

AQUINAS COLLEGE GOVERNING BODY

Meeting: 10 March 2020

Time: 4.30pm

Venue: The College

GOVERNORS PRESENT

Miss A Aspacio, Dr P Beatty, Miss M Braithwaite, Mr P Carter, Mrs C H Dove, Mr PJ Horton, Mr G Hynes, Cllr T P McGee, Mr A Martin, Mr D Pearson, Miss E Shuttlewood, Ms J Siddall, Dr A Smith 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

Apologies for absence had been received and accepted from Mr L Byrne, Mr R Harris, Mrs J Miller and Ms E Urbancova.

3. STAFF GOVERNOR

It was noted that Ms J Siddall had been elected as Staff Governor.

4. STUDENT GOVERNORS

It was noted that Miss A Aspacio and Miss E Shuttlewood had been elected as Student Governors.

5. INTRODUCTIONS

For the benefit of Miss A Aspacio, Miss E Shuttlewood and Ms J Siddall 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 Ms J Siddall be appointed to the Resources Committee.

8. (i) GOVERNING BODY MINUTES

RESOLVED – i) That the minutes of the meetings held on 19 November 2019 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.

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

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

9. (i) COMMITTEE MINUTES

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

(i) Audit Committee	10 February 2020
(ii) Resources Committee	11 February 2020
(iii) General Purposes and Employment Committee	28 January 2020
(iv) Teaching and Learning Committee	4 February 2020

(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.

9. (ii) MATTERS ARISING FROM THE COMMITTEE MINUTES

a) Audit Committee – 10 February 2020

i) Internal Audit Reports - Minute 10

a) The audit on Health and Safety had resulted in an Amber/Green assurance with one medium recommendation. The college disagrees that it is a medium risk and RSM have agreed to review the recommendation with the college. In response to a question from Governors Mrs Blackburn replied that doors of classrooms were only wedged open when occupied.

b) The audit on IT had resulted in an Amber/Green assurance with two medium recommendations. It was felt that IT security was on going and that the college were aware of the need to keep it under review.

ii) Appointment of Auditors for 2020/2021

Mazars LLP had given a figure for the External Audit that showed an increase of 57% on the fees from last year. No figure had been received from RSM in respect of Internal Audit. Mrs Blackburn advised Governors that other colleges were facing increases in the cost of external audit. No decision had been made until further information had been received from Mazars LLP and other colleges.

Mrs Blackburn advised Governors that there are two local consortiums STAR (Stockport, Tameside, Trafford and Rochdale authorities) and Crescent Purchasing which colleges can use to get further quotes. Cllr McGee added that at a recent SFCA meeting it had been reported that colleges were seeing an increase in the price for external audit.

Mr Taylor asked if there were any accountancy firms in Stockport that could carry out the

b) Resources Committee – 11 February 2020.

i) Budget Update 2019/2020 – Minute 7

Governors noted the latest position in regard to the 2019/2020 budget.

ii) Three Year Financial Plan – Minute 9

The Three Year Financial Plan had been submitted to the ESFA. Mr Pearson advised Governors that William Wragg MP for Hazel Grove had visited the college recently.

c) General Purposes Committee and Employment Committee – 28 January 2020

i) Admissions 2020/2021 - Minute 6

Governors noted the information in relation to the admissions process for 2020/2021 with particular reference to the number of category 2 students that had been interviewed. Mr Pearson advised Governors that offers to students had been sent on 14 February 2020. The intention was for the college to grow by about 20 Students.

The number of offers made was 1978 with a view to having 1205 students in L6 and 1045 students (plus 13 new & 17 existing pathways) in U6 giving a total of 2280.

ii) Student Destinations – Minute 7

The Governing Body noted the information on the destination of students who had left the College at the end of the 2018/2019 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 Ms Vitti has been appointed as Principal at Holy Cross Sixth Form College in Bury and that she will take up her new post in September 2020. Governors offered their congratulations to Ms Vitti on her appointment.

d) Teaching and Learning Committee – 4 February 2020

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

Mr Hynes thanked the college for sending out the HESA data that showed how well the college was doing. He felt that the data was very impressive.

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.

10. RESOURCES COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Resources Committee's Terms of Reference (copies of which had been circulated prior to the meeting) had been reviewed by the Resources Committee and recommended for approval.

RESOLVED: That the amended Resources Committee Terms of Reference be agreed.

11. BUDGET 2019/2020 HALF YEAR FORECAST

Mrs Blackburn reminded Governors that the February 2020 accounts included the re-forecasting that had been undertaken in January 2020 to take account of the increase in high needs funding. Other adjustments have been made including the additional costs for utilities and the forecast outturn now stands at £113,000 but this will change depending on the staffing budget costs. The high needs budget is being monitored and the budget is running as expected.

The Chairperson advised Governors that the pay awards for teaching staff and support staff has not yet been agreed. The teaching staff and support budgets are being monitored but there is an element of risk until the actual pay awards are known. It is hoped that a two year deal can be agreed by the end of March 2020. It could amount to around 5% over two years. An allowance for the teacher's and support staff pay award has been included in the budget. The grant for the increase in the employer's contribution of the teachers' pension is until 31 March 2020, it is not known if this grant will continue.

Governors noted that there had been a funding cut in real terms of around 30% over the last 10 years. The Governors thanked Mr Pearson and Mrs Blackburn for their work in managing the college's finance during this difficult period.

RESOLVED: That the budget position for 2019/2020 be noted.

12. (i) PRINCIPAL'S TERMLY REPORT

That the report of the Principal, copies of which were circulated, was presented and discussed. Mr Pearson apologised for the brief report. Unfortunately, his secretary had been ill all week and he had been unable to get the reports that are usually sent to her for editing.

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) Budget 2020/2021

Mrs Blackburn advised Governors that the college had received its ESFA budget for 2020/2021 based on 2253 students. There has been an increase of 4.7% in the rate of funding per student and increases in some of the other funding factors means the overall effect is that the college should receive up to an additional £900,000 in 2020/2021.

Other than the increase to the rate the budget increases for 2020/2021 are due to a small increase to student numbers plus an increase in the number of students in Band 5, There have been changes in the weighting that is given for some subject areas i.e. STEM. The funding for core maths has not yet been confirmed but it anticipated that it will remain at its present value. The increases have not been consolidated beyond next year.

Other than the increase to the rate the budget increases for 2020/2021 are due to a small increase to student numbers plus an increase in the number of students in Band 5, students who are studying a full time programme of more than the 540 hours. There have been changes in the weighting that is given for some subject areas i.e. STEM. The funding for core maths has not yet been confirmed but it is anticipated that it will remain at its present value. The increases have not been consolidated beyond next year.

A budget for 2020/2021 will be presented to Governors at the June 2020 meeting.

b) Local Provision

There is still some uncertainty around the Cheadle and Marple College Network, it had been given a Notice to Improve and it was no longer a viable institution. Trafford College are in the process of a takeover, however, they would require financial assistance from the ESFA to take over both sites. A decision on this should be known by the end of the academic year. If this were to happen there would be three main providers in Stockport for post 16 education. These would be i) Aquinas College, ii) Trafford College running Stockport College and Cheadle and Marple College and iii) school six forms run by the Laurus Trust. A 14-19 group has been reformed and is chaired by the local authority with the priority for all post 16 providers to work together to provide good educational opportunities for the young people of Stockport as the number of students increase.

The Chairman advised Governors that Trafford College offer a wide range of courses through Cheadle and Marple and Stockport College.

Mr Hynes asked if there was any drift from Cheadle to the sixth form at Parrs Wood High School. Mr Pearson replied that many students from Cheadle Kingsway School are going to the Laurus Trust schools. Dr Smith added that the college has many students from the High Peak area of Derbyshire. Mr Hynes asked if the college can vire monies from STEM funding. Mr Pearson replied that it is possible.

c) Students

Mr Pearson advised Governors that departments were focused on working hard with students towards their final assessments. The upper sixth are in college for another nine weeks so are approaching the end of their time at the college. They are all wished the best of luck with their revision and exams.

Finally, Mr Pearson and the Governors noted that Ms Vitti had been appointed as Principal at Holy Cross Sixth Form College in Bury. Ms Vitti will take up her new post on 1 September 2020. Governors offered their congratulations to Ms Vitti on her appointment.

The Governors thanked Mr Pearson for his informative report.

13. GOVERNOR TRAINING SESSION

In view of the fact that the local elections would be held on 7 May 2020 it was suggested that the training session be held on 13 May 2020 instead of the 6 May 2020 as originally planned. It was agreed that Governors be asked which date they would prefer the training evening be held on.

The session would include the following:

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

14. UPDATE ON COLLEGE STRUCTURE

Mr Pearson advised Governor that following the appointment of Ms Vitti as Principal at Holy Cross Sixth Form College in Bury from 1 September 2020 he wanted to review the senior management structure at the college. The college needs a nominated deputy to the Principal who has to be a practising Catholic, therefore, it is proposed that Mr A Bailey, Assistant Principal (Pastoral) becomes the nominated deputy to the Principal from 1 September 2020.

At the moment the senior management structure of the college is as follows;

Principal	Mr Pearson
Vice Principal	Ms Vitti (Curriculum/Quality)
Assistant Principal x 2	Mr Bailey (Pastoral) and Mrs Blackburn (Finance)
Senior Tutors x 8	

The proposed new senior management structure would increase the number of Senior Tutors by 2 to 10. Mr Pearson reminded Governors that when Mrs Bleasdale left her post was not replaced. Once the two new Senior Tutors have been appointed it will provide an opportunity to look at what skills are needed in the Vice Principal role. It is anticipated that the appointment of the new Senior Tutors will have started by the time the Governors Training session takes place in May 2020 and that a new senior management structure can be presented at the meeting. The new Vice Principal would, therefore, be in post from January/ April 2021. The post of Vice Principal has to be advertised nationally and it is a Governors appointment.

Dr Smith advised Governors that funding cuts had necessitated a reduction in the numbers in the senior management team at the college. He reminded Governors that when he was Principal he had 6 Assistant Principals in addition to a Vice Principal.

15. CHAIRPERSON'S ACTION

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

16. CORRESPONDENCE

No correspondence was brought forward for Governors consideration.

17. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

a) Coronavirus

The Chairperson reported that the SFCA had advised colleges to work to the Government advice taking into account the local conditions. The main areas discussed were as follows:

- i) What impact would there be on examinations.
- ii) The action by the Government was aimed at bringing the spike down
- iii) The number of staff and students that were self isolating
- iv) At what point does the college tell the students they have to stay at home
- v) Can students access moodle for on-line learning

Dr Beatty said that the college had to plan for the worst case scenario and hope for the best. A large number of people are infected but they don't know.

Dr Smith asked what measures the college was taking in relation to cleaning door handles, wiping down hard surfaces and the provision of hand gel. Mr Pearson replied that all of these measures were in place and tissues were also available. He added that at the moment the virus does appear to be affecting students.

The Chairperson added that there is a lot of misinformation circulating around at the moment. He added that Stockport Council were working with Public Health to ensure that the best advice was available to residents of Stockport. The message is that it is business as usual and there are no plans to close schools and colleges at the moment.

Mr Pearson advised Governors that the college is communicating with parents via emails, staff via email and daily briefing and students via email, text, notices and posters in college. In addition, there are daily updates from the Department for Education.

18. DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS

- a) Governor Training Session - 6/13 May 2020 at 4.30pm
- b) Summer Term Meeting - 23 June 2020 at 4.30pm

Signed _____
Chairperson

Date _____