

AQUINAS COLLEGE GOVERNING BODY

Meeting: 10 March 2015
Time: 4.30pm
Venue: The College

GOVERNORS PRESENT

Dr P Beatty, Miss M Braithwaite, Mr L Byrne, Ms C Calverley, Mr P Carter, Mrs B Donovan, Mrs C H Dove, Mr B Hickey, Mrs R Hewitt, Mr J Horan, Mr A Martin, Cllr T P McGee, Mrs J Miller, Fr P Munroe, Dr A Smith and Mr D Pearson (Principal).

IN ATTENDANCE

Mrs D Blackburn Assistant Principal
Mr T Conlon Clerk to the Governing Body

Cllr T P McGee in the Chair

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Ms H Delahan, Miss F Insoll, Mr M Kiaei and Mrs E Rice.

2. APPOINTMENT OF FOUNDATION GOVERNOR

RESOLVED: That subject to confirmation by the Diocese Mrs J Miller be appointed as a Foundation Governor.

3. STUDENT GOVERNORS

RESOLVED: That Miss F Insoll and Mr M Kiaei be appointed as Student Governors.

4. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Governors and Staff were asked to declare any interest, which they may have in any of the items on the Agenda for this meeting. No interests were declared. However, Governors were reminded of the fact that there would be a confidential item on admission arrangements.

5. COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

RESOLVED- i) That Mrs J Miller be appointed to the Audit Committee and ii) that Miss F Insoll and Mr M Kiaei be appointed to the General Purposes Committee and Resources Committee. The students to determine which committee they want to be on.

6. (i) GOVERNING BODY MINUTES

RESOLVED – i) That the minutes of the meetings held on 18 November 2014 copies of which had been circulated previously, (a) be approved and signed by the Chairperson as a correct record and (b) be authorised for publication in accordance with the College Instrument and Articles.

6. (ii) MATTERS ARISING FROM THE GOVERNING BODY MINUTES

There were no matters arising that were not covered on the Agenda for the meeting.

7. (i) COMMITTEE MINUTES

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the following Committee meetings, copies circulated previously,

(i) Audit Committee	26 January 2015
(ii) Resources Committee	27 January 2015
(iii) General Purposes and Employment Committee	3 February 2015
(iv) Teaching and Learning Committee	10 February 2015

(a) be approved and signed by the Chairperson as a correct record and (b) be authorised for publication in accordance with the College Instrument and Articles.

8. (ii) MATTERS ARISING FROM THE COMMITTEE MINUTES

a) Audit Committee – 26 January 2015

i) Benchmarking Report 2013/2014 – Minute 8

A report provided by Baker Tilly contained Benchmarking Data in respect of assurance levels across all assurance audits for 2013/2014. The report also showed the College's performance for 2012/2013 and 2013/2014, benchmarked against other sectors. The Benchmarking data was noted.

ii) Review of Committee Terms of Reference – Minute 10

The Audit Committee Terms of Reference had been reviewed and Mr Byrne had undertaken a tidying up exercise and the changes proposed were cosmetic.

RESOLVED: That the amended Audit Committee Terms of Reference be approved.

iii) Appointment of Internal Auditors – Minute – 13

Concerned was expressed that if the college was faced with an inspection there was no evidence that the college had tested the market and that the college was getting value for money.

Mrs Blackburn undertook to contact Holy Cross, Salford, Priestley, Loreto, Xavarian and Winstanley Sixth Form Colleges to see who they have appointed as Internal and External Auditors. This information had now been received and would be considered at the next Audit Committee meeting.

b) Resources Committee – 27 January 2015.

i) IT Strategy – Minute 3

Mr Moss had advised Governors that a Technology Strategy Group had been established within the college. All sections of staff were represented and the aim of the group is to try to identify problem areas and to bring new ideas on how to resolve the problems. In addition Mr Moss and Mrs Blackburn meet regularly to monitor the position. The infrastructure of the college is now 5 years old and is getting towards the end of its life span. The college could be faced with large expenditure over the next few years to replace the telephone system, 300 pc and 92 whiteboards/projectors. It is now impossible to get some spare parts for the telephone system.

Cllr McGee suggested that the college look at leasing as an option to give the college some breathing space.

Mr Pearson informed Governors that the use of IT equipment had increased because more students are taking BTEC courses. When determining what curriculum to offer the college needs to make sure that it has the IT equipment to support it. He added that rooms that were dedicated IT rooms would in future be used for other subject areas.

A future report would be submitted to the Resources Committee.

ii) Review of Committee Terms of Reference – Minute 10

The Resources Committee Terms of Reference had been reviewed and the only change was at Point 8 delete Three year Plan add Two Year Financial Plan.

RESOLVED: That the amended Resources Committee Terms of Reference be approved.

c) General Purposes Committee and Employment Committee – 3 February 2015

i) Student Destinations – Minute 5

The Governing Body noted the information on the destination of students who had left the College at the end of the 2012/2013 academic year.

ii) Admissions 2014/2015 – Confidential Item

Governors noted the information in relation to the admissions process for 2015/2016 with particular reference to the taking up of references, personal statements and the interviews of students. The standard of applications had been good and the personal statements were of a very high quality.

The target number for 2015/2016 would be a minimum of 2050 students.

iii) Employment Issues – Minute 5

There will be a need to make significant savings in 2016/2017. The savings needed for 2015/2016 will be covered by natural turnover. However, it may be necessary to restructure in 2016/2017 and there may be a need to consider redundancies.

Mrs Blackburn advised Governors that the college was faced with high additional costs at the same time and protection funding would cease.

Ms Calverley reminded Governors that if there are more than 20 redundancies the college will need to consult the respective teacher associations. It is important that the college has a line of communication with staff representatives.

Mr Byrne suggested that it may necessary to review the college policy.

d) Teaching and Learning Committee 10 February 2015

i) Quality Reviews – Minute 5

The Governing Body noted the information on the Quality Review process within the College and the results of the lesson observations that had been undertaken by staff within the college and staff from other sixth form colleges.

The college grades its departments using the Ofsted grading having a + or a – added to the grades to add accuracy. Governors noted that most of the departments were a grade 2.

ii) Linearity 2015 Onwards – Minute 7

Mr Pearson advised Governors that mathematics and further mathematics would now move to become a linear A level in September 2017.

A letter to staff had proposed 4 options from September 2015 as follows:

- i) To teach all classes as a 2 year linear course
- ii) As above but to identify students in danger of failing by January of their first year to be entered for AS to gauge their progress and potential to continue.
- iii) To teach all classes to be examined in the AS at the end of year1 and the full A level at the end of year2. Allowing a drop out point.
- iv) Where subject size allows, to have the majority of classes as option i) and one or two classes as option iii)

Most departments voted for option iii) which is basically what is currently happening, with English taking option i).

Mr Pearson advised Governors that currently most students take 4 and if 1 is dropped at any point it still leaves 3. This provides a safety net that would not exist if students only started 3 subjects. The college will probably still offer AS across the board.

Dr Smith asked what was happening to A*. Mr Pearson replied that it had not yet been decided for A levels but in GCSE it was the top 20% of those achieving an A grade.

It was noted that by 2016 there will be 25 linear A levels with more still to convert in 2017.

9. BUDGET 2014/2015 HALF YEAR FORECAST

Mrs Blackburn advised Governors that the February 2015 account included the re-forecasting that had been undertaken in January 2015. There had been some savings on staffing but increased expenditure on facilities.

It was anticipated that the year end surplus would be in the region of £270,000.

RESOLVED: That the budget position for 2014/2015 be noted.

10. (i) PRINCIPAL'S TERMLY REPORT

The report of the Principal, copies of which had been circulated, was presented and discussed.

RESOLVED - That the Principal's report be received.

10. (ii) MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PRINCIPAL'S TERMLY REPORT

Mr Pearson reported on the following:

- a) Budget – The student numbers at the college have grown but there is concern for 2016/2017 when the formula protection funding ceases. There is £300,000 protection for 2015/2016. The EFA funding is likely to be reduced at the same time as the college will be faced additional costs of £190,000 for national insurance and pension contributions.

b) Local Developments – Both Stockport College and Cheadle and Marple College are rationalising their provision and managing a shrinking economy and falling rolls, 700 and 400 students respectively. Stockport College has appointed a new Principal, Simon Andrews who will take up the post in April 2015. The Technical School, SK1 based at the College will close due to a lack of pupils in 2016. Cheadle and Marple College have now sold the Hibbert Lane site for housing and will concentrate their provision in Marple on the Buxton Lane site. Miss Braithwaite asked where the students were going. Mr Pearson replied that there was a reduction in student numbers and students were going to Manchester colleges, Macclesfield College and other sixth forms in the area.

Mr Pearson advised Governors that there would be a meeting with the Local Authority in a few weeks time to discuss post 16 provision within the Authority. There is the possibility that some colleges may need to consider merging.

c) Admissions for 2015/2016 had been dealt with under matters arising from the General Purpose Committee held on 3 February 2015.

d) Staffing Updates – Mr Pearson reported on the new appointments that have been made and on those that had left the College. Governors noted that the two level 2 Apprentices had achieved their level two qualifications, one as an IT applications apprentice and the other in business administration. Both had now secured posts outside of the college.

e) Adult Education – The SFA adult budget will be cut for 2015/2016 around 24%. In addition the results for GCSEs in 2013 /2014 were disappointing and some failed to meet the Minimum Level of Performance set by the SFA. This may result in a Notice of Concern which sets out conditions around funding connected to retention and achievement of students.

On 15 April 2015 between 6.00pm and 8.00pm there will be an Adult Education “Art and Craft Exhibition” covering art, painting, creative craft, ceramics, photoshop and photography. All Governors are invited to celebrate adult learning at the college.

f) Aquinas Day – On 28 January 2015 the college celebrated Aquinas Day with staff and students participating in a number of events around the college. Fr Pat Munroe celebrated Mass in the afternoon giving invaluable insight of our patron’s life and what he stood for.

g) College Visits – Governors noted the various college visits that had been undertaken.

The Governors recorded their thanks to Mr Pearson for his informative report.

12. GOVERNOR TRAINING SESSION

It was agreed that the training evening be held on 13 May 2015 and would include the following:

- i) Return to Linear A levels in 2015
- ii) Education Policy
- iii) Adult Education
- iv) Financial Health of the college
- v) Direction of the college

13. CHAIRPERSON'S ACTION

The Chairperson advised Governors that a student had been excluded from college in October 2014 after several warnings. The mother and step father had been satisfied with the process and accepted that the process had been fair. However, the student's natural father had contacted the college and spoke to several staff about the issue submitting a complaint. He then contacted the Chairperson to complain that the Principal was not suitably responding to answering his emails. The Chairperson upheld the college's decision and found that the college had followed its procedures and that the matter was now closed. The father was advised that the matter would be reported to Governors at their next meeting.

In the meantime the father had suggested he would take his complaint further and write to the EFA and the Clerk to the Governors to lodge a complaint against the Chair of Governors. No contact has been made by the EFA to the college on this matter. The Chairperson and the Principal had offered to meet with father but he declined the offer.

Mr Horan asked has the college followed its own procedures and is there evidence in place to prove this. The Chairperson confirmed that the college had followed its own procedures and there was evidence to support this. The Principal stated the college had gone as far as it could to answer all the questions raised by the father.

The Chairperson and the Principal advised Governors that the matter had taken up a lot of staff time in dealing with the complaint. The college have not heard from the father in the last two months and the college considers that the matter was now closed.

RESOLVED: That the Governing Body supports the action taken by the Chairperson to resolve the matter.

14. CORRESPONDENCE

No correspondence was brought forward for Governors consideration.

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

A copy of the revised Instrument and Articles of Government for the college had been received. The revised Instrument and Articles of Government had been drawn up by Paul Barber (Director Catholic Education Service) and Christine Fischer (Legal Adviser Catholic Education Service). The Shrewsbury Diocese had signed a copy of the revised Instrument and Articles of Government to signify their acceptance.

A discussion took place and it was agreed that the matter would be deferred until the next Governing Body meeting when the changes to the Instrument and Articles of Government could be considered and a decision made on whether or not to accept the revised Instrument and Articles of Government.

16. DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS

- a) Governors Training – 13 May 2015 at 7.00pm
- b) Summer Term meeting - 23 June 2015 at 4.30pm

Signed _____
Chairperson
Terry Conlon (Clerk to the Governors)

Date _____