

Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol Board of Directors

Wednesday 23 March 2022 (10:00 – 15:00)

Microsoft Teams

Present

- Directors:** Meri Huws (Vice Chair, in the chair)
Ann Beynon
William Callaway
Nia Elias
Rhys Evans
Dr Anwen Jones
Gwilym Dyfri Jones
Angharad Roberts
Professor Enlli Thomas
- Observers:** Meg Hughes, Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW)
Branwen Thomas, Welsh Government
Alan Jones, Welsh Government
- Officers:** Dr Ioan Matthews (Chief Executive)
Dr Dylan Phillips (Secretary)
Dr Dafydd Trystan (Registrar)
Gwenllian Griffiths (Chief Engagement and Communications Officer)
Catrin Williams (Academic Development Officer; Minutes)
- Apologies:** Pedr ap Llwyd, Llinos Roberts, Rhian Huws Williams

1. Item 1 – Welcome and apologies

Number	Main points of discussion	Actions	Timescale
1.1	All those present were welcomed to the meeting.		
1.2	The Chair noted with sadness the death of the Welsh Language Commissioner, Aled Roberts, and condolences were extended to Llinos and the family. Condolences were extended to Elin Williams, following the recent death of her father, and to Nia Brown, following the death of her mother.		
1.3	Alan Jones (Welsh Government) was welcomed to his first meeting, and the Board wished Branwen Thomas well in her retirement.		
1.4	Apologies were noted as above.		

2. Item 2 – Declarations of interest

Number	Main points of discussion	Actions	Timescale
2.1	Members were reminded of the procedure by which they are asked to note any declarations of interest additional to those already noted in the Register of Interests.		
2.2	In relation to the Coleg's Work Welsh scheme, Ann Beynon declared that she is on the Board of Hafren Dyfrdwy, which is likely to apply for funding for Welsh lessons for its staff.		

3. Item 3 – To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 17 November 2021

Number	Main points of discussion	Actions	Timescale
3.1	The minutes were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting held on 17 November 2021.		

4. Item 4 – Matters arising

Number	Main points of discussion	Actions	Timescale
4.1	There were no matters arising from the minutes.		

5. Item 5 – Chief Executive's Report

Number	Main points of discussion	Actions	Timescale
5.1	The Chief Executive echoed the Chair's comments about the late Aled Roberts, noting his support for the Coleg whilst a member of the Senedd as well as the close co-operation during his time as Welsh Language Commissioner.		
5.2	The Chief Executive's written report on current developments was received.		
5.3	<p>Budget for 2022/23</p> <p>The good news on the Coleg's budget was reported, and Branwen Thomas was thanked for her co-operation in discussing the Coleg's proposals for the budgets of the next few years. It was noted that</p>		

	there would be an opportunity to look at the budget in detail later in the meeting.		
5.4	<p>Higher Education</p> <p>It was reported that consultation with institutions on the Academic Plan had begun and that responses were expected in April. It was noted that recommendations would be presented to the Board.</p> <p>A report was given on plans to maintain contact with students studying outside Wales.</p>	Recommendations following consultation on the Coleg's Academic Plan	6 July 2022
5.5	<p>Initial Teacher Education</p> <p>The Chief Executive reported on the Coleg's discussions with the Welsh Government. It was reported that Dr Dafydd Trystan was representing the Coleg on the Group developing a plan for the Education Workforce. It was noted that there was a difference of opinion at present between the proposals submitted to the Group by the Coleg and the views of some Government officials. Concern was noted that the extent of the challenge, in both the primary and secondary sectors, is not being recognized.</p> <p>It was reported that in order to deliver the numbers, providers need to fulfil the commitments they made as part of their accreditation as providers. It was noted that there is currently a question about providers' capacity.</p> <p>It was reported that a pilot project for a teacher training mentoring programme had already been supported by the Government, and that the post of Teacher Training and Education Officer was currently being advertised by the Coleg.</p>		

	<p>Following a discussion, it was agreed that this area was key to the success of the Coleg's wider strategies, and that national developments should be kept under review. It was noted that if the final strategy does not reflect what the Coleg feels is necessary, the concerns will need to be raised with the Minister.</p>		
5.6	<p>Appointment of Anti-Racism Coordinator</p> <p>It was confirmed that an appointment had been made and that a presentation would be given to the Board in due course.</p>		
5.7	<p>The Coleg's 10th anniversary celebrations</p> <p>It was reported that the Coleg was awaiting confirmation of the arrangements for the event at the Senedd on 10 May. It was further reported that the social media campaign would begin in March.</p>		
5.8	<p>Awards</p> <p>It was reported that it was intended to present the Coleg's Awards at the Eisteddfod and at an awards evening (to be broadcast live) in July.</p>		
5.9	<p>Working arrangements</p> <p>It was reported that the Coleg's offices were now fully open again, and that the Coleg was experimenting with hybrid working arrangements. It was also reported that a number of appointments had been made recently.</p>		

5.10	<p>Fundraising scheme to support Ukraine</p> <p>A report was given on the intention to hold a virtual walk from Carmarthen to Kiyv to raise money to buy resources for the refuge being provided by the Urdd.</p> <p>It was agreed that care needed to be taken when communicating the message about the campaign. It was noted that the Coleg was one of the Urdd's strategic partners and that the idea of a walk had been put forward by the Coleg's ambassadors, so the walk was an appropriate contribution.</p>		
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6. Item 6 – Chair's Report

Number	Main points of discussion	Actions	Timescale
6.1	<p>The Vice Chair reported that she was keeping in touch with the Coleg's Officers and with the Chair, and assurances were given that nothing would get lost during this time.</p>		
6.2	<p>It was reported that an annual meeting was being held next week with the Chief Executive and Chair of the Funding Council. It was noted that Meri Huws would be joining this meeting.</p>		

7. Item 7 – Audit and Risk Committee

Number	Main points of discussion	Actions	Timescale
7.1	<p>Minutes</p> <p>The minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee meeting held on 16 March 2022 were noted and received.</p> <p>It was reported that the Committee had met with the new External Auditors.</p>		
7.2	<p>Strategic Risk Register</p> <p>The Strategic Risk Register was presented. It was reported that the Committee had agreed that the Board should be given a verbal update as well as a copy of the register in light of the external circumstances at present, including the Covid-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine.</p> <p>Dr Dafydd Trystan gave a verbal update. It was reported that committee members scrutinize the Risk Register in detail but that it needed to be jointly owned by everyone. It was noted that the changes to the Register had been accepted by the committee, but there were concerns about the number of students studying through the medium of Welsh due to the pandemic.</p> <p>It was noted that the risk attached to the Further Education Plan had changed following receipt of the budget, and that the risk now related to the delivery of the work.</p> <p>It was reported that the committee had discussed in detail external factors that could affect the Coleg, but</p>		

	<p>many of those were beyond the Coleg's control, for example fuel and inflation costs.</p> <p>It was agreed that these external risks should be kept together on the register. It was noted that the Board of Directors was comfortable with the way the register was compiled and reviewed, and that this could be kept under consideration from meeting to meeting.</p>		
7.3	<p>Cybersecurity</p> <p>It was reported that the Coleg had received appropriate reports on processes from the Internal Auditors, and that South Wales Police had conducted a phishing test with staff. During a brief discussion, it was noted that some staff had received further training as a result.</p>		

8. Items 8 – Finance and General Purposes Committee

Number	Main points of discussion	Actions	Timescale
8.1	<p>Minutes</p> <p>The minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held on 16 February 2022 were noted and received.</p>		
8.2	<p>Coleg budget 2021/22</p> <p>It was reported that the committee had received a report on the Coleg's expenditure and on the variances that had arisen during the year. It was noted that the Coleg had received £130,000 to spend before the end of the financial year, and that three projects had benefited from this additional funding:</p>		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Glyndŵr University Care and Health Project. - A project to measure students' attitudes towards studying through the medium of Welsh. - A project to create language awareness resources for health and care. <p>It was reported that the expenditure for the end of the financial year was consistent with the income, being a couple of thousand pounds higher than the budget.</p> <p>It was agreed that strategic discussions will be required when the results of the studies on student perception have been received.</p>		
8.3	<p>Investments</p> <p>It was reported that the committee had updated the Reserves Policy. It was noted that the size of the long-term and medium-term reserves could be seen in the minutes. It was reported that the investment manager was generally focused on ethical investment.</p> <p>It was suggested that a detailed investment report could be provided to the Board on an annual basis if required, but the Board was reminded that Sterling Asset Management reported to the committee on the work of investment managers Sarasin and that there was a record of this.</p>		

9. Item 9 – Academic Board

Number	Main points of discussion	Actions	Timescale
9.1	The minutes of the Academic Board meeting held on 9 February 2022 were noted and accepted.		

	<p>A summary of the points arising from the 13 October 2021 meeting was given by Gwilym Dyfri Jones, the committee's Chair;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An update on the digital learning materials project was received. - An introduction to the student attitude measurement project and the keeping in touch with students project was provided. - An update was received from the Research and Publication Committee. - An update was received from the student representatives. 		
9.2	<p>It was reported that the Research and Publication Committee had recommended in the response to the HEFCW consultation that a combination of the Coleg and the Learned Society should have a deciding role. It was suggested that the Directors could have a briefing on Welsh-medium research.</p>	<p>Briefing session on Welsh-medium Research</p>	<p>If needed</p>

10. Item 10 – Further Education and Apprenticeships update

Number	Main points of discussion	Actions	Timescale
10.1	<p>Minutes</p> <p>The minutes of the Post-16 Strategic Board meeting held on 9 November 2021 were noted and received. It was reported that the Strategic Board would be meeting on 30 March, and from 2022/23 much more up-to-date minutes of the meetings would be presented.</p>		

10.2	<p>Budget</p> <p>It was reported that the challenge now would be to make good use of the new budget. It was noted that the Further Education and Apprenticeship Providers' journey is only just beginning and that they face huge challenges in terms of staffing capacity and bilingual culture in the Colleges.</p>		
10.3	<p>The Coleg's staffing capacity</p> <p>It was reported that the staffing capacity in the Coleg would be kept under review, and that a new member of staff was starting with the Coleg today who had a background in the apprenticeship sector. It was noted that Further Education and Apprenticeships would be part of Coleg-wide work, including the work of the marketing team and the Subject Officers.</p>		
10.4	<p>Apprenticeships Policy</p> <p>It was reported that the Government had been aiming to review the apprenticeships policy by March 2022, but this had not been done as yet.</p> <p>It was reported that 8% of employers were involved in apprenticeships. It was noted that it would be interesting to know how many apprenticeships exist that are not Government funded.</p>		
10.5	<p>Raising awareness</p> <p>A question was asked as to the role of the Coleg in raising awareness of the Welsh-medium possibilities? It was reported that this is an important role for the Coleg, and that there is a desire to provide information and work with younger pupils in schools, but care also</p>		

	<p>needs to be taken of the sensitivity between schools and colleges.</p> <p>It was noted that there were plans to target priority areas and to target specific industries in marketing work.</p>		
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11. Items 11 – Coleg Budget

Number	Main points of discussion	Actions	Timescale
11.1	<p>It was reported that the Coleg's total income in 2022/23 will be £9,441,000. It was noted that an expenditure plan had been prepared, following consultation with Managers, and submitted to Government.</p> <p>The following matters were discussed:</p> <p>Branch Grants</p> <p>It was confirmed that, although the model had changed slightly, most of the Grant continued to go towards the salary of the Branch Officer, with the remainder to support activity.</p> <p>Learning Spaces</p> <p>It was noted that the Coleg had stopped providing funding to maintain the learning spaces several years ago. It was confirmed that there would be a cost to upgrade equipment and software to meet new interactive requirements.</p> <p>Central Staffing Costs</p> <p>It was confirmed that the percentage of the budget spent on staffing costs had remained constant at between 15% and 17%. It was reported that one of the priorities for the next 2/3 years would be people development of paid staff, and the new performance</p>		

	<p>management arrangements were a step in this direction. It was agreed that benchmarking the 15/17% with any other body was difficult, and that there should be regular discussions as the Coleg received new funding and responsibilities.</p> <p>It was agreed that the Board would receive confirmation via email once the Coleg had received letters confirming the additional funding.</p> <p>The budget as it stood was unanimously approved.</p>	<p>Circulate the written confirmation of the additional budget to the Board when received.</p>	<p>When received</p>
11.2	<p>Investment Income</p> <p>It was agreed that investment income could continue to be used where necessary, to support activities to develop the Coleg as an organisation.</p>		
11.3	<p>Academic Planning Grants list</p> <p>The list of Academic Planning Grants for 2022/23 was noted and accepted. It was reported that the main investment in Higher Education would be the Subject Grants to support provision at the Universities.</p> <p>It was confirmed that there would be some new Interdisciplinary Grants, one at Cardiff University and another at Glyndŵr University. These would be pilots that the Coleg would like to see being replicated.</p>		
11.4	<p>Collaboration with the National Centre for Learning Welsh</p> <p>It was reported that the Coleg had agreed to intensify collaboration with the National Centre for Learning Welsh to implement a single Higher Education, Further Education and Research strategy, and that further discussions would be held in May.</p>		

12. Item 12 – Grant Letter

Number	Main points of discussion	Actions	Timescale
12.1	It was reported that the Coleg had been in discussions with Branwen Thomas about the Grant Letter, and that the Coleg would receive it by the end of the month. It would be circulated to the Directors once received.	Circulate Grant Letter to the Board.	When received

13. Item 13 – Constitutional Matters

Number	Main points of discussion	Actions	Timescale
13.1	<p>Thanks were extended to all those who had attended the Annual General Meeting, the Coleg Court, the previous day.</p> <p>It was reported that the Court had received the Annual Report and Audited Accounts.</p> <p>It was reported that the Court had accepted the proposal of the Appointments and Governance Standards Committee to amend certain clauses in the Coleg's Articles of Association.</p>		

14. Item 14 – Any other business

Number	Main points of discussion	Actions	Timescale
14.1	No other business was raised.		

15. Item 15 – Establishment of a Tertiary Commission (Closed item)

Number	Main points of discussion	Actions	Timescale
15.1	<p>The paper was submitted, confidentially, to the Directors only. It was reported that the Coleg had now received legal advice from Gwion Lewis QC. It was reported that, since the advice had been received, the Welsh Government had shown a willingness to bring forward amendments, but the Coleg was still waiting for these to be published. It was recommended that an emergency meeting should be called if necessary, when the amendments are received.</p> <p>One further change to the wording was suggested: "(2) In drawing up the plan, the Commission shall - (a) have regard to the priorities in the Welsh Ministers' statement of strategic priorities; (b) consult such persons as it considers appropriate, including the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol." <i>There should always be a duty to consult the Coleg, not just when the Plan is originally being drawn up.</i></p> <p>It was agreed to first wait to see the amendments and send them to Gwion Lewis, before suggesting the above change.</p> <p>It was reported that the Coleg had also begun discussing the Welsh-medium Education Bill with the Welsh language division, and that the Minister had stated that the Coleg should be placed on a statutory footing. Members discussed what this would mean for the Coleg, what were the advantages and disadvantages? There are a range of possible models.</p>	<p>Call an emergency meeting when the amendments are received, if necessary.</p> <p>Send one further change to Gwion Lewis for consideration.</p>	<p>If needed</p> <p>Immediately</p>

	<p>It was agreed that the implications for the Coleg would need to be carefully considered. It was agreed to find out the cost of initial legal advice on this.</p> <p>It was noted that the Government intends to publish a white paper in the coming months, and that the Coleg expects to be part of formal discussions with officials soon.</p> <p>It was agreed that the matter should be placed on the Board of Directors' Agenda in July.</p>	<p>Find out the cost of legal advice on the various models of statutory bodies.</p> <p>Put the proposed Welsh-medium Education Bill on the Board's Agenda.</p>	<p>Immediately</p> <p>6 July 2022</p>
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16. Item 16 – Appointments and Governance Standards Committee

Number	Main points of discussion	Actions	Timescale
16.1	<p>Minutes</p> <p>The minutes of the Appointments and Governance Standards Committee meeting held on 19 January 2022 were noted and accepted.</p>		
16.2	<p>It was reported that the main matters of discussion were constitutional matters.</p> <p>It was noted that the Committee had agreed that more representatives from the Further Education sector should be nominated to the Coleg Court, so that there was better parity between the two sectors, and that it had discussed the process of re-appointing the Coleg Chair.</p> <p>It was reported that a more attractive information pack would be provided when advertising roles.</p> <p>It was anticipated that the advertisement for Chair would be published in April and close on 1 June, with</p>		

	the appointment being approved at the July 2022 meeting.		
16.2	<p>Procedure for the Reappointment of the Chair</p> <p>The paper detailing the proposed changes was presented.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction of an appraisal process. - Extension of the term of service. <p>The paper and the recommendations on appointment and assessment of performance were approved.</p>		

17. Item 17 – Board Meetings: Discussion on the format of future meetings (Closed item)

Number	Main points of discussion	Actions	Timescale
17.1	<p>A discussion took place on the format of future Board meetings. It was agreed to hold the next meeting face to face as long as it was possible to join in virtually as well. The need for a suitable room to ensure confidence in the technology was noted in order for that approach to work.</p> <p>It was agreed to discuss the arrangements for 2022/23 at the next meeting.</p>	Arrange the next meeting face to face (with virtual option).	By 6 July 2022.

18. Item 18 – Dates of the next meetings (locations to be confirmed)

Number	Main points of discussion	Actions	Timescale
18.1	<p>The dates of the next meetings were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 July 2022 		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 23 November 2022• 22 March 2023• 28 June 2023		
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