

AQUINAS COLLEGE GOVERNING BODY

Meeting: 24 November 2015

Time: 4.30pm

Venue: The College

GOVERNORS PRESENT

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

IN ATTENDANCE

Mrs D Blackburn (Assistant Principal- Finance) and Mr T Conlon (Clerk to the Governing Body).

Mr T Conlon in the Chair

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON

It was proposed, seconded and unanimously

RESOLVED: That Cllr T P McGee be elected Chairperson for the ensuing academic year.

Cllr T P McGee in the Chair.

2. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRPERSON

It was proposed, seconded and unanimously

RESOLVED: That Mr L Byrne be elected Vice Chairperson for the ensuing academic year.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Ms C Calverley, Ms H Delahan, Mrs J Miller, Mrs E Rice and Mr E Moore (Vice Principal).

The Chairperson advised Governors that Mrs Miller was undergoing chemotherapy treatment at the moment but was remaining very positive. The Governors passed on their best wishes.

4. GOVERNING BODY MEMBERSHIP

The Chairperson welcomed Mrs R Phillipson as a new Parent Governor. For the benefit of Mrs Phillipson the Governors introduced themselves.

5. ELIGIBILITY AND REGISTER OF PECUNIARY INTERESTS

Governors were asked to complete the Declaration of Eligibility and Register of Pecuniary Interest Forms that had been circulated and to return them to the Clerk at the end of the meeting.

6. 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.

There were no interests declared.

7. OPEN GOVERNMENT

RESOLVED: That the Governing Body would continue to adopt the Open Government policy. Governing Body meetings and its committees would be open to the public, subject to the exclusion of observers for confidential items.

8. COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

i) The Chairperson advised Governors that Mr L Byrne had indicated that he no longer wanted to be member of the Audit Committee and Governors were asked to consider becoming a member of the Audit Committee. However, due to the illness of Mrs Miller he had agreed to continue pro tem.

ii) It was agreed that Mrs R Phillipson would be a member of the General Purposes and Employment Committees.

9. GOVERNING BODY MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meetings held on 23 June and 29 September 2015, copies of which had been circulated previously be, (a) approved and signed by the Chairperson as a correct record and (b) authorised for publication in accordance with the College Instrument and Articles.

10. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE GOVERNING BODY MINUTES

i) 29 September 2015- Minute 4 (a)

The Chairperson advised Governors that between 70-80 colleges out 320 General FE colleges and sixth form colleges will be in serious financial difficulty next year. The outcomes of the Comprehensive Spending Review will be known tomorrow but it will be February 2016 before colleges know how they will be affected.

11. COMMITTEE MINUTES

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

(i) Audit Committee	9 November 2015
(ii) General Purposes and Employment Committee	6 July and 20 October 2015
(iii) Resources Committee	10 November 2015
(iv) Teaching and Learning Committee	6 October 2015
(v) Remuneration Committee	10 November 2015

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

12. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE COMMITTEE MINUTES

a) Audit Committee – 9 November 2015

i) Financial Statements Audit and Management Letter

Governors noted that the draft Management Letter from Mazars LLP indicated that subject to carrying out a post balance sheet events review there will be an unqualified opinion on both the Financial Statements and Regularity Audit for the year ended 31 July 2015. Mrs Blackburn advised Governors that the auditors had added a note to cover the Area Reviews.

There were no management points that required to be drawn to the attention of Governors.

ii) Internal Audit Annual Report for 2014/2015

The report from Baker Tilly Business Services Ltd concluded that the College has adequate and effective risk management, control and governance processes to manage the achievement of the College's objectives.

iii) Change of Name

Governors noted that with effect from 26 October 2015 there had been a change of name from Baker Tilly to RSM and that the entity under which they provide the internal audit service to the college will be RSM Risk Assurance Services LLP. A new Letter of Engagement will be issued to reflect this change.

iv) Statement Of Recommended Practice (SORP)

Governors noted that the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) will be introduced for the financial year ending 31 July 2016.

v) Draft Statutory Accounts

Governors noted that the College's Annual Report and Financial Statement for the year ended 31 July 2015 would be considered at this meeting.

vi) Audit Committee Annual Report

Governors noted that the Audit Committee Annual Report would be considered at this meeting.

vii) Risk Management

Governors noted that the Annual Report on Risk Management would be considered at this meeting.

b) Resources Committee - 10 November 2015

i) Health and Safety Report

Governors noted that the main cause of absence was reported as stress related. The number of

days lost had reduced from 372 in the previous year to 25 and covered 5 staff. 20 days had been due to stress related illness compared to 330 in the previous year.

ii) Financial Regulations

RESOLVED: That the changes to the Financial Regulations be approved.

iii) Governors noted that the College's Annual Report and Financial Statement for the year ended 31 July 2015 would be considered at this meeting.

c) General Purposes and Employment Committee – 20 October 2015

i) Admissions 2015/2016

Governors noted that on the census date of 14 October 2015 there were 2103 students. This meant that a net of 37 students either did not arrive or have already left to go elsewhere. The final number of 2103 was 27 above target.

ii) Admissions 2016/2017

Governors noted that the Open Evenings had been very busy. The closing date for applications (which are online) for 2016/2017 is 29 November 2015. Applications from category 5 students who have submitted their application forms by 29 November 2015 will then be considered taking into account their school reference. Applicants who are to receive further consideration will receive a letter by 19 December 2015 inviting them to attend an interview in January/February 2016.

Governors were reminded of the current classification of the different categories for admission to the college:

Category 1	Catholic applicants from the college's Catholic partner schools
Category 2	Catholic applicants from other schools
Category 3	Non Catholic applicants from other Catholic schools
Category 4	Brothers and sisters of present and former students of the college and children of current staff and governors of the college
Category 5	Other applicants

Mr Pearson advised Governors that he would like to revise the categories to just two, with category 1 being sub divided into four.

- Category 1 to be come Category 1 (a)
 - Category 2 to be come Category 1 (b)
 - Category 3 to be come Category 1 (c)
 - Category 4 to be come Category 1 (d)
 - Category 5 to be come Category 2
- After a full discussion it was:

RESOLVED: i) That the target number for 2016/2017 would be 2125 students and

ii) That the change of categories outlined above be approved.

iii) Publicity - Governors noted that the college website had been hacked into and was the subject of a "Denial of Service attack". As a result 16 other colleges suffered a break down in service. The college has since changed service provider. It had been

decided not to update the website so close to the online applications process. The college now has more protection against such attacks.

Governors noted that the School Liaison and Marketing group (SLAM) meets every week and are now visiting schools to speak to pupils as young as Year 9. The college had acknowledged that it had to improve its marketing as a result of competition from other colleges.

d) Teaching and Learning Committee - 6 October 2015

Cllr McGee reminded Governors of the reasons why the committee had been established last year i) the reorganisation of A levels and GCSE, ii) the fact that many staff have never taught linear subjects and iii) the Governing Body has a duty to look at what the impact will have on outcomes.

Governors noted that 14 linear A levels that started in September 2015 and that there would be 11 more next year with final subjects commencing in September 2017. Students will sit AS levels this year but probably not from September 2016. AS is only a measure of progress. Cllr McGee reminded Governors that there were a number of staff who had not taught Linear A levels and that they may need some support.

Cllr McGee advised Governors that the college was last inspected in October 2013, therefore, the earliest date that the college could expect to be inspected was September 2016.

13. COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

RESOLVED: That the revised Committee Terms of Reference for a) General Purposes and Employment Committees and b) Teaching and Learning Committee be approved.

14. GREATER MANCHESTER AREA REVIEW OF SIXTH FORM COLLEGES

This was a confidential item.

15. APPROVAL OF STATUTORY ACCOUNTS

A copy of the College's Report and Financial Statement for the year ended 31 July 2015 had been circulated to all Governors prior to the meeting. Both the Audit Committee and the Resources Committee had discussed these at their November 2015 meetings.

Members of the Audit Committee and Resources Committee had recommended that the Governing Body approve the Report and Financial Statement for the year ended 31 July 2015.

RESOLVED: That the College's Annual Report and Financial Statement for the year ended 31 July 2015 be approved.

16. BUDGET 2015/2016

Mrs Blackburn advised Governors there had been three changes i) the teaching staff budget was up £60,000 due to additional staff to cover curriculum pressures and to cover staff absences due to illness, ii) the support staff budget was down £23,000 due to a reduction in learning support staff and iii) high needs income up £60,000.

The budget would be reviewed in January 2016 and there will be regular re-forecasts during the year to ensure that the surplus reflects the latest information and cash flow is accurate as possible.

RESOLVED: That the budget position be noted.

17. GOVERNORS ATTENDANCE RECORD 2014/2015

Details of the Governors attendance at both Governing Body meetings and Committee meetings during the academic year 2014/2015 had been circulated to all Governors prior to the meeting.

The Chairperson thanked all Governors for their support at the various Committee meetings and at the Governing Body meetings.

RESOLVED: That the Annual Report on Governors attendance for the academic year 2014/2015 be approved.

18. PRINCIPAL'S TERMLY REPORT

The report of the Principal, copies of which were circulated, was presented and discussed. Mr Pearson apologised for the delay in getting his report to Governors.

RESOLVED: That the Principal's report be received.

19. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PRINCIPAL'S TERMLY REPORT

Mr Pearson reported on the following:

a) Examination Results – Mr Pearson advised Governors that there had been another set of good results building on improved results from last year. This was a testament to the hard work and effort of both staff and students. AS results were significantly better, as were high grades. Results in GCSE Mathematics and English were impressive and the BTEC provision continues to be outstanding despite significant growth in these areas.

Together with the outstanding results a college wide focus has led to the college retaining a high proportion of students. The statistical measures for the college are at or above the National benchmarks for Sixth Form Colleges. Over 50% of the grades at A level are at the high grades of A*- B and is further improved by adding in BTECs where over 80% grades are D* or D - equivalent to A* or A. BTECs now account for over 15% of the college's entries. Early indications show that the Points Per Entry score of 213 is comfortably the highest that the college has ever had (last year 210).

b) Student Enrolment – Mr Pearson advised Governors that enrolment for 2015/2016 was at the level that the College had hoped for and that it kept class sizes at the same level as last year. There will be a reduction in funding next year so it is important that the college recruits enough students. The staff have been impressed with the L6 students.

c) National Issues

i) The Comprehensive Spending Review will be announced on 24 November 2015 and it will provide a guide to the level of saving that the college will be required to make.

ii) The A level reforms have begun this year and are being phased in over three years.

d) Staffing

i) Mr Pearson reported on the resignations and appointments that had been made to the college from September 2015.

ii) A new pay framework will be introduced over the next three years. It aims to simplify the scale and give opportunities for progression. It removes the old threshold payment and allows staff to get to the top of the scale a little quicker, subject to annual satisfactory performance. The appraisal procedure has been amended accordingly.

e) Finance

i) The final results for 2014/2015 showed a surplus of £479,000.

ii) From September 2015 there has been an increase in employer's contributions to the Teachers Pension Scheme from 14.1% to 16.48% an increase to the college of £120,000. In addition from April 2016 the rebate on National Insurance due to being in a final pension scheme will finish and add 3.4% which is estimated at £105,000.

f) Adult Education – Mr Pearson reported on the current education curriculum offered by the Adult Education section of the college. It covers a wide range of academic and leisure courses.

g) Mission Day

The College held a Mission Day in July and started with Mass and followed by a presentation by Mr Moore reflecting on the college's ethos since the move into the new building. Staff who had completed the Leadership and Management course at the college were presented with their certificates. The other part of the day allowed staff to undertake a variety of activities organised by the College.

h) Euroweek

The report also covered the various activities that take place during Euroweek 2014 in Latvia. Seven students from the college represented the UK.

The Governors thanked Mr Pearson for his informative report.

20. RISK MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT

Mrs Blackburn outlined the key elements of the report to Governors. It was noted that the risk management process was well established in the college with regular reports to the Senior Management Team. In addition Risk Management was a standard item on the Audit Committee Agenda. Governors noted that the college has had clean audit reports from both Internal and External auditors.

RESOLVED: That Risk Management Annual Report for 2014/2015 and the amended Risk Management Policy be approved.

21. AUDIT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

Governors were advised that the Audit Committee had considered its Annual Report for the financial year 2014/2015, a copy of which had been circulated to all Governors prior to the meeting.

RESOLVED: That the Audit Committee's Annual Report be received.

22. CHAIRPERSON'S ACTION

i) The Chairperson reported that he had reviewed the college's Financial Regulations.

ii) The Chairperson reported that he had spent a great deal of time on the Area Based Review for post 16 education that involved all the Greater Manchester Colleges (21).

23. CORRESPONDENCE

No correspondence was brought forward for Governors consideration.

24. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

i) A paper giving details of the end of term arrangements was circulated for information. Governors were invited to attend the various activities.

ii) Governors were reminded that the Certificate Evening was on Tuesday 15 December 2015 at Stockport Town Hall at 7.30pm. The Chairperson encouraged Governors to attend.

iii) A paper was circulated that gave an update on Adult Education provision post the 2014/2015 results

25. DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS

19 January 2016 and 8 March 2016

Signed _____
Chairperson

Date _____

Terry Conlon
(Clerk to the Governors)

