COLEG CYMRAEG CENEDLAETHOL

Coleg Board, 25 March 2026 (10:00 – 12:30), Carmarthen

Present

Board Members:	Dr Aled Eirug (Chair) Ann Beynon Nia Elias John Hayes Professor Anwen Jones Professor Pedr ap Llwyd Angharad Roberts Llinos Roberts Professor Enlli Thomas
Observers:	Alan Jones (Welsh Government) Deio Owen (National Union of Students Wales)
Officers:	Dr Ioan Matthews (Chief Executive) Gwenllian Griffiths (Director of External Affairs) Dr Dylan Phillips (Director of Corporate Affairs and Secretary) Dr Dafydd Trystan (Director of Tertiary Education and Registrar) Nia Brown (Governance Officer) Mari Fflur (Senior Manager for Policy) Ffion Hughes (Senior Manager for Higher Education)

	Suzanne Lewis (Senior Manager for Corporate Services) Dr Lowri Morgans (Senior Manager for Further Education) Rebecca Williams (Senior Manager for Language Skills and Workforce Planning)
Observation:	Fflur Jones (Darwin Gray) Heledd Ainsworth (Darwin Gray)
Apologies:	Rhys Evans Meri Huws

Minutes of Meeting 25 March 2026

1. Item 1 – Welcome, apologies and introductory matters

No.	Main points of discussion	Action	Timescale
1.1	All those present were welcomed to the meeting.		
1.2	Fflur Jones and Heledd Ainsworth (Darwin Gray) who were observing as part of the governance review were welcomed.		
1.3	Apologies were noted as above.		
1.4	It was reported that this would be Llinos Roberts and Professor Pedr ap Llwyd's last meeting after		

	they had served as Board members for two terms. Llinos has been a wise Vice-Chair who stepped into the fold at the time of Gareth Pierce's death. Pedr's strong leadership as chair of the Finance and General Purposes Committee is recognised. It was also reported that Rhys Evans is standing down from the Board and finishing today. Rhys has been a member since 2021, and more recently chair of the Audit and Risk Committee. All three of them were thanked for their valuable service.		

2. Item 2 – Declarations of interest

No.	Main points of discussion	Action	Timescale
2.1	Members were reminded of the procedure in which they are asked to note any declarations of interest in addition to those already noted in the Register of Interests.		

3. Item 3 – Minutes 19 November 2025

No.	Main points of discussion	Action	Timescale
3.1	The minutes of the meeting held on 19 November 2025 were approved.		

4. Item 4 – Matters arising

No.	Main points of discussion	Action	Timescale
4.1	Item 4.3 – Update on the Strategic Plan to the Board under Item 7.		
4.2	Item 4.4 – Outline of potential funding situations following the Senedd Elections under Item 14ii.		
4.3	Items 7.6 and 7.7 – Governance review. The preparation of the terms of reference and specification for the governance review was delegated to the Chair with the assistance of the chairs of the Board's sub-committees, and was completed before Christmas. The draft was discussed at the Appointments and Governance Standards Committee meeting on 21 January. A copy was also shared with Government officials, before sending it to Board members for their		

	approval. It was advertised on the Sell to Wales website and Darwin Gray has undertaken the work. Work has already begun including observing today's Board meeting and its committees in the coming months. The reviewers will meet with all Board members as part of the process. It is planned to complete the work and submit a report to the Board at the meeting of 24 June 2026.	Governance review report to the Board	24 June 2026

5. Item 5 - Chief Executive's Report

No.	Main points of discussion	Action	Timescale
5.1	The Chief Executive's written report on recent activities was received and the updates included in the report were noted.		
5.2	**Congregation 24 March 2026** The Congregation held the night before begins the Coleg's 15th anniversary celebrations.		
5.3	**Minister for Further and Higher Education consultation on challenges facing the tertiary sector**		

	It was reported that the Coleg had fully contributed to the Minister for Further and Higher Education's consultation on the challenges facing the tertiary sector. The Coleg will submit written evidence based on the initial advice to Medr and the manifesto as agreed by the Board.		
5.4	**Coleg Budget and Welsh Government** It was reported that the Welsh Government's Grant Letter for 2026/27 has been received (See Item 13).		
5.5	**Medr** It was reported that the Coleg had acquired the advice of Gwion Lewis *KC* in relation to the legal status of the Welsh Language Condition and his comments were also reported on the current form of the Condition and the possibility of establishing a link between the Welsh Language Education and Research Act 2023 and the Welsh Language and Education Act 2025 in due course. It was reported that parts of the condition have been strengthened but that the final form of the Condition does not reflect all of the Coleg's suggestions in its advice and in its response to		

	the consultation, but that Medr has stated that regulation is an evolving process. The Coleg will submit formal advice on (i) the National Plan, and (ii) funding issues later in the year. The Coleg and Medr are keen to ensure that the Welsh Government acts as soon as possible on the basis of its intention to establish a workstream to look at how the Code of Ability Description in Welsh could be applied to the tertiary sector.		
5.6	**Higher Education** It was reported that the budgetary challenges of the universities continue. To provide short-term certainty it is planned to maintain the current grant arrangements in 2026/27 and 2027/28 unless there are significant changes following the Senedd elections.		
5.7	**Further Education and Apprenticeships** The steps taken to implement the Board's decision in terms of raising ambition and placing emphasis on the Welsh-medium experiences of learners and apprentices were reported.		

	The Chief Executive reported on the ColegauCymru headteachers' meeting on 4-5 March. The challenges and discussions in the area of apprenticeships were reported.		
5.8	**Yr Athrofa** Congratulations were extended to Llinos Roberts on her appointment as Chair of the Board of Yr Athrofa and we look forward to working together in the future.		
5.9	**Engagement** The Director of External Affairs provided an update on the engagement work with reference to the brief provided to Board members on the relevant commitments of the parties or in statements issued to date.		

6. Item 6 – Chair's Matters

No.	Main points of discussion	Action	Timescale
6.1	The Chair reported on recent meetings he had participated in with the Chief Executive including		

	meeting with Welsh Government Ministers and the Chair and Chief Executive of Medr.		
6.2	He reported that the governance review was underway.		

7. Item 7 – Strategic Plan 2026-30

No.	Main points of discussion	Action	Timescale
7.1	An update was provided on the preparation of the 2026-30 Strategic Plan.		
7.2	Members were thanked for their input in discussing the principles of the scheme at the workshop held on 26 February. It was reported that their conclusions were consistent with internal discussions.		
7.3	A structure for the Plan was introduced which included: i. Main strategic areas to be included in the plan: • Tertiary provision • Tertiary education workforce • Learners' journey and experience ii. Approaches:		

	• Strategic planning • Funding and incentives • Promoting and changing behaviour • Influencing and policy iii. Infrastructure for carrying out the work iv. Metrics		
7.4	Alan Jones, Welsh Language Division, Welsh Government, noted that the new Government is expected to review the Cymraeg 2050 strategy and is likely to include plans for workplaces and workforces.		
7.5	It was noted that the Coleg's vision, which will form the basis of the Strategic Plan, was fully outlined in the initial advice presented to Medr in September 2024. Board members were invited to continue to contribute to the development of the Plan.	Draft plan to be circulated to Board members two weeks before the meeting on 24 June.	Two weeks before 24 June 2026
7.6	Following discussion it was agreed on the principles to be included in the draft Strategic Plan to be presented to the Board on 24 June ahead of a period of consultation during the summer months.	Draft Strategic Plan to the Board	24 June 2026

	At this point Dr Lowri Morgans left the meeting		

8. Item 8 – Appointments and Governance Standards Committee

No.	Main points of discussion	Action	Timescale
8.1	**Minutes (Item 8i)** The minutes of the Appointments and Governance Standards Committee meeting held on 21 January 2026 were noted. The Secretary reported on: • the discussion to agree the specification of the governance review • Membership update • update on the Cynllun Llywio • the evaluation questionnaire circulated before Easter • a discussion on the benefits of being able to offer remuneration to Coleg chairs and plans to apply to the Charity Commission for their consent. The report was received.		
8.2	**Governance Document (Item 8ii)**		

	The Coleg Governance Document was presented. The Board's comments on some clauses were noted for consideration by the governance review. The Governance Document was accepted.		
8.3	**Membership of the Board (Item 8iii)** It was noted that Yusuf Ibrahim was confirmed as a new member of the Board from 1 April 2026 by correspondence. The appointment was approved.		
8.4	**Other updates regarding Board membership** A report was given on Llinos Roberts and Professor Pedr ap Llwyd's end of office and that Rhys Evans was standing down from the Board. End-of-office meetings will be held between them and the Chair. It was also reported that Nia Elias' second term will end in November 2026. It was reported that there will be a discussion at the next meeting about plans to advertise for new members during the year.		

8.5	**Committee Chairs** It was reported that Professor Anwen Jones chaired her first meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee on 4 March 2026. It was reported that Ann Beynon will chair the next meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee on 20 May 2026 ahead of confirmation of long-term arrangements.		
8.6	**Appointment of a Vice-Chair** Following nominations and a vote by correspondence by Board members, the appointment of Ann Beynon as the new Vice Chair of the Board was confirmed with effect from 1 April 2026.		
8.7	**Coleg Chair** It was reported that it was intended to advertise for a new Chair of the Coleg in May to succeed Dr Aled Eirug at the end of his term which ends 31 August 2026.		

9. Item 9 – Audit and Risk Committee

No.	Main points of discussion	Action	Timescale
9.1	**Minutes (Item 9i)** The minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee meeting held on 5 February 2026 were noted. The Secretary (in the absence of Rhys Evans, chair of the Audit and Risk Committee) reported on: • External Audit Programme 2025/26 • Compliance report • the internal auditors' reports on risk management and mitigation controls, which offered significant assurance; follow up; and work programme 2026/27 • strategic risk register • Artificial Intelligence Policy • a discussion of risks and mitigation measures if Coleg chairs were offered a fee, and plans to apply to the Charity Commission for their consent The report was received.		
9.2	**Strategic Risk Register (Item 9ii)**		

	The Coleg's strategic risk register was noted, for information.		
9.3	**Risk Management Policy and Procedure** **(Item 9iii)** It was reported that the internal auditors had recommended that the Board should be responsible for setting levels of risk tolerance and appetite, and not the Audit and Risk Committee. The revised risk management policy and procedure now sets out the responsibility of 'setting the levels of risk tolerance and appetite' to the Board. The amendments were approved and the Risk Management Policy and procedure were accepted.		
9.4	**Risk Appetite Statement** **(Item 9iv)** The Risk Appetite Statement was noted.		
9.5	**Training** In discussing the mutual understanding of the Board's responsibilities on appetite and risk	Arrange risk management and appetite training	2026/27

	management, it was recommended that training be held for Board members.		

10. Item 10 – Finance and General Purposes Committee

No.	Main points of discussion	Action	Timescale
10.1	**Minutes (Item 10)** The minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 4 March 2026 were noted. Professor Anwen Jones, chair of the Finance and General Purposes Committee, reported: • that they said goodbye to Professor Pedr ap Llwyd and Llinos Roberts • Nia Edwards-Behi had joined as an observer of the Cynllun Llywio • had received an update on the 2025/26 budget and management accounts • Draft Budget 2026/27 discussed • the intention to carry out a review of the investments in September 2026		

	• there had been an annual review of the salaries of the Chief Executive and Executive Directors The report was received.		

11. Item 11 – Academic Board

No.	Main points of discussion	Action	Timescale
11.1	**Minutes (Item 11)** The minutes of the meeting of the Academic Board held on 11 February 2026 were noted. Professor Enlli Thomas, chair of the Academic Board, reported on: • an update from the Research and Publications Committee that some universities' internal policies do not give fair consideration to Welsh-medium research • report by the Learners' Voice Forum • presentation on Artificial Intelligence The report was received.		
11.2	Alan Jones, Welsh Language Division, Welsh Government, noted that officials were meeting		

	with UCAS in April to raise issues raised by the Coleg in a briefing to Ministers.		

12. Item 12 – Post-16 Strategic Board

No.	Main points of discussion	Action	Timescale
12.1	**Minutes (Item 12)** The minutes of the Post-16 Strategic Board meeting held on 25 February 2026 were noted. The Chief Executive (in the absence of Meri Huws, chair of the Post-16 Strategic Board) reported: • that Yusuf Ibrahim chaired the meeting • on a presentation by an ambassador • on the discussions on raising ambition and the challenges The report was received.		

13. Item 13 – Welsh Government Grant Letter

No.	Main points of discussion	Action	Timescale
13.1	The Welsh Government Grant Letter for 2026/27 was received.		

13.2	The Secretary reported a 1% increase to the core grant from the previous year. It was reported that there will be some change to the grant payment arrangements which will henceforth be based on the Coleg's proposed expenditure profile rather than equal monthly instalments.		
13.3	The Grant Letter was noted.		
	At this point Deio Owen joined the meeting		

14. Item 14 – Coleg Budget 2026/27

No.	Main points of discussion	Action	Timescale
14.1	**Draft budget for 2026/27 (Item 14i)** The Coleg's draft budget for 2026/27 was presented by the Secretary. It was reported that 76% of the Coleg's budget continues to be spent on activities at universities, colleges and other educational institutions.		

	It was reported that as the Grant Letter arrived after the circulation of the draft budget the income figure was £224 lower than forecast. Following discussion the draft budget was accepted.		
14.2	**Possible funding scenarios following the Senedd Elections (Item 14ii)** Possible funding scenarios following the Senedd Elections were presented by the Secretary. Following discussion the paper was noted.		
14.3	**Grants to tertiary education providers (Item 14iii)** A paper detailing a list of grants to tertiary education providers for 2026/27 was presented by the Director of Tertiary Education. The paper was approved.		

15. Item 15 – Constitutional matters

No.	Main points of discussion	Action	Timescale
15.1	**Annual General Meeting (Court) of the Coleg**		

	The Secretary gave an oral report on the Coleg's annual meeting held on 23 March 2026.		
15.2	It was reported that the Court received the 2024/25 Annual Report; and the Coleg's annual accounts up to 31 March 2025 which have been filed with Companies House and the Charity Commission.		
15.3	It was reported that the Board's proposals: for (i) the adoption of new Articles of Association, and (ii) the authorisation of the Board to be able to pay the chairs of the Coleg (both proposals subject to the consent of the Charity Commission) had been approved.		

16. Item 16 - Any other business

No.	Main points of discussion	Action	Timescale
16.1	On the eve of a period of absence, the Registrar presented his thanks to the members of the Board, the Chief Executive and the officers for their support over the past 19 years.		

	The Chief Executive expressed his appreciation to the Registrar for his key contributions to the development of the Coleg to date.		

17. Item 17 – Dates of next meetings

No.	Main points of discussion	Action	Timescale
17.1	**Next meeting dates** The dates of the next meetings were noted: • 24 June 2026, Cardiff • 18 November 2026, Cardiff • 17 March 2027, Swansea • 30 June 2027, Aberystwyth		

18. Item 18 – CLOSED

No.	Main points of discussion	Action	Timescale
	At this point the observers departed.		
18.1	The closed minutes of the meeting held on 19 November 2025 were approved.		