



**St Brendan's Catholic Sixth Form College
Board of Governors**

OPEN – MINUTES

In Person and Virtual Meeting Held On: Wednesday 11 December 2024

D-Building Room D2/D3 at 16:00– 18:00 hrs

Governors Present: Svetlana Bajic-Raymond [Chair of Governors], Margaret Abazie-Humphrey, Gareth Beynon, Roger Bridgeman, Antonia Corrigan, James Creamer, Marian Curran [Principal], Sr Margaret Harlock MBE, Risha Hussain, Melaine Jonik, Mark O'Sullivan, Paul Ryan, Aaron Skinner, Peter Turner, Iain Turri [R], [15]

Apologies: Michelle Hazelwood, Doug Jennings [2]

Absent without Apology: None [0]

Attending: Nicholas Ogborne [Co-opted Committee Member – observing], Kevin Hunt [Co-opted Committee Member – observing] [R], Leanne Sowersby [Governance Professional], Alexandra Moruzzi [Vice Principal, Student Experience Progression], Stephen Clayson [Vice Principal, Curriculum, Quality and Innovation], Shane Blackshaw [Executive Director, Finance]

Quorum Present: 15/17 [includes required minimum of 4 Foundation Governors]

Note – [R] – remote attendance in MS Office Teams

Circulation: All Governors, Governance Professional, Principalship, & [College Website after signature if declared OPEN].

ITEM	ISSUES RAISED IN DISCUSSION	ACTION
1. Welcome	<p>1.1 Welcome: <i>Svetlana Bajic-Raymond</i> [Chair of Governors] opened the meeting with prayer. New governors were welcomed.</p> <p>1.2 Quorate: The meeting was declared quorate.</p>	
2. Declarations of Interest	<p>2.1 Declaration 2023/2024 Access/Equality/Safeguarding Declaration: There were no additional declarations. Noted that new governors will need to sign the declaration of interests and code of conduct.</p>	LS
3. Minutes Previous Meetings	<p>3.1 Previous Minutes: 15 October 2024</p> <p>The Minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting, to be signed by the Chair of Governors electronically. The open Minutes to be made available on the College website by the Governance Professional.</p>	
4. Matters Arising & Actions	<p>4.1 Actions Report: see actions report for details</p> <p><i>MAH left the meeting</i></p>	
5. Governors' Committee Reports	<p>5.1 Audit Committee: IT updated. Audit reports were reviewed from external and internal auditors. No concerns were reported and a good rating was reported. There were also some policy updates.</p> <p>5.2 Ethos Safeguarding Welfare Committee: AC noted that she has met with LHH re safeguarding and discussed ongoing issues.</p> <p>5.3 Resources Premises Human Resources Committee: JC updated – there were some policies</p> <p>5.4 Strategy, Search & Remuneration Committee: SBR updated, the majority of items will be covered on the agenda.</p> <p>5.5 Teaching Curriculum Quality Committee: MOS updated. The 2023-24 results were discussed and MOH talked through some of the key headlines. Curriculum reform was also discussed, and there was a briefing on the engineering curriculum. Governors also expressed concern to get feedback from staff around class sizes.</p>	
6. Diocesan Education Strategy	<p>6.1 Aquinas Partnership Report: MC gave an overview of the Aquinas Group currently. The group currently consists of a number of primary schools and a secondary school. The aim of the groups was to provide opportunities for support. Noted that a number of the primary schools have joined MATs and are no longer part of this group.</p> <p>6.2 Diocesan Education Strategy Report / MAT update: MC updated. The Diocese has currently paused the timeline for its schools to join MATs due to the change in funding from the government. There is still a discussion to have around the possibility of the college academizing,</p>	

	<p>and forming an empty MAT.</p> <p>Q – Is there a preference around this in college? It would likely not be sensible to join a MAT that consists only of primary schools other than the college. It is worth holding the conversation, at least partially due to the discrepancy in the ability to award pay rises between colleges that are academies and those that are not.</p> <p>Noted that the situation has been ongoing for some years, and things can change. Discussion around the strategies that can be involved in creating a MAT, the benefits and issues.</p> <p>6.3 Cabot Learning Federation Post-16 Free School: MC updated. A letter was shared that was sent to the ESFA around this. There is no additional news so far.</p> <p><i>KH joined the meeting</i></p>	
<p>7. Principal's Report</p>	<p>7.1 Student Enrolment 2024/2025: Current numbers – applications year to date 1866, total offers 875, total acceptances are at 542. Currently enrolled for funding purposes is 2218, which is positive both for next year's funding, and because we will qualify for in-year funding, although we have not yet confirmed the amount of this.</p> <p>Retention is currently high</p> <p>Q – Is there any update on the lower attendance for this year? This is due to strikes. This is impacting the most vulnerable cohorts the most. AM to provide figures to LS.</p> <p>7.2 Staffing / Recruitment: We have recruited 13 teachers and 11 support staff. MC talked through the posts that have been recruited to, which include a Head of RE. We had 21 applications for the Vice Principal role, 16 were long-listed, 2 dropped out and 5 were interviewed. MC thanked the governors who supported with the short-listing and interview process.</p> <p>Q – Is there any mitigation against agency working? We will have some agency staff, as we are struggling to recruit to some posts. There is a blended approach to covering the classes where we do not have a teacher in post, depending on the size of the team and the need. We are monitoring the impact.</p>	<p>LS</p>
<p>8. College Business</p>	<p>8.1 College Self-Assessment Report: SC gave a presentation. SC discussed the ratings for the various areas in the self-assessment, and the reasonings behind them. Governors are asked to agree the assessments or offer feedback.</p> <p>SBR shared concern raised by email around the lack of presence / visibility of student voice. SC noted that there is student voice that could be included.</p> <p>MC noted that, in the college, the SAR must be sent to Ofsted.</p> <p>Q – Could there be further reference to Religion, Philosophy and Ethics and the grounding in the Catholic Ethos? SC will go back through and ensure that this is clear.</p>	

	<p>Q – Will the development achieve Outstanding? That is the aspiration, and in some areas we are close. We really need to work on our progress. MC noted that there could be a move away from the single overall rating, towards, ‘best fit’ with ratings in different areas. <i>MAH joined the meeting</i></p> <p>Q – Has the issues of poor attendance been addressed? There are a number of areas of work towards supporting students, with attendance as well as other issues.</p> <p>Q – Why you chosen to push Behaviour and Attitudes to outstanding, when not all of the criteria are met – there is outstanding practice in all areas, why not push other areas to outstanding also? Discussion around this, particularly Leadership and Management.</p> <p>Propose to approve the overall assessment of 2 – Good for the Self-Assessment – Proposed SBR, seconded AC, approved unanimously.</p> <p>8.3 College Quality Improvement Plan: SC gave a presentation. Comments by email noted that the nature of the priorities at this stage it is difficult to measure the impact.</p> <p>Q – When can we see some sort of RAG rating on this document to see progress? SC has been through this at TCQ. SC will send the summary to LS to share.</p> <p>8.2 S48 Inspection Self-Assessment Report: MC talked through the key points of the report. MC noted that there is the possibility of the removal of the overall judgement from this framework too.</p> <p>Feeling expressed that there has been a real improvement. Student governors felt that RPE has improved in the past year and there have been some very positive discussions around what can be done to move forward.</p> <p>Discussion around the need to ensure that student voice is representative of the student body. There is significant student voice and MC has plans for more, including an evaluation of thought for the day.</p> <p>Q – How does the college participate in the Diocesan Education Mass? MC attended this year. We need to be proactive in order to play a larger role in the Mass, which will be more feasible now that we have a Chaplain in post.</p> <p>Propose to approve the overall assessment of 2 – Good for the S48 Self-Assessment – Proposed MC, seconded AC, approved unanimously.</p> <p>8.4 Outcome and Approval of Vice Principal Appointment: MC updated on the appointment. The proposal is to appoint David Beasley Proposed MC, seconded AC, approved unanimously</p>	SC
	Break	
9. College/ Financial Matters	9.1 Governors’ Audit Committee Annual Report: IT talked through the report. Confirmed that the opinion of the Audit Committee is that the systems of control and audit are in good order. The recommendation of the committee is to accept the annual accounts and report.	

9.2 Moore SW External Audit Report / Letter of Representation: SBI talked through the key points. There was one employment contract that had not been signed and systems have been tightened around this. There is also a need to do a full audit of non-computing fixed assets. There are no qualifications within the accounts, it was a clean audit and they are happy with our ongoing concern status.

9.3 Validera Internal Audit Report 2023-24: SBI talked through the key points. There were some very minor points, which SBI talked through.

9.4 Annual Report & Financial Statement – for adoption: SBI talked through the key points. This is the final draft, and follows a standard format. **Adoption proposed MC, seconded RB, approved with one abstention.**

Governors thanked SBI for the significant work on this.

9.5 Estate Development Report: SBI talked through the key points, achievements and next steps. SBI has been able to gather new evidence for the resubmission of the CIF bid for the security on site and will complete this this week.

We will continue to seek out external funding opportunities where possible. We are now beginning to develop, through the college estates strategy, a three-year strategy for estates spending.

Discussed the opening of the pavilion alongside the 3G pitch, now that we have the processes, staffing and kitchen in place. There has been limited take-up for changing, but there has been trial opening of the cafeteria which is bringing in additional revenue for minimal investment.

Q – What is the tension between the priorities of the estates building and IT? This is mostly been for this year. There is significant risk around the current IT infrastructure, but we cannot put all of our reserves into IT, as there are also buildings works that are needed. The key for this will be external funding and re-building reserves.

9.7 Current College Cash Flow Update and Management Accounts: SBI talked through the key points. Highlighted additional spend on staffing, due to the additional numbers on roll, which will be partially off-set by the in-year funding. There is also a delay in high-needs funding, which AMz is addressing. Predicted cash is still around 20 days by the end of the year.

The risks are still the cash days in hand, potential agency costs, the bus subsidy – we are still trying to get conformation of the financial position, but passenger umbers are very positive; and the NI increase from April and whether that will be funded.

SBI has been working with the FE Commissioner team on a new format for the management accounts, that governors can adopt if they wish. The new format should be clearer and easier to understand.

Q – What is the long term debt of £168K? This is the outstanding loan, which is being repaid. Discussion around the issue around the loan covenant and the operating surplus required.

	<p>Q – Do we plan to create a reserves policy? The essence of the policy is what we are doing for this, and following year’s budgets. We have set the budget with the aim of achieving a good financial rating.</p> <p><i>MAH left the meeting</i></p> <p>9.6 Staff Pay Awards 2024-25, for approval: MC talked through the key points. Negotiations for a pay award have stalled due to the industrial action.</p> <p>Principal’s Performance Management: SBR talked through the process and the discussion at the Strategy Committee. The Committee agreed to approve MC’s pay progression for this year. Targets for this year are aligned with the College Strategic Plan.</p> <p>LS to find three dates for finance committee meetings in 2025</p> <p>Senior Leadership Pay Progression – MC recommended pay progression for the Principalship team, proposed MOS, seconded, RB, approved unanimously.</p>	
<p>10. Board of Governors’ Operations</p>	<p>10.1 Governor Day 2024/2025: 14 February 2025 - The agenda for this was discussed about Strategy – Bill Watkins from SFCA about academisation and the difference between governors and trustees; induction for new governors; support for IT; sustainability; curriculum reform and quality monitoring; shared lunch with colleagues and governors; management accounts and finance; visiting classrooms. There will also be a briefing from the FE Commissioner lead who is supporting us around the finances, at another time.</p> <p>10.2 Governors’ Briefing next Meeting: To decide at Governor day.</p> <p>10.3 Committee Structure 2024-25: text SBR talked through the proposal to create a separate Finance committee in additional to the Resources Committee. Iain will chair the finance committee and remain a member of Resources, JC will remain Chair of Resources</p> <p>10.5 Governance Review Action Plan Update: SBR talked through – LS to circulate. A priority is the skills audit. SBR noted that there are a few governors who have not yet completed the National College training and asked people to follow this up.</p> <p>10.7 Governor Vacancies / Recruitment update: SBR talked through the new appointments. SBR proposed the appointment of NO and KH as co-opted committee members, seconded RB – approved unanimously</p> <p>There is another Foundation Governor who has been recently approved by the Diocese. She is currently in South Africa so will join virtually until we can decide whether she is able to join permanently. LS to follow up re access to St Brendan’s system and training.</p>	
<p>11. Policy Reviews</p>	<p>11.1 Risk Management Policy & Procedure: SBL talked through the key changes. Proposed SBR, seconded AC, Policy approved unanimously</p> <p>11.2 Student Bursary Policy: AMz talked through the key changes.</p>	

	Q – Is the bursary money ring-fenced and audited? Yes. Proposed MC, seconded AC, Policy approved unanimously.	
12. Risk Management	<p>12.1 Review of Board of Governors’ Risk Register Items: text MC talked through the updates to the register and highlighted the items relating particularly to the full board.</p> <p>SBI noted the risks with changed scores and talked through the reasons for these.</p> <p>Q – Risk 2 – middle leaders training evaluation for improvement – what is this? This is training, ‘on’ evaluation for improvement.</p>	
13. Any Other Business	13.1 None	
14. Date Next Meetings	<p>Board of Governors – Wednesday 26 March 2025 at 16:00</p> <p>Audit Committee – Wednesday 19 March 2025 at 16:00</p> <p>Ethos Safeguarding Welfare Committee – Wednesday 5 February 2025 at 16:00</p> <p>Resources Premises Human Resources Committee – Wednesday 5 March 2025 at 16:00</p> <p>Strategy, Search & Remuneration Committee – Wednesday 22 January 2025 at 16:00</p> <p>Teaching Curriculum Quality Committee – Wednesday 26 February 2025 at 16:00</p> <p>Governors’ Day 2024/2025 – Friday 14 February 2025</p> <p>Diocesan Education Mass 2024 – Thursday 26 June 2025</p>	
Minutes Agreed	<p>Minutes Approved</p> <p>Date Wednesday 26 March 2025</p> <p>Signature</p> <p>_____ Chair of Governors</p>	