

AQUINAS COLLEGE
RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Date: 8 November 2022
Time: 4.30 pm
Venue: College

GOVERNORS PRESENT

Miss M Braithwaite, Mr C Green, Mr P Horton, Cllr T P McGee, Mr D Pearson and Mr M Quinney.

Miss M Braithwaite in the Chair.

IN ATTENDANCE

Mrs D Blackburn Senior 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. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Mr B Hickey, Mr J Mairs and Miss T Prempeh.

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. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting held on 9 June 2022 copies of which had been circulated previously, were agreed as a correct record.

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

a) Continuing Education Courses – Minute 4 (b)

Miss Braithwaite asked what functional skills were being offered by the college. Mrs Blackburn replied that only Literacy was being offered.

b) Reclassification of Sixth Form and FE Colleges Minute – 12 (ii)

Miss Braithwaite asked further news on the Reclassification of Sixth Form and FE Colleges. Mr Pearson replied that there was no further news and that it will probably be the end of November 2022 before anything is known. Any changes are unlikely to affect any proposed college build.

Mr Pearson advised Governors that the Diocese were now going down the route of Catholic Multi Academy Trusts based on a geographical area. Stockport and Tameside are likely to be

grouped together as a hub of a larger MAT. The college is the only sixth form college in the area, so it is not known how that will impact on any Academy Trust. Mr Pearson added that the training session in May 2023 will look at the implications for the college.

Mr Cunningham, Director of Schools, Shrewsbury Diocese has agreed to attend.

Mr Horton assumed that there would be no commercial borrowing for the college. Mrs Blackburn replied that the college may be able to borrow from the government although terms are unclear.

6. HEALTH AND SAFETY ANNUAL REPORT 2021/2022

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. The report covered the academic year 2021/2022 and the main points were as follows:

a) There have been no significant regulatory changes affecting the college.

b) Accidents reported for the period 1 September 2021 to 31 August 2022 were summarised by cause. The number of accidents was 9 compared to 6 in the previous year. No incidents had been reported under RIDDOR.

c) Work related ill health – Governors noted that the main causes of absence were musculoskeletal disorders resulting in 104 days of absence out of a total of 107 days. In the previous year 8 members of staff had been absent from work with work related ill health for a loss of 42 days. A breakdown of the 107 days that were lost is as follows:

| | | |
|--|---------|---------|
| i) Musculoskeletal Disorders (contributed to by computer workstation usage) | 39 days | 2 staff |
| ii) Musculoskeletal Disorders (shoulder operation) | 65 days | 1 staff |
| iii) Migraine (contributed to by computer workstation usage) | 1 day | 1 staff |
| iv) Work related stress | 1 day | 1 staff |
| v) Migraine (contributed to work related stress) | 1 day | 1 staff |

d) Within the review of departments carried out to advise the college or any remedial action needed, findings 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 2021/2022 be received.
ii) That the Governors record their appreciation to all staff for their work during this difficult time.

7. MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS

Mrs Blackburn introduced the Management Accounts for October 2022 that had been circulated to Governors. Mrs Blackburn added that the accounts covered only 3 months and that there was little to report on results to date but there have already been an exercise to re-forecast due to the items covered within the budget update below. The financial health of the college remains good.

Mr Horton asked if the college had received any money as a result of the electricity failure. Mrs Blackburn replied that the college had received around £22,000.

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

RESOLVED: That the Accounts for October 2022 be received.

Mr Quinney left the meeting at this point.

8. BUDGET 2022/2023

Mrs Blackburn advised Governors that the following items were to note:

High Needs income had increased to £500,000 from £247,000 following the completion of negotiations with Local Authorities who are responsible for the students

The pay award for support staff had been agreed and was included in the budget. The pay award for teaching staff has not yet been agreed so the college were accruing the unpaid amount that had not yet been paid to staff in the accounts each month. Employer's national insurance contributions may return to 13.8% from 15.05%.

The Utilities budget had been increased by £267,498 and the college is in a contract with Stockport MBC for the supply of energy from October 2022. The college knows the rates that will apply up to March 2023 but it is not known what the rates will be from April to July 2023.

Mrs Blackburn advised Governors that around £6,000,000 would be placed on deposit at a rate of 2.5%. This was not yet included in the forecast changes.

The contingency reserve had been reduced by £13,000.

Mr Horton asked if the uptake in the college canteen had picked up. Mrs Blackburn replied that it had almost returned to the pre pandemic level.

Miss Braithwaite asked how many students were on roll at the college. Mr Pearson replied that on the census date there were 2,385 students which is 30 below what was funded. The staffing levels have been maintained to cover the timetable and there is a little bit of slack.

Cllr McGee felt that the college can cope this financial year provided that there were no unforeseen costs but next year there may well be uncontrollable costs i.e. utilities.

The budget would be reviewed in January 2023. An updated report will be provided for the Governing Body meeting on 29 November 2022.

9. DRAFT STATUTORY ACCOUNTS 2021/2022

Mrs Blackburn introduced the draft Statutory Accounts for 2021/2022 that had been circulated previously to members. It was noted that the Audit Committee had also considered the draft Statutory Accounts at its meeting on 7 November 2022.

Mrs Blackburn circulated a paper that updated the movement on the surplus post the management accounts which included the normal amendments of removing the bursary payments and putting through the pension adjustments. This year there has been a significant change as a result of the adjustment of the pension liability of the college with an actuarial gain of £6,186,000, along with additional charges to salary costs and interest costs. These are normal changes but the actuarial gain is materially different to previous changes. The pension adjustments have changed the trading surplus of £847,000 to a final surplus of £6,308,000. The pension liability of £4,647,000 in the Balance sheet has become an asset of £814,000. There was a discussion about where this should be shown in the accounts and a definitive answer was awaited from the ESFA.

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 2021/2022, subject to any governor amendments be recommended to the Governing Body for approval.

10. FUTURE FUNDING METHODOLOGY

Mr Pearson advised Governors that the sector had been promised an inflation rate of increase in funding. This was after the sector had seen no real increase for 10 years. The Chancellor of the Exchequer is due to deliver his Autumn Statement on 17 November 2022 which will determine future funding.

Cllr McGee felt that it likely that there will no reduction in funding but there would be no inflation increase.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

a) Capital Build

Mr Pearson introduced a paper that had been circulated to all members prior to the meeting. The paper gave an over-view of the progress made in respect of a capital project to increase the

accommodation at the college due to an increase in the demographics up to the year 2030 and the demand for places at the college.

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 should 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.

Three firms AA Projects, AMR Consult and Roger Hannah had been asked to provide outline plans which would accompany the grant application form. The college appointed AMR Consult who have had successful outcomes of grants applied for other colleges.

The cost of the new build would be in the region of £3,900,000 but in the current climate that could easily increase. This figure does not include fixtures and fittings and IT equipment which are not covered by the grant. If the grant application is successful the college would have to fund 20% of the £3,900,000 cost, plus any additional costs. The building would be free standing and, therefore, not subject to VAT.

Mr Pearson advised Governors that the planning department at Stockport MBC did not foresee any problems in getting the plans approved. However, as part of the planning application it would need to be considered at an Area Committee meeting. Cllr McGee added for the building to be ready for September 2024 a planning application needs to be made soon. There are boundary changes in the Borough as a result of re-drawing of the electoral constituencies and wards. The college would be in the new Offerton ward having previously been in Manor ward.

Mr Pearson advised Governors that the new building would house the more popular subjects such as criminology, public services, health and social care, BTEC law. This would free up space in the main building which had been taken off other subjects to accommodate the growth in the new popular subjects.

Mr Horton asked if the Diocese would contribute to the project either in the form of a grant or loan. Mr Pearson replied that he had discussed the project with Damian Cunningham, Director of Schools for Shrewsbury Diocese and with the Diocese property adviser Richard Crawford.

After a full discussion it was RESOLVED:

- a) That the college go ahead with the project and make an application to the ESFA for grant funding
- b) That the college will make a 20% contribution if the grant application is successful
- c) That the college will meet any additional overrun costs of the build.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

14 February 2023 at 4.30pm.

Signed _____
Chairperson

Date _____