

**Craven College**  
**Full Governing Board**  
 Minutes of the meeting held on:  
**THURSDAY 16 OCTOBER 2025 AT 5.30PM**

**PRESENT:**

Alison Birkinshaw - Chair	Anita Lall - Principal and Chief Executive (via Teams)
Majid Bokhari (via Teams)	Teams)
Nicki Crail	Mark Pettit
Habibe Khaliq	Neil Roe
Izzy Goulthorp	Rob Scott
Judith Lancaster	Claire Thomas
Chris Morgan	Sara Wright

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Duncan Bulloch - Assistant Principal (via Teams)  
 Gareth Dixon – Deputy Principal  
 Wesley McGlinchey – Assistant Principal  
 Susan Francis – Director of Governance

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

1.1 Apologies were received and accepted from Dean Langton.

**2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

- 2.1
- Chris Morgan declared a potential conflict of interest in relation to his role as Director of Education – Employability and Skills/ Director of External Relationships with WEA (The Workers' Educational Association).
  - Neil Roe Anita Lall declared that he was Chair of Skipton BID (Business Improvement District).
  - Anita Lall declared that she was Vice Chair of Skipton BID (Business Improvement District).
  - Wesley McGlinchey was now a co-opted member of the Teaching and Learning Committee at Heart of Worcester College.

**3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING**

3.1 **Resolved:** That the minutes of the last Board meeting held on 3 July 2025 were agreed as a true record.

3.2 Actions

- The Board requested an action to confirm that detailed data reporting would be in place to support self-assessment and strategic monitoring related to the planned linkage of student destination and work experience data through Pro-Monitor and Power BI reporting, which would be presented via the Quality and Curriculum Committee.

**4. Principal's Report**

4.1 The Board had received the Principal's report and members noted the content. Concerns were raised about SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) reforms and plans to remove or restrict Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) and local authorities directing the College to take students despite not being able to meet their needs.

4.2 The Board received updates on:

- The forthcoming [Vocational Level \(V-Level\) qualification](#) to replace some defunded BTECs.
- Potential impact on the College of the [Office for Students \(OfS\) to overhaul its higher education quality assessment regime](#).

**ACTION**

**WM/DB**

- The transfer of [skills policy to the Department for Work and Pensions \(DWP\)](#) and the growing emphasis on adult provision linked to sustained employment outcomes.
- The establishment of regional FE improvement teams, with further detail provided in the [Post-16 Skills and Education White Paper](#).
- [West Yorkshire Combined Authority's integrated adult skills settlement](#) and [North Yorkshire's 10-year skills strategy](#), both offering opportunities aligned with the College's strengths in construction, health and social care, and the visitor economy.

4.3 Concerns were raised regarding the new [Ofsted Education Inspection framework](#), which moved away from an overall grade, making it harder to determine intervention thresholds with a more stringent "secure fit" model. The Principal explained how College was preparing for this through development of a new Inclusion Strategy aligned with Teaching and Learning and Ambition priorities. This would be supported by student engagement through the new Student Council.

4.4 Thoughts about regional improvement teams focusing on governance and finance, given recent high-profile college failures were shared.

## 5. STRATEGIC MATTERS

### 5.1 Item 5a: Vision, Mission and Values

A paper on the College's vision, mission, and values was presented, highlighting the focus on ambition and striving for excellence. The value of sharing this with new Governors was noted. The importance of innovation and ambition was discussed, with a suggestion that examples be provided to staff to illustrate how they could achieve these goals. The Ambition Strategy would reflect these themes and be shared with the Quality and Curriculum Committee (Q and C) and the Board. Staff development days and training sessions had focused on ambition and excellence, linking these themes to strategic aims and values. The Board **noted** the paper.

### 5.2 Item 5b: Strategic Operating Plan 2025-2026 and KPIs (Key Performance Indicators)

Governors discussed embedding ambition and innovation across all areas, including estates utilisation and financial return on investment. Questions were asked and answered about the impact of staff satisfaction ratings on overall performance, the strategy for engaging employers, and the challenges faced due to new employment legislation.

5.3 The College provided insights into employer ratings and the challenges faced by small and medium enterprises in understanding apprenticeship funding and new employment legislation and NI (National Insurance) increases. The Board discussed the importance of supporting employers and the planned employer event scheduled for February, which was being supported by the Careers and Work Experience Link Governor.

5.4 The importance of achieving high grades in GCSE English and maths was emphasised, with systems being improved for data accuracy and Ofsted readiness. The Assistant Principal explained that College had bought a system of forecasting maths and English performance, that a new Curriculum Manager had been appointed, and that different teaching approaches at lower levels were being piloted, with progress closely monitored.

5.5 The College provided information on the work undertaken on the KPIs and provided assurance on how the ones still red were being addressed. The Board commended the team on the progress made over the last two years.

5.6	<p>The Board discussed the complexity and volume of KPIs, suggesting delegation of some to Committees to allow the Board to focus on fewer, broader KPIs for a quicker snapshot of the College's performance. There was a proposal to differentiate between high-level KPIs for the Board and medium-level KPIs for Committees. Governors supported a streamlined dashboard giving a clear performance overview.</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> Delegate specific medium-level KPIs to committees. Create a streamlined view of the governor KPI dashboard.</p>	SF/AL/Chair
5.7	<p>A Governor raised concerns about environmental sustainability being delayed until utilisation improved and stressed the financial risks of this and the need for an urgent plan. The College agreed to address this.</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> Develop a plan to optimise utilisation and address environmental sustainability.</p>	GD
5.8	<p><b>Item 5c: Quality Improvement Plan 2024 – 2025 close down</b></p> <p>The paper provided assurance of the strong progress made on the Quality Improvement Plan, with most areas closed as green. The Chair invited questions and comments, and the discussion concluded with an acknowledgment of the strides made in teaching and learning and the need to continue focusing on ambition and value-added</p> <p>The Board <b>noted</b> the paper.</p>	
6.	<b>REPORTS AND UPDATES</b>	
6.1	<p><b>Item 6a: Teaching Excellence report</b></p> <p>The Assistant Principal (Curriculum and Student Experience) presented the report which provided a summary of the key papers discussed at the Quality and Curriculum Committee meeting.</p> <p>The Board was assured that the College consistently met Office for Students (OfS) regulations, and sexual harassment training was being rolled out across all staff and students following the new <a href="#">E6 condition of registration</a> from the OfS.</p>	
6.2	<p>The discussion highlighted strong achievement and retention rates, with a focus on sustaining high achievement and improving high grades and ambition.</p> <p>In response to a question on building best practice, the Board was informed that areas of good practice were identified through the observation process and shared across College.</p> <p>The Board gave positive feedback on the format and content of the report.</p>	
6.3	<p><b>Item 6b: Safeguarding Annual report 2024 - 2025</b></p> <p>The Safeguarding Annual Report 2024-25 was presented for formal approval. The report had been fully redesigned based on sector best practice and Governors were pleased with the changes made.</p>	
6.3	<p>An increase in student demand for counselling services was noted, with key priorities identified for the coming year.</p> <p>Governors commended the proactive approach to student wellbeing, particularly the positive engagement with local initiatives.</p> <p>The Student Governor confirmed that students felt safe, knew how to access support, and had confidence in the College's wellbeing services.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> The Board approved the Safeguarding Annual Report 2024-25.</p>	
6.4	<p><b>Item 6c: SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities)</b></p> <p>The Assistant Principal introduced the SEND report which was presented to the Board for the first time, reflecting the importance of inclusion in governance oversight.</p> <p>It was noted that 692 of 1,400 students were identified with SEND needs, including 133 with EHCPs.</p>	

The College was conducting a SEND review to clarify student categories and ensure accurate identification and support.  
Governors requested a flowchart and clear definitions to distinguish between funded and non-funded EHCP students and to improve understanding of high-needs provision.  
The report was well received and **noted**.

**ACTION:** Include clear definitions and numbers (flowchart) in the SEND report.

WM

#### 6.5 **Item 6d: Estates and Technology Update**

The report provided an update on recent estate developments, including refurbishments and expansions to unlock capacity and potential, and improving the student experience, particularly within Construction and Early Years. The expansion of the refectory at the Auction Mart site and the creation of dedicated areas for students had been well received, this was endorsed by the Staff and Student Governors.

6.6 The update also included information on estate compliance, IT estate refresh, and the expansion of laptop locker systems. The Board made a suggestion to include metrics in future reports for clarity.

**ACTION:** Include metrics in future estate development reports.

GD

#### 6.7 **Item 6e: Marketing Update**

The Deputy Principal presented the report which provided an update on enrolments, highlighting the achievement of the funded target and the need to differentiate between funded and business plan targets.

The Board discussed the lower conversion rates for new applications and enrolments, particularly in aviation and travel, and ongoing efforts to address this issue were provided.

6.8 Early signs on adults and apprenticeships were positive, but HE enrolments continued to be lower than planned. A Governor from HE provided insights into HE recruitment, highlighting the importance of innovation and development. It was added that a significant percentage of Colleges (51%) were reporting a decrease in HE enrolments, with many (62%) closing HE courses as a result.

The discussion concluded with a plan to address HE recruitment and conversion rates, recognising the need for continuous improvement.

**ACTION:** Report HE recruitment and conversion rates to Q and C and marketing update to FRI with additional details regarding actions being taken.

WM/GD

#### 6.9 **Item 6f: Staff Survey Results and Action Plan**

The Principal introduced the staff survey, noting its discussion at People, Search and Governance (PSG). The Principal mentioned the transition to using a different provider for staff surveys, to reassure staff about the anonymity of the survey process. The discussion concluded with positive feedback on the survey results and acknowledgment of the need for continuous improvement.

#### 6.10 **Item 6g: Finance Update**

The Board reviewed the management accounts and noted the College's financial health, with restricted cash fully reinvested in the estate. Upcoming changes in lease accounting were discussed, highlighting the impact on reported debt and the importance of reviewing leased assets to maximise efficiency and return on investment. Challenges with achieving previous cost savings were acknowledged, with operational pressures such as staffing and agency costs highlighted.

6.11 Governors expressed concern over the organisation's cash position, and the need to assess estate utilisation, including leased and community spaces, to ensure value for money.

- 6.12 A detailed review of estate use and key investments would be addressed at the Governor Away Day on 22 January to inform planning and efficiency improvements. Governors emphasised that significant actions were needed to improve financial performance beyond current levels.  
**ACTION:** Review estate utilisation and leases to ensure maximum efficiency and financial viability for 22 January 2026.

GD/SF

## 7. FINANCE MATTERS

### 7.1 Item 7a: Funding update

The Assistant Principal presented an update on the funding situation, specifically the Adult Skills Fund and apprenticeship delivery. The Adult Skills Fund met its allocation, and measures were being put in place to improve enrolment data accuracy. The apprenticeship delivery showed positive results, exceeding previous year's performance and budget targets.  
The Board **noted** the information provided.

### 7.2 Item 7b - Regularity Self-Assessment Questionnaire 2024-25

The Deputy Principal presented the paper which provided an update on the background and detail of the Regularity Self-Assessment Questionnaire.

**Resolved:** The Board approved the Self-Assessment Questionnaire 2024-25, noting that it would be signed by the Chair of the Governing Board and the Principal. UPDATE: Signed by both.

### 7.3 Item 7c: External Audit strategy

The Deputy Principal advised that following the appointment of external auditors Armstrong Watson, a revised external strategy and plan for the current year (25/26) and next three years had been prepared. The Board reviewed the strategy, and with no questions or comments.

**Resolved:** The Board **approved** the External Audit Strategy 2025-26 as recommended by Audit Committee.

## 8. GOVERNANCE

### Membership Matters

- 8.1 A new student Governor had been appointed by the Student Executive and would attend the next Board meeting following her induction meeting with the Director of Governance.

The PSG Committee had made the following recommendations: the Board was happy to approve them all.

**Resolved:** That Neil Roe, having successfully completed his 12-month probation continue for the remainder of their full term (to August 2028).

**Resolved:** That Judith Lancaster (staff Governor), having successfully completed her 12-month probation continue for the remainder of their full term (to August 2028).

*Sara Wright temporarily left the meeting so her nomination could be discussed.*

**Resolved:** The Board approved the appointment of Sara Wright as Chair of the Quality and Curriculum Committee for a term of office for two years (October 2027).

**Resolved:** The Board approved the appointment of Sara Wright as second Vice Chair for development and succession planning purposes.

### 8.2 Terms of reference and Cycle of business

Resolved The Committee Terms of Reference and Cycle of Business were approved.

- 8.3 The Board noted that the appraisal of the Chair was undertaken in August 2025. It assessed the Chair against key governance and leadership areas, including



strategic oversight, board effectiveness and accountability. The Chair thanked the Board for their feedback and noted that she would work on the key areas for development identified.

#### 8.4 **Annual declarations**

All Governors were asked to confirm they had read KSCIE (Appendix 8.3), updated their declarations of interest, and agreed to abide by the Code of Conduct (Appendix 8.2).

#### 8.5 **Written Resolution**

The outcome of the written resolution , approval in July 2025 of the Sexual Harassment, Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Violence Policy to ensure compliance with [Office for Students E6](#) was accepted.

**Resolved:** That the written resolution was accepted by the Board.

### 9. **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

The Board noted the minutes and the paper which outlined the main items of business discussed at the Committees.

#### 9.1 **Audit Committee held on 24 September 2025**

The following items were discussed:

- Internal Audit close out of 2024 – 2025
- Internal Audit Plan for 2025 - 206 – updated

**Recommended for Board approval:** Annual External Audit Strategy (7c).

#### 9.2 **Quality and Curriculum Committee held on 2 October 2025**

The following items were discussed:

- Curriculum and Teaching Excellence report
- HE Report
- 2025-26 QIP Final and 2026-27 QIP Draft
- Compliments and complaints annual report
- Strategic Operating Plan
- Careers Information, Advice and Guidance Annual Report 2024-25
- Digital Learning Strategy 2023-2026
- Student Experience report – inc student end of year survey results
- Student Engagement Plan 2025 – 2026
- Safeguarding and Mental Health report – termly
- SEND report, outcomes, destinations and numbers for current academic year.

**Recommended for Board approval:**

- Safeguarding/Prevent Annual report 2025 – 2026
- Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults policy
- Annual complaints and compliments report
- Compliments and Complaints Policy
- Freedom of Speech Policy
- FE/HE Admissions Policy
- External Speaker • Cycle of Business (item 8)
- Terms of Reference (item 8)

#### 9.3 **People, Search and Governance (inc Remuneration) on 9 October 2025**

The following items were discussed:

- People Strategic Operation Plan
- Staff survey results and action plan
- Annual HR Report
- Annual EDI Monitoring Report and Quality Objectives 2025-26
- Governance overview
- Appraisal of Chair

- Staff Code of Conduct - reviewed but not recommended as changes required

**Policies approved:**

- Absence Management Policy
- Governor and SLT Conflict of Interest Policy
- DBS Policy
- Anti Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Staff Disciplinary and Grievance policies (as per Staff Capability Policy)
- Redundancy and Severance Policy

**Recommended for Board approval:**

- Annual EDI Monitoring Report and Quality Objectives 2025-26
- Cycle of Business (item 8)
- Terms of Reference (item 8)
- Appointment of a second Vice Chair (item 8)
- Senior Post Holder Appraisal Policy (inc Chair review)
- SPH Remuneration Policy
- Remuneration Annual Report – confidential

## 10. BOARD APPROVAL

10.1 Items 10.1 – 10.13 were recommended by Committees.

**Safeguarding/Prevent Annual report 2025**

**RESOLVED:** The Board approved the Safeguarding/Prevent Annual report 2025.

10.2 **Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy**

**Deferred for further review.** To look at specific concerns about inconsistencies between the safeguarding policy and the code of conduct.

WM

10.3 **Complaints and Compliments Policy**

**RESOLVED:** The Board approved the Complaints and Compliments Policy.

10.4 **Annual EDI Monitoring Report and Quality Objectives 2025-26**

**RESOLVED:** The Board approved the Annual EDI Monitoring Report and Quality Objectives 2025-26 with changes suggested by PSG to be implemented.

10.5 **Careers Information, Advice and Guidance Annual Report 2024-25**

**RESOLVED:** The Board approved the Careers Information, Advice and Guidance annual report.

10.6 **Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom Policy**

**Deferred for further review.** Required alignment with the external speaker policy.

WM

10.7 **External Speaker Policy**

**Deferred for further review.** Required alignment with the Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom policy.

WM

10.8 **Observation of Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy**

**RESOLVED:** The Board approved the Observation of Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy.

10.9 **FE Admissions Policy**

**RESOLVED:** The Board approved the FE Admissions Policy.

10.10 **HE Admissions Policy**

**RESOLVED:** The Board approved the HE Admissions Policy.

10.11 **Senior Post Holder Appraisal Policy (inc Chair review)**

**RESOLVED:** The Board approved the Senior Post Holder Appraisal Policy (inc Chair review).

- 10.12 **Senior Post Holder Remuneration Policy**  
**RESOLVED:** The Board approved the Senior Post Holder Remuneration Policy.
- 10.13 **Staff Code of Conduct**  
Deferred for further review AL
- 10.14 **Whistleblowing Policy**  
Deferred for further review. With specific amendments requested for whistleblowing regarding ex-employees and anonymous reports. SF
- 10.15 **Careers Information, Advice and Guidance policy**  
**RESOLVED:** The Board approved the Careers Information, Advice and Guidance policy.
- 11. RISK MANAGEMENT**
- 11.1 The Deputy Principal presented the report which provided the Board with an update on the College's strategic risks and the actions being taken.  
The College had recently held a risk review meeting, updating the wording of five key risks. Notable changes included an increased risk of failing to respond to adverse publicity and concerns over government funding. Compliance risks had reduced. Horizon scanning highlighted emerging risks, such as cyber threats and AI (Artificial Intelligence).
- 11.2 The Board discussed the need for additional actions in the Finance Risk Action Plan and to possibly review the College's financial risk appetite. It was noted that this had been approved for increase in March 2025 but if further review was required, it would be undertaken in line with the annual cycle of business.
- All staff and students left the meeting at this point.*
- 14. SPH REMUNERATION ANNUAL REPORT (confidential)**
- 14.1 The Board reviewed the SPH remuneration annual report prepared by the Chair of the Remuneration Committee. The report had been scrutinised by the Remuneration Committee and was approved by the Board.  
**RESOLVED:** The Board approved the SPH remuneration annual report.
- 12. REVIEW OF MEETING**
- 12.1 Governors reviewed the effectiveness of the meeting and recognised the improvement in the papers.
- 13. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**
- 13.1 The next meeting was to be held in College on Thursday 11 December 2025 at 5.30pm.
- | Board Meetings in College      | Strategic Away Days in College          |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Thursday 11 December at 5.30pm | Thursday 22 January, Strategic Away Day |
| Thursday 26 March at 5.30pm    | Thursday 25 June, Strategic Away        |
| Thursday 2 July at 5.30pm      |   |
- The meeting closed at 7.40pm.

Item	Action	Owner	Due
3.2	The Board requested an action to confirm that detailed data reporting would be in place to support self-assessment and strategic monitoring related to	WM/DB	December 2025



	the planned linkage of student destination and work experience data through Pro-Monitor and Power BI reporting, which would be presented via the Quality and Curriculum Committee.		
5.6	<b>KPIs</b> - Delegate specific medium-level KPIs to committees. Create a streamlined view of the governor KPI dashboard.	SF/AL	February 2026
5.7	Develop a plan to optimise utilisation and address environmental sustainability.	GD	January 2026
6.4	Include clear definitions and numbers (flowchart)in the SEND report.	WM	December 2025
6.6	<b>Estates and Technology</b> Include metrics in future estate development reports.	GD	March 2026
6.8	Report HE recruitment and conversion rates to Q and C and marketing update to FRI.	WM	March 2026
6.12	Review estate utilisation and leases to ensure maximum efficiency and financial viability.	SF/GD	January 2026
10	Policies – update 10.2/6/7/13/14	WM/AL/SF	ASAP

The Board certify this is a true and accurate record of the meeting held 16 October 2025 and agree to them being made public on the Craven College website.