CRAVEN COLLEGE
FULL GOVERNING BOARD
Minutes of the meeting held in College on:
THURSDAY 26 March 2026 AT 5.30PM

PRESENT:	Alison Birkinshaw – Chair	Anita Lall - Principal
	Nicki Crail	Chris Morgan (via Teams)
	Judith Lancaster	Rob Scott
	Marnie Marshall	Claire Thomas
	Ann Moralee	Sara Wright
		Steve Wroe

IN ATTENDANCE: Duncan Bulloch - Assistant Principal
Gareth Dixon – Deputy Principal
Wesley McGlinchey – Assistant Principal
Susan Francis – Director of Governance
Sandra Prail – External Board Reviewer

0. **Evolve –** Presentation from Bev Skaife, Head of Evolve

0.1 The Board received a detailed presentation on Evolve outlining its development, growth and impact, exceptional long-term outcomes including 100% retention since joining the College as a sister organisation in 2014. The centre, which has a cohort of 57 students, 89% of whom have High Needs with an EHCP (Education Health and Care Plans) offers a personalised curriculum model, strong positive destinations, extensive work-placement programme, enrichment strands and SEND-specialist provision.
The provision had reached capacity in its existing building, and a proposed solution was to acquire and develop a former pub adjacent to the current building. This was presented as a phased, low-risk expansion enabling growth while retaining Evolve's small-college ethos. Governors asked questions about age ranges, staffing models, transition support and timescales and commended the Team for their outstanding work.
The Board thanked Bev for her time and she left the meeting at 5.45pm.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE **ACTION**

1.1 Apologies were received and accepted from Mark Pettit, Dean Langton, Majid Bokhari and Neil Roe.

1.2 The new Governors were welcomed to the Board and brief introductions made.

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).
- College Lall declared that she was Vice Chair of Skipton BID (Business Improvement District).
- College McGlinchey was a co-opted member of the Teaching and Learning Committee at Heart of Worcester College.
- Sara Wright declared an interest, confirming that her husband was currently undertaking a pro bono Higher Education review for the College.

2.2 Additionally, the Board noted that Mark Pettit completed work for the College prior to his appointment as a Governor, that payment was processed in line with standard College procedures, Mark Pettit had voluntarily chosen to donate the amount to support a student prize. All declarations were noted, and there were no further conflicts of interest reported.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

3.1 **RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the last Board meeting held on 11 December 2025 were agreed as a true record.

<u>Actions</u>

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

3.2 <u>Minute 3.2 – Committee KPIs</u>

Ongoing: *Work had begun to delegate specific medium-level KPIs to committees.* **AL/SF/AB**

3.3 <u>Minute 3.2 – Plan to Optimise Utilisation/ address Sustainability/Leases</u>

Ongoing: Utilisation stood at 43.1% (January 2026) and planning was underway for 2026/27 sustainability with a partner having been engaged to support on three year carbon reduction programme.

Ongoing: Review estate utilisation and leases to ensure maximum efficiency and financial viability.

Further information on these points was also tabled in the KPI paper.

3.4 <u>Minute 5.3 – Self-Assessment Report (SAR)</u>

Completed: *Update the Self-Assessment Report (SAR) regularly to reflect progress and changes, and provide governors with a colour-coded, evidence-based position paper.*

The Principal provided an update on this stating that progress was reflected in the QIP (Quality Improvement Plan) and Governors would be provided with a position paper ahead of the next Ofsted visit.

4. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

4.1 The Board had received the Principal's report and members noted the content on the key activities in relation to a raft of policy changes, updates, new strategies and reforms.

A Governor asked about the potential impact and associated risks of the forthcoming curriculum reforms. The Principal reported that the pause in defunding would allow for a one-year transition period and a phased rollout of V Levels, supported by a package of assistance from the Department for Education. Governors discussed the implications for finance, curriculum models and curriculum intent, noting the requirement to submit a transition plan in June despite limited guidance from the DfE.

4.2 Funding uncertainties remained, particularly regarding land-based weighting. The Principal emphasised the importance of protecting the College's strong reputation and ensuring that the future curriculum continued to meet the needs of students and the local community.

4.3 The following points were highlighted:

<u>SEND Reforms</u>

- The recent announcement of additional SEND capital was noted as a positive development, allowing for gradual expansion to meet the increasing demand for places.

<u>DfE funding update</u>

- On 10th March the DfE announced that there would be a 0.55% increase in the base rate funding. This fell short of what had been hoped following the commitments previously made by the Government in the post-16 white paper. Implications for the College were discussed.

<u>School and College Pay Gap</u>

- The recently published National Foundation for Educational Research report noted that the gap between College lecturer and teacher pay was at a 15 year high with a 20% gap now in existence.

<u>Student and Staff Success</u>

- A list of nominations, shortlists and achievements were shared. A note of thanks on behalf of the Board would be sent to the individuals/Teams concerned once the results were known.

4.4 The Board acknowledged the paper and appreciated the detailed updates provided.

5. STRATEGIC MATTERS

5.1 **Item 5.1: Strategic Operating Plan and KPIs (Key Performance Indicators)**
The discussion on the Strategic Plan and KPIs focused on the College's performance against its strategic objectives. The Board reviewed the KPIs and noted that while some targets had been met, others required further attention.

5.2 A Governor asked whether KPIs could be reported on a rolling twelve-month basis to provide clearer oversight of progress against annual targets. The College confirmed that rolling data was already used within People, Search and Governance and agreed to review this further as part of the ongoing KPI and Committee discussions.
ACTION: Review KPI reporting as part of the Committee KPI discussion. **AL**

5.3 Follow-up questions were raised regarding areas currently rated red, including teaching and learning observations, HE achievement, apprenticeships, and the percentage of full-time teaching staff. The Board noted that these matters had been considered in detail at the recent Quality and Curriculum Committee meeting, and responses were provided accordingly.

5.4 A Governor asked about employer engagement. The Board received an update on the redevelopment of employer engagement and job-outcome reporting. New approaches were being designed to deliver more consistent, evidence-based metrics, providing Governors with clearer oversight of progression outcomes, employer satisfaction, and alignment with local labour market needs.

5.5 **Item 5.2: Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) Progress Update**
The Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) progress update provided an overview of the key initiatives and achievements aimed at enhancing the quality of education and student outcomes. Progress made in various areas, including curriculum development, teaching and learning, and student support services were reported. The Board was informed about the ongoing efforts to address any areas of concern. The QIP progress update was well-received, and the Board commended the College staff for their dedication and hard work in driving these improvements.
The Board **noted** the paper.

6. REPORTS AND UPDATES

6.1 **Item 6.1: Curriculum and Teaching Excellence report**
The Assistant Principal presented the report which provided a comprehensive update on the key initiatives and achievements aimed at enhancing the quality of education and student outcomes.

6.2 College led the discussion, addressing questions from Governors regarding the high grade and value-added training initiatives. It was explained that staff had completed high-grade and value-added training, and the OneGrade system was fully embedded across curriculum areas, strengthening standardisation and assessment practice. College noted that while some students were not meeting expectations due to external factors, the system now allowed for better measurement across departments.

6.3 College acknowledged that the value-added for the land-based provision was not yet where it needed to be, with retention issues impacting achievement rates. Regular predictions and quality reviews were in place to monitor progress.

6.4 In response to a question about adaptive teaching, it was explained that adaptive-teaching performance indicators showed a temporary dip. SLT (Senior Leadership Team) explained that this reflected targeted intervention work in higher-risk curriculum areas rather than a decline in overall practice, and a recovery was expected for the next report.

6.5 Governors highlighted the significant improvement in the November maths and English results, showing positive outcomes from strategic changes.

6.6 The Student Governor provided feedback confirming that learners continued to experience stretch, challenge and pastoral support across curriculum areas. Governors welcomed this assurance and emphasised the importance of balancing support with high expectations to build resilience among students.

6.7 The predicted achievement rate for the year was expected to be between 89% and 90%, showing a small but significant improvement from the previous year. College addressed concerns about the accuracy of predictions, noting that initial predictions often come out higher, but rigorous testing and adjustments were ongoing.

6.8 Further discussions included the final student destination report for 2024-25, with 98% of students achieving positive destinations. Questions arose about apprenticeship destinations and full-time employment rates, with College explaining that the figures included all learners.

6.9 College was asked about the broad strategic outlook in terms of land based provision, to which the long term plans around this were explained.
The report format was praised for its clarity.
The Board **noted** the paper.

6.10 **Item 6.2: Safeguarding report**
The report provided an update on safeguarding arrangements, noting that referrals had increased, particularly for mental health issues such as self-harm, anxiety, and depression. Assurance was given that appropriate referrals were made to children's social care and relevant external agencies.

6.11 A question was raised about the College's lockdown practices being developed in preparation for Martyn's Law. The Board was advised that lessons learned from previous drills had led to improvements in communication and system updates. A working group was in place to finalise these plans, with capital investment scheduled for the summer to implement a recognised lockdown system.
ACTION: Finalise lockdown plans and implement a recognised lockdown system by summer. **GD**

6.12 Student feedback on safeguarding remained strong, with 94-95% of students feeling safe. The College continued to reinforce safeguarding awareness among students.

6.13 Governors were informed that two Prevent referrals had been made since the last meeting and assurance received that procedures followed.

6.14 The increase in child-on-child abuse referrals was queried. The College explained that all such cases were treated seriously, with appropriate interventions, re-education and support for all concerned. Following discussion at Quality and Curriculum future reports would include a column including details and also no further action.

6.15 The Board was reassured by and acknowledged the ongoing efforts to support safeguarding and student wellbeing.
The Board **noted** the paper.

6.16 **<u>Item 6.3 Inclusion Report</u>**
The report provided a breakdown of student categories by department, including those with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), looked-after children (CLA/LAC), care leavers, and students on free school meals (FSM).
College explained that the data in the report was continuously updated to reflect the status of inclusion efforts. The breakdown of data showed gaps in attendance and achievement among different student groups. The introduction of new categories such as youth justice, young carers and a bursary column, enabled a more accurate and comprehensive picture of learner needs.

6.17 The Board was advised that the use of a new dashboard allowed the College to track individual students who may fall into multiple inclusion categories. This helped ensure no student fell through the gaps. Assurance was provided that regular meetings were held to review this data and address any issues.

6.18 The Board commended the College's efforts to support students from disadvantaged backgrounds, with significant improvements in attendance and achievement celebrated as successes.
The Board **noted** the paper.

6.19 **<u>Item 6.4: Estates and Technology Update</u>**
College provided an update on the estates and technology report, highlighting the recent building regulation sign-off for the new unit at the Equine facility. This marked the completion of the project, with final spending to be reflected in the next update.

6.20 A question was asked about the period covered by the report, with College clarifying that future reports would provide quarter-on-quarter comparisons for a clearer picture of technology performance.

6.21 **<u>Item 6.5: Gender pay Gap Report</u>**
The Gender Pay Gap Report provided an overview of the College's efforts to address gender pay disparities and promote gender equality. The report highlighted the progress made in various areas, including staff recruitment and retention, pay and benefits, and professional development opportunities.

6.22 In response to question around how the data was reviewed, the Board was informed about the ongoing efforts to address any areas of concern and to ensure that the College maintained a fair and equitable working environment for all staff.
RESOLVED: The Board **approved** the <u>Gender pay Gap Report</u> as recommended by the People, Search and Governance Committee. A summary of which would be uploaded to the website. UPDATE: On the website.

7. FINANCE MATTERS

7.1 **<u>Item 7.1 Funding update</u>**
The funding update focused on the College's performance in apprenticeships and Adult Skills Funding (ASF).
The College reported that overall funding delivery for both the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) and the Department for Education (DfE) was currently behind profile, various factors had contributed to this shortfall.
To mitigate the risk of a contract reduction notice from WYCA, the College had already returned £50,000 and anticipated that the total amount to be returned could reach £100,000. Confirmation of the final amount was expected following a meeting with WYCA’s contracts team.
The Board noted the need to capture and apply lessons learned to strengthen planning and forecasting for the next academic year.

7.2 The fact that Aapprenticeships had performed better than anticipated, offset some of the shortfall.

7.3 College provided a brief update on the overall financial position, noting that the July forecast looked positive, with good performance in managing vacancies and non-pay control.

7.4 Questions were raised about the challenges of working with combined authorities such as West Yorkshire and Lancashire. The Board was advised that efforts were ongoing to engage with these authorities and explore potential solutions. A Governor offered to support with this.
ACTION: Principal to make contact with the Governor offline to discuss the combined authority situation. **AL**

8. GOVERNANCE
The paper provided assurance on governance matters, ensuring governance remained effective and compliant.

8.1 **Item 8. 1: Membership Matters**
Following recommendation from the People, Search and Governance Committee, the Board was asked to approve the following:

- That Thomas Skelton as voted for by the Student Executive, be appointed as Student Governor for a term of office of one year or when they ceased to be a student at College.
- That Mark Pettit become a member of Remuneration Committee.
- That Mark Pettit to become the Sustainability Link Governor.
- That Nicki Crail, having successfully completed her 12-month probation continue for the remainder of their full term (to December 2028).
- That the probationary period of Majid Bokhari be extended for a further six months, to be reviewed in July 2026.

RESOLVED: The Board approved all.

8.2 **Item 8.2: Board Assurance Framework (BAF)**
The purpose of the Board Assurance Framework in strengthening assurance across governance and compliance were noted. Governors were invited to provide feedback. Following discussion on the BAF, it was agreed that as further refinement was needed, approval would be deferred to the next Board meeting. A Governor was supporting with this.
DEFERRED: That, subject to further refinement, the BAF be deferred and brought to the next Board meeting for approval. **Agenda SF**
ACTION: Further refine and update the new BAF.

8.3 **Item 8.2.1 Board Assurance Statement**
An explanation behind the updated Board Assurance Statement was provided and again, it was agreed to defer it to the next Board meeting.
DEFERRED: The Board Assurance Statement would be reviewed at the next meeting.

8.4 **Item 8.2.2: Compliance checklist**
A brief explanation behind the compliance checklist and associated spreadsheet aimed to strengthen assurance, reduce risk, and ensure College met all statutory and regulatory requirements was given. Details had been discussed at the People, Search and Governance Committee.
RESOLVED: The Compliance checklist was approved.

8.5 **Item 8.3 Link Governor Reports**
Information on recent Link Governor activity was received. Visits had taken place, and feedback provided by the Safeguarding Link Governor, the Community Engagement Link Governor, and the Land-based Link Governor.

Assurance was sought around the availability of suitable teaching space within the Animal Care area. College confirmed that dedicated theory and computer rooms were available for learners.

8.6 **8.4 Written Resolutions**
That the outcome of the written resolutions be accepted:

- 19 December 2025 Approval of the of the Audit Committee Annual Report.
- 26 January 2026 – Approval of the appointment of three new Governors as recommended by PSG.

RESOLVED: That the written resolutions were accepted by the Board.

8.7 **8.4 Application of the College Seal**
It was explained that the solicitors dealing with the sale of the High Street had asked that a document be re-submitted to the Land Registry with the College Seal affixed**.**
RESOLVED: That the Board approved the application of the College Seal to the Land Registry document and authorised the Chair of the Board and the Principal/Deputy Principal to sign in confirmation of the Seal's application.
UPDATE: Sealed, signed and submitted.

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 3 March 2026**
The following items were discussed:

- Audit Tracker/Update on Audit Recommendations
- Review of internal audit reports.
- Compliance report including Freedom of Information Requests/Fraud/
- Bribery/Whistleblowing/GDPR /cyber security breaches report.
- Risk Review
- Cyber Risk update

Recommended for Board approval (see item 11):

- Data Protection/GDPR (privacy statement)
- Risk Management Policy
- Anti-Fraud and Bribery Policy
- Anti Money Laundering Policy

9.2 **Finance, Resources and Investment Committee 9 March 2026**
The following items were discussed:

- Funding Update ASF/Apprenticeships
- Marketing and Applications Update
- Marketing Plan Update Sept_Jan26
- Projects and Commercial Update
- Strategic Operating Plan
- Management Accounts - Jan 2026
- Health and Safety Report
- Estates and Technology report

Policy approved:

- Treasury Management Policy

Recommended for Board approval (see item 11):

- Course Fee and Refunds Policy and Course Fees
- Financial Regulations
- Procurement Policy

9.3 **People, Search and Governance Committee 26 January 2026**
The following items were discussed:

- HR Report
- Gender Pay Gap Report

- Governance KPI's – to review post External Board Review along with Action Plan
- Recommended three Governors following recruitment interviews.

Policy approved:

- Access to Board Information and Attendance at Board Meetings

Remuneration Committee

- Reviewed and ratified the appraisal targets for all SPHs (Principal/Deputy Principal and Director of Governance).
- Recommended a pay award to SPH (see item 14)

<u>Recommended for Board approval:</u>

- Staff Code of Conduct (item 11)
- Remuneration of Senior Post Holders – Confidential (agenda item 14)

People, Search and Governance Committee 16 March 2026

The following items were discussed:

- HR Report
- Employment Rights Action Plan
- Professional learning programme 2025 - 26
- Post Away Day Action Plan
- Link Governor Reports
- Board Assurance Framework
- Membership Matters
- One to one feedback actions update
- Risk Review

<u>Recommended for Board approval:</u>

- Board Assurance Framework
- Board Assurance statement
- Compliance Checklist

9.4 **Quality and Curriculum Committee held on 19 March 2026**

The following items were discussed:

- Curriculum and Teaching Excellence Report
- Curriculum KPI Report
- 2025 -26 QIP - Ongoing updates.
- Destinations Data
- Complaints and compliments report
- Safeguarding and Mental Health report
- Inclusion Report
- Student Experience Report

Polices approved:

- Maths and English Strategy
- Student Executive Constitution

<u>Recommended for Board approval:</u>

- Student Code of Conduct

9.4.1 The Committee Chair drew the attention of the Board to the significant improvement in the quality of papers over the past 18 months. In addition, the strong November GCSE results were noted, with thanks recorded to staff and students for this achievement.

10. RISK REVIEW

10.1 The report provided the Board with a detailed overview of the College's risk management processes and any recent developments in this area.
The Board noted that two risks had reduced, reflecting assurance on funding compliance following positive external audits and positive student survey feedback.

One had increased due to the shortfall in ASF (Adult Skills Fund) delivery against plan and allocation as discussed earlier in the meeting.

10.2 Governors discussed risk appetite, presentation and horizon scanning, noting that these would be kept under review. The Board Assurance Framework would be tabled for the next risk meeting for further discussion.
The Board **noted** the paper.

11. BOARD APPROVAL

Items 11.1 – 11.10 had been recommended by Committees.

11.1 11.1 Data Protection Policy
Following on from Audit Committee suggestions, the policy included more specific details.
RESOLVED: The Board approved the Data Protection Policy.

11.2 11.2 Risk Management Policy
RESOLVED: The Board **approved** the Risk Management Policy

11.3 11.3 Anti-Fraud and Anti-Bribery Policy
This had been reviewed and edited to align with DfE 2025 expectations, AoC Code of Governance, and the Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Act 2023 (future proofing).
RESOLVED: The Board approved the Anti-Fraud and Anti-Bribery Policy

11.4 11.4 Anti-Money Laundering Policy
RESOLVED: The Board approved the Anti-Money Laundering Policy

11.5 11.5 Course Fee and Refunds Policy
RESOLVED: The Board approved the Course Fee and Refunds Policy.

11.6 11.6 Financial Regulations
RESOLVED: The Board approved the Financial Regulations.

11.7 11.7 Procurement Policy
RESOLVED: The Board approved the Procurement Policy.

11.8 11. 8 Student Code of Conduct
RESOLVED: The Board approved the Student Code of Conduct.

11.9 11.9 Staff Code of Conduct
RESOLVED: The Board approved the Staff Code of Conduct.

11.10 11.10 Whistleblowing Policy
The policy had been updated to reflect new legal requirements coming into force on 6 April 2026, under amendments to the Employment Rights Act 1996 made by the Employment Rights Act 2025.
RESOLVED: The Board approved the updated Whistleblowing Policy.

12. REVIEW OF MEETING

12.1 Governors reviewed the effectiveness of the meeting. All were satisfied with the conduct of the meeting.

12.2 On behalf of the Board, the Chair thanked SLT and asked that appreciation of the work done by all College staff be shared. This part of the meeting concluded.

13. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

13.1

Board Meetings in College	Away Days in College

Thursday 2 July 2025 at 5.30pm	Thursday 25 June 2025 at 2pm – 7pm.

All staff and student Governors, Assistant Principals, Deputy Principal, Director of Governance and Principal left the meeting to allow the Board to consider item 14 in confidence.

14. PART TWO: CONFIDENTIAL ITEM

14.1 This item was captured in a separate, confidential minute.

The meeting ended at 7.35pm.

Action Summary

Item	Action	Owner	Due
3.2/5,2	**KPIs -** Delegate specific medium-level KPIs to committees. Review KPI reporting as part of the Committee KPI discussion.	AL/AB/SF	June 2026
6.11	Finalise lockdown plans and implement a recognised lockdown system by summer.	GD	July 2026
7.4	Principal to make contact with the Governor offline to discuss the combined authority situation.	AL	Completed
8.3	Further refine and update the new BAF.	SF	ASAP