

**CRAVEN COLLEGE
FULL GOVERNING BOARD**

Minutes of the meeting held in College on:
THURSDAY 3 JULY 2025 AT 5.30PM

PRESENT:	Alison Birkinshaw - Chair Majid Bokhari (via Teams) Nicki Crail Habibe Khaliq Izzy Goulthorp Judith Lancaster Dean Langton	Anita Lall - Principal and Chief Executive Chris Morgan Mark Pettit Rob Scott Naomi Sharples (via Teams) Claire Thomas Sara Wright
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IN ATTENDANCE: Gareth Dixon – Deputy Principal
Duncan Bulloch - Assistant Principal
Wesley McGlinchey – Assistant Principal
Susan Francis – Director of Governance
Martin Lofthouse – Head of Department (until item 1)

0. Construction – PowerPoint Presentation on Current position and Future Growth

0.1

The construction department had seen significant growth, driven by increased demand for apprenticeships and full-time courses. Martin detailed the various levels of courses offered, including Level 1 multi-skills, Level 3 apprenticeships in carpentry, joinery, and brickwork, and the introduction of new apprenticeships in plastering and plumbing. He highlighted the growth in student numbers and the need for additional facilities and staff to accommodate this expansion. He also discussed the challenges of recruiting qualified staff. Success in [SkillBuild](#) competitions continued, with recent golds in plastering and strong performances in joinery and brickwork, highlighting the department's strengths.

When asked about progression to employment, it was confirmed that many students secured apprenticeships or worked in the industry, with some returning later for qualifications. The presentation concluded with a discussion on niche markets, such as heritage skills and the green agenda, and the potential for growth in these areas. When asked about constraints to further growth, it was noted that facilities, staffing, and regional demand were all factors. Concerns were raised about entering professional services like HNC/HND construction due to heavy competition, with higher apprenticeships seen as a more viable route. The Board thanked Martin for his time and Team for their work.

Martin Lofthouse left the meeting at 5.45pm.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 Apologies were received and accepted from Heather Kerrick and Neil Roe.

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).
- Anita Lall declared that she was Vice Chair of Skipton BID (Business Improvement District).

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

3.1

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

Actions

Completed: Most actions had been closed off or were integrated into the agenda.

ACTION

- 3.2 Ratification of Habibe Khaliq as new non-teaching staff Governor as elected.
RESOLVED: The Board approved the appointment of Habibe Khaliq as newly elected non-teaching staff Governor for a term of office of four years from June 2025 to June 2029.
New Governors were welcomed and brief introductions made.

4. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

- 4.1 The Board received the Principal's report and Members noted the content.
- 4.2 The Board discussed the anticipated Ofsted inspection under the new framework. Concerns remained about the tight timeline and lack of clarity, as the final framework could differ significantly from the consultation. In response to a question about how College was managing with the uncertainty around the new toolkit, the Principal explained that work was underway to produce case studies across key areas, with a focus on securing an outstanding rating in the Apprenticeship provision, where achievement rates were among the strongest nationally.
- 4.3 Details of the [FE Commissioner's office](#) decision to raise the benchmark for cash days from 25 to 40 were given. While currently presented as a guideline rather than a formal target, it was a significant increase. The College offered assurance that the focus remained on maintaining sufficient cash reserves while continuing to invest in student-facing provision. Governors were advised to consider these changes in future financial planning and monitoring.
- 4.4 An issue at another College that had recently come to light around the accuracy of data and the lack of challenge from Governors was mentioned. The importance of the ongoing rigorous scrutiny provided by both the College and Governors in terms of data was noted.
- 4.5 The Board commended the College on the positive comments made around progress in the recent FEC (Further Education Commissioner's) strategic conversation.

5. STRATEGIC MATTERS

- 5.1 **Item 5a: Budget 2025-26 and Financial Forecasts 2026-27 CFFR return**
The Deputy Principal presented the report. The Board noted the slightly improved financial performance in 25-26 from the 24-25 forecast with a financial health score of 190 points (24-25 forecast: 180) and financial health of 'Good' (24-25 forecast: 'Good') with an improvement in liquidity.
The budget had been scrutinised at length in the recent Finance, Resources and Investment Committee.
- 5.2 The key assumptions within the budget, pay and non-pay costs were covered. With the main points of discussion being IT provision, lease accounting changes (2026/27) and the WYCA (West Yorkshire Combined Authority) Audit in adult skills funding.
- 5.3 Questions were asked and answered around the potential for claw back following the WYCA audit, noting specific contingencies that had been built into the budget. Information on lessons learnt were also shared.
- 5.4 Having discussed the report, and noting the recommendation for approval from the Finance, Resources and Investment Committee, the Board approved the Budget for 2025-26.
RESOLVED: That the Budget 2025-26 and the Financial Forecasts 2026-27 CFFR (College Financial Forecasting Return) return were approved.

- 5.5 **Item 5b: Strategic Plan and KPIs (Key Performance Indicators)**
 The strategic plan was introduced, with a helicopter view provided on the progress of the College's strategic aims.
 The Board was assured that College was making good progress overall. Areas requiring acceleration included value-added measures and staff reward and recognition, which would be addressed in the new People Strategy.
 The Principal explained the operating plans and KPIs would be reviewed over the summer, ensuring all actions remained impactful and aligned with strategic priorities.
- 5.6 The Board held a discussion around the College's ambition to be an employer of choice. The Principal reported a cultural shift across the organisation. These indicators were linked to a more robust and accountable management culture. Stability in senior leadership and clarity around College values and ethos ("One College, One Team") were identified as key enablers of future improvement.
ACTION: The College was asked to prepare a detailed report on staff absence, linking it to course contribution and satisfaction for the next People, Search and Governance Committee (PSG).
- 5.7 It was stated that although sustainability remained a strategic priority, progress had been slower due to the financial implications of investment. Options under consideration included "gain share" models and leased energy solutions (e.g., solar, LED lighting) with a view to minimising upfront capital expenditure.
- 5.8 The Board discussed financial constraints and the potential impact of capital investment decisions on cashflow and future estate improvements.
 It was agreed that student outcomes and the quality of teaching and learning must remain the College's priority.
- 5.9 The ongoing challenges of employer engagement in Apprenticeships and the importance of the Business Innovation Team in strengthening relationships and gathering evidence for self-assessment were noted.
- 5.10 **Item 5c: Progress update of Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)**
 The Board received an update on progress against the College's Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). The following points highlighted:
- College had made strong progress notably in curriculum intent, teaching and learning, and early careers support.
 - Assessment/IQA (Internal Quality Assurance) and destination tracking/work experience remained amber-rated due to staffing pressures.
 - By the end of the year, it was anticipated that six improvement areas would progress to a 'green' RAG rating, with a further two moving from 'red' to 'amber'. This demonstrated clear and measurable progress in addressing identified priorities.
- 5.11 The Assistant Principal confirmed that the 2025/26 QIP would have a sharper focus on ambition, professional curiosity, and high-performance outcomes (e.g., high grades, progress scores). A new digital model aligned with the observation tool was under development to automate performance tracking and reporting.
- 5.12 Governors emphasised the need for improved data reporting, particularly in relation to work experience and student destination data. The Board suggested that the current use of ProMonitor receive further internal development, with which a Governor offered to support.

PSG/AL

SLT/MBok

- 5.13 The Board were pleased with the progress made so far but added that detailed data reporting must be in place by October to support self-assessment and strategic monitoring.

6. REPORTS AND UPDATES

6.1 Item 6a: Curriculum Plan 2025 – 2026

The Curriculum Plan for 2025-2026 was discussed, highlighting areas of growth and decline.

- 6.2
- Overall numbers for this **16-18** were higher compared to the previous year.
 - Plans for **adult learning** remained consistent with last year. The Board noted that recruitment in non-devolved areas could present challenges.
 - **Higher Education (HE)** remained static, with potential growth in innovation, travel, tourism, and digital sectors.

- 6.3 **Apprenticeships** showed growth at Level 4 and Level 5, although concerns were raised about the impact of changes to National Insurance and the national living wage on employer take-up. It was added that the Countryside Worker Apprenticeship would begin in 2025/26 with financial support from the [Moorland Association](#) to allow delivery of bespoke industry qualifications to allow sustained employment.

- 6.4 The College was challenged about declining enrolment in equine studies, to which the Principal explained that [Landex](#) were conducting a survey around this as it was a national issue. In addition, the department were working with Marketing on how to move this forward. The Equine Governor and Student Governor were both asked for their insights into this, they advised that accessibility due to limited transport links was a significant barrier for many. Suggestions to improve transport options and revisiting policies around student-owned horses on campus were made and duly noted by the College.
ACTION: It was agreed that a travel to learn analysis would be undertaken and reported at the next FRI meeting to establish the feasibility of College exploring travel options.

GD/FRI

- 6.5 The Board discussed potential risks to Apprenticeship growth and agreed that employer engagement remained a key focus area for the newly formed Business Innovation Team.

- 6.6 Governors commended the clarity of the report and its value in informing strategic planning and self-assessment processes.

6.7 Item 6b: Curriculum and Teaching Excellence report

The Assistant Principal presented the report to assure the Board about overall performance and progress towards targets, and key improvement actions. The information emphasised the importance of high grades and progress measures. The following points were highlighted:

- The College continued to perform strongly, with high retention, attendance, and achievement rates across all learner groups, exceeding national averages.
- Teaching and learning quality were consistently high, supported by effective CPD and the successful “Be Exceptional” programme.
- Adult and Apprenticeship provision was being strengthened through focused quality assurance and improved processes.
- The positive [NART](#) data was commended.
- The Teaching Excellence Strategy aimed to focus on ambition and professional curiosity, supported by new tools and study coaches.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> While most areas were thriving, targeted action was underway in a small number of curriculum areas. 	
6.8	The College explained that there was a new Ambition Strategy, which would be about high grades, progress etc which be presented at the next meeting.	Agenda
6.9	<p>The End of Year Student survey results were reviewed with student satisfaction at 94%. A suggestion to look at ways to improve the recording of the number of careers interviews was made, which was taken on board by College.</p> <p>ACTION: Use improved tracking for careers interviews.</p>	WM
6.10	Governors reviewed the Student Outcomes data Dashboard for Higher Education. Information about the need to comply with the Office for Students (OfS) condition E6 Harassment and Sexual Misconduct by 1 st August 2025 was provided. An overview of the planned actions and staff training initiatives to ensure compliance was shared.	
6.11	<p>Item 6c: Safeguarding, Prevent, Vulnerable Learners and Mental Health Report</p> <p>The Assistant Principal presented the paper which provided a report to Governors of how College was discharging its duties under Safeguarding and the Prevent Duty legislation. That the College was fully committed to the safety and wellbeing of students, staff and those who had direct links with the organisation. Governors were assured that this had been fully reviewed at the Quality and Curriculum meeting.</p> <p>The following points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safeguarding referrals were primarily related to domestic violence, abuse, and mental health. There had been no safeguarding incidents on campus since the last report. Smoothwall continued to work effectively. Counselling referrals were higher than previous year. The College had successfully conducted a lockdown drill. 	
6.12	<p>The Safeguarding Link Governor had completed a visit to College and gave positive feedback from his first meeting with the Team. During the next visit, the plan was to help the Team improve the termly report by adding clearer data breakdowns and better tracking.</p> <p>ACTION: Review the structure and content of the report for the next meeting.</p>	WM
	<i>Majid Bokhari left the meeting at 7.05pm.</i>	
6.13	<p>Item 6d: Estates and Technology Update</p> <p>The paper updated the Board on the finance position and performance of the College along with an overview of estates developments.</p> <p>The update focused on investments in Construction, Access to FE, and Early Years, which had been funded through grants and proceeds from property sales. Information on a significant IT refresh, with visible improvements in infrastructure was shared. Overall, the discussions highlighted the College's commitment to strategic growth, quality improvement, with ongoing efforts to address challenges and enhance operational efficiency.</p>	
7.	FINANCE MATTERS	
7.1	<p>Item 7a: ASF (Adult Skills Fund) update including sub-contracting.</p> <p>The attention of the Board was drawn to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2024/25 performance was ahead of 23/24 for ASF allocations, demonstrating a positive position year on year and against the plan. Apprenticeships were also ahead of the same point last year. <p>The positive progress was acknowledged by the Board and the paper noted.</p>	

- 7.2 **Item 7b: Internal Audit Plan**
The plan set out the scope of the internal audit to be carried out by Wbg. The internal audit strategy was reviewed, with changes made following Committee feedback. It was agreed to replace the 16-19 funding audit with an Adult Skills Fund audit due to identified concerns. There was a proposal to conduct both audits to ensure comprehensive oversight.
RESOLVED: That subject to the suggested changes being made, the Board approved the Internal Audit Plan 2025-26 as recommended by Audit Committee.
- 7.3 **Item 7c: External Audit strategy**
DEFERRED: This would be added to the next Board agenda as new external auditors were being appointed.
8. **GOVERNANCE**
- 8.1 **Item 8a: Membership Matters**
- The appointment to the Board of Habibe Khaliq as non-teaching staff Governor had been approved at the start of the meeting.
 - The vacancy for the Chair of the Quality and Curriculum Committee was pointed out with expressions of interest for the role invited.
- 8.2 **Item 8b: Committee Effectiveness**
The effectiveness of various committees was reviewed, with recommendations for improvements noted.
- 8.3 **Item 8c – Link Governor Visits/Governor Engagement**
A copy of the Link Governor visits had been shared as part of the meeting bundle. The Director of Governance acknowledged the contributions of Governors in engaging with staff and students through visits and events, which had been positively received.
- 8.4 **8d) Instrument and Articles of Government 2025**
The document had been reviewed and amended with a focus on ensuring robust governance practices in light of a recent issue in another College and recommendations made by the FEC.
RESOLVED: The Board approved the updates to the instruments and articles.
- 8.5 **8e) Written Resolution**
Two resolutions had been passed since the last meeting. Several Governors had raised questions about the confidential one, which had been answered satisfactorily.
RESOLVED: The written resolutions were noted.
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 26 June 2025**
The Board approved the Treasury Management policy. Detailed discussion on the WYCA audit and updated plans for the internal audit plan took place.
Policies approved: Treasury Management Policy
- 9.2 **Finance, Resources and Investment Committee on 19 June 2025**
The key points from the FRI minutes were noted which included the Budget 2025/26 and Financial Forecasts 2026-27 including CFFR, ESFA Letter – College Financial Statements, Strategic Operating Plan 2025-26, Health and Safety Report, Applications Update 2025/6 FE/HE and Commercial and other Income updates.

Agenda

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- 9.3 **People, Search and Governance (PSG) (inc Remuneration) on 22 May 2025**
The People, Search and Governance Committee minutes dealt with various areas such as the EDI Action plan, HR Report, Membership Matters, Governance KPIs, Board Succession Planning Policy, Principal/SLT Succession Planning, Committee effectiveness results and a confidential item.
Policies approved: Board Succession Planning Policy.

- 9.4 **Quality and Curriculum Committee held on 5 June 2025**
The minutes evidenced discussion around the curriculum report, the QIP, student experience report including student engagement /careers/work experience, complaints and compliments report, safeguarding and mental health report, SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) and High Needs, Student Survey Feedback and Committee effectiveness results.

10. BOARD APPROVAL

Items a - e were recommended by Committees:

- 10.1 **Item 10 a – Marketing Strategy**
The Board mentioned that the current Marketing Strategy included too much routine activity, making it difficult to identify new or distinctive initiatives. Governors expressed concern that the strategy lacked clarity and ambition, particularly in terms of targeting under-recruited subject areas and addressing specific challenges such as transport and course visibility. The need to focus on the "vital few" priorities that would differentiate the College in a competitive market were emphasised by the Board.

- 10.1.2 **DEFERRED:** Approval of the Marketing Strategy was deferred until the next Full Board meeting in October.

- 10.1.3 **RESOLVED:** The Board approved the current Marketing operational plan.

- 10.1.4 **ACTION:** To revise the strategy to include a clear articulation of ambition and focus on strategic impact.

- 10.2 **Item 10b: Appointment of new external auditors**
RESOLVED: Following a thorough procurement process and a recommendation of the Audit Committee, the Board approved the appointment of Armstrong Watson as External Auditors for a three-year period from July 2025 to July 2028.

- 10.3 **Item 10c: Sub-contracting and Fee Schedule**
RESOLVED: The Board approved the Sub-contracting and Fee Schedule as recommended by the Finance, Resources and Investment Committee.

- 10.4 **Item 10d: Quality of Education Strategy**
RESOLVED: The Board approved the Quality of Education Strategy as recommended by the Quality and Curriculum Committee.

- 10.5 **Item 10e: Careers Information, Advice and Guidance policy**
RESOLVED: The Board approved the Careers Information, Advice and Guidance policy as recommended by Quality and Curriculum Committee.

- 10.6 **Item 10f: Sexual Harassment, Misconduct and Sexual Violence Policy**
DEFERRED: The updated policy to ensure compliance with [Office for Students E6](#) would be approved by written resolution.
ACTION: Share a written resolution for the sexual harassment, misconduct, and violence policy. **UPDATE:** Sent to all Governors and approved.

- Izzy Goulthorp left the meeting at 7.25pm.*
11. **RISK REVIEW**

Agenda

GD

SF

11.1 The Deputy Principal presented the report and summarised the current risk register and action plan. Concerns were raised about sector-wide scrutiny, environmental risks, and potential issues with 16–19 funding. The College gave assurance that these would be reviewed at the next Risk Committee meeting.

11.2 Whilst the Board acknowledged the Team's responsiveness to emerging risks. Governors suggested a need for improved horizon scanning to better anticipate emerging risks.

ACTION: Risk horizon scanning to be added as a standing item in future risk management discussions.

GD

12. REVIEW OF MEETING

- 12.1
- Members noted improvements in the clarity and structure of agenda papers, that overall quality was improving.
 - New governors found the papers informative and helpful.
 - All members confirmed they had sufficient information.
 - There was adequate opportunity for discussion and decision-making.

The Chair thanked members for their contributions and wished them a pleasant summer.

13. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

- 13.1
- Thursday 16 October at 5.30pm in the Board Room.
 - Thursday 11 December at 5.30pm in the Board Room.
 - Thursday 22 January, Strategic Away Day, in College.
 - Thursday 2 April at 5.30pm in the Board Room.
 - Thursday 25 June, Strategic Away Day, in College.
 - Thursday 2 July at 5.30pm in the Board Room

The meeting closed at 7.35pm.

Action Summary

Item	Action	Owner	Due
5.6	Strategic Operating Plan 2025-2026 The College was asked to prepare a detailed report on staff absence, linking it to course contribution and satisfaction for the next People, Search and Governance Committee (PSG).	AL	October 2025
6.9	Student Survey - Use improved tracking for careers interviews.	WM/DB	October 2025
6.12	Safeguarding Report: Review the structure and content of the report for the next meeting	WM/JA	October 2025
10.1.4	Marketing Strategy- To revise the strategy to include a clear articulation of ambition and focus on strategic impact.	GD/JS	December 2025
10.6	Share a written resolution for the sexual harassment, misconduct, and violence policy.	SF	Completed
11.2	Risk – add Horizon scanning as an item.	GD	October 2025

The Board certify this is a true and accurate record of the meeting held 3 July 2025 and agree to them being made public on the Craven College website.