



**St Brendan's Catholic Sixth Form College
Board of Governors**

OPEN – MINUTES

In Person and Virtual Meeting Held On: Thursday, 27 March 2024

D-Building Room D2/D3 at 16:00– 19:45 hrs

Governors Present: Svetlana Bajic-Raymond [Chair of Governors], Roger Bridgeman, Bethany [Bea] Channing-Cone, James Creamer, Marian Curran [Principal], Sr Margaret Harlock MBE, Marie-Claire Harper [Vice Chair of Governors], Mark O'Sullivan [R]*, Deborah Redwood, Paul Ryan, Daniel Smith, Peter Turner [R]*, Iain Turri, Antonia Corrigan, Michelle Hazelwood [15]

Apologies: Maragret Abazie-Humprey, Paul Ryan [2]

Absent without Apology: None [0]

Attending: Peter J Harrison [Governance Professional], Leanne Sowersby [Governance Professional], Alexandra Moruzzi [Vice Principal [Student Experience Progression], Shane Blackshaw [Executive Finance Director], Mary Malcolm

Quorum Present: 15/16 [includes required minimum of 4 Foundation Governors]

Note – [R]* – remote attendance in MS Office Teams

Circulation: All Governors, Governance Professional, Principalship, & [College Website after signature if declared OPEN].

ITEM	ISSUES RAISED IN DISCUSSION	AGREED ACTION
1. Welcome	<p>1.1 Welcome: Svetlana Bajic-Raymond [Chair of Governors] opened the meeting with prayer. Welcomed Mary Malcolm and Leanne Sowersby.</p> <p>1.2 Apologies: Margaret Abazie-Humpreys,</p> <p>1.3 Absent without Apology: None [0]</p> <p>1.4 Quorate: The meeting was declared quorate.</p>	
2. Declarations of Interest	<p>2.1 Declaration 2023/2024 Access/Equality/Safeguarding Declaration: There were additional no oral declarations.</p>	Next Agenda
3. Minutes Previous Meetings	<p>3.1 Previous Minutes Open [7 December 2023, 8 February 2024, 13 March 2024] It was noted that the minutes from 13 March were not circulated until the day of the meeting. SBR gave a summary of the reason for that meeting, and this will be discussed at item 9.5.</p> <p>There were some corrections to the December minutes, LS to check that these have been incorporated.</p> <p>PR's apologies were noted for the March minutes.</p> <p>The Minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting with the corrections noted, to be signed by the Chair of Governors electronically. The open Minutes to be made available on the College website by the Governance Professional.</p> <p>Action – Governance Professional</p>	<p>LS</p> <p>LS</p> <p>LS</p>
4. Minutes Actions Review	<p>4.1 Student Enrolment/Attendance/Retention 2023/2024 Data [Minutes Dec § 7.1] – MC – This was to report year to date and is now being done – complete.</p> <p>4.2 Teaching and Learning [Minutes Dec § 7.4] – MC – This will be updated on the agenda</p> <p>4.3 College Self-Assessment Report [SAR] [Minutes Dec § 8.1] – MC/SBR - complete</p> <p>4.4 Moore SW External Audit Report /Letter of Representation [Minutes Dec § 9.2] – MC/SBR – complete</p> <p>4.5 Annual Report and Financial Statement 2022/2023 [Minutes Dec § 9.4.] – MC/SBR/SB – SB gave an update. Pending the outcome of the loan breach, the ESFA will issue a letter to the college, which we will copy to the auditors, who will then sign off the accounts with some sort of qualifying paragraph.</p>	<p>MC/SB</p>

	<p>4.6 Staff Pay Remuneration 2023/2024 [Minutes Dec § 9.6] – MC/SB - complete</p> <p>4.7 Governors’ Committees Terms of Reference [Minutes Dec § 10.5] – PJH - complete</p> <p>4.8 Governance Professional Job Description Revision [Minutes Dec § 10.7] – MC - complete</p> <p>4.9 Governors' Virtual Attendance Policy [Minutes Dec § 11.1] – PJH - complete</p> <p>4.10 Raising Concerns Policy and Procedure [Whistleblowing [Minutes Dec § 11.2] – MC – this was looked at. To be brought back to Resources to clarify – the title of the policy has now been changed back to include whistleblowing.</p> <p>4.11 Travel Expenses Policy and Procedure [Minutes Dec § 11.3] – All Governors - complete</p> <p>4.12 Social Media Policy Minutes Dec § 11.4] – All Governors - complete</p> <p>4.13 Information Technology Policy issues Affecting Governors [Minutes Dec § 11.4] – MC – This has been discussed at Resources and Audit. There is an ongoing conversation around security on governors’ personal devices. There was due to be a briefing on this today, but this has been delayed - to follow-up.</p> <p>Noted that all governors should have completed cyber security training. Link to be resent to all governors to the National College training / included in minutes.</p> <p>4.14 Link Governor Profiles [Minutes Dec § 14.1] – Governors - complete</p> <p>4.15 Appointment New Governance Professional [Minutes Feb § 4.1] – MC/SBR - complete</p> <p>4.16 Governor ‘Cyber Training’ [Minutes Feb § 6.1] – Governors – discussed above, all to contact Marie-Claire if help needed</p>	<p>LS/MC</p> <p>LS/MC</p> <p>LS</p> <p>All</p>
<p>4. Matters Arising [agenda item not itemised]</p>	<p>5.1 None</p>	
<p>5. Governors’ Committee Reports [circulated reports and/or minutes]</p>	<p>5.1 Audit Committee: IT reported: Internal audit report on procurement cards was noted with some small changes recommended. Looked at budgets and the proposals for future budget setting. There was a short report on cyber security, including actions the college is taking around phishing etc. Governors will be included in the next phishing exercise.</p> <p>5.2 Ethos Safeguarding Welfare Committee: AC reported: Received an update on safeguarding and Prevent issues. Discussed tutor times and the fact there is 84% attendance. Applications looking promising. A new Chaplain has been appointed.</p>	

	<p>Also looked at the Supporting Children in care policy.</p> <p>There was also a section 48 preparation meeting for the Diocese, which raised some suggested changes.</p> <p>Safeguarding update – have met today. Things are similar to last year. There have been some concerning incidents around vulnerable students. Gave an overview of the issues leading to referrals. There has been additional concern around knives and weapons. The level of concern is similar to last year. There is a new member of staff supporting with mental health and wellbeing, alongside the Chaplain.</p> <p>5.3 Resources Premises Human Resources Committee: JC reported: Discussed the issues around the cash reserves, as well as the ESFA and the issue around the breach of the terms of the loan agreement.</p> <p>Also looked at the Environmental policy and the Local Authority Accountability Agreement and Local Needs Duty.</p> <p>5.4 Strategy, Search & Remuneration Committee – [231128]: SBR reported: Discussed the Diocesan Education Strategy and MATs, the external governance review and the Code of governance, as well as the interim performance review for the Principal and the risk register.</p> <p>5.5 Teaching Curriculum Quality Committee – [231108]: SBR reported: Presentation on post 16 curriculum reform, introduction of new examination courses and discontinuation of existing ones Advances in digital technology and impact on T&L Substantive look at recent developments in T&L in the college The Board of Governors noted the reports.</p>	
<p>6. Diocesan Education Strategy</p>	<p>6.1 / 6.2 Aquinas Partnership Report [Update] – standing item: SrMH reported. The Diocesan education dept expects all schools and colleges to have joined MATs by 2027. Two members of the Aquinas partnership have already joined the Newman Group. There are three MATs, Dunstan is all primaries in North Somerset, Little Way is in the Northern part of the Diocese and the Newman Trust covers Bristol. St Bede’s have not joined Newman as of yet, the existing members are all primaries. The Newman Group consists of 4 primaries. So far neither St Bernadettes or St Bedes have expressed an interest in joining. The remaining members of Aquinas Group would prefer to work collaboratively. MC detailed the discussions that have been had around the reasons for not joining a MAT as an FE college, as well as potential other options for colleges.</p>	

	<p>Noted that Bishop Declan has been very supportive of the college. He has now resigned due to ill health. The new Bishop is Canon Bosco, who is the current Dean of the Cathedral.</p> <p>MC has written to Bishop Declan on behalf of the GB to thank him for this support, and also to the new Bishop to invite him to visit the college.</p> <p>Q – What do the Aquinas Partnership do for us? It is based in supporting the Catholic ethos, and heads supporting each other, as well as exploring options for this kind of issue.</p> <p>Discussion around working with other colleges to support things such as requirements for panels etc. and whether formal reciprocal arrangements are required.</p> <p>Q – Is there a chance of us missing out if other institutions join the Trust and we do not? As an FE college, it is difficult for us to fit well with a group of primaries. There is a chance that the college would end up supporting the schools. We do already work with secondary schools to offer support.</p> <p>Discussion around the new Bishop and how he has been received.</p> <p>The Board of Governors noted the report.</p> <p>6.3 Cabot Learning Federation Post-16 Free School [Update]]: MC talked through the correspondence and gave an update.</p>	
<p>7. Principal’s Report</p>	<p>7.1 Student enrolment/attendance/retention. Current numbers are: 2603 applications, 2108 total offers and 1860 acceptances. This is 100 up from last year.</p> <p>Retention figures - noted that funded retention has improved.</p> <p>There are some particular issues around attendance. We need to ensure that punctuality is being captured accurately.</p> <p>AMz gave some context around attendance. We report on attendance for the most vulnerable students. We are seeing increasing issues linked to safeguarding and mental health, above and beyond the normal anxieties around end of year exams. We are following the normal college policies around things like restarts (re-starting year 13 to manage mental health). We are seeing an increase in students being offered a restart of year 13.</p> <p>Governors would like a breakdown of attendance of the various groups for Ethos.</p> <p>Q – Do we know the causes? These are diagnosed mental health conditions.</p> <p>Q – How do the student fatigue in Maths and English, and high thinking and high effort balance with mental health? The Maths and English fatigue is around students who are retaking these, and how they keep themselves going. There is additional support for these students from a team based with the inclusion team. MC gave an example of teaching staff providing support for students around exam stress and the higher challenge. There is also the, ‘fitness to study’ process that includes support for students to be able to study, as well as supporting students who are not able to study at this point.</p>	<p>AMz</p>

The, 'think hard, high challenge' is from work that has been done with teachers around framing the approach being taken to students and setting work.

Discussion around the approach to Maths and English and multiple resits of these. It is important to be able to diagnose where the difficulties are to be able to provide additional support, as well as issues such as attendance. We generally have a very good GSCE pass rate, but it could be appropriate to offer other qualifications to some students.

Q – Is managing mental health built into the curriculum? Yes, this is part of the tutor programme, there are workshops around exam anxieties, the Chaplaincy space is also available for students during this time.

7.2 Staff Recruitment – have not recruited many staff. MC noted the most recent appointments. One progress tutor has been replaced and interviews for another took place last week.

7.3 Teaching and Learning update. SC talked through the update.

Q – Who has carried out the observations? This is a team of internal staff.

We have also had two visits from the external college improvement partner who has done some drop-ins, especially around the key areas.

Student feedback continues to be positive, although the number of responses is still low, and this needs to be addressed.

Q – Do staff know they are going to be observed? Just under half are formal, planned lesson observations with a pre-observation discussion, and these are linked to performance management targets. Over half are lesson visits, and teachers know that there is a theme but do not know when they will happen. These are not part of the performance management process but focus on particular things we are trying to monitor. Progress tutors are also monitored formally and LSAs are also monitored during lesson visits.

Q – Are examples of home learning that exist, shared with staff? It is often possible to see concerns in the outcomes where students do not make the most of home learning. There is no plan at the moment. A variation of the quality of home learning leads to variation in the completion of home learning and whether it is picked up at the beginning of the lesson.

Q – At what point is this triangulated with outcomes? All the time, but particularly at the points where we review the data. Where there is good classroom practice and robust home learning etc, we are seeing good outcomes.

Steve is considering models of observation that allow for more collaborative approaches for next year.

Q – Is current performance data used in observations? Yes, students who have been identified as priorities will be a focus for the observer.

Q – Is Business studies a softer A-level subject? No, this is one of the biggest subjects and has quite strict entry criteria.

<p>8. College Self-Appraisal Report [SAR]</p>	<p>SC talked through the report.</p> <p>Q – When is the next report on QUIP? Noted that this is the last meeting for Dan and Bea. Thanked them for their work and contribution to the Governing Board.</p> <p>A vote for the new student governors will happen after the holidays.</p> <p>This is also Peter Harrison’s last meeting as Clerk to Governors. Governors thanked Peter for all of his work over the 20 years of his time at the college. A gift was presented.</p>	
<p>Comfort Break</p>	<p>Comfort Break</p>	
<p>9. College Financial Matters</p>	<p>9.1 Employability Annual Report AMz talked through the key points of the report.</p> <p>Q - What is the percentage increase of applications this year compared to last year? About 22%</p> <p>Q - What are the plans to improve the students entering intended destinations? This is included in the report. The remaining unknown destinations are being chased, there are still 70 unknown, and some have asked us not to contact them again.</p> <p>Noted that we have been offered exclusive apprenticeships by some employers based on the careers fair approach.</p> <p>Discussed how this data is used at curriculum planning level. We look at the number of applications to assess which subjects are popular.</p> <p>Also noted that some of the apprenticeships sector areas link to the skills priorities.</p> <p>Q – Have the number of unconditional offers declined? Yes. Universities were told during Covid that they could not make unconditional offers. There are still some students for whom this is appropriate.</p> <p>9.2 Local Authority Annual Accountability Agreement ESFA – This was discussed at the Resources committee. We have a duty to ensure that our curriculum and provision meets national, regional, and local skills needs. MC talked through the process that has led to the document that has been presented. This is a requirement to show how we meet this need. It will also inform the strategic conversation with the ESFA.</p> <p>Once approved, this will be published on the website.</p> <p>Proposed JC, Seconded BCC. Local Authority Annual Accountability Agreement approved unanimously.</p> <p>Noted that there will be a need for training for governors around this document. There are also particular actions for the committees.</p> <p>Q – How do we keep in touch with people who take a year out regarding destinations, and do we give advice? We have</p>	<p>MC</p>

	<p>provided guest speakers around gap years, and they have full access to the careers team. There is a need to balance the use of resources with the current students. We do ask students before they leave. They can still apply to university through us.</p> <p>We could also be asking students what their intended destination when they arrive, compared to when they are leaving, which would give a picture of whether we are raising aspirations.</p> <p>Discussion around the subjects that are popular, and that we are predominantly social sciences.</p> <p>To update and analyse for what further information on the agreement governors would like.</p> <p>Governors thanked AMz for the destinations information.</p> <p>9.3 College Strategic Plan 2022-2025 [Update] MC talked through the plan update as shared.</p> <p>Q – What is the benefit of networking and promoting the college? This connection gives us an insight into how other colleges are performing, what developments may be happening that could influence future strategic considerations. With the AoC we on the advisory group on curriculum reform. With UWE, this is more of a mutual relationship – MC has been working on UWE supporting us on our IT strategy. We are also involved in national campaigns on Raise the Rate and the Applied General Campaign as well as our work on being the SFCA Southwest support for other colleges.</p> <p>Q – Would it be possible to research the results for Pupil Premium students as they progress through university? The SFCA track this, and we are top in the area.</p> <p>Discussion around building links with the Merchant Venturers.</p> <p>Q – To what extent could the areas in red move to amber by the end of this academic year? Such as 2.1? This is likely to move to amber with the next set of results.</p> <p>9.4 Annual Equality Diversity Inclusion Report 2023/2024. Noted that the action plan included was not the correct one. The correct version will be provided for circulation.</p> <p>AMz talked through the report.</p> <p>Would like to include annual EDI training for all governors.</p> <p>Proposed SrMH, seconded MC, Annual Equality Diversity Inclusion Report 2023/2024 approved unanimously</p> <p>9.5 Current College Cash Strategy. MC gave an update of the current situation, as discussed at the extra-ordinary meeting of 13 March and outlined in the minutes.</p> <p>MC noted the excellent work done by SB to ensure that finances will be more secure for next year, at the end of 2025.</p>	<p>MC</p> <p>MC</p>
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The college has always had good financial status, and this is a blip year with regards to capital build, inflation and other raising costs. Th College is proactively addressing its cash position both short term, medium term and long term. The FE Commissioner now recommends holding 40 days cash as an operating balance.

SB noted the actions that have been taken.

We have reviewed all income and expenditure budgets and have asked budget holders to indicate whether reductions are feasible – in most cases they have confirmed they are.

We are looking at the possibility of Increasing revenue from Sports pitches, especially over the summer.

We can now look at moving some cash into our savings account.

The college has started to construct its budget for next year and this is being shared with the ESFA.

We need to ensure that the in-year operating surplus is large enough to generate the cash balance that we are aiming for at the end of 2024-25 and set the budget from this.

We are looking to move to formula-based budgets for the curriculum departments.

Also need to make sure that cash balances are sufficient to also any developments that are needed on the estates.

Q – Is it possible to identify other external sources of income, such as turning the restaurants into limited trading companies, or use of the site for marketing etc.? We are starting to explore sponsorship opportunities as a way to bring in more income.

Q – What information will be given to staff? We will explain why we are where we are, that we do not have as much cash as we would like. There are significant concerns among staff that MC will address.

Q – Is the 40 days mandatory? This is a guideline. We will need to continue to horizon scan and to ensure that the college is in a strong financial position. Discussion around the potential changes to the curriculum, the potential impact of political changes etc. There are plans in place to ensure continuity of subjects and retaining student numbers.

Q – If we join a MAT, do we stay financially independent? A benefit of academising is not having to pay VAT. MAT finances often have a finance model that includes top-slicing or a MAT wide finance model.

9.6 Education Skills Funding Agency Approval 2022/2023 Accounts [Update] – The draft accounts have already been submitted, the draft letter from the ESFA should be received this week to allow them to be signed off.

9.7 Estate Development Plan - With the exception of one project to redevelop an ICT workshop and cyber EPQ. All of this is funded through the Local Skills Improvement Partnership. SB will ensure that we are reimbursed as soon as payments are made.

We have been notified that we have not been successful in the CIF bid for the security and fencing, but will be working with

	<p>the consultant to appeal.</p> <p>Anything else is on hold until we are happy with the budget.</p> <p>Q – Is the modernisation of the IT infrastructure going ahead? We do need to look at this, MC has been applying for external funding for this.</p>	
10. Board of Governors' Operations	<p>10.1 Code of Governance – for adoption None of the available codes of governance are a perfect fit. SBR proposes adopting the Corporate Code of Governance, alongside the Nolan Principles. Other colleges appear to have adopted the Corporate Code. Seconded DS. Corporate Code of Governance adopted unanimously.</p> <p>10.2 Governors' Briefing July Meeting - IT and data protection</p> <p>10.3 Governance Professional Induction – LS started on 4 March. Initial induction meetings have taken place and other activities are underway.</p> <p>10.4 Appointment New Student Governors – discussed above at item 8.</p> <p>10.5 Governor Recruitment [Update] – have interviewed a potential foundation governor, who is a local secondary head and are waiting for official approval from the Diocese. Tomorrow will be interviewing another foundation governor. There are two other potential candidates.</p> <p>We will also need a new parent governor from September.</p> <p>10.6 Governance External Review – MM is attending this meeting and will complete her report as soon as possible.</p>	LS
11. Policy Reviews	<p>11.1 College Admission Policy 2024/2025– for adoption to come to the next meeting</p> <p>11.2 College Mission Statement Annual Review Antonia, Marian – all in favour</p> <p>11.3 Environmental Policy – something around Laudato Si to be added – to come back to the next meeting</p>	AM SB
12. Risk Management	<p>12.1 Review of Board of Governors' Risk Register Items – MC noted that we have asked that some of the financial aspects are reviewed at SSRM as well. SB will also ensure that any high risks are looked at regularly, likely monthly, to monitor, outside of official principalship meetings.</p> <p>MC talked through some of the risks specific to FGB and the actions being taken towards mitigating these.</p> <p>Q – 6.16 appears to have increased risk with the control measures? This needs to be completely updated – the comments need to be updated. The score has been updated for the current situation, and the comments need to reflect this.</p> <p>This will be reviewed in April at Principalship and updated. To look at the whole register in SSRM</p>	

	12.2 Safeguarding/PREVENT Review - discussed above.	
13. Correspondence	13.1 None	
14. Any Other Business	Query whether the weekly newsletter could also be circulated to governors so that they are aware of events that are taking place. Yes, this can be sent to LS to circulate.	LS
15. Date Next Meeting	<p>15.1 Date of Next Meeting – Governors’ Diary [Agreed dates]</p> <p>Board of Governors – Tuesday, 9 July 2024 at 16:00</p> <p>Audit Committee – Wednesday, 12 June 2024 at 16:00</p> <p>Ethos Safeguarding Welfare Committee – Wednesday, 8 May 2024 at 16:00</p> <p>Resources Premises Human Resources Committee – Wednesday, 26 June 2024 at 16:00</p> <p>Strategy, Search & Remuneration Committee – Wednesday 24 April 2024 at 16:00</p> <p>Teaching Curriculum Quality Committee – Wednesday, 15 May 2024 at 16:00</p> <p>[NOTE – 1 meeting dates may need to be changed]</p>	Clerk/ All Governors Next Agenda
Notes	None	
Minutes Agreed	<p>Minutes Approved</p> <p>Date</p> <p>Signature</p> <p>_____ Chair of Governors</p>	