AQUINAS COLLEGE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Date: 2 June 2026
Time: 4.30 pm
Venue: College

GOVERNORS PRESENT

Ms J Dommett, Mr B Hickey, Mrs C Houghton, Mr T P McGee, Mr J O'Sullivan and Ms J Payton.

Mr T P McGee in the Chair

IN ATTENDANCE

Mr A Bailey (Finance)	Vice Principal	Mrs D Blackburn	Senior Assistant Principal
Miss E Bradbury	Head of Adult Education (Item 4)	Mr T Conlon	Clerk to the Governing Body

1. OPENING PRAYER/REFLECTION

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

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Mr L Byrne and Ms H Donelon.

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. CHARGING POLICY FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION COURSES

Miss Bradbury introduced a paper that had been circulated prior to the meeting that gave details of the proposed fees to be charged for Adult and Continuing Education Courses for 2026/2027. Governors note that the funding rules for 2026/2027 had not yet been received from the Greater Manchester Combined Authority.

Governors noted the following:

a) Access to Higher Education Diploma – Health Professions or Criminology and Psychology is free for those aged 19-23 if this is their first or full level 3 qualification and is claimed from the GMCA grant. Those aged 19 and above who already hold a level 3 qualification will have to pay the full cost of the course. The Advanced Learner Loan continues to be available or students can pay themselves by instalments.

b) GCSE English and Mathematics continue to be fully funded by the GMCA and are free for those students aged 19+ who have not yet achieved a Grade C or 4. Others pay full fee. English and Mathematics students who want to improve a previous pass grade (A+ -B or 9 – 4) would have to pay £864.00.

c) GCSE Science Trilogy (combined) 50% of the fee is paid by the student and 50% is funded by the GMCA. Those on job seeker's benefits or low income would receive the course free i.e. the GMCA would cover the full course fee. For those who want to improve a previous pass grade (A+ -B or 9–4) they have to pay £864.00.

d) AAT Courses

i) AAT Foundation Certificate in Bookkeeping Level 2

ii) AAT Certification in Accounting Level 2

iii) AAT Advanced Certificate in Bookkeeping or Accounting Level 3

iv) The college are considering whether or not to offer AAT Advanced Level 4. The cost of the course to be met by the student or their employer. There are some logistical problems with the course as it runs over more than one year and we would have to recruit as the current teacher could not cover all levels. This is not straightforward as there are not many AAT teachers .

For level 2 courses, the courses is fully funded for students meeting the criteria. Otherwise 50% of the fee is paid by the student and 50% is funded by the GMCA or students pay in full. Those on job seekers benefits or low income benefits would receive the course free using the GMCA budget.

The GMCA grant is available to all students 19+ without a full level 3 qualification or students who hold a level 3 and are unemployed / on low income. The Advanced Learner Loan would be available or students pay themselves by instalments.

Mr Hickey sought clarification on who teaches the AAT courses. Ms Bradbury replied that it is a specialist who is a qualified AAT teacher. It was noted that Stockport College may cease to offer AAT courses.

e) Leisure Course fees are in line with other providers and have been increased by 8.0% to £7.45 per hour and are paid in full by the student with subsidised rate for those on benefits. Concessions are reduced from 50% to 30%, so the hourly cost is £5.15. The course fee is competitive with other providers. The various language courses are offered at beginner, intermediate and advanced. Governors noted that there are around 300 students on leisure courses and 83 students on academic courses.

f) All courses must cover the cost of the tutor and provide a contribution to cover the central administration costs.

RESOLVED: That the fees as set for 2026/2027 be recommended for approval to the Governing Body.

5. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meetings held on 10 February 2026 were agreed as a correct record.

6. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

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

7. HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT

Mrs Blackburn introduced the Health and Safety Report that had been circulated to Governors prior to the meeting. The report covered the period 1 August 2025 to 14 May 2026. A full report is submitted to the Autumn Term Governing Body meeting.

To date 93 actions have been generated as a result of active monitoring during the academic year. 70 actions have been completed and 23 remain open and are within target date. These were broken down as low, medium or high risk.

There were two actions arising from active monitoring that met the criteria for reporting to Governors as they came in the high risk category. In one instance a damaged electrical socket face exposing the wiring behind was found, the socket was used for cleaning the building but was adjacent to a hard floor so it's use was limited. The other was the car park exit door failed to hold open during a fire drill. It is normally closed and card access controlled so it is rarely held open. Both were resolved immediately by the Facilities Department.

One accident had been reported under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations and a member of staff was absent for 62 days.

Seven incidents have been recorded in the academic year. All accidents have been appropriately investigated and remedial measures put in place. Six members of staff have been absent due to work related ill health, resulting in 37 days absence. All instances of work related ill health have been appropriately investigated and remedial measures put into place.

There have been no significant regulatory changes affecting the college. It was noted that the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025 received Royal Assent on 3 April 2025 and that there is a 24 month implementation period that ow follows before requirements becomes enforceable. Statutory guidance on compliance was published in April 2026 and the college is reviewing current procedures against the guidance to ensure key public protection procedures including evacuation, invacuation, lockdown and communications are in place in a manner consistent with the guidance.

RESOLVED: That the Health and Safety report be noted.

8. MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS

Mrs Blackburn introduced the Management Accounts for April 2026 which had been circulated to Governors prior to the meeting. She added that the accounts informed Governors of the various grants that the college would receive. A discussion took place on the April Accounts with particular reference to the following:

i) There had been a trading surplus of £992,000 to date. The monthly results for April 2026 show a surplus of £117,000. The forecast outturn for 2025/2026 is around £594,000.

ii) The final retention on the new build has now been paid.

iii) Additional income to fund the teacher's pension fund and the increase in the national insurance contributions for employer's will be received during the year.

iv) Bank interest has increased by £123,000 as the £6,500,000 invested for 6 months has matured in April 2026. The £6,500,000 can be reinvested for a further 3 months to mature in August 2026. a further £2,000,000 is due to mature in July and will generate £29,000 interest.

v) High Needs income has increased from an initial budget figure of £350,000 to £500,000.

vi) The variable rate loan was paid off in 2024/2025 which means that the college does not have any loans.

vii) The £200,000 contingency is being spent on wireless points, server, tills, emergency lighting and fire detection , a total £89,000. In addition there are some other small projects which should be finished before the year end but there is likely be some unspent contingency.

The financial health calculations show that the college will be classed as Outstanding with a score of 260.

If Governors had any questions on the April Accounts they were asked to contact Mrs Blackburn.

RESOLVED: That the Accounts for April 2026 be received.

9. BUDGET 2026/2027

Mrs Blackburn introduced a set of papers in relation to the proposed budget for 2026/2027 which had been circulated to Governors prior to the meeting. The papers contained a) a spreadsheet of cash income and expenditure and b) the same converted into an accounting format. An updated commentary would be provided for the Governing Body meeting on 7 July 2026. Mrs Blackburn outlined the process of moving from a cash budget to an accounting budget.

The DfE have now confirmed that the income from them for 2026/2027 will be £14,843,665 compared to £14,301,854 for 2025/2026 and is an increase of £541,811. The funding is based on 2,558 students compared with 2,540 for last year an increase of 18 students. An inflationary increase of only 0.55 % has been applied to all funding bands, now giving a top rate of £5,133 compared with £5,105 for 2025/2026. 98.5 % of students are at the top rate of £5,133. The DfE funding above contains £372,000 for 62 High Needs students; this element of funding provides the first £6,000 additional support funding per High Needs students who need one to one support. The total income for the 2026/2027 financial year is £17,690,357 compared to £16,927,427 last year an increase of £762,930.

In addition, the college has still to evaluate the cost of new High Needs students to the Local Authority. This covers the assessment of the additional costs over £6k. The college estimates that the cost of moving from L6 to U6 for continuing students with high needs at £250,000, so the budgeted income should exceed £350,000 and may be around £500,000. The college is in discussions with the Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council about the funding for next year, there are some concerns that funding may be reduced.

The Teacher's Pension Grant will continue until 31 July 2027 and is confirmed at £ 762,053, compared to £727,985 for 2025/2026 an increase of £34,068. The SFCA and others are pressing for the grant to continue beyond July 2027.

The draft budget shows a contingency reserve of £235,521 (cash surplus) compared to £252,308 last year, a decrease of £16,787. Whilst the initial trading surplus is £75,096.

All aspects of staffing and non pay costs will be monitored to ensure the running of the college as efficiently as possible. A 5 % increase had been included in the staffing budget with various inflationary increase for non pay costs. Staffing costs account for about 76% of the total budget.

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 200 within the range 180 to 230.

Mr O'Sullivan sought clarification on college free meals for students. Mrs Blackburn replied that the free meals are paid by a bursary. She added that the college were looking to appoint a new catering manager.

RESOLVED: That the draft budget for 2026/2027 as presented, subject to a final review of costs, be recommended to the Governing Body for approval.

10. NATIONAL FUNDING POSITION

Mrs Blackburn advised Governors that there are no planned changes to the formula but the DfE have been asked to simplify the formula for future years. The SFCA are continuing with their Raise the Rate campaign.

11. AUTHORISATION OF TWO YEAR FINANCIAL PLAN

Mrs Blackburn advised Governors that the two year financial plan has to be submitted to the DfE by the end of July 2026. The plan includes the outturn for 2025/2026, the budget for 2026/2027 and the forecast of 2027/2028.

The plan may be ready for the Governing Body meeting scheduled for 7 July 2026. If not, the Chairperson would need to sign the two year Plan on behalf of the Governing Body.

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

12. POLICY REVIEW

a) Financial Regulations

Mr O'Sullivan had undertaken a review of the college's Financial Regulations and had suggested a few minor changes that were mainly a tidying up of the regulations. These had been accepted by the college and it was:

RESOLVED: That the amended Financial Regulations be recommended for approval to the Governing Body

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

a) A note to supplement the minutes - Mr O'Sullivan had sought clarification on a number of points related to i) Health and Safety Report, ii) Management Accounts for April 2026 and iii) The draft budget for 2026/2027. It was agreed that the points raised and the responses from the college be added as supplement to theses minutes.

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting to be held on Tuesday 3 November 2026 at 4.30pm, subject to the Calendar of Meetings being agreed by the Governing Body at its meeting on 7 July 2026.

Signed _____ Date _____

Chairperson