

CARDINAL NEWMAN COLLEGE

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

A meeting of the Governing Body was held at 4.00 p.m. on Wednesday 6 December 2017 at Conference Room at the College.

Members present:

Len Hampson, Vice Chair (F)
Nick Burnham, Principal
John Calvert (F)
Peter Halpin (F)
Father Luiz Ruscillo (F)
Adrian Metcalf (F)
Bill Noblett (F)
Helen Seechurn (F)
Barbara Smith
Peter Towers
Canon Scott Tanner (F)
Andrew Wygladala (F)

Officers in attendance:

Bob Deed, Clerk
Katie O'Reilly, Vice Principal Finance and Resources
Paul Vaughan, Deputy Principal

MINUTES

1 Opening prayer

The meeting commenced with a prayer.

2 Welcome, introductions and apologies

Apologies were received from Matthew Ainge, Richard Ainscough, Charu Ainscough and Bob Eastwood.

3 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 11 October 2017 were accepted as a correct record subject to the correction of the time on page 1 from 2pm to 4pm.

5 Matters arising from the minutes

There were no matters arising not dealt with elsewhere on the agenda.

6 Diocese of Lancaster Education Service Mission Focus

Father Luiz introduced the Mission Focus circulated by the Diocese to assist Roman Catholic schools and colleges to reflect on a common theme.

[Peter Towers joined the meeting]

Father Luiz asked the governors to reflect on what “parish” meant to students and highlighted the particular circumstances of the College as a post-16 institution. A governor noted the College drew from many parishes and three diocese as well as being a service to the community with students drawn from other faiths. The Principal drew the governors’ attention to the College’s contribution to and links with the local Catholic community.

Father Luiz noted the risk that schools and colleges could be distant. He suggested the College needed to think creatively about connecting to parishes. The governors noted multiple meeting points including the previous evening’s well-attended Advent Vigil. The participation in mass of both current and past students in local parishes was noted.

Father Luiz suggested that the termly Chaplaincy Report should be used as the basis of a newsletter to local parishes. This could include invitations to events.

The Governing Body requested that the Marketing Team prepare a newsletter to local parishes.

Principal

7 RE and Chaplaincy Report

The Principal informed governors that the Chaplain would present in person her report in the future. However, the Chaplain had to send her apologies as she was unwell.

Governors applauded the £15,000 of fundraising to charities.

The Vice Chair asked that the Chaplain and the Chaplaincy Team be thanked for all their hard work.

8 Governance – letter from the Chief Executive of the Education and Skills Funding Agency

The Vice Chair proposed that the letter from the out-going Chief Executive of the Education and Skills Funding Agency be noted and submitted to the Governance & Search Committee for a report-back after its detailed scrutiny. The Vice Chair asked governors to provide any feedback to the Clerk, particularly where governors are not members of the Governance & Search Committee.

Clerk

The Governing Body resolved to:

- **Note the letter from the outgoing Chief Executive of the ESFA.**
- **Agree that the March 2018 meeting of the Governing Body considers a report-back from the January meeting of the Governance & Search Committee.**

9 Principal’s report

The Principal thanked the governors’ contribution to the SAR panels. He noted the positive report on the College’s SAR process from the College’s critical friend.

The proposal of a compact on admissions with high schools had been welcomed from Corpus Christi which the Principal intended to roll-out to other Catholic partner schools. Such compacts allowed the College to respond flexibly to the schools.

The Principal warned governors that the Budget was a disappointment with the so-called Maths Premium unlikely to benefit high-performing colleges with large numbers of Maths enrolments.

10 Risk management: update report

Discussion

The Vice Principal – Finance & Resources introduced the paper and highlighted the new risk relating to possible future unfunded pay rises. The Vice Chair noted the risk that the College would continue to face cost pressures with physical limits to student number growth, if the College was unable to accommodate growth.

A governor expressed concern over the rise in the pay:income ratio. The Principal stressed the importance of growing to 4000 students with the associated scale economies.

11 Board assurance framework

The Clerk noted that the Governing Body paper was the document reviewed by the Audit Committee.

The Audit Committee Chair explained the discussion at the last Audit Committee about assurance reviews with the recommendation that there was an assurance review of the College's position in relation to the imminent General Data Protection Regulation. He noted the presentation on CEDAR which gave the Committee assurance on this area of activity. The Committee would be keeping assurance activity under review, including the letter from the out-going Chief Executive of the Education and Skills Funding Agency.

The Governing Body resolved to approve the Audit Committee's proposal that there should be an external assurance review of GDPR during 2017/18 with the Audit Committee meeting in March 2018 considering whether there was a need for further reviews.

Clerk

12 Audit Committee Annual Report

The Audit Committee Chair presented the Committee's Annual Report which outlined the Committee's work during the year. He drew particular attention to the assurance review on governance which included a positive conclusion and to the the Commercial and Procurement Manager's presentation on value-for-money activity.

The Governing Body accepted the Audit Committee Annual Report.

13 Financial statements

The Vice Chair reminded Governors that the papers on this item had been considered in detail by the Audit Committee and the Finance & Resources Committee.

The Vice Principal – Finance and Resources noted that the College was now deemed to have outstanding financial health in 2016/17 whereas it was expected that more colleges would be posting deficits and showing financial weakness.

The Vice Chair commented on the tightening of the surpluses over time. The Principal informed governors that the recent SLT Away Day focused on identifying savings. He referred to the demographic trough in 2018 before the College could grow substantially.

On the basis of the detailed scrutiny by and the recommendations from the Audit Committee Clerk and the Finance & Resources Committee, the Governing Body resolved to:

- **Approve for signing the draft College financial statements for 2016/17;**
- **Note the draft Newman Business Limited financial statements for 2016/17;**
- **Note the external auditors' Audit Completion Report; and**
- **Approve for signing the draft letters of representation from the Governing Body to the external auditors.**

14 College finance update

The Vice Principal – Finance and Resources presented the finance report including the October 2017 accounts. The College was forecasting a surplus of £465k – a £67k improvement against the budget in spite of expected increases in the pension provision adjustment. She also noted the healthy recruitment in Higher Education provision.

The Vice Chair asked about School Direct. The Principal explained that the College had experienced some restrictions on 2017 recruitment numbers.

The Vice Principal – Finance and Resources was asked about the costs incurred on the project. She said that the figures were still being calculated and reviewed by the Quantity Surveyor but the costs were expected to be within the budget and the additional £55k spend approved by the previous Governing Body meeting.

15 Property strategy update

The Vice Chair noted the earlier discussion of property strategy developments.

The Vice Principal outlined the progress in discussions with the Highways Department on remodeling roads with bus laybys on Queen Street.

The Vice Chair raised a concern about students and road safety. The staff governor and Principal noted that the College did work on road safety awareness with students. The Principal stressed the value of bus laybys on Queen Street in reducing risks.

16 Admissions Policy

The Principal introduced the draft revised Admissions Policy with particular reference to the College's Foundation Learning provision which was reliant upon local authority funding and commissioning.

A governor asked about appeals processes. The Principal assured governors that these were in place.

There was a discussion about the draft revised Admissions Policy in relation to mission and ethos. Governors noted that the policy showed the College would enroll Foundation Learners where the College was able to do so in the best interests of the students and the places were appropriately resourced.

The Vice Chair noted the risk the College may be obliged to put in new admission criteria if the College could not accommodate students. While this was not an immediate risk, this issue would need to be identified in sufficient time and properly considered by governors, including the Quality, Curriculum and Staffing Committee.

On the basis of the Quality, Curriculum and Staffing Committee's detailed review and recommendation to approve, the Governing Body resolved to approve the revised Admissions Policy.

17 Human Relationships and Sex Education Policy

The Principal introduced the draft new policy based on the Diocese's model. Father Luiz observed that College staff had attended the Diocese's training. He also noted that it the normal protocol was for a school's Human Relationships and Sex Education Policy to be reviewed by the Diocese before a governing body was asked to approve it.

The Principal suggested that the draft policy be withdrawn and sent to the Diocese. He further proposed that if the Diocese were content with the policy, it should be considered at the next Governing Body meeting without needing to pass through the Quality, Curriculum and Staffing Committee.

The Governing Body resolved to send the Human Relationships and Sex Education Policy to the Diocese for review so that it could be considered in the spring term by the Governing Body and, if necessary, the Quality, Curriculum and Staffing Committee.

18 Equality & Diversity report

The Principal noted that report showed good progress in implementing actions. The Clerk as Vice Principal leading on equality and diversity issues said that the Equality & Diversity Group had met recently and had another meeting planned for January to consider actions and targets.

19 Living Wage

Decision

As the College is committed to fair pay as an accredited Living Wage Employer, the Principal asked the Governing Body to approve the increase in the Living Wage. He noted that the College's commitment to the Living Wage was rooted in gospel values.

The Governing Body resolved to approve implementation of the Living Wage hourly rate of £8.75 from 1st November 2017.

20 Audit Committee minutes

The Audit Committee Chair noted the extensive discussions about the annual accounts and the property strategy.

The Governing Body resolved to accept the Audit Committee minutes.

21 Finance and Premises Committee minutes

The Vice Chair commented on the extensive discussions about the annual accounts and the property strategy at the meeting.

The Governing Body resolved to accept the Finance and Premises Committee minutes and agree the recommendations contained.

22 Quality, Curriculum and Staffing Committee minutes

The Chair of the Quality, Curriculum and Staffing Committee noted that the drafts of the revised Admissions Policy and the new Human Relationships and Sex Education Policy were key issues for the Committee.

The Clerk informed governors that a collection of papers relating to the College's growing Higher Education provision had been uploaded in a pack of "Other information of interest to governors". These documents had been discussed at the Committee when it considered the draft Annual Provider Review return.

The Governing Body resolved to accept the Quality, Curriculum and Staffing Committee minutes and agree the recommendations contained including the HR policies and HEFCE return.

23 Determination of any items to be treated as Confidential

The Governing Body agreed that the discussion of the capital funding application should be treated as Confidential.

24 Date and time of the next meeting

The next ordinary meeting of the Board of Governors is scheduled to be held at 4.00 p.m. on Wednesday 21 March 2018.