that our challenges have been due to failures in their support and system issues. We are also fortunate to have a very experienced and knowledgeable team. - <i>What are the reasons for the significant reduction in turnover of labour compared to national figures? 18.6% (Cirencester college) vs. 28.2% (nationally)</i> This is clearly a very positive place to work. MG added that more work can still be done around exit interviews although much better reporting is now available. - <i>How are staffing plans for next year?</i> Lots of recruitment is taking place and there are some significant gaps. A good number of applications are being received which is a change from previous recruitment rounds. - <i>Why are we seeing greater numbers of applicants?</i> This is linked to our competitive pay. Also, there is no direct evidence but anecdotally the applicant tracking system is a better experience for candidates. <p>Governors expressed their thanks to the team.</p> <p>DECISION: Governors unanimously agreed that going forwards this report be submitted annually to Corporation (rather than twice per year) now that the project is nearing completion.</p>	
14.	<p>Receive and discuss Quality of teaching and learning report – courses for concern</p> <p>MCou explained that at the start of the year, courses are identified where there are concerns over provision and then deep-dives take place to review this. The spreadsheet included as part of the meeting papers shows the progress of these courses over the course of the year. Most courses are now doing well, and attendance is generally excellent across the board. Where retention is low, this has been reviewed, and entry requirements have been raised to</p>	

	<p>address this. There are still some concerns in some areas where staffing issues are being managed.</p> <p><i>Questions from governors:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Why is Health and Social Care regularly on the courses of concern list?</i> Historically and nationally, staffing for Health & Social Care is difficult. Generally, staff move from the NHS into teaching and very few come into teaching from university, and there is no training on conversion. - <i>Do we need a different approach at induction?</i> Compulsory attendance is not required for training, but this should be reviewed. 	
15.	<p>Receive and discuss Annual destinations report, including review of how this supports governance</p> <p>MCad provided a verbal update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Oxbridge figures are down. There will be a change in approach next year with the recent appointment of a new staff member. - Russell group and higher tariff university figures have increased, which is due to our ambitious approach. - Scores which show how learners do when they go to university are very positive. - There are concerns that the unemployment rate is rising. This is still very low compared to the sector, but it would be good to review as this is an increase in our normal figures. - There has been a surprising rise in university as a destination, possibly linked to the lack of apprenticeships available. - The most important measure is that students get their first choice. <p>Governors agreed that this is a useful report.</p> <p><i>Questions from governors:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Will there be any challenges due to the Ofsted changes?</i> It is likely that we will need to increase reporting. More work can be done with our alumni as well so that our students see inspirational individuals from similar backgrounds, although it can be difficult to encourage alumni back. - <i>What was EB's first impression?</i> At first, college felt big compared to secondary school but thanks to visits, it was clear that students got used to this quickly. It is good to have posters around college, but it is important to celebrate average students as well as those who achieve above average. 	
16.	<p>Financial Report and Account</p> <p>Governors thanked GR for the new report format which is clear and easy to understand.</p> <p>GR provided a verbal update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The numbers continue to improve. The current surplus forecast is £787K and by the end of the year this will be closer to £900k. - Cash balances are at £4.5m, after repaying the loan. - There are no issues in terms of turnout as savings have been made against budget in operating costs and payroll costs. - Regarding loan compliance, GR confirmed that the college is fully compliant with requirements. 	

	BB added that in the recent Focus Governor meeting, GR had been able to fully explain the reason for the improving financial picture.	
17.	<p>Assurance that College financial forecasting return will be complete by deadline (31/7/2025)</p> <p>GR confirmed that the return has been completed, and he is waiting for more accurate figures before submitting nearer to the deadline.</p>	
18.	<p>Receive draft minutes of Search and Governance committee and Chair's update</p> <p>AT reminded governors that the External Review of Governance will take place next year, so work is being done on the action plan to ensure we have an evidence base for our answers. FG mentioned that last time a panel of three governors was required for this piece of work.</p> <p>ACTION: Governors to consider if they wish to be involved in the external review of governance in 2026.</p>	ALL
19.	<p>Receive draft minutes of Audit committee and Chair's update, to include:</p> <p><i>Approval of Forvis Mazar's Audit Strategy Memorandum: Approved by Corporation</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">**EB left at 18:58**</p> <p><i>Approval of proposed internal audit activity</i></p> <p>GR confirmed that he would like to recommend a different plan to that agreed at Audit committee for reviewing the process for financial controls. He recommended that this could be covered better with a peer-to-peer review. GW questioned whether another college would be suitably placed to review our in-house systems and that an external provider would be preferable. It was agreed that the format for this internal audit action should be discussed again by committee.</p> <p>ACTION: SM to add this to the next Audit committee agenda</p> <p><i>Approval of regularity self-assessment questionnaire (for signing by Chair and Principal)</i></p> <p>Approved by Corporation and signed</p> <p><i>ESFA audit management letter (for signing by Chair)</i></p> <p>Approved by Corporation and signed</p>	SM
20.	<p>Approve reviewed policies</p> <p>a. <i>Senior postholder policies x 3 (disciplinary, complaints, grievances)</i> <i>(Reviewed by Focus governor and S&G committee)</i> An amendment was requested by the S&G committee. ACTION: SM to ensure the change is made and the policies are brought to the next meeting for approval.</p> <p>b. <i>Financial regulations (reviewed by Audit committee)</i></p> <p><i>Questions from governors:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>When is the college's financial year? 1st August – 31st July</i> <p>DECISION: Unanimously approved by Corporation</p>	SM
21.	<p>Receive verbal proposal to create student council and integrate student governors</p> <p>FG informed governors that a Student Council made up of elected students from first and second years for all student groups will be established from September.</p>	

	<p>Student governors will be involved. AT added that the Youth Forum are keen to be involved in establishing the Council.</p> <p>ACTION: SM to add an agenda item for the next S&G committee meeting to examine the relationship between student governors and the student council.</p>	SM															
22.	<p>Approve suggested meeting dates for 2025-2026 and schedule of business</p> <p>DECISIONS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Governors agreed that training should start at 4.30pm. - The proposed dates were agreed. 																
23.	<p>Approve Corporate membership recommendations from Search & Governance committee:</p> <p>The following nominations were APPROVED:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Governor</th><th>Name</th><th>Recommendation</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>External</td><td>Sara Sharkey</td><td>Confirm term of office for further 3 years following successful completion of probationary period</td></tr> <tr> <td>Student</td><td>Erika Badea</td><td>Confirm appointment</td></tr> <tr> <td>Staff</td><td>Liam Nolan</td><td>Confirm appointment following election</td></tr> <tr> <td>Project Artemis focus governor</td><td>Gay Wales</td><td>To backfill Catherine Simpson</td></tr> </tbody> </table> <p>FG thanked all the nominees.</p>	Governor	Name	Recommendation	External	Sara Sharkey	Confirm term of office for further 3 years following successful completion of probationary period	Student	Erika Badea	Confirm appointment	Staff	Liam Nolan	Confirm appointment following election	Project Artemis focus governor	Gay Wales	To backfill Catherine Simpson	
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24.	<p>Approve changes to Standing Orders on recommendation of Search & Governance committee:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>SO</th><th>Name</th><th>Minute</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>SO 17</td><td>Members' tenure of office</td><td> <p>FG confirmed that our articles allow for a maximum of eight years' service for external governors, but they are currently only appointed for seven. S&G reviewed the terms of office and propose that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - External governors serve no more than two terms up to a maximum of 8 years - Parents and students may serve for longer than two years, linked to the length of their course - Staff governors will be increased to four years to reflect other terms of office. LN will be appointed for three years in line with the SO in place at the time of advertising. <p>DECISION: Unanimously agreed</p> </td></tr> <tr> <td>SO 30</td><td>Public value statement</td><td>See item 10</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	SO	Name	Minute	SO 17	Members' tenure of office	<p>FG confirmed that our articles allow for a maximum of eight years' service for external governors, but they are currently only appointed for seven. S&G reviewed the terms of office and propose that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - External governors serve no more than two terms up to a maximum of 8 years - Parents and students may serve for longer than two years, linked to the length of their course - Staff governors will be increased to four years to reflect other terms of office. LN will be appointed for three years in line with the SO in place at the time of advertising. <p>DECISION: Unanimously agreed</p>	SO 30	Public value statement	See item 10							
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25.	<p>Approve S&G committee request to approve re-subscription to SFCA governance webinar programme 2025-2026 (£285 +VAT)</p> <p>DECISION: Unanimously approved</p>																
26.	<p>Upcoming dates</p> <p>Thursday 26th June, 5-8pm: open evening Monday 7th July, 6-7.30pm: End of Year corporation event</p>																

Actions from the meeting on 23rd June 2025:

ITEM	ACTION	LEAD
3	Finalise approved amendments to standing orders	SM
3	Review college performance report template as part of review of Corporation reporting	KF/SM
3	Contact MG with the question regarding why the average median female salary is lower now than three years ago	BB
6	Update report for KPI 2.2a to reflect new timelines	MR
8	Add review of strategy document to September meeting	SM
9	Ensure Accountability Agreement is added to the website before the deadline	MR
10	Remove duplicate text and ensure the Public Value Statement is added to the website	MR
10	Confirm that there is no reason that prevents the Public Values Statement being added to the annual report.	GR
18	Consider if governors wish to be involved in the External Review of Governance	ALL
19	Add review of internal audit action to next Audit committee agenda	SM
20	Ensure requested change is made to policies and bring back to next meeting for approval	SM
21	Add agenda item to next S&G meeting to examine the relationship between student governors and the Student Council.	SM