



GOVERNING BODY

MINUTES

of the meeting held on Wednesday, 28 November at 6.00pm

PRESENT

Mr M Bentley
Mrs A Fox
Mr D Frost
Mrs K Hayhurst
Mrs R Hyndman
Mrs I Lewandowski
Mrs H Leyden
Mrs J McCool
Miss M Shah
Mrs H Stainton (Chair)
Mr J Sweeney
Mrs P Walsh

IN ATTENDANCE

Mrs A M Cassidy (Director of Finance and Professional Services)
Mrs E Hoyle (Clerk to Governors)
Mrs R Szolkowska (Deputy Principal)

The meeting was opened by a prayer led by the Principal. Mr G Beckett (GB) presented a report of the recent Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes. GB showed photos and videos of the daily activities/events of the pilgrimage. The trip was very rewarding, the photos and videos showed how everyone enjoyed the event. The students were all well-behaved and very caring. GB thanked all the staff, students and volunteers for all their hard work to make this pilgrimage a success. Governors thanked GB for his report who then left the meeting after his report.

2111 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs M Jones, Mr A Lilley and Mrs S Smith.

2112 **DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST**

No member of the Governing Body declared a personal interest in relation to any item on the agenda.

2113 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 10 OCTOBER 2018**

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 October 2018 were approved and signed by the Chair subject to the following amendments:

- page 5 – Item 2104 – the anticipated final account should read as **£1.707M** (instead of £1.202M)
- page 3 – Mrs Lewandowski (instead of Mrs Lewandowsky)

2114 **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

There were no matters arising. Governors welcomed the additional agenda item 'What we have done in this meeting to improve the effectiveness of our college for the benefit of our students?' and commented that it is a very good ending to the minutes.

GOVERNANCE MATTERS

The Clerk presented the report and reminded governors of some items relating to governance that are reviewed on an annual basis. These include membership of the Governing Body; Eligibility; Register of Interests; Skills Audit; and Committee membership. Governors were reminded that whenever circumstances change and interests are acquired or cease, the Clerk to Governors should be informed in writing. Governors who have not completed the Register of Interests, Eligibility and Skills Audit forms were requested to complete and submit the forms as soon as possible.

There are 3 Foundation Governor vacancies, arrangements have been made for the vacancies to be advertised in the local Parishes, however, a comment was made that the vacancies have not been published in their church bulletins. The Clerk will write to the Parishes again and request for the vacancies to be published. The Search Committee needs to hold a meeting to discuss recruitment of Foundation Governors.

The membership to the Committees was discussed, vacancies will hopefully be filled in once all vacancies in the governing body have been filled in.

The Governing Body Performance Indicators for 2017/2018 was circulated with the report as Appendix B.

The Chair reported that she and the Vice Chair of Governors attended the 'Chair and Aspiring Chair' training delivered by the Diocese. The Chair is looking into an external review of governance which will be delivered by governance consultants at a cost. The Chair is looking into the SCIF funding awarded to St John's Rigby College which included support for HCC governance. Governance budget was discussed, it was noted that printing cost is very high. The Chair suggested that governors' agenda and documents can be emailed to all and print copies for governors who do not have a printer. A list was circulated and governors were asked to tick their preference, whether papers are posted or emailed.

The Chair welcomed the new student governor, Miss M Shah and requested members to introduce themselves.

RESOLVED: Governors noted the comments on eligibility and register of interests, if necessary, individual members apprise the Clerk to Governors of any relevant information; and agreed to submit the required completed form. Governors received the Performance Indicators Report for 2017/2018; there were no amendments made for the PI for 2018/2019.

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT INCLUDING UNIVERSITY CENTRE REPORT

The report was previously circulated to governors and the Principal highlighted the following:

Mission and Ethos – The following activities to look forward to are: Advent Assemblies; Christmas Party for children from local special schools at the Metro Christian Centre on 5th December; Biennial opera – L'Enfant et les Sortilèges on 11th, 12th and 14th December; and the Celebration Evening on 17th December. The College is trying a different approach for Celebration Evening by reinvigorating the social side of the event and making it more of an opportunity for past students to meet and celebrate on their first Christmas back at home. The Principal is grateful to the Vice Principal-Pastoral for leading on this student-friendly re-think.

The Head of RE is leading reflection and planning for the canonical Diocesan inspection, which will now be a separate inspection from the Ofsted inspection. It is not expected to have the Diocese inspection this academic year. Governors will be involved to gain overview of key matters and strategies.

Strategic College Improvement Fund (SCIF) – The Principal reported that the efforts to drive forward improvement rapidly benefitted from the fund. The project is now at a formal end and the final report will be submitted this month. There is much good news, including substantial Alps progress across almost all of the subjects in scope. Ways to embed the lessons learned and some of the new ways of working will be continued. The SCIF project fitted nicely into the wider remit of the Post Inspection Action Plan, which will be replaced with the Strategic Plan and general quality improvement planning as we seek to build from a position of growing strength.

Self-Assessment & Ofsted – The Self-Assessment (SAR) process is now largely complete in its first phase. From the recent external validation of the Leadership and Management SAR, external colleagues agreed that the college has substantially improved over the last 12 months, and a grade 2 was proposed across the board. The grade is only a self-assessed grade and the College is eagerly awaiting the wider and more objective validation of improvement from Ofsted.

The new Assistant Director of Education and Inclusion, Paul Delbridge-Smith is enthusiastic about the rapidly improving progress of students at Holy Cross in the last year or so, and is making it clear that he sees the College as a key partner in driving school improvement in Bury. Mr Delbridge-Smith has made representations to the Diocese that he would like to make extensive use of the Deputy Principal and other officers to help St Monica's High School. After careful discussion with officers concerned, it was decided that at this point in time the College needs to do more to improve and is not in a position to share the Deputy Principal's time to the extent he originally envisaged for St Monica's.

Staffing, Systems, Building and Finances – The CLT is actively engaged in the preliminary work to bring forward plans to address the demanding financial pressures in January. These include the post-inspection enrolment, the final end of Government cushioning of earlier cuts, and continued inflation. Focus on standards and the College's ethos, putting the needs of students is always the front and centre stage of every plan.

The College has shown excellent improvement on the present site, there are plenty of new social, IT and meeting space. The college environment is at its best, and staff are continually driving forward improvement. The College had invested heavily in staffing as part of the college's strategy to ensure the student experience is of the highest quality, and to manage staff illness, etc. For these reasons, buildings, pay and non-pay costs, and systems all remain crucial to look at, especially as a number of new opportunities are emerging on our present site.

Governors will need to consider afresh whether acquiring any new land or adding new buildings is timely and necessary at this juncture. The College's financial position presents more challenges given inflation, government cuts, 2018 recruitment and the recent and excellent improvements. The College needs to maintain healthy reserves in uncertain times.

Governors accepted the report and the Chair thanked the Principal.

2116

DIRECTOR OF FINANCE & PROFESSIONAL SERVICES REPORT

1. Management of Accounts to 31 October 2018

The Management Accounts which were previously circulated to governors showed the activity for the first three months of the new academic year together with the annual budget as agreed by Governors in the financial forecast. Funding for 2018/19 is based on lagged student number of 2148 students calculated from recruitment in 2017/18.

1. Income and Expenditure Account – the cumulative operating deficit for the 3 months ending 31 Oct 2018 is £59k compared to the original forecast deficit of £89k. The report showed the ESFA Main Allocation; Student Numbers; University Centre Income and Expenditure to 31 Oct 2018; Other Income (includes lettings and teacher release fees); Interest Receivable of £5k against a £6k budget; Student Bursary Funding and Free school meals; Pay Expenditure; Summary of Pay Percentages; Non-Pay Expenditure; Catering.
2. Balance Sheet – Fixed Assets of £307k to date. Report included Capital Project-New Entrance; Other Debtors; SLC/LH Debtor; Accrued Income; Cash and Bank balances; Treasury; Trade Creditors; Accrued Expenditure; FRS 102 Pay Accrual; HE Partners/SLC Creditors; Deferred Income/Deferred Capital Government Grants within Creditors.
3. Cash Flow – The cash flow forecasts a bank balance by the end of the year of £2.5M.
4. Performance Indicators – A tabled illustration showed the key performance indicators of the college, at key dates, for financial health, all of which are positive in relation to the agreed strategic indicators for 2018/19. The Financial health grade of the College assessed within the financial forecast using these key performance indicators is GOOD.

RESOLVED: Governors approved the management accounts for 31 October 2018.

2. Annual Review of College Activities

A requirement arising from regularity audit is that Governors should periodically review the activities undertaken by the College to ensure that they are within the principal powers laid set out in s18 and s19 of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 as modified by the Education Act 2011. The following activities were undertaken during 2017/18.

- Provision of 16-18 Education over 2000 students
- Supporting provision of level 4 HE courses with over 500 adult students with a range of University partners
- Collaborative working with St Mary's Blackburn, Liverpool Hope delivering 'own' HE provision from September 2012
- Working with The Daughters of the Cross, Founders of the College
- Working with Salford Diocese, College trustees since July 2015
- Working in collaboration with Bury MBC and College consortia
- Catering provision
- Support for High schools and related curriculum initiatives
- Sharing of staff to deliver HE programmes
- Sharing good practice activities/Inspection activities/subject conferences
- Work placement and working with Employers
- Treasury investment activity
- A range of Sporting Activities – Extra Curricula
- Sports Scholarships
- Music Scholarships
- College Production and other dramatic or musical performances
- Renting of temporary accommodation for the year end of year A-Level Student Art Exhibition
- College Trips (UK and Abroad)
- Charitable fundraising activities and donations
- Letting of facilities at the weekend and in the evening e.g. sports hall
- Developing the college estate both refurbishment and new build
- Feasibility work and consideration of site expansion
- Rental of off-site car parking facility for staff and student usage

RESOLVED: Governors approved the undertaking and continuance of the above main college activities in light of the statutory powers conferred upon it as a Sixth Form Corporation to ensure compliance with the principal legislative powers, as well as having due regard for the Charities Act 2011 in terms of public benefit.

3. Property Strategy Update

There were a number of works undertaken at the October half term due to health and safety considerations during term time including:

- Drama Studio floor sanded and surface sealed and finished – completed.
- Daughters of the Cross – Main Entrance Cross fitted at high level externally – completed.
- Annunciation Plaque – to be fitted on Maureen Haverty building walkway wall – costing to refurbish the item is £1,640 plus vat, plus building work to fit £400 plus vat, cost of stone corbel still to be received.
- Snagging list – small items to be remedied including some furniture matters – mostly completed.

4. Financial Statement – Final Accounts

The College's adviser Simon Fenton partnership is working with HH Smiths to agree a final account and expect to be able to have a final figure before Christmas.

5. Other consideration and costings

Refurbishment of the Sacred Heart statue and relocation to the centre of the new courtyard – costing required – there is no further progress to report.

Consider extending the courtyard paving – costing to be sought; or simply reusing the old block paving as originally planned. The Advisers are working on a cost and will feed back before the next meeting with a site plan and alternative options in time for budget planning and scheduling of summer works.

The new Premises Manager has been appointed and is waiting for the DBS check before starting.

The Principal mentioned that there will be an official opening ceremony of the new building; a celebration of the University Centre QAA report; and a formal thank you celebration to Anne Fox for her 22 years of service as Chair of Governors. Details of the event will be circulated to governors.

6. **Potential Purchase and Redevelopment of 176-178 Manchester Road – Update**

There were 75 comments on the Bury Planning departmental portal, some of which support the project but most objecting to the scheme on the grounds of traffic congestion, heritage of the existing building and nuisance from students and litter. Feedback was received from the Planning Officer that they are minded to refuse the application in its current form.

Mrs A Fox asked a question – ‘What’s the main objection to the proposed purchase and building?’ The Principal replied that in addition to the reasons given above, neighbours object to students and staff parking at the Sports Club which is a charity organisation. Some of the neighbours are very troubled with the proposed purchase and building. There were also written complaints to which the Principal responded and invited the concerned neighbours to a meeting but no responses were received. It was commented that the College reputation should be considered because comments made were in a public domain.

The Planning Officer advised that it would be possible to withdraw the application and resubmit an alternative scheme with a much smaller building in the garden, single storey and a reduced in size housing 2 or 3 classrooms instead of the 8 classrooms proposed. If the College consider a withdrawal and resubmission, then this would have to be discussed with the Planning Officer ahead of 7 December 2018 in order to allow them sufficient time to review the proposal and give advice if this can be considered as part of the original application.

The Chair of Property & Finance Committee commented that he is aware of the major concerns about the financial viability to purchase the property, however, the P & F Committee’s view is to go ahead with the planning application and ask the architects to amend the original scheme/drawing to a reduced scale. The College may not have this kind of opportunity again in the future.

A comment was made that the College should take into account the wider knowledge based on demographic; the DP responded that the main objective is to improve the quality of education and that the increase in Academy Trusts should also be considered, there is no guarantee that more students will come to Holy Cross College. The Principal concurred with the DP and that the College need to make a decision on focussing on quality of provision and on the number of students it takes and asked the question of ‘how big do we need to be to be brilliant?’ The Principal is very concerned with the change in the financial situation, including reserves and maintenance costs of taking on another building, and worried about the workload of staff. We want to focus on improvement not expansion. The ESFA is delighted about the College’s quality of improvement but concerned about another building project. The positive side of the decline in student numbers is that we now have more rooms on the site. The Principal had reached the point that he does not think the College should go ahead with the purchase of the property on Manchester Road.

It was mentioned that the College should be looking for a level of confidence with the students’ experience; some parents’ view is that students do not have as much time in college as they did in high school, or about the situation at the last Inspection, and ask – ‘Has this situation changed?’; Students should be in College for a full programme and we have to make sure that we manage this expectation. DP replied that students are in College for a full programme and the College is definitely meeting this requirement.

A suggestion was made for CLT to put into action how they can manage numbers and timetable improvement on the current site and report back to the governing body.

ACTION:PRINCIPAL/DEPUTY PRINCIPAL

The new student governor was asked for her views on the change of timetable from high school - she replied that it was less of a fully structured day than in high school but understood that this has many benefits, as do proposals for timetable improvement.

Following discussion, an election was held whether to:

- Option 1 - completely withdraw the application and not to go ahead with the purchase of the property. There were 6 governors who voted for this option.
- Option 2 – continue with a refurbishment scheme on the 176-178 Manchester Road property with full knowledge that we would not get planning permission for the garden extension with 8 classrooms. Nobody voted for this option.
- Option 3 – continue with the planning application on a reduced scale. There were 5 governors who voted for this option.

RESOLVED:

- **Governors approved to withdraw the application with no further interest in the property and at the same time re-plan alternative use of existing space on the College site to provide options for curriculum and timetable changes.**
- **Governors accepted the Director of Finance & Professional Services Report and thanked the DFPS.**

2117

AUDIT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

The DFPS introduced the report on behalf of the Chair of Audit Committee. The report relates to the work of the Audit Committee during the period 1 August 2017 to 31 July 2018. The report included:

- **Annual Report of the Internal Audit Service 2017/18**
RSM acted as Internal Auditors for the period covered by this report. The work of the Internal Audit is in accordance with the 2016/19 Audit Strategy Report approved by the Audit Committee at its meeting held on 5 June 2017 (minute 600). The Internal Audit gave a positive overall assurance for the period ending 31 July 2018, that the College has an adequate and effective framework for risk management, governance and internal control. The Audit Committee approved the 2017-2018 Audit Findings Report and noted its comments and recommended the report to the Governing Body for approval.
- **Audit of Accounts Report and Financial Statements**
At its meeting on 7 November 2018, the Audit Committee considered the Audit of Accounts Report and Financial Statements; and the Audit Findings Report which highlighted the key issues affecting the results of the College and the preparation of the College's financial statement for the year ended 31 July 2018. The Auditors confirmed that there are no significant facts or matters that impact on their independence as auditors that they are required or wish to draw the College's attention. The Auditors have complied with the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standard and confirm that as a firm, and each covered person, are independent and are able to express an objective opinion on the financial statements. The Audit Committee is satisfied that reasonable reliance can be placed on the internal control systems to provide effective and efficient achievement of the College's objectives and recommended the Annual Financial Statements to the Governing Body for approval.
- **Annual Risk Management Report and Risk Register**
The Audit Committee considered the Annual Risk Management Report and Risk Register and recommended it to the Governing Body for approval.

RESOLVED: Governors:

- **Considered the 2017/18 Annual Report of the Audit Committee and approved the Annual Report of the Internal Audit Service.**
- **Approved the Audit Findings Report for 2017-2018 and noted the comments of the External Auditors.**
- **Approved the Financial Statements and Report for 2017-2018.**
- **Approved the appointment of RSM as Internal Auditors and Grant Thornton UK as External Auditors for 2018-2019.**
- **Noted the Self-Assessment Checklist**
- **Approved the Annual Risk Management Report and Risk Register.**
- **Approved the signing of the letters of representation in respect of the financial statements and the regularity audit by the Chair of Governors.**

The Chair thanked the DFPS and the Finance Staff for all the efficient running of the College Finance.

Mr M Bentley left the meeting at 7.40pm

2118

MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS AND BRIEF UPDATES FROM CHAIRS OF COMMITTEES

- a) **Quality & Standards Committee** – The Q & S Chair had had to give apologies on this occasion a discussion was nonetheless held by governors. The Staff Survey had been held and feedback will be reported to Quality & Standards Committee and also to Personnel Committee. One of the results of the survey showed that staff felt that the Post-Ofsted Inspection Action Plan had resulted in more positive effects for students than for staff.

Copies of the amended 'Whole College SAR' was distributed at the meeting. The proposed grade for overall assessment is Grade 2. DP commented that there is more emphasis on quality of education and things will be increasingly different next year. Governors have a full understanding how committees are supporting each other.

- b) **Property & Finance** – The minutes had already been discussed under Item 2116.
- c) **Audit Committee** – Minutes have been covered under Item 2117.
- d) **Personnel Committee** – The Vice Chair gave an update of the meeting, in the absence of the Chair of Personnel Committee. A working party will be meeting to review the Code of Ethics and the Whistle-blowing Policy. There has been a lengthy discussion at the Personnel Committee meeting regarding Risk Register, how we set red, amber and green. The DFPS informed the meeting that the College is using a methodology recommended by the Auditors and suggested refresher training.
- e) **SELF ASSESSMENT REPORT (SAR) COMMITTEE** – Mrs H Stainton has been appointed as Chair of the SAR Committee. The Committee reviewed the Post-Inspection Plan and Draft Leadership and Management SAR; review last year's SAR (2017) and identified the Governance SAR strengths and areas for improvement. The Committee agreed a proposed Grade 2, to be confirmed/amended at the External Validation.

A comment was made that it will be good for staff to know that the governing body is planning to get an external reviewer to review governance. The Chair will include this in the letter for the next Coffee and Chat session with staff.

ACTION: CHAIR

RESOLVED: Governors approved the Committee minutes.

2119

GOVERNOR TRAINING

The Chair and the Vice Chair gave a brief report of the training they attended entitled 'Chairs and Aspiring Chairs Training' delivered by the Diocese.

Chair is exploring Link Governor Training, initially with St John Rigby College

On-line safeguarding training is being arranged by the Human Resources Manager, governors will be informed of the details.

The Clerk spoke about the training that the Bury Governor Development Board is delivering. There is a Service Level Agreement of £960 per annum; Individual training is also offered to those who are not buying into the package. A full day training is £175 per governor; half day/evening is £95; and twilight or short (1.5hrs or less) is £55.

The Association of Colleges will be holding an 'Induction of New Governors' on 22 January 2019

at 4.00pm here at Holy Cross College. The Clerk encouraged not only new governors but everyone to attend this event to refresh their knowledge of their roles and responsibilities.

The Clerk reported that the DfE has funded the Education and Training Foundation (ETF) to deliver training/courses to governors. Once the ETF programme is finalised, the Clerk will be informed. They can also offer to come to the governing body meeting to deliver training prior to the full meeting.

2120 **RISK REGISTER**

The Risk Register will need to be re-visited and amended to consider the following suggestions:

- M5 – change to 3
- M10 – change to 1
- F1 – this has been updated
- G12 – to delete the sentence - ‘The current Chair has announced her retirement as Chair of the Governing Body.

2121 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

A special meeting will be held on Monday, 28 January 2019 at 6.00pm. There will be one item for discussion which will be the College Finance.

2122 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- Mrs P Walsh thanked everyone and informed the meeting that this will be her last governing body meeting as she will be starting her new job in the College in January 2019. Governors thanked Mrs P Walsh for her contribution to the governing body and wished her well in her new job at the College.
- Mr J Sweeney shared his delightful experience of speaking to some students during his visits at the College and found that students are respectful, fantastic and engaged.
- The Chair reported that at the recent Lourdes trip, care of students was excellent as they had many doctors and medical staff in attendance.

WHAT HAVE WE DONE IN THIS MEETING TO IMPROVE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF OUR COLLEGE FOR THE BENEFIT OF STUDENTS?

- Approved the undertaking and continuance of the main college activities in light of the statutory powers conferred upon it as a Sixth Form Corporation to ensure compliance with the principal legislative powers, as well as having due regard for the Charities Act in terms of public benefit.
- Approved the withdrawal of the planning application for 176-178 Manchester Road with no further interest in the said property and at the same time re-plan alternative use of existing space on the College site to provide options for curriculum and timetable changes.
- Discussed the importance of governor training to help governors fulfil their strategic leadership roles.
- Identified the strengths and areas for improvement for the Leadership and Management SAR.

Meeting finished at 8.25pm.

Signed _____ Date _____