

AQUINAS COLLEGE
RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Date: 9 November 2021

Time: 4.30 pm

Venue: Virtual

GOVERNORS PRESENT

Miss M Braithwaite, Mr C Green, Mr B Hickey, Mr P Horton, Cllr T P McGee, Mr D Pearson.

Miss M Braithwaite in the Chair.

IN ATTENDANCE

Mr A Bailey Vice Principal Mrs D Blackburn Assistant Principal (Finance)

Mr T Conlon Clerk to the Governing Body

1. OPENING PRAYER

The meeting began with a prayer led by Miss M Braithwaite.

2. INTRODUCTIONS

Mr Green was welcomed to the meeting and for his benefit members were introduced by the Chairperson.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

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. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting held on 10 June 2021 copies of which had been circulated previously, were agreed as a correct record.

6. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

a) Health and Safety – Minute 7 (c)

Miss Braithwaite asked if the investigations in to the incidents had been completed. Mrs Blackburn replied that the investigations had been completed and none had been reported under RIDDOR.

b) Budget 2021/2022 – Minute 9

Miss Braithwaite reminded Governors that the contingency reserve of £225,264 was the forecasted cash surplus.

c) Cessation of LIBOR – Minute 10

Mrs Blackburn advised Governors that everything had been completed and that Mr Pearson and herself had signed the amendment letter on behalf of the college. From 1 January 2022 the base rate will be used going forward as the basis of calculating any break clauses if the college decide to pay the fixed term loan off early.

d) Financial Assessment and Governors Dashboard – Minute 11

Miss Braithwaite asked if confirmation had been received from the ESFA that the college does not receive any income from the Office for Students in relation to the PGCE course which operates on a franchise basis with Bolton University. Mrs Blackburn replied that confirmation had not been received and that she would pursue the matter with the ESFA

7. HEALTH AND SAFETY ANNUAL REPORT 2020/2021

Mrs Blackburn introduced a paper that had been prepared by Neil Lowe, Health and Safety Adviser, which had been circulated to all members prior to the meeting. She added that the report was more detailed than in previous years. The report covered the academic year 2020/2021 and the main points were as follows:

a) There have been no significant regulatory changes affecting the college. Government guidance has been published by the DFE in relation to the management of the coronavirus pandemic, specially “Action for FE Colleges and Providers During the Coronavirus Outbreak. The latest guidance was issued on 27 September 2021.

b) Accidents reported for the period 1 September 2020 to 31 August 2021 were summarised by cause. The number of accidents was 7 compared to 4 in the previous year. No incidents had been reported under RIDDOR.

c) Work related ill health – Governors noted that the main causes of absence was related to the use of computer workstations which accounted for 37 days which covered 4 staff. The number of days lost was 42 compared to 41 in the previous year. All cases of work related ill health have been investigated and resolved. 5 days had been lost due to stress and covered 4 staff.

d) Incidents are classed as follows:

Low – There is scope for enhancing control or improving efficiency and quality

Medium – Internal control risk management issue that could lead to: hospital treatment or financial loss which could affect the effective function of a department or loss of controls or process being audited or possible reputational damage or negative publicity in local or regional media.

High – A serious internal control or risk management issues that may lead to: major injury or substantial losses or violation of corporate strategies, policies or values, reputational damage or negative publicity in national or international media or adverse regulatory impact such as loss of operating licences or material fines.

Extreme – Permanent disability/fatality, serious internal control or risk management issue that may lead to catastrophic loss.

The college risks are mainly low with a few classed as medium.

Four departments, Art and Design, Facilities, Kitchen and Science were classed as high risk. Whilst IT, Physical Education, Performing Arts and Pathways were classed as medium risk. All departments classed as high risk and medium risk had been evaluated in October 2021.

e) Benchmarking data had been provided that showed that the college was performing well in comparison to other colleges and that the college is a safe place to work and study.

RESOLVED: i) That the Health and Safety Report for 2020/2021 be received.

ii) That the Governors record their appreciation to all staff for their work during this difficult time.

8. MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS

Mrs Blackburn introduced the Management Accounts for October 2021 that had been circulated to Governors. Mrs Blackburn added that the accounts covered only 3 months and that there was little to report.

A discussion took place on the October 2021 Management Accounts with particular reference to the following:

a) The trading surplus is £194,000.

b) The forecast outturn is £361,000.

c) The number of students on roll on the census date for this academic year will be around 2,400 which is an increase of around 120 students which will mean an increased budget for 2022/2023.

d) Mrs Blackburn advised Governors that the pay award for teaching staff had been paid in October, it was 1.0% for most grades with 1.5% for scale points in the middle of the first 9 scale points. This was lower than the amount budgeted for but additional staff have been employed because of increase in student numbers. Cllr Mc Gee advised Governors that an offer has been made to UNISON for an increase in support staff pay, it is similar to the teachers pay award.

e) The canteen is operating close to pre-pandemic levels on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday but on Thursday and Friday it is much quieter due to changes to the timetable to include “catch up” time for students. The increase in the living wage from April 2022 will impact on staff in the canteen.

f) The financial health of the college remains good.

If members had any questions on the October Accounts they were asked to contact Mrs Blackburn.

RESOLVED: That the Accounts for October 2021 be received.

9. BUDGET 2020/2021

Mrs Blackburn advised Governors that the changes to the budget had been covered whilst discussing the October 2021 Accounts. She added that there was nothing to note other than the increase in High Needs income which is shown as £247,000 but there is another £70,000 -£80,000 of income due. National Insurance contributions will increase to 15.05% from 13.8% in April 2022.

Mr Pearson added that the college will have to make a business case to the ESFA for additional funding due to increased student numbers.

The budget would be reviewed in January 2022. An updated report will be provided for the Governing Body meeting on 23 November 2021.

10. DRAFT STATUTORY ACCOUNTS 2020/2021

Mrs Blackburn introduced the draft Statutory Accounts for 2020/2021 that had been circulated previously to Governors. It was noted that the Audit Committee who have a corporate governance role in considering the draft Statutory Accounts had discussed this at its meeting on 8 November 2021 and had made an amendment to the statement on page 17.

A discussion took place on a number of points included in the draft Statutory Accounts for 2020/2021 with particular reference to the following points:

- i) The college had exceeded all its targets.
- ii) £70,000 had been released from the reserves held as accounting adjustment
- iii) The college had ended the year with a £1.2m operating surplus.
- iv) Last year there had been a £1,000,000 increase in funding due to increased student numbers and an increase in the amount at which they are funded along with increase in funding for high value courses.
- v) There is an actuarial gain in respect of the Greater Manchester Pension Fund and Mrs Blackburn advised Governors how that was calculated.

In addition all members were asked to check the draft Statutory Accounts for any mistakes or typing errors and to advise Mrs Blackburn accordingly.

The accounts remain draft until they are approved by the Governing Body and signed by the Chairperson, Principal and the auditors.

RESOLVED: That the draft Statutory Accounts for 2020/2021, subject to any governor amendments be recommended to the Governing Body for approval.

11. FUTURE FUNDING METHODOLOGY

Mr Pearson advised Governors that the Government's Spending Review published recently had indicated that funding would be in line with inflation and that courses with a high value would be funded for the next 3 years. He added that the SFCA had done a good job in pushing for a 3 year plan and for recent increases in funding to be embedded in the settlement.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Insurance - Mr Horton asked if the college had been successful in making a Business Interruption claim for the loss of income in the canteen during the pandemic. Mrs Blackburn advised Governors that the college had been successful in claiming £100,000 which would show up in the accounts for 2021/2022. Initially insurance companies had said that a Business Interruption claim only applied to notifiable diseases on the premises. However, the Supreme Court had determined that this was not the case, therefore, the claim had been successful.

The college were putting together a case for a claim to be made as a result of the recent of the electricity failure.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

8 February 2022 at 4.30pm.

Signed _____
Chairperson

Date _____