

1. Attendance and Introductory Matters

- 1.1 Present: John Graystone (in the Chair), David Elis-Williams, Caroline Davies, Chris Franks, Gayle Hudson, Gerry Jenson, Cathy Clark, June Jeremy, Sonia Reynolds, Dafydd Rhys, Toni Schiavone, Heather Willbourn, Iwan Hywel; and Nick Taylor (to end of minute 4 only). The meeting was quorate throughout.
- 1.2 Apologies: Kaitlin Crisp, Glenys Hughes-Jones, Marjorie Williams.
- 1.3 In Attendance: Kathryn Robson (Acting Chief Executive), Cath Hicks (Head of HR and Workforce Development), Stephen Thomas (Clerk), Steffan Wiliam (simultaneous interpreter). Nathan Jones (Head of Curriculum Delivery), Sharon Reader (Head of Quality and Learner Services) and Mark Baines (Head of Finance – present via Skype) attended for minutes 5 to 12 inclusive. Clare Grist (Senior Officer, Bilingualism) was present for minutes 5 to 7.
- 1.4 Stephen Thomas distributed copies of 'Governance Handbook 2017' to all Council members present and provided a brief description of the reference documents that were included therein.

Council Confidential Business of 24 July 2017– see minutes 2 to 4 inclusive, separately minuted.

Council Open Business – minutes 5 to 12 inclusive.

5. Minutes of Open Business at the Council meeting of 13 June 2017 and matters arising not on the agenda

The minutes of the Open Business at the previous Council meeting, held in Harlech, were approved as a correct record, subject to the deletion in minute 4 of *Pembrokeshire College* and the insertion of *Pembrokeshire County Council* instead. There were two matters arising:

Minute 3 – Coleg Harlech site update, July 2017: part of the organisation's land holding in Astor Fields, Harlech had been included within the recently approved Cyngor Gwynedd Council Local Development Plan, thus increasing its value. Cyngor Gwynedd Council was also showing greater activity on the issue of the Coleg Harlech site, through its engagement of Chris Jones as a regeneration consultant for the town. However, it had proved increasingly difficult to manage communications with China Consulting (a Leeds-based company) through Harlech In Action as an intermediary, and there might not be a realistic prospect of future progress with that company on its intentions for the site. Two other expressions of interest in the site had come through – one from an individual involved with the previous, unfulfilled, Cambria Project (which dated from CHWEAN's days); and another from the Llanbedr UK Spaceport developers, who were considering it as a possible venue for their training purposes. **As set out at the previous Council meeting, Charity Commission regulations had to be complied with: this meant in broad terms minimising the risks of our involvement with others, avoiding all forms of trading or speculation on the site's future, and engaging only with bidders who were willing to deal directly with us, or with our Surveyor. The Council reiterated its instructions to the Harlech Steering Group in those terms.** Once the vacating

of Wern Fawr was complete there would be further marketing of the site - though the fact that essential repair work on the theatre building had now been costed at over £1,000,000 would inevitably colour expressions of interest.

Minute 5 – Draft formal agreement with Wales TUC Cymru: a proposed agreement had been received from Wales TUC Cymru the previous week, and would be put to the next Council meeting for final approval.

6. Welsh Government’s Adult Community Learning Review: Update

The Chair spoke to his note on this matter, adding that a fifth possible outcome to the situation had recently been aired, that of a ‘revenue support grant to local authorities’ option. He underlined the importance of purposeful campaigning on the issue and of utilising the organisation’s members in summoning support, as the prospect of the organisation losing out altogether from the new post-Review landscape had to be avoided. One member said that a degree of risk existed not only to ourselves as an institution, but to the future of adult community education as a whole in Wales.

7. Welsh Language Standards

Clare Grist spoke on this item, explaining that our institution was grouped with further education colleges and universities as part of a cohort of bodies which came under particular standards set out in the 2011 Welsh Language Measure. It entailed specific and highly detailed obligations for us to fulfil as described in the accompanying papers from the Welsh Language Commissioner. Discussions were still continuing with the Commissioner’s staff on the precise outcomes for us from the relevant Regulations; negotiation and consultation would end on 4 August 2017 with a Final Compliance Notice for us in September 2017, followed by a six month period in which to become fully compliant. Certain derogations remained possible for us, but any future lack of compliance on our part could lead to risks to our reputation, funding consequences, or possible action by the ombudsman should complaints be taken out against us.

The work conducted by SMT members and colleagues on this issue was praised, and it was presumed that certain FE colleges would find it harder to comply with the stipulations than would we. Some Council members nevertheless found it difficult to accept the bureaucratic approach applied by the Commissioner, though they were pleased that the intention was to exceed the Commissioner’s demands where possible. In passing, it was noted that Standard 87 made it clear that our correct name as an organisation was the full 6 words of Addysg Oedolion Cymru | Adult Learning Wales.

8. Minutes of the Learner Experience Committee meeting of 4 July 2017

These minutes were formally noted. The Committee’s Chair said she was confident that this could become an effective Committee, pulling together the work of two previous committees: combining their work cycles into one practicable document had been proof of this. She underlined the importance of the Council itself and of other committees overseeing and acting on the Quality Development Plan. It was also noted that there remained ways in which the organisation could be creative in working with Cymraeg i Oedolion/Welsh for Adults to undertake Welsh language awareness and similar initiatives with branches and others. The potential was great in terms of extending our involvement in music technology too in the eyes of certain governors, though there was a possibility that the specific 2017-18 Music Technology course scheduled for Harlech might not

now occur because students had pulled out of its second year. Michelle Kerswell (Manager, North Region) was nevertheless pursuing the potential for music technology courses more broadly.

9. Minutes of the Audit Committee meeting of 13 July 2017

The Council formally noted these minutes. Chris Franks mentioned the high quality of contributions from the co-opted appointments to the Committee, and referred to minute 6 and the need to obtain a revised asset value for Coleg Harlech - which was scheduled to be visited by the Minister for Welsh and Lifelong Learning, Alun Davies, in October.

10. Minutes of the Resources Committee meeting of 13 July 2017 revisited

These minutes were returned to (see minute 3 above) and noted by the Council. Given the decisions taken earlier about organisational development under Confidential Business, the proposed budget for 2017-18 and the associated 1% pay award for the year could not be approved at this juncture. **The Council did however approve the Budgetary Control Procedure Improvements, as agreed and recommended by the Committee.** Given the importance of the issue, the Committee would however not utilise its newly-acquired authority on budget controls to approve the pay award at its next meeting, but would bring that matter back to the full Council for consideration. The contents of the management accounts to the end of May 2017 were also noted.

An additional Resources Committee meeting would be organised in the near future in order to advance these matters and to make revised recommendations where necessary to the Council. In a consultative round-the-table exercise undertaken by the Chair to gauge what Council members believed a revised 2017-18 budget should aim for, the consensus was that it should be between a break-even and a 1% surplus budget. It was also considered a good opportunity to provide illustrative three-year budgeting options to the Council as well at its next meeting. Council members were forewarned that despite revised, more conservative budgetary totals there were still likely to be further proposed redundancies.

11. Additional written communications amongst governors between meetings

Caroline Davies had raised the question following the Harlech Council meeting of the usefulness and practicability of having intra-governors' meetings discussions, through e-mail or other means such as a WhatsApp Messenger group or a SharePoint (Microsoft Office) scheme. It was agreed that this was possible in principle – having been briefly attempted a couple of years previously through the VocalEyes platform – as long as the channel was used for specific matters only, excluded non-Council members, and avoided becoming a caucus or lobbying mechanism. **It was agreed that a detailed protocol for its functioning would be drawn up and presented alongside a proposed mechanism for it to a future Council meeting.**

12. Forthcoming Council dates confirmed for the diary

As a consequence of decisions taken earlier, it was possible that an additional meeting date would be added, prior to the two already agreed, viz.:

1.00 pm, Wednesday 27 September 2017: Wrexham

12.30 pm, Thursday 30 November 2017: Dylan Thomas Centre, Swansea