West Herts College Corporation Board Meeting
Wednesday 13 May 2026
Watford
5pm – 7pm

MINUTES

Attendees:

Governors	Role:	Other Attendees	Role
Tony Breslin	Chair of Corporation	Nidha Patel	Group Director-Finance
Gill Worgan	Principal & CEO	Amanda Washbrook	Deputy Principal-Business Development
Phil Berry	External Governor	Emma Doree	Vice- Principal
Charles Chidom	Staff Governor	Alice Giles	Vice-Principal
Olivia Darbon	Staff Governor	Sarah Knowles	Deputy Principal
Laura Dawson	External Governor	Rachel Robson	External Reviewer – StoneKing
Rachel Fox	External Governor	Anne-Marie Kinsella	Governance Professional
Chris Gentle	External Governor		
Chris Nicholls	External Governor	**Apologies**	
Stuart Ord	External Governor	Jadan Khaliq	Student Governor
Gary Phillips	External Governor	Ash Wilson	Student Governor
Martin Sidders	External Governor	Chris Rowe	External Governor

Ref Agenda Item

25/33 1. WELCOME & APOLOGIES

The Vice-Chair opened the meeting, as the term of office of TB as Chair of Corporation had expired on the 07 May 2026.

1.1. **Welcome**
The Vice-Chair welcomed all attendees to the Corporation meeting.

1.2. **Apologies for absence and quoracy**
Apologies were received and accepted. The meeting was confirmed as quorate.
All reports had been circulated in advance of the meeting for consideration.
It was noted and accepted that the Principal would leave the meeting at 6.10 to attend another meeting.

1.3. **Declaration of pecuniary interests**
There were no declarations.

1.4. **Requests for urgent business**
The Vice Chair asked the Corporation to consider the reappointment of Tony Breslin (TB) and Martin Sidders (MS) for a further 2 year term.
The Corporation agreed that both reappointments should be approved.

The Corporation considered the role of chair and noted the measurable progress in TB's knowledge of the further education sector over the past two years but highlighted the importance of continued development to fully support his effectiveness in the role of Chair.

TB and MS terms of Office would run from the 13 May 2026 – 12 May 2028

DECISION: The Corporation approved:

- the reappointment of TB as a member of the Corporation;
- the reappointment of MS as a member of the Corporation
- the reappointment of TB as Chair of Corporation.

Following approval, the Vice Chair formally handed over the chairing of the meeting to TB, who then assumed the role of Chair of Corporation for the remainder of the meeting.

25/34 2. PREVIOUS MEETING

2.1. **Approval of Minutes** (25 March 2026)

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record and approved for electronic signature.

2.2. **Matters Arising and Action Log Review**

There were no matters arising not on the agenda. It was confirmed that Rachel Fox would take over the role of Safeguarding, SEND and EDI Governor from LD in September 2026.

Ref	Action Log	when
25/30/6.2	The terms of office for Tony Breslin and Martin Sidders also expire on 7 May 2026. Their reappointments will be considered and approved at the Corporation meeting on 13 May 2026.	See agenda item 1

25/35 3. STRATEGIC ITEMS

3.1. **Principals Report**

The report highlighted that the vast majority of students are making expected levels of progress.

The further 19 Technical Excellence Colleges (TECs) in priority sectors were detailed and the Corporation noted the allocation of TEC Colleges and asked for clarification of the selection process. The Executive explained that selection was not college-led but place-based.

The Corporation discussed the funding for the growth in 16–18 student numbers, which is below expected levels and concerns were expressed about the potential impact on the College and the sector overall. The Association of Colleges (AoC) has expressed deep dissatisfaction to government ministers on behalf of the sector.

The new theme park in Bedford, Universal Destinations and Experiences UK, will transform economies and job opportunities across the region.

The College has joined a specialist group organised by the AoC to share practice and ideas on managing prejudice in response to the recent increase in hate crimes.

Work is underway to partner with an organisation specialising in literacy and oracy skills development.

Work has been commissioned to measure the College's social value contributions beyond its core business. It was confirmed that three companies had been interviewed, and a provider was selected based on expertise in storytelling and sector understanding, rather than solely data analysis. The

Board highlighted the importance of sharing stories from the local community to complement data and demonstrate impact.

The College is featuring in a high-profile campaign to promote teaching careers in further education. The Corporation congratulated the member of staff who featured in the campaign.

Since the report was issued, an unannounced HSE inspection took place, focusing on ventilation within the brick workshop. The inspection was completed with no issues identified. Appropriate measures have also been implemented to support ongoing monitoring.

An update was provided on student behaviour, noting that incidents had reduced since the Christmas period. This was attributed to a fast and efficient intervention and resolution process. The Engagement Support Team has supported over 100 students through targeted and individualised support plans, with a particular focus on vulnerable groups and addressing barriers to learning. It was noted that the new Ofsted toolkit places increased emphasis on these areas, and the Board acknowledged that the College is managing the situation effectively.

The report was noted and accepted.

25/36 4. QUALITY & STANDARDS

4.1. **Accountability Statement**

The Deputy Principal (AW) said that the system for completing the Accountability Statement is now fully embedded with robust scrutiny processes in place and strong forward planning. Provision for 16–18 learners is growing, with expansion planned through to 2028, including new cohorts and courses designed to meet local labour market needs. Identified skills shortages are being addressed through increased cohort sizes and the introduction of new courses.

The Corporation thanked the Executive for the report and noted it provided a helpful overview which demonstrates the breadth of activity. It was acknowledged that the statement is produced on a DfE template, and the wording is constrained and must align with mandated phrasing, limiting the ability to explicitly describe quality.

The Corporation discussed the opportunities not yet fully reflected, such as the Universal Studios. It was reported that current provision is still developing in these areas, with actions planned for the next academic year and these developments will align with emerging job opportunities, supported by employer engagement and recruitment activities.

Careers education planning is expected to play a key role in identifying future pathways across both primary and secondary school phases. Approval to deliver higher technical qualifications has been secured, and steps toward implementation, including marketing and rollout, have been outlined.

Learner destinations were discussed in particularly the proportion progressing into employment, and whether further action is needed to strengthen outcomes. A destinations report is expected. The Executive believed that strengthening mechanisms for employers to share vacancies and opportunities would give a more active approach in supporting progression.

The document was viewed positively overall, though questions were raised about how clearly it aligns with the wider strategy, and it was accepted that while elements of the strategic plan are embedded, the connection is not always explicit. It was noted that the Business Plan sets out how individual reports align with specific strategic objectives.

The report was noted and accepted.

ACTION: Governance Professional to draft a plan illustrating the relationship between the Corporation's Business Plan and Regulatory Documents.

DECISION: The Corporation approved the Accountability Statement.

4.2. **Skills and Employment Strategy Annual Report**

The Corporation thanked the Executive for a well written report and sought clarification on responsibility. The Executive confirmed that the Principal and the Deputy Principal (AW) hold overall responsibility, with senior-level initial involvement and curriculum leaders engaged where appropriate. It was further noted that this approach supports effective management while reducing workload for Heads of School. The importance of senior-level representation on the Local Sports Accountability Board was highlighted, alongside the value of ongoing dialogue with employers.

The College contributes to national initiatives including T Levels and curriculum development and supports the Get Britain Working agenda in South Midlands and Hertfordshire. The College's engagement with community organisations and its role as an anchor institution through participation on a range of regional boards and panels was noted by the Corporation.

The significant support in place for getting learners into employment was acknowledged and commended by the Corporation.

The report was noted and accepted.

4.3. **SEND Annual Report**

The College supports a large cohort of (Special Educational Needs & Disabilities) SEND learners, including those with complex and high-cost needs, through a broad range of specialist provision. High-quality teaching by skilled staff was recognised, with students achieving positive outcomes and progressing to further study or employment, supported by strong employer links.

The Corporation was updated on local and national consultations relating to SEND reforms and the increase in EHCP numbers was reported. The College experienced an 11% increase in numbers last year, and applications so far are indicating a projected increase of over 20%.

The Corporation discussed the data, specifically the proportion of 16–18 learners represented. The Executive said that the SEND reforms are welcome and are expected to strengthen further education provision. The reforms are anticipated to provide more detailed information which ensures that appropriate support follows the learner, enabling more effective transition into further education. It was noted that the reforms are still subject to change.

The Corporation welcomed the development of SENCO roles and sought clarification on links to national programmes. It was confirmed that involvement includes engagement with DfE-led groups and centres of excellence. It was noted that strong collaboration between colleges and local authorities will be required and achieving a consistent collegiate approach will have its challenges.

The Executive confirmed that funding for learners can extend to age 24 and does not cease at 18 for looked-after children, provided they remain within the social care system.

The report was noted and accepted.

4.4. **Complaints – Annual report**

The College aims to resolve all complaints promptly, fairly, and to the satisfaction of the complainant, in line with its published procedures. At the time of writing, no complaints have been referred to external agencies.

The Board noted the increase in complaints; the reasons for this rise are outlined in the accompanying report and include a national upward trend and an increased use of Artificial Intelligence (AI).

A breakdown of complaint types was provided. Complaints are received from parents, students and stakeholders.

The Executive reported that changes are being made to improve how the process operates, noting that some formal complaints are in fact requests for information or clarification.

The Corporation was pleased to see that complaints continue to be managed efficiently and noted the increased use of AI which has significantly raised the volume of written correspondence, with individuals often expecting formal written responses, which is time-consuming. Formal access requests have also increased, and these are reported to the Audit Committee.

GW left the meeting at 6.10pm.

The Corporation discussed whether compliments are being properly recorded and noted that they may not be, as positive feedback is often given directly to tutors rather than formally documented.

Strengthening the informal resolution stage was considered, to ensure that complainants have completed the initial stage before progressing to a formal complaint. This would involve requiring evidence that an informal resolution has been attempted. Work is underway to adapt the relevant forms to capture this more clearly, with the aim of improving early resolution and overall efficiency.

Staff Governors confirmed that staff have the correct information to respond effectively, particularly at tutor level.

The report was noted and accepted.

25/37 5. FINANCE & RESOURCES

5.1. **Finance Report** (confidential)
(Please see confidential minutes (part 2)

5.2. **Draft Budget** (confidential)
(Please see confidential minutes (part 2)

25/38 GOVERNANCE & COMPLIANCE

6.1 **Feedback from Learning Walks**

There were no learning walks since the last meeting.

In terms of the possibility of learning walks for the remainder of the summer term, it was agreed that SEND and Adult provision visits would be available after half term. This would avoid clashes with areas focused on examinations.
Visits during the autumn term could be arranged now to ensure appropriate timing and coverage.

Learning walks in future to include the following:
- Opportunities to observe apprentices in the workplace,
- Arrange time to sit in with Student Services
- Opportunities to meet staff and discuss case studies
- Follow a student journey or case study, including areas such as careers, ALS (Additional Learning Support), and enrichment activities

ACTION: Governance Professional to produce a timetable for learning walks in 2026–27 academic year

6.2 **Update on Board Membership**

Membership was noted and accepted.

6.3 **Update on Corporation Action Plan**

The Action plan was noted and accepted. The Governance Professional confirmed that it would be updated in line with the outcome of the External Review due to conclude in July 2026.

6.4 **Committee Feedback and Recommendation**

6.4.1 **Search & Governance Committee**

The Corporation reviewed the Committee's Annual Report for 2025–26 and were asked to approve the Terms of Reference and membership for 2026–27.

The Chair of the Search & Governance Committee gave a verbal update of the meeting held on the 06 May.

DECISION:
The Search & Governance Committee's Annual report was noted and accepted
The Search & Governance Committee's minutes were noted and accepted.
The Search & Governance Committee Terms of Reference for 2026–27 were approved.
The Search & Governance Membership for 2026-27 was approved:

- Laura Dawson – Committee Chair
- Tony Breslin – Chair of Corporation
- Gill Worgan – CEO/Principal

25/39 6. URGENT BUSINESS
There was no urgent business.

25/40 7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Strategic Away Day – Friday 26 June – All day.

Meeting closed: 18.48

Minutes approved by the Corporation on 08 July 2026

Ref	Summary of Actions	when
25/36/4.1	Governance Professional to draft a plan illustrating the relationship between the Corporation's Business Plan and Regulatory Documents	2026-27
25/38/6.1	Governance Professional to produce a timetable for learning walks for 2026–27 academic year.	2026-27

Ref	Summary of Decisions
25/33/1.4	The Corporation approved the reappointment of: • the reappointment of MS as a member of the Corporation • the reappointment of TB as Chair of Corporation. • the reappointment of TB as Chair of the Corporation
25/36/4.1	The Corporation approved the Accountability Statement.
25/38/6.4	• The Search & Governance Committee's Annual report was noted and accepted • The Search & Governance Committee's minutes were noted and accepted. • The Search & Governance Committee Terms of Reference for 2026–27 were approved. • The Search & Governance Membership for 2026-27 was approved: • Laura Dawson – Committee Chair • Tony Breslin – Chair of Corporation • Gill Worgan – CEO/Principal