

## AQUINAS COLLEGE GOVERNING BODY

Meeting: 29 June 2021

Time: 4.30pm

Venue: Virtual

### GOVERNORS PRESENT

Dr P Beatty, Miss M Braithwaite, Mr L Byrne, Mr S Coker, Mrs C H Dove, Mr R Harris, Mr B Hickey, Mr P Horton, Mr G Hynes, Mr A Martin, Cllr T P McGee, Mr D Pearson (Principal), Mr D Quanash, Ms J Siddall, Dr A Smith, and Ms E Urbancova.

### IN ATTENDANCE

Mr A Bailey	Vice Principal
Mrs D Blackburn	Assistant Principal (Finance)
Ms C Phillips	Assistant Principal (Curriculum and Quality)
Mr T Conlon	Clerk to the Governing Body

Cllr T P McGee in the Chair

#### 1. OPENING PRAYER

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

#### 2. INTRODUCTION

The Chairperson welcomed Mr S Coker and Mr D Quanash (Student Governors) to the meeting.

#### 3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Mrs J Miller and Mr M Taylor.

#### 4. 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.

#### 5. (i) GOVERNING BODY MINUTES

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meetings held on 9 March, 21 April and 12 May 2021, 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.

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

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

#### 6. (i) COMMITTEE MINUTES

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

(i) Audit Committee	26 May and 7 June 2021
(ii) Resources Committee	8 June 2021
(iii) Remuneration Committee	8 June 2021
(iv) Teaching and Learning Committee	15 June 2021

(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.

6. (ii) MATTERS ARISING FROM THE COMMITTEE MINUTES

a) Audit Committee – 26 May 2021

i) Appointment of External Auditors – Minute 2

RESOLVED: i) That Murray Smith be appointed as External Auditors for 2021/2022 and ii) That the fee for 2021 which is exclusive of VAT and expenses be agreed at £11,025. Future inflation prices limited to 2%.

b) Audit Committee – 7 June 2021

i) Audit Committee Assurance – Minute 5

In the absence of internal auditors Mrs Blackburn had produced a report that summarised the financial process and the high level summary of the main controls and measures taken to ensure accurate and effective reports to the Senior Leadership Team and Governors.

ii) Strategy for Internal Audit 2021/2024 – 2021/2022 – Minute 6

RSM had submitted a Strategy for the provision of an Internal Audit Service for 2021/2022. The Audit Plan for 2021/2022 would consist of 18 days with the addition of contingency days as necessary. The fee for 2021/2022 based on 18 days would be £9,780 which is inclusive of expenses but exclusive of VAT. This gives a daily rate of £543.

RESOLVED: i) RSM be appointed as Internal Auditors for 2021/2022 and ii) that the Strategy for the provision of an Internal Audit Service for 2021/2022 be agreed.

iii) Audit Code of Practice – Minute 8

A new Post 16 Audit Code of Practice for 2020/2021 had been produced and one of the more significant changes is that in accordance with the recommendations of the Ney Review, the external auditors will present their findings annually at a meeting of the Governing Body.

c) Resources Committee – 8 June 2021

i) Charging Policy for Adult and Continuing Education Courses – Minute 4

RESOLVED: That the recommendation made by the Resources Committee in relation to the fees to be charged for Adult and Continuing Education Courses for 2021/2022 be approved.

ii) Health and Safety Report – Minute 7

Governors noted the report that covered the period 1 September 2020 to 13 May 2021.

iii) The budget for 2021/2022, Authorisation of Two Year Financial Plan and the Cessation of LIBOR were separate items on the Agenda for this meeting.

iv) Financial Assessment and Governors Dashboard – Minute 11

Mrs Blackburn advised Governors that a reply had not yet been received from the ESFA and Bolton University in respect of income from the Office for Students in relation to its PGCE course.

d) Remuneration Committee – 8 June 2021

i) Succession Planning – Minute 5

Governors noted the new senior management structure at the college and the details of which members of the Senior Leadership Team was linked to the various committees

ii) Senior Postholders Remuneration – Minute 7

The Committee felt that it would be appropriate to increase the pay of the Principal on the same basis as the two stage pay award for teaching staff which equates to a 2.42% increase. The pay of the Vice Principal was not considered in view of the fact that he had only been appointed from 1 May 2021

The Committee had recorded their thanks and appreciation to Mr Pearson and all the college staff 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 be approved.

e) Teaching and Learning Committee – 15 June 2021

i) Impact of Covid on TAG process – Minute 6

Governors noted that students grades this year would be based on Teacher Assessment Grades (TAG) where as last year they were based on Centre Assessment Grades (CAG). The difference between the grades is that TAG is ore evidence based on what the students have achieved, whilst CAG was based on what the student was most likely to achieve. The college had worked through the process and produced a TAG for each subject.

ii) In Year Progress – Minute 7

The committee had considered the Teacher Assessed Grades (TAG) in relation to ALPS scores for the college. The value added score is based on a scale of 1 – 9 with the top 20% shown in red and the bottom 20% shown in blue.

The A level Quality Indicator for the college was 1.03. The Centre Assessment Grades (CAG) last year gave also gave a 1.03 residual score. This year the results are evidence based and the overall value added for each subject is shown.

It forms part of the quality assurance process in the college.

### iii) Curriculum Issues – Minute 8

Governors noted that there were no new courses for 2021/2021 and that there were changes to both level 2 and level 3 courses. The level 3 provision offers a variety of more vocationally focused courses, mainly BTECs, which complement the A level courses.

The college are looking to introduce more contact time for students in the next academic year with a view to increase the contact time from 4.5 hours to 5 hours or something in between.

## 7. CESSATION OF LIBOR

Mrs Blackburn introduced a paper in relation to the cessation of LIBOR that had been circulated to Governors prior to the meeting.

LIBOR stands for the London Inter-Bank Offered Rate and has been used for many years. It is an interest rate average calculated from estimates submitted by the leading banks in London. Each bank estimates what it would be charged were it to borrow money from other banks. LIBOR is being replaced by SONIA which is based on actual transactions and reflects the average of the interest rates that banks pay to borrow sterling overnight from other financial institutions and other institutional investors. It is administered by the Bank of England.

The college holds two bank accounts, i) a fixed rate loan with a residual balance of £1.5m with a fixed interest repayment of 5.27% and a penalty for early repayment and ii) a variable rate loan of £1.2m repayable at base +0.35% (0.45%) currently) with no penalty for repayment. Both will be fully paid off in 2033.

The reason for the change is that LIBOR is being abolished in January 22 and the outcome of changing to a new interest rate measure uses the principle of economic equivalent i.e. neither the bank nor the college should be advantaged or disadvantaged by the change to the chosen new method of calculation. It is recommended that the base rate be used as it is established as a useful measure, is easily understood and will exist going forward. The change will need Governor approval and a signed minute as before when for instance the covenants had to change to take account of FRS102- the new financial reporting standard effective from 1 January 2019.

The minute to read:

At a full meeting of the Governors of Aquinas College (the college) held on Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> June 2021 the following resolution was passed:

It was RESOLVED:

i) That the loan facility in an original principal sum of up to £11,700,000 arranged with Lloyds Bank PLC in a letter dated 17<sup>th</sup> January 2008 (the Facility letter) be amended in the manner suggested by the bank in the letter headed “LIBOR loan facility Transition Proposal” dated 12<sup>th</sup> February 2021.

ii) That the original loan agreement be amended to replace LIBOR with bank **Base Rate** wherever it appears and for the main purpose of calculating any break charges should the college decide to pay off part or all of the fixed rate element of the loan before its termination date of 9<sup>th</sup> March 2033.

iii) That Mr D Pearson and Mrs D Blackburn, jointly, be authorised to make necessary arrangements with the Bank and to sign the amendment letter on behalf of the college.

We certify that this is a true copy of the Resolution which has been entered in the Minutes and that it was passed in accordance with the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the College.

RESOLVED: That the Governing Body agree the minute outlined above.

## 8. BUDGET 2021/2022

Mrs Blackburn gave Governors an overview of the budget that had been presented to the Resources Committee at its meeting on 8 June 2021

i) The ESFA have now confirmed that the income from them for 2021/2022 will be £10,672,133 compared with £10,370,448 for 2020/2021 and is an increase of £301,685. The funding is based on 2,298 students compared with 2,253 for last year an increase of 45 students. The funding band increases from last year have been maintained with a top rate of £4,188. 97.5 % of students are at that rate. In addition all the new elements of funding introduced in 2020/21 are to be paid in 2021/22. The ESFA funding above contains £300k 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.

In addition, the budget includes Local Authority high needs funding of £247,399. This covers the assessment of the additional costs over £6000. The college has already secured £195,000 from Stockport MBC for continuing students with high needs. A claim for new students starting in September 2021 will be submitted to Stockport MBC.

ii) The Teachers Pension Grant will continue until 31 August 2022 and is confirmed at £356,359.

The draft budget shows a contingency reserve of £225,264 compared to £121,362 last year, an increase of £103,902. Whilst the initial trading surplus is £360,987.

iii) All aspect of staffing and non pay costs will be monitored to ensure the running of the college as efficiently as possible.

iv) Mrs Blackburn drew Governor's attention to the Financial Health calculated from the initial budget where the overall outcome is that it is classed as Good at 220 within the range 180 to 230.

RESOLVED: That the budget for 2021/2022 as recommended by the Resources Committee be approved.

## 9. TWO YEAR DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Mrs Blackburn advised Governors that the two year financial plan has to be submitted to the ESFA by the end of July 2021. The plan includes the outturn for 2020/2021, the budget for 2021/2022 and the forecast of 2022/2023.

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

10 (i) PRINCIPAL'S TERMLY REPORT

That the report of the Principal, copies of which were circulated, was presented and discussed.

RESOLVED - That the Principal's report be received.

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

a) ESFA Annual Strategic Meeting

This is a new initiative from the ESFA and the college had met recently with members from the ESFA. At the meeting the college outlined the strategic challenges that it would face. These included Covid catch up, staff well-being, potential curriculum changes regarding Applied Generals (BTECs) and the fact that the college is close to its capacity. It was felt that the meeting had been a success and that the ESFA had a better understanding of the college. A summary of the meeting will be provided by the ESFA in the near future.

There will be a greater emphasis on Governance and the need for a Governors Development Plan. Cllr McGee felt that the Governing Body was very experienced in many areas including education. Dr Beatty asked if the ESFA were looking for a Governors Improvement Plan. Mr Pearson replied that there would be increased scrutiny of colleges in the Skills White Paper and that governance has a major role in the direction of the college. Mr Pearson added that he felt the SFCA and the Diocese would be providing guidance for the college.

Mr Pearson added that the ESFA would look for the college to have an independent adviser for the appointment of a Principal, Vice Principal and Head of RE. Mr Hynes asked if the adviser would have a vote on the appointments panel. Mr Pearson replied that they would not have a vote.

It was agreed that Chairperson, Principal and the Clerk of Governors would keep this matter under review.

b) Teacher Assessment Grades (TAG)

Mr Pearson advised Governors that the TAG were submitted to the Examination Boards by 18 June 2021. There is more emphasis on assessment in line with guidance received from the examination boards. The assessments are controlled by results from mock examinations and are objective and unbiased. Mock examinations have been undertaken in the college under normal examination conditions. Each department has undertaken validation and moderation training so that their assessments are thorough, vigorous and will stand up to scrutiny. It is hoped that the college will not be challenged by students on their TAGs. The results for A levels is 10 August 2021 and for GCSEs it is 12 August 2021.

Mr Pearson added that staff and students had worked extremely hard and were ready for a break before facing the challenges for the next academic year.

c) Budget 2021/2022 - This had been dealt with under the budget for 2021/2022.

d) Employment

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.

e) Adult Education

Governors noted that some courses had recommenced at the beginning of March 2021, whilst the leisure courses resumed in April 2021. It is hoped that for 2021/2022 the normal academic course will be delivered with a slightly reduces general leisure offer but an increased language offer.

11. CHAPLAINCY REPORT

Mr Pearson introduced the Chaplaincy Report that had been prepared by Carmel Scanlon, Lay Chaplain.

Governors asked that a list of the acronyms used in the report be forwarded to them.

RESOLVED: i) That the Chaplaincy Report be received and ii) that all the staff involved be thanked for their hard work.

12. GOVERNING BODY MEMBERSHIP

The Clerk to the Governors advised Governors that the following members term of office terminate on 31 August 2021:

- i) Mrs E Urbancova (Parent Governor).
- ii) Mr R Harris and Ms J Siddall (Staff Governors).
- iii) Dr P Beatty (Co-opted Governor).

Dr Beatty indicated that he would like to continue as a Co-opted Governor subject to his health improving. He undertook to discuss the matter with the Chair of Governors.

The Chairperson thanked Mrs E Urbancova, Mr R Harris, Ms J Siddall and Dr Beatty for their contribution to the college and the work of the governing body.

13. COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP 2021/2022

i) Governors were asked to consider which Committee they would be interested in being members of for 2021/2022. A copy of the Committee Membership for 2020/2021 had been circulated for information.

Once a new Parent Governor and Staff Governors have been elected they will be appointed to the committees.

RESOLVED: That the Committee membership for 2021/2022 remain as detailed on the paper that had been circulated prior to the meeting.

ii) That the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson of the Committees for the academic year 2021/2022 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 P Horton	Mr L Byrne
c) Remuneration Committee	Mrs C H Dove	Miss M Braithwaite
d) Resources Committee	Miss M Braithwaite	Mr P Horton
e) Teaching and Learning	Dr A Smith	Mr M Taylor

- iii) That Mr B Hickey 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.

14. CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2021/2022

A schedule of meetings for the Academic Year 2021/2022 had been circulated to all Governors for information. At this stage it was not known what format the meetings would take place. A decision would be made when the college returns in September 2021.

RESOLVED: That the schedule of meetings for the Academic Year 2021/2022 as circulated be approved.

15. CHAIRPERSON'S ACTION

The Chairperson reported that he had agreed the following:

- i) The appointment of Murray Smith LLP as External Auditors for the college for 2021/2022.
- ii) He had authorised expenditure for the purchase of additional IT equipment. Mr Coker reported that the additional IT equipment had been appreciated by the students.

16. DESIGNATED GOVERNORS REPORTS

Reports were received from the Designated Governors as follows:

- i) Health and Safety – Dr Beatty advised Governors that the Health and Safety Committee had looked at a wide range of issues. He added that everything was working well and that an Annual Health and Safety report is present to Governors and the Resources Committee regularly receive reports. If any Governor had required further information they should contact him.
- ii) SEND – Mrs Dove advised Governors that the main focus had been on safeguarding and that each term she attends the Designated Safeguarding meetings. She added that she was impressed by the dedication and hard work of the SEND department. A new online reporting system has been introduced that should help to speed up how staff are informed of any safeguarding concerns. At the moment there are three Safe Guarding Leads but it is hoped to increase it to four. The work with Pathways had been limited due to Covid.
- iii) JCC – Miss Braithwaite advised Governors that she had attended two Joint Consultative Committee meetings. The Committee discusses items that impact on staff within the college. The most recent items have included the college timetable, class sizes.

The Chairperson thanked the Governors for their positive reports.

17. CORRESPONDENCE

No correspondence was brought forward for Governors' consideration.



18. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

i) The Chairperson thanked every one for attending the meeting and for their support and commitment to the college and hoped that they would enjoy the summer break.

ii) The Chairperson wished those whose term of office up all the best for the future.

19. FUTURE NEXT MEETINGS

i) The Chairperson expressed the hope that future meetings could be held face to face. The position would be reviewed in September 2021.

ii) The next meeting would be held on 23 November 2021 at 4.30pm.

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_