

AQUINAS COLLEGE GOVERNING BODY

Meeting: 21 November 2017

Time: 4.30pm

Venue: The College

GOVERNORS PRESENT

Dr P Beatty, Miss M Braithwaite, Mr C Broda, Mr L Byrne, Mr P Carter, Mrs C H Dove, Mr R Harris, Mr D Hodson, Mr P Horton, Mr A Martin, Cllr T P McGee, Mrs J Miller, Mr D Pearson, Mrs R Phillipson, Dr A Smith and Miss A Snape.

IN ATTENDANCE

Ms C Vitti	Vice Principal
Mrs D Blackburn	Assistant Principal (Finance)
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 Mrs J Miller be elected Vice Chairperson for the ensuing academic year.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Ms C Calverley, Mr B Hickey and Mr J Horan.

4. GOVERNING BODY MEMBERSHIP

It was noted that Mr R Harris and Miss A Snape had been elected as Staff Governors. For the benefit of the Staff Governors all of 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. GOVERNING BODY MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 27 June 2017, 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.

9. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE GOVERNING BODY MINUTES

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

10. COMMITTEE MINUTES

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

(i) Audit Committee	6 November 2017
(ii) General Purposes and Employment Committee	3 July and 10 October 2017
(iii) Resources Committee	7 November 2017
(iv) Teaching and Learning Committee	3 October 2017

(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 – 6 November 2017

i) Draft Statutory Accounts – Minute 5

Governors noted that the College's Annual Report and Financial Statement for the year ended 31 July 2017 would be considered at this meeting.

ii) Internal Audit Annual Report for 2016/2017 – Minute 6

The report from RSM concluded that the college has adequate and effective risk management control and governance processes to manage the achievement of the College's objectives.

iii) Financial Statements Audit and Management Letter – Minute 9

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 2017.

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

iv) Risk Management – Minute 10

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

v) Audit Committee Annual Report - Minute 12

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

b) Resources Committee - 7 November 2017

i) Health and Safety Report 2016/2017 – Minute 5

Governors noted that the main cause of absence was reported as stress related. The number of days lost had increased from 25 in the previous year to 109 and covered 4 staff. 78 days had been due to stress related illness compared to 20 in the previous year.

ii) Amended Bank Covenants – Minute 9

Mrs Blackburn advised Governors that changes were needed to the bank covenants to account for the pension disclosures under FSR 102 (28). The changes are to clarify the treatment of the large pension adjustment that need to be included in the accounts.

RESOLVED: That the changes to the Bank Covenants be agreed.

iii) Financial Regulations – Minute 10

Mrs Blackburn advised Governors that the Resources Committee had reviewed the financial regulations and had recommended them to the Governing Body for approval.

RESOLVED: That the Financial Regulations be approved.

c) General Purposes and Employment Committee – 10 October 2017

i) Trains stopping at Woodsmoor and Davenport stations – Minute 4 (a)

Governors noted that it was felt that the initial proposals by Northern Rail to reduce the number of trains that would stop at Woodsmoor and Davenport stations would not go ahead.

ii) Admissions 2017/2018 – Minute 5

Governors noted that at the start of the term the actual number of students on roll in L6 was 1206 with 1124 new students, (the remaining 82 students being made up of pathways and recyclers). Mr Pearson reported that 930 students had applied by the deadline from category 1 with a predicted conversion rate of 63.44% that gave 590 students. The actual conversion rate was 61.94% which gave 576 students. 840 students from category 2 had applied for a place at the college. In previous years the conversion rate has been between

54-62%. 840 offers were made based on a conversion rate of 58.1%. The actual conversion rate was 58.57% which gave 492 students. The actual number of new students in L6 was, therefore, 1068. There were 41 late offers to category 1 and 15 in category 2 giving a total of 1124 new students in L6. In the U6 there are 992 students giving a total of 2198 (including the 82 mentioned above) which was below last year's figure. The funding figure for 2017/2018 was 2226. The college had grown each year by about 20 students but this could not continue.

With the introduction of linear subjects the college would expect to keep more students. Mrs Braithwaite asked why was this? Mr Pearson replied that it is no longer possible for students to drop out or change courses. It is not known what the progression rate will be to U6 in 2018/2019 but it could possibly be the largest U6 the college has ever had.

ii) Admissions 2018/2019 – Minute 6

Mr Pearson advised Governors that the optimum size for the college was around 2200 students which would mean approximately 1100 in each year. There would be a need to carefully consider the curriculum and financial position of the college for 2018/2019. In addition there would be a need for careful planning to determine the size of the L6 for 2018/2019.

Governors noted that the Open Day/Evenings had been very busy. The closing date for applications (which are online) for 2018/2019 is 30 November 2017. Applications from category 2 students who have submitted their application forms by 30 November 2017 will then be considered taking into account their school reference. Applicants who are to receive further consideration will receive a letter by 19 December 2017 inviting them to attend an interview in January/February 2018.

With over 1200 students in the L6 this year, 2018/2019 could possibly be the largest U6 the college has ever had. This will mean that the L6 for 2018/2019 could be about 100 students less than this year. Around 1000 category 2 applicants would be interviewed along with all category 1 applicants.

d) Teaching and Learning Committee - 3 October 2017

Dr Beatty thanked Dr Smith for chairing the meeting and Ms Vitti for the detailed information that had been provided for the committee.

i) Results Overview – Minute 5

Governors noted that the college will look closely at those students whose average GCSE score is 7.0 - 7.5 and that there had been an improvement in Mathematics at AS level.

ii) Progress on Under Performing Subjects - Minute 6

Dr Smith advised Governors that the committee discusses in detail those subject areas that are under performing. Dr Beatty added that that the committee looks carefully at the progress that is being made.

13. GOVERNING BODY SELF ASSESSMENT 2017

Details of the Governors Self Assessment returns for the academic year 2016/2017 had been circulated to all Governors prior to the meeting.

The Chairperson advised Governors that the Self Assessment should have been completed earlier and thanked Governors for their support in completing the Self Assessment Review form. He added that with the Clerk to the Governors and he would look in detail at the responses with particular reference to the areas where improvement could be made. The Teaching and Learning Committee will look at how Governors can be attached to individual subject areas.

RESOLVED: That the Governors Self Assessment returns for the academic year 2016/2017 be received.

14. APPROVAL OF STATUTORY ACCOUNTS

A copy of the College's Report and Financial Statement for the year ended 31 July 2017 had been circulated to all Governors prior to the meeting. Both the Audit Committee and the Resources Committee had discussed these at their November 2017 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 2017.

RESOLVED: That the College's Annual Report and Financial Statement for the year ended 31 July 2017 be approved.

15. BUDGET 2017/2018

Mrs Blackburn advised Governors that the only change to the budget was in relation to High Needs students as outlined in the Management Accounts. The contingency figure had increased to £338,00 from £164,000.

The budget would be reviewed in January 2018 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.

16. GOVERNORS ATTENDANCE RECORD 2016/2017

Details of the Governors attendance at both Governing Body meetings and Committee meetings during the academic year 2016/2017 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 2016/2017 be approved.

17. PRINCIPAL'S TERMLY REPORT

The report of the Principal, copies of which were circulated, was presented and

discussed. Mr Pearson advised Governors that the autumn term report provides an opportunity to review the previous year's performance and focus on the future.

RESOLVED: That the Principal's report be received.

18. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PRINCIPAL'S TERMLY REPORT

Mr Pearson reported on the following:

a) Examination Results – Mr Pearson advised Governors that the results were for the first cohort sitting the reformed linear A levels. Once again over 53% of grades at A Level were at the highest grades level of A* - B and that BTECs where almost 90% of grades were at D* or D, equivalent to A* or A. BTECs account for over 20% of the college's provision. These vocational courses are in the process of being reformed in a similar way to A levels.

With last year being the first year of the reformed A levels there are no benchmarks. Cllr McGee asked the staff governors if they had any results for the subjects they teach. Both indicated that their subjects were not included in the results. Cllr McGee added that many staff had no experience of linear A levels.

b) Student Enrolment – Mr Pearson advised Governors that enrolment for 2017/2018 was 1240 students in L6 and just short of 1000 students in U6. On the census date for funding 2018/2019 the number was 2188 compare to 2215 last year which means that funding for 2018/2019 will be down from this year.

Cllr McGee suggested to Governors that in terms of finance then numbers were crucial and across the country 6th Form Colleges could be seen in 3 broad groups as follows;

a) those who have a growth in pupil numbers b) those where numbers have declined and have closed or amalgamated and c) those in the middle but are struggling.

Mrs Miller asked for clarity on the numbers that would transfer from L6 to U6 in September 2018. Mr Pearson replied that curriculum planning for 2018/2019 had already started and that the move to linear A levels had impacted on some subject areas. In some areas there no expansion possible. From a student perspective Mr Hodson felt that linear A levels were more stressful than modular, with linear A levels you have to revise two years course work. Mr Pearson added that students are given good support in preparing for the examinations. Dr Smith felt that students had a lack of vision in what they want to do and as a result fewer are applying to go to universities.

c) Area Review

Mr Pearson advised Governors that the Greater Manchester Combined Authority was focused on skills development across Greater Manchester and is working with FE colleges rather than sixth form colleges. Some sixth form colleges have decided to go down the academy route, however, there has been little progress on providing the necessary primary legislation for Catholic Colleges to become academies. Shrewsbury Diocese is progressing with its plan to identify geographical clusters where it would make sense for Multi Academy Trusts to be set up. The college remains in discussion with the Diocese but there are no plans to change the status of the college.

Stockport College is still pursuing a merger with Trafford College and a decision is

expected in March 2018. Miss Braithwaite asked what was the benefit of the merger. Mr Pearson replied that it was to do with efficiency and cutting costs. Stockport College had financial difficulties and offered level 2, 3 and 4 courses, no Alevels had been offered for 4 years. Dr Beatty asked what would the impact be on the college of the merger or if the college closed. Cllr McGee replied that Cheadle and Marple College could take some extra vocational students. Mr Pearson added that he would prepare a report for the Teaching and Learning Committee on the possible implications.

d) Staffing

Mr Pearson reported on the resignations and appointments that had been made to the college from September 2017.

e) Adult Education – Mr Pearson reported on the current education curriculum offered by the Adult Education section of the college. Governors noted that it covers a wide range of academic and leisure courses and that the number enrolled was similar to last year. The Notice of Concern had been lifted in March 2017 and all results for 2016/2017 were above the minimum level of performance with 18 Access students going on to university in either 2017/2018 or deferring until 2018/2019.

f) Mission and Ethos Day

The College held a Mission and Ethos Day in July and started with a motivational talk from Canon Luiz Ruscillo who is a priest in the Diocese of Lancaster where he is Head of Education Service of the Diocese of Lancaster. The other part of the day allowed staff to undertake a variety of activities organised by the College.

g) Euroweek

The report also covered the various activities that take place during Euroweek 2017 in Hungary. Eight students from the college represented the UK.

h) Trips and Visits

The report also covered the various trips and visits that had been undertaken by Modern Language Students and Earth Sciences.

i) Departmental Activities

The report also covered the activities that had taken place in the Art and Design Department, Science Department, Cambridge Chemistry Challenge, Performing Arts and PE Department.

The Governors thanked Mr Pearson for his informative report.

Mr Broda left the meeting at this point.

19. 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 2016/2017 and the amended Risk Management Policy be approved.

20. AUDIT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

Governors were advised that the Audit Committee had considered its Annual Report for the financial year 2016/2017, a copy of which had been circulated to all Governors prior to the meeting. The Chairperson of the Audit Committee advised Governors that after the Audit Committee meeting the internal auditors had advised the college that there was a need to add to the report a comment on the committee's opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the college's assurance arrangements, framework of governance, risk management and control processes for the effective and efficient use of resources, solvency of the institution and the safeguarding of its assets.

RESOLVED: That subject to the above amendment the Audit Committee's Annual Report be received.

21. CES CODE OF CONDUCT

A discussion took place on the CES Code of Conduct for Foundation Governors that had been circulated to Governor prior to the meeting. A number of concerns were raised by Governors about the suitability of the CES Code of Conduct. It was agreed that a small group of Governors would meet to go through the CES Code of Conduct and report back to the next meeting of the Governing Body. The Clerk to the Governors would advise Governors of the date and time when the meeting would be held.

22. DISCLOSURE AND BARRING SERVICE (DBS)

A discussion took place on whether or not Governors at the college are subject to the Disclosure and Barring Service. Mr Pearson advised Governors that sixth form colleges governors are not subject to the provisions of the Disclosure and Barring Service. However, if they were to go into classrooms with students present they would be subject to the provisions of the Disclosure and Barring Service.

Mr Horton explained what the Disclosure and Barring Service covered. Governors noted that they would need to provide two documents to confirm their identity and address. The service is provided by a regulatory authority and cannot be transferred from one school/college to another. There is a cost to the college for the service.

After a full discussion it was agreed that governors (including Student Governors if they are over 18 years of age) would be asked to undertake a Disclosure and Barring Service clearance. Mr Horton was asked to liaise with Mr Pearson so that Governors can complete the Disclosure and Barring Service application forms in January 2018.

Mr Pearson advised Governors that all the staff had taken part in a Safeguarding update.

23. CHAIRPERSON'S ACTION

The Chairperson reported that he had agreed that a member of the support staff who had been off ill and was subject to a return to work interview be offered a severance payment in line with agreed procedures.

24. CORRESPONDENCE

No correspondence was brought forward for Governors consideration.

25. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

i) Mr Pearson was asked to update the booklet of Aquinas Staff which gave details of the management structure, senior management team, curriculum and quality section heads, curriculum heads of department, pastoral senior tutors, support staff leaders and support staff heads of department to reflect the changes in September 2017.

ii) Governors were reminded that the Certificate Evening was on Monday 18 December 2017 in the Sports Hall at the college at 7.30pm. The Chairperson encouraged Governors to attend.

26. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

6 March 2018.

Signed _____
Chairperson

Date _____

Terry Conlon
(Clerk to the Governors)