

## AQUINAS COLLEGE GOVERNING BODY

Meeting: 29 November 2022

Time: 4.30pm

Venue: College

### GOVERNORS PRESENT

Dr P Beatty, Miss M Braithwaite, Mr L Byrne, Mrs C H Dove, Mr C Green, Mr R Harris, Mr B Hickey, Mr P Horton, Mr G Hynes, Mrs C Knights, Mr A Martin, Cllr T P McGee, Mrs J Miller, Mr D Pearson, Dr A Smith, Mr M Taylor.

### IN ATTENDANCE

Mr A Bailey	Vice Principal
Mrs D Blackburn	Assistant Principal (Finance)
Mr T Conlon	Clerk to the Governing Body

Mr T Conlon in the Chair

#### 1. ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON

It was proposed, seconded and unanimously

RESOLVED: That Cllr T P McGee be elected Chairperson for the ensuing academic year.

Cllr T P McGee in the Chair.

#### 2. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRPERSON

It was proposed, seconded and unanimously

RESOLVED: That Mrs J Miller be elected Vice Chairperson for the ensuing academic year.

#### 3. OPENING PRAYER/REFLECTION

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

#### 4. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Mr J Mairs and Mr M Quinney

#### 5. ELIGIBILITY AND REGISTER OF PECUNIARY INTERESTS

Governors were asked to complete the Declaration of Eligibility, Register of Pecuniary Interest and Code of Conduct Forms that had been circulated and to return them to the Clerk as soon as possible.

#### 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.

There were no interests declared.

7. OPEN GOVERNMENT

RESOLVED: That the Governing Body would continue to adopt the Open Government policy. Governing Body meetings and its committees would be open to the public, subject to the exclusion of observers for confidential items.

9. CODE OF CONDUCT FOR GOVERNORS

It was agreed that all Governors (except Student Governors) are required to complete and sign the Code of Conduct for Governors issued by Shrewsbury Diocese. Completed forms should be returned to the Clerk as soon as possible.

10. RECLASSIFICATION OF SIXTH FORM COLLEGES

Mr Pearson advised Governors that the Office for National Statistics (ONS) has just confirmed that sixth form and FE colleges have been reclassified as public sector institutions. In technical terms they are now part of the central government sector. This decision has immediate effect. There are now only 45 sixth form colleges and any new sixth form colleges would have to be academies.

Colleges will now operate in a very similar framework to academies but will receive none of the financial benefits (e.g. VAT refund)

Colleges must now comply with HM Treasury's managing public money guidance. The ability to borrow commercially has effectively ended and the use of existing overdraft and revolving credit facilities will be subject to DfE consent.

College funding agreements will be updated next month to reflect the above.

Payment profiles will be changed so colleges receive funding, like academies, in even monthly payments.

Mr Bailey joined the meeting at this point.

Mr Pearson advised Governors that the college had undertaken a feasibility study to build a two storey building on land near the visitors' car park. The new build would provide an additional 12 classrooms and would need to be completed for September 2024. The college will make an application for funding to the ESFA Post 16 Capacity Fund which is based on need and readiness. The cost of the proposed building would be in the region of £4M and the college have asked for 80% support. If the college is unsuccessful with its bid the college would have to use its reserve funds if it were to go ahead.

More details are given in the Resources Committee Minutes of the meeting held on 8 November 2022.

Cllr McGee advised Governors that there will probably be the need to hold a Special Meeting in early March 2023 to deal with the proposed capital build.

Mr Hickey arrived at this point in the meeting.

## 11. ACADEMISATION

The view of Shrewsbury Diocese is that it is proposing 3 Multi Academy Trusts based on geographical areas, that schools can join when they are ready. The college is not currently part of the Diocese's plans but is in discussion with the Diocese about possible future routes including working with colleges from different Diocese.

Miss Braithwaite asked would the college's position in respect of VAT change and who would manage the college. Mr Pearson replied that VAT position would change if it became an academy and that the college would still have a Governing Body but there would be a Board above it.

Cllr McGee reminded Governors that the Training Session in May 2023 would focus on academisation. He added that he and Mr Pearson had recently met with the ESFA who were keen to seek the views of the college.

Dr Beatty asked will academisation be the same as the current programme. Mr Pearson replied that the north west has the fewest academies and that consultation will take place with the Regional Schools Commissioner. He added that T levels were not presently being considered by the college.

## 11. GOVERNING BODY MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 29 June 2022, copies of which had been circulated previously be, (a) approved and signed by the Chairperson as a correct record and (b) authorised for publication in accordance with the College Instrument and Articles.

## 11. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE GOVERNING BODY MINUTES

Safeguarding – Minute 7

It was agreed that Safeguarding would be a standard item on future agendas.

## 12. COMMITTEE MINUTES

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

(i) Audit Committee	8 November 2022
(ii) Resources Committee	9 November 2022
(iii) General Purposes and Employment Committee	6 July and 11 October 2022
(iv) Teaching and Learning Committee	5 October 2022

(a) be approved and signed by the Chairperson as a correct record and (b) authorised for publication in accordance with the College Instrument and Articles.

## 14. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE COMMITTEE MINUTES

a) Audit Committee – 8 November 2022

Cllr McGee as Chairperson of the Governing Body had attended the meeting at the request of the External Auditors to receive the Financial Statements Audit and Management Letter.

i) Draft Statutory Accounts – Minute 7

Governors noted that the College's Annual Report and Financial Statement for the year ended 31 July 2022 would be considered at this meeting.

ii) Internal Audit Annual Report for 2021/2022

The report concluded that the college had an adequate and effective framework for risk management, governance and internal control. The audits identified further enhancements to risk management, governance and internal control to ensure that it remains adequate and effective.

iii) Financial Statements Audit and Management Letter – Minute 11

Governors noted that the draft Management Letter from Murray Smith LLP indicated that, subject to carrying out a post balance sheet events review, there will be an unqualified opinion on both the Financial Statements and Regularity Audit for the year ended 31 July 2022.

Murray Smith LLP felt that the college had been well prepared for the audit and that they had been impressed by its organisation.

iv) Risk Management – Minute 14

Governors noted that the Annual Report on Risk Management would be considered at this meeting.

v) Audit Committee Annual Report – Minute 16

Governors noted that the Audit Committee Annual Report would be considered at this meeting.

vi) Committee Terms of Reference – Minute 16

A copy the revised Committee Terms of Reference of had been circulated to Governors prior to the meeting.

**RESOLVED:** That the revised Committee Terms of Reference be approved.

b) Resources Committee – 9 November 2022

i) Health and Safety Report 2020/2021 – Minute 7

Governors noted that the number of incidents and staff absences due to illness and that the number of days lost was 107 compared in the previous year to 42 days and this related to 6 members of staff. The main cause of absence had been due to musculoskeletal disorders (104 days).

ii) Draft Statutory Accounts – Minute 9

Governors noted that the College's Annual Report and Financial Statement for the year ended 31 July 2021 would be considered at this meeting.

### iii) Capital Build – Minute 11

This had been discussed under the Reclassification of Sixth Form Colleges at the start of the meeting.

### c) General Purposes and Employment Committee – 5 July and 11 October 2022

#### i) Analysis of Student Withdrawal – Minute 8 5 July 2022

Governors noted the information in relation students leaving that effected the retention data and the number of all leavers in the academic year 2021/2022.

#### ii) Admissions 2022/2023 – Minute 7

Governors noted that at the start of the term the actual number of students on roll was 2426 including Pathways. The latest figures are 2360. In addition, there are 42 pathway students. Mr Pearson added that the college would had liked 2400 retained students by the census date in Oct. There have been some retention issues over the last two years as students have struggled to readjust after Covid.

#### iii) Admissions 2023/2024 – Minute 8

Mr Pearson advised Governors that the number of applications received to date is in line with what the college would expect at this time of the process.

Mr Pearson advised Governors that the Open Day had been held on Saturday 24 September 2022 and there had been Open Evenings in October and November 2022. In addition, the college had also been scheduled to attend school events and whilst they would avoid large open events they would still attend year 10/11 assemblies at secondary schools.

The closing date for applications (which are online) for 2023/2024 is 30 November 2022. All category 1 students will have a telephone interview before Christmas 2022. Applications from category 2 students who have submitted their application forms by 30 November 2022 will then be assessed. All applicants will be notified whether or not they are being considered for interview. Students who are to receive further consideration will receive a letter before Christmas 2022 inviting them to an interview in January/February 2023. The telephone interviews for category 1 students have already started.

### d) Teaching and Learning Committee – 4 October 2022

#### i) Results Overview – Minute 6

Mr Pearson advised Governors that there had been a lot of uncertainty about the results for 2022. The college were hopeful that the results would reflect the hard work of staff and students. The results were above those for the past two years and were above the national average. The college had also out performed statistical neighbours and were an excellent set of results. Governors record their appreciation of the work of the staff at the college.

ii) Section 48 Inspections – Minute 9

Mr Pearson advised Governors that the college would not be inspected this year. The module for sixth form colleges has not yet been agreed and not enough inspectors have been trained.

iii) Careers

It was agreed that Mr Morrison (Head of Careers) be invited to a future meeting to outline the work of the Careers Office.

15. GOVERNING BODY SELF ASSESSMENT 2022

A copy of the details of the Governors Self – Assessment returns for the academic year 2021/2022 had been circulated prior to the meeting.

The Chairperson advised Governors that the average overall was similar to last year and was around 4.7. He thanked Governors for their support in completing the Self - Assessment Review form.

The Chairperson advised Governors that he, the Principal and the Governing Body Clerk would meet to discuss the points raised and report back to Governors.

Mr Pearson added that the new Internal Auditors would undertake a review of the Corporate Governance arrangements at the college and would check that appropriate arrangements are in place. The review would take place towards the end of the term and Governors would be asked to complete and return an anonymous survey to the auditors. Governors were encouraged to complete the survey.

Mr Hynes added that he had worked with a school where safeguarding issues had not been reported to the Head or Governing Body and as a result the school was placed in Special Measures.

RESOLVED: That the Governors Self - Assessment returns for the academic year 2021/2022 be received.

16. GOVERNORS ATTENDANCE RECORD 2021/2022

Details of the Governors attendance at both Governing Body meetings and Committee meetings during the academic year 2021/2022 had been circulated to all Governors prior to the meeting.

The Chairperson thanked all Governors for their support at the various Committee meetings and at the Governing Body meetings.

RESOLVED: That the Annual Report on Governors attendance for the academic year 2021/2022 be approved.

17. APPROVAL OF STATUTORY ACCOUNTS

A copy of the College's Report and Financial Statement for the year ended 31 July 2022 had been circulated to all Governors prior to the meeting. Both the Audit Committee and the Resources Committee had discussed these at their November 2022 meetings. Members of the Audit Committee and Resources Committee had recommended that the

Governing Body approve the Report and Financial Statement for the year ended 31 July 2022  
Mrs Blackburn reported on the key aspects of the Statutory Accounts.

The college's financial health would be reported as "outstanding" to the ESFA in December 2022.  
RESOLVED: That the College's Annual Report and Financial Statement for the year ended 31 July 2022 be approved and that the Chairperson be authorised to sign them on behalf of the Governing Body.

18. BUDGET 2022/2023

Mrs Blackburn advised Governors that the budget for 2022/2023 was approved at the last meeting of the Governing Body with a surplus of £397,992. The high needs income has been confirmed at a higher level than the budget by about £250,000. The latest utilities assessment shows an increase of £270,000 and it is unknown what will happen for the period April to July 2023. The forecast surplus is now £385,000. The pay awards for support staff pay award has been agreed but the teacher associations are asking for a pay award above 10% and may ballot members on possible strike action.

Mrs Blackburn advised Governors that there will be regular reforecasts of the budget during the year to ensure that the surplus reflects the latest information and the cash flow is as accurate as possible.

RESOLVED: That the budget position be noted.

19. (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.

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

a) Examination Results – 2022

Students had faced formal examinations for the first time since Covid and Ofqual had said that the results would be roughly half way between the 2019 outcomes and the 2021 Teacher Assessed Grades with a full return to 2019 standards in 2023. The reality was that nationally the results were slightly closer to the Centre Assessed Grade of 2021 than the actual results of 2019.

The actual results for the college were even better than the teacher assessed 2021 results and high grades A\* A and B were 20% above the respectable 2019 level of 50% at 70% higher even than last year's centre assessed grades. These were the best results that the college has ever had.

b) Future Considerations

There are a number of important factors that the college needs to consider moving forward and these are:

- i) Estates Strategy – expansion
- ii) Becoming an Academy – options
- iii) Financial Pressures – inflation
- iv) Leadership and Governance – succession planning
- v) Curriculum - direction

The major concern at the moment is the college's capacity and the feasibility study that the college has undertaken to increase its capacity.

c) Staffing

Governors noted the staffing appointments that had been made for September 2022 along with the leavers at the end of the Summer term 2022.

d) Governors noted the reports from the following areas:

Adult Education, Careers, Chaplaincy, Remembrance Day, Class of 22 – Results Day, various trips and visits that had been undertaken, Duke of Edinburgh Award, Economics, Enrichment, Film and Media, Geography, History, Languages, Music, Performing Arts, Politics, Pathways, Public Services, Science, Sports teams and Theology.

Governors noted the varied and rich opportunities that were available to students. Mrs Miller added that students in L6 had not been able to undertake extra-curricular activities at their secondary schools due to Covid.

Miss Braithwaite added that the quality of the college magazine was very good along with the Positive Feedback, Reflection and Prayer booklets.

## 20. RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY AND ANNUAL REPORT

Mrs Blackburn outlined the key elements of the report to Governors. It was noted that the risk management process was well established in the college with regular reports to the Senior Management Team. In addition, Risk Management was a standard item on the Audit Committee Agenda.

RESOLVED: That Risk Management Annual Report for 2021/2022 and the amended Risk Management Policy be approved.

## 21. SAFEGUARDING POLICY

A copy of the revised Safeguarding Policy had been circulated to Governors prior to the meeting with the changes highlighted. In addition, a copy of the Peer on Peer Abuse and Anti- Bullying Policy was also circulated.

Governors were asked to let Mr Bailey know if there were any areas that they needed clarification or if there were any suggested amendments.

Miss Prempeh confirmed that the Safeguarding Policy had been discussed at a Student Council meeting.

Mr Hickey asked if Governors had undertaken any Safer Recruitment Training. Mr Pearson replied that Governors were only involved in the appointment of the following posts: Principal, Vice Principal and Head of RE.

RESOLVED: That the revised Safeguarding Policy and Peer on Peer Abuse and Anti-Bullying Policy be approved subject to any changes that Governors may recommend.



## 22. AUDIT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

Governors were advised that the Audit Committee had considered its Annual Report for the financial year 2021/2022, a copy of which had been circulated to all Governors prior to the meeting.

RESOLVED: That the Audit Committee's Annual Report be received.

## 23. AUDIT COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

A copy of the revised Audit Committee Terms of Reference had been circulated to Governors prior to the meeting.

RESOLVED: That the revised Audit Committee Terms of Reference be approved.

## 24. MEETING PAPERS

Governors were asked if they were happy to receive papers for the committee meetings and the Governing Body by email. Miss Braithwaite and Mr Byrne both indicated that they would prefer hard copies of the papers, all other Governors were happy for the papers to be sent electronically.

## 25. GOVERNORS EMAIL ADDRESSES

The Chairperson advised Governors that the Diocese had stated all Governors should be using a school email address for all correspondence in relation to their role as a college governor and not a personal email address. The Diocese we will cease to communicate any governor information to private email addresses and have asked that the Principal and Chair of Governors ensure that all governors have access to a college email address and it is only this email address that will be used for Governor correspondence.

Mr Pearson advised Governors that all Governors have been allocated a college email address and that the college were looking at the best way to access it.

## 26. CHAIRPERSON'S ACTION

The Chairperson advised Governors that he had not taken any action since the last meeting.

## 27. CORRESPONDENCE

College Dashboard

The Chairperson advised Governors that the college had received its Financial Dashboard from the Education Skills and Funding Agency. Based on the financial information submitted by the college the ESFA has confirmed that the college financial plan is:

- Outstanding for 2021/22 (the latest outturn forecast year), and
- Good for 2022/23 (the current budget year).

RESOLVED: That the above information be noted.

28. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

a) Freedom of Information Policy

The Freedom of Information Policy had been reviewed by members of the of the General Purposes Committee.

RESOLVED: That the amended Freedom of Information Policy be approved.

29. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

21 March 2023 at 4.30pm.

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Terry Conlon  
(Clerk to the Governors)