

## CARDINAL NEWMAN COLLEGE

### BOARD OF GOVERNORS

A meeting of the Governing Body of the College was held at 4.00 p.m. on Wednesday 9 December 2020 on Microsoft Teams.

#### **Members present:**

Richard Ainscough (F), Chair  
Len Hampson (F), Vice Chair  
Charu Ainscough  
Amy Baines  
Nick Burnham  
Bernadette Davies (F)  
Evelyn Davies  
Sue Davies  
Bob Eastwood (F)  
Peter Halpin (F)  
Adrian Metcalf (F)  
Bill Noblett (F)  
Helen Seechurn (F)  
Barbara Smith  
Canon Scott Tanner (F) from item 1  
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, events and apologies**

The Chair welcomed Sue Davies to the meeting. The governors introduced themselves.

#### **3. Declarations of interest**

There were no interests which required declaring.

#### **4. Minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes of the meetings held on 7 October 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.

A governor asked about the expression of interest noted at the last meeting. The Chair said that the Clerk had been in touch with the potential candidate. The issue of the Foundation and Co-opted governor vacancies would be reviewed early in the new year.

The Vice Chair asked about his re-appointment as a Foundation governor and that of Adrian Metcalf. It was confirmed that the paperwork had been received back for Adrian Metcalf. The Clerk would ask for the papers to be sent or re-sent to the Vice Chair.

## **6. Student satisfaction survey**

The Deputy Principal presented on the twice-yearly SPOCS Student satisfaction survey. He said that the results were considered at subject-level and cross-College. He explained that the ten questions were based on Ofsted's Learner Voice with the results analysed and reflected upon to inform Course Reviews and Performance Management Reviews.

The Deputy Principal outlined how the survey had been changed in 2020/21. He highlighted the two additional questions about their experience of remote learning. He noted the 3400 responses out of the College population of over 3900.

The overall responses to question about their experience of subjects were positive: the average score was between agree and strongly agree for both Year 12 and Year 13. The scores for remote learning were close to those of classroom learning.

The Deputy Principal noted that staff were reflected on by staff. The results were seen in the round as part of the College's Quality Assurance processes.

The Deputy Principal outlined the cross-College responses. He noted the context of COVID-19 which had an impact on specific areas such as catering and social space.

The Chair thanked the Deputy Principal for the presentation. He asked how the results were followed-up. The Deputy Principal said that any issue with particular subjects would be addressed with training and support as necessary. The Principal noted how the survey was an element in the recent Course Reviews alongside other data on attendance, retention etc.

The Chair of the Quality, Curriculum and Staffing Committee said that his Committee would be keen to follow-up on the results.

The Principal noted the role of the Course Review Update in the early spring. He said that process would be fed into the Committee. He also invited governors to the Course Review Updates in the spring.

## **7. Governing Body membership: appointment of a Parent Governor (taken after 3)**

The Chair outlined the process for parent governor which attracted 11 applications with a wealth of experience. Two had withdrawn their applications. The remaining nine had been interviewed by the Principal and Clerk with one being short-listed for interview of the Chair.

The Chair recommended the appointment of Sue Davies, who had a son in Year 13 and one who was now at university after being a student. He noted Sue Davies was Head of Admissions at Lancaster University.

**Governing Body resolved to appoint Sue Davies as the Parent Governor.**

The Principal noted that another parent who expressed an interest was Claire Batson, a Deputy Head at Parklands High School. He said that she would be a suitable candidate in the future to be Governor. He suggested that Claire Batson could be appointed to the Quality, Curriculum and Staffing Committee as an external member given her experience of secondary education.

**Governing Body resolved that Clare Batson should be appointed as a non-governor member of the Quality, Curriculum & Staffing Committee subject to an interview with the Chair, Vice Chair and Chair of the Quality, Curriculum and Staffing Committee.**

## **8. SARS and calendar of events**

The Principal outlined the value of the recent Course Reviews. He explained that Senior leadership Team had decided that the usual Self-Assessment Review panels would not take place in autumn. Instead Course Review Updates would allow a check mid-year following the recent Course Reviews.

The Principal said that invites would be issued to governors to attend these meetings in the early spring.

The Clerk noted that the calendar of events would be re-issued.

## **9. RE and Chaplaincy Report**

The Link Governor for RE and Chaplaincy presented the Report. He highlighted the twice-weekly liturgy which he had really enjoyed personally. He applauded the range of activities led by Chaplaincy.

## **10. Termly performance dashboard**

The Principal outlined the key metrics on the dashboard. He noted the high levels of student attendance and retention. He also noted the healthy pay:income ratio and excellent performance on the human resources benchmarks.

#### **11. Principal's report**

The Principal said that he was concerned about the levels of self-isolation at the College and across the north west. He said that the remote learning was going well but he was disappointed with the government's plans for exams.

A governor asked about lobbying of government on regional inequalities in the impact of COVID-19 on schools and colleges. The Principal noted the differential impacts meant that sixth form colleges were not always speaking with one voice on the issue.

The Principal said that the Course Review for Religious Education was very positive. He noted the high levels of engagement in online RE lessons.

The Chair asked how the College identified students at risk of “drifting” during the circumstance of the pandemic. He said that teachers remained vigilant and noted the safeguards. He said that the College Assessment points (CAPS) were intended to scrutinise effort and performance. The CAPS results were analysed and followed-up.

The Principal said that Microsoft Teams was being used to invite parents to meetings with under-performing students. He said that this made engagement easier and it would continue after COVID-19.

The Principal said that data for particular groups of students was analysed such as Looked After Children and students taking GCSE re-sits.

A governor asked about the university value added chart in the Report. The Principal said that the value added data of sixth form colleges was analysed by Nick Allen of Peter Symonds College. He noted that it appeared that many Asian students were staying local rather than moving onto Sutton 30 universities. A governor agreed and suggested that there may be cultural factors affecting some female students.

The parent governor said that Lancaster University and other higher education institutions would be keen to promote applications by BAME students and help address aspirations.

A governor asked about Ofsted. The Principal said that he expected an Ofsted inspection next year due to elapse of time while the College was exempt by virtue of its Outstanding success and sustained performance.

The Principal updated the Governing Body on the closure of St Mary’s College Blackburn planned for July 2022.

The Chair of the Quality, Curriculum & Staffing Committee noted the national pressure for increased face-to-face learning. The Principal said that the College was not being coerced to change the blended learning model. He said that the College was concerned that the long face-to-face lessons adopted by some colleges were not conducive to effective teaching and learning. He said that the College was thinking about how to bring more students onto site as infection levels fall over the year.

## **12. Risk management: update report**

The Clerk as Vice Principal introduced the risk register. He highlighted the new risks including the three pandemic-related risks added over the summer. He noted the recent assurance review which had led to changes being made to the presentation and content of the risk register.

## **13. Audit Committee Annual Report**

The Chair of the Audit Committee presented the report required by Audit Code of Practice which summarised the work of the Committee. He highlighted the Committee’s conclusion that governance and internal control was strong.

#### **14. Financial statements**

The Chair noted that the financial statements and related documents had been considered by the Finance & Resources Committee and the Audit Committee with several governors attending the latter meeting as observers to hear the presentation by the external audit partner.

**The Governing Body resolved to approve the College Annual Report and Accounts on the recommendation of the Finance & Resources Committee and the Audit Committee.**

**The Governing Body resolved to approve the signing of the letter of written representations to the external auditors.**

The Chair observed that the Newman Business Limited financial statements would be considered by the subsidiary's board in the new year. The Vice Chair asked the Chair to explain the purpose of Newman Business Limited. He explained that the College's main trading activities were undertaken by the subsidiary so that taxable profits could be covenanted to the College as a charitable donation.

The Vice Principal confirmed that 18 colleges used the CEDAR software. The Principal noted the significant demands on the development team at the current time.

The parent governor asked about the College's team of developers. The Principal said that the College had grown its team of developers with this work supported by the sales of the software.

#### **15. College finance report**

The Vice Principal Finance & Resources said that the College was now forecasting an operating surplus of £49k – slightly up on the budgeted outturn.

The Vice Principal noted:

- Income up £356k due to T Levels funding, more High Needs learners and the ESFA Tuition Fund allocation, higher numbers of Higher Education and Catholic Teaching Alliance/School Direct students.
- Pay up £123k largely due to anticipated pay rises.
- Non-pay up £208k with significant costs arising as a result the pandemic such as enhanced cleaning and student laptops.

The Principal said that the College was determined to ensure that no student would be disadvantaged by the remote learning. He said that laptops had been acquired and, where necessary, data allowances purchased. The Principal explained the safeguards against misuse of IT equipment.

#### **16. Property strategy update**

The Vice Principal Finance & Resources said that the Carr Street project was going well although there was a slight delay. She said the options for parallel working were being explored. The Chair said that the building was looking brilliant with the design consistent with the St Francis building.

The Principal said that the St John Henry building was the working title of the building. The Chair welcomed this and suggested inviting the Bishop to open the building.

The Vice Principal Finance & Resources said that the new canopies were being well used by students.

The Vice Principal Finance & Resources said that the ESFA had informed the College that it had been successful with its T Level Capital Wave 2 bid. The exact allocation had not been confirmed but the Vice Principal was confident that the College would receive the full amount in the application. She also expected that there would be a Specialist Equipment Allowance to support these new T Levels.

## **17. Property strategy decision**

The Vice Principal Finance & Resources said that the planning application for the St James building was about to be submitted. She said that the current plans showed a 520 sqm two storey extension to the building to provide five art and design classrooms (four of which would be additional), an open learning area and small gallery space.

The Vice Principal Finance & Resources reminded the Governing Body of the background to the project. She said that the College had a strong case for the Condition Improvement Fund 2021/22 but noted that the successful projects for the CIF 2020/21 were largely smaller projects and not expansion-related.

The prospect of a sixth form expansion fund was noted as well as the potential for Lancashire Enterprise Partnership funding opportunities.

**The Governing Body resolved to approve:**

- **the submission of the CIF application for up to £2.5 million works, subject to the Chair's review of the final draft and analysis of the financial feasibility; and**
- **a College contribution of 10% and a further expenditure of £300k for related works.**

## **18. Admissions Policy**

The Principal introduced the paper and said that the only substantive change was in relation to the end of the Brexit transition period.

**The Governing Body resolved to approve the revised Admissions Policy on the recommendation of the Quality, Curriculum and Staffing Committee.**

## **19. Living Wage**

The Principal presented the paper and noted the College's commitment to being a Living Wage Employer. A governor asked about the staff benefiting from the College being a Living Wage Employer. The Principal said that the in-house cleaning team were the main beneficiaries.

**The Governing Body resolved to approve implementation of the Living Wage hourly rate of £9.50 from November 2020.**

## **20. Audit Committee minutes**

The Chair of the Audit Committee said that the key formalities had been dealt with. He noted the annual update on value-for-money which highlighted the work on procurement. He applauded the work of the Procurement Team.

The Audit Committee Chair notes that the assurance review of the risk register found that the overall approach was sound but made several useful recommendations including:

- Having an item at the end of Committee agendas to identify emerging and growing risks.
- Giving more focus on the more significant and strategic risks.

The Chair agreed but noted the value of considering the wider risk universe periodically.

**The Governing Body resolved to accept the Audit Committee minutes and approve the recommendations made.**

## **21. Finance and Resources Committee minutes**

The Chair as Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee noted that the main items of business from the Committee had already been dealt with.

**The Governing Body resolved to accept the Finance & Resources Committee minutes and approve the recommendations made.**

## **22. Quality, Curriculum and Staffing Committee minutes**

The Chair of the Quality, Curriculum and Staffing Committee highlighted the Committee's discussion of the Complaints Reports which showed a reduction in the number of complaints in 2019/20 compared with previous years.

A member of the Committee noted the excellent work on Equality and Diversity as exemplified by the E&D calendar.

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

## **23. Determination of any items to be treated as Confidential**

There were no items deemed confidential.

**24. Date and time of the next meeting**

The Clerk noted that the next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday 24 March 2021.

The student governor commented on the commitment of staff during the pandemic.

**The Governing Body asked that its thanks to staff was noted.**