nescot

Minutes
Meeting of the FE Corporation
Held on Friday 27th March 2026, at 9.30 am in the Skills Park

Governors: Chris Muller (Chair), Jeremy Williams (Vice-Chair), Julie Kapsalis (CEO/ Principal), Simon Enoch, Angela Green, Jackie King, Paul Mason, James Newman, Asa'ah Nkohkwo, Giuliana Pieri, Clive Palfreyman, Nick Vaughan-Barratt.

Student Governors: Oliver Martin (FE).

In Attendance: Andy Cowan (Deputy Principal), Sarah Watson (Chief Operating Officer), Donna Patterson (Chief People Officer), Dan Thornton (Executive Director, Innovation Strategy & Growth), Susanne Wicks (Head of Governance).

<table>
<tr><td>1</td><td colspan="2">Welcome and Apologies for Absence</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="2">Apologies were received from Sean Ahearne, Mark Brunt, Richard Elliott and Amber Watson.</td></tr>
<tr><td>2</td><td colspan="2">Declarations of Interest</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="2">The CEO/Principal declared that she is an unremunerated Director of Nescot Enterprises Ltd. (NEL).</td></tr>
<tr><td>3</td><td colspan="2">Minutes of the Previous Meeting and Matters Arising</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>a</td><td>Governors approved the minutes of the meeting held on 12th December 2025.</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>b</td><td>There were no matters arising not otherwise covered on the agenda.</td></tr>
<tr><td>4</td><td colspan="2">CEO/Principal's Report</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="2">The CEO/Principal and Leadership Team delivered a presentation which is available on GovernorHub and welcomed comments and questions. The following matters were discussed:

<u>Curriculum & Quality</u>

Governors welcomed the demonstration of the improved live dashboard, which enables all appropriate staff to access a wide range of live data, which can be drilled down to individual students. They agreed it would be useful to receive a demonstration of the dashboard, although noted that all Governors are welcome to attend Curriculum & Quality Committee meetings, where the dashboard is shared to evidence information provided in a range of reports.

The Deputy Principal acknowledged that there has been a drop in the rate of whole-college attendance, with some areas causing concern, but others where attendance has improved. SE asked if rates of attendance for English and Maths could impact on funding and the Deputy Principal confirmed that it is currently within the levels of tolerance set out in the conditions. The Chair asked what action is taken to address non-attendance at English and Maths classes and the Deputy Principal explained that many students will attend their main qualification classes, as well as tutorials, and participate in enrichment activity, but try to avoid English and Maths. Staff are aware and challenge students when needed. There are plans to make it easier to access timetables, so when students are observed out of class, colleagues can easily check where they should be.</td></tr>
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	The Chair asked about numbers of bullying incidents logged relating to discrimination. The Deputy Principal confirmed that each recorded incident will be reviewed, triaged and managed appropriately, and undertook to share data on bullying incidents. The Chair asked if any behaviours have been observed relating to the conflict in the Middle East and the Deputy Principal confirmed that there haven't but tutorials and workshops have been delivered and some guest speakers have been arranged for next term. AN asked about data relating to student destinations and the Head of Governance reminded Governors that they can access to the Curriculum & Quality Committee's reports and minutes on GovernorHub, where all matters relating to the student experience are reported. <u>Strategy and Finance</u> The Corporation noted the Chief Operating Officer's confidence in achieving a balanced budget for this financial year. The DfE announced an increase of 0.5% for next year, which they say equates to 1.6% per learner, and there has been no confirmation of an uplift in the current year, although this was not factored into the budget. The increments for next year will feed into curriculum and budget planning. Governors noted that there will be challenges next year in achieving a balanced budget, particularly given the uncertainty around the impact of the changing political landscape on adult skills funding and capital funds. The Chief Operating Officer gave an update on the interim appointment of a Director of Finance and the recruitment of a permanent replacement. She acknowledged that there are risks inherent in the vacancy of such a key role, but reassured Governors that robust plans are in place to ensure stability of the budget and the Finance Team. The Chief Operating Officer reported that IT continues to present high levels of risk, particularly given the recent cyber-attacks on the website, which have been experienced across the sector. The Corporation noted that the enhanced security presence on site will be maintained until after the Epsom Derby in June. The CEO/Principal confirmed that she and ELT would agree next week any contingency plans to be put in place to manage the impact of the Middle East conflict (for example, fuel shortages or supply chain delays) and to ensure business continuity. <u>People</u> The Chief People Officer confirmed that the 2024-25 Gender Pay Gap for both the College and NEL have been published on the college website. For the first time, a separate report for each was required due to the number of NEL employees exceeding 250. She highlighted that, as is typical in most education settings, there are more female than male staff. In response to the Chief People Officer's observation staff continue to raise concerns about internal communication, AG asked what methods are used. The Chief People Officer advised that there are a range of methods in place to communicate with, and seek feedback from staff, including a SharePoint intranet, termly mandatory all-staff briefings, weekly email updates from the CEO/Principal and information cascade via the Matrix meeting structure. However, efforts are continually made to improve communication, as it's apparent from comments and suggestions made by staff that they are not always aware that the answer to their query / comment is already easily available.

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<tr><td></td><td colspan="2">The CEO/Principal observed that many of the issues raised prior to this term's Staff Reps meeting were quite operational and could easily have been addressed if they had been reported via the service desk. In response, every opportunity to enable communication is taken, including a new monthly drop-in surgery with the Chief Operations Officer and her team, and a termly vlog by the Deputy Principal.

<u>Employment Rights Bill</u>

Governors noted the scale of the changes brought by the new Act. JN commented that it will be challenging to properly observe and evaluate new staff in six months if they are recruited in the summer term, due to the long summer break. The Chief People Officer agreed and suggested that, in future, new lecturers would normally not be appointed to start beyond Easter.

<u>Innovation and Growth</u>

Governors welcomed the update on the Matrix accreditation and progress of the Apprenticeships action plan.

AG asked about the practical impact of the Matrix accreditation and the Executive Director advised that it gives some independent assurance of a high-quality offer of advice and guidance. It has also focussed the Team on further developments to the service, which have been captured in an action plan.

<u>Good News</u>

The CEO/Principal gave examples of just a few of the achievements and activities for students and staff over the duration of this term. Noting the importance of sharing positive stories, she confirmed that she would also present these to colleagues at the all-staff briefing on Monday 13th April.

The Chair congratulated the CEO/Principal, the staff and students for such an array of amazing achievements.</td></tr>
<tr><td>5</td><td colspan="2">Compliance Matters</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>a</td><td><u>College Fees Policy</u>

Noting the recommendation from the Finance & General Purposes Committee, the Corporation approved the policy.</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>b</td><td><u>HE Tuition Fees 2027-28</u>

Noting the recommendation from the Finance & General Purposes Committee, the Corporation approved the HE Tuition Fees 2027-28.</td></tr>
<tr><td>6</td><td colspan="2">Reports from Committees</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="2">The Corporation received an update on this term's Committee meetings, minutes of which are all available on GovernorHub.</td></tr>
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	a	Search & Governance Committee The Corporation Chair (who also chairs this Committee) set out his plans to step down after the summer term board meeting on 26th June 2026. He will be succeeded by the current Vice-Chair, JW. The Chair thanked all of those who were able to attend the Strategy Day on 13th February, highlighting the importance of taking time to reflect on governance in the college. The Head of Governance confirmed that she has drafted a plan to ensure that all agreed actions are addressed. In response to a query from the Chair, the CEO/ Principal set out recent development activity undertaken collectively and individually by the leadership team.
	b	Curriculum & Quality Committee The Committee Chair, GP, gave a brief summary of matters discussed at the meeting, highlighting: • The continued strong performance of Nestots. • The risks around apprenticeship delivery. • Student attendance, and actions in place to address curriculum areas where this is a concern. • The new, AI enabled SAR process which is working very well. • The careers Matrix accreditation. She reassured colleagues that the Committee was given full details of clear actions in place to address challenges where needed.
	c	Audit & Risk Committee The Committee Chair, SE, gave a brief summary of matters discussed at the meeting. He reported that there was robust scrutiny by the Committee of the challenges around IT and actions underway to meet those challenges. In addition, funding compliance continues to remain high on the Committee's radar. Governors noted that the internal auditor, RSM, have appointed a new lead auditor to Nescot, following the previous incumbent's retirement.
	d	Finance & General Purposes Committee The Committee Chair, CP, gave a brief summary of matters discussed at the meeting, noting that much has already been discussed at this meeting. He highlighted the progress report on the development of the Estates Masterplan and the discussion around NEL. It was agreed that a virtual briefing on the structure, aims and operation of NEL would be offered to all Governors.
7	**Governance Matters**	
	a	Chair's Report The Chair delivered a verbal report, and matters discussed are set out below.

		The Corporation noted Mikey Bertagna-Agozzino's resignation as HE Student Governor, and recognised his input into the role. The Corporation noted that Amber Watson will leave Nescot at the end of April. They recorded thanks for her hard work as Non-Teaching Staff Governor, and in particular her contribution to establishing the Staff Reps Group. The Chair advised that this would be SE's last Corporation meeting, as he will be standing down after the next meeting of the Audit & Risk Committee. On behalf of all Governors, he thanked SE for his enormous contribution to the college and its governance, recognising the importance of his leadership of this Committee. Finally, the Chair extended personal and collective thanks to NVB, for whom this was the final meeting. He described NVB's impact since joining the Corporation in 2020, not least in providing valuable support to him in his role as Vice Chair. The Chair highlighted NVB's willingness to ask challenging questions which are a reflection of his commitment to accountability, transparency and continuous improvement, pushing fellow Governors and leadership to think critically about ideas and to foster a culture of excellence and innovation. Governors also noted NVB's commitment to supporting the Performing Arts Department.
	b	<u>Staff Governors' Report</u> In the absence of the Staff Governors, the Head of Governance reported that a Staff Reps meeting took place on 16th March. A number of issues were raised in advance of the meeting, all of which were responded to by ELT in writing and have been shared with Staff Reps to disseminate to colleagues.
	c	<u>Calendar of Meetings 2026-27</u> The Corporation approved the calendar of meetings for 2026-27.
	d	<u>Membership</u> The Corporation: 1. Approved the extension of Chris Muller's term of office as a Governor and Chair to 26th June 2026. 2. Appointed Chetan Chuttoo as HE Student Governor from 28th March 2026 to 31st August 2027. 3. Appointed Chetan Chuttoo to the Curriculum & Quality Committee. 4. Appointed Paul Mason to the Finance & General Purposes Committee with immediate effect.
	e	<u>Written Resolution</u> The Corporation noted that, in accordance with Instrument 14(3) and Standing Order 7.5, the Corporation resolved, on 12th January 2026, in writing to make the following decision: *Approval of pay increment for the CEO/Principal and Head of Governance, in accordance with the recommendation of the Senior Staff Performance & Remuneration Committee.*

	f	Governors Code of Conduct Noting the recommendation from the Search & Governance Committee, the Corporation approved the revised Code of Conduct.
8	**Date of Next Meeting**	
	Friday 26th June 2026 at 9.30 am.	
9	**Confidential Items**	
	The discussion of confidential matters is contained within a separate minute.	

The meeting closed at 11.25 am

The Corporation approved:

- The minutes of the meeting held on 12th December 2025.
- The Fees Policy.
- The HE Tuition Fees for 2027-28.
- The extension of Chris Muller's term of office as a Governor and Chair to 26th June 2026.
- The appointment of Chetan Chuttoo as HE Student Governor from 28th March 2026 to 31st August 2027.
- The appointment of Chetan Chuttoo to the Curriculum & Quality Committee.
- The appointment of Paul Mason to the Finance & General Purposes Committee with immediate effect.
- The calendar of meetings for 2026-27.
- The Governors' Code of Conduct.