

AQUINAS COLLEGE GOVERNING BODY

Meeting: 19 November 2013

Time: 4.30pm

Venue: The College

GOVERNORS PRESENT

Dr P Beatty, Miss R C Bircher, Miss M Braithwaite, Mr L Byrne, Ms H Delahan, Mr P Carter, Mrs C H Dove, Mr J Horan, Mrs P Lynch, Cllr T P McGee, Fr P Munroe, Miss A Perry and Mr D Pearson.

IN ATTENDANCE

Mrs J Miller	Prospective new Governor
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 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, Mrs R Hewitt, Mr A Martin and Mr E Moore.

4. GOVERNING BODY MEMBERSHIP

The Chairperson introduced Mrs J Miller who had expressed an interest in becoming a governor at the College. Governors introduced themselves for the benefit of Mrs Miller.

The Chairperson proposed that Mr P Carter (Co-opted Governor) becomes a Foundation Governor and that Mrs J Miller becomes a Co-opted Governor). Governors were asked to consider this proposal and that it would be an agenda item at the next Governing Body meeting.

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 meetings held on 25 June 2013, 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	4 November 2013
(ii) Finance and Building Committee	5 November 2013
(iii) General Purposes and Employment Committee	8 July and 8 October 2013

(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.

11. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE COMMITTEE MINUTES

a) Audit Committee – 4 November 2013

i) Internal Audit 2013/2014

Governors noted that the Internal Auditors for 2013/2014 would be Baker Tilly Business Services Ltd (formerly RSM Tenon Ltd). The change of name was effective from 1 October 2013.

ii) 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 2013. There were no management points that required to be drawn to the attention of Governors.

iii) Internal Audit Annual Report for 2012/2013

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.

iv) Governors noted that the College's Annual Report and Financial Statement for the year ended 31 July 2013 would be considered at this meeting.

v) Audit Committee Annual Report

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

vi) Risk Management

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

b) Finance and Building Committee - 5 November 2013

i) Governors noted that the College's Annual Report and Financial Statement for the year ended 31 July 2013 would be considered at this meeting.

ii) Health and Safety Report

Governors were advised that the Health and Safety Report for 2012/2013 had been considered by the Finance and Buildings Committee.

iii) Management Accounts

Mrs Blackburn advised Governors that the College has a £2.15m loan on a fixed term repayment with £1.9m on variable rate repayments of base plus 0.85%. The College has £3.7m placed on deposit and the interest earned covers some of the cost of borrowing.

c) General Purposes and Employment Committee – 8 October 2013

i) Analysis of Student Withdrawals

A Governor asked if there were early leavers from Harrytown and St James High Schools. Mr Pearson advised Governors that links between the two schools and the College were good and the number of early leavers were small as a percentage.

ii) Admissions 2013/2014

The breakdown was 1175 in lower sixth with 1143 new students and 32 returners and recyclers. The number of returners and recyclers is 18 fewer than anticipated and there are 63 more new students. Thus the overall number in the lower sixth is 95 more than forecasted. The number in the upper sixth is 874, which is 18 less than expected. The total number of students in the College is, therefore, 2049. It was noted that 19 students had left the lower sixth and 12 students had left the upper sixth since the start of term. The number of leavers are less than previous years. This may be due to the raising of the Participation Age to 17, whereby students have to be in some form of training or education.

Mr Pearson advised Governors that the College is funded for 1930 students in the current financial year. The funding census date for 2014/2015 is 18 October 2013 and it is anticipated that the number of students on roll will be around 2050. The target number was 2000. The extra students this year will mean that the financial future of the College is secure for the next two years.

iii) Admissions 2014/2015

Mr Pearson advised Governors that the Open Evening had been very busy. The closing date for applications (which are online) for 2014/2015 is 30 November 2013. Applications from category 5 students who have submitted their application forms by 30 November 2013 will then be considered taking into account their school reference. Applicants who are to receive further consideration will receive a letter by 21 December 2013 inviting them to attend an interview.

Governors agreed that the target number for 2014/2015 would be 2050 students.

12. APPROVAL OF STATUTORY ACCOUNTS

A copy of the College's Report and Financial Statement for the year ended 31 July 2013 had been circulated to all Governors prior to the meeting. Both the Audit Committee and the Finance and Buildings Committee had discussed these at their November 2013 meetings.

Members of the Audit Committee and the Finance and Buildings Committee had recommended that the Governing Body approve the Report and Financial Statement for the year ended 31 July 2013.

RESOLVED: That the College's Annual Report and Financial Statement for the year ended 31 July 2013 be approved.

13. BUDGET 2013/2014

A discussion took place on the paper that had been circulated to all Governors which outlined the changes that had been made to the budget set in June 2013. Mrs Blackburn advised Governors that the College had received the additional income relating to High needs students and have recruited additional staff to support these students. In addition interest income has increased by £14k. This has meant that there has been an increase of £60,000 in the projected surplus to £254,000.

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.

14. GOVERNORS ATTENDANCE RECORD 2012/2013

Details of the Governors attendance at both Governing Body meetings and Committee meetings during the academic year 2012/2013 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 2012/2013 be approved.

15. OFSTED INSPECTION

Mr Pearson reported on the Ofsted Inspection that had taken place at the end of September 2013. The Inspection had lasted for four days and there was a team of 9 Inspectors. Mr Pearson added that he was satisfied with the overall outcome of the Inspection that classed the College as grade 2, which is good. The Colleges own self assessment was grade 2. The final report was an endorsement of the significant improvements that the College has made in recent years. Some areas had been classed as better than good but not outstanding. It also identified areas where further improvement is needed and acknowledged that the College has both the appetite and skills to make these improvements. The subject grades were as follows: Maths 2, English 1, Social Sciences 2 and Business Studies 2.

The new inspection framework makes it harder to get outstanding; the old grade 3 which was satisfactory is now classed as Requires Improvement.

A governor asked how much importance is there on teaching and learning in the new framework. Mr Pearson replied that previously the inspection had been outcomes led; now it is more focussed on teaching and the learning that is taking place.

The Chairperson on behalf of Governors thanked Mr Pearson, staff, students and governors who had been involved in the inspection process. He felt that comparison with other colleges locally and nationally showed that the College had done well. The local picture was as follows:

Aquinas College Grade 2, Cheadle & Marple Sixth Form College Grade 3 and Stockport College Grade 4.

16. PRINCIPAL'S TERMLY REPORT

The report of the Principal, copies of which had been circulated, was presented and discussed. Governors commented that they liked the new format of the report.

RESOLVED: That the Principal's report be received.

17. 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. The College has focussed on outcomes with departments working on targeted action plans throughout the year and a number of new initiatives about raising expectations. These improvements are despite the national picture that suggest that high grades have been suppressed and some of the very highest performing colleges reporting that their value added data has slipped whilst the College's is on the up

b) Student Enrolment – Mr Pearson advised Governors that enrolment for 2013/2014 was at the highest level that the College could cope with. Adjustments had been made to class sizes. In response to a question from a Governor Mr Pearson reported

that the average class size was 18 normal class sizes would be around 22 with some at 24 or more being considered large.

c) Local Issues

i) A discussion took place on the fact that Cheadle Hulme High School and Hazel Grove High School had opened sixth forms in September 2013. In addition Stockport College had opened a 14-19 Technical School offering courses in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM). Each institution had recruited enough students to offer their planned provision, however, Hazel Grove High School started with a lower sixth of 22 students. In the first year the academies can only recruit from within their own school but will be allowed to recruit freely from the second year.

ii) Mr Pearson advised Governors that six of the twelve secondary schools within Stockport have either appointed or are looking to appoint a new Headteacher.

d) National Issues

i) A pay award of 1% had been agreed for both teaching and support staff backdated to 1 September 2013. This may not stave off further strike action because teacher associations are still in dispute about new pension arrangements.

ii) The Sixth Form College Association (SFCA) is still campaigning to get a VAT rebate for sixth form colleges to bring it in line with schools.

iii) Ofqual has launched a consultation on the proposed changes to A levels and AS level qualifications. The consultation is seeking views on the design, assessment and regulations of the revised A levels and AS qualifications. Fourteen subjects will be affected and the first teaching of these subjects will start in September 2015 with A level mathematics, further mathematics and modern languages to follow in September 2016. There will also be radical changes to the GCSEs with the changes in place for September 2014 for English language and mathematics. There will be a new grading scale that will use 1-9 to identify levels of performance. A linear structure will be introduced with assessments taking place at the end of the two year course. Examinations will only take place in the summer excluding mathematics and English Language which can be taken in November.

c) Finance

i) The budget for 2014/2015 will see a reduction in income of £342,000 due to the latest funding cuts and the loss of transitional protection. However, the increase student number this year will mean an increase in income of £400,000 which will mitigate the reduction in income for 2014/2015. All of this means that 2014/2015 will be another challenging year.

ii) The major capital project has been completed, with £41.1m spent out of a total budget of £41.4m. Capital grants of £41.1m have been received.

d) Staffing – Mr Pearson reported on the resignations and appointments that had been made to the college from September 2013

e) Adult Education – As a result of Mr Darke's retirement Emma Bradbury has become Head of Adult Education and Sheila Lahan, Assistant Head of Adult Education. Mr Pearson

advised Governors that a report of the activities of the Adult Education centre will be a regular feature in his termly report to Governors.

f) Year of Faith

Pupils from Catholic schools in Stockport marked the Year of Faith on the last day of term. It was led Scott Thomas a student at the College and activities were based on the theme of “building bridges”.

The day was attended by Bishop Mark Davies who celebrated Mass at Our Lady’s Catholic Church. Chaplains from Harrytown, St Anne’s and Aquinas had met regularly to organise the day.

Fr Munroe advised Governors that he had enjoyed the event in July and that a similar event is planned for 22 November 2013 to mark the end of the Year of Faith.

Mr Hickey reported that under Section 48 when schools are inspected they have a one day visit from the Diocese. Mr Pearson advised Governors that during the College inspection a Catholic Inspector was present for two days. There is no separate judgement and the College felt that it should have had more significance.

g) Mission Day

The College held a Mission Day in July with two guest speakers who gave talks on “A year in Reflection and “What is forgiveness. The talks were reflective in nature and well received by staff, although at the start of the day some staff had questioned the need for their input. The other part of the day allowed staff to undertake a variety of activities organised by the College.

h) The report also covered the various sporting activities that take place within the College, Euroweek 2013 and Student Exchanges.

The Governors thanked Mr Pearson for his informative report.

18. RISK MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT

A copy of the Risk Management Annual Report for 2012/2013, which had been circulated to all Governors, was discussed. 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 2012/2013 and the amended Risk Management Policy be approved.

19. AUDIT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

Governors were advised that the Audit Committee had considered its Annual Report for the financial year 2012/2013, a copy of which had been circulated to all Governors prior to the meeting.

RESLOVED: That the Audit Committee’s Annual Report be received.

20. CHAIRPERSON'S ACTION

The Chairperson reported that since the last meeting he had become a member of the Sixth Form College Association as a representative from Catholic Sixth Form Colleges.

21. CORRESPONDENCE

No correspondence was brought forward for Governors consideration.

22.. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Governors were reminded that the Certificate Evening was on Monday 16 December 2013 at Stockport Town Hall at 7.30pm. The Chairperson encouraged Governors to attend.

23. DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS

4 March 2014

Signed _____
Chairperson

Date _____

Terry Conlon
(Clerk to the Governors)