

Minutes of a meeting of the B&FC Corporation Board ('the Board')

Held on 6 July 2026 at 5.00pm

In The Boardroom on the Bispham Campus, Ashfield Road, Bispham, Blackpool, FY2 0HB

Members' attendance record:

		23 Sep 2025	4 Nov 2025	9 Dec 2025	27 Jan 2026	17 Mar 2026	14 Apr 2026	28 Apr 2026	18 May 2026	2 Jun 2026	6 Jul 2026	2025/26 attendance
Steve Fogg	Chair	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	A	✓	✓	90%
Helen Broughton	Independent Member	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	A	A	✓	✓	✓	80%
Andrea Challis	Independent Member	✓	A	✓	A	✓	A	✓	✓	A	✓	60%
Stephanie Crane	Independent Member	✓	✓	A	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	A	80%
Alun Francis	Chief Executive	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100%
Chris Holt	Independent Member	A	A	✓	✓	✓	A	A	A	✓	✓	50%
Will Jerram	Staff Member	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	A	✓	✓	90%
Antony Lockley	Independent Member	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	A	✓	A	✓	✓	80%
Adrian Mills	Independent Member	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100%
Allan Oldfield	Independent Member	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	A	A	✓	✓	80%
Ian Owen	Independent Member	✓	✓	✓	✓	A	✓	✓	✓	✓	A	80%
Alison Robinson	Independent Member	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	A	✓	✓	90%
Wendy Robinson	Independent Member	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	-	-	-	100%
Esther Steel	Independent Member	-	✓	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	100%
Jagjit Walia	Staff Member	A	✓	✓	A	✓	A	✓	✓	✓	✓	70%
John Westhead	Independent Member	A	✓	✓	✓	✓	A	A	-	-	-	57%
Christopher Willson	Student Member	✓	A	✓	✓	A	A	A	A	A	✓	40%

In attendance:

Linda Dean	Chief Commercial and People Officer
Peter Greenall	Vice-Principal: Higher Education and Frontier Economy
Paul Howard	Governance Professional, PDH Advisory (minutes)
Simon Hughes	Executive Principal
Annie Kerfoot	Vice-Principal: B&FC Foundational Economy
Rob Lawson OBE	External Governance Reviewer (observer)
Alistair Mulvey	Chief Operating Officer
Mark Taylor	Shakespeare Martineau (to item 88/26 only)
Nicola Tomlinson	Director, Rockborn Management Consultants (to item 88/26 only)

84/26 Chair and quorum

Steve Fogg took the chair and noted that due notice of the meeting had been given to all members and that a quorum was present. Accordingly, he declared the meeting duly convened and constituted.

85/26 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Stephanie Crane and Ian Owen (Independent Members).

86/26 Declarations of interest

Each member present confirmed that they had no interests to declare.

Note was made of the fact that Ian Owen, who had sent apologies to the meeting, had recently declared that he was to become a trustee of Fleetwood Hospital Trust. The Board noted that he was not present at today's meeting and that he had not been involved in any way in relation to minute reference 94/26.

87/26 Background and purpose to merger resolutions

- (i) The Chair reminded members that, at its previous meeting, the Corporation had agreed in principle to move forward with a merger of the Corporation with Furness College (the **"Merger"**).
- (ii) The purpose of the meeting was for the Corporation to approve the terms of the Merger and to approve the execution and signature of the documents required to effect the Merger.
- (iii) The following documents, each to be entered into prior to the Merger (the **"Documents"**), were presented to members:
 - (a) a final draft transfer deed between (1) Furness College and (2) the Corporation to document the transfer of all property, rights and liabilities from Furness College to the Corporation (the **"Transfer Deed"**);
 - (b) a final draft TR5 form to be entered into between (1) the Corporation and (2) Furness College in respect of effecting the transfer of the property known as:
 - (i) Land on the north side of Bessamer Way, Barrow-In-Furness registered at the Land Registry with freehold title number CU244183;
 - (ii) Channelside, Barrow-In-Furness registered at the Land Registry with freehold title number CU256053; and
 - (iii) Barrow In Furness Sixth Form College, Rating Lane, Barrow-In-Furness registered at the Land Registry with freehold title number CU214657;
 - (c) a final draft licence to assign in relation to the lease of Unit 6, Furness Business Park, Barrow-in-Furness, LA14 2PE;

- (d) a final draft deed of assignment in relation to the lease of Unit 6, Furness Business Park, Barrow-in-Furness, LA14 2PE; and
- (e) a final draft novation and amendment deed between (1) the Corporation, (2) Furness College and (3) Lloyd's Bank plc pursuant to which the Corporation will take on the obligations and liabilities under the Lloyd's facility agreement dated 24 February 2010 (as amended) and under which the Final Repayment Date is amended from the 30 September 2034 to 31 July 2034.

88/26 Consideration of merger resolutions

(i) **IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that following:

- (a) publication of the results of the statutory consultation by the Corporation of Furness College as required under the Further Education College Corporations (Publication of Proposals) (England) Regulations 2012; and
- (b) the carrying out of legal and financial due diligence exercises in respect of the Corporation of Furness College,
 - (i) the Corporation of Blackpool and The Fylde College hereby **RESOLVES** to merge with the Corporation of Furness College in accordance with section 27A and 27B of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992, with the Corporation of Furness College dissolving at 00:01 on 1 August 2026 and its property, rights and liabilities transferring immediately before that time to the Corporation of Blackpool and The Fylde College in accordance with section 27A and 27B of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992;
 - (ii) the Documents, and the transactions contemplated by the Documents, are approved (subject to any amendments to the Documents in accordance with paragraph 88/26(i)(b)(v) below);
 - (iii) any member of the Corporation be authorised to sign on behalf of the Corporation any Documents not required to be executed as Deeds;
 - (iv) any two members of the Corporation be authorised to authenticate the use of the Seal on behalf of the Corporation on any Documents required to be executed as Deeds;
 - (v) any member of the Corporation be authorised to agree any amendment to the Documents to which the Corporation is a party on the Corporation's behalf;
 - (vi) any member of the Corporation be authorised to agree any other documents, agreements, certificates, notices, communications or confirmations required to effect the Merger and to do all such other things as may be required in connection with the Merger; and
 - (vii) any of the foregoing matters that have been done on or before the date of the meeting be and are hereby adopted, ratified, confirmed and approved.

- (ii) After the passing of the above resolutions, the meeting adjourned to allow for execution of the relevant documentation, following which Nicola Tomlinson and Mark Taylor left the meeting.
- (iii) Peter Greenall updated the Board on engagement with the Office for Students (OfS) regarding the merger. Two reportable event notifications had already been submitted – one following B&FC's selection as the preferred merger partner and one following the Board's go/no go decision in May 2026 – and he noted that further documentation had been requested to reflect the creation of the merged institution. This included requests for updates to student protection plans, a self-assessment of governance arrangements and an updated Access and Participation Plan. With regard to this latter request, Peter Greenall noted that it had been agreed with OfS that the organisation would continue with the two legacy plans until such a time as a merged data set is available. He also noted that a further notification of a reportable event would be submitted the following day, once all merger resolutions had also been approved by the Board of Furness College. The Board received and noted the verbal update.

89/26 Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 2 June 2026 were **APPROVED** as a true and accurate record.

90/26 High-level performance dashboard

The Board considered the regular dashboard of quality and financial indicators, and noted that there had been no significant changes since the previous meeting. No questions were raised.

91/26 Chief Executive's report

- (i) Alun Francis presented his report, highlighting progress across a range of strategic priorities including merger preparations, technical education developments, quality improvement and organisational culture. Board members welcomed the continued improvement in apprenticeship and adult learner performance and discussed the more stable position within 16–18 provision.
- (ii) In response to questions, Alun Francis explained that improvements in quality and performance management systems would provide stronger diagnostic information from the next academic year, that a more detailed analysis of learner intake would allow departments to better understand performance in context and that the College would continue to pursue incremental improvements in 16–18 outcomes over time.
- (iii) Alison Robinson asked whether attendance rates were expected to improve. Alun Francis noted the strong relationship between attendance and achievement, whilst recognising that attendance patterns are often influenced by learners' experiences before joining the college.
- (iv) Chris Holt asked about the general implications of potential changes in government policy, to which Alun Francis noted the need for clearer alignment between industrial strategy,

skills policy and technical education, noting opportunities linked to defence, technical education and regional growth.

- (v) The Board received the report and noted the content.

92/26 Period 10 finance report

- (i) Alistair Mulvey presented the latest finance report. The Board noted that the College remained slightly ahead of forecast as at 31 May 2026 with strong cash performance being noted, with the improved position in part reflecting benefits arising from the Local Government Pension Scheme revaluation.
- (ii) Members discussed an ongoing matter relating to debt recovery from an insolvent debtor and confirmation was provided that recovery action continues, whilst provision had been made for the value of the debt in the event that recovery is unsuccessful.
- (iii) The Board noted the report.

93/26 Two-year budget and college financial forecasting return

- (i) Alistair Mulvey presented a report which had been circulated with the agenda to seek approval of the two-year budget and the college financial forecasting return (CFFR). Members discussed assumptions regarding future government funding and the recently announced FE pay funding arrangements, as well as the alignment of pay award implementation dates across Blackpool and Furness following merger. In relation to this latter point, Alistair Mulvey explained that aligning arrangements across the merged group was important operationally as well as from an employee relations perspective. The Board noted that the forecast maintained an Outstanding financial health assessment.
- (ii) Following discussion, the Board **APPROVED** the CFFR for submission to the Department for Education and the associated budget for 2026/27. In addition, the Board **APPROVED** the learning and teaching capital plan which it had previously considered and had provisionally approved, subject to confirmation of the associated revenue budgets.

94/26 Student accommodation: Fleetwood Nautical College

- (i) Alistair Mulvey presented a report which had been circulated with the agenda to share a proposal to improve accommodation capacity for learners associated with Fleetwood Nautical Campus. Andrea Challis took the opportunity to remind members of a previously declared interest relating to accommodation provision for students at Fleetwood Nautical College through her business, and the Board considered this did not constitute a conflict requiring withdrawal from discussion.
- (ii) Members welcomed the proposal. Helen Broughton commented that accommodation had been a longstanding challenge for Fleetwood Nautical College and described the proposal as a positive and practical step forward.
- (iii) The Board discussed arrangements for learners under 18 years of age. In response to a question from Alison Robinson, Reter Greenall confirmed that Ofsted was aware of the accommodation arrangements and that the College had undertaken robust internal

reviews of national minimum standards, with external reviews having also previously been completed. The Chair noted this assurance but suggested that the Board might wish to seek a further independent review to provide additional assurance and this was supported by those present. It was therefore agreed that an external validation of residential arrangements for learners under the age of 18 would be undertaken and reviewed through management channels, with a summary assurance report being presented to the Board in December 2026.

ACTION: Peter Greenall

- (iv) Will Jerram noted that a recent audit by the UK Visas and Immigration Service had also reviewed the arrangements and that no concerns had been raised.

95/26 Strategic plan and accountability statement

- (i) Alun Francis presented a report which had been circulated with the agenda to share draft versions of the emerging Strategic Plan and Accountability Statement. Members noted that, with the agreement of the regulator due to the merger, the Accountability Statement would not be submitted until September 2026 and that the documents therefore remained work in progress.
- (ii) Board members welcomed the drafts; particularly the way they reflected the priorities of the merged institution and its communities across Blackpool, Fleetwood and Barrow. Members were invited to provide any additional comments by the end of July.

ACTION: All (as needed)

96/26 Great Place to Work update

- (i) Linda Dean presented a report to give an update on the College's Great Place to Work activity.
- (ii) The Board noted that accreditation remained in place from November 2025 to November 2026 and that 76% of colleagues had identified B&FC as a great place to work, which was significantly above national benchmarks. Board members congratulated the College on this achievement and acknowledged the progress made over a relatively short period.
- (iii) The Board received the report and noted the content.

97/26 B&FC Group policies

- (i) Simon Hughes presented a suite of B&FC Group policies for approval. Confirmation was provided that the policies had been reviewed through the merger workstreams and that consultation processes had been completed. Simon Hughes noted that the policies would apply across the whole of the merged entity, whilst local procedures would continue to reflect operational differences where necessary.
- (ii) Following consideration, the Board **APPROVED:**
 - (a) The Group Safeguarding Policy 2026/27;

- (b) The Group Prevent Policy 2026/27;
- (c) The Group Low Level Concerns Policy 2026/27; and
- (d) The Group Risk Management Policy 2026/27.

98/26 Feedback from student focus groups

The Board noted that no student focus group meeting had been held since the previous meeting.

99/26 Audit Committee matters

The Board received a summary report from the most recent meeting of the Audit Committee on 17 June 2026 and a copy of the approved minutes of the meeting held on 4 March 2026 had been circulated with the agenda for information.

100/26 Review of Financial Regulations

The Board **APPROVED** the revised Financial Regulations on the recommendation of the Audit Committee.

101/26 External audit plan 2025/26 and internal audit plan 2026/27

- (i) The Board **APPROVED** the external audit plan for 2025/26 on the recommendation of the Audit Committee.
- (ii) In addition, the Board noted that the Audit Committee had recommended a hybrid approach to internal audit during the coming year, given the forthcoming merger, and **ENDORSED** this approach. Following the Board's endorsement, a detailed internal audit plan for 2026/27 would now be developed and presented to the Board for approval at its next meeting.

102/26 Board members' forum

- (i) Chris Holt reported on a recent strategic event hosted by BAE Systems involving government, industry and education leaders. He thanked Alun Francis and colleagues for representing the College and supporting discussions on future skills and regional economic development.
- (ii) Board members also highlighted the success of the College's Apprenticeship Awards, positive feedback from staff regarding end-of-year celebrations, the strength of College's safeguarding arrangements and the increasing visibility of the College's communications and social media activity.
- (iii) Steve Fogg sought assurance that major investment decisions continued to be supported by robust value-for-money analysis. In response, Alistair Mulvey outlined the processes used to evaluate proposals and ensure alignment with strategic priorities.
- (iv) Chris Holt also highlighted the opportunities arising from national defence investment commitments affecting both Barrow and the Fylde Coast. Members agreed that these developments would be considered further at a future strategic discussion.

- (v) The Board discussed post-merger governance and noted that key merger programmes would transition into normal business and committee reporting arrangements.
- (vi) Alun Francis thanked Board members for their support throughout a significant and transformative year for the College.

103/26 Remuneration Committee matters

The Board directed that this item be minuted confidentially.

104/26 Date, time and venue of next meeting

The next scheduled meeting of the Board will be held on 29 September 2026, 3.30pm, at Furness College, with an optional tour of the site available from 2.30pm.