



Minutes of the Full Governing Body Meeting held on Monday 8 July 2024 at 6pm in the College Conference Room

Present:	Patrick Alcantara	Foundation Governor
	Mark Dawson	Parent Governor
	John Fogarty	Foundation Governor
	Brother Ben	Foundation Governor
	Janet Gater	Principal
	Susan Jarvis	Co-opted Governor
	Andrew Jones	Co-opted Governor
	Sam Johnstone	Staff Governor
	Mick Martin (Vice Chair)	Foundation Governor
	Andrew Rannard	Foundation Governor
	Graeme Slater	Foundation Governor
	Helen Stevenson	Foundation Governor (<i>via Teams</i>)

In attendance: Michelle Williams (*Vice Principal, Finance, Resources & Systems*)
Laura Forsyth (*Vice Principal, Curriculum, Quality & Pastoral*)
Ruth Potter (*Clerk to Governors*)
Ron Matthews (*External Governance Reviewer*) – *part of meeting*

PART 1

The Vice Chair of Governors chaired the meeting for practical reasons as the Chair of Governors was in attendance virtually. He welcomed new Foundation Governor, Brother Ben, and opened the meeting with the College 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 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

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 26 March 2024 (*previously circulated*)

The minutes of the Full Governing Body (FGB) meeting held on 26 March 2024 were (a) approved and the Vice 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. With regard to action 5, reference was made to the schools application data circulated prior to the meeting. It was noted that benchmark destinations data for the Liverpool City Region was not readily available.

2. EXTERNAL GOVERNANCE REVIEW

2.1 **External Governance Review Report** (*previously circulated*)

Ron Matthews delivered a presentation outlining the key findings from his external governance review. He began by outlining the process that had been followed in line with the Association of Colleges (AoC) external board review procedure. This had entailed a board survey, key document review, one-to-one discussions and meeting observations. The resultant report had been through a moderation process as determined by the AoC.

An overview was provided of the key strengths and areas for development found in each of the key areas of review (board composition, board structure, and board interaction). Areas for development had been included in a recommended action plan. In addition, the reviewer provided feedback on the three areas identified by the board for specific focus: effectiveness of committees, triangulation of information, and strategic planning and monitoring.

In terms of the overall assessment of board effectiveness, the reviewer concluded that there was strong evidence that the board was highly proficient and had a consistent, positive impact on college strategy, effectiveness and outcomes.

The Chair of Governors put on record the Governing Body's thanks to Ron Matthews for his work on the board review and his presentation of findings. She also thanked all board members for engaging in the review process and for their continued effort and commitment on behalf of the College.

Resolved:

- **That the External Governance Review report be received.**

3. STUDENT VOICE AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

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

The Student Council Tutor presented this annual report and highlighted the important work of the Student Council over the course of the year. Of particular note were:

- Culture Day – a new event this year which, moving forwards, would become a feature of the annual calendar
- Involvement of Student Council members in the Merseyside Youth Police Commission and Merseyside Youth Parliament
- Input into the Liverpool City Region transport plan
- Engagement in College committees and student focus groups
- Fundraising and charitable activity
- Leavers' celebration.

Elections for the new Student Council had taken place and meetings with newly elected members held to discuss arrangements and priorities for the next academic year. The Student Council Tutor put on record his thanks to the outgoing Student

Council for its hard work and dedication and, particularly, the key office holders of President, Vice Presidents and Student Governor.

On behalf of the Governing Body, the Chair reiterated the College's appreciation to members of the outgoing Student Council for their service.

Governors' comments and questions were invited:

Q – How integrated did non-Catholic students feel within College?

A – Very integrated: students from all faiths (or none) regularly got involved in a wide range of activities. An inclusive atmosphere was prevalent across College.

Resolved:

- **That the Student Council Annual Report be received.**

4. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

4.1 Principal's Termly Report (*previously circulated*)

The Principal referred governors to her report and highlighted the following points:

- Leadership and management – first complete year of the newly established Senior Leadership Team (SLT); completion of Sixth Form College Association (SFCA) Middle Leadership Programme.
- Student progress and outcomes – upwards trajectory evidenced through Common Assessment Point (CAP) data and projection for Alps value-added.
- Quality improvement – actions over the course of the year, including strategic priority given to high-volume departments and under-performing departments.
- Student recruitment and financial health – update on student recruitment for the new academic year and overview of extensive marketing and liaison activities. Continued 'good' financial health.
- Student welfare and wellbeing
- Staff update – staff changes for the new academic year
- Student, staff and parent/carer view – perception surveys had been completed and full reports would be presented to governors in the Autumn Term.
- College mission and ethos in action – numerous activities reported
- Student update – range of student activities and achievements included within the report, a particular highlight was the publication of *Have a Go Avocado!*, a book written and illustrated by Foundation Learning students.

The Governing Body extended its congratulations to all Foundation Learning students and staff on the publication of this useful book. The Vice Chair invited any further comments and questions from governors.

Q – Where does the demographic bulge in students for 2024 enrolment come from?

A – Range of areas, but noted an increase in potential applicants from South Liverpool.

Resolved:

- **That the Principal's Termly Report be received.**

5. STRATEGIC ISSUES

5.1 Academisation – update (*previously circulated*)

The Vice Principal (Finance, Resources & Systems) referred governors to her report and the appended document received from the Archdiocese of Liverpool. It was noted that since the last Governing Body meeting and following further consultation

with the Catholic Education Service (CE) and the Department for Education (DfE), the Archdiocese had confirmed that it did not support a post-16 Catholic Multi-Academy Trust (CMAT). It remained, however, the Archdiocese's strategy for all schools and colleges to eventually academise as part of a planned programme over a number of years. An update on progress with this strategy was provided.

Reference was made to the College's outstanding loan which remained a significant technical barrier to academisation due to HM Treasury Managing Public Money requirements post-reclassification. This had been discussed with DfE officials during the College's recent Annual Strategic Conversation.

As a result, the Vice Principal confirmed that academisation was not imminent for the College and therefore the strategic risk register had been adjusted accordingly to reduce this to a housekeeping risk. In the meantime, SLT would continue to explore options. Discussion ensued on the College's position within the Archdiocese and the potential risks and implications of continued delays with academisation.

Resolved:

- **That the academisation update report be noted.**

6. FINANCE AND ESTATES MANAGEMENT

6.1 Financial Update and Management Accounts – May 2024 *(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 was in sound financial health. All KPIs were RAG rated green apart from one (staff numbers) that was rated amber. It was reported that as a result of savings and efficiencies throughout the year, the planned year-end deficit had reduced by £100k.

It was noted that the management accounts to April 2024 had been considered by the Finance and Resources Committee at its meeting on 10 June 2024. The Chair of the Committee confirmed that its members had been tracking the progress of potential savings throughout the course of the year and it was positive to note that these had now been realised as actual savings against the planned deficit.

Resolved:

- **That the finance update and management accounts to May 2024 be noted.**
- **That the change to the planned deficit to 31 July 2024 be approved.**

6.2 Financial Forecast and Commentary 2024 to 2025-26 *(previously circulated)*

The Vice Principal (Finance, Resources & Systems) referred governors to the Financial Plan 2024 to 2026 which detailed the anticipated financial forecast of the College for the financial years ended 2024 to 2026.

The Vice Principal confirmed that at its meeting on 10 June 2024, 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:

- Forecast outturn position for 2023-24 including actuals to 31 March 2024 and forecast up to 31 July 2024.

- Forecast (and operating budget) for 2024-25 and forecast for 2025-26.
- Plan to return to surplus budget in 2024-25.
- Sensitivity analysis provided to demonstrate the potential impact of major changes in key assumptions.
- College financial health self-assessed as Good over the three-year period to July 2026.

Discussion ensued on the financial health of the College and the planned return to a surplus position next year after a challenging period. Of particular note was the sensitivity analysis which governors agreed was an important assessment of key risks to financial assumptions.

The Vice Chair of Governors thanked the Vice Principal for her comprehensive report.

Resolved:

- **That the financial forecast for the period 2024-25 and 2025-26 be approved**
- **That the forecast for 2024-25 be approved as the operating budget.**

6.3 ESFA College Financial Assessment Letter and Governors' Dashboard
(previously circulated)

The Vice Principal (Finance, Resources & Systems) referred to the ESFA letter dated 22 April 2024 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 2022-23. All governors were reminded that they could access the dashboard via the ESFA 'View Your Education Data' online portal.

Resolved:

- **That the ESFA letter and dashboard be noted.**

6.4 Property Strategy Review *(previously circulated)*

The Vice Principal (Finance, Resources & Systems) referred governors to the College's updated Property Strategy 2023-28 which had been reviewed by Finance and Resources Committee at its meeting on 10 June 2024 and recommended for approval. The Strategy reported on activity during the previous year and planned activity over the period ahead. Proposed activity centred on phased redecoration and investment in:

- library accommodation
- reception area
- reflection and reading space
- college flooring – West Park building
- college access systems – including turnstiles at the student entrance to improve security
- sustainability projects.

The Vice Principal reported that car park remodelling had been on the original activity plan for next year, however following completion of the capital equipment bid process a high level of demand had emerged across curriculum areas for upgrades to IT equipment. Therefore, the car park modelling had been put on hold to ensure that these curriculum capital requests could be addressed.

Following discussion, governors' comments and questions were invited.

Q – Turnstiles and building access: had consideration been given to biometrics as a more secure means of gaining entry rather than passes?

A – Had investigated this in the past and discounted it due to issues around data protection requirements and additional costs.

Resolved:

- **That the updated Property Strategy be approved.**

7. RISK MANAGEMENT AND AUDIT

7.1 Risk Management Action Plan *(previously circulated)*

The Vice Principal (Finance, Resources & Systems) presented the updated Risk Register and Action Plan. The revised document had been considered by the Audit Committee at its meeting on 11 June 2024. The updated significant and contingent risks were highlighted. It was noted that Level 3 policy reform had been upgraded to a significant risk given the potential impact of this uncertainty on the College's ability to plan effectively.

Resolved:

- **That the updated Risk Register be noted and approved.**

7.2 Internal Audit Plan 2024-25 *(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, WBG, following consultation with the Vice Principal and Clerk and had been recommended for approval by the Audit Committee at its meeting on 11 June 2024. The Plan set out the proposed areas for internal audit during 2024-25 and it was reported that in identifying these areas, full consideration had been given to the College's strategic risk register.

The areas identified were:

- budgetary and financial reporting (December 2024)
- equality, diversity and inclusion (December 2024)
- funding review (April 2025)
- staff recruitment and retention (April 2025)
- follow up review (April 2025).

The Vice Principal notified governors that since the Audit Committee meeting, the ESFA had selected the College for a provider funding audit which was due to commence imminently. As a result, depending on the outcome of this audit, an alternative area to 'funding review' may be identified for internal audit activity in April 2025.

Resolved:

- **That the Internal Audit Plan 2024-25 be noted and approved.**

7.3 External Auditor's Audit Strategy Memorandum for the year ended 31 July 2024 *(previously circulated)*

The Vice Principal (Finance, Resources & Systems) referred governors to the Audit Strategy Memorandum for the year ended 31 July 2024. 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.

Resolved:

- **That the External Audit Strategy Memorandum for the year ended 31 July 2024 be noted and approved.**

8. GOVERNANCE

8.1 Link Governor Scheme Annual Report *(previously circulated)*

The Clerk presented this report which had been compiled in consultation with link governors. The report provided an overview of all link governor activity during 2023-24 as well as a summary of the key issues and areas of discussion that had emerged from link governor meetings. Given the stated purpose of the link governor scheme, and the feedback from the external governance review, governors' comments were invited on the content of the report and overall effectiveness of the scheme.

Discussion ensued and the following points were agreed in relation to the operation of the scheme next year:

- identify strategic priorities and desired outcomes for each link governor at the start of the academic year
- schedule link governor termly visits to College so as to feed into relevant Committee and/or board meetings
- link governors to continue to record visit notes on standard template after each visit
- invite verbal link governor updates at each meeting so that salient points can be shared in a timely manner
- present written annual report to the board in the Summer Term, bringing together all findings and providing a general overview of activities throughout the year.

Verbal reports were provided from the SEND Link Governor and Skills & Careers Link Governor on their recent visits to College and appreciation put on record to all the staff and students involved. All link governors agreed that their termly visits provided valuable opportunities to gain a deeper understanding in their respective areas.

Resolved:

- **That the Link Governor Scheme Annual Report be received and noted.**

8.2 Membership and Succession Planning *(previously circulated)*

The Vice Chair referred governors to the Clerk's report and invited her to highlight the key points.

- Student Governor – Alyssa Snowden-Leak had been elected to this role in the recent Student Council elections and Search Committee had recommended her appointment for a one-year term of office running from 8 July 2024 to 7 July 2025.
- Student Governor engagement – Search Committee had considered more meaningful ways in which to engage the Student Governor and wider Student Council. The ensuing proposal was to remove the Student Governor as a member of the Quality and Standards Committee and instead conduct student focus groups aligned with link governor visits.
- Foundation Governor and Co-opted Governor vacancies – update provided on open advertisement of vacancies, expressions of interest received, and plans to engage with parents of new student cohort in September by re-advertisement of vacancies amongst College community.

Following the earlier presentation on the external governance review findings, discussion ensued on the maximum term of office for governors and the approach to re-appointment beyond two terms. The Clerk clarified that the College's Instrument of Government set out the provisions relating to term of office and confirmed that governors were eligible for reappointment at the end of their term of office. Whilst the Governing Body Recruitment and Succession Planning Policy – in line with good governance practice – anticipated a maximum term of office of eight years other than in exceptional circumstances, this rule did not apply to Foundation Governors given the express provision at clause 7(3) of the Instrument of Government. It was noted that all reappointments were considered by Search Committee in the context of an individual governor's skills, attendance and wider contribution.

Resolved:

- **That Alyssa Snowden-Leak be appointed as Student Governor for one year from 8 July 2024 to 7 July 2025**
- **That Quality & Standards Committee terms of reference be amended to remove the Student Governor from its membership**

ACTION

- **Clerk to arrange standard checks, documentation and induction for newly appointed governor**
- **Amend Quality & Standards Committee terms of reference to remove Student Governor from membership list**

8.3 Chair's Action – Value for Money Policy *(previously circulated)*

The Governing Body considered the Chair's decision to approve the Value for Money Policy which had been recommended for approval by the Finance and Resources Committee but had been omitted from the agenda at the previous Governing Body meeting.

Resolved:

- **That the Chair's Action be noted**

9. 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 Vice 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)*

- 9.1 **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**
- 9.2 **Low Level Concerns Policy**
- 9.3 **Special Educational Needs Policy**
- 9.4 **Strategies for Success Policy**
- 9.5 **Student Recruitment and Admissions Policy**
- 9.6 **Student Fee Charging Policy**
- 9.7 **Financial Regulations**
- 9.8 **Freedom of Information Policy**
- 9.9 **Data Protection Policy**
- 9.10 **Records Management Policy**
- 9.11 **Governing Body Handbook 2024-25**

Committee minutes and reports *(previously circulated)*

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

- 9.12 **Quality and Standards Committee draft minutes from 21 May 2024**
- 9.13 **Finance and Resources Committee draft minutes from 10 June 2024**
- 9.14 **Audit Committee draft minutes from 11 June 2024**
- 9.15 **Search Committee draft minutes from 18 June 2024**

Resolved:

- **That all policy documents be approved**
- **That all committee minutes and verbal reports be received and noted**

10. OTHER MATTERS

10.1 Any other business

None

10.2 Date of next meeting

Tuesday 1 October 2024 at 6pm.

Notice was given of a change to the December full governing body meeting which would now be held on Monday 9 December at 6pm. The Clerk would issue a revised meeting schedule to all members.

ACTION

- **Issue updated 2024-25 governance meeting schedule**

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

Signed by the Chair: _____


On this day: _____ 1 October 2024 _____