



Minutes of the Full Governing Body Meeting held on Tuesday 28 March 2023 at 6pm in the College Conference Room

Present:	Sarah Carroll	Foundation Governor (<i>virtual attendance</i>)
	Mark Dawson	Parent Governor
	John Fogarty	Foundation Governor
	Andrew Jones	Co-opted Governor
	Oliver Maddock	Foundation Governor
	Mick Martin	Foundation Governor
	Janet Nevin	Interim co-Principal
	Andrew Rannard	Foundation Governor
	Graeme Slater	Foundation Governor
	Joe Stead	Student Governor
	Helen Stevenson (<i>Chair</i>)	Foundation Governor

In attendance: Angela Williams (*Interim co-Principal*)
Michelle Williams (*Vice Principal, Finance, Resources & Systems*)
Janet Gater (*Acting Vice Principal, Curriculum, Quality & Student Performance*)
Laura Forsyth (*Acting Assistant Principal, Curriculum & Quality*)
Sam Johnstone (*Pastoral Director and Staff Governor elect*)
Ruth Potter (*Clerk to Governors*)

PART 1

The meeting was opened in prayer by the Chair of Governors.

1. ROUTINE AND STANDING ITEMS

1. Declarations of interest

Governors were invited to declare whether they had any direct or indirect personal, prejudicial or pecuniary interest or conflict of interest in any matter which formed part of the agenda for this meeting or was likely to be discussed at the meeting. No interests were declared other than those already recorded on the Register of Interests.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies had been received and accepted from the following governors:

- Sue Jarvis – Co-opted Governor
- Tracy Mawson – Co-opted Governor

The meeting was declared quorate.

3. Items to be included under any other business

There were no items submitted for inclusion under any other business.

4. Minutes of the Governing Body meeting held on 6 December 2022 (*previously circulated*)

The minutes of the Full Governing Body (FGB) meeting held on 6 December 2022 were (a) approved and the Chair authorised to sign them in accordance with Article 12(3) of the Articles of Government and (b) publication was authorised in accordance with Article 13.

It was noted that the question and answer on page 2 related to financial information provided in the financial statements for the year ended 31 July 2022.

5. **Minutes of the Special Governing Body meeting held on 30 January 2023**
(previously circulated)

The minutes of the Special Full Governing Body (FGB) meeting held on 30 January 2023 were (a) approved and the Chair authorised to sign them in accordance with Article 12(3) of the Articles of Government and (b) publication was authorised in accordance with Article 13.

6. **Matters arising from the minutes** *(previously circulated)*

The Governing Body noted the action log prepared by the Clerk.

Andrew Jones joined the meeting at this point.

7. **STUDENT VOICE AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

7.1 **Student Governor Update** *(previously circulated)*

The Student Governor presented his report which had been previously circulated. He highlighted the following points:

- Road safety – the Student Council had met with the College Estates Manager and representatives of St Helens Council in order to discuss concerns and possible road safety measures. An update was provided on subsequent action taken by the Student Council to raise the profile of road safety amongst students and engage with road safety charity, Brake.
- Leavers' event – the Student Governor and Student Council President were involved in developing plans for the Upper Sixth leavers' event.
- Student Council outreach activities via Carmel Radio and social media.

The Chair thanked the Student Governor for his excellent report and commended the Student Council's proactive approach to road safety concerns.

ACTION – Share date of Upper Sixth Leavers' Event with the Governing Body once this is confirmed

8. **PRINCIPAL'S REPORTS**

8.1 **Interim co-Principals' Termly Report** *(previously circulated)*

Governors were referred to the Interim co-Principals' report which had previously been circulated. Comments and questions were invited on the content of the report.

Discussion ensued on the student recruitment data that had been considered in detail by the Finance and Resources Committee.

Q – Predicted enrolment figure of 831 in 2023: how realistic is this?

A – Aim for the figure to be significantly higher than this, but conversion data impacted by change in metric used for 'presumed withdrawn' figure. In addition to this focus on strong recruitment and enrolment figures, priority will also be placed on retention of students from lower sixth to upper sixth.

Governors commended the Foundation Learning Department on the positive report which provided strong evidence of the College's mission and ethos in action. The Interim co-Principals reported that work was underway to review funding sources to support Foundation Learning students to ensure that all funding streams were optimised.

The Governing Body **noted** and **approved** the Interim co-Principals' report.

9. STRATEGIC ISSUES

9.1 Curriculum Update: Level 3 qualifications reform *(previously circulated)*

The Acting Assistant Principal presented her report and updated governors on the Department for Education's (DfE) significant reforms planned for post-16 level 3 vocational qualifications. The anticipated impact on the College was highlighted alongside associated mitigating curriculum plans. Current BTEC provision at the College was relatively small, hence the impact was not as far reaching as in other colleges. It was noted that final confirmation was awaited and the College needed to be agile to respond to changes as they emerged. Final plans were expected to crystallise in 2024-25. In the meantime, the College Management Team (CMT) continued to keep abreast of the reform landscape and ensure the College's plans were fit for purpose.

Governors' comments and questions were invited.

Q – Given planned reforms, will the College be able to recruit staff to deliver the new BTEC Engineering course planned for 2023-24?

A – Yes. Have existing staff with the necessary expertise. Anticipate that this new course will be very popular based on feedback from feeder schools. Plan to limit it to two classes initially, then review the position post-enrolment to assess options for growth. Links with employers and wider skills agenda were highlighted.

The Acting Vice Principal reported on the BTEC qualification frameworks and explained the validation process and link into Alternative Academic Qualifications (AAQs). CMT would continue to liaise closely with awarding bodies to inform future strategy.

The Chair thanked the Acting Assistant Principal for her informative report and requested that further updates be provided as required.

Laura Forsyth and Sam Johnstone left the meeting at this point.

9.2 Strategic planning cycle and the new statutory duty to review the College's curriculum offer and its contribution to the national, regional and local learning and skills agenda on a three-yearly cycle *(previously circulated)*

The Clerk referred governors to her report and appended strategic planning timeline. It was noted that the College's approved strategic plan ran for three years from 2022 to 2025 and planning for the development of a new plan would be required in 2024. Governors were also referred to their new statutory duty to review how well the College meets local, regional and national skills needs every three years and publish the resultant report on the College website. It was proposed that the board's curriculum review – through which the Governing Body could fulfil this statutory duty – sit alongside the overarching strategic planning cycle. Publication of the new strategic plan 2025-28 and the report of the Governing Body's section 52B review would then take place in January 2025.

Underpinning this three-yearly cycle, was a new requirement for the College to prepare an annual Accountability Statement each year to articulate a limited number of targets focussed on curriculum provision for the year ahead. This document must be submitted to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) by 31 May each year following Governing Body approval (see item 9.3).

A proposed timeline for these key strategic planning and reporting responsibilities was presented for consideration.

The Governing Body **noted** the report and **approved** the strategic planning timeline.

Andrew Rannard joined the meeting at this point.

9.3 **New Statutory Duty: the annual Accountability Agreement (Part 2) for 2023-24** *(previously circulated)*

Angela Williams, Interim co-Principal, updated governors on the new Accountability Agreement that had been introduced to replace the funding agreement for 2023-24. Part 2, the Accountability Statement, must be prepared by the College and approved by the Governing Body prior to submission to the ESFA by 31 May each year. The document must also be published on the College website.

The Interim co-Principal presented the draft Accountability Statement for 2023-24 and invited feedback from governors. She reported that the draft statement had been based on exemplar documents shared by the ESFA following the pilot phase. In addition, liaison had taken place with St Helens Chamber as a key partner in the development of the Liverpool City Region Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP). Eight priorities for the 2023-24 academic year had been identified for consideration.

The Acting Vice Principal (Curriculum, Quality & Student Performance) reported on how the involvement of employers and higher education partners on subject self-assessment review (SAR) panels had played a key role in shaping the skills development and focus for each subject. In addition, the curriculum had been mapped against the top 10 work skills as identified by the World Economic Forum and opportunities to develop students' skills in these areas had also been explored when planning enrichment opportunities.

Discussion ensued on the strength of evidence presented on the College's contribution to local, regional and national skills needs and governors agreed that a self-assessment judgement of 'reasonable' was the most accurate at that point in time. As the College's collaboration and engagement with employers and stakeholders developed further, this judgement had the potential to improve to 'strong'. Governors who had attended SAR panels in the Autumn Term reported on the excellent added value brought about by the presence of employers on the panels.

The Governing Body:

- **approved** the Accountability Statement 2023-24, without amendment, for submission to the ESFA by 31 May 2023 and publication thereafter on the College website
- **agreed** a self-assessment judgement of 'good'.

ACTION – (a) Submit signed Accountability Statement to ESFA by 31 May 2023
(b) Publish signed Accountability Statement on College website
within three months of the start of the new academic year

10. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

10.1 Financial Update and Management Accounts – January 2023 (*previously circulated*)

The Vice Principal (Finance, Resources and Systems) referred governors to the finance update and management accounts as at the end of January 2023 and reported that these had been considered in detail by the Finance and Resources Committee at its meeting on 16 March 2023. A comprehensive financial review of income and expenditure anticipated for the remainder of the financial year to July 2023 had been conducted. As a result of this review, the planned outturn for the current financial year was forecasted to be £75k, a reduction of £155k from the previously approved operating surplus of £230k. It was explained that higher than anticipated utility costs and a reduction in HE receipts were the main causes of this variance.

The Governing Body **noted** the report and **approved** the adjustment to the planned outturn for the year ending 31 July 2023.

Discussion ensued on the impact of under recruitment this year on College funding for 2023-24. A shortfall in funding would result in a deficit position next year and the Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee updated governors on the detailed discussions around this that had taken place during the recent Committee meeting. He reported that the Committee had requested a recovery plan be prepared based on models for reducing expenditure that would mitigate against reliance on student numbers. This modelling would be prepared by senior College staff for discussion after Easter and would be presented formally to governors for more detailed consideration at the next Governing Body meeting.

ACTION – FGB agenda item at Summer Term meeting

10.2 National Pay Agreements (*previously circulated*)

Teaching staff

The Vice Principal (Finance, Resources and Systems) updated governors on the National Joint Council (NJC) teaching staff pay negotiation as set out in the letter dated 7 March 2023 from Graham Bird and Darren O’Grady (NJC Joint Secretaries). It had been agreed to uprate teachers’ pay with effect from 1 September 2022 in line with the employers’ side offer, however this did not represent acceptance of that offer and the NJC teacher unions’ dispute for a fully funded pay increase continued. The Vice Principal reported on the financial and budgetary implications of this interim teaching staff pay award.

The Governing Body **approved** the interim teaching staff pay award for 2022-23.

Support staff

The Vice Principal (Finance, Resources and Systems) reported that the support staff pay award had been approved by the Governing Body at its meeting in December 2022. She updated governors on the subsequent amendment to the national minimum wage rate and the impact on College pay points that required further approval from the Governing Body.

A discussion ensued and it was confirmed that the College had adopted the real living wage rather than the minimum wage. Reference was made to the Liverpool City Region ‘Fair Employment Charter’ and the opportunity for the College to apply for membership of this and reference it in promotional/recruitment material.

The Governing Body **approved** the adoption of support staff pay award additional changes.

ACTION – Explore membership of the Fair Employment Charter

10.3 **Catering Contract** (*previously circulated*)

The Vice Principal (Finance, Resources and Systems) updated governors on the outcome of the recent catering tender. The successful tenderer had been awarded a three-year contract with the option to extend. It was noted that the governors' Tender Panel had received excellent support from a number of students who had attended the food tasting and presentations in an advisory capacity. Governors expressed thanks to all students involved for their time and valuable contributions to the Panel deliberations.

The Governing Body **noted** the new Catering Contract.

11. RISK MANAGEMENT

11.1 **JISC Cyber Security Assessment Report** (*previously circulated*)

The Vice Principal (Finance, Resources and Systems) updated the Governing Body on the outcome of JISC cyber security assessment and referred governors to the full report that had been uploaded separately to GovernorHub. The Audit Committee had considered the report in detail at its meeting on 14 March 2023 and had also received a presentation from the College's IT Manager on the prioritised action plan to address the report's recommendations. The Chair of the Audit Committee confirmed that regular updates on progress against the action plan would be provided to subsequent Committee meetings. In addition, the Committee had requested that a follow-up review be conducted at an appropriate point by JISC in order to provide further, specialist assurance that all necessary steps had been taken to address the report's recommendations.

The Governing Body **noted** the contents of the report.

11.2 **Risk Management Action Plan** (*previously circulated*)

The Vice Principal (Finance, Resources and Systems) referred governors to the College's updated risk register and action plan and reported that this had already been considered by the Audit Committee at its meeting on 14 March 2023. Four significant risks had been identified as follows:

- recruitment of suitably qualified IT staff
- student recruitment target not achieved
- financial health
- recruitment of permanent College leadership.

Discussion ensued on the key risks facing the College and the operational plans in place to mitigate these.

The Governing Body **noted** the updated risk register and action plan.

11.3 **Business Continuity Annual Report** (*previously circulated*)

The Vice Principal (Finance, Resources and Systems) presented the Business Continuity Annual Report which had been considered by the Audit Committee at its meeting on 14 March 2023 and recommended for approval. The report referred to the College's Disaster Management Plan and reported on business interruptions for the academic year ended 31 July 2022. The incident report referred to the cyber-

attack in May 2022 which had been reported separately to the Governing Body immediately following the attack.

The Governing Body **approved** the Business Continuity Annual Report.

12. GOVERNANCE

12.1 **Governance SAR** (*previously circulated*)

Given the late circulation of the draft Governance SAR, the Chair suggested that governors be afforded more time to consider the document before recommending approval. Therefore, it was **agreed** to circulate the Governance SAR to all board members separately via email after the Easter break with a view to securing feedback and approval.

ACTION – Circulate draft Governance SAR via email for Governing Body approval

12.2 **Link Governor Scheme** (*previously circulated*)

It was agreed that this item be deferred to the next Governing Body meeting to ensure adequate time for discussion.

ACTION – FGB agenda item at Summer Term meeting

12.3 **Membership and Succession Planning** (*previously circulated*)

The Chair of Search Committee referred governors to the update report on the the latest developments with regard to its membership and succession planning.

Staff Governor

One nomination had been received for the role – Sam Johnstone, Pastoral Director.

The Governing Body **approved** the appointment of Sam Johnstone as Staff Governor for a four-year term with immediate effect. The Staff Governor was allocated to the Quality and Standards Committee in line with the committee's terms of reference.

Re-appointment of Foundation Governor

The Chair of Governors reported that at its meeting on 27 February 2023, the Search Committee had recommended that Oliver Maddock be re-appointed as Foundation Governor for a period of four years. This re-appointment would be subject to the ultimate approval of the Archdiocese as well as satisfactory completion of a new DBS check.

The Governing Body **approved** the re-appointment of Oliver Maddock as Foundation Governor from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2027 subject to Archdiocesan approval and satisfactory completion of DBS check.

Chairs of Committees and Chair of Governing Body

The Chair of Search Committee highlighted the imminent need to conduct re-elections for a number of chair roles, most notably that of the Chair of Governors. These would take place in the Summer Term.

ACTION – (a) **Arrange induction for newly appointed Staff Governor**
(b) **Arrange DBS check for re-appointed Foundation Governor**

12.4 **External Governance Review** *(previously circulated)*

It was agreed that this item be deferred to the next Governing Body meeting to ensure adequate time for discussion.

ACTION – FGB agenda item at Summer Term meeting

13. **CONSENT AGENDA**

It was noted that no questions had been raised in advance of the meeting with the Clerk regarding the papers listed under the consent agenda. The Chair advised the Governing Body that there remained an opportunity to raise any queries if required. None were raised.

Policies and other documents *(previously circulated)*

13.1 **Use of Reasonable Force Policy**

13.2 **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy – updated Appendix 8**

13.3 **Equality and Diversity Annual Report and Policy**

13.4 **Dignity at Work Policy**

13.5 **Redundancy Policy**

13.6 **Safeguarding College Assets Annual Report**

13.7 **Sustainability Policy**

13.8 **Financial Regulations 2023**

13.9 **Tendering Policy**

The Governing Body **approved** all the documents without revision.

Committee minutes and reports *(previously circulated)*

Committee Chairs were invited to highlight key points of interest arising from the recent round of Committee meetings.

13.10 **Search Committee draft minutes from 27 February 2023**

13.11 **Quality and Standards Committee meeting held on 7 March 2023**

The Chair of the Quality and Standards Committee provided a brief verbal update on key business discussed during the meeting, pending the completion of the draft minutes.

13.12 **Audit Committee draft minutes from 14 March 2023**

13.13 **Finance and Resources Committee draft minutes from 16 March 2023**

The Governing Body **noted** all committee minutes and reports.

14. **OTHER MATTERS**

14.1 **Any other business**

None

14.2 **Date of next meeting**

The Chair indicated that the next scheduled meeting was set for Tuesday 27 June 2023 at 6pm, however it was likely that an earlier additional meeting would need to be called given the important Governing Body decisions that would be required on certain key matters.

There being no further Part 1 business to discuss the meeting concluded at 7.05pm.

Signed by the Chair: _____

On this day: _____27 June 2023_____