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AQUINAS COLLEGE GOVERNING BODY

Meeting: 6 March 2018

Time: 4.30pm

Venue: The College

GOVERNORS PRESENT

Dr P Beatty, Miss M Braithwaite, Mr L Byrne, Ms C Calverley, Mr P Carter, Mrs C H Dove, Mr R Harris, Mr B Hickey Mr J Horan, Mr P J Horton, Cllr T P McGee, Mrs J Miller, Mr D Pearson, Mrs R Phillipson, Dr A Smith, Miss A Snape and Mr A Wood.

IN ATTENDANCE

Ms C Vitti (Vice Principal)
Mrs D Blackburn (Assistant Principal Finance)
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 Miss M Jarvis and Mr A Martin.

2. STUDENT GOVERNORS

It was noted that Miss M Jarvis and Mr A Wood had been elected as Student Governors.

For the benefit of Mr A Wood all of the Governors introduced themselves.

3. 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.

4. COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The Chairperson advised Mr Wood that the Student Governors decide between themselves who will be a member of the General Purposes Committee and the Resources Committee and that both are members of the Teaching and Learning Committee.

RESOLVED- That Miss M Jarvis and Mr A Wood be appointed to the Teaching and Learning Committee.

5. (i) GOVERNING BODY MINUTES

RESOLVED – i) That the minutes of the meetings held on 25 November 2017 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.

Mrs Miller arrived whilst this item was being discussed.

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

a) Governing Body Self Assessment 2017 – Minute 13

A paper was circulated that identified a number of areas where Governors felt improvements could be made on how the Governing Body operates. The paper identified four areas for improvement and Governors were asked to consider what action should be taken. The areas identified were as follows:

- i) Create a nomination form for either a co-opted or foundation governor that any governor could take and fill in to nominate someone for the post. It should include a resume of skills and experience or statement as to why that person would be a suitable candidate.
- ii) Governors to discuss whether they would like to produce an annual communication to parents. If this was deemed appropriate then discuss what it may contain and how it could be achieved.
- iii) Use the Performance Review of 2017 to design a new questionnaire for the 2018 Annual Review
- iv) Discuss what further areas of the college may benefit from having a link governor who can more regularly engage with that particular area of the college.

After a full discussion it was felt that the best way to communicate with parents was to attend the Open Evenings and to include Governance information on the college website including a reminder that both committee meetings and Governing Body meetings are open meetings and members of the public can attend.

It was agreed that items i), ii) and iv) above be pursued and that any Governor who wished to follow up on item iv) should contact the Principal.

b) CES Code of Conduct - Minute 21

The notes of the meeting that was held on 23 January 2018 had been circulated to all Governors prior to the meeting.

Mr Horan advised Governors that meeting had identified a number of areas of concern and had made a number of recommendations to the Governing Body.

Dr Smith asked if Paul Barber from the Catholic Education Service had been involved in drawing up the Code of Conduct. The Chairperson replied that he did not know but would follow the matter up.

After a full discussion it was:

RESOLVED: That i) That Governors do not sign the Code of Conduct.

ii) That the Catholic Education Service be asked to reconsider the Code of Conduct in light of the reservations detailed in Minute 3.

iii) That Very Rev Canon David Roberts, Director of Education at Shrewsbury Diocese be informed of our decision by letter informing him of our concerns. If necessary he could be invited to a Governing Body meeting so that the concerns of the Governing Body can be expressed fully.

c) Disclosure Barring Service – Minute 22

The Chairperson reminded Governors that they needed to be subject to the provisions of the Disclosure and Barring Service and that they had been asked to produce three documents to confirm their identity to Julie Jones, HR Department at the college to start the process off. Governors who had not yet provided the necessary information were asked to do so as soon as possible.

6 (i) COMMITTEE MINUTES

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

(i) Audit Committee	12 February 2018
(ii) Resources Committee	13 February 2018
(iii) General Purposes and Employment Committee	30 January 2018
(iv) Teaching and Learning Committee	6 February 2018

(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 COMMITTEE MINUTES

a) Audit Committee – 12 February 2018

i) Co-opted Members – Minute 2

Ms M Garratt had attended her first meeting of the committee.

ii) Audit Committee Annual Report – Minute 5 (iii)

The Audit Committee's Annual Report had been amended to take in to account the changes in accordance with the Post 16 Audit Code of Practice published in March 2017.

iii) Governance and Risk Management – Minute 8 (a)

The audit identified that the college needs to undertake a Skills Analysis of Governors. The Chairperson and the Clerk to the Governors had produced a new Skills Audit form for Governors to complete. A hard copy would be provided at the end of the meeting and an electronic copy would be sent to all Governors. Governors were asked to complete the Skills Audit and return it to the Clerk of the Governing Body by 31 March 2018.

iv) Benchmarking Report 2015/2016 - Minute 9

The Benchmarking data produced by RSM showed that the levels of assurance for the college was well above the sector average.

v) Appointment of Auditors for 2018/2019

Mrs Blackburn has been asked to contact both RSM and Mazars LLP to ascertain what their fees would be for 2018/2019 for the same level of audit that was undertaken in 2017/2018.

b) Resources Committee – 13 February 2018.

i) Technology Update – Minute 6

Mrs Blackburn advised Governors that an initial review of the budget for 2018/19 indicates that it will be a financially constrained year. In 2017/18 we have the benefit of a large increase in income and anticipate a larger surplus. A review of the college's Technology Strategy had been undertaken and it had identified the need for the replacement of IT equipment. In order to alleviate pressure on 2018/19, it was proposed to bring forward £200,000 of IT expenditure into this year's budget.

After a full discussion it was:

RESOLVED: That approval be given for an additional £200,000 for the replacement of IT equipment be brought forward from the 2018/2019 budget to this year's budget.

ii) Future Funding Methodology – Minute 9

Mr Horan asked when was the per student funding last increased. Mrs Blackburn replied that it was in 2012. Mr Pearson advised Governors that Sixth Form College Association and principals have been lobbying for the level of funding to be increased and there had been a campaign called Save our Sixth Forms. Mr Horan felt that this was something that parents should be made aware of encouraged to contact their MP.

The Chairperson referred to funding debate that was on going in respect of funding for schools and the Tertiary Review that was being undertaken on post 18 and felt that sixth form colleges had missed the opportunity to raise its case for additional funding. Dr Smith added that if the 2010 budget for the college had been inflated by the Retail Price Index (RPI) it would be higher than the current budget although there were less students. He also add that the narrowing of the curriculum meant that it was the smallest in Europe.

Mr Pearson advised Governors that the next opportunity to lobby for increased funding would be when the Comprehensive Spending Review for 2019 is being drawn up. It was suggested that Mr Pearson continue to lobby the local MPs and possibly invite them to the college to see the college at work.

iii) Committee Terms of Reference - Minute 11

The committee's Terms of Reference had been reviewed and it had been agreed that no changes needed to be made.

c) General Purposes Committee and Employment Committee – 31 January 2017

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 2017/2018 academic year. Copies of the report were available if other governors wanted a copy.

ii) Admissions 2018/2019 - Minute 6

Governors noted the information in relation to the admissions process for 2018/2019 with particular

reference to the number of category 5 students that still needed to be interviewed. The target number for 2018/2019 would be around 2,210 students. The latest position would be covered by the Principal's report.

iii) Mollie Bentley – Minute 9

Dr Beatty advised Governors that the flowers had been delivered to Mollie Bentley a former governor at the college

iv) Employment Committee – Minute 5

In response to a question from a governor Mr Pearson advised Governors that no appeal had been received following the Disciplinary Hearings.

d) Teaching and Learning Committee – 6 February 2018

i) Quality Review meetings – Minute 5

Dr Beatty advised Governors that they should look at the associated papers that are produced that detail the steps that are being taken by the college to address issues in individual subject areas and departments. Governors noted that the majority of subjects are grade 2 or above. Particular reference was made to the traffic light system that has been introduced in relation to the actions taken to improve outcomes. Mr Pearson advised Governors that at an inspection the inspectors would only expect the members of the Teaching and Learning Committee to have a detailed knowledge. It was agreed that an overview would be included in the Governor Training session on 16 May 2018. The Teaching and Learning Committee was now in its third year and the role was developing.

ii) Impact on the college of the merger or closure of Stockport College – Minute 8

Mr Pearson advised Governors that the proposed merger of Stockport College with Trafford College to form the Trafford College Group has been put back to late March or early April 2018. Stockport College had been inspected again and was judged to be inadequate.

There is unlikely to be any change to the curriculum delivered by Stockport College and therefore, the merger will have little impact on the college.

iii) League tables – Minute 9 (i))

a) Mr Pearson advised Governors that the League Tables showed the headline measures for the college in comparison with Loreto, Ashton, Xaverian, Holy Cross, Cheadle and Marple Network colleges and the average for England. Overall the table showed that the college was performing well and scored the highest in 3 areas more than any of the other colleges. Governors noted that in English and Maths at GCSE level the college score was 60% compared with the national average of 40%.

7. BUDGET 2017/2018 HALF YEAR FORECAST

Mrs Blackburn advised Governors that the February 2018 accounts included the re-forecasting that had been undertaken in January 2018.

The overall effect is to increase the cash surplus to £403,000 and the accounting surplus to £573,000.

RESOLVED: That the budget position for 2017/2018 be noted.

8. BUDGET 2018/2019

Mrs Blackburn advised Governors that the college had received its initial ESFA budget for 2018/2019 which was £9.2m. The rate of funding per student has been static for many years, whilst the college has been faced with increases in pension and NI costs, pay awards and incremental progression. Due to a drop in student numbers in September 2017 there will be a reduction in income for 2018/2019 of around £161,000. Initial estimates of the teaching staff budget shows an increase of £250,000. A budget for 2018/2019 will be presented to Governors at the June 2018 meeting.

The Chairperson added that it is important to have the right number of staff to deliver the curriculum.

9. (i) PRINCIPAL'S TERMLY REPORT

That the report of the Principal, copies of which was circulated, was presented and discussed.

RESOLVED - That the Principal's report be received.

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

Mr Pearson reported on the following:

a) Admissions 2018/2019

Mr Pearson updated Governors on the latest position regarding admissions for 2018/2019. There had been 2340 applications including late applications. The target number for 2018/2019 would be around 2,210 students for September 2018. The college will be funded for 2,190 students in 2018/2019 based on lagged funding, which would mean that the college would receive a reduction in funding of £161,000. Whilst the numbers are critical for funding, what subjects the students opt to take is critical for curriculum planning. One or two areas have seen a lot of growth recently including Art and Design and Photography, whilst other subject have become less popular.

An update on the admission numbers will be given at the General Purposes Committee meeting on 2 July 2018.

b) Tertiary Review

Mr Pearson advised Governors that the Government have launched a "tertiary review". There had been a great deal of lobbying for the 16-18 sector to be included in the review. Principals in the North West had met with Angela Rayner, Shadow Education Secretary to try and influence future policy and manifesto commitments from the Labour Party.

c) Section 48 Inspection

Mr Pearson advised Governors that under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005 all schools with a religious nature are subject to an inspection to evaluate the quality of Religious Education and the Catholic nature of the institution. The Diocese is responsible for the inspection. The college has received the draft inspection guidelines and will be undertaking an audit to see what the college does well and to highlight any areas for improvement. Dr Smith commented that the college was the only Sixth Form College in the Diocese. Mr Pearson replied that the inspection is likely to be a cross Diocese inspection.

Mr Hickey advised Governors that from 1 January 2018 there had been changes to Section 5 full inspection and Section 8 short inspection for schools. Mr Pearson advised Governors that the college would be subject to a Section 8 inspection as it is sitting on a good judgement, however the inspection process is different for schools and colleges. If the result of the inspection finds that the college is no longer “good” or there are safeguarding issues identified it will convert from a two day inspection to a four day inspection. If the result is heading for outstanding the college may be re-inspected within a year. Cllr McGee added that there was a need to ensure that safeguarding remained outstanding and that the Common Inspection Framework was being reviewed shortly.

Mr Carter asked if the Diocese had any plans to replace Fr Munroe as a Foundation Governor. Mr Pearson advised Governors that the vacancy does not have to be filled by a member of the clergy but he would contact Fr David Long (Our Lady’s) to see if he was interested in becoming a Foundation Governor at the college.

d) General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

The new General Data Protection Regulations will come into effect in May 2018. Governors noted the progress that the college has made in preparation for the introduction of the new regulations. An important change is that the college will no longer seek consent from staff and students to collect and process their data. This consent has previously been obtained when the student sign their college/student contract. In the future the college will use essential business interests to justify the collection of the data. Student data is needed to satisfy the requirements of the funding bodies and staff data to satisfy HMRC requirements. However, consent will have to be obtained for using images of students for marketing purposes. A Data Protection Officer has not yet been appointed because there is conflicting advice on who can be appointed.

Mrs Blackburn advised Governors that the aim of the GDPR was to protect an individual’s privacy and that the college was reviewing its policy. It was agreed that a further update be provided at the Governors Training session on 16 May 2018.

A brief discussion took place on a fake twitter account “Snowdays” that had been on the college website but it had been taken down on the same day.

e) Trips and Visits

The report also covered the various trips and visits that had been undertaken by students to India, Washington, Florence, and by Language and Earth Sciences students.

f) Departmental Activities

The report also covered the activities that had taken place in Careers, Performing Arts and PE Department.

Miss Snape undertook to remind staff to submit reports for inclusion in the Principal’s Report

The Governors thanked Mr Pearson for his informative report.

10. GOVERNOR TRAINING SESSION

It was agreed that the training evening be held on 16 May 2018 at 4.30pm and would include the following:

- a) General Data Protection Regulations b) Overview of Quality Review Process

11. CHAIRPERSON'S ACTION

The Chairperson reported that since the last meeting he had met with the Clerk to Governors following the Governing Body Self Assessment 2017 to identify areas for improvement. See Minute 5 (ii) (a).

12. CORRESPONDENCE

No correspondence was brought forward for Governors consideration.

13. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

- a) Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Ms Calverley, Mr J Horan and Dr Smith undertook to review the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS

- a) Governor Training Session - 16 May 2018 at 4.30pm
b) Summer Term Meeting – 26 June 2018 at 4.30pm

Signed _____
Chairperson

Date _____