

AQUINAS COLLEGE GOVERNING BODY

Meeting: 19 March 2019

Time: 4.30pm

Venue: The College

GOVERNORS PRESENT

Dr P Beatty, Miss M Braithwaite, Mr L Byrne, Mr P Carter, Mrs C H Dove, Mr R Harris, Mr B Hickey Mr J Horan, Mr P J Horton, Miss S Howard, Cllr T P McGee, Mr A Martin, Mrs J Miller, Mr D Pearson, Dr A Smith, Mr N Sutherland, Mrs A Taylor and Mr M Taylor

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. OPENING PRAYER

The meeting began with a prayer led by Cllr McGee.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence had been received.

3. FOUNDATION GOVERNOR

It was noted that Mr M Taylor had been appointed as a Foundation Governor.

4. STUDENT GOVERNORS

It was noted that Miss S Howard and Mr N Sutherland had been elected as Student Governors.

5. INTRODUCTIONS

For the benefit of Miss S Howard, Mr N Sutherland and Mr M Taylor all of the Governors introduced themselves.

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. No interests were declared.

7. COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The Chairperson advised the Student Governors that they could 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 S Howard and Mr N Sutherland, be appointed to the Teaching and Learning Committee.

8. CES CODE OF CONDUCT FOR GOVERNORS

A discussion took place on the Code of Conduct for Governors that had been issued by Shrewsbury Diocese. The Chairperson reported that whilst not all Dioceses had issued the Code of Conduct for Governors it was the expectation of the Shrewsbury Diocese that all Governors would sign the Code of Conduct.

It was noted that a number of Governors have serious concerns and felt that they could not sign the Code in its present form. The Chairperson added that he respected the views of these Governors and it was up to them as individuals to decide whether or not to sign the Code. He added that on appointment or re-appointment Foundation Governors will be required to sign the Code. The Diocese had asked that Governors with concerns should sign the form and provide details of their concerns that will be forwarded to the Catholic Education Service for them to review. Dr Smith felt that elected governors should not be required to sign the Code.

Mr Byrne and Mr Horan had sent details of their concerns to the Chairperson who undertook to circulate these to Governors. Dr Beatty advised Governors that he had written to the Chair of the local Methodist District to ask for his views on the Code. He added that he would sign the Code but there were parts that he cannot adhere to.

Copies of the Code were available at the meeting for Governors to sign. Student Governors were deemed to be exempt from signing the Code.

The Chairperson added that he had been requested by the Diocese to inform them which Governors had signed the Code and to also provide details of those who had not signed the Code.

9. (i) GOVERNING BODY MINUTES

RESOLVED – i) That the minutes of the meetings held on 20 November 2018 copies of which had been circulated previously, (a) be approved and signed by the Chairperson as a correct record subject to Minute 9 being amended as follows:

The Chairperson reminded Governors that a sub group of the Governors had met on 23 January 2018 to review the Code of Conduct for Governors. The revised Code of Conduct, copies of which had been circulated previously did not address the concerns that the Governing Body had raised with the Diocese. The changes amounted to the deletion of 3 lines on page 2 comprising of 35 words out of 3027 in the code. A summary of the responses received from Governors on the revised Code of Conduct had also been circulated to Governors.

(b) be authorised for publication in accordance with the College Instrument and Articles.

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

There were no matters arising that were not covered by the Agenda for the meeting.

10 (i) COMMITTEE MINUTES

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

(i) Audit Committee

11 February 2019

(ii) Resources Committee	12 February 2019
(iii) General Purposes and Employment Committee	29 January 2019
(iv) Teaching and Learning Committee	5 February 2019

(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.

10. (ii) MATTERS ARISING FROM THE COMMITTEE MINUTES

a) Audit Committee – 11 February 2019

i) Benchmarking Report 2017/2018 - Minute 8

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

ii) Feedback on Risk Register and Management Actions – Minute 10

To note the current position in relation to the equalising of pensions in defined Benefits Schemes.

iii) Appointment of Auditors for 2018/2019

To note that RSM had been appointed as the Internal Auditors for 2019/2020 and that Mazars had been appointed as External Auditors for 2019/2020.

iv) Network Security Policy – Minute 13

The policy and been reviewed by the Audit Committee members and Governors were recommended to approve the policy.

RESOLVED: The Network Security Policy be approved

b) Resources Committee – 12 February 2019.

i) National Funding Position – Minute 6 (a)

No changes will be made to the funding methodology until the Comprehensive Spending Review is announced later in the year. The Budget for 2019/2020 is covered in the Principal's Report for the meeting.

ii) Committee Terms of Reference – Minute 9

The Committee's Terms of Reference had been reviewed and reference to a ten year planned maintenance programme had been deleted.

c) General Purposes Committee and Employment Committee – 29 January 2019

i) Admissions 2019/2020 - Minute 7

Governors noted the information in relation to the admissions process for 2019/2020 with particular reference to the number of category 2 students that still needed to be interviewed. The interview process will be reviewed for next year. The latest position would be covered by the Principal's

Report for the meeting.

Miss Braithwaite asked when will the college stop growing. Mr Pearson replied that the college funding depends on the number of students that are at the college and that the growth in student numbers is a way of financing the budget to retain jobs, but the college is very close to its optimum number. He added that students are now doing 3 subject and with the economies of scale there is not a huge impact on resources. Mr Horan added that there has been a 21% reported reduction in funding since 2012.

Mr Pearson advised Governors that the college may need to change its organisation to accommodate larger numbers of students. At the moment there are 40 tutor groups in both L6 and U6 and this may need to increase to 45 tutor groups with an adjustment to the college timetable. The demographics in Stockport has bottomed out and there will be a 400 – 600 increase in student numbers over the next few years across the borough.

Cllr McGee advised Governors that the number of sixth form colleges is in decline, there are now only 59 sixth form colleges. He added that the amount of non academic provision at Stockport College has increased.

ii) Student Destinations – Minute 8

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. Particular reference was made to the number of unconditional offers that are being made by universities.

iii) Employment Committee – Minute 5

Mr Pearson advised Governors that Carmel Wanlass has been appointed as the new Chaplain and she will start in September 2019. Governors also noted the new arrangements at the college for the counselling service and the amount of staff time that had been lost due stress.

d) Teaching and Learning Committee – 5 February 2019

i) Careers, The Gatsby Standards – Minute 7

Dr Beatty advised Governors that Mr Taylor would now be working with the college careers department on the Gatsby Standards.

ii) Executive Summary of Leadership and Management SAR and Quality Review Meetings Update – Minute 9

Dr Beatty advised Governors that the committee is moving forward in developing a strategy to review and improve the grading of subject areas within the college. He added that he was happy for student governors to attend the committee meetings.

11. BUDGET 2018/2019 HALF YEAR FORECAST

Mrs Blackburn reminded Governors that the budget for 2018/2019 was the tightest budget that the college had set. The February 2019 accounts included the re-forecasting that had been undertaken in January 2019 to take account of the increase in high needs funding. Other adjustment have been made and the forecast outturn now stands at £200,000 but this will change depending on the staffing budget costs.

The teacher pay award has not yet been agreed, the overall offer is 1.6%. Various pay proposals have been submitted by the teacher associations and members have been asked to vote on the offer. The college have budgeted for a 2% increase. The pay award for support staff has been agreed with different percentage increases depending on the scale point. The overall cost will be in the region of 1.4% and the college have budgeted for a 2% increase. The minimum wage will increase from 1 April 2019 to £8.21 per hour.

A discussion took place on the funding of sixth form colleges with particular reference to the Raise the Rate campaign and the need for more funding for the sector. Dr Smith advised Governors that since 2009/2010 the funding had reduced by 13.6% in real terms and the RPI had increased by 20.6%. Governors were encouraged to sign the petition. Ms Vitti advised Governors that Amanda Spielman (HM Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills) had also raised the issue of more funding for the sixth form sector. Cllr McGee added that nothing would happen until the Comprehensive Spending Review is announced later in the year and that it will be 2020/2021 before any possible changes would be introduced.

Mr Taylor advised Governors that the Higher Education sector was undergoing a review, this included universities and contributory FE colleges.

RESOLVED: That the budget position for 2018/2019 be noted.

12. (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.

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

Mr Pearson reported on the following:

a) Admissions 2019/2020

Mr Pearson updated Governors on the latest position regarding admissions for 2019/2020. The target number for 2019/2020 would be around 2,270 students for September 2019. The college will be funded for 2,243 students in 2019/2020 based on lagged funding. 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 Criminology which will mean additional staff will be required.

An update on the admission numbers will be given at the General Purposes Committee meeting on 2 July 2019.

b) Budget 2019/2020

Mrs Blackburn advised Governors that the college had received its initial ESFA budget for 2019/2020.. 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. The increase in student numbers will increase funding by £240,000 but other factors in the calculation including retention have gone against the college. The overall effect of these changes is that income has fallen by £46,000 but it is hoped that £98,000 can be obtained from disadvantage funding which has been incorrectly applied. The college is currently in discussion with the ESFA to recover the £98,000. Additional funding for students

studying maths is also not reflected in the budget. Initial estimates of the teaching staff budget shows an increase of £250,000. A budget for 2019/2020 will be presented to Governors at the June 2019 meeting.

c) Careers

Governors noted the progress that is being made by the college to achieve the Gatsby career benchmarks. In addition to increase the profile of careers within subject departments each department will have a Careers Ambassador who will be the link person with careers.

d) Trips and Visits

The report covered the various trips and visits that had been undertaken by students to Germany, San Francisco and Silicon Valley, Washington, New York and India and by Language and Earth Sciences students. Governors congratulated Angela Bentley on being honoured by the Royal Astronomical Society with the Patrick Moore Medal in recognition of the contribution she has made through her Teacher at Sea role and her part in the RRS James Cook expedition to the Mid Atlantic Ridge.

e) Departmental Activities

The report also covered the activities that had taken place in Art and Design, Performing Arts, Dance and Sport.

The Governors thanked Mr Pearson for his informative report.

13. GOVERNOR TRAINING SESSION

It was agreed that the training evening be held on 15 May 2018 at 4.30pm and would include the following:

- a) Education Inspection Framework (replaces Common Inspection Framework)
- b) Safeguarding c) Denominational Inspections d) Mission/Strategic Aims of the college

14. CHAIRPERSON'S ACTION

The Chairperson advised Governors that there had been no action since the last meeting.

15. CORRESPONDENCE

No correspondence was brought forward for Governors consideration.

16. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

No other business was brought forward for Governors consideration.

17. DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS

- a) Governor Training Session - 15 May 2019 at 4.30pm
- b) Summer Term Meeting – 25 June 2019 at 4.30pm

Signed _____
Chairperson

Date _____