

Trustees' Annual Report 2017



Another outstanding year – and our 90th birthday



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The Trustees (governors), who are also the directors of the Derwen College charity, here report on the main activities of the College in 2017.

Board of Governors

Kathleen Kimber
Chair
FE Management

Peter Jones
Vice Chair
Teacher - Mentor

Jamie Ward
Vice Chair
Local Businessman

Cllr. Krista Childs
Wrexham County Borough
Council Nominee

Mick Cowan
Teaching & Learning

Paul Evison
Chartered Accountant

Irene Gull
Business Management

Cllr. Andrew Hinchliff
Conwy Council Nominee

Lord Lloyd Kenyon
Businessman

Robert Macey
Marketing Consultant

Cllr. Paul Milner
Shropshire Council
Nominee

John Morten
Businessman
- Confectionery

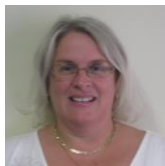
Helen Owens
Business Manager NHS

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

Barbara Court
B&F
Finance / HR Management

Helen Smith
S&E
Practice Education
Facilitator at Glyndwr
University

Justin Soper
S&E
Special Education Advisor



Fiona Hammond
Clerk to the Board of Trustees / Governors

During the year:

- Cllr David Lloyd (nominated by Shropshire Council) resigned, 6 April 17
- Paul Milner appointed as a co-opted member to Estates Committee, 6 April 17 and the nominated governor of Shropshire Council from 28 June 17
- Helen Smith appointed as a co-opted member of S&E Committee, 6 April 17
- Tim Dallinger (co-opted member) resigned, 6 April 17
- Justin Soper co-opted to S&E Committee, 25 May 17
- Karen Griffiths (co-opted) resigned 10 July 17
- Lord Kenyon, previously nominated by Wrexham County Borough Council, co-opted on 20 July 17
- Cllr Krista Childs appointed, nominated by Wrexham County Borough Council, 24 July 17
- Mark Woodward resigned 2 October 17

We record our thanks to all governors and co-opted members for their commitment and work, and acknowledge in particular Mark Woodward's contribution made over many years.

Vice-Chairs: Jamie Ward was elected on 20 July 17 and Peter Jones on 12 October 17, for a one year term.

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 remains 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.

On 14th June we celebrated 90 years since the foundation of the charity by Dame Agnes Hunt and there were celebrations and activities to mark this milestone throughout the year.

However, 2017 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 being needed 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, with the number of day students not fully compensating for this loss. It is clear that these trends will continue. They have been fully recognised and have been the main focus 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. However it is evident that nationally the focus is on limiting the development and training of students with learning difficulties and disabilities to their home area.

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 specialist vocational and life-skills programmes that provide direct experiences of living and work, with an emphasis on providing services to members of the public. 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. Students' 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 Union Board develop an understanding of the democratic process and involvement in the 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 Union 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. Thomas Shacklady has been elected onto the NUS FE Committee and will continue the work Robin started. Thomas will be representing students across the UK. Members of the SU Board visited South Wales Learning Disability Wales Conference to deliver a presentation entitled "Love Your Health"

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 Premier Inn, Sainsbury's and Debenhams. 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 and shelf stacking 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 College sites

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. The governors' Estate Committee has been busy reviewing all properties and land and seeking to ensure they are fit for purpose. Decisions to release and adapt properties, land and buildings have been carefully considered. Rigorous maintenance programmes are being established.

Early in the year the adaptation of the former Health Centre was completed and with great delight and a loud fanfare the Derwen College Premier Inn complex was opened. We place on record our sincere thanks to Whitbread and Novus for their generosity, commitment and extremely efficient working practices which enable us to boast of being the Premier Inn No 751.

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.

Management and structural review



The Leadership Team

| | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|---|
|  <p>Ruth Thomas Chief Executive Strategic Advisor <i>Part time</i></p> | |  <p>Meryl Green Vice CEO Principal</p> | | |
|  <p>Maggie Furmanek Director: <i>Finance & Resources</i></p> |  <p>Louise Keevil Director: <i>Charity & Corporate Services</i></p> |  <p>Andrew Harris COC nominated individual Registered Manager Director: <i>Student Services & Safeguarding</i></p> |  <p>Natalie Bellis Director: <i>Human Resources & Estates</i></p> |  <p>Karen George Registered Manager Director: <i>Clinical, Care & Therapies</i></p> |

The continued changes in the College's intake, with fewer students, more complex needs and a falling number 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 the Leadership Team. Andrew Harris and Louise Keevil left the College towards the end of the year and we place on record our sincere appreciation of their work and achievements.

Provision overview

The current structure of departments emphasises and recognises their interdependence. It underpins the holistic programmes followed by students and trainees. The development of specific understanding and skills which will be invaluable in the workplace, is underpinned by functional skills and work experience. It becomes more rounded and transferable through creative activity and independence development. Health and well-being, personal care programmes, and sport and leisure activities contribute to a student's ability to act and live independently. Access to all provision is enabled through appropriate speech and language, physiotherapy, occupational therapy and counselling services provided as appropriate for each individual by the specialist staff team. Personal tutors and the Transition team help students set and monitor aspiration targets and offer advice and guidance to support decision making for the future.

A great deal of attention has been given to data on the destinations of leavers and further analysis of the learning difficulties and disabilities of the current and future students. The organisation of the curriculum will during 2018 be adapted to capitalise on the areas of outstanding provision, where there is clear evidence of very positive outcomes for students. The curriculum will be organised under two umbrella headings: Hospitality and Customer Services (with pathways in Hospitality and housekeeping, Horticulture and Retail), and Foundation Studies and Creative Studies (with pathways in Sensory, Work Skills and Creative Studies).

Work experience is an integral part of programmes. During 16-17 182 students, trainees and clients went on a work placement each week. 99% of learners felt safe at their placement. 80% of employers judged their links with the College to be outstanding and 20% thought they were good. 100% of observations of the standard of provision were judged good or better.

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 formal departmental evaluations of performance and outcomes are moderated in the autumn by panels which include governors. These rigorous self-assessment procedures led the College to grade its performance 2016-17 as outstanding.

The Self-assessment Report for 16-17, scrutinised and approved at Board level, included the following:

Strengths:

- ❖ Governors and senior leaders set an ambitious and demanding ethos, mission and culture for the whole organisation
- ❖ Extremely robust quality improvement cycle reflecting both Ofsted and CQC frameworks resulting in excellent quality of provision across all sites
- ❖ Highly effective performance management and professional development of staff
- ❖ Outstanding and consistent quality of teaching, learning and assessment
- ❖ Highly personalised student programmes in line with individual aspirations, including accreditation where appropriate
- ❖ Extensive external work experience programme with 98% of students accessing high quality community placements during 2016-17
- ❖ Excellent Information, Advice and Guidance programme
- ❖ Good support for independence including safe practices with self-medication, travel training and meal preparation

- ❖ Extensive sports and enrichment offer that encourages all students to have a healthy and active life style and develop their practical and social skills and personal interests

However, there is no resting on laurels and the report identifies specific areas for attention, e.g.

- ❖ Ensure that curriculum/commercial outlet reviews and developments are even more closely aligned to local and national market intelligence and outcome data
- ❖ Continue to maximise business opportunities with established employer partners e.g. Whitbread group
- ❖ Staff training focus on supporting the changing cohort and new programme strands – Sensory and Foundation Studies
- ❖ Establish increased awareness, participation and ownership of Learner Voice across the College, building on the excellent external profile

Public recognition of excellence

During 2016 the College was inspected both by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission. The third successive 'outstanding' grading from Ofsted, particularly when judged against a new inspection framework which had nationally resulted in very few such grades, was and is a source of great pride. It has set a target for the College, which it is determined to strive to exceed. The external review by the Care Quality Commission with a grading of 'good' in all five key lines of enquiry (safe, caring, effective, responsive and well-led) was an affirmation of success in the rigorous implementation of improvement plans and an encouragement to pursue further refinements and upgrading of practice. The record keeping and performance management and analysis now reflect these public inspection frameworks.

While close and frequent attention is given by governors to the scrutiny of any causes for concern, it is heartening for all to read the many tributes received from parents, carers and stakeholders.

.....wish he could stay for ever. Once again a very heartfelt thanks to all the staff for everything they have done to help Y*** gain skills and confidence to help him live as independently as possible in the future.

Parent's letter, Summer 17

You can never know how much we appreciate all you have done for A***. To see the pure joy on A*** face when he is at College and to see how independent and confident he is just blow us away!... You all work so hard at creating a caring, enthusiastic and encouraging environment that, at all times, puts respect for the young person and their uniqueness first. It is truly a magical place.

Parents' letter Autumn 17



Increasing numbers of students are amazing family and friends with their participation and success in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. A wonderful awards ceremony was held on 1 July 17. For each award participation in four categories is required: volunteering, physical exercise, skills development and expedition. The successes 16-17 were:

Bronze Award: 23 students

Silver Award: 11 students

Gold Award: 7 students

The Gold Award winners would have their formal presentations at either Buckingham or St James's Palace. One of the 2016 Gold winners subsequently went on to achieve the Diamond Award within the Scheme's diamond anniversary celebrations.

...She sent everyone texts saying 'I pass DofE now', was much more articulate than normal after water sports and told me, quite casually, 'So I'm going to the Palace'.

'A huge achievement for our son and we appreciate the hard work and organising on Derwen's part to make it happen. Hopefully he will choose to work on his Silver award.'

There were two Inclusive Skills Competition winners. One day student won Gold in the Welsh Catering competition held at NPTC Newtown, and the other won Gold in the West Midlands competition. Both went on to compete in the Inclusive Skills finals at the WorldSkills UK event at the NEC, Birmingham in November, with one winning gold and the other silver. For the third year running the College won the National Union of Students' Disabled Student FE Union of the Year. This was just one of many examples of the outstanding work undertaken by students to raise awareness of disability.

Derwen on Tour, affectionately known as DOT, the student dance group, successfully applied and were chosen to be the sole entertainment at the gala dinner of the Association Of Colleges annual conference in November. This event is the highlight of the further education world nationally and the standing ovation the students received was very well deserved.

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 annually for reporting purposes.

The regulatory framework of the charity

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

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

There were in 2017 twelve co-opted trustees and three 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 2017

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 identified the successful role of governors in creating a culture and ethos of high expectations and continuous improvement. Partnership working in the interests of the students and trainees characterises the operation of the Board, the Leadership Team and the staff. The range of skills brought to the Board is constantly monitored and has increased both in breadth and strength. The commitment and enthusiasm of Board members is hugely encouraging. Individual governors make invaluable contributions to key areas affecting students' well-being e.g. safeguarding, equality and diversity, and the Student Union, as well as attending College events and using College commercial outlets.

Governors have increasingly, maybe relentlessly during 2017, worked on the strategic direction and long-term sustainability of the College. Board meetings have been increasingly focused on this, drawing extensively on the detailed work of the committees. Governors have balanced 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 elaboration of the strategic plan is a detailed and searching exercise, undertaken in partnership first with the Leadership Team and then with key managers. This year the strategic direction of the College has become the focus of deliberations and has led to key decisions being taken to adapt and diversify to meet consequences of the reducing and changing student cohort.

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 Estate 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 key decisions taken during 2017 concern

- ❖ the future curricular emphasis on Hospitality and Customer Service and the Foundation Programme, coupled with significant development projects to refine and enhance such provision
- ❖ increased working with commercial partners, particularly national chains
- ❖ the upgrading of the existing swimming pool and the building of a free standing hydro-therapy pool
- ❖ the move to ensure the full occupation of residences

- ❖ the disposal of those properties in Gobowen off the campus which are no longer fit for purpose and the realisation of some assets
- ❖ developing short break and independence training stays to utilise vacant accommodation
- ❖ the development of a business hub, supported by the LEP
- ❖ working with new partners as part of the diversification of the College's services.

This clearly presents a challenging and exciting programme for 2018, when business plans for projects and implementation of ideas will be the main thrust of activity.

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 2019, and having taken key strategic decisions, 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. During 2017 the central area of the College became pedestrianised. 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 give a high priority to providing 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 Board believes that the College provides excellent

value for money to the public purse and that student outcomes mean they can be less dependent on benefits throughout the rest of their lives.

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 agreed projects include the up grading of the residential accommodation, the establishment of a business hub, the enhancement of the swimming pool, and the construction of a hydro-therapy pool. Business plans for the other projects are being drawn up in 2018.

Fund raising

The Association of the Friends of the Derwen held its final meeting on 10 July 17, after fifty years of support and fund-raising. The College was indebted to the Association which had contributed a great deal to the students' and trainees' well-being and to College projects and in its final year helped to fund the swimming pool upgrade project. This year the College organised a Sponsored Walk, the Summer Fete and a 90th Birthday Ball, as well as other, smaller events. Legacies and events held by local groups and individuals also brought in much appreciated income. The College 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, although this is not especially attractive with the current level of interest rates. 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

Building the sustainable future

The full implementation of the Children and Families Act and the SEND Code, restrictions on local authority budgets and government grants to authorities to establish new 'local' provision make it inevitable that there will be a further reduction in student enrolments and numbers - while there is **no** reduction in the need for placements as analysis of the enquiries to the College clearly reveals. This situation requires rigorous financial management, a willingness to diversify, and an ability to ensure every decision focuses on high quality and sustainability. The College continues to keep the students and trainees, the beneficiaries of the charity, as its focus. It will continue 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. Day-time only, part-time and short break provision are now firmly on the agenda. The curriculum has been further reviewed and honed and there are significant development projects being pursued to ensure it has yet greater relevance and high quality. 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, physical

activity and D of E pursuits. 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 five days a week. The on-line sale of Derwen hampers has been 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. In addition the satellites offer access to new partnerships and promote links with additional local communities.

Extending partnerships

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

Significant progress has been made in extending partnership working in nursing, therapies and care, ensuring that the College's operation remains cutting edge. Keele University uses the College for its placements for student nurses specialising in the care of those with learning disabilities. It also has links with the College's physiotherapists. Students of nursing from Glyndwr University also have placements at the College and students of psychology from Chester University volunteer here. Speech and language specialists work with Cardiff University and the College has support from the Shropshire Learning Disability Team.

We have continued working with our local further education mainstream neighbour, Walford and North Shropshire College. We offer work experience placements to their students of health and social care and are members of the local employers' board based at the College.

Efficient and effective in the face of uncertainty – the final word

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 fully to develop 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. In an external context which is hugely 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. Provision will be further and regularly reviewed to explore, develop and drive ahead new developments and opportunities.

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

This report was approved by the Trustees on 8 March 2018 and signed on their behalf by:

Mrs K Kimber (Chair)