Cirencester College Corporation Meeting Minutes

Meeting:	Corporation 6	**Chair:**	Fiona Galbraith (FG)
Date:	29th June 2026	**Clerk:**	Suzanna Miles (SM)
Location:	T104/5		
Time:	17:03 – 19:17		
Corporation members (with voting rights):	Fiona Galbraith (FG), Libby Reed (LR), Brendan Brown (BB), Matt Reynolds (MR), Gay Wales (GW), Matt Bullivant (MB) (online), Liam Nolan (LN), Mike Cadman (MCad), Mikey Ezewudo (ME), Sara Sharkey (SS), Cydie Soriano (CS)		
Guests (no voting rights):	SLT: Giles Robinson (GR), Matt Couzens (MCou), Karen Fraser (KF), Mahalah Gleed (MG); Jane Fern (JF) Melissa Drayson (MD); Debbie Corcoran (DC) – Rockborn (online) Hannah Boardman – prospective Governance Manager		
Apologies:	Ping Li, Jacqui Parry-Jones, Paul Tibbetts, Rich Stonebridge Simon Foster – apologies received following the meeting		
Meeting theme:	External Review of Governance		
Pre-meeting training:	*'Ofsted preparation' - session led by Matt Reynolds* Presentation slides 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.	**Welcome:** • **Introductions:** FG welcomed the board and introduced Hannah Boardman. • **Apologies for absence:** Apologies were accepted from Ping Li, Jacqui Parry-Jones and Paul Tibbetts. A resignation has been received from Yasmin Struthers-Frost. Apologies were subsequently received from Simon Foster. • **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.	
2.	**Approve minutes of the last meeting on 11th May 2026** The minutes from the meeting on 11th May were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.	
3.	**Matters arising from 11th May 2026**	

ITEM	ACTION	LEAD	STATUS UPDATE	
3	Review college performance report template as part of review of Corporation reporting - in discussion with ERG reviewers	S&G	For review with new Governance Manager from Sept	Gov Mgr.
3	AI discussion to be tabled for Strategy Away Day - follow-up with SS required	SS/ FG		SS/FG

	3	Send feedback on Focus Governor report to SM	ALL	S&G to consider template at meeting in Oct 2026	ALL
	7	Share the updated strategy document ahead of summer break	MR	Item 6	
	16	Consider when College Performance Report will be submitted to governors	SM	**Complete** Agreed to include on agenda for October 2026 – annual planner updated	
	19	Report back to Corporation on development of feedback response to parents following survey	MCou	MCou confirmed that a feedback summary is currently being worked on, including "you said, we did". The same is true for the staff feedback.	
	22	S&G committee to consider actions required following recent resignations (to be discussed at next meeting)	SM	**Complete** See S&G minutes (items 22 and 23)	

4.	**Chair's Report to Corporation** FG commented on the key items: • FG has become the Southwest representative for Sixth Form Colleges Association Council. • Hannah Boardman starts as the new Governnace Manager from 8th July. • Governors who attend faculty reviews find them highly valuable. FG encouraged others to attend where possible. **ACTION: SM to consider practicalities** • Corporation is recruiting, especially for those with audit, finance and chairing experience. **ACTION: All governors to consider if any contacts or associates may suit the vacancies.**	SM ALL
5.	**Focus Governance** • **SEND:** The report was noted. • **Artemis:** GW reported on the volume of work undertaken since February in each area. Work is now being completed on professional development to ensure staff fully understand the various aspects of the project. Training has also been closely aligned with Ofsted expectations, at the request of staff. • **Finance:** BB confirmed that he met GR twice in June to discuss the items on this agenda as well as the key outcomes of the external review of governance. • **Staff experience:** The report was noted. FG explained that further work has been completed to align focus governor reporting with Corporation reports. She added that the Search & Governance committee recommend that Focus Governor plan their meeting dates in advance for the whole year. **ACTION: Focus Governors to book in their meeting dates**	ALL
6.	**Receive report on External Review of Governance and discuss recommendations** FG welcomed MD and DC from Rockborn to share their findings. The final draft report was shared in advance of the meeting, and the initial draft report reviewed by the Search & governance committee at their last meeting. DC thanked Corporation and college staff for their welcome and engagement in the process. She noted that the review followed DfE guidance and was underscored firmly by the college's context. As requested, the areas for review were around the statutory	

requirements of finance and safeguarding, and particularly the assurance received around the business of education.

ME arrived at 17:22

DC explained that a thorough desk review had taken place (and received a clean bill of health), the survey results had been analysed, and all committee and Corporation meetings had been observed during the review. The survey feedback is included in the written report.

DC observed that the culture of the Corporation and relationships have strengthened, as well as governance frameworks. There is a clear 'learner-first' ethos.

The key recommendations are as follows:

1) Increase the level of finance experience within the Corporation's membership
2) Address the membership of committees
3) Consider the level of Governance Manager resourcing
4) Consider the focus given to quality of education

As quality of education was a key focus of the review, further assurance in this area was discussed. MD acknowledged the strong commitment to learners and the significant contribution of the Focus Governor but questioned whether this core area receives sufficient time and attention. The review concluded that establishing a dedicated committee or sub-group would be the most effective way to strengthen oversight, as further rationalisation of Corporation's agendas is unlikely to create adequate space for detailed discussion.

Other suggestions to develop this area were also offered:
- Integrate the various reports that cover teaching and learning (to include QIP/ SAR/ KPIs)
- Implement a termly report from student governors on learner voice
- Ensure governor induction includes a strong focus on quality and teaching
- Increase governors' involvement in key quality processes, such as the SAR
- Provide more opportunities to engage in the curriculum, through learning walks and meeting with students
- Consider introducing a joint assurance report for focus governors with student-related responsibilities to identify common themes and issues

Questions and comments from governors:

- *The comment in the report about missing management accounts is not entirely accurate as governors receive a much-improved finance report at each Corporation meeting. How much detail do you expect governors to receive, and is the waterfall approach insufficient?*
  DC commented that, in line with FE Commissioner expectations, governors should receive the full management accounts on a monthly basis. She emphasised that financial oversight is the responsibility of the entire Corporation and that all governors must have access to sufficient information to effectively discharge their duties.

  FG confirmed that the management accounts are reviewed by the Focus Governor, and the report and waterfall chart are made available to all governors at each meeting.
- *A report from the student governor would be interesting and could make a difference.*
- *Governors agreed that nothing in the report was a surprise, and it reflected current reality.*

FG thanked MD and DC.

MD and DC left at 17:37

	FG noted that the Search & Governance committee would be responsible for reviewing and implementing the recommendations. While some could be actioned quickly, others would require further consideration, making this a three-year project leading up to the next review.	
6.	**Principal's Report** MR gave a verbal update: • MR and FG attended an SFCA conference where the audience was addressed by the Secretary of State and the new FE Commissioner. • Thanked BB for his involvement in the Vice Principal interviews. • Staff across college have been involved in DfE consultations on the introduction of V Levels. The first qualifications (from 2027) will be Accounting, Digital and Early Years. MR stated that the current desire is to adopt all three, to add depth to the curriculum. T Levels are already being delivered in these areas, so we are in a strong position. • MCou has confirmed his retirement from Christmas 2026 and Corporation members thanked him for his long and dedicated service to the college. *Questions from governors:* - *Will V Levels attract different students?* MR confirmed that it is still unknown exactly what the qualifications will look like, but we know already that students do benefit from a mix of qualifications, and this can lead to greater resilience. This should give students more options and, alongside the level 2 pathways which are being proposed, may support student progression if conversion to a different qualification is required during their studies. - *At what point do we need to understand whether learners are interested in these courses?* We need more information first and then we will start to engage with students in the run up to Christmas. There will be a holding page in our prospectus for new qualifications. We will confirm to the DfE that we are interested in running the new qualifications, but this is not yet a firm commitment.	
8.	**Review Key Performance Indicator tracker against Strategic Priorities 2025-2030** MR explained that the KPIs will be reviewed following the summer exam results and a new set of KPIs released.	
9.	**Risk** • **Review of risk register** GR explained that this is the third revision for the year and it has been reviewed closely by the Audit committee. None of the numbers have changed but there have been some wording changes to reflect the restructure, job title changes and any new boards. *Questions from governors?* - *How is the new approach to digital risk management working?* The Audit committee received the first report at the last meeting, and SS as Digital Focus Governor has commented. SS will meet with KF over the summer to review the current position as well as the recently updated DfE guidance. A strategic review of this is important, as the world is moving faster than our planned investment. Consideration of skills and the management of threats is required. **ACTION: SS to meet with KF to discuss** • **Approval of risk management policy (on recommendation of Audit committee)**	SS

	Decision: the policy was unanimously approved	
10.	**Approve Accountability Statement 2026-2027** MR explained that the statement must be published annually to justify the college's decisions on curriculum and how this fits local and national skills need. The statement also includes information about the college's use of the 'inclusive mainstream fund', which has been introduced as part of the changes to funding arrangements for high-needs and vulnerable learners. MR explained that some learners with additional needs will no longer meet the criteria for an EHCP and will therefore not attract the associated funding. The 'inclusive mainstream fund' is intended to replace this funding and enable the college to provide additional support. *Questions from governors:* - *Has the level of funding been confirmed?* We have been given a balance of money to preempt the changes that will be made. - *Will it be a similar amount of funding?* This is not yet known, but it is likely to be a reduction in funding, however it may give us some flexibility around what the money can be spent on. The Accountability Statement was approved and governors thanked MR for his work.	
11.	**Update from Student Council** CS provided her update, stating that the student council is progressing plans to improve the outside seating area, which directly addresses feedback received from students.	
12.	**Receive report on Courses of Concern** *Questions from governors:* - *Has the process changed to address the changes by Ofsted regarding deep dives?* RS and MCou run the report at the start of the year and discuss course data with faculty heads. From September, a set of criteria is being implemented to identify courses of concern in a more formalised and robust way. MCou added that the reviews at the beginning of the year are intended more as 'mini' inspections to standardise the process. MCou added that the tracker, including mock results, had been shared with governors, so the areas of focus and progress over the year are clear to see. MR was positive about the excellent progress made across all areas but noted that the fruit of this work will not be seen in full until next summer. However, early retention figures look positive.	
13.	**Receive report on the strategic careers plan and Gatsby update** MCad noted that enrichment benchmarks are increasingly being subject to external monitoring, despite no additional resource. Participation and attendance in enrichment remains strong; however, the benchmarks require enrichment to be linked to students' future plans. This can be challenging to demonstrate and does not always align with how students or the college perceive the value and benefits of enrichment.	
14.	**Receive report on outcomes of cross-college student survey** CS provided her perspective on the outcome of the survey: • Student governors campaign for their position, so it is surprising that they are not more	

	widely recognised. However, the Student Council itself is not particularly well known across the college and, given that there is only one student governor, it is perhaps understandable that not all students are aware of who holds the role. • Feedback is received verbally from the student governor's friends and associates, but this does limit the number of voices that are heard. A suggestion box could be a useful addition to improving student voice. • Student ambassadors are more well-known. More coherence between this group, the Student Council and other leadership groups would be beneficial and would improve visibility of the other ways in which students' voices can be heard. • CCO student view could be improved to make it more streamlined and accessible to improve communication with students. A discussion followed: • Governors recognised that the Student Council is a new initiative for college this year. • There has been significant turnover of student governors this year. **ACTION: CS/ MR/ HB to work with the Student Council to review the survey results and associated suggestions, with a view to identifying ways to raise the profile and visibility of both the Student Council and the Student Governors.** *Questions from governors:* - *Do student governors have access to the marketing department?* Not as far as the student governor is aware. - *Do you know why the response rate is lower than last year?* MCou responded that a 70% response rate is recognised as a good response. - *Are students incentivised to complete the survey?* No, this is voluntary during the first week of the survey and compulsory during the second week. It is recognised that incentives tend to skew data. - *Is there any additional support beyond tutorials?* Most answers are overwhelmingly positive about tutorials, which fits in line with the general upward trend around the relevance of tutorial time. The actions and progress from last time are shown in the report. - *Should there be a concern around the level of attendance at tutorials?* MCad noted that tutorial provision continues to present a long-standing challenge, as funding is linked to the delivery of many tutorial topics. This is despite regular feedback from students that some of these areas are not relevant or were already covered at secondary school. Nevertheless, the college has taken a creative approach to its tutorial programme, which has contributed to improved outcomes this year. While positive progress has been made, the issue remains an ongoing challenge. MCou added that tutorial attendance within the Wessex group of 15 colleges is around 62%, so we compare strongly. He added that the tutorial figure should not be compared to the academic attendance figures.	CS/MR/ HB
15.	**Receive and approve latest financial statement and college financial commentary** GR reported that: • The forecast has not changed since the previous report and remains at £1.4M. • Cash remains stable at £6.9M.	

	• The annual forecast return is due for submission by the end of July and will be completed based on the figures within the approved budget. • The build project remains on schedule with the Davis building due to be demolished should the building bid be successful. The outcome is expected sometime in July.	
16.	**Receive annual subcontracting report** – nil return	
17.	**Receive report on climate change strategy/ Climate Action Plan and road map** JF explained that this is a baseline report, produced using the road map. The strategy aligns with the sustainability strategy and is relatively generic and pragmatic. The timeline aligns with the corporate strategy. The Climate Action plan is a one-year plan, driven by the sustainability group, of which ME is a member. ME has reviewed the strategy.	
18.	**Receive report on outcomes of whole college staff survey** MCou explained that although a predominately positive outcome, any negative issues have been pulled into an action plan. The report also includes an update on progress against the comments raised last year. MCou added that the issue around the communication of staff training was already being addressed.	
	Beta Cirencester College Strategic Plan MR explained that he has drawn on the discussions from the Strategy Day to review and update the strategic plan. The document is now less narrative in style and places greater emphasis on clearly defining what success looks like. Greater alignment has also been achieved between the strategic plan and the strategic priorities poster. In addition, the document now includes definitions of the Cirencester Learner, the Cirencester Teacher and the Cirencester Manager. *Questions and comments from governors:* - *Are we expecting improvements in exam results?* MR noted that results have improved each year over the past three years. Retention figures are the highest ever and mock results were good, so we are cautiously optimistic. - *The condensed format of the strategic plan makes it more accessible and user-friendly. Stronger alignment with the priorities is also welcomed, as it will help staff better understand and engage with the college's strategic priorities.* - *Will we see a golden thread from the strategy document through the KPIs?* MR confirmed that this is the intention. He explained that the strategic plan sets out the college's vision and priorities, while the KPIs provide measures and evidence against those objectives. He added that the coming year will provide an opportunity to test the alignment between the two and identify any gaps or areas requiring further development. - *The Student Governor commented that the descriptions of the Cirencester Learner and the Cirencester Teacher resonate with their experience of the college.*	
19.	**Receive update from Chair of Audit Committee and minutes from meeting on 8th June 2026** **ACTION: FG to write to Catherine Simpson** • **Update on internal audit actions 2025/26 and agreed focus for internal audit 2026/27** GR noted that the internal audit for the coming year will include a review of financial controls and a funding review (including external scrutiny by the DfE). BB added that the	FG

	Audit Committee is also considering whether there are other areas beyond finance where internal audit could provide additional assurance. For example, if changes are made to the HR system, an internal audit would be commissioned to assess the effectiveness of the new arrangements and provide assurance to the Committee. • **Corporation review and approval of the Regularity Self-Assessment Questionnaire** The questionnaire was drafted by GR and reviewed by the Audit Committee. The document was approved by Corporation. **ACTION: SM to arrange signatories from FG and MR.** • **Corporation review and approval of the Audit Strategy Memorandum** BB noted that the auditors had attended the Audit Committee meeting, and the document had been reviewed in detail. The document was approved by Corporation. FG thanked members of the Audit Committee for their ongoing work. BB noted that the DfE guidance documents were circulated to Corporation for awareness.	SM
20.	**Approve policies** - there were no policies for review at this meeting.	
21.	**Appointment of Governance Manager** Hannah Boardman was welcomed as the new Governance Manager. The Corporation extended warm thanks to SM for all she has contributed during her tenure.	
22.	**Note Corporation membership, appointed Focus governors and committee membership** FG provided an update: • Yasmin Struthers-Frost has resigned from the Corporation. • Recruitment is underway for governor(s) with a financial background. • Matt Bullivant has been appointed as H&S Focus Governor, allowing ME to concentrate on sustainability. • Brendan Brown has been appointed as interim Chair of the Audit committee.	
23.	**Receive update from Chair of Search & Governance committee and minutes from meeting on 18th May 2026** • **Notice of upcoming Chair of Corporation vote (from 2nd November) and Corporation approval of timeline for longer-term Chair succession** LR explained that a longer-term succession plan is required to ensure an effective transition of leadership. As a new Chair will be required from September 2028, the proposed timeline would allow for the appointment of a Chair-elect up to one year in advance, providing sufficient opportunity to shadow FG and support a smooth handover. The timeline was approved. • **Corporation approval of continued subscription to SFCA webinar programme (£295)** The subscription was approved due to positive feedback and nature of the SFCA training. • **Corporation approval of governance guidance documents (see SharePoint folder)** The governance documents were included in the meeting papers and had also been shared in advance with the relevant people. All the items on the agenda were approved and thanks extended to SM for her work on those. • **Corporation approval of Scheme of Delegation**	

	LR confirmed that this had been closely reviewed by the Search & Governance committee and was recommended to the Corporation as a thorough and useful representation of the delegation of powers. Corporation approved the Scheme of Delegation. *Comments from governors:* - *It is noted that no committee oversight is currently given in the areas of finance, HR, safeguarding, H&S or SEND with these matters being monitored instead through Focus Governor reviews and Corporation oversight. A question was raised as to whether this level of scrutiny is sufficient and whether the governance structure provides appropriate assurance across these key areas.* **ACTION: SM to add for discussion by the Search and Governance Committee.**	SM
24.	**Approve meeting dates 2026-2027** A discussion was held regarding the best date for the annual celebration. It was agreed that this would take place following meeting 6. **ACTION: SM to update meeting dates**	SM
25.	**Approve committee terms of reference and annual governance planner 2026-2027** FG commented that the annual planner may require further work because of the updated strategic plan. **ACTION: SM/HB to discuss annual governance planner for 2026-27 with FG.**	SM/ HB

26.	**Review meeting effectiveness**
	
	• **What impact has Corporation had on strategy development in this meeting?**
	  • Strategic plan document is available and accessible
	  • Positive consideration of V Levels
	  • The process for reviewing the strategy has been successful
	
	• **What impact has Corporation had on student experience in this meeting?**
	  • Greater student engagement in the meeting having heard directly from the student governor
	  • Consideration of how the student governor and Student Council relationship may develop next year
	  • The potential creation of an education committee would have a big impact
	
	• **Did Corporation have the right level of information required to be effective?**
	  • Yes, information was appropriate	

27.	**Upcoming dates** 6th July: end of year event, 6pm ***SLT members, CS, LN, MCad and MR left at 18:58***	
28.	**Receive update from Chair of Remuneration committee and minutes from meeting on 22nd July 2026** ****Confidential minute****	
AOB	ME explained that, at a recent meeting of the Powell Education Trust, the possibility of college being offered ownership or exclusive use of a parcel of land had been mooted. It was agreed that ME would make the necessary introductions and leave this as an operational issue for college to take forwards.	

Actions from the meeting on 29th June 2026:

ITEM	ACTION	LEAD
3	Review college performance report template as part of review of Corporation reporting - in discussion with ERG reviewers	S&G
3	AI discussion to be tabled for Strategy Away Day - follow-up with SS required	SS/ FG
3	Send feedback on Focus Governor report to SM - S&G to consider template at meeting in Oct 2026	ALL
4	Consider practicalities of how governors can be involved in faculty reviews	SM
4	Consider if any personal contacts may fit the requirements for ongoing finance governor recruitment	ALL
5	Focus Governors to book their meeting dates for the academic year	ALL
9	Meet with KF to discuss IT risk	SS
14	Work with the Student Council to review the survey results and associated suggestions to identify ways to raise the profile of the Student Council and Student Governors	CS/MR/ HB
19	Write to Catherine Simpson	FG
19	Arrange signatories on regularity self-assessment	SM
23	Consider whether the current arrangements for oversight in key areas is sufficient	S&G
25	Discuss annual governance planner for 2026/27 with FG	SM/ HB
27	Update meeting dates	SM

Signed as an accurate record of the meeting:

Date: