

Trustees' Annual Report 2016

An outstanding year



Index

The Board of Governors and co-opted members	2
The objectives of Derwen College	3
The current context and challenges	3
The main activities during 2016	3
Students and learning	3
Development projects and the site	4
Management and structural review	4
Provision overview	5
Outstanding performance and quality	7
Public recognition of excellence	7
Governance	9
The development of the Charity	9
The current regulatory framework	9
Governance activity in 2016	9
Financial and resource management	10
A going concern	10
Risk management	10
Public benefit	11
Fund-raising	11
Investments policy and performance	11
Looking ahead	11
Funding and promotion	11
Satellite provision	12
Extending partnerships	12
Efficient and effective in the face of uncertainty - -and further projects	12

The Trustees (governors), who are also the directors of the Derwen College charity, here report on the main activities of the College in 2016.



Registered Charity No. 1153280



Board of Governors



Kathleen Kimber
Chair
FE Management



Mick Cowan
Vice Chair
Teaching & Learning



Paul Evison
Chartered Accountant



Irene Gull
Business Management



Mark Woodward
Solicitor in Private Practice



Helen Owens
Business Manager NHS
Friends of the Derwen



Cllr. Andrew Hinchliff
Conwy Council Nominee



John Morton
Businessman
- Confectionery



Karen Griffiths
Quality Manager
Chester University



Cllr. David Lloyd MBE
Shropshire Council
Nominee
& Media Professional



Robert Macey
Marketing Consultant



Lesley Carille
SLD & Parent



Jamie Ward
Local Businessman



Cllr. Lloyd Kenyon
Wrexham County
Borough Council Nominee



Barbara Court
B&F
Finance / HR Management

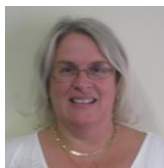


Tim Dallinger
S&E
Care & Training



Peter Jones
S&E
Teacher - Mentor

Co-opted members of the Business & Finance (B&F) and Standards & Effectiveness (S&E) Committees.



Fiona Hammond
Clerk to the Board of Trustees / Governors

The objectives of Derwen College – where learning comes to life.

The College provides education, support and accommodation, and specialist expertise, to people with learning difficulties and disabilities.

The Mission:

To provide inspirational learning, development and care, and enable the achievement of aspirations which transform lives.

The current context and challenges

Derwen College is a vibrant and ambitious College, able to embrace change, attract new partnerships and offer real value for money for the public purse. Above all it transforms the lives of its students and trainees. In the Spring of 2016 the College was short-listed as the Times Educational Supplement FE College of the Year. In April 2016 a full Ofsted inspection led to it being awarded (for the third time) 'outstanding' for all four judgements and the overall grade. In the Autumn 2016 a full CQC inspection led to being graded 'good' in all five key lines of enquiry. This has been another extremely successful year for the students and trainees at the College.

However, 2016 continued to be a period of unprecedented challenges. The College recognises that the principal risks and uncertainties facing the charity concern the constant change characterised by the regulatory frameworks within which the College operates. The impact of reductions in public spending are being felt across further education and have certainly had a significant impact on national specialist colleges. Funding constraints in England and Wales are both tighter and more unpredictable than ever before. Decision-making by local authorities, coupled with funding from several sources, means that students are frequently finding it harder to secure residential placements, as increasingly cash-strapped authorities are seeking to keep people in their home area. This has resulted in a continued reduction in the number of residential students in the College, an increase in part-time and day students, and an increase in trainee numbers. Every indication is that these trends will continue. They have been fully recognised in the strategic planning undertaken.

The Children and Families Act, the SEND Reforms and the SEN Code of Practice are still being implemented with varying and inconsistent patterns of practice and procedure across the country. Provision for people with high need learning difficulties and disabilities is not as easily secured as the legislation intended. Considerable time is spent lobbying and alerting those in authority to the reality of the implementation of the changes. The College is fortunate to have the Chair of Natspec (a membership organisation for providers of high needs education) as its Chief Executive, a position which gives significant additional access to decision-makers and opinion-formers and the College remains at the leading edge of discussions about specialist provision.

The main activities during 2016

Students and learning

The students' and trainees' range of learning difficulties and disabilities continues to be broad and increasingly complex. Thorough initial assessment processes result in each individual having achievable but aspirational programme aims. The curriculum is highly innovative and inclusive and has a strong and relevant focus on vocational skills. The College's specialism is to teach through the medium of vocational and life-skills programmes that provide direct experiences of living and work. In providing services to members of the public, all students have opportunities to learn skills for living and for work beyond College. Destination data and feedback show that the skills developed in the vocational areas in the College, in addition to the personal and independence development enjoyed by residential students, are enabling students to live in the community with the greatest level of autonomy of which they are capable.

The focus of the College's organisation and operation is unequivocally the students and trainees and each is valued as an individual. The College programmes are holistic. All students have access to the care, support and therapies needed to enable them to maximise their development. The College is a Makaton centre of

excellence and students' needs for speech and language therapy, physiotherapy, occupational therapy and counselling are met by College staff. The progress towards independent living developed during a two or three year residential period continues to amaze those who knew them on arrival.

In addition to the focus on employability, the students are skilfully encouraged to become active citizens. The elections to the Student Council and Student Union develop an understanding of the democratic process and involvement in the Council and Union enables them to play a significant part in planning and influencing College life. However, governors have particularly sought to recognise and applaud the outstanding work the Council officers undertake locally and nationally to raise awareness of disability and support those addressing disability issues. They have worked closely with the Oswestry Equality Group and explored ideas about local democracy, including hosting a visit from the Town Mayor. The ground-breaking collaborative work with the National Union of Students initiated in 2014 has continued and trainees have attended the NUS Disabled Students' and NUS National Conferences in Manchester and Brighton. On 6 July 2016 at an NUS gala dinner in Liverpool Derwen College Students' Union was announced as the NUS FE Students' Union of the year.

Students have worked with Network Rail/Arriva Trains Wales and Cambrian Partnership to develop a video, *Helping hand*, to promote travelling by rail for passengers with disabilities. This has involved attending the Senedd in Cardiff to promote the Orange Wallet Scheme in Wales and discussions with Welsh Assembly members. They have again lobbied MPs at Westminster in the *A Right not a Fight* Campaign. They exceed all expectations in their awareness raising of disability issues, with the guidance and support of the staff.

The range of work experience opportunities is extensive. The College was the first Natspec college to achieve the Gold standard of the Work Experience Quality Standards. Staff work systematically to strengthen the links with local employers and also with national chains, such as Tesco, the Co-op and Premier Inn. This leads to links with branches in a student's home area. The Tesco relationship has been developed to include staff and students training in till work, rumbling, shelf stacking and .com internet shopping across three local stores. There is a well-developed range of local community projects and partnerships, such as attendance at the Farmers' Markets in Oswestry and Whitchurch, running the café at Gobowen railway station (another award-winning initiative), and producing hanging baskets for Llangollen Town Council. Excellent real work opportunities are also provided within the dc Shopping and Leisure commercial outlets on the College perimeter. The Orangery restaurant and the Garden Café have regular clientele as well as passing trade. The Garden Centre and its transformed shop offer real competition to local outlets. In the Food Centre students produce chutneys, jams, bread and cakes which others then sell in our Farm Shop, another retail outlet, where the products of students' creative talents are also on display – and for sale. The Print Centre offers a range of services to local people.

Competition activity has been further promoted this year. It extends students' skills to high levels of excellence and enhances capacity in attributes valued by employers, such as team work, prioritisation, time management, and working under pressure. These activities have enabled students to be thoroughly challenged and have increased confidence and aspiration immensely.

Development projects and the site

The facilities at the College remain outstanding. The current focus remains establishing detailed maintenance and improvement plans for the College's residential accommodation. Upgrading and refurbishment are very high on the priority list. A new governors' Estate Committee has been set up and its work includes supporting staff working on a complete review of College property and tenancies.

A project to renovate and adapt the farm buildings to provide recycling facilities for the College and the community was explored. A new Wellbeing Centre has been provided, enabling nursing staff to work more closely with students, trainees and staff. At the close of the year work was progressing well on the adaptation of the former Health Centre to provide a Premier Inn complex.

Management and structural review

The continued changes in the College's intake, with fewer students, more complex needs and increased numbers of trainees, coupled with the impact of the funding regimes, continues to require time spent on reviewing the

structures and range of staffing expertise in the College. All changes have been the subject of extensive consultation, reflection and discussion at Board and senior management level. Managers and Heads of areas are ever more accountable for quality improvement and development. Governors work particularly closely with the Chief Executive and Leadership Team.



The Leadership Team



Ruth Thomas
 Chief Executive
 Strategic Advisor
Part time



Maggie Furmanek
 Vice CEO
 Director: Finance



Meryl Green
 Principal
 Director: Learning & Quality



Louise Keevil
 Director:
 Charity & Corporate Services



Andrew Harris
 CQC nominated individual
 Registered Manager
 Director: Student Support
 & Well-being



Natalie Bellis
 Director:
 Human Resources & Estates



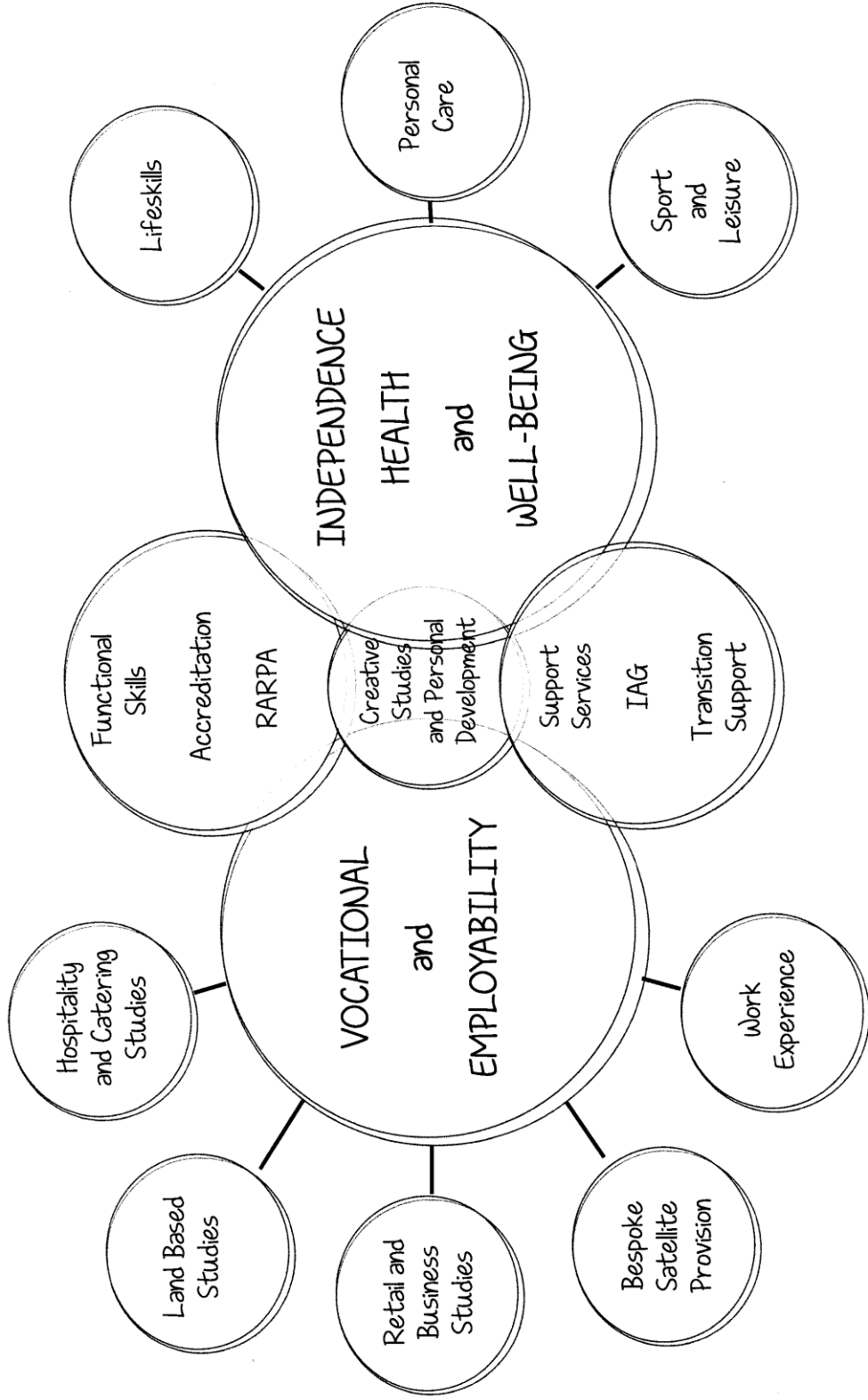
Karen George
 Registered Manager
 Director:
 Clinical, Care & Therapies

To help meet the needs of the Government's localism agenda, the College purchased a property in Wales. **ColegDerwen@Ashdale** was opened on 25 September 2014 and is focusing on day provision for local students and some from the main campus. Another satellite, **Derwen@Walford**, was opened on 5 November 2014, an innovative partnership with Shropshire Council and North Shropshire College. A property in the south of the county was also purchased and **Derwen@CravenArms** opened for work with students during 2015. All three now have fully staffed teams, steadily growing admissions and are open five days a week, apart from Craven Arms, which is open four days a week.

Provision overview

The current structure of departments emphasises and recognises their interdependence. It underpins the holistic programmes followed by students and trainees.

PROVISION OVERVIEW SEPTEMBER 16



Outstanding performance and quality

The College benefits from considerable analysis and judgement of its performance! Internally it has a well-established, thorough and transparent self-assessment system. Quality and the achievement of Improvement Plan targets are monitored throughout the year and the outcomes moderated by panels which include peers from other colleges and governors. The work of the vocational departments, the extended curriculum, personal and social development activities, the care, clinical and therapy inputs come together to provide highly enriched, challenging and enabling programmes. The holistic approach adopted, the interdependence of each strand of the College's operation, lead to the excellent coherence of each programme. The College graded its performance 2015-16 as outstanding.

However, there is no resting on laurels and the Self-assessment Report for 15-16 included the following:

Priorities:

- To continue to focus on outstanding teaching, learning and assessment
- To implement the demanding action plans for care and clinical services
- To continue to review and adapt admissions and pre-entry assessment processes to ensure that systems and provision are responsive to evolving need
- To continue to refine processes for capturing, monitoring and analysing student progress across the whole curriculum
- To continue to review and refine provision, curriculum and programme offer to ensure relevance and sustainability at all sites in the context of a changing environment
- To continue to strengthen transition links with employers and Local Authorities

Public recognition of excellence

This was endorsed by a full **Ofsted inspection** on 22-24 April 2016. It led to the following judgements:

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for learners	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

Summary of key findings

This is an outstanding provider

- Governors and senior managers have successfully created a culture and ethos through which all staff have very high expectations of student; as a result, students respond positively and thrive.
- Students greatly enjoy their education and training. A high proportion of students successfully gain their qualification and almost all students make excellent progress from their starting points.
- Leaders and managers develop close employer links which lead to extensive, high-quality and meaningful work experience for the vast majority of students.
- Leaders' and managers' innovative partnership working with 'industry champions' substantially increases students' opportunities for employment.
- Students benefit from a wide range of real working environments at the college, which offer authentic opportunities to develop work-related skills.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are outstanding. Teachers stimulate and engage students in practical and imaginative activities, which contribute to students' progress and enjoyment of learning. Teachers' development of students' English and mathematics skills in all learning settings is excellent.
- Leaders and managers ensure that the curriculum is individualised to meet the needs of each student; as a result, students develop valuable skills that prepare them for their future life exceptionally well.
- Students participate in an extremely wide range of sport, leisure and social activities that effectively

promote their health and well-being and help them to develop sustained and absorbing hobbies and interests.

Clearly, to receive a third successive 'outstanding' grading, particularly when judged against a new inspection framework which has nationally resulted in very few such grades, has been a source of great pride and endorsement of the emphasis the College puts on quality and performance.

The College is also subject to external review by the **Care Quality Commission**. In 9 – 12 October 2016 there was an unannounced inspection by six inspectors and one expert by experience. The report was published on 22 November 2016.

Overall rating for this service	Good ●
Is the service safe?	Good ●
Is the service effective?	Good ●
Is the service caring?	Good ●
Is the service responsive?	Good ●
Is the service well-led?	Good ●

The findings included the following:

- People [N.B. the report does not refer to students or trainees] received personalised support that was tailored to their needs and wishes.
- People were actively encouraged to pursue their wishes and aspirations.
- People were supported by staff who had the skills and knowledge to fulfil their role and who were highly motivated.
- Staff treated people with dignity and respect.
- Staff supported people to be as independent as possible.

Although the inspection found that not every safeguarding allegation had been reported to CQC, they noted that all allegations had been investigated and action taken by the College and that there had been no impact on people's health and well-being. The differing thresholds for reporting for local authorities and CQC were discussed. Following the inspection the College has reviewed its recording of incidents and lowered its reporting threshold in line with CQC recommendations.

The report contained many quotes, which had been sought by the inspectors, from parents and relatives of students and trainees. These included:

There is nothing I could fault. There's never been a question I have asked or situation not dealt with appropriately.

There is no way we could give [.....] the social life and experience they have. It's a proper college student life.

It's a fantastic service. They [the staff] have been brilliant at encouraging [.....], encouraged them more than we could imagine.

I have actually spoken to staff during the middle of the night and I have so much admiration for the staff here as they create a really homely atmosphere whilst still meeting people's educational needs.

This place is very well run and managed. It comes from a very strong position in that they don't want to be an institution and have the interests of my [family member] at the heart of what they do.

From CQC Inspection Report 22 November 2016.

The action plan which resulted from reading and analysis of the report has been presented to the Board and is being monitored by senior staff and governors.

Governance

The development of the Charity

Derwen College charity has a long pedigree. It was founded in 1927 by Dame Agnes Hunt and was originally based at the Orthopaedic Hospital in Gobowen. The Derwen Estate was purchased in 1928 and the first trust deed was established on 3rd August 1932. It was varied or affected by schemes of the Charity Commission dated 25th January 1968 and 18th August 1972, and then consolidated in the Deed of 29th November 1988.

An incorporated charity was established on 1st July 2014, Derwen College (Charity number 1153280, Companies House number 8615826). The former charity remains in existence as Derwen College Trust (charity number 208745) with the sole purpose of managing the permanently endowed property. It appointed as its trustees the new Derwen College charity.

The solicitors drew up a uniting directive which allows a single set of accounts to be drawn up, as the two entities have the same financial reporting period. "Linked" financial statements for both Companies House and the Charity Commission are submitted for reporting purposes.

The regulatory framework of the charity

Under the agreed Articles of Association (2013) to which the College is now working there are:

- at least seven and not more than eleven co-opted trustees, appointed by resolution of the Board, conforming to any criteria the Board determines, and
- six nominated trustees, one from each of five local authorities invited from time to time to nominate as determined by the Board, and one nominated by The Association of Friends of the Derwen.

There were in 2016 eleven co-opted trustees and four nominated trustees. The term of office of all trustees is five years, with an expectation that usually after three terms of office the Trustee shall be eligible for re-election only after a year has elapsed.

Governance activity in 2016

The Trustees, usually referred to as governors, continue to review their working practices and performance. The governing body encourages, supports and effectively holds to account those responsible for the delivery of high quality provision in the College. Ofsted's April 2016 report identifies the successful role of governors in creating a culture and ethos of high expectations and continuous improvement. They have increasingly, maybe relentlessly, worked on the strategic direction and long-term sustainability of the College. The range of skills brought to the Board is constantly monitored and has increased both in breadth and strength.

There is a wider range of skills than I have ever known and an enthusiasm to use those skills to the College's advantage.

From a governor's self-assessment questionnaire – September 2016

Following last year's self-assessment it was decided to address the issue of improving the focus on teaching, learning and assessment by having a standard item on the Board's agenda immediately following the Chief Executive's report. This is followed by another standard item, addressing issues of Care and Well-being. This has helped to further the governors' commitment to being student and quality focused. Consideration of

finances follows, so that decisions taken are underpinned by an understanding of the current and strategic issues facing the College.

Governors balance the need to be fully informed about current national issues and the funding reforms, during this period of continued significant change, with an increased grasp of the day to day operation. The Board responds to national consultations, and individual governors make invaluable contributions to key areas affecting students' well-being e.g. safeguarding, equality and diversity, and the Student Council, as well as attending College events and using College commercial outlets. The elaboration of the strategic plan is a detailed and searching exercise, undertaken in partnership first with the Leadership Team and then with key managers.

It is noteworthy that much of the detailed analysis and scrutiny of the College's operation is managed by the committees, of which there are now five. The Standards and Effectiveness Committee has given focused attention to a range of issues concerning care and clinical services, as well as teaching and learning. The Business and Finance Committee focuses on very detailed scrutiny of finances and budget, as well as the wider matters of corporate activity. The Human Resources Committee has spent much time on the analysis of HR data and the outcomes of consultations with staff. The Estates Committee has worked tirelessly to support directors in the review of tenancies, the establishment of detailed maintenance and refurbishment programmes, and the much greater understanding of the range and diversity of the College's properties and estate. The Search Committee monitors the range of expertise and the profile of the Board.

The Board makes its position regarding support for, praise for and value of the work undertaken by all aspects of the staff absolutely clear. They have an all-pervading empathy for the students and a positive confidence for the future of the College.

From a governor's self-assessment questionnaire – September 2016

Partnership working in the interests of the students and trainees characterises the operation of the Board and the Leadership Team and staff.

Financial and resource management

A going concern

The audited and approved annual accounts are submitted by the due dates to both the Charity Commission and Companies' House. After making all appropriate enquiries, very thorough consideration of draft budgets and cash flow up to 2017, the trustees expect the charity to have adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. For this reason they continue to adopt the going concern basis in preparing financial statements.

Risk management

The trustees regularly examine the principal areas of the College's operations and consider the major risks faced in each. There are established resources and review systems which, under normal conditions, should allow any risk to be managed to an acceptable level in the College's day to day operation. College risk management has two distinct tiers: strategic and operational. The operational level is reviewed on a 'real time' basis and deals with individual departments, students, functions and duties. At the strategic level the Senior Leadership Team review the risk assessment register monthly and it is reviewed at least termly as part of the College quality improvement plan and presented to the Business and Finance Committee where issues are debated and reported to the Board. This includes College pension funding, insurances and trustee responsibilities to ensure these remain in line with current legislation and operational factors.

The College's spacious campus is open to visitors and customers in the public areas and is imaginatively and purposefully managed to enable students to interact with staff and members of the public appropriately and safely. However, the open-plan nature of the campus and the heightened staff awareness of potential hazards necessitate regular reviews. During 2014 gates were erected at strategic points on the campus enabling a secure area for students, away from the public areas, to be closed off at 9 p.m. each evening. Departmental operational risk management encompasses all locations and individuals. This is reviewed through the Health and Safety

Committee, which now includes governor membership, audited by specialist advisors and monitored by external agencies.

The College provides a safe and supportive environment for learners to access the internet, including social networking sites. Staff provide support in the safe use of personal technology, such as mobile phones and computers.

Public benefit

The quality of provision, inspected by Ofsted and The Care Quality Commission, has been judged as outstanding and good respectively. The successes of former students continue to demonstrate that College programmes provide students with the skills, inspiration and motivation to achieve in their transition from College. The high level of staff expertise is a key element of the College's management of learning, student support and innovation.

The trustees are committed to necessary capital spending to maintain and enhance the College's facilities and to meet the legal and regulatory requirements. The planned focus is the up grading of the residential accommodation and the enhancement of the swimming pool, including the addition of a therapies area. Other building projects are being explored.

Fund raising

The Association of the Friends of the Derwen continued to make significant financial contributions to the College. This year it fundraised with the intention of contributing to accommodation upgrades. The money was raised through the annual Sponsored Walk and the Sumer Fete, and other, smaller events. Legacies and events held by local groups, also brought in much appreciated income. The College also raises money through an increasing number of events and activities and has now issued a fund-raising pack for supporters.

Investments policy and performance

The College takes a prudent, low risk approach to investments, placing cash surpluses on deposit to attract a return. This is principally because the reserves may need to be utilised during the short to medium term for cash flow and for capital projects.

Looking ahead

Funding and promotion

The full implementation of the Children and Families Act, the new Education Health Care Plans and restrictions on local authority budgets lead the College to expect a further reduction in student enrolments and numbers - but there is no reduction in the need for placements as analysis of the enquiries to the College clearly reveals. This situation will entail further rigorous financial management, as anticipated in the budget for 2017. The College continues to strive to deliver outstanding value for money, and believes it can and unequivocally does demonstrate excellence in comparison with recently developed, local provision.

The importance of marketing and providing information, advice and guidance in the current climate is very evident. There is much misrepresentation and the term 'local offer' is misinterpreted. For many families and young people access to reliable, objective and comprehensive information is well-nigh impossible. The gap between the intention of recent legislation and the effects of its implementation remains huge; the trustees are committed to working with total integrity in the interests of people with learning difficulties and disabilities. The provision of day-time only, part-time and respite care are now firmly on the agenda. The Admissions procedure has been fully reviewed and is yet more rigorous and thorough, in order to ensure that the needs and aspirations of incoming students and trainees are identified as precisely and accurately as possible.

Satellite provision

The College has made progress with its Welsh provision, which includes exploiting the considerable potential of the site, and the significant area of land and woodland, for vocational learning. The annex at Walford, part of the North Shropshire College sites, is fully operational and attractive and students and trainees undertake projects within the local community there, such as the maintenance of a church yard. The property purchased at Craven Arms has been adapted and is now open four days a week. The on-line sale of Derwen hampers is currently part of the curricular provision at this site. Attendance at the three annexes is on a day-time basis. Residential facilities are available on the main site for those needing them. In these outreach premises the very significant expertise and specialisms of the Derwen College staff contribute hugely to the provision of local services to those with learning difficulties and disabilities.

Extending partnerships

The College's focus on ensuring that it works to industry standards wherever possible and promotes employment opportunities for students and trainees has led to significant partnerships with national companies and organisations, not least Premier Inn and Tesco. Much work is being done to extend this.

The satellites provide day college facilities utilising both College expertise and new partnerships. The centres promote links with additional local communities.

Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational and Physiotherapy services now work closely with each other and vocational departments. They are exploring extending their services to provide for local service users either in College or the community. The therapies team continues to develop links with external organisations and the local learning disability teams to establish service user needs within the local communities.

Efficient and effective in the face of uncertainty - & further projects

Most students are funded to come to the College because their needs cannot be provided for adequately and sufficiently in a non-residential, local further education college, nor can their potential be maximised. It is essential that the high quality provision that Derwen offers is sustained and available to future students and trainees if they are to develop fully independent living, social and vocational skills. The commitment of trustees and staff is to ensure this quality, within the culture of constant improvement which has been recognised to characterise the College's operation.

This is also a time of opportunity. While recognising that the external context is bound to be challenging, we continue to strive to deliver outstanding value for money. Delivering successful student outcomes within a sustainable cost base remain our fundamental objectives, underpinned by effective marketing of the offer we make.

We are seeking new funding streams and opportunities to ensure that we maximise our income, including grants and fund raising. Greater use of 1:1 support will be available for those learners who require it. Provision will be further and regularly reviewed to explore, develop and drive ahead new developments and opportunities such as post-college placements, domiciliary care, tenancies, respite care and holiday provision.

There are plans for a significant upgrade and extension to the swimming pool to create a Therapies Centre, to open the Premier Inn facility, to review the creation of a 'Go Green' recycling centre, to adapt some residential accommodation to meet changing student and trainee need, and to continue to develop the provision of meals within residences, which is leading to much greater independence training for students.

We must ensure that we remain student and trainee centred, financially sound, forward looking and proactive.

This report was approved by the Trustees on 6 April 2017 and signed on their behalf by:

Mrs K Kimber (Chair)