



*Draft minutes prepared on 19 April 2016 from contemporaneous notes  
Draft minutes approved by the Chair via email on 5 May 2016*

Approved by the Corporation: .....  
Signed by the Chair .....  
Date .....

**Bradford** College

## **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CORPORATION AWAY DAY HELD: Thursday 14 April 2016**

### **Present:**

<b>Richard Wightman (Chair)</b>	Governor
<b>Mazn Amhamed</b>	Governor (Student) (to 1545)
<b>Paul Ashton</b>	Governor
<b>Terry Davis</b>	Governor
<b>Eve Gregory</b>	Governor (from 1320)
<b>Nasreen Karim</b>	Governor
<b>Dave Mann</b>	Governor (from 1330)
<b>Khan Muzzamil Nawaz</b>	Governor (Student) (to 1545)
<b>Cath Orange</b>	Governor
<b>Karl Oxford</b>	Governor
<b>Debbie Rolls</b>	Governor (Staff)
<b>Ramindar Singh</b>	Governor
<b>Cllr Dale Smith</b>	Governor (to 1715)
<b>Andy Welsh</b>	Governor (Group Chief Executive Officer) (GCEO)

The quorum was six Governors

### **In Attendance:**

<b>Jane George</b>	Head of Faculty Social Care & Community Practice (from 1400 to 1545)
<b>Joanna Green</b>	Clerk to the Corporation (Clerk)
<b>Richard Hall</b>	Head of Faculty Applied Sciences (from 1400 to 1545)
<b>Clare Hallows</b>	Registrar (from 1400 to 1545)
<b>David Hambleton</b>	Group Finance Director (GFD)
<b>David Harwood</b>	Principal
<b>Dave Howard</b>	Head of Faculty McMillan Teacher Education (from 1400 to 1545)
<b>Nathan Kelly</b>	Head of Faculty Art and Film (from 1400 to 1545)
<b>John Kenyon</b>	Vice Principal
<b>Liz Knowles</b>	Assistant Clerk
<b>Julie Lees</b>	Head of Faculty Applied Sciences (from 1400 to 1545)
<b>Chanaka Mudalige</b>	Head of School Business, Travel & Tourism, Sports and Hair & Beauty (from 1400 to 1545)
<b>Gareth Osborne</b>	Group Chief Operating Officer (GCOO)
<b>Graham Stevens</b>	Dean: Scholarship and Research (from 1400 to 1545)
<b>Richard Thomas</b>	Provost

Apologies for absence were received from Angela Cawthra due to illness and Rob Holden, who had been unable to secure cover for his work due to the unexpected absence of a colleague.

The meeting was held in Enterprise Zone 1 of the Advanced Technology Centre, Bradford College commencing 1315 and ending 1800. The meeting was chaired by Richard Wightman as Chair Elect.

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## 1. Welcome

- 1.1 Declarations of interest were made for, Debbie Rolls and Andy Welsh in their employed capacity. The Chair opened the meeting and the Clerk confirmed a quorum was present.
- 1.2 The Chair referred to the College's history of delivering Higher Education ("HE") and advised that the object of the day was to review the nature and scope of the HE provision and consider proposals aimed at ensuring the College is able to sustain its mission; and that its provision will meet the needs and expectations of students, potential students and employers going forwards.

## 2. Introduction and Objectives of the Day

- 2.1 Richard Thomas, the Provost, said the Heads of Faculties would be making presentations on their individual areas of responsibility to give Governors an opportunity to meet the strong, cohesive team leading HE forward and to ask them questions. He said it is appropriate to periodically review the College's educational character and he hoped Corporation would approve his proposals in terms of direction of travel.

## 3. Principles of Governance in Higher Education

- 3.1 The Clerk had tabled a paper on *the Principles of Governance in HE*. She said the report proposes a risk-based approach to determining, as Governors are required to do from time to time, whether governance arrangements for the oversight and monitoring of the HE provision are efficient and sufficient. She said the report was not prompted by any concern about the College's ability to manage its affairs. She invited Governors to read it at leisure following the meeting but pointed out that it contains information at page 3 about what "reviewing the educational character of the College" means, which newer Governors might find useful during the session. The Chair said although Governors have not had time to read and digest the paper, this is just the start of the process and there will be opportunities to discuss it at future meetings.

### **RESOLVED:**

- i. That the Principles of Governance in HE report be received at a future meeting.*

Clerk

## 4. Determination and Review of the Educational Character and Mission of the College

### 4.1 *HE Financial Sustainability and Risk Overview*

- 4.1.1 David Hambleton, the Group Finance Director ("GFD"), presented a report on financial sustainability, introducing the concept of "full economic costing", a standard methodology used by higher education institutions in the UK for estimating the cost that an institution would incur if it were investing in its resources and infrastructure at a level appropriate to ensure that it could continue to survive and maintain its capacity in the long term. He said this methodology, if applied to the College, indicates that a surplus of £3.7m is needed to meet that cost annually and the "sustainability gap" (the difference between the level of surplus achieved by the College and the level required to cover the full economic cost of its activities) is currently £3.09m or 6% of total income.

- 4.1.2 GFD said in terms of the College's FE provision, the sustainability gap is just short of £1.9m, whereas in terms of its HE provision, it is just short of £1m. The ambition is to close the gap completely within five years by generating more income and/or becoming more operationally efficient.
- 4.1.3 A Governor asked if benchmarking information is available to show how the College compares to the HE sector. GFD said according to an annual report by HEFCE (the Higher Education Funding Council for England), it is not performing too badly against comparators.
- 4.1.4 A Governor asked whether full economic costing has been done at Faculty level. GFD said so far the methodology has only been applied at a high level; the next stage is to apply it at the level of individual Faculties and Schools.
- 4.1.5 Moving on to the 2016/2017 HE income forecast, GFD explained his assumptions in respect of the HEFCE funding grant, the value of the NCTL (National College for Teaching and Leadership) teacher training contract and the loss of income from HE tuition fees. He observed that for the second year running, applications for HE courses are down against the same point in the previous year.

4.1.6



4.1.7 The Chair thanked GFD for his informative and well-articulated report.

1400 *Jane George, Richard Hall, Clare Hallows, Dave Howard, Julie Lees, Nathan Kelly, Chanaka Mudalige and Graham Stevens joined the meeting*

#### 4.2 ***Presentations by HE Senior Leadership Team***

- 4.2.1 The HE Senior Leadership Team members gave presentations on their individual areas of responsibility. Governors heard about the function of the College HE Registry and the approach to scholarly activity and research and they discussed the Team's concerns about the impact of the moratorium on the validation of courses and the risk to the College. The Registrar said the College's inability to validate its own courses is placing it at the mercy of other institutions. Jane George ("JG"), the Head of Faculty of Social Care and Community Practice said "because of the validation arrangements, the curriculum is falling behind, as the College cannot react to changes in the sector." Governors **ACKNOWLEDGED** the risk and said they understood that it was a very significant concern.
- 4.2.2 The Team then outlined their Faculties' employment engagement strategies and gave examples of work undertaken with industry partners. Governors asked for examples of how industry relationships have benefitted students and heard that many students progress into

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employment via work placements which are part of their programmes. Nathan Kelly (“NK”), the Head of Faculty of Arts and Creative Industries, told Governors about a curriculum review carried out by his team, which had looked at ways to upskill students to fill a skills gap identified by employers in the creative industry sector: graduates with an in-depth understanding of one or two key areas and a wider skillset in terms of how they think about the creative process and what they create.

- 4.2.3 Julie Lees, the Head of Faculty of Applied Sciences, Schools of Ophthalmic Dispensing, Construction and Vocational Sciences, reported that Spec Savers and Vision Express have recently agreed to send their trainees to Bradford College from 2017 following a redesign of programmes to suit their business needs. She said her Faculty has also worked with the construction industry to develop a Higher Apprenticeship in construction which is now ready. The Provost added that the Faculty is developing a unique Higher National Certificate in construction by blended learning and additional pathways.
- 4.2.4 Dave Howard (“DH”), the Head of the McMillan Faculty of Education spoke of the College’s significant influence as a teacher training provider. He said his Faculty has excellent relationships with local schools, which take Bradford College trainees and subsequently employ them. One of the College’s strengths is longevity as to how long its graduates remain in the profession compared to competitors’ graduates.
- 4.2.4 Governors asked about the strategy for widening participation and what they could do to help, emphasising how important widening participation is to them and their strong commitment to Equality and Diversity. A Governor said the Corporation must be very definitive on how it will measure evidence of success in this area, so targeting is critical where there might be equality deficits. The Provost acknowledged this but cautioned that it must be approached in a “smart” way. This was **AGREED**.
- 4.2.5 Richard Hall, the Head of Faculty of Applied Sciences, Schools of Computing and Engineering said, in terms of what Governors can do, attending College events to show support is very valuable for students. He said a Computing Open Day is being held in the Advanced Technology Centre on 4 May 2016 with a target of showcasing students and increasing employer engagement. Governors would be welcome.
- 4.2.5 A Governor referred to the Faculty of Arts and Creative Industries’ short and weekend courses and asked whether those are offered as part of a strategy to get people from the local community into the College to see what is on offer. NK said it is about placing ourselves within the city and was a great way to get mature learners to start to engage with the College and also to encourage their children.
- 4.2.6 A Governor said, at the Graduation Ceremonies, he had noticed a change in the ethnic composition of teacher training graduands. Staff Governor Debbie Rolls responded, saying as the Faculty has grown its work-based learning routes, it has attracted more mature learners and a different mix of students. DH said there are high levels of BME and mature students on the courses, observing that this may also be due to where the College is situated. He said teaching is a genuine career choice for the College’s students, many of whom come from the local community to train and then go back into the local community to work. He said he has not seen anything that would lead him to reconsider the

approach to student recruitment; the Faculty has strengthened its position and has excellent employer and community relationships.

- 4.2.7 The McMillan Faculty of Education was discussed further, with a Governor asking whether college-based teacher training is in terminal decline. DH said there are external challenges such as teaching schools and regional and local competitors but it is not a “terminal” decline. He said the College has held its own against those challenges and in some areas is growing its provision. He urged Governors to hang on and see how things unfold.
- 4.2.8 A Governor asked, “Could we do with a teaching school within our College Group?” DH said, “Absolutely”. He said we are not sponsoring schools that can become teaching schools and this is something Corporation should consider as we are a powerful player in the region for school-led teacher training and it would be a feather in our cap. Governors **ACKNOWLEDGED** this suggestion.
- 4.2.9 A Governor congratulated DH on his Faculty’s contribution to the community and asked if he had written it up as a position of excellence, for example by writing to the Prime Minister. He replied that he would certainly consider it.
- 4.2.10 Governors asked about student recruitment generally. Chanaka Mudalige, the Head of School Business, Travel & Tourism, Sports and Hair & Beauty, said HE student satisfaction levels are very high here; in his own area they are 96% for business and 97% for law, which rivals the best Universities. He said we need to promote this fact and in particular, make sure everyone knows Bradford College offers HE.
- 4.2.11 JG said there is a risk that the HE identity may be lost in the David Hockney Building and that the expectations of students who are paying fees of £7,000 may not be met. She said the David Hockney Building was not designed to be a 100% HE institutional building but the mix of FE and HE students does not always work well. The fourth floor was intended for HE provision but that has not happened in practice.
- 4.2.12 GCOO referred to the property strategy, part of which is to create a HE University Centre in a separate building. A Governor cautioned that one of the key drivers when the David Hockney Building was being designed was to get FE students accustomed to seeing HE students – it is part of the progression from FE to HE strategy. She said that is still the sort of environment that should be being aimed at unless and until the Corporation changes its position.
- 4.3 The Faculty presentations having concluded, the Provost said he hoped Governors had a sense of the passion and enthusiasm that his Team has. Governors thanked the HE Senior Leadership team, complimenting them on their presentations.

1545 *Jane George, Richard Hall, Clare Hallows, Dave Howard, Julie Lees, Nathan Kelly, Chanaka Mudalige and Graham Stevens left the meeting.*

1545 – 1600 *Break*

## 5. **Determination and Review of the Educational Character and Mission of the College: Determining the Direction of Travel**

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- 5.1 The Provost spoke to his presentation entitled *Higher Education Transformation*, inviting questions as they arose. He said he anticipates a five year timescale for implementing his proposals and would be presenting short, medium and long term priorities.
- 5.2 The starting point, he said, is to recognise that, for as long as it takes to implement strategies to secure long term sustainability, the College must maintain a critical mass of HE provision, in order to ensure that it continues in the short to medium term. Also to recognise that we cannot control the pace of legislative change, so must focus on the things we can do to control our destiny, starting with building strong community partnerships and developing our understanding of the needs and dynamics of our communities, in order to design a curriculum that meets their particular needs. He observed that education institutes are significant generators of economic growth; by developing the community, we can bring wealth to the District and improve the standard of living for everyone.
- 5.3 Governors said they **AGREED** with this. They said they feel there is already a good level of understanding of the characteristics and needs of the College's communities which can be built on; and that the quality and value of the College's relationships and interactions with its communities can and ought to be one of its unique selling points.
- 5.4 A Governor observed that one way in which the College differs from other colleges is that its degrees produce professionals equipped to go on to lead their communities, rather than being an extension of what learners have studied at FE level. The Provost agreed that the College is quite unique in this respect.
- 5.5 A Governor observed that the number of applications for HE courses has fallen dramatically both here and at Bradford University and asked whether this is an indication that young people in the local area are turning away from higher education completely. Governors **AGREED** that, if they are, there is an urgent need to understand why and to engage with them and their communities to reverse the trend.
- 5.6 A Governor recommended that management consider how positively the College addresses the issue of fees in its recruitment literature; and whether it is effectively communicating the message that student loans are interest free, are not payable until an earnings threshold is reached, and are subject to a break clause during periods of unemployment. A Governor suggested that some prospective students might be concerned about whether student loans and other finance option, such as student overdrafts, are Sharia-compliant.
- 5.7 Andy Welsh, the Group Chief Executive Officer (GCEO), said it is worth investing in research to determine what factors deter local people from applying for the College's HE courses and this was **AGREED**. GCEO said currently, Bradford District is around 4% ahead of national average in terms of people going into higher education and if that changes, the impact would be significant.
- 5.6 The Provost referred the meeting to a series of slides on priorities and actions, one of which included some named potential university partners. He advised that he had committed to keeping the identities of prospective partners confidential for commercial reasons and this was **NOTED**.
- 5.7 The Provost advised that, while the number of applications for HE courses has fallen, the rate of conversion (applications to acceptances) has dramatically increased: both the number of firm acceptances and the number of reserve

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acceptances are higher than this time last year, so there are signs that the investment in the recruitment and enrolment process is beginning to pay off.

- 5.8 A Governor referred to the current sector trend towards making large numbers of unconditional offers, enquiring how that practice might impact on the educational character of the College, assuming the College adopts it, and whether it might harm the Corporation's aspirations for the College in terms of its approach to encouraging and motivating learners; and in terms of the calibre of students generally aimed at. GCEO commented that last year, local universities made offers to students well below the UCAS points level they had previously been looking for. Another Governor commented that the calibre or quality of applicants is difficult to assess and some students with a history of low achievement go on to do exceptionally well with the right support.
- 5.9 A Staff Governor said she perceived that some staff were confused about whether and when unconditional offers should be made to current FE students before they have completed their courses. It was **AGREED** that the Provost should take steps to ensure that appropriate guidance is communicated to staff.
- 5.10 In terms of the short term priority of reaching agreement with a new university validation partner or partners, the Provost commented that the threat of Teesside University withdrawing from the validation partnership has turned into quite an interesting opportunity. He explained that he had prepared a prospectus for prospective partners, highlighting the College's aspirations, experience and strengths, including around higher level apprenticeships, and identifying what it is looking for from a partnership relationship. This was well received and a number of high profile institutions have expressed an interest. A relationship with a new validation partner will take time to set up, as processes and procedures will need to be brought in line with the validating partner's requirements, but there is potential to develop meaningful relationships, including in terms of joint scholarship and research, joint commercial activity, joint international marketing, and shared services.
- 5.11 In response to a question, the Provost confirmed that the prospective validating partners have said they would be able to pick up the potential lapse in 2017; one or two have said they could do it from 2016. He said if we get a validating partner, curriculum review will move up the agenda to become a short term priority. He said it is widely known that the College is seeking TDAP and all prospective validating partners are comfortable with that.
- 5.12 Slide 16 of the Provost's presentation addressed the question of what the College would do in the event of achieving TDAP or not. GCEO said, if the College does achieve TDAP and Governors then wish to seek University title, one of the criteria that would need to be satisfied is that the number of full time equivalent HE students must exceed 55% of the total number of full time equivalent students. To achieve this, it would be necessary to change the corporate structure of the College, creating separate institutions for the HE and FE students. The Provost advised that he believed that criteria would not apply were the College to seek University College title instead.
- 5.13 A Governor reported that QAA will be attending the External Advisory Panel in May, so it would be useful for the Corporation to have a discussion about its aspirations and the possibility of restructuring before then. This was **AGREED** as an action point.
- 5.14 Slide 20 of the Provost's presentation illustrated the proposed structure of what the Provost referred to as the "Integrated HE programme". Governors **NOTED** that this is aimed at widening participation and removing barriers.

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1715 *Dale Smith and Karl Oxford left the meeting*

- 5.15 The Provost then spoke about the longer term priorities and concluded his presentation by inviting Governors to comment and ask questions.

1720 *Karl Oxford rejoined the meeting*

- 5.16 The Chair asked what the Provost was asking the Corporation to do at this stage and the Provost said he wanted the Corporation to say yes to the direction of travel he was proposing. The Chair responded that he anticipated that there may be some deal breakers, which Governors would expect the Executive to observe in taking the roadmap forward.
- 5.17 A Governor asked how the Provost's proposals interface with the College's HE strategy, which currently does not address many of the issues the meeting had been discussing. The Provost replied that the HE strategy needs revising and this is part of that process.
- 5.18 A Governor acknowledged the advice of the Executive that the Corporation should not countenance the loss of, or slimming down of, the College's HE provision. She said while she supports the objective of growing the provision in principle, she would want to be assured that scenario-planning has also taken place in the opposite direction, i.e. around redirection and consolidation; and that the Executive has considered at what point below critical mass the risk of costs spiraling out of control would crystallise, and has done contingency planning. She said while Governors are not suggesting the strategy is wrong, the question must be asked, otherwise Governors might be failing in their duty.
- 5.19 GFD said, first of all, he has confidence that the sustainability gap will reduce quite significantly next year when the Education Funding Agency grant income increases by £3.2m; also that it can be closed within a five year timescale. Secondly, while the FE provision must not subsidise the HE provision in the long term, Governors must bear in mind that the HE provision contributes £9m to shared costs and doing away with the income from HE would mean potentially having to cut support services by up to £9m, which would shrink the business beyond what it can reasonably bear. Reducing the HE provision is therefore not being considered as an alternative strategy.
- 5.20 GCEO said there are several unexploited areas of potential and the Executive's ambition is still very much for growth. He said if we cut things back to take out costs without taking time to do market analysis and product development, key opportunities may be lost. Therefore, the Executive is proposing a three to five year timescale to identify such opportunities. Appropriate action will of course be taken during that time if courses are running inefficiently.
- 5.21 The Provost agreed, saying while we may know which courses are losing numbers we also need to know why; we should not assume we can't recruit or retain students just because we have not done so in the past. He said a medium term priority is to do that research and get better market intelligence. Some courses are not attracting students but might do in a refreshed format.
- 5.22 The Chair asked whether in light of these explanations and subject to the approach being kept under review, Governors were in favour of responding to the sustainability challenge by aiming at growth, rather than cutting back and consolidating. Governors **AGREED** that they are.
- 5.23 A Staff Governor raised a concern about cross-charging arrangements, saying no account is currently taken of professional development training provided by HE staff to FE staff. She asked if this could be quantified in a report. GFD

said while he could certainly provide the information if Governors want it, it will not make a material difference in terms of the apportionment of the sustainability gap between HE and FE, as the numbers are so large.

- 5.24 Governors moved on to discuss whether the College should focus its recruitment activity on the local area or spread its net more widely. They **NOTED** that the vast majority of students come either from Bradford or from a short distance away and the Provost said that is the nature of the organisation and he would encourage Governors to concentrate on the established catchment area for now and come back to discussions about future direction in due course. A Governor commented that if the College is awarded TDAP and is approved to use the University title, it could dramatically change the nature of the organisation, which would be a change of educational character.
- 5.25 Another Governor observed that it would be a dramatic change if the College were split into a FE college and a Higher Education Institution. If Governors wished to retain the philosophy of progression, they would need to make sure the two parts were uniquely joined.
- 5.26 The Clerk advised that Governors should consider at an early stage whether there are any principles they would not be prepared to compromise on, as significant management resource could be wasted if the Executive inadvertently spends time developing proposals which would offend those principles, not knowing about them. This was **ACKNOWLEDGED**.
- 5.27 A Governor remarked that one characteristic of the College that he would not wish to see it move away from is the goal of embedding itself within the local community and the objective of being an active partner in the Bradford District and contributing to its social and economic development. It might be that the College moves ahead quicker than Bradford but we should not leave it behind. This was **AGREED**.
- 5.28 Another Governor said she had attended a recent Centre for Cities event which had looked at the success of Greater Manchester Combined Authority and the impact of the excellent working relationships between the universities and college and the local authorities, and was persuaded that the relationship with the Bradford District is critical.
- 5.29 The Chair asked whether Governors were happy with the Provost's proposals, subject to the provisos that nothing must be done that might materially weaken the College's relationship with the Bradford District and that dialogue with the Corporation should continue as the proposals are implemented. Governors **AGREED** that they were.
- 5.30 The Chair thanked the Provost and his team for the presentations and the work they had done. Governors commented that they were really encouraged by what they had heard and wished to keep this kind of dialogue going forward, so the Corporation has a better understanding on an ongoing basis.

**RESOLVED:**

- i. To formally recognise the significant risk to the College posed by the withdrawal of Teeside University as its validation partner in that from September 2017, unless it is able to secure a new validation partner or partners and/or is awarded TDAP (Taught Degree Awarding Powers), it will not be able to recruit new students to any degree programmes.***
- ii. To direct the Provost to report to the next Corporation meeting on the status of Risk #3: the College does not obtain TDAP status.***

- iii. *That SMART targets should be agreed for the objective of widening participation.*
- iv. *To formally recognise the importance of the College's relationships with its communities and to commit to building stronger and better relationships.*
- v. *That the Provost shall take steps to ensure that appropriate guidance is communicated to academic staff on the issuing of conditional and unconditional offers.*
- vi. *That a discussion about the Corporation's aspirations for the College in the event that it achieves TDAP should take place at the next Corporation meeting the meeting of 12 May 2016.*
- vii. *To note that the Higher Education Strategy is in the process of being refreshed to recognise changes in the external environment and that appropriate discussion will take place at a Corporation meeting in due course.*
- viii. *To affirm that the Corporation is committed to embedding the College within its local communities; and being an active partner in the Bradford District and contributing to its social and economic development by the delivery of its charitable objectives.*
- ix. *That nothing must be done that might materially weaken the College's relationship with the Bradford District, or that is incompatible with the Corporation's commitment to building and maintaining strong community partnerships, except with the express agreement of the Corporation.*
- x. *That subject as above, approval is given to the direction of travel proposed by the Provost as minuted above and as contained in the slides accompanying the Provost's presentation today.*
- xi. *To commend the HE Senior Leadership Team on their achievements and to ask that they pass on Governors' thanks to their teams.*

## 6. Appointment of Governor to the Remuneration Committee

- 6.1 The Clerk stated that at least one Independent Governor volunteer is needed to serve on the Remuneration Committee, as there is currently a vacancy. It was **NOTED** that Angela Cawthra had offered to serve. Terry Davis also volunteered. Following a vote, it was **AGREED** that Terry Davis and Angela Cawthra be appointed to the Remuneration Committee with immediate effect.

### **RESOLVED:**

- i. ***To appoint Terry Davis and Angela Cawthra as members of the Remuneration Committee with immediate effect.***

*Due to time constraints discussion on the following items was deferred.*

- 7. Governance of Higher Education at Bradford College
- 8. Marketing Brief
- 9. Introductory Paper on Culture and Values
- 10. Annual Calendar of Meetings 2016-2017
- 11. Review of Articles of Government

## 12. Chair Summing Up and Close

- 12.1 The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and the meeting closed at 1800.