



Minutes of the Full Governing Body Meeting held on Tuesday 27 June 2023 at 6pm in the College Conference Room

Present:	Mark Dawson	Parent Governor
	Susan Jarvis	Co-opted Governor
	Andrew Jones	Co-opted Governor
	Sam Johnstone	Staff Governor
	Oliver Maddock	Foundation Governor
	Mick Martin	Foundation Governor
	Janet Nevin	Interim co-Principal
	Andrew Rannard	Foundation Governor
	Joe Stead	Student Governor
	Helen Stevenson (<i>Chair</i>)	Foundation Governor

In attendance:	Angela Williams (<i>Interim co-Principal</i>)
	Janet Gater (<i>Acting Vice Principal, Curriculum, Quality & Student Performance</i>)
	Michelle Williams (<i>Vice Principal, Strategy & Resources</i>)
	Laura Forsyth (<i>Acting Assistant Principal, Curriculum & Quality</i>)
	Harrison Zysiak Tobin (<i>Student Governor elect</i>)
	Ruth Potter (<i>Clerk to Governors</i>)

PART 1

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

The Chair welcomed the Student Governor elect, Harrison Zysiak Tobin, as an observer to the meeting.

1. ROUTINE AND STANDING ITEMS

1.1 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 other interests were declared other than those that were already recorded on the College's register of interests.

1.2 Apologies for absence

Apologies had been received and accepted from the following board members:

- Sarah Carroll – Foundation Governor
- John Fogarty – Foundation Governor
- Tracy Mawson – Co-opted Governor
- Graeme Slater – Foundation Governor

The meeting was declared quorate.

1.3 **Items to be included under any other business**

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

1.4 **Minutes of the Governing Body meeting held on 28 March 2023** (*previously circulated*)

The minutes of the Full Governing Body (FGB) meeting held on 28 March 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.

1.5 **Matters arising from the minutes** (*previously circulated*)

Governors noted the action log prepared by the Clerk.

2. **STUDENT VOICE AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

2.1 **Student Council Annual Report** (*previously circulated*)

The Governing Body considered the Student Council Tutor's Annual Report which had been previously circulated and received a verbal report from the outgoing Student Governor. Progress with regard to road safety outside College was reported and the Student Governor confirmed that good links had been forged with representatives from St Helens Council which could be built upon by the incoming Student Council.

The Chair thanked the outgoing Student Governor for his enthusiastic and professional contributions during his time on the Governing Body and wished him every success in the future.

3. **PRINCIPAL'S REPORT**

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

The Interim co-Principals presented their report and explained that it was a collaborative, corporate report produced via contributions from the wider senior leadership team (SLT). The following key points were highlighted:

- Leadership and management – new SLT structure for 2023-24 had been presented to governors at the informal collaborative session preceding the meeting.
- Student progress and outcomes – final progress point for Y13 and end of year progress point for Y12 reported. Formal examination results this summer were expected to be lower nationally following on from Covid-19 and a return to pre-pandemic grade boundaries.
- Quality improvement – the format of the College's Self-Assessment Report (SAR) and Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) would be amended next year to ensure all indicators of performance were captured fully, leading to a more holistic assessment.
- Student recruitment / finance and resources:
 - strategic efforts had been made to strengthen the College's relationship with its key feeder schools which should positively impact upon recruitment numbers and ultimately financial health. Increased applications and confirmed taster day attendance were positive current indicators.
 - progress with capital projects reported (roof repairs and LED lighting)
 - two key tenders completed for catering and student transport. Two free student bus services would run next year for the first time on key strategic routes.
 - new student information system (CEDAR) to be implemented in time for new academic year. This system was used by many other sixth form colleges and would provide good networking and support opportunities.

- exams – Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) report on College’s management of this year’s exam series raised no concerns.
- Student welfare and wellbeing – Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 released and College’s policies had been updated accordingly for governors’ approval.
- Staffing update – Early Career Teacher (ECT) scheme update provided at the end of the first ever cohort’s two-year programme. Quality inspection report of ECT programme took place in March 2023 and was very positive, with no recommendations for action. Overview of staffing changes reported including leavers, new starters and internal promotions/moves.
- Student, staff, parent/carer voice – surveys had taken place or were underway and full reports would be provided to governors in the Autumn Term.
- College mission and ethos in action – work had taken place with the Assistant Principal (Staffing & Catholic Ethos) to ensure a more strategic approach to Catholic ethos and mission and extend the reach of the Chaplaincy across the whole College community.
- Academisation – a series of meetings had taken place and a full report would be provided under item 4.1.

Governors’ comments and questions were invited.

Q – Examination results – was it anticipated these would be comparable to the College’s competitors?

A – Yes. Results should hold up against key benchmarks.

Q – Free bus services – which routes had been identified for these?

A – Warrington and Widnes. The Warrington route would be an express service with only five stops to cut down student journey time.

Q – What does a student bus pass cost?

A – c.£400 per year

Q – Liaison with feeder schools – had we engaged with Multi Academy Trusts at a central level yet, in order to build relationships with Chief Executive Officers as well as individual schools?

A – Not yet; this could be built into next phase of strategic liaison activity.

Q – Any concerning trends identified amongst staff leavers, some of whom had been with the College for a year or less?

A – No specific trends identified. These staff had left for a variety of reasons.

Q – Parent survey response rate this year?

A – Good response rate. Full parent voice report would be presented in Autumn Term.

Governors’ feedback on the content and structure of this corporate report was invited to ensure that the right level and range of information was provided. Discussion ensued and governors confirmed that the report was insightful and concise, providing an effective overview of key areas. In particular, the staffing update was welcomed. Further additions were suggested including a student section and a horizon scan or forward look section.

ACTION – Update corporate report to include sections on students and future developments

The Governing Body thanked the Interim co-Principals for their informative report and **noted** the contents.

4. STRATEGIC ISSUES

4.1 Academisation *(previously circulated)*

Interim co-Principal, Janet Nevin, updated governors on developments with regard to academisation. A series of meetings had taken place and these were reported by way of a chronology in the circulated paper. Governors had decided to explore academisation in the form of a post-16 Catholic Multi Academy Trust (CMAT) following discussions with the Archdiocese of Liverpool and the other sixth form provider in the diocese. Further details were awaited from the Archdiocese in the form of a proposed programme plan which would be shared with governors once available. In the meantime, governors were invited to consider the formation of an academisation working group to help facilitate more detailed consideration of key issues and enhance reports back into the full Governing Body. The working party would have no delegated powers.

Discussion ensued on the vision for academisation and the potential benefits and opportunities this could bring. Governors were clear, however, that any final decision and model must be right for Carmel College and its students. It was agreed that a dedicated strategy day on academisation would be helpful once the Archdiocese's programme plan was known.

In the meantime, expressions of interest were invited to sit on the academisation working party. The Chair of Governors and Parent Governor confirmed their interest.

ACTION – (a) Governors to confirm if they wish to sit on academisation working party (b) Arrange academisation strategy day

4.2 DfE Annual Strategic Conversation *(previously circulated)*

The Chair reported that the College's annual strategic conversation with Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and Further Education Commissioner (FEC) officials had been scheduled to take place on 13 July 2023. The outcome from the meeting would be shared with governors in due course.

ACTION – Circulate DfE letter to governors once received.

5. FINANCE AND ESTATES MANAGEMENT

5.1 Financial Update and Management Accounts – May 2023 *(previously circulated)*

The Vice Principal (Finance, Resources & Systems) provided an overview of financial performance – as presented in the RAG rated finance dashboard – and confirmed that the College's financial health grading was anticipated to be good as at the end of May 2023. It was reported that the finance update and management accounts had been considered by the Finance and Resources Committee at its meeting on 22 June 2023.

The Governing Body **noted** the contents of the finance update and management accounts.

5.2 **Financial Forecast and Commentary 2023 to 2024-25** *(previously circulated)*

The Vice Principal (Finance, Resources & Systems) referred governors to the Financial Plan 2023 to 2025 which detailed the anticipated financial forecast of the College for the financial years ended 2023 to 2025.

The Vice Principal confirmed that at its meeting on 22 June 2023, the Finance and Resources Committee had reviewed the financial forecast and recommended approval to the full Governing Body. The Governing Body (as the corporation) was ultimately responsible for ensuring the financial viability of the College and as such must approve the College Financial Forecasting Return (CFFR).

The following key aspects were highlighted:

- Summary outturn position for 2022-23 including actuals to 31 March 2023 and forecast up to 31 July 2023.
- Forecast (and operating budget) for 2023-24 and forecast for 2024-25
- Deficit budget for 2023-24 – financial modelling reviewed by Finance and Resources Committee and built into the financial plan.
- Income assumptions based on plan to grow student numbers to ensure return to surplus position for 2024-25.
- Pay expenditure based on fully costed payroll budget and incorporating estimated pay award of 5%.
- Percentage of pay expenditure as proportion of total income benchmarked against sixth form sector averages.
- Capital expenditure and planned estate development.
- Sensitivity analysis provided to demonstrate the potential impact of major changes in key assumptions.
- Under both the existing financial health grading system and the proposed new system, the College would be assessed as Good in 2023, Good in 2024 and Outstanding in 2025.
- The financial health of the College was therefore self-assessed as Good over the three-year period to July 2025.

Discussion ensued on the challenging financial environment in which the College was operating with rising staff costs and other inflationary increases. Financial modelling had been considered in detail by the Finance and Resources Committee at its meeting on 22 June 2023. A variety of measures had been applied to ensure a return to surplus as quickly as possible and close scrutiny of student enrolment numbers would be required in the Autumn Term in order to assess impact on the forecast.

Governors' questions and comments were invited.

Q – Impact of increase in HE student numbers and fees?

A – Liaison with University of Liverpool taking place and planned increase in fees can only be implemented from 2024-25.

Q – Potential impact of over recruitment on space and staffing considered?

A – Yes. Any significant over recruitment would attract additional in-year funding.

The Vice Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee thanked the Vice Principal for the clear and comprehensive papers that had informed governors' consideration of this key area.

Following discussion, the Governing Body:

- **approved** the Carmel College financial forecast 2023-2025, and
- **approved** the 2023-2024 forecast as the operating budget for 2023-2024.

5.3 **ESFA College Financial Assessment Letter and Governors' Dashboard**

(previously circulated)

The Vice Principal (Finance, Resources & Systems) referred to the ESFA letter dated 29 March 2023 and governing body financial dashboard. This had already been considered by the Finance and Resources Committee and had been brought to the Governing Body for all governors to consider. The Vice Principal reported that the financial health of the College had been confirmed as Good for 2021-22.

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

5.4 **Property Strategy Review** *(previously circulated)*

The Vice Principal (Finance, Resources & Systems) referred governors to the College Property Strategy 2023-28 which had been reviewed by Finance and Resources Committee at its meeting on 22 June 2023 and recommended for approval. The Strategy reported on activity during the previous year and planned activity over the period ahead. Proposed activity centred on:

- ensuring compliance and best practice across the College estate
- phased re-decoration of areas to ensure upgrading of estate in line with a cyclical programme of works
- investment and improvement of key areas within the College including: library, reception, sports hall, linkway between College buildings, SLT office space
- sustainability agenda.

Governors' comments and questions were invited.

Q – Background to SLT office space requirement?

A – To ensure all members of SLT were located on the same corridor to facilitate close collaboration.

Discussion ensued on the proposed areas for investment and improvement across the College estate. The benefits of bringing all SLT members together physically within the building were acknowledged alongside the importance of SLT members being visible and approachable throughout the College.

Governors emphasised the importance of social value across all aspects of the College's tender and procurement activity and the opportunities for securing wider social, economic and environmental benefits.

Following due consideration, the Governing Body **approved** the Property Strategy 2023-28.

ACTION – Explore further how social value could be taken account of during procurement process

6. **RISK MANAGEMENT**

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

The Vice Principal (Finance, Resources & Systems) presented the updated Risk Register and Action Plan. It was confirmed that the SLT had reviewed the Register and the updated significant and contingent risks were highlighted. The revised

document had been considered by the Audit Committee at its meeting on 13 June 2022.

Discussion ensued on the format of the Risk Register and Action Plan and the potential to improve the presentation and accessibility of this key document. It was noted that the document had been revised following feedback from the internal audit of risk management that had taken place the previous year. It was agreed that alternative formats for the document would be explored.

The Governing Body **noted** the updated Risk Register and Action Plan.

ACTION – Explore optimal format for Risk Register and Action Plan

6.2 External Auditor’s Audit Strategy Memorandum for the year ended 31 July 2023 *(previously circulated)*

The Vice Principal (Finance, Resources & Systems) referred governors to the Audit Strategy Memorandum for the year ended 31 July 2023. The Memorandum had been prepared by the College’s external auditors, Murray Smith LLP, and set out a summary of their audit plan in respect of the external audit of the College.

The Governing Body **noted** the Audit Strategy Memorandum for the year ended 31 July 2023.

6.3 Internal Audit Plan 2023-24 *(previously circulated)*

The Vice Principal (Finance, Resources & Systems) presented the Internal Audit Plan for the coming year. The Plan had been prepared by the College’s internal auditors, Wylie Bisset, following consultation with the Vice Principal and Clerk and had been recommended for approval by the Audit Committee at its meeting on 13 June 2023. The Plan set out the proposed areas for internal audit during 2023-24 and it was reported that Audit Committee had requested that, where possible, the Internal Auditor conduct audits on-site rather than remotely.

The Governing Body **approved** the Internal Audit Plan 2023-24.

7. GOVERNANCE

7.1 Governance SAR and QIP *(previously circulated)*

The Chair of Search Committee presented an overview of how the Governance Self-Assessment Report (SAR) had been developed and explained why final approval of this document had been delayed. An update was provided on progress made to address actions set out in the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). Further progress reports would be provided against this plan until it was superseded by the recommendations arising from the external governance review scheduled for next year.

The Governing Body:

- **approved** the Governance SAR and QIP, and
- **noted** the Summer Term progress report set out in the QIP action log.

7.2 Link Governor Scheme *(previously circulated)*

The Chair of Search Committee presented this report which had been deferred from the March meeting of the full Governing Body. The benefits of extending the link governor scheme were highlighted and the following link areas were recommended for approval:

- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- Skills and Careers
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

These areas would be in addition to the already established Safeguarding and Prevent link governor role currently undertaken by Mick Martin. Governors were referred to the draft role descriptions for all link governor areas which were recommended for approval.

Expressions of interest had been invited for the vacant link governor roles and governors were appointed to each role as follows:

- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion – Graeme Slater
- Skills and Careers – Tracy Mawson
- SEND – Andrew Jones.

An update to the link governor section of the Governing Body Handbook would be required and all link governors were asked to ensure that they completed a standard visit pro forma whenever they visited the College as part of their link governor role.

The Governing Body:

- **approved** the link governor role descriptions and scheme information for implementation in the next academic year
- **approved** the appointment of named governors to each link governor role.

7.3 **External Governance Review 2023-24** *(previously circulated)*

The Chair of Search Committee referred governors to the report prepared by the Clerk setting out plans for the external governance review that must be scheduled next academic year. Discussion ensued on the scope and timing of the review and it was agreed that Spring Term 2024 was the optimum time to ensure a full report was ready for presentation to the Governing Body before the end of the academic year. A suitable provider would need to be selected and the Clerk updated governors on the likely scope and costs of the review.

Following discussion, the Governing Body:

- **approved** the commissioning of an external governance review to take place in Spring Term 2024
- **approved** the delegation of the day-to-day project management of this review to the Chair of Search Committee and Clerk with support from other Search Committee members as required.

ACTION – Commission external governance review for Spring 2024

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

The Chair of Search Committee updated the Governing Body on the latest developments with regard to Governing Body membership and succession planning.

Governing Body re-appointments

At its meeting on 22 May 2023, Search Committee had recommended the following re-appointments:

- Sue Jarvis (Co-opted Governor) – re-appointment for four-year term from 1 July 2023. Membership of Audit Committee to continue.
- Naheem Shafiq (Associate Member) – re-appointment for four-year term from 1 July 2023 and allocation to Finance and Resources Committee.

The Governing Body **approved** the re-appointment of Sue Jarvis and Naheem Shafiq.

Appointment of new Foundation Governors

Patrick Alcantara had applied to become a Foundation Governor and had been invited into College the previous week for a tour and interview. The interview panel had recommended his appointment. Background information on his relevant skills and experience was provided and it was determined that allocation to the Quality and Standards Committee would be most appropriate in the first instance. Archdiocesan approval of his application was awaited.

The Governing Body **approved** the appointment of Patrick Alcantara as Foundation Governor for a four year term and his assignment to the Quality and Standards Committee (subject to Archdiocesan final approval and completion of satisfactory checks).

Appointment of new Student Governor

Harrison Zysiak Tobin had been elected to the Student Governor role on the Student Council and his appointment had been brought to the full Governing Body for approval. Membership of the Quality and Standards Committee was also required.

The Governing Body **approved** the appointment of Harrison Zysiak Tobin as Student Governor with effect from 4 July 2023 to 3 July 2024 and his assignment to the Quality and Standards Committee (subject to completion of satisfactory checks).

The Chair extended the Governing Body's congratulations to Harrison on his appointment.

Chairs of Committees

Elections had taken place during recent meetings in order to secure the future chairing of key committees. It was reported that the Quality and Standards Committee had been inquorate when it met on 13 June 2023, but the unanimous view of members present was to re-appoint Mick Martin as Chair for a further two-year term commencing on 1 August 2023.

The Governing Body **approved** the appointment of Mick Martin as Chair of the Quality and Standards Committee for a two-year term from 1 August 2023.

ACTION – Clerk to arrange all standard checks, documentation and induction for newly appointed governors.

7.5 **Election of Chair of Governors** *(previously circulated)*

The Clerk reported that Helen Stevenson's term of office as Chair of Governors was due to end on 31 August 2023. Written notice had been sent to all governors inviting nominations for the role of Chair to serve from 1 September 2023 to 31 August 2025. One verbal nomination was submitted and accepted for Helen Stevenson to be re-appointed. There were no other nominations.

Governors expressed their gratitude to the Chair for her excellent leadership over the past two years and emphasised the importance of consistency and stability in the period ahead. A vote took place with a unanimous outcome in favour of Helen Stevenson being re-appointed as the Chair of the Governing Body.

The Governing Body **elected** Helen Stevenson to serve as Chair of the Governing Body for a period of two years from 1 September 2023 to 31 August 2025.

8. CONSENT AGENDA

It was noted that no questions had been raised in advance of the meeting with the Chair or 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)*

8.1 Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy 2023-24

8.2 Low Level Concerns Policy

The Chair of Quality and Standards Committee reported that Keeping Children Safe in Education had been published later than usual this year meaning that the draft College policies at items 8.1 and 8.2 had not been considered by the Committee when it met on 13 June 2023. Since then, the draft policies had been circulated to Committee members via email and feedback invited. No further revisions had been proposed.

8.3 Business Continuity Plan & IT Disaster Recovery Plan

8.4 Student Fee Charging Policy

8.5 Treasury Management Code of Practice

8.6 Financial Regulations

8.7 Tendering Policy

8.8 Data Protection Policy

8.9 Professional Development Policy

8.10 Complaints Procedure

8.11 Remuneration Policy for Senior Post Holders and the Clerk

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

ACTION – Policies for approval to be saved and shared separately to main board pack in future

Committee minutes and reports *(previously circulated)*

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

8.12 Search Committee draft minutes from 22 May 2023

The Chair of Search Committee emphasised the importance of maximising governor involvement in College SAR panels in the Autumn Term.

8.13 Audit Committee draft minutes from 13 June 2023

The Chair of Audit Committee referred governors to the draft minutes and highlighted the progress reported against the JISC cyber security action plan.

8.14 Quality and Standards Committee draft minutes from 13 June 2023

The Chair of Quality and Standards Committee reported that this meeting had been inquorate and therefore only informal discussion had taken place of all agenda items, with any decision making referred to the full Governing Body. Draft minutes of the inquorate meeting were not yet available and a brief verbal report was provided.

- 8.15 **Finance and Resources Committee draft minutes from 22 June 2023**
The Vice Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee provided a brief verbal report from this meeting as draft minutes were not yet available.

The Governing Body **noted** the committee minutes and verbal reports.

9. OTHER MATTERS

9.1 **Any other business**

None

9.2 **Date of next meeting**

Tuesday 10 October 2023 at 6pm.

There being no further Part 1 business to discuss the meeting concluded at 7.50pm.

Signed by the Chair: _____



On this day: _____ 10 October 2023 _____