



# Minutes of the Full Governing Body Meeting held on Tuesday 10 October 2023 at 6pm in the College Conference Room

**Present:** Patrick Alcantara (*Foundation Governor*) – attended via Teams  
Sarah Carroll (*Foundation Governor*)  
John Fogarty (*Foundation Governor*)  
Janet Gater (*Principal*)  
Susan Jarvis (*Co-opted Governor*)  
Andrew Jones (*Co-opted Governor*)  
Mick Martin (*Foundation Governor*)  
Tracy Mawson (*Co-opted Governor*)  
Andrew Rannard (*Foundation Governor*)  
Graeme Slater (*Foundation Governor*)  
Helen Stevenson (*Foundation Governor*) – Chair  
Harrison Zysiak Tobin (*Student Governor*)

**In attendance:** Michelle Williams (*Vice Principal, Finance, Resources & Systems*)  
Laura Forsyth (*Acting Vice Principal, Curriculum, Quality & Pastoral*)  
Ruth Potter (*Clerk to Governors*)

## PART 1

*The Chair of Governors welcomed new governors, Harrison Zysiak Tobin and Patrick Alcantara, and opened the meeting in prayer.*

### 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:

- Sam Johnstone – Staff Governor

The meeting was declared quorate.

#### 1.3 Items for inclusion 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 27 June 2023 (*previously circulated*)

The minutes of the Full Governing Body (FGB) meeting held on 27 June 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*)  
The Board noted the action log prepared by the Clerk.

## **2. STUDENT VOICE AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

### **2.1 Student Governor Report** (*previously circulated*)

The Student Governor presented his report and started by recording his thanks for the outgoing Student Council. He proceeded to highlight the following points:

- Student Council – elections would take place the following week to identify a new Lower Sixth representative on the Council.
- Events – a culture day was planned later this term, designed to help students explore and understand different cultures.
- Social media – the Council's use of social media had increased in order to extend reach across the student body.
- Student engagement – greater visibility of Student Council members across College and plans to host drop in session on Friday afternoons.
- Committee membership – Student Council members were active on College committees where relevant, for example, Equality and Diversity Committee.
- Wider engagement – some Student Council members were involved in the Merseyside Youth Commission and Youth Parliament, extending student influence beyond the College.

The Chair thanked the Student Governor for his comprehensive report and invited governors' comments and questions.

**Q** – Any progress with the traffic calming issue raised by last year's Student Council?

**A** – Currently trying to establish a car-pooling system to reduce traffic in and out of College. Some discussion regarding potential involvement of Police Community Support Officer.

**Q** – How will new Lower Sixth students be encouraged to engage with Student Council?

**A** – Student enrichment fair held the previous week with stall and information on Student Council and lots of interest and interaction with new students.

The Governing Body thanked the Student Governor for his report and **noted** the contents.

## **3. PRINCIPAL'S REPORTS**

### **3.1 Principal's Termly Report** (*previously circulated*)

The Acting Principal provided a summary of her detailed written report which had been shared with the Board. An overview of progress against key performance indicators (KPIs) was provided and latest data in relation to student numbers, destinations and retention shared. Key aspects within the report were highlighted as follows:

#### Leadership and management

The new Senior Leadership Team (SLT) structure had been in place since the start of term and was starting to bed in. Re-structure of Pastoral and General RE teams also noted.

### Student progress and outcomes – examination results 2023

The Principal reported on an excellent set of examination results and indicated that the full report had been considered in detail by the Quality and Standards Committee when it met on 19 September. The results marked an improvement on 2019 but, as anticipated, were not quite as high as 2022. The following points were highlighted:

- A Level results – exceeded national averages across all grade bands. In particular, it was noted that the number of U grades was significantly lower than in 2019.
- Appeals – a number of appeals had been submitted resulting in some successful re-grades.
- BTEC results – 100% pass rate but slight decline in top grades that reflected a wider, national trend.
- Level 3 value added score
- Six Dimensions progress analysis reports for specific cohorts, including gender, ethnic group, socio economic group, and learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LLDD) – it was noted that all cohorts performed above the sector average.
- Pass rates for: UAL Diploma, Art Foundation, Foundation Learning, GCSE English Language, GCSE Mathematics including functional skills.
- HE Year 0 results were still being processed following a period of re-sits and would be reported in due course.
- Six Dimensions student destinations analysis for the 2023 cohort indicated excellent value-added progression scores for students progressing to university and Sutton 30 institutions. This was particularly impressive given the local context of social and economic deprivation.
- Foundation Learning destinations data – positive progression for the majority of students into further education and supported internship.

Governors' questions were invited.

**Q** – Was there a particular push on re-marking and appeals this year compared to previous years?

**A** – Yes. Bigger push this year because of the significant positive impact this can have on individual students and their progression routes.

**Q** – How large a part did clearing play for our students' destinations?

**A** – No significant impact. Majority of our students achieved the destination of their choice.

### Quality improvement

The Principal provided an update on the exam results achieved by departments targeted for improvement last year. Significant improvements to results and pass rates had been secured. Improvement priorities for the current year would continue to centre on high volume subjects and under-performing subjects.

Ofsted inspection was anticipated during the year and the Principal reported on the preparations underway. Of particular note was the emphasis on middle leader development and the Principal reported that the College had made a significant investment in the Sixth Form College Association (SFCA) middle leader programme which would support the professional development of over 20 Curriculum Leaders and Heads of Department across College.

### Student recruitment 2023-24

The Principal gave an update on current recruitment against target. Under achievement against the 16-19 target had arisen mainly from two discrete areas: Foundation Learning and Art Foundation. Final student numbers would be confirmed following census date. Significant over recruitment of HE students on Year 0 programmes was reported with additional funding provided in-year for these students. Marketing and liaison activity was highlighted. The Principal indicated that monthly finance planning group meetings were taking place and a full financial update would be provided later in the meeting.

### Student welfare and wellbeing

A safeguarding refresher training session for governors had taken place prior to the meeting during which contextual safeguarding and wellbeing issues had been discussed. The full annual safeguarding report had been considered in detail during the Quality and Standards Committee meeting and had been shared with the Board. Of particular note was the increase in incidents during the previous year.

### Staffing update

The Principal referred governors to the staffing update contained within her report which provided information on newly appointed staff and the induction arrangements in place. Staff mental health and wellbeing remained a priority and governors were updated on the recent introduction of the Employee Assistance Programme which provided all staff with access to confidential support and advice on any personal or professional issues affecting their wellbeing.

### Student, staff and parent/carer voice

The Principal reported on the results of the student voice and parent/carer voice surveys which had been carried out during the 2022-23 academic year. An overview was provided and key improvement actions highlighted. The staff perceptions survey was also highlighted alongside SLT plans for securing ongoing feedback from staff. The full reports had been considered by the Quality and Standards Committee at its September meeting.

Governors' comments and questions were invited:

**Q** – What happens next with regard to previous under-performing departments; do these continue to access support?

**A** – Yes. Curriculum Leaders continue to support these departments.

**Q** – With regard to HE Year 0, has the fee increment been approved?

**A** – Yes. University of Liverpool approved the increase from September 2024.

**Q** – Plan to continue to recruit more HE students?

**A** – No. This year's increase in recruitment was not planned for and arose as a result of adjustments to HE entry criteria following publication of Level 3 results in August 2023. This impacted the conversion rate from application to enrolment.

**Q** – In terms of Ofsted preparation, what was required of governors?

**A** – Governor training would be arranged via the College Ofsted nominee. In the meantime, governor attendance at SAR panels during the Autumn Term was requested.

**Q** – Changes to student disciplinary process: were these in response to any significant concerns?

**A** – No. Wanted to involve parents earlier in the process as a collaborative approach more likely to be effective.

#### College mission and ethos in action

The Principal updated governors on the variety of events and activities linked to the College's mission and ethos, these included CAFOD Young Leaders, Carmel 'Stands with you' campaign, International Day of Peace, and Archdiocese Youth Group at the recent enrichment fair.

#### Student update

New 'Inspire Me' events had been organised this year providing students with access to inspirational alumni; the first event had been very successful with over 200 students in attendance and the opportunity for follow up discussion with the speaker if desired. The new Lower Sixth students had been settling into College life with the support of a new cohort of Carmel Ambassadors. Student success across a range of curriculum specific challenges and competitions was noted.

#### Future look

The Principal reported that the College Self-Assessment Review (SAR) process was due to commence with individual subject and departmental panels leading to the whole college SAR in early December. Ofsted and denomination inspections were awaited. Curriculum development and Level 3 reform preparation were also highlighted.

Discussion ensued on curriculum strategy and development, with governors' questions responded to by SLT.

The Chair thanked the Principal for her comprehensive report and the Board:

- **noted** the contents of the Principal's Termly Report
- **placed on record** their appreciation to all staff and students for an excellent set of examination results.

### **ACTION – Governor Ofsted training**

## **4. STRATEGIC ISSUES**

### **4.1 Academisation update** *(previously circulated)*

The Vice Principal (Finance, Resources & Systems) referred governors to her report which provided an update on progress with academisation. A number of meetings had taken place with the Department for Education (DfE) and Archdiocese of Liverpool, however there were certain key financial issues that needed to be resolved with the DfE in the first place. The Archdiocese's Catholic Multi-Academy Trust (CMAT) programme plan for a post-16 CMAT had been shared and it was noted progress was behind schedule. The Vice Principal advised that a governor working party would be formed once more activity and input was required.

Governors discussed the update and the impact on potential effective date for an academy structure. It was noted that a longer Board strategic planning session had been scheduled on the afternoon of 5 December 2023 at which this could be explored in more detail.

The Board **noted** the content of the report.

#### 4.2 **Local Skills Improvement Plan** *(previously circulated)*

The Principal drew governors' attention to the Liverpool City Region's Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP), the final version of which had been published in August 2023. The LSIP confirmed the local skills priorities for the region. It was reported that the Skills & Careers Link Governor had met with the Assistant Principal (Super Curriculum) and Ofsted Skills Nominee to discuss the College's provision. Progress against the priorities set out in the College's Accountability Statement 2023-24 would be reviewed and reported to governors later this term. Work would also commence on drafting the new Accountability Statement for 2024-25 to ensure that this was able to go through the appropriate approval process prior to submission to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) by 31 May 2024.

The Board **noted** the content of the report and LSIP.

### 5. **FINANCE AND ESTATES MANAGEMENT**

#### 5.1 **Financial Update – Interim Year End Accounts 2022-23** *(previously circulated)*

The Vice Principal (Finance, Resources & Systems) provided an overview of the finance update and interim year-end accounts for 2022-23. It was reported that the external auditors had advised of an accounting treatment adjustment that would be required to the accounting of the CIF roof project. Once made, this adjustment would impact the statement of income and expenditure and outturn. It was noted that the interim accounts had been considered in detail at the Finance and Resources Committee meeting on 21 September 2023.

The Chair reported back on discussions that had taken place at the recent Association of Catholic Sixth Form Colleges (ACVIC) conference regarding the treatment of balance sheet assets. It was anticipated that the new College Financial Handbook would clarify the position.

Questions and comments were invited from the Board.

**Q** – Impact on loan covenants if assets were to be removed from the balance sheet?

**A** – Yes, potentially significant implications.

The Board **noted** and **approved** the contents of the year-end financial update as at 31 July 2023.

#### 5.2 **Capital Projects Update: CIF roof repairs** *(previously circulated)*

The Vice Principal (Finance, Resources & Systems) presented an update report on the Condition Improvement Fund (CIF) roof repairs project. It was reported that all works had been completed within budget.

The Board thanked the Vice Principal for her update on this project and **noted** the contents of the report.

### 6. **RISK MANAGEMENT AND AUDIT**

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

The Vice Principal (Finance, Resources & Systems) presented the updated Risk Register and Action Plan which had been considered by the Audit Committee at its meeting on 26 September 2023. Significant and contingent risks were discussed alongside key mitigating actions.

The Board **noted** the updated Risk Register and associated action plan.

- 6.2 **JISC Cyber Security Action Plan – update report** *(previously circulated)*  
The Vice Principal (Finance, Resources & Systems) updated governors on progress against the JISC Cyber Security Action Plan which had first been reported to the Board in the Spring Term. Since then, Audit Committee had been monitoring progress against the actions and it was reported that current completion rate stood at 80% with full completion anticipated by Spring 2024. Audit Committee had agreed that a follow-up review would be commissioned from JISC in the Spring Term to provide further assurance in this critical area.

The Board **noted** the progress reported in the action plan.

- 6.3 **Audit Committee Annual Report 2022-23** *(previously circulated)*  
The Chair of the Audit Committee presented this annual report which Audit Committee members had considered at their meeting on 26 September 2023 and recommended to the Board for approval. He highlighted the work of the internal auditors throughout the year as well as the additional external assurance reports and internal reports provided by College Management. The Audit Committee had concluded that it was of the opinion that the College's assurance arrangements, framework of governance, risk management and control processes for the use of resources, solvency of the College and the safeguarding of assets were adequate and effective.

Governors' questions were invited on the contents of the report, following which the Board **approved** the Audit Committee Annual Report 2022-23.

## 7. **GOVERNANCE**

- 7.1 **Membership and Succession Planning** *(previously circulated)*  
The Chair and Clerk updated the Board on the recent resignation of Foundation Governor, Oliver Maddock. This resignation created a further Foundation Governor vacancy, taking the total number of vacancies to three. The Clerk confirmed that the vacancies were openly advertised on the College's website and invited all governors to promote this via their professional networks.

The Chair indicated that this resignation also created vacancies for the following specific roles:

- Vice Chair of Governing Body
- Chair of Search Committee
- Member of Audit Committee
- Member of Remuneration Committee.

The first of these vacant roles would be dealt with under the next agenda item. The Chair asked all governors to consider the remaining vacant roles and liaise with the Clerk should they be able to support in any way.

In the meantime, the Board wished to record a vote of thanks to Oliver Maddock who had served on the College's Governing Body for six years, first as a Student Governor and more recently as a Foundation Governor.

**ACTION – All governors to review vacant Committee roles and confirm whether they are able to offer support.**

- 7.2 **Election of Vice Chair of Governors** *(previously circulated)*  
Written notice had been sent to all governors inviting nominations for the role of Vice Chair to serve from 10 October 2023 to 9 October 2025. One verbal nomination was received and accepted for Mick Martin. There were no other nominations. A vote

took place with a unanimous outcome in favour of Mick Martin being elected as the Vice Chair of the Governing Body.

The Board **elected** Mick Martin to serve as Vice Chair of the Governing Body for a period of two years from 10 October 2023 to 9 October 2025.

### 7.3 **Governance QIP** *(previously circulated)*

The Clerk presented the Governance Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) action log which had been updated with progress as at Autumn Term 1. A number of improvement actions were flagged and progress to date reported. The following points were highlighted:

- Governing Body vacancies – initial positive progress had been made via the recruitment of an additional Foundation Governor in July 2023, however the recent resignation had adversely impacted the position. Discussion ensued on the challenges faced in recruiting practising Catholics with the requisite skills and experience. Vacancies were openly advertised on the College's website and all governors were invited to share the advertisement amongst their own professional networks.
- Governor involvement on SAR panels – all governors were asked to review the schedule and confirm availability to attend at least one panel.
- Link governor scheme – all newly appointed link governors had either completed their initial introductory meetings with relevant key staff or were due to meet them imminently.

The Clerk recommended that the Governance SAR and QIP from last year be rolled forward and reviewed by Search Committee when it met in November so that appropriate updates to improvement actions could be recommended based on most recent evidence. A full self-assessment process would not be required this year as an external governance review was due to take place. The key priority would be ensuring positive progress against the identified actions.

The Board **noted** the progress recorded in the action log.

### 7.4 **External Governance Review 2023-24** *(previously circulated)*

The Chair and Clerk updated governors on the arrangements for the external governance review. Following due consideration of three provider quotes for this service, the Association of Colleges (AoC) had been selected to conduct the review. Governors were updated on the identity and professional background of the anticipated consultant reviewer and final confirmation of their availability was awaited. An indicative timetable for the external review was shared and it was noted that the majority of the work would take place in the Spring Term leading up to a face-to-face observation of the Board meeting scheduled for 26 March 2024. An initial scoping meeting would be arranged with the Chair, Principal and Clerk.

The Board **approved** the appointment of the external reviewer and **noted** the indicative review timeline.

### 7.5 **Annual Review of Register of Interests** *(previously circulated)*

The Clerk referred members to the requirement to maintain a register of governors' interests which was available for inspection and published on the College website. Updated declarations of interests had been requested from all board members and the updated register of interests was presented to the Board.

One member provided a further verbal update to his declared interests and the Clerk agreed to update the register accordingly prior to publication.

**ACTION – Clerk to update register and arrange for publication on College website.**

## **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 Board that there remained an opportunity to raise any queries if required. None were raised.

**Policies and other documents** (*previously circulated*)

### **8.1 Exclusion Policy**

### **8.2 Safeguarding Annual Report**

### **8.3 Complaints Annual Report**

Further to the Safeguarding refresher training that had preceded the meeting, the Chair of the Quality and Standards Committee highlighted elements of the Safeguarding Annual Report and reported on the Committee meeting held on 19 September 2023.

The Board **approved** all 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.

### **8.4 Quality and Standards Committee notes of the informal meeting held on 13 June 2023**

### **8.5 Quality and Standards Committee draft minutes from 19 September 2023**

### **8.6 Finance and Resources Committee draft minutes from 21 September 2023**

### **8.7 Audit Committee meeting held on 26 September 2023**

The draft minutes were unavailable and would be uploaded to GovernorHub as soon as they were available.

The Board **noted** all committee minutes and reports.

## **9. OTHER MATTERS**

### **9.1 Any other business**

None

### **9.2 Date of next meeting**

Tuesday 5 December 2023

The Chair referred to plans for a board strategic session on the afternoon of 5 December starting at 1pm. Following the session, the formal board meeting would commence at 6pm.

There being no further Part 1 business to discuss the meeting concluded at 7.30pm.

Signed by the Chair: 

On this day: \_\_\_\_\_ 5 December 2023 \_\_\_\_\_