



## Aquinas College Governing Body

Meeting: 28 June 2022

Time: 4.30pm

Venue: College

### Governors Present

Dr P Beatty, Miss M Braithwaite, Mrs C H Dove, Mr C Green, Mr B Hickey, Mr P Horton, Mr G Hynes, Mrs C Knights, Mr J Mairs, Mr A Martin, Cllr T P McGee, Mrs J Miller, Mr D Pearson (Principal), Miss T Prempeh, Mr M Quinney, Dr A Smith, and Mr M Taylor.

### In Attendance

Mr A Bailey Vice	Principal
Mrs D Blackburn	Assistant Principal (Finance)
Mrs D Greenidge	Head of Year 12 and Designated Safeguard Leader
Mr T Conlon	Clerk to the Governing Body

Cllr T P McGee in the Chair

### 1. Opening Prayer

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

### 2. Introduction

The Chairperson asked all Governors to introduce themselves.

### 3. Apologies For Absence

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Mr L Byrne, Mr R Harris and Mrs J Miller for her late arrival.

### 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. Mrs Knight declared an interest in the Data Protection Policy.

### 5. (i) Governing Body Minutes

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meetings held on 8 March and 11 May 2022, 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) Electrical Fault Minute 7

Mrs Braithwaite asked if there had been any progress on the insurance claim following the electrical fault. Mrs Blackburn replied that the matter had now been passed on to the insurers.

##### b) Covid – Minute 10 (d)

Mr Pearson advised Governors that in his termly report he outlined the post Covid issues that the college faced. At the moment there were 5 staff absent and 7 students. The advice that had been to them was to self isolate for 5 days. Cllr McGee added that was good advice.

#### 6. (i) Committee Minutes

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

(i) Audit Committee	6 June 2022
(ii) Resources Committee	7 June 2022
(iii) Remuneration Committee	7 June 2022
(iv) Teaching and Learning Committee	14 June 2022

(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) Resources Committee – 7 June 2022

##### 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 2022/2023 be approved.

##### ii) Sign Language Course Minute 4 (g)

Mr Hynes asked if the sign language course would be offered in September 2022. Mrs Blackburn replied that the college were still looking to see if there was enough interest and added that the course does not have to start in September 2022 it could be later.

iii) The budget for 2022/2023 and Authorisation of Two Year Financial Plan are separate items on the agenda.

c) Remuneration Committee – 7 June 2022

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 1% payable from 1 September 2021. The Committee had recommended slightly higher pay award for the Principal and Vice Principal in view of the sustained excellent performance of the college, particularly over the last few years during Covid.

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.

iii) September 2022 Pay Award

Cllr McGee advised Governors that discussions were taking place on the pay award for September 2022. He added that one union was seeking a double figure pay award for teachers. The SFCA had asked colleges what they could afford. Mr Pearson advised Governors that the 1% pay award for September 2021 was in line with other public sector pay awards. He felt that the September 2022 pay award could possibly be above 4% and that unions may ballot members on possibly strike action. Mr Pearson reported that there had been recruitment issues with Support Staff vacancies.

Cllr McGee added that some sixth form colleges had high reserves but had plans on how that would be used. Mr Pearson felt that some colleges would be faced with having to make some redundancies.

Mrs Miller arrived at this point in the meeting.

d) Audit Committee – 6 June 2022

i) Committee Membership Minute 3

RESOLVED: That Mr Asad Anwar be appointed as a Co-opted member of the Audit Committee.

ii) Audit Code of Practice – Minute 11

A new Post 16 Audit Code of Practice for 2021/2022 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.

## ii) Appointment of Internal Auditors – Minute 13

RESOLVED: i) That Wylie Bisset be appointed as Internal Auditors for 2022/2023 and ii) That the fee for 2022 which is exclusive of VAT and expenses be agreed at £11,025. Future inflation prices would be limited to 2%.

## e) Teaching and Learning Committee – 14 June 2022

i) Mr Martin apologised for not attending the meeting but he had not received the papers for the meeting.

## ii) Minute 11 (b)

Dr Beatty advised Governors that would be available for meetings in the Autumn term but did not want to continue beyond that.

Cllr McGee thanked Dr Beatty for his service to the college over many years. He added that he along with Mr Pearson and Mr Conlon would meet to start the process of finding a replacement for Dr Beatty.

## iii) Curriculum Issues – Minute 8

Governors noted the BTEC/OCR Qualification reforms.

## 7. Safeguarding Report

Mrs Greenidge made a presentation to Governors on the key points that the college needs to focus on. A copy of the presentation pack will be emailed to Governors.

There had been 144 safeguarding concerns at the college during the current academic year, 82 were classed as mental health which covered low mood and suicidal tendencies. There had been 10 cases of sexual abuse since the students had arrived at the college and 7 historical abuse cases. There is usually a spike in the number of cases when safeguarding is highlighted in the college pastoral programme. High risk cases are dealt with by the safeguarding team which consists of 3 designated safeguarding leaders.

The number of students who have received counselling is 167 and they receive 6 sessions. There had been a waiting list of 50 students and the list had been suspended. The waiting list has been reinstated and there are now 10 on the list.

There has been Prevent and Sexual Harassment Training for staff but the main focus has been on increasing awareness of mental health. Mr Quinney felt that prevent and sexual health awareness for students had been really helpful. He added if the Student Council members received training they could engage more with the students. Mr Bailey replied that mental health training for students was also something that the college will look at. Mr Quinney added that he was willing to come in on an inset day when training was being provided to staff.

Mr Hickey asked if the referrals were self referrals or were they staff referrals. Mrs Greenidge replied that that they are generally self referrals but staff can also refer students. Mrs Greenidge added that referrals are normally seen on the same day by the triage team. Mrs Miller asked when would the waiting list be re-opened, Mrs Greenidge replied that it was now open, it had been suspended for about 6/7 weeks. The college were confident that the triage system would point students in the right direction and explain what support was available. Mr Pearson advised Governors that the college can access external services such as KOOH and 42nd Street for children and adult mental health counselling services. Cllr McGee said that CAMHS is also available from Pennine Health Trust.

Mrs Knights asked if the college were facing more or different difficulties. Mrs Greenidge replied that there had been an increase in low risk anxiety cases, where students can be taught remotely but the college's aim is to get the students back in college. Mr Pearson added that these would not be seen as safeguarding cases. Mrs Greenidge advised Governors that there had been an increase in homelessness cases. Mr Pearson added that the problems do not cease when the college is closed, the college is open during the holiday periods to offer help and support to students.

Mr Bailey advised Governors that there is a disclosure box in MyAquinas for students to report a problem and that goes to the dedicated safeguarding leaders.

Mr Horton asked do Governors need to sign that they have read Keeping Children Safe in Education in its entirety. Mr Hickey thought Governors who were involved in recruitment need to read the entire document and that others only needed to read part of it. Mr Bailey undertook to clarify the position.

The Governors thanked Mrs Greenidge for her informative presentation.

## **8. Governance Review**

A paper had been circulated to Governors prior to the meeting that outlined the latest guidance from the Department for Education on the External Review of Governance.

Cllr McGee advised Governors that the review has to be done in three years and the initial thoughts are that the college would be looking to use Year 1 to plan and see what others have done with a view to having the actual review in Year 2. Mr Pearson added that the college would want to undertake the review within the catholic sector.

Mrs Blackburn added that the Internal Auditors would also be looking at governance as part of their internal audit work for 2022/2023.

## **9. Budget 2022/2023**

Mrs Blackburn gave Governors an overview of the budget that had been presented to the Resources Committee at its meeting on 7 June 2022

The ESFA have now confirmed that the income from them for 2022/2023 will be £12,069,682 compared to £10,675,133 for 2021/2022 and is an increase of £1,397,549. The funding is based on 2,413 students compared with 2,297 for last year an increase of 116 students. The funding band increases for 2022/23 are now giving a top rate of £4,542 compared with £4,188 for 2021/2022. 96.8 % of students are at that rate. The ESFA funding above contains £300k for 50 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 budget includes Local Authority high needs funding of £247,399. This covers the assessment of the additional costs over £6k. The college has already secured £65,000 from Stockport MBC for continuing students with high needs. They are about to submit claims for new students starting in September 2022.

The Teacher's Pension Grant will continue until 31 August 2023 and is confirmed at £440,142.

The draft budget shows a contingency reserve of £185,318 compared to £225,264 last year, a decrease of £39,799. Whilst the initial trading surplus is £397,992.

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 230 within the range 180 to 230.

RESOLVED: That the budget for 2022/2023 as recommended by the Resources Committee be approved.

Mr Quinney left at this point in the meeting.

## 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 2022. The plan includes the outturn for 2021/2022, the budget for 2022/2023 and the forecast of 2023/2024. The college's financial health for the three years will be Outstanding, Good and Good.

Cllr McGee advised Governors that the college was in a good financial position. Mr Pearson added that the budget for 2022/2023 shows an increase of £1.4 million due to increased student numbers but the college cannot continue to grow.

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

### a) Post Covid issues

Mr Pearson advised Governors that next year will see a return to pre-Covid standards (grades, data, league tables etc.) Many issues will remain but there will be few allowances made for them. The college will continue to support students but need to be mindful that the college cannot rule out further disruption.

### b) Inspections

The college needs to be ready for Ofsted returning to full inspections and will inspect every college in a 3 year window. Inspection teams will spend more time with staff and students than with managers under the new inspection framework. The college will also be inspected under the new national framework for denominational inspections in the next academic year.

Mr Pearson added that the Diocese is starting to change its view over academisation.

### c) Curriculum

The promotion of T levels is the preferred vocational route with many existing vocational courses retired. However, after strong campaigning the vocational courses, which account for 20% of the college's provision have had a stay of execution with only 160/ 2000 national courses being retired. An extension has been given for most of these courses until 2024.

### d) Capacity

The college has around 2400 student which has put a lot of pressure on space making timetabling very challenging. To cope with increased student numbers the college needs to look at gaining more space. The college is undertaking a period of consultation to firm up options and to look at developing an accommodation strategy.

e) Budget 2022/2023 - This had been dealt with under the budget for 2022/2023.

### f) Employment

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.

### e) Adult Education

Governors noted that some courses were still affected by Covid. There is high demand for leisure courses. The Annual Art Exhibition was on Sunday 26 June 2022 at Stockport Art Gallery. The course for 2022/2023 have been published and it is hoped to increase the number of students on both academic and leisure courses.

f) Governors noted the various activities undertaken by the careers service, trips and visits, enrichment activities, film and media, languages, performing arts, science, pathways, sport and U6 leavers celebrations.

### 13. Accommodation Strategy

Mr Pearson advised Governors that he had been looking at options to extend the accommodation at the college, this included looking at how the current buildings are utilised. This included the possibility of building an additional floor on top of one of the wings or a new standalone building.

Three architect firms who had been involved in recent additional builds within the sector had been recommended to the college. The cost of a feasibility study would be in the region of £20 - 25,000.

Mr Hickey asked if the Diocese had been involved. Mr Pearson replied that the Diocese were aware of the proposal and had been advised that they would not incur any costs.

In order for any building to be in place for September 2024 the college would need to proceed quickly and get plans drawn up. It may be necessary to call a meeting of the Resources Committee or a sub group from that Committee to look at any plans.

Mr Horton asked how would the college pay for any additional building, Mr Pearson replied that it would be paid for by using some reserves and loans. There is a possibility that some monies could be obtained from the DfE Capacity Fund. Both Mr Pearson and Cllr McGee had held discussions with Stoke on Trent Sixth Form College who had obtained some monies from the Capacity Fund. Mr Horton asked if there would be any commercial borrowing. It was thought that this would not be needed as the college has reserves but is allowed under the current regime. Mrs Blackburn replied that the college could borrow money from the Government if sixth form colleges are in the public sector.

RESOLVED: That approval be given for a feasibility study to be undertaken.

### 14. Policy Reviews

The following policies had been reviewed by members of the of the committee whose jurisdiction the policies come under:

Hospitality, Fraud, Bribery, Financial Regulations, IT Acceptable Use, Data Protection, Whistleblowing and Recruitment.

RESOLVED: That the proposed to amendments to the above policies be approved.

### 15. 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 a Co-opted Governor.



## 16. Committee Membership 2022/2023

i) Governors were asked to consider which Committee they would be interested in being members of for 2022/2023. A copy of the Committee Membership for 2021/2022 had been circulated for information.

RESOLVED: That the Committee membership for 2022/2023 as detailed on the paper that had been circulated prior to the meeting, be approved, subject to the addition of Mr A Martin on the Teaching and Learning Committee.

ii) That the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson of the Committees for the academic year 2022/2023 are as follows:

<b>Committee Title</b>	<b>Chair</b>	<b>Vice Chair</b>
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

## 17. Calendar Of Meetings 2022/2023

A schedule of meetings for the Academic Year 2022/2023 had been circulated to all Governors for information.

RESOLVED: That the schedule of meetings for the Academic Year 2022/2023 as circulated be approved, subject to the Resources Committee meeting in the summer term to read 6 June 2023.

## 18. Chairperson's Action

The Chairperson reported that he had agreed the following:

i) The appointment of Wylie Bissett as Internal Auditors for the college for 2022/2023.

ii) The appointment of Mr Asad Anwar as a Co-opted Governor on the Audit Committee.

## 19. Correspondence

No correspondence was brought forward for Governors' consideration.

## 20. Any Other Business

- i) The Chairperson thanked Mrs C Knights and Dr A Smith for attending the meeting via Zoom.
- ii) 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 22 November 2022 at 4.30pm. The meeting would also be available on Zoom for those Governors who did not want to meet face to face.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson