

CARDINAL NEWMAN COLLEGE

BOARD OF GOVERNORS – GOVERNANCE AND SEARCH COMMITTEE

A meeting of the above Committee was held at Wednesday 20 May 2020 on Microsoft Teams.

Members present:

Richard Ainscough, Chair (F)
Nick Burnham, Principal
Peter Halpin (F)
Len Hampson (F)
Adrian Metcalf (F)

Officers in attendance:

Bob Deed, Clerk

MINUTES

1. Opening prayer

The meeting commenced with a prayer.

2. Welcome, introductions and apologies

The Clerk noted apologies from Helen Seechurn.

3. Declarations of interest

There were no interests which required declaring.

4. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on Wednesday 29 January 2020 were accepted as a correct record and signed by the Chair (file copy entered).

5. Matters arising from the minutes

The Clerk said that he had intended to prepare a termly governors' training and development report. However, with the lockdown and site closure this had not been possible for the meeting.

6. Principal's update

The Principal updated the Committee on discussions with the ESFA on plans for re-opening. He also highlighted the success of the College's current online teaching and learning.

The Chair noted the support of staff and unions during these difficult times.

The Principal said that management were planning to open the site in early to mid-June once preparations were complete. The opening would allow face-to-face meetings for students for those who needed them such as vulnerable students and those struggling with their studies. The online teaching and learning programme would continue for the rest of the term.

The Chair stressed the importance of health and safety for students and staff. He said that the preparations were largely an operational matter and that he had confidence in SLT handling this. Nevertheless, governors had an important monitoring role.

A Committee member asked about one-to-one meetings over video. The Principal said that the College had robust safeguarding procedures which addressed risks. He also noted the value that students and parents put on the College's teaching and learning.

A Committee member asked about levels of engagement. The Principal said that over 90% of students were engaged with 40 causing concern. Governors asked about those without IT equipment. The Principal said action was being taken with kit and potentially dongles being provided.

The Chair noted that there may be opportunities from the success of the College's blended learning.

A governor highlighted the importance of governor involvement. The Clerk quoted the ESFA guidance which advised: "Consider establishing a coronavirus governance and leadership group which meets regularly to monitor the board approved plan and consider any required adjustments and/or circumstances that may have arisen that require an immediate policy response. The group's membership, role and relationship to the full board should be agreed by the board, along with regular reporting protocols."

The Principal said that some SLT members should participate. He also stressed that it needed to be strategic rather than operational.

The Deputy Chair noted the need for a link to the Health & Safety Committee.

The Committee agreed to recommend to the Full Governing Body to constitute a Coronavirus Working Group:

- **with delegated authority for the plan and risk assessment;**
- **with a remit to:**
 - **monitor the plan and risk assessment;**
 - **address the full range of risks arising from Coronavirus;**
 - **consider any required adjustments and/or circumstances that may have arisen that require an immediate policy response.**
- **composed of the membership of the Governance and Search Committee.**

The Deputy Chair asked about the delivery of Religious Education. The Principal said that an online package was being developed for RE for 2020/21. He noted that the RE teachers would be getting high-specification laptops along with other teaching staff.

The Chair noted the importance of the College as a community. The Principal said that this was a recognised issue being discussed by the SLT. He said there was discussion about options such as buddies for all new students.

A governor asked about the difficulties of practical lessons and assessment for certain subjects. The Principal noted that this was not an issue when the lockdown was imposed. He said that there would be issues in 2020/21. For example, there would be a particular challenges for subjects such as Sport and Art.

The Chair asked about the timescales for the risk assessment. The Principal said that work was progressing towards the early or mid-June opening. The Clerk confirmed that the Coronavirus Working Group would be convened in time.

A governor asked about staff who were vulnerable. The Principal said that over 30 staff were vulnerable and/or lived with vulnerable individuals. He stressed that when the site partially re-opened in June, staff would not be obliged to work on site.

The Principal noted that the ESFA was considering property options for the Maths School imminently with good progress being made. He noted that the Coronavirus had complicated matters.

The Principal noted that the Further Education Bill was likely to allow academisation of incorporated Roman Catholic sixth form colleges.

7. Risk register: termly update

The Clerk said that there had not been any material changes for the risks on which the Committee was the lead.

The Principal noted that the pandemic risk was being reviewed as a single risk was not now appropriate given the complex set of risks arising.

8. Governing Body and Committee membership

A governor observed that the Audit Committee only had four members. The Clerk suggested that it was good practice for audit committees to have a smaller membership than other committees. However, he agreed that this did make quoracy more challenging. It was noted that Charu Ainscough and Helen Seechurn would be ideal candidates for the Audit Committee.

The Committee agreed that the Chair of the Governing Body should discuss audit committee membership with suitable governors.

9. Calendar of meetings

The Clerk presented the draft calendar of meetings for 2020/21. He said that timings were broadly in line with the calendar for 2019/20 although the Audit Committee was later as a result of the Maths School having an August year-end and the external audit being planned for October rather than September.

The Committee agreed the calendar of meetings for 2020/21.

The Chair raised the issue of the SLT/Governors' Conference being re-arranged for 2020/21. He said that an autumn conference would be difficult for the SLT. The Chair suggested a conference in June 2021 would be timely given likely financial and strategic challenges in the aftermath of the Coronavirus crisis. A governor suggested that there would be major changes and factors affecting Higher Education - as a result of Coronavirus – and hence sixth form colleges.

The Chair suggested that the Governing Body which had been planned for the June SLT/Governors' Conference should be re-arranged for Wednesday 24 June. The Clerk suggested that there should be a Remuneration Committee on the same day.

The Committee agreed the Remuneration Committee should meet at 3pm and the full Governing Body at 4pm on Wednesday 24 June.

10. Determination of any items to be treated as Confidential

There were no items deemed to be Confidential.

11. Date and time of the next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee was to be on Wednesday 16 September at 2pm according to the agreed calendar of meetings for 2020/21.