

AQUINAS COLLEGE GOVERNING BODY

Meeting: 19 November 2019

Time: 4.30pm

Venue: The College

GOVERNORS PRESENT

Dr P Beatty, Miss M Braithwaite, Mr L Byrne, Mr P Carter, Mr R Harris, Mr P Horton, Mr G Hynes, Miss S Howard, Mr A Martin, Cllr T P McGee, Mrs J Miller, Miss K O'Callaghan, Mr D Pearson, Dr A Smith, Mrs A Taylor and Ms E Urbancova.

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. OPENING PRAYER/REFLECTION

The meeting began with a moment of reflection led by Cllr T McGee.

4. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Mrs C H Dove and Mr M Taylor.

5. GOVERNING BODY MEMBERSHIP

i) It was noted that Mr G Hynes had been appointed as a Foundation Governor. Mr Hynes was welcomed to the meeting and for his benefit all of the Governors introduced themselves. It was agreed that Mr Hynes be appointed to the General Purposes and Employment Committees and the Teaching and Learning Committee.

ii) It was noted that Mrs A Taylor had resigned as a Staff Governor with effect from 31 December 2019.

The Chair of Governors thanked Mrs Taylor for her service on the Governing Body and wished her well on her impending maternity leave.

iii) It was agreed that Mr P Horton be appointed as Chairperson of the General Purpose and Employment Committees and that Mr L Byrne be appointed as Vice Chairperson of the General Purpose and Employment Committees.

iv) Governor Vacancies

It was noted that there are vacancies for a Foundation Governor, Staff Governor and a Co-opted Governor and it was agreed that the skills matrix that governors had completed would be used to identify any skills gap. Election for a Staff Governor would take place at the start of the Spring Term 2020.

6. 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.

7. 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.

8. 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.

9. GOVERNING BODY MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 25 June 2019, 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) Resources Committee – Minute 5 (b) (iii)

Mrs Blackburn advised Governors that the additional capital funding of £149,000 was almost spent.

ii) Education Inspection Framework – Minute 8 (ii) (b)

Mr Pearson advised Governors that those colleges classed as Good/Outstanding would be inspected if the data for the college had dropped.

11. COMMITTEE MINUTES

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

(i) Audit Committee	4 November 2019
(ii) Resources Committee	5 November 2019
(iii) General Purposes and Employment Committee	9 July and 8 October 2019
(iv) Teaching and Learning Committee	1 October 2019

(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 – 4 November 2019

i) Draft Statutory Accounts – Minute 7

Governors noted that the College's Annual Report and Financial Statement for the year ended 31 July 2019 would be considered at this meeting.

ii) Internal Audit Annual Report for 2018/2019 – Minute 8

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 12

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 2019.

The issues in relation to the Greater Manchester Pension Scheme for support staff concerning the assets and liabilities being de-pooled and allocate to individual colleges continue.

There was one management point that required to be drawn to the attention of Governors concerning a review of the Whistleblowing Policy. Mr Martin and Mrs Dove had undertaken to review the policy.

iv) Oversight of Public Funds – Bournville - Minute 12

Governors noted the contents of the letter from the Education & Skills Funding Agency and the assurances given by Mrs Blackburn.

v) Risk Management – Minute 13

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

vi) Audit Committee Annual Report – Minute 15

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

b) Resources Committee – 5 November 2019

i) High Needs Funding – Minute 5 (ii)

Mr Hynes asked if the additional funding from Stockport MBC had been received. Mrs Blackburn replied that the funding had been received and that discussions were ongoing with East Cheshire Council.

ii) Health and Safety Report 2018/2019 – Minute 6

Governors noted that the main cause of absence was reported as Stress. The number of days lost had reduced from 150 in the previous year to 90 days and covered 6 staff. 88 days (5 members of staff) were lost due to stress.

iii) Draft Statutory Accounts – Minute 9

Governors noted that the College's Annual Report and Financial Statement for the year ended 31 July 2019 would be considered at this meeting.

c) General Purposes and Employment Committee – 8 October 2019

i) Admissions 2019/2020 – Minute 5

Governors noted the information in relation to 317 students who had not been interviewed.

Governors noted that at the start of the term the actual number of students on roll was 2273. The latest figures are 2241 with a L6 of 1170 and U6 of 1071. On average around 30 students dropped out for a variety of reasons.

ii) Admissions 2020/2021 – Minute 6

Mr Pearson advised Governors that the number of applications received to date are what the college would expect.

Governors noted that the Open Day/Evenings had been very busy. A new prospectus had been used and the feedback on it had been very positive. The closing date for applications (which are online) for 2020/2021 is 30 November 2019. Applications from category 2 students who have submitted their application forms by 30 November 2019 will then be considered taking into account their school reference. Those students who have not completed the admissions process will be sent a reminder. Applicants who are to receive further consideration will be contacted by email by 20 December 2019 inviting them to attend an interview in January/February 2020.

There will be around 1000 category 1 students and 1200 category 2 students in the cohort for 1100 – 1200 places at the college.

iii) Employment Committee 8 October 2019 – Minute 5

It was agreed that this minute should be a confidential item.

d) Teaching and Learning Committee – 1 October 2019

ii) Results Overview – Minute 6

Governors noted that the pass rates for Level 2 courses in GCSE Maths, GCSE English, Business and Financial Studies had increased from last year. A level pass rate (A*-E) was 98.1% with high grades (A* - B) 51%.

ii) College Focus – Minute 6

Governors noted that the college would continue to focus on value added for the middle and upper bands. In addition there is a whole college approach on independent learning, focussing on sharpening the culture of individual learning.

13. GOVERNING BODY SELF ASSESSMENT 2019

A revised copy of the Details of the Governors Self – Assessment returns for the academic year 2018/2019 was circulated.

The Chairperson advised Governors that the average overall was around 4.7. Particular reference was made to the areas for improvement which included a) College Mission Day, b) Strategic Development – include in the Training session in May and c) Committees Self - Assessment.

The Chairperson thanked Governors for their support in completing the Self - Assessment Review form and that he and the Principal would meet to discuss the points raised.

RESOLVED: That the Governors Self - Assessment returns for the academic year 2018/2019 be received.

14. APPROVAL OF STATUTORY ACCOUNTS

A copy of the College's Report and Financial Statement for the year ended 31 July 2019 had been circulated to all Governors prior to the meeting. Both the Audit Committee and the Resources Committee had discussed these at their November 2019 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 2019.

RESOLVED: That the College's Annual Report and Financial Statement for the year ended 31 July 2019 be approved.

15. BUDGET 2019/2020

Mrs Blackburn circulated a paper that gave an overview of movement on the budget to date. There had been some significant changes to areas of funding and expenditure. The paper covered the following:

- a) Additional high needs income b) Language assistants c) Invigilator
d) Utilities e) Insurance f) Canteen g) PGCE income

There is still some uncertainty around the main staffing budgets because the impact of pay awards is not yet known. The budget position had been reported to the Resources Committee on 5 November 2019. The budget would be reviewed in January 2020 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 2018/2019

Details of the Governors attendance at both Governing Body meetings and Committee meetings during the academic year 2018/2019 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 2018/2019 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 all subjects are now linear. The raw results were good with very strong pass rates. The value added score (ALPS) went down slightly but that is against a backdrop of many colleges seeing dramatic drops. At A level, pass rates are similar to last year but retention has improved.

High grades of A*, A, B remain above 50% and BTECs grades were close to 90% of grades at Distinction 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 but the college will stay with the old BTECs as long as it can.

The staff governors felt that there were lots of challenges for staff to overcome including workload and that staff had to adopt different teaching strategies. They are working support departments. The timetable has been changed so that all teaching staff are in on a Tuesday.

Dr Beatty added that now all subjects are linear it will be easier to see if there is any change. He also felt that gender differences need to be analysed.

b) Cheadle and Marple College – Mr Pearson advised Governors that the Cheadle and Marple College Network had been served with a financial notice to improve. This had resulted in the intervention of the FE Commissioner's Office and has ultimately resulted in a proposed takeover by Trafford College. At this stage it is not known what impact this will have on the college.

c) Adult Education – Mr Pearson reported that the uncertainty surrounding the funding of adult courses by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority has been resolved. Governors noted the details of the course that are running in 2019/2020 with a comparison for the 2018/2019 academic year.

d) Funding for 2020/2021 – The funding for 2020/2021 for the main 16-18 cohort will benefit from a 4.3% increase and STEM subjects (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) are going to attract a further increase of around 10%. This could mean an increase of an additional £500,000 next year which will mean a real terms increase in funding per student for the first time in ten years. The increase in funding will mainly be spent on staffing. The Pensions increase is currently funded by a grant.

e) Staffing - Mr Pearson reported on the resignations and appointments that had been made to the college from September 2019.

f) Mission and Ethos Day – The College held a Mission and Ethos Day in July and started with a presentation by the ethics department on matters related to the college mission statement. This included going off in team to solve challenging puzzles that required team work and problem solving skills. 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 2019 in Austria. Eight students from the college represented the UK. Poland had pulled out of hosting the event in 2020 but the college has agreed to host the event.

h) Trips and Visits – The report also covered the various trips and visits that had been undertaken to Japan and Borneo by students.

i) Departmental Activities – The report also covered the activities that had taken place in the Art and Design Department, Performing Arts and PE Department.

The Chairperson referred i) to the work with Stockport Council which resulted in an exhibition of students work being displayed in the Mersey Way Shopping Centre and ii) to the display of Poppies in the Mersey Way Shopping Centre from 2– 11 November 2019.

The Governors thanked Mr Pearson for his informative report.

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 2018/2019 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 2018/2019, a copy of which had been circulated to all Governors prior to the meeting.

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

21. AUDIT COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

A copy of the revised Audit Committee Terms of Reference had been circulated to Governors prior to the meeting.

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

22. CES CODE OF CONDUCT FOR GOVERNORS

The Chairperson advised Governors that the Diocese require all Governors, except Student Governors to sign annually the Governors Code of Conduct.

Copies of the Code were available at the meeting for Governors to sign.

23. CHAIRPERSON'S ACTION

This had been reported in Minute 5 (i) - Committee Membership in relation to the appointment of a Foundation Governor.

24. CORRESPONDENCE

No correspondence was brought forward for Governors consideration.

25. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Budget Plan – Mrs Blackburn advised Governors that the Education Skills & Funding Agency (ESFA) want all colleges to complete a planning model by 31 January 2020. This will replace the July Plan because the ESFA are concerned that student numbers in July are not accurate and that in the January Plan the actual student numbers can be put in. The January Plan would need Governors approval. In view of the fact that the next Governing Body meeting is not until March 2020 it is proposed that approval be given for the Chairperson on behalf of the Governing Body to approve the January Plan and reports back to the Governing Body.

RESOLVED: That the Chairperson be authorised to approve the January Plan on behalf of the Governing Body.

26. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

10 March 2020 at 4.30pm.

Signed _____
Chairperson

Date _____

Terry Conlon
(Clerk to the Governors)