

## GOVERNOR PEN PORTRAITS – 2025/26

**Denys Rayner (Chair)** - Denys has had a varied career primarily in the banking sector with senior roles working in strategy and change. In recent times Denys has focused on business consultancy working with the NHS nationally on a number of projects, many of which have been developing leadership teams. He is an experienced chair and holds a number of directorships in the not-for-profit sector. Denys is Chair of the Full Board and a member of the Finance and General Purposes, Quality and Standards and Building Projects Committees. He is also a Director of UCSCG Corporate Services.

**Helen Stapleton (Vice-Chair)** – Helen is Vice Chair of our Full Board, Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee and a member of the Governance and Search Committee. Helen is the Associate Director of Strategic Workforce Transformation at NHS Somerset Integrated Care Board and leads planning and development of the future workforce for the Somerset health and care system. She has worked in a senior workforce management role in the NHS in Somerset for the last 20 years, and before that was Chief Pharmacist at a hospital in London. Helen was the catalyst for the Workforce Development Group which over a four-year period successfully supported the achievement of NMC approval for delivering nursing education at UCS.

**Andy Berry CBE (CEO)** – Andy Berry leads University Centre Somerset College Group, setting strategy and working closely with the Board to deliver high-quality education and skills. Andy drives continuous improvement and student success through his strong focus on quality, risk, and effective governance. In June 2024, Andy was awarded a CBE in the King's Birthday Honours for outstanding contributions to further education. Andy has also been formally invested into the Chartered Institute for Further Education (CIFE) and, under Andy's leadership, the College has received the Queen's Anniversary Prize for Education (2023), the AoC Beacon Award for Exceptional Support for Students, and Somerset Business Awards' Large Employer of the Year (2024). The College is also recognised as a chartered institute of education and holds 3 Star Accredited Football College status. Andy credits these achievements to the collective effort of the college community and remains committed to innovation, partnership, and the highest standards in education.

**Lyndon Brett** – Lyndon is Chair of the Building Projects Committee and a member of the Finance, Personnel and General Purposes Committees. A Chartered Surveyor, Licensed Property Valuer, and experienced Property Investor, Lyndon is proprietor of Lyndon Brett Partnership, a well-established firm based in Bridgwater. With a wealth of expertise in property, construction, and strategic estate management, Lyndon Brett brings practical insight and commercial acumen to the Board. As a highly experienced governor, Lyndon is committed to effective governance, supporting the College's development and ensuring robust oversight of building projects and financial planning.

**Mark Cox** - Mark Cox joined the Board in 2024, bringing a wealth of experience from the land-based sector. As Ruminant Director Atlantics at Trouw Nutrition—a leading supplier to the agricultural industry—Mark has developed deep expertise in agricultural supply chains, livestock nutrition, and sector innovation. Mark’s extensive background enables strategic oversight of curriculum and college development, ensuring strong links between education and industry. As Chair of the Cannington Local College Board and a member of the Quality and Standards Committee, Mark is committed to advancing high standards, supporting student success, and strengthening the College’s role within the rural economy.

**Beverley Hawkins** – Dr Beverley Hawkins is Dean for Taught Students and Professor of Leadership and Organisational Studies at the University of Exeter. An expert in higher education, Beverley brings deep academic and leadership experience to the Board. Beverley is a member of the HE Senate, Search Committee, and Quality and Standards Committee, where Beverley’s insight supports strategic development, quality assurance, and the advancement of student experience.

**Alan Hunt** - Alan Hunt is Chair of the Quality and Standards Committee and a member of the HE Senate. With extensive experience in higher education, Alan was formerly Head of Academic Development and Quality at Bournemouth University and has worked for the QAA and as a consultant in the sector. Alan’s expertise in academic quality, governance, and strategic development underpins Alan’s leadership of the committee and contribution to the Board.

**Leanne Mills** – Leanne Mills is a member of the Full Board, Safeguarding Link governor and Deputy Headteacher at Haygrove School in Bridgwater. With a strong background in safeguarding and many years of experience in education, Leanne is known for being fair, caring, a good listener, and reflective in leadership practice. Leanne’s commitment to student welfare and inclusive education particularly supports the Board’s work in safeguarding and quality assurance.

**Nick Skyrme** - Nick Skyrme brings extensive leadership experience as a former Director of Finance and Estates at Bridgwater College, where he played a pivotal role in strategic financial planning and estate management. Nick’s expertise spans governance, resource optimisation, and operational oversight, ensuring robust financial stewardship and sustainable development. Nick Chairs our Finance, Personnel and General Purposes Committee and is a valued member of the Quality and Standards Committee. Nick also leads as Chairs of the Taunton Local College Board.

**Mike Westlake** - Mike began his career as an engineering apprentice in the nuclear industry, sparking a lifelong passion for technology. He represented the UK in Design Engineering at WorldSkills in Japan and won two national gold medals. After five years as a Mechanical Design Engineer, Mike led international project teams across Oil & Gas, Energy and Pharmaceuticals. Today, he heads a global strategy team for Autodesk’s education experiences group and holds advisory roles in manufacturing and education. Former Chair of the UK Government’s T Levels Engineering & Manufacturing panel, Mike is an Honorary Professor at the University of Warwick and a Fellow of the RSA. He is a member of our Quality and Standards Committee, Audit & Risk and chairs the Bridgwater Local College Board.

**Ros Wyke** – (details coming soon)

**Andrew Fowler** – Andrew Fowler is a highly organised and driven professional with extensive leadership experience and works within UCS College Group as course leader for A-level studies. As staff governor, Andrew draws on his experience as Chair of a primary school governing body and professional experience from holding several senior global roles in multinational corporations. With expertise in careers and senior-level marketing, Andrew brings strategic insight, effective communication, and a commitment to collaborative governance. Andrew is a member of Full Board and Quality and Standards Committee.

**Emma Hawkes** – Emma Hawkes is a dedicated staff governor known for her calm, professional, and objective approach. Reliable and conscientious, Emma excels in communication and listening and has a keen eye for detail. With expertise in inclusivity, stakeholder management, and SEND, Emma is committed to supporting students and staff, fostering a positive and inclusive college environment. Emma is a valued member of the Full Board and Quality and Standards Committees.

**Samual Witts** – Samuel Witts is our Higher Education Student Governor who brings energy, commitment, and a willingness to push boundaries for the benefit of others. Samuel is approachable, a good listener, and always ready to step out of his comfort zone to support the college community. With a focus on personal growth and inclusivity, Samuel is passionate about representing student voices and driving positive change. Samuel is a member of the Full Board, Quality & Standards Committee and the HE Senate.

**Munashe Chapisa** – Munashe Chapisa is our Further Education Student Governor and Student Union College Group President, studying Access to Nursing at Taunton. Munashe is enthusiastic about representing students, collaborating with staff, and enhancing the student experience. With a strong commitment to leadership and inclusivity, Munashe is dedicated to building a vibrant and supportive college community. Munashe is a member of the Full Board and Quality & Standards Committee.

**Dr Tim Rideout** – Dr Tim Rideout is a highly experienced senior leader in the UK healthcare system and a well-regarded and long serving school governor. He has a background in data-driven decision making, forensic analysis, and strategic planning. Tim is a qualified accountant (CIPFA) and has held a number of senior positions in the NHS and private health sector at Chief Financial Officer and Chief Executive Officer level. Tim has also worked in the Department of Health as a senior civil servant. He is currently employed as the Chief Executive of Towards, a private mental health therapy provider. Tim supports the group board with analytical insight and a commitment to continuous improvement. Tim leads the Strode Local College Board as Chair and is member of the Full Board and Quality and Standards Committee.

**Jane Viner MBE**– Formerly a Chief Nurse, Jane Viner is a collaborative and considerate governor with extensive experience as Chair of Governors at two colleges and as an Executive Director and Deputy CEO of an NHS Trust. Jane's competitive spirit and strategic leadership underpin her commitment to effective governance and quality assurance, supporting the

college's mission and values as a highly skilled member of the Full Board. She was awarded the MBE for services to nursing in 2020.

**Craig Middleton** – Craig is a member of the Full Board and Link Governor for Safeguarding. An experienced senior educator and pastoral leader, he plays a key role in shaping a safe, consistent, and aspirational environment for around 950 students within a complex residential school setting. His oversight spans behaviour, wellbeing, safeguarding awareness, and the systems that support students academically and pastorally. He brings strong pastoral leadership, combining a deep understanding of adolescent development with fair, balanced judgement. Strategic, discreet, and quietly influential, Craig strengthens systems, supports colleagues effectively, and consistently helps bring out the best in others.

**Mel Squires** – Mel Squires is an experienced senior leader, skilled facilitator, and strategic manager. With a focus on collaboration, performance management, and coaching, Mel is team-oriented and people-focused. Mel's expertise in careers and strategic management supports the board's work in driving college improvement and fostering a supportive environment for staff and students. Mel is Vice-Chair of the Cannington Local College Board and a member of the Full Board and Quality and Standards Committee.

**Liam O'Shea** – Liam is Head of Public Affairs and Deputy Chief of Staff at the University of Bristol. Previously, he managed public affairs for a UK tertiary education and research sector body and for a national not-for-profit investing in and advocating for the creative industries. An experienced communications leader, Liam specialises in public affairs, public relations, policy engagement, content marketing, corporate communications, and crisis management. He collaborates with a wide network of colleagues across the tertiary education and research sector and provides strategic counsel to the University's leadership team to advance institutional objectives.

**James Freeman** – (details coming soon)

*Updated April 2026*