



ST BRENDAN'S CATHOLIC SIXTH FORM COLLEGE
Governors' Resources Premises Human Resources Committee
MINUTES OF MEETING
Wednesday 5 March 2025
Office Team Virtual Meeting (16:00–18:00 hrs)

GOVERNORS/MEMBERS PRESENT: James Creamer [Chair], Svetlana Bajic-Raymond, , Michelle Hazelwood, Roger Bridgeman, Peter Turner [6]

APOLOGY: Marian Curran [Principal], Kevin Hunt [0]

ATTENDING: Shane Blackshaw [Executive Finance Director], Leanne Sowersby [Governance Professional], Luke Abrahams [Head of Human Resources]

Absent Without Apology: None [0]

CIRCULATION: All Governors, College website

QUORUM REQUIRED: 3/6 (Voting Committee members)

Circulation: All Governors, Clerk to Governors, Principalship, & [College Website after signature].

Committee Briefing – none this meeting

ITEM	ISSUES RAISED IN DISCUSSION	AGREED ACTION
1. Welcome	1.1 Welcome: JC welcomed everyone and opened the meeting with prayer. Apologies were accepted.	
2. Declarations of Interest	2.1 Declarations of Interest: Governors confirmed there had been no change.	
3. Minutes Previous Meeting	3.1 Minutes 20 November 2024: Date of the next meeting to be checked and corrected. Otherwise the Minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record.	
4. Actions Review & Matters Arising	<p>4.1 Actions Report: See Actions Report for updates – all actions completed.</p> <p>Q – Was there anything that needed to be done as a consequence of the management letter? There were two recommendations - We needed to do a full review of assets that are disposed of, and one other. The Business Continuity Plan will continue to be refined, but it was important to have something in place. In terms of its practical application, there are two things to note are the emergency response team (essentially the leadership team) and plan, and that the scenarios will be tested to refine the wording.</p> <p>4.2 Matters Arising: None</p>	
5. Committee Business	<p>5.1 Terms of Reference: Finance terms of reference will be approved on 2 April. IT advised that there will be some duplication with RPHR.</p> <p>Discussion around how the Audit committee fits in with these changes – the function and terms of reference of the Audit committee will not change.</p> <p>IT and LS to liaise re producing both committee’s terms of reference.</p>	IT/LS
6. Staff Matters	<p>6.1 Staff Retention Report 2024/2025: LA talked through the key points. LA noted that the November peak in leavers was due to removing records of casual workers who have not worked for us for some while. LA highlighted the effect of casual workers on the turnover rate.</p> <p>LA talked through the work that is being done to reduce out of hours work for teachers, and reduce pinch points for high demands, as well as additional benefits that have been introduced.</p> <p>Q – Is there any evidence these have been effective in retaining staff? Not for the car leasing, it is difficult to tell. LS talked through the benefits and issues with the scheme.</p>	

	<p>Q – Given there are more support staff than teachers, including a wider range of staff, is it worth breaking down the reports to see which areas of support staff may need more support? This could be done. Discussion around where there may be differences, there is some chat among staff, but it is important to know whether this is reflective of an actual issue. LA noted that there is high turnover among cleaning staff, partially due to the number of hours – 3 hours per day – and they are often looking for more hours. LA will note for this information to be broken down by staff group in future.</p> <p>Further discussion around the car-leasing scheme, and other options to make this more attractive, as well as the implications for a member of staff leaving the college during the period of the lease.</p> <p>Governors noted that exit interviews seem to be generally positive. LA noted that we have tried to learn from those that are less positive.</p> <p>6.2 Staff Demographics Report 2024/2025: LA talked through the key points.</p> <p>Q – How useful is this information, for the college and the meeting? It does form part of the Public Sector Equality Duty requirements, to demonstrate that we are an inclusive employer. The aim of the report is to give governors a sense of whether the college is reflective of the community that we serve, and whether there is work we can do to improve that. Recruitment is one of the reasons we collect this information.</p> <p>Q – Is the length of service comparable with other colleges, with a number with relatively short service? LA is not sure. Many of the roles do not offer opportunities for progression within the college, so many staff will gain experience and then progress outside of the college.</p> <p>Governors thanked LA for his work in supporting the college, as well as this committee.</p> <p>Discussion around the new Vice Principal starting in April, and the other changes in the leadership team.</p> <p>6.3 Staff Wellbeing Report 2024-2025: LA talked through the key points. Noted that there is an increase in absence and talked through some of the key issues.</p> <p>Absence is above sector average, and mental health continues to be the highest reason for absence. LA talked through the support in place to manage attendance.</p> <p>Discussion around the process for staff on long-term sickness absence and how this is managed, including where there is no prospect of a return to work.</p> <p>Q – what are the percentages around the absence reason by staff group, percentages of? It is the total of all days lost to that category of absence.</p> <p>Q – In terms of mental health absence, do we distinguish between work and non-work related issues? We often find it is a combination of issues, and that having an issue at home can mean that an issue in work can impact them in a way it might not otherwise. We do ask in return to work interviews if an issue is work</p>	LA
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related, but we do not record that. The discussion noted that the level of mental health related absence in teaching staff is higher than in support staff, while other areas of illness are evenly split.

6.4 Staff Engagement Report 2024/2025: JC noted some very positive responses, but that there were low levels of people feeling that leadership were supportive and that they were recognised for their achievements. LA talked through this – there is a feeling that the strikes in part have driven a feeling of, ‘us vs them’. We are working to understand the results. LA talked through some of the work that is done to recognise the work of staff and plans to improve this. There have been a number of conversations at Principalship around this.

Q – Have the staff made any suggestions around this? Primarily workload, with staff feeling that things are being added to their workload, but without things being removed. We are looking at promoting good practice in terms of managing workload. There is work around managing assessments to reduce the level of marking and this is staggered, for example.

Q – Is there a possibility that the results are skewed by those with particularly strong views? People are often more willing to complain than give compliments. Staff responses have traditionally below 30%, however this is 44% of staff, which prompts more of a need to act.

Q – Is the responses of full-time equivalent staff? 78 responses is not 44%? This does not include casual staff. Governors noted it would be useful to see how many staff this was sent to.

Also noted that there are three groups of staff – teaching staff, teaching management staff and support staff, with a variety in that group. It may be more useful to analyse some of these questions by group, rather than by the whole group.

Q – How frequent are the surveys? They have been every term, but we were getting fewer results, so they are now every long term, to encourage more responses.

Q – Do you feed back on the results and actions? Yes, we have done. Previously we have fed back what has come up and what we have tried to do as a result of them.

Q – is feedback from student used in the wellbeing of staff? Student feedback is collated, but is not normally seen by the HR team. This is fed back to all staff, so that they can understand student voice.

6.5 Staff Pay Round 2024-2025 Teacher Pay and Support Staff pay settlement: JC noted that the pay award was provisionally approved at the Governor day on 14 February, pending confirmation of funding figures from the government, which is still outstanding (due to be March). This paper is to summarise the current position.

	<p>Committee Briefing - Staff Wellbeing</p> <p>LA noted that we have been creating a health and wellbeing strategy to consolidate what we are doing and communicate effectively what is being done. The strategy was shared on screen and LA talked through the key elements of it.</p> <p>Q – What is the status of this? Currently in draft, and to be launched before LA leaves or soon after.</p> <p>Q – Have staff been involved in this? Yes, there have been meetings, and a forum with unions, so we have aimed to include the feedback from various sources.</p> <p>Q – Does stress = mental health, or are there other factors? Do the people who go the extra mile get additional recognition? Some people thrive in stressful situations, and different people will find different things stressful. Managers need to be aware and able to spot when people are struggling. Stress is a factor in mental health, but not the whole story.</p> <p>In terms of the extra mile, LA wants to look at a recognition scheme, so that these colleagues can be appropriately recognised.</p>	
<p>8. Policy & Strategy Review</p>	<p>8.3 College Complaint Resolution Policy and Procedure: LA talked through the policy and procedure, which replaces the college complaints policy. It aims to move away from solely complaining and more towards resolution, as well as addressing things early and informally where possible. This also includes expectations for complainants and provides support around unreasonable or vexatious complaints and behaviour from complainants. There is also support for the parties, including staff.</p> <p>Policy approved unanimously.</p> <p><i>LA left the meeting</i></p>	
<p>7. College Estate</p>	<p>7.1 Premises Report: SBk talked through the key points. Highlighted the positive news on utility costs. SBk also noted that there is some catching up to do on the estate due to the focus on the new sports facility and rebuilding cash reserves.</p> <p>SBk noted that we have had no unknown intruders since the security guards have been employed. Discussion around the role of the security guards. They do manage issues that come up, and once the majority of students have arrived, one of them is available to be inside the college to check lanyards, deal with minor incidents etc.</p> <p>MH noted that there are now more students needing temporary ID. SBk has advised that this has been discussed, and there is a proposal to introduce a fine system to hopefully reduce this. If the security bid is successful, it will be lanyard access only to access the site.</p>	

	<p>SBk talked through the WECA proposals, conversations are ongoing around this.</p> <p>Q – Are there security issues in the evenings and weekends? There are staff who are available to cover the commercial bookings. There are also casual staff covering the café when we have bookings, which is also generating income.</p> <p>Q – Is there a plan for replacing the boilers? They are on the wish list for capital investment. The more expensive projects are more likely to qualify for a CIF bid, but if this is not successful, it is best to plan for this.</p> <p>7.2 Health and Safety Accident Report: SBk talked through the report. SBk noted that it is possible that not all first aid calls are being recorded and this will be checked. SBK talked through the two RIDDOR incidents and the measures that have been put in place to address the incidents.</p> <p>There was a fire alarm activation yesterday linked to the ovens in the kitchen, which is being looked into.</p> <p>Q – Are fights between students recorded? Yes, these will be followed up with the students involved, and these are recorded in the student record. Student on student injury would not be RIDDOR reportable unless it was a falling on our part to manage a situation.</p> <p>7.3 College Estate Development Plans: Q – Is the procedure that aspirations would go to the Finance committee? Partly yes, though there is work to be done on the list. The aim is to ensure that governors have a full list of things that need to be done, then a process by which these things are prioritised, based on risk, the college requirements etc.</p> <p>There is a proposal for the property manager we have worked with to create an asset management plan for us, to help us create a comprehensive estates management plan to inform the budget process. Equally, the budget will govern the capital investment.</p> <p>The Finance committee will need to approve the ratios of how much is set aside for operation, capital investment and cash in hand.</p> <p>SBk noted that some of the figures are estimates, but it gives a sense of the scale of the plan. We will almost certainly take out finance leases for some items.</p>	
<p>8. Policy & Strategy Review</p>	<p>8.1 IT Strategy update: SBk talked through the elements of the strategy that have been completed, and planned work.</p> <p>8.2 IT Policies Change Log: This details the changes to the IT policies, with a bi-annual review date proposed.</p> <p>8.2a IT Acceptable Use Policy:</p> <p>8.2b IT Security Policy: Noted that this refers to Twitter, which should be updated to, 'X'</p> <p>8.2c BYOD Policy:</p>	

	<p>IT policies noted by the committee.</p> <p>8.4 Data Protection Policy: Noted approval should be by this committee, not Audit. Policy approved unanimously</p> <p>8.5 Document Retention Scheme: Noted by the committee</p>	
9. Risk Management	<p>9.1 Review of Board of Governors' Risk Register Items: Items that have been updated are shown in red. SBk noted that finance related risks have been left in the report this time, but proposed these be removed for the next meeting. This was agreed.</p> <p>Also noted that the format and accessibility of the register was discussed at the Finance Committee. SBk is developing a risk dashboard, which will show the key risks and changes, with an option to dive deeper into the full register if governors wish to.</p> <p>There was a discussion around the key – A was an addition, D was a deletion etc. However, this is not as useful as it could be, due to the number of reviews and SBk will consider how to make this manageable.</p> <p>Noted that the risk of overcrowding has increased with increasing numbers.</p> <p>Key points to note are cyber security and national funding not keeping pace with pay awards.</p> <p>9.2 Safeguarding/PREVENT – Committee Duty Review: Discussed under security arrangements for the college, as well as cyber security.</p>	
10. Report Items to Board of Governors	<p>10.1 Report Items to Board of Governors: Nothing specific</p> <p>10.2 Committee Briefing Next Meeting: Breakdown of support staff issues, needs etc – this can be covered on the agenda.</p>	
11. Any Other Business	11.1 None	
12. Next Meeting	Wednesday 18 June 2025 at 16:00 [Subject to confirmation]	
Minutes Agreed	<p>Minutes of Meeting agreed as true and accurate record</p> <p>Wednesday 18 June, Date 2025</p> <p>Signed: _____ Committee Chair</p>	