

CARDINAL NEWMAN COLLEGE

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

A meeting of the Board of Governors of the College was held at 4.00 p.m. on Wednesday 24 June 2020 on Microsoft Teams.

Members present:

Richard Ainscough (F), Chair
Len Hampson (F), Vice Chair
Charu Ainscough
Nick Burnham, Principal
Amy Baines
Bernadette Davies (F)
Evelyn Davies
James Gilford
Peter Halpin (F)
Adrian Metcalf (F)
Bill Noble (F)
Helen Seechurn (F)
Barbara Smith
Peter Towers (F)
Andrew Wygladala (F)

Officers in attendance:

Vicky Bryant, VP – Teaching, Learning and Staffing
Bob Deed, Clerk
Katie O'Reilly, VP- Finance and Resources
Paul Vaughan – Deputy Principal

MINUTES

1 Opening prayer

The meeting commenced with a prayer.

2 Welcome, introductions and apologies

The Clerk noted that Canon Tanner and Bob Eastwood had sent his apologies.

The Chair said that Bob Eastwood's term of office had ended and he was having difficulty seeing his parish priest to sign the re-appointment forms.

The Chair welcomed Evelyn Davies and James Gilford to the meeting. He said that the Governing Body would welcome their contributions giving the student perspective on decisions.

3 Declarations of interest

There were no interests which required declaring.

4 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meetings held on 26 February 2020 and 20 May 2020 were approved as a true record.

5 Matters arising from the minutes

There were no matters arising which were not covered by agenda items.

6 Governance

The Chair presented the draft calendar of meetings for 2020/21. He noted that the only meeting date not included was the summer 2021 Governing Body meeting expected to be held at the SLT/Governors conference. He said that the Conference would be held in June 2021 if safe to do so.

The Vice Chair asked whether all the meetings would be on Microsoft Teams. The Chair said that he expected meetings to be on Teams at least until Christmas and probably later. He noted how well the Teams meetings were going and suggested that there may be a strong case for carrying on with Teams meetings for the committees after the end of the pandemic.

The Clerk noted that the Student Union had chosen Evelyn Davies and James Gilford as student governors.

The Governing Body formally confirmed the appointment of Evelyn Davies and James Gilford as Student Governors.

7 RE and Chaplaincy Report

The RE Link Governor introduced the RE and Chaplaincy Report previously considered by the Quality, Curriculum and Staffing Committee. He noted that RE and Chaplaincy had been busy before and after the lockdown. He highlighted the varied activities including the fundraising work.

The Principal said that he had met the Chaplain that date. He passed on the Chaplain's best wishes to the Governing Body.

The Principal noted the plans for online RE from September 2020 if weekly classes RE classes could not place.

8 Performance dashboard

The Principal presented the termly performance dashboard. The Principal noted that there was no staff satisfaction questionnaire this year. The budget had been redirected to staff support and counselling during the College site closure. He noted that there was no Value Added measure included due to the temporary Centre Assessed Grades (CAGS) this year.

The Principal noted the high level of retention as a side-effect of the lockdown. Very few students had left since March.

The Chair observed the excellent financial health shown on the dashboard.

9 Principal's report

The Principal described the arrangements for online teaching and learning. The student governor outlined how well the online learning had gone. She suggested that live lessons were the most engaging and effective model of online delivery. The Principal agreed and said that live lessons were the preferred form of delivery rather than talked-through presentations or other pre-recorded or pre-set work.

The Principal noted the work on CAGs but said that he was conscious of the uncertainty about how exam boards would moderate grades. He said that the College should challenge any unfairness. He noted that the College would have to put in place an appeals process.

A governor asked how staff had responded to the process for CAGs. The Principal said that the feedback from staff was positive and reflected an awareness of how it had been fair and rigorous.

A governor asked about destinations with the pandemic affecting employment and university destinations. The Principal said that he expected universities to show flexibility on grades and allocate spaces through clearing as they would have lower numbers of overseas students. He agreed that apprenticeship and other work opportunities might contract.

The Vice Principal noted that some students at the College were making late applications to universities because of reduced apprenticeship opportunities.

A governor asked about the College's support to students making Oxbridge applications. The Principal said that this support continued during the lockdown and site closure. He noted media coverage of the College's success with Oxbridge applications.

The Principal said that the College looked forward to being back with on-site learning in September. As a full-back the College had a well-developed hybrid model for distanced learning on-site with extensive online teaching and intensive curriculum support.

The Principal said that the College was concerned about distancing restrictions on public transport.

The Chair asked about how the College was able to promote its ethos and provide support when off-site. The Principal outlined the support being given to vulnerable students.

The Principal noted the risks around Coronavirus and the discussion of these at the Audit Committee. He noted the importance of maintaining the ethos and suggested that events like Newman Day could be held online if necessary.

The Principal said that the Assistant Principals Students had been working with pastoral leads at partner high schools to identify and support vulnerable student over the summer.

A governor asked about virtual open days next year. The Principal confirmed that this kind of online activity was already happening with the recent virtual Art Show. He also noted Newman Fest and Newman Beginnings for new students.

The Chair thanked the Principal for the report which showed how well the College had operated during challenging times.

The Principal noted the review of online learning by the Vice Principal. He said that this review would be shared with governors.

10 Risk management: update report

The Clerk as Vice Principal introduced the risk register. He noted that relatively few changes had been made. He did say that since the last meeting the pandemic risk had been re-worded in March to reflect the risks of significant staff and student absence and then more recently it had been re-framed in June to address infection risks associated with partial re-opening of the College site. He said that over the summer further Coronavirus-related risks would be added and the implications of the pandemic for existing risks reviewed.

The Chair outlined the probability and impact scoring used in the risk register for newer governors.

The Chair outlined the discussion at the Finance and Resources Committee around business continuity risks in the light of the College's ability to operate online. The importance of network infrastructure for online teaching and back office was noted. The Clerk said that plans were in hand for the network security review being commissioned by the Audit Committee.

The Principal noted the excellent work of the Networks team in the run-up to and during the College site closure. The Chair asked for the thanks of the Governing Body to be communicated to the Networks team.

11 College finance report

The Vice Principal highlighted

- The College is forecasting a year-end operating surplus of £109k compared with a budgeted surplus of £115k.
- The uncertainty with the outturn.
- The College is forecasting a year-end cash balance of £4.9m. Cashflow now assumes the capital expenditure and income of a successful Wave 2 T-Levels capital funding bid.

The Chair noted the high year-to-date operating surplus. The Principal said that this was in large part explained by the pension provision charges at year-end and the pay settlements being agreed late and implemented with backpay in June.

The staff governor asked if the exam boards were likely to refund colleges as they would have lower costs with CAGs. The Vice Principal said that savings were unlikely to materialise.

The Principal noted that sixth form college would not be receiving any of the government's £1 billion catch-up funding for schools.

12 Budget 2018/19 and financial forecast

The Vice Principal Finance and Resources introduced the paper. She noted:

- The 4.7% rise in the National Funding Rate and the other funding increase.
- The budget allowance of £80k for Coronavirus-related costs.
- The critical assumption of Teachers Pension Grant funding - if the Grant was not extended, the College will forego £161k in 2020/21 and £483k in 2021/22.

The Vice Principal noted the operating surpluses, healthy cash balances, loan covenant compliance and the outstanding financial health over the period of the plan.

A governor asked about the unfair treatment of sixth form colleges by the government. The Principal confirmed that the College and the rest of the sector were lobbying on these issues.

The Chair thanked the Vice Principal for her work on the budget and forecast in uncertain times.

The Governing Body approved the draft Budget 2020/21 and Financial Forecast 2021/22.

13 Property strategy

The Vice Principal Finance and Resources said that the Carr Street contract was due to be signed the next day. She noted that the contract had been negotiated to address the risks to Coronavirus. She said that mobilisation was imminent with site cabins are due to be delivered imminently.

The Vice Principal updated the meeting on the ESFA Condition Improvement Funding application. The outcome was expected in late March but is still outstanding.

The Principal thanked the Vice Principal for her hard work through the hard negotiations. The Vice Principal acknowledged the contribution of the Commercial and Procurement Manager.

The Vice Principal introduced the decision paper on the Wave 2 T Levels capital funding application. The project would refurbish and remodel the first floor and part of the ground floor of the St Mary's Building to provide state-of-the-art teaching accommodation for health and science courses. The existing space will be re-modelled to provide two new fully fitted laboratories, a specialist clinical simulation ward with advanced patient simulators, a science studio with demonstration bench, a general classroom and larger open learning areas. The existing subjects on the first floor of the St Mary's building would be relocated as part of a re-organisation of College accommodation once the new Carr Street project is completed in 2021.

The Vice Principal updated the meeting on the latest cost estimates.

The Governing Body approved on the recommendation of the Finance and Resources Committee:

- **Submission of a Wave 2 T Levels capital funding application through the Building and Facilities Improvement Grant (BFIG) process for the re-modelling and refurbishment of the St Mary's Building.**
- **Match funding allocation of £388K towards the expected works costs of £766k.**

The Vice Principal reminded governors of the past discussion of the St James project and the ESFA CIF application. She also noted the submission of the same project in a bid to Lancashire Enterprise Partnership. She said that the LEP bid had been unsuccessful and had probably forfeited points as it was not shovel-ready.

The Deputy Chair asked about the implications of the building's listed status. The Vice Principal said that the College had been liaising with Preston City Council's heritage advisors. There had been positive feedback on plans for a glass wrap-around for the building.

The Principal said that this project would give the College excellent facilities with art and design students and staff being co-located. The Chair noted the context of demographic growth in the area.

The Governing Body resolved to:

- **Indicate their support for the potential expansion of the St James' Building**
- **Confirm that a maximum capital contribution of £330k can be committed to the project if suitable grant funding opportunities for the scheme are successful.**
- **Confirm that a financial commitment of £45k can be made towards developing the project to submit and achieve full planning consent**
- **Delegate Authority to continue liaising with funders and progress with grant funding agreements in line with the submitted funding applications.**

The Chair of the Governing Body noted the context of the ESFA requirements for colleges to set-up a governance and leadership group for overseeing plans and risks associated with the Coronavirus. He said that the meeting had reviewed the plans and risks assessments for the partial re-opening. The Coronavirus Working Party has used its delegated authority to approve these plans.

The Governing Body noted Coronavirus Working Party minutes and the group's use of the authority delegated to it.

15 Audit Committee minutes

The Audit Committee Chair outlined the tendering process and the Audit Committee's discussions. He noted that Murray Smith has submitted a competitive tender and offered sector experience and expertise. He noted the references obtained and the interview held as part of the process. The Clerk noted that the firm would, if appointed, start work soon on the Teachers' Pension Scheme audit as part of the 2020/21 audit.

The Governing Body resolved to accept the Audit Committee minutes and approve the appointment of Murray Smith as the College's financial statements and regularity auditors.

16 Finance and Resources Committee minutes

The Chair noted the earlier discussions in relation to the accounts and the budget. He noted the discussion about moving deposits to secure better interest rates. He highlighted the discussion about the changes to the Financial Regulations, the fees policy, the Ethical College Policy and Health & Safety Policy. The Clerk said that the only substantive changes were the new sections on modern slavery in the Financial Regulations and the Ethical; College Policy.

The Governing Body resolved to accept the Finance and Resources Committee minutes including:

- **The delegation of authority to the Chair in relation to new deposits of excess funds.**
- **The waiver relating to the credit limit on individual procurement cards.**
- **The changes to the Financial Regulations and other policies.**

17 Governance & Search Committee minutes

The Chair outlined the discussion at the meeting. The Clerk explained the proposed process for appointing the parent governors.

The Chair mentioned the value of governor training and development. He highlighted the Sixth Form College Association webinars which are available both live and recorded. He also encouraged governors to inform Claire Eccles if they used the webinars or undertook any other training and development activities.

The Chair noted the discussion of the governor skills audit. The Clerk informed governors that they would shortly be receiving the weblink to the survey. He also noted that the register of interests forms would also be circulated.

The Governing Body resolved to accept the Governance & Search Committee minutes and approve the recommendations made.

18 Quality, Curriculum and Staffing Committee minutes

The Chair outlined the discussions at the Quality, Curriculum and Staffing Committee including minor changes to the set of HR and Safeguarding policies.

The Governing Body resolved to accept the Quality, Curriculum and Staffing Committee minutes and approve the recommendations made.

[The Senior Leadership Team, staff governors and student governors left the meeting.]

19 Remuneration Committee minutes

This discussion about the Remuneration Committee held before the meeting was conducted as Reserved business.

20 Determination of any items to be treated as Confidential

There were no items deemed confidential.

21 Date and time of the next meeting

The Clerk noted that the next meeting was scheduled for 7 October 2020.