

## AQUINAS COLLEGE GOVERNING BODY

Meeting: 25 June 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 P Horton, Miss S Howard, Mr A Martin, Cllr T P McGee, Mrs J Miller, Miss K O'Callaghan, Mr D Pearson (Principal), Dr A Smith, Mrs A Taylor and Mr M Taylor.

### IN ATTENDANCE

Ms C Vitti Vice Principal  
Mrs D Blackburn Assistant Principal  
Mr T Conlon Clerk to the Governing Body

Cllr T P McGee in the Chair

#### 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mr R Harris and Mr J Horan.

#### 2. STUDENT GOVERNORS

- a) It was noted that Mr N Sutherland had resigned as Student Governor.
- b) It was noted that Miss K O'Callaghan had been elected as a Student Governor.

For the benefit of Miss O'Callaghan all of the Governors introduce 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. (i) GOVERNING BODY MINUTES

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meetings held on 5 March and 15 May 2019, copies of which had been circulated previously, (a) be approved and signed by the Chairperson as a correct record subject to some typographical amendments and (b) be authorised for publication in accordance with the College Instrument and Articles.

#### 4. (ii) MATTERS ARISING FROM THE GOVERNING BODY MINUTES

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

#### 5. (i) COMMITTEE MINUTES

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

- (i) Audit Committee 3 June 2019
- (ii) Resources Committee 4 June 2019
- (iii) Remuneration Committee 11 June 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 with the exception of the Remuneration Committee minutes that were confidential.

5. (ii) MATTERS ARISING FROM THE COMMITTEE MINUTES

c) Audit Committee – 3 June 2019

i) Strategy for Internal Audit 2019/2020 – 2021/2022 – Minute 7

RSM had submitted a Strategy for the provision of an Internal Audit Service for 2019/2020. The Audit Plan for 2019/2020 would consist of 18 days with the addition of contingency days as necessary. The fee for 2019/2020 based on 18 days would be £9,040 which is inclusive of expenses but exclusive of VAT.

RESOLVED: i) RSM be appointed as Internal Auditors for 2019/2020 and ii) that the Strategy for the provision of an Internal Audit Service for 2019/2020 be agreed.

The possibility of Audit Committee members aligning themselves to areas of audit strategy for the College during 2019/2020 (in a similar way to Link Governors) to allow for a more in depth understanding of the compliance performance of the college was discussed. Cllr McGee felt that it was important that the role of the Audit Committee being independent was preserved. Tony Martin raised concerns that the audit committee should remain independent of the management to ensure appropriate oversight. Mrs Blackburn was asked to prepare a paper for the next meeting that would indicate areas where this might be possible.

ii) Audit Review – Minute 9

Governors noted that the auditors had been very complimentary about the work of Debbie Blackburn, Assistant Principal (Finance).

iii) Appointment of External Auditors – Minute 10

RESOLVED: i) That Mazars be appointed as External Auditors for 2019/2020 and ii) That the fees for 2019/2020 be agreed.

b) Resources Committee – 4 June 2019

i) Charging Policy for Adult and Continuing Education Courses – Minute 3

Cllr McGee advised Governors that this was the first year that funding had come from the Greater Manchester Combined Authority.

RESOLVED: That the recommendation made by the Resources Committee in relation to the fees to be charged for Adult and Continuing Education Courses for 2019/2020 be approved.

ii) The budget for 2019/200 and Authorisation of Two Year Financial Plan were separate items on the Agenda for this meeting.

iii) Management Accounts– Minute 7 (ii)

The additional capital funding of £149,000 was the “little extras” that had been made in the budget statement by the chancellor of the Exchequer.

c) Remuneration Committee – 11 June 2019

The Committee felt that it would be appropriate to increase the pay of the Principal and Vice Principal in accordance with the national average pay award. The Committee had recorded their thanks and appreciation to Mr Pearson and Ms Vitti for their hard work and commitment to the college.

RESOLVED: That the recommendation made by the Remuneration Committee in relation to the pay of Principal and Vice Principal be approved.

d) Teaching and Learning Committee - 11 June 2019

i) Guiding Principles for Learning, Teaching and Assessment – Minute 6

Governors noted the Guiding Principles for Learning, Teaching and Assessment that are undertaken by the college to ensure that a high quality Educational experience with a broad and diverse curriculum is provided for every student.

ii) In year Progression Quality Reviews - Minute 7

Dr Beatty introduced a paper that was circulated to all Governors that summarised the actions taken to improve outcomes at the college. It used traffic light system to assess risk whereby:

Red = Subjects which have serious concerns, some with more than 40 students.

Amber = Subjects which have some concerns; in some cases L6 results may show improvement which should have a positive effect on U6 outcomes for 2019.

Green = Subjects which have few concerns because in year actions appear to be having a positive effect to improve U6 outcomes for 2019.

Governors noted that no subject area was classed as Red.

The paper reflected the way in which staff involved in setting targets and best practice are looking at best practice in other departments. The outcome will not necessarily be as predicted. It is a self assessment by the college and indicates the direction of travel.

Mr Pearson advised Governors the Teaching and Learning Committee had scrutinised the paper and that other Governors may wish to take the paper away and read at a later date.

Cllr McGee advised Governors that Alps results come out early/mid September and a paper will be prepared showing i) Summer 2018 actuals, ii) Summer 2019 predictions and iii) Summer 2019 actuals. He added that all A levels were now linear. Ms Vitti added that Alps connect looks at the predictions/actuals and there will be variations but there should be fewer.

Cllr McGee felt that the results of those students who had received unconditional offers needed to be tracked.

Finally, Dr Beatty said that he welcomed student participation in the work of the Teaching and Learning Committee.

## 6. BUDGET 2019/2020

Mrs Blackburn advised Governors that the college had been successful in the business case that it had submitted to the ESFA for a correction to disadvantage funding for students who had not achieved Mathematics and/or English GCSE at school and for core mathematics which had been omitted in error when the initial ILR had been submitted. As a result of the business case being agreed the college will receive an additional £196,000.

Mrs Blackburn circulated a new set of papers in relation to the proposed budget for 2019/2020. The papers contained a) a spreadsheet of cash income and expenditure b) the same converted into accounting format and c) a written commentary.

The ESFA have now confirmed that the income from them for 2019/2020 will be £9,410,257 compared with £9,347,338 for 2018/2019 and is an increase of £151,349. The funding is based on 2,243 students compared with 2,187 for last year an increase of 56 students. The increase in student numbers generated an additional £240,000. Against that there has also been a fall in the retention factor of £100,000 and course weighting factors of £140,000 due to a change in the funding rules. High needs funding has increased by £48,000 to £300,000 for 50 students; this element of funding provides the first £6,000 additional support funding per High Needs students who need one to one support. The main cause of the increase is the £104,000 for core maths.

The draft budget includes £247,000 from Stockport MBC for students with high needs. Some of this income has yet to be submitted to the Local Authority. This figure is understating the predicted final outcome.

The Teachers Pension Grant will continue until 31 August 2020 and is estimated at £285,000.

The draft budget shows a contingency reserve of £98,893 compared to £109,453 last year, a decrease of £10,560. This is again a small surplus given the level of income. Whilst the trading surplus is £100,595. Miss Braithwaite added that income from interest earned was higher than the trading surplus.

The budget for 2019/2020 is very tight and will present a number of challenges. All aspect of staffing and non pay costs will be monitored to ensure the running of the college as efficiently as possible. It is anticipated that in the coming years a modest increase in student numbers will not generate large amounts of additional income. Cllr McGee added that the growth in student numbers could not be depended on as the college is approaching the optimal number of students.

Cllr McGee reminded Governors of the Raise the Rate campaign that had been organised by the Sixth Form College Association in which it was calling for a 20% increase in the funding per student. He added that he felt that the Spending Review due in the Autumn was unlikely to happen, further, it is difficult to predict what will happen and that in order for any changes to be made for 2021/2022 it would need an announcement in Spring 2020.

Dr Smith advised Governors that in the Guardian newspaper a letter of his had been published in which he refereed to an almost 30% reduction in college funding which is clearly unsustainable. He had followed this up with a letter to Ann Hilton MP for High Peak. Reference was also made to the

level of funding in the independent sector of £18,000 per student compared with £4,000 per student in the state sector.

The Resources Committee had considered the Draft Budget for 2019/2020 at its meeting on 4 June 2019 and had recommended the budget for acceptance to the Governing Body.

RESOLVED: That the draft budget for 2019/2020 as presented be approved.

## 7. TWO YEAR DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Mrs Blackburn circulated copies of the two year financial plan that has to be submitted to the ESFA by the end of July 2019. The plan includes the outturn for 2018/2019, the budget for 2019/2020 as presented to Governors and the forecast for 2020/2021.

Mrs Blackburn drew Governors attention to the Financial Health of the college where the overall outcome is that it is classed as good for the period of the plan. Cllr McGee felt that to maintain a good Financial Health check was good in view of the constraints on funding.

RESOLVED: That the Chairperson be authorised to agree the Two Year Plan on behalf of the Governing Body.

## 8 (i) PRINCIPAL'S TERMLY REPORT

The report of the Principal, copies of which had been circulated, was presented and discussed.

RESOLVED - That the Principal's report be received.

## 8 (ii) MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PRINCIPAL'S TERMLY REPORT

a) All A level subjects have gone through the transition to become linear. Students are facing tougher challenge at the end of two years. There are more changes on the horizon with more challenging versions of vocational courses. The current policy is aiming to achieve a 3 route approach to post 16, academic, apprenticeship or technical route. The debate is whether vocational courses have a place along side A level on the academic route.

b) The post 16 sector has altered considerably over the past few years. A number of sixth forms have converted to academies but primary legislation would be needed for a Catholic college to become an academy. Being an academy provides benefits such as not having to pay VAT and receiving the Teachers Pay Award Grant. The cost of VAT is around £200,000 to the college. It was noted that academies come out of local authority control, but would not be the case for the college.

c) The new Education Inspection Framework will come into force from September 2019. This had been covered at the recent Governor Training session. The college will probably have a short inspection sometime before January 2022.

d) Section 48 Inspection- The college will be subject to an inspection in the future which will be led by a Diocesan inspector and will be focussed on the Catholic nature of the college. A Mission Group has been set up in college to co-ordinate action. This has begun with an audit of current practice. Reports will be provided to the Teaching and Learning Committee on how this work is progressing.

e) Staffing - Mr Pearson reported on the resignations and appointments that had been made to the college and thanked all staff for their commitment, diligence and hard work.

f) Finance Issues – This had been dealt with under the budget for 2019/2020. It was noted that some local colleges had reduced staff numbers and some had been faced with making staff redundancies.

g) PGCE 14+ - Mr Pearson advised Governors that the Aquinas PGCE course which is run in conjunction with Bolton University had just completed its third year and is well established, successful and sought after programme with an outstanding reputation. To date 8 trainees have been

recruited to full time employment at the college. Whilst on the course the trainees play an active role in the life of the college. The targets for 2020/2021 are to increase recruitment by 25% by 2021, increase fees to £8,500 from £7,500 from September 2019, arrange for all teachers to be observed by trainees in the first half of the Autumn Term 2019, significantly contribute to the revalidation of the programme in 2020/2021, include FE college as a diverse placement for 2019/2020 and involve 2x more teachers in the programme as CPD for management roles 2019/2020.

h) The Adult Education Art and Craft Exhibition will again be at Stockport Art Gallery for a month commencing on 22 June 2019.

i) Details of the college's stretch and challenge programme, AQ Scholars was provided for Governors.

j) Mr Pearson advised Governors that the contribution by students to the life of the college has been exceptional. He drew particular attention to After Aquinas Event, the trips and exchanges undertaken, Performing Arts, BTEC Acting Upper Sixth Showcase and sporting success.

## 9. CHAPLAINCY REPORT

Mr Pearson that there was no Chaplaincy Report this year due to the resignation of Duncan Whelan.

## 10. POLICIES

The Fraud Policy and Health and Safety Policy had be reviewed by Governors.

RESOLVED: That the above policies be approved.

## 11. COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP 2019/2020

The Governors were asked to consider which Committee they would be interested in being members of for 2019/2020. A copy of the Committee Membership for 2018/2019 had been circulated for information.

Cllr McGee advised Governors that Mr Hickey had resigned as a Governor and that as a result of this there is a vacancy for a Foundation Governor. There is also a vacancy for a Co-opted Governor.

Cllr McGee advised Governors that due to the uncertainty about how the Diocese would re-act to Governors who have not signed the Code of Conduct he proposed that the membership along with the Chair and Vice Chair of committees remained unchanged.

RESOLVED:

i) Committee membership 2019/2020

a) That Mr M Taylor be appointed to the General Purposes and Employment Committee.

ii) That the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson of the Committees for the academic year 2019/2020 are as follows:

	<u>Chair</u>	<u>Vice Chair</u>
a) Audit Committee	Mr A Martin	Mrs J Miller
b) General Purposes and Employment	Mr J Horan	Mr P Horton
c) Remuneration Committee	Mrs C H Dove	Miss M Braithwaite
d) Resources Committee	Miss M Braithwaite	Mr P Carter
e) Teaching and Learning	Dr P Beatty	Dr A Smith

- iii) That Dr P Beatty be appointed as the Health and Safety Governor.
- iv) That Mrs C H Dove be appointed as the SEND Governor.
- v) That Miss M Braithwaite be appointed to serve on the JCC.
- vi) That Mr M Taylor be appointed as the Link Governor for the Gatsby Standards

12. CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2019/2020

A schedule of meetings for the Academic Year 2019/2020 had been circulated to all Governors for information.

RESOLVED: That the schedule of meetings for the Academic Year 2019/2020 as circulated be approved.

13. CHAIRPERSON'S ACTION

The Chairperson advised Governors that in purchasing the IT equipment referred to in Minute 4 b (ii) he had authorised the expenditure of £51,000.

14. CORRESPONDENCE

No correspondence was brought forward for Governors' consideration.

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no any other business.

16. DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS

19 November 2019 at 4.30pm.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson

Date \_\_\_\_\_