

CARDINAL NEWMAN COLLEGE

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

A meeting of the Governing Body of the College was held at 4.00 p.m. on Wednesday 12 October 2022 on Microsoft Teams

Members present:

Richard Ainscough (F), Chair
Len Hampson (F), Vice Chair
Charu Ainscough
Amy Baines
Nick Burnham
Zaarah Chand-Suleman
Bernadette Davies (F)
Sue Davies
Bob Eastwood (F)
Peter Halpin (F)
Charlie Livesey-Shorrocks
Father Mark Harold (F)
Adrian Metcalf (F)
Bill Noblet (F)
Asma Stopyra
Andrew Wygladala (F)
Emma Watts

Officers in attendance:

Vicky Bryant, VP – Teaching, Learning and Staffing
Bob Deed, Clerk

Others in attendance:

Rob Peacock (up to item 6)

MINUTES

1. Opening prayer

The meeting commenced with a prayer.

2. Welcome, introductions and apologies

The Chair recorded apologies from Peter Towers. He said that it would have been Peter's last meeting as a Governor and asked for the Governing Body's thanks to be recorded.

The Chair noted that Paul Vaughan and Katie O'Reilly were unable to attend.

The Chair noted the circulation of the College events calendar and the SFCA governance webinar. He commented on how governors found the SFCA webinars very useful.

3. Declarations of interest

There were no interests which required declaring.

Len Hampson noted his role as Chair at the Rigby Education Trust. The Chair asked whether registered interests needed declaring. The Clerk advised that they only needed declaring if relevant to items under discussion or for decision.

4. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 17 June 2022 were approved.

5. Matters arising from the minutes

A governor asked about the draft Strategic Plan which was due to be presented at the meeting. The Clerk explained that the Strategic Plan was on the initial draft agenda for the meeting but was deferred until the December 2022 meeting due to workload including enrolment, course changes, year-end and external audit.

6. External Review of Governance

The external reviewer, Rob Peacock, said that the governors had a key a key role in the College's success. He said that governors worked well contributing and challenging management. He said that he had made no major recommendation.

The external reviewer stressed that he had focussed on effectiveness rather than compliance. He observed that the Sport England review focussed on compliance.

The external reviewer said that he would amend the final report to note the observation of meetings as well as the review of documents.

The external reviewer went through the main recommendations. In particular:

- He explained the inclusion of the recommendation of annual appointment of the Chair as reflecting the expectations of the National Governance Association. But he noted that annual appointment would still allow re-appointment.
- He noted the dual role of Bob Deed as the Clerk and as an SLT members but observed that the arrangement was reviewed annually by the Audit Committee. The Vice Chair said that this was also considered through the appraisal process.
- He highlighted the risks around cyber security and suggested that there might be Link Governor role for cyber security.
- He noted the challenges of ensuring that the governing bodies were ethnically diverse.
- He stressed the importance of induction of governors which was now made easier with the end of Covid restrictions.
- He suggested an annual review of governors' contributions – albeit light-touch - given the importance of governance to any organisation.
- He noted that the governance self-assessment process had evolved and continued to be refined.

[Rob Peacock left the meeting]

7. Presentation on exam results 2022

The Principal presented on the 2022 exam results. He highlighted that the College's strong A Level performance was better than both the 2022 national average and the last examined results in 2019. He compared the College's performance compared with other local colleges.

The Principal noted that the A Level value added showed that all cohorts – whether by GCSE points, gender or socio-economic background - showed strong value added at the College.

The Principal observed the similarly strong performance across BTECs.

The Principal explained the national picture with English and Maths GCSEs after Centre Assessed Grades in 2020 and Teacher Assessed Grades in 2021. He said that the College did expect the College's English and Maths GCSE results to be better than national averages.

The Principal briefed the Governing Body on the good performance in the College's first T Level results. He outlined the national issues with T Levels including those with assessment.

8. Governance

The Clerk highlighted the issues for decision arising from the paper on Governors and Committee membership.

The Clerk noted that Sue Davies's term as Parent Governor was ending. He said that the Governance & Search Committee had proposed that Sue Davies remain on the Quality, Curriculum & Staffing Committee as co-opted committee member for a four-year term given her valuable contribution to the Committee. He said that the Committee had also proposed that Clare Batson's co-opted Committee membership be placed on a four-year basis.

The Clerk noted that Bernadette Davies had expressed an interest in joining the Quality, Curriculum & Staffing and the Chair was proposing that the Committee's proposed membership be amended to reflect this.

The Chair noted that there would now be two Foundation Governor vacancies with Peter Tower's stepping down and Anne Russell withdrawing her application.

The Governing Body resolved to:

- **endorse the re-appointment of Peter Halpin as a Foundation Governor;**
- **agree the co-option of Sue Davies and Clare Batson on the Quality Curriculum & Staffing Committee for four-year terms;**
- **approve the Committee membership and Link Governors as proposed in the paper with the addition of Bernadette Davies joining the Quality Curriculum & Staffing Committee.**

The Clerk presented the report on governor attendance and the Governors' survey. He noted that governor attendance had slightly dipped in 2021/22 but remained high.

9. Letter from the FE Commissioner

The Chair outlined the Letter from the FE Commissioner which surveyed college sector developments.

The Chair asked how the College performed against the FE Commissioner benchmarks. The Clerk as Vice Principal Finance & Resources said that the College performed well against these measures. He noted that the Annual Report and Accounts would include a table showing these metrics.

10. Principal's update

The Principal noted the College's performance in exams league tables in 2022. He said that The Times A Level high grades league table showed the College as the second highest performing sixth form colleges in England.

The Principal shared a chart showing the sixth form college sector in terms of relative value added in 2022 with the College in fourth place nationally.

The Principal outlined the Year 13 key indicators in 2022 for subject retention, attendance and student satisfaction. He outlined the main issues with exams in 2023.

The Principal said that the College had grown again in 2022 but noted that Year 12 enrolment was lower than expectations based on demographics. He said that employment and apprenticeship opportunities may be affecting numbers staying on for Level 3 qualifications across the country.

The Principal updated the meeting on national discussions on the academisation of Roman Catholic sixth form colleges. He noted the strengths of the Catholic sixth form college sector. The Chair asked about timescales. The Principal said that there was a meeting planned for January 2022. He noted that the secondary legislation was not yet in place.

The Principal outlined the state of current national pay negotiations.

The Principal said that Maths School had opened successfully in temporary accommodation. He said that the enrolment was below expectation but better than other Maths Schools when they opened. He said that the College's own Maths department continued to thrive in terms of numbers and results.

11. Finance Update

The Clerk as Vice Principal Finance & Resources drew governors' attention to the College's Outstanding financial health and the analysis of the improvement in the 2021/22 outturn since the last termly Financial Report. He also highlighted the year-on-year analysis of income and expenditure with programme funding up by over £1million and staff costs up by 6% as a result of increased student numbers.

The Chair asked about cashflow forecasts and a governor asked about the cashflow implications of the proposed St James car park project. The Clerk as Vice Principal Finance & Resources said that the September management accounts would include a cashflow forecast. He said that cash and investments had reached £8million – reflecting both the outturn for last year and the profile of funding income. He said that cashflow forecasts included the proposed St James car park project and showed cash balances remained around or above £2million at their lowest points.

12. Property strategy update

The Principal outlined the summer works including:

- The Atrium project including a new T level Business dual purpose classroom, a large open learning area, a new meeting room and an interview room.
- The refurbishing of the Newman Theatre.
- The work preparing temporary accommodation for the Maths School.

The Principal noted that the Multi Use Games Area had been delayed with completion likely in the spring due to weather conditions.

13. Revised Estates Strategy

The Principal introduced the annually updated Estates Strategy. He noted the challenge of accommodating the current numbers, including the rooms required for Curriculum Plus, as well as the expected demographic growth.

A governor asked about recent media coverage of students and traffic in the local neighbourhood. The Principal outlined the issues and the extensive discussions with the local authority. He noted the plans for new bus laybys and other works which would ease the issues.

The Governing Body resolved to adopt the Summary Estates Strategy 2022.

14. St James car park project - decision paper

The Chair noted that the Governing Body was being asked to re-affirm its approval of the Capacity Fund application for the St James car park project and allow the delegation of authority in the event of the funding application being significantly different from the current expectation. He noted the increase in project costs since June 2022 following the work on the design and costings.

A governor asked about the procurement process and the risks associated with this. The Principal said that developments reflected the current state of construction industry with several firms who had worked with the College before being unable to take on more work.

The Chair asked about time penalties in the contract. The Principal said that he expected the contract to include this. He said that the College's Contracts and Projects manager would be closely monitoring and addressing any issues and delays.

A governor asked about cost certainty given the issues on the last Post 16 Capacity Fund application. The Clerk as Vice Principal Finance & Resources said that colleagues had reviewed the scoring of the previous application and discussed the issue with colleges who had successful projects. As a result the College had progressed work to give much greater cost certainty.

In response to a question, the Principal discussed the College's divergence from space norms and the practical implications.

A governor asked about energy costs. The Principal noted that the building would be operating at Net Zero with a substantial array of solar PV panels on the roof as well as other measures and technologies. The Chair noted the section on carbon reduction in the Estates Strategy.

The Clerk as Vice Principal Finance & Resources said that the College's energy costs in 2022/23 were relatively certain with a fix until the spring but he noted the risks around the energy costs for 2023/24.

The Governing Body resolved to:

- **Re-affirm its approval of a Post-16 Capacity Fund application for the proposed St James car park new build project but with:**
 - **costs of up to £5.1m**
 - **a College contribution of £1.1m.**
- **Re-affirm its approval of the other St James car park projects (which would only be progressed if the Post-16 Capacity Fund application was successful):**
 - **External hard and soft landscaping to car park (£250k)**
 - **St Bedes' entrance and related works (£210k)**
- **Delegate authority to the Finance & Resources Committee to consider the outline of the Capacity Fund application and to approve any changes to the project or the application required before the next Governing Body.**

15. Governance & Search Committee minutes

The Chair noted that the issues discussed had been covered and most of the decisions had already been adopted. The Chair noted the need for finding those with relevant skills for the Audit Committee. The Chair of the Audit Committee noted the relevance of cyber security and IT.

The Governing Body resolved to note the Governance & Search Committee minutes and adopt the recommendations of the Committee where not already adopted by the meeting.

16. Academisation Working party minutes

The Principal outlined the discussion at the meeting around the options and said that the College would be contacting the Diocese during the autumn term. He noted that the discussions at national level were a new development since the meeting.

17. Determination of any items to be treated as Confidential

There were no items deemed Confidential.

18. Date and time of the next meeting

The next meeting of the Board of Governors is scheduled to be held at 4.00 p.m. on Wednesday 7 December 2022.