

DRAFT MINUTES

AQUINAS COLLEGE GOVERNING BODY

Meeting: 27 June 2023

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, Mr A Martin, Mr T P McGee, Mr M Matthew, Mr D Pearson (Principal), Dr A Smith and 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 P McGee in the Chair

Before the meeting started Mr Moss gave an overview on how Governors can access Google Drive from their college email address. If Governors had any queries they were asked to contact Mr Moss.

1. OPENING PRAYER

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

2. INTRODUCTION

The Chairperson advised Governors that Mrs D Blackburn had received an MBE in the Kings Birthday Honours List for services to education. The Governors congratulated Mrs Blackburn on receiving the honour.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Mrs C Knights and Mrs J Miller.

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 21 March and 10 May 2023, 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

a) 21 March 2023

i) Accountability Statement

Miss Braithwaite asked if the accountability statement had been submitted by 23 May 2023. Mrs Blackburn confirmed that the accountability statement had been submitted on time.

b) 10 May 2023

i) Mrs Knights to be included in the list of Governors who were present at the meeting.

6. (i) COMMITTEE MINUTES

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

(i) Audit Committee	5 June 2023
(ii) Resources Committee	6 June 2023
(iii) Remuneration Committee	6 June 2023
(iv) Teaching and Learning Committee	13 June 2023

(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 – 5 June 2023

i) Audit Review – Minute 6

Mr Pearson had attended the meeting to receive feedback from the auditors on the college's performance.

b) Internal Audit Reports – Minute 7

All the Internal Audit Reports had received strong Assurance.

iii) Appointment of Internal Auditors – Minute 10

RESOLVED: i) That Wylie Bisset be appointed as Internal Auditors for 2023/2024, ii) The Internal Audit Plan of 17 days be agreed and iii) That the fees for 2023/24 which are exclusive of VAT and expenses be agreed at £11,245. Future inflation prices would be limited to 2%..

iii) Audit Code of Practice – Minute 11

A new Post 16 Audit Code of Practice for 2022/2023 had been produced. The Code is reviewed and update annually to reflect the latest sector developments and best practice. It was noted that there was nothing significant in the changes.

b) Resources Committee – 6 June 2023

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 2023/2024 be approved.

ii) National Funding position – Minute 10

Mr McGee advised Governor that there will have to be a resolution of the Teachers' pay negotiations. He added that some colleges will be able to fund the pay rise, some will be able to fund part of it and other may not be able to fund it.

iii) Capital /Sustainability Funding – Minute 12

Mrs Blackburn advised Governors that the college had received £400,000 and had decided to pursue Option 1 to install photovoltaic panels on the roof of both buildings to generate electricity for use by the college.

iv) The budget for 2023/2024 and Authorisation of Two Year Financial Plan are separate items on the agenda.

c) Remuneration Committee – 6 June 2023

i) Succession Planning – Minute 5

Governors noted the senior management structure at the college and the details of the areas of responsibilities that the Senior Leadership Team covered.

ii) Senior Postholders Remuneration – Minute 7

The Committee noted that the pay award for teachers had been 5% payable from 1 September 2022. The Committee had recommended slightly higher pay award for the Vice Principal in view of the additional responsibility that he had taken on since being appointed.

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 and Vice Principal be approved.

d) Teaching and Learning Committee – 13 June 2023

i) Inspection Feedback - Minute 6

Miss Braithwaite asked if the college had responded to the draft inspection report. Mr Pearson replied that college had responded to the report.

Dr Beatty said that Governors need to understand the assessment made by the inspection team compared to what is actually going on in college. Mr McGee added that it appeared that one small aspect had distorted the whole report, the inspectors had only spoken to 8 students. Staff also feel that the report is patently unfair and that the inspectors had arrived with an agenda. Mr Pearson advised Governors that the college had sought advice from the SFCA and was making a formal complaint to Ofsted. Mr Hickey asked if there had been any movement by

Ofsted. Mr Pearson replied that there have been changes from one extreme to another i.e. too many to a few. Mr Hickey asked if the complaints process was under the new regime. Mr Pearson replied that it was under the old system. Mr McGee said the the inspection had a significant impact on staff. Mr Hickey offered his congratulations to staff, particularly the Senior Leadership team.

Mr Pearson advised Governors that the college had made its response to the draft report and hoped that the final published report will better reflect the strong position that the is in. It was felt that there were a few unjust comments in the report and it is hoped that these can be changed. Ofsted have 30 days to make any amendments before they issue a final draft.

9. BUDGET 2023/2024

Mrs Blackburn gave Governors an overview of the budget that had been presented to the Resources Committee at its meeting on 6 June 2023.

Mrs Blackburn introduced a set of papers in relation to the proposed budget for 2023/2024 that had been circulated to Governors prior to the meeting. The papers contained a) a spreadsheet of cash income and expenditure b) the same converted into accounting format and c) a written summary.

The ESFA have now confirmed that the income from them for 2023/2024 will be £12,157,985 compared to £12,069,692 for 2022/2023 and is an increase of £88,303. The funding is based on 2,396 students compared with 2,413 for last year a decrease of 17 students. The funding band increases for 2023/24 at 2% are now giving a top rate of £4,642 compared with £4,542 for 2022/2023. 97 % of students are at that rate. The ESFA funding above contains £342k for 57 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 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 £320,000. They are about to submit claims for new students starting in September 2023. The cost could rise to £500,000. Dr Smith added that the number of students with high needs continues to grow. The number of Education Health Care Plans (EHCP) in Stockport is higher than most authorities.

The Teacher's Pension Grant will continue until 31 August 2024 and is confirmed at £465,103.

The draft budget shows a contingency reserve of £81,606 compared to £189,491 last year, a decrease of £107,885. Whilst the initial trading surplus is £130,000.

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

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.

The college is experiencing supply issues in relation to the purchase of IT equipment and to secure some of the hardware equipment it may arrive before the end of the current financial year and be accounted for in the fixed assets for 2022/2023. This is simply a cash and depreciation effect.

RESOLVED: That the budget for 2023/2024 as recommended by the Resources Committee be

approved.

10. 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 2023. The plan includes the outturn for 2022/2023, the budget for 2023/2024 and the forecast of 2024/2025. The college's financial health for the three years will be Outstanding, Good and Good.

Mr McGee advised Governors that the college was in a good financial position.

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

11 (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.

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

Mr Pearson advised Governors that there are three main areas covered in his report and they are a) the recent Ofsted inspection, b) new building project and c) academisation.

a) Inspections - This had been dealt with under matters arising from the Teaching and Learning Committee minutes under Minute 6 (d) (i) of these minutes.

b) New building project – The college was successful in its bid for funding support for a new build. The cost of the new build will be in the region of £4M and the college has received 80% of that cost. The design team has worked up detailed plans and these were submitted for planning permission to the local authority at the end of May 2023. It will take around 13 weeks before a decision on the plans is received. Mr McGee advised Governors that the local authority has two planning committees and that the type of application determines which committee it goes to and how long it will take.

The college has gone out to tender to two firms for the building contract and are undertaking tender analysis with the design team. It is hoped that work can start at the end of the summer holiday period with an expectation that the project will be completed by September 2024. Mr Horton asked if the college had undertaken due diligence. Mr Pearson confirmed that it had.

c) Academisation – This was the subject of the Governors training session in May 2023 and Mr Cunningham from the Diocese attended, The Diocese are happy for the college to pursue what options are available. The option that makes most sense seems to be working with similar colleges. Mr Pearson had attended a meeting between Salford and Shrewsbury Diocese with the Principals of Holy Cross and Xaverian sixth form colleges to look at the option of a cross Diocese, Catholic MAT between the three colleges.

Some important principles had been established and it was agreed that possibility of a cross Diocese MAT would be explored further. At this stage it is a gathering of information exercise.

Mr Pearson added that there may be a need for a special Governors meeting around the October half term to determine which way the college goes. Governors were reminded that all educational establishments must become an academy by 2030.

d)) Budget 2023/2024 - This had been dealt with under the budget for 2023/2024.

e) Staffing

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.

f) Governors noted the activities in the following areas within the college:

Biology, Business Development, Careers, Chemistry, Duke of Edinburgh Award – Gold, Economics, Environmental Science, Languages and Photography.

13. CHAPLAINCY

Mr Pearson advised Governors that the Chaplaincy Report would be submitted to the next meeting of the Governing Body on 23 November 2023.

14. GOVERNING BODY MEMBERSHIP

The Chairperson advised Governors that he would meet with Mr Pearson and Mr Conlon to discuss the vacancies that exist for a Foundation Governor and two Co-opted Governors.

16. COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP 2023/2024

i) Governors were asked to consider which Committee they would be interested in being members of for 2023/2024. A copy of the Committee Membership for 2022/2023 had been circulated for information.

RESOLVED: That the Committee membership for 2023/2024 as detailed on the paper that had been circulated prior to the meeting, be approved.

ii) That the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson of the Committees for the academic year 2023/2024 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.

vi) That Mr B Hickey be appointed as the Governor representative on the Mission Group

vii) That Mr M Taylor be appointed to serve on the Careers Group

iv) That Mr G Hynes be appointed as a Governor responsible for Personal Professional Development.

17. CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2023/2024

A schedule of meetings for the Academic Year 2023/2024 had been circulated to all Governors for information.

RESOLVED: That the schedule of meetings for the Academic Year 2023/2024 as circulated be approved.

18. CHAIRPERSON'S ACTION

The Chairperson advised Governors that there had been no action since the last meeting.

19. CORRESPONDENCE

No correspondence was brought forward for Governors' consideration.

20. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

i) Mr Harris informed Governors that college production of Footloose was on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday this week.

ii) The college had an exhibition on at Stockport Art gallery

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

21. FUTURE NEXT MEETINGS

The next meeting would be held on 21 November 2023 at 4.30pm.

Signed _____
Chairperson

Date _____