



**ST JOHN RIGBY COLLEGE
MEETING OF THE FULL GOVERNING BOARD
HELD AT 6PM ON THURSDAY 12TH OCTOBER 2023
AT THE COLLEGE**

MINUTES

The core functions of the corporation board include:

- *Preserving and developing the college's educational character*
- *Setting and communicating the college's strategy and goals*
- *Holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance and quality of the college, and for the performance of staff*
- *Exercising effective control to ensure that funds and assets are protected, the organisation remains solvent and legal obligations are met*

The meeting opened in prayer.

Pam Tate (Vice Chair) took the Chair.

Business commenced at 6.10pm.

Meeting closed at 7.58pm.

The meeting was quorate.

Meetings of the Board shall be quorate if the number of Governors present is at least 40% of the number appointed, including at least 4 Foundation Governors (Article 10 (4) refers).

Governors present:		
Pamela Catherall	Foundation Governor	Yes
Philip Collier	Foundation Governor	Yes
Mark Higgins	Foundation Governor	Yes
Pam Tate	Foundation Governor	Yes
Catherine Morgan	Foundation Governor	Yes
Mark Dumican	Foundation Governor	Apologies
Kate Watts	Staff Governor	Yes
Chris Chandler	Staff Governor	Yes
Peter Cudlip	Parent Governor	Virtually
Madison Bryan	Student Governor	Apologies
Anne White	Co-opted Governor	Yes
Peter McGhee	Principal	Yes
In Attendance:		
Paula Nolan	Vice Principal	Yes
Nicola Craven	Vice Principal	Yes
Jim Winstanley	Finance Manager	Yes
Sophie Gardiner	Clerk to the Governing Board (Wigan Governor Services)	Yes

Prior to the meeting, Governors had been invited to attend from 5.30pm when there had been a 15minute Safeguarding presentation from Paula Nolan and a short demonstration on the functions of Governor Hub by the Clerk. Notes from the Safeguarding briefing included at Appendix A.

Following the demonstration on Governor Hub, a discussion ensued regarding the availability of specific Governor training, including for Safeguarding.

The Principal reported that he had obtained a quote for training from Wigan Governor Services. The cost of training would be £1,300 for the remainder of the 2023/2024 academic year. This would include access to all training provided through Wigan Governor Services along with online learning (including for Safeguarding) through the National Governance Association (Learning Link platform).

Governors **agreed** to purchase the training, as outlined, and to review value for money at the end of the academic year.

ACTION 1: Pam Tate to confirm agreement with Wigan Governor Services.
ACTION 2: Clerk to circulate links via Governor Hub.

1. Apologies and consideration of consent to absence

Apologies had been **received** in advance of the meeting from Mark Dumican and Madison Bryan and were **accepted** by the Board.

2. Any other Urgent Business

The Principal informed the Board that Simon Dale had stepped down from the Board with immediate effect. Simon's term of office was due for renewal through the Archdiocese appointment process, but he had chosen to step aside now. The Board was aware that Simon's tenure as Chair had been a temporary position, pending the Governor vacancies and new Audit Committee Chair being identified.

The Board must now appoint a new Chair.

Pam Tate (Vice Chair) had previously been identified in December as the future successor and would Chair this meeting. However, the Board were asked to consider the implications of the resignation due to the impact on membership and chairing of the Finance and Resources Committee and Audit Committee.

In accordance with the college's Instrument and Articles, the Chair and Vice Chair must be a Foundation Governor. Governors were invited to put forward expressions of interest in the role. The Board would then vote on the nominations.

The Principal invited Pam Tate to outline some of the complications that had arisen from the resignation. These included:

- There were four vacancies for Foundation Governors.
- Simon Dale had stepped down as Chair of Governors and Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee, and from the role of Link Governor for SEND.
- The Audit Committee Chair (currently Pam Tate) must be a different person to the Chair of Governors.
- Membership of the Audit Committee and the Finance and Resources Committee must be completely separate.

- The College was due an Ofsted inspection imminently.
- The Review of Governance must be completed before July 2024.
- Academisation was under consideration.
- The Chair must be supported by the Board.
- Workload must be shared.

The Board considered the circumstances. Comments included:

- Until vacant posts were filled, there would be an increased workload of remaining Governors.
- Skill level required for certain roles; Recruitment to vacancies would strengthen the Board, increase capacity and lessen the burden placed on existing Governors.
- Compliance with Instrument and Articles and other corporate governance documents.
- Quoracy for Committee and Board meetings.
- Governors could be appointed to a second committee or move committees.
- Changes would be expected to be short term due to the academisation agenda.
- Requirement of appointment process to be followed, in particular for Foundation Governors.
- Recognition of personal commitment of Governors.
- Potential to request appointment of a Parish Priest to the Board.
- Recent skills audit had identified vulnerability in the area of finance skills.

The Board discussed options:

- 1) Pam Tate to be appointed Chair of the Board and appointment of two new sub-Committee Chairs
- 2) Pam Tate to be appointed Chair of the Board and Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee and another Governor to be appointed as Chair of Audit Committee
- 3) Pam Tate to remain Chair of Audit Committee and another Governor to be appointed as Finance and Resources Committee Chair and Chair of the Board.
- 4) A new Vice Chair would be appointed in any scenario that Pam was appointed as Chair of the Board.

Following a lengthy debate, no decision was made.

Pam Tate would continue as acting Chair until a Chair was formally appointed by the Board.

The Agenda continued.

Item 7.3 was addressed at this point in the meeting.

7.3 Board Membership – Appointments

The Board considered the re-appointment of Anne White (Co-opted Governor).

Proposed by – Philip Collier
Seconded by Mark Higgins

Resolved – Anne White re-appointed for a two-year term of office.

7.2 To approve items for 2023/2024 (Reported in July 2023)

- Board Standing Orders – item deferred.

ACTION 3: Clerk to agenda for next FGB.

- Committee related items for inclusion on the Annual Governance Action Plan – discussed under item 5.

3. Declaration of Interest

No declarations were made.

4. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 6th July 2023

Approved and Authorised for publication pending the following note of correction; Mark Dumican had been recorded as a Staff Governor, this should in fact be Foundation Governor.

Matters arising:

Pam Tate reported that the Audit Committee had reviewed the latest Risk Register (see item 5.3), a copy of which had been circulated to the Board. The Board were advised that two areas of risk had been updated:

- Student recruitment – the risk had reduced due to good recruitment numbers in the latest intake.
- The loss of key staff - the risk had increased due to the previous re-structure meaning that there was less room for cross cover when vacancies or absence arose.

High scoring risks remained unchanged, these included finance and staff absence, both of which would be addressed by the Finance and Resources Committee.

The Board were asked to note the content of the risk register and consider the risks assigned to the sub-committees at their future meetings this year.

5. Minutes of the Committee Meetings

5.1 Quality and Standards Committee – 21st September 2023

Committee Chair, Philip Collier, reported that actions from the Committee were noted within the minutes for Governors' information.

Areas to draw the Board's attention to included:

- Curriculum update – thanks to Nicola Craven for reports. A-Level outcomes had been very pleasing with high pass rates.
- Retention was 3% above national average.
- Significant improvements noted in areas that were being monitored.
- Geography – update on staff recruitment. Noted improvement in high grades but no improvement on progress data yet.
- Reviewed Value Added and ALPS scores. It was pleasing to see a much-improved enrichment offer.
- It had been a positive meeting and the Committee had noted that the pleasing recovery was testament to the hard work of staff over the previous twelve months.
- Recruitment to T levels had not been as high as expected. Eight students enrolled and this was not felt to be a viable group. Five students had chosen alternative courses at

SJR whilst three were assisted in enrolling onto the same T Level course at Wigan & Leigh College.

- Risk of year 13 returning students – positive picture.

The Committee recommended the Board approve the Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy 2023/2024 – **Approved**.

5.2 Finance and Resources Committee – 28th September 2023.

The meeting had been postponed due to quoracy issues therefore Governors had received a revised budget forecast and associated papers prior to this meeting.

Jim Winstanley confirmed that the budget had been approved in July 2023 and drew the Board's attention to the commentary notes regarding changes.

The salient points to note included:

- Just over £100,000 surplus budgeted for but there was a small loss of £4,400. Finance was a fast-moving scenario.
- Recruitment would have a positive impact on next years' budget.
- Teaching capacity – an additional 0.9FTE added to teaching posts.
- Pay award – budgeted for 2.0%. Independent pay review recommended 6.5% for teaching and support staff. The Government provided some help for funding.
- Income for High Needs had significantly reduced.
- The Audit Committee had recommended *Wylie and Bisset* be appointed the Internal Auditors.
- Penetration testing resulted in significant costs.
- Staffing was a key risk. The college must provide the ESFA and External Auditors with a balanced budget and demonstrate that the college remained a going concern. The reduction in High Needs funding would take place within this financial year and work was already underway to reduce associated staffing costs.

Part of this discussion was recorded in confidential minutes.

5.3 Audit Committee - 5th October 2023.

Committee Chair, Pam Tate, drew the Boards' attention to the Committee minutes. The Audit Committee had requested that Penetration testing be carried out. The action plan was reviewed. The cost implications were £8,000 for support to address high and critical risks and £113,000 for network switches.

The Committee reviewed the Health and Safety and Fire Risk reports. Ten actions had been completed with the remaining 12 to be completed by December 2023.

The Committee had considered the inclusion of Governance items in the Risk Register.

Finance update – Teacher pension audit signed off; Pension categorised as an asset rather than liability (as per advice from External Auditors, to not show this on the balance sheet).

The draft Annual report from the Audit Committee to the Full Governing Board had been circulated to the Audit Committee and would be finalised pending the outcome of the audit. The Committee was pleased to report 100% Governors attendance at meetings.

Annual work plan – the Committee had agreed to reinstate the internal function. Following a tender process, the Audit Committee recommended *Wylie and Bisset* to be appointed. The External Auditors had worked with both companies who had submitted tenders, both were reputable companies.

The Committee would consider the Accommodation strategy at future meetings and it was agreed that the Committee would receive an annual report from the internal health and safety committee.

The Audit Committee noted that previously highlighted information had not been updated on the college website. Update; This was followed up after the meeting and the Principal confirmed that updates to the Governance section on the college website, had now been completed.

6. COLLEGE ITEMS

6.1 A Review of the 2022/2023 College Development Plan

The Principal drew the Board's attention to the completion of many of the actions within the plan and confirmed that any outstanding actions (areas in red and amber) would be carried forward. Many of these were already underway.

ACTION 4: Agenda item for next FGB.

6.2 Principal's Report

The Principal invited questions and comments.

There were many reasons to celebrate, including positive exam results and recruitment. Destinations – the college was above the national average for students securing their first choice university placement.

Work continued with the ESFA, Archdiocese and DfE regarding academisation.

There had been a lot of investment in building, through refurbishments.

Q Could the report also be RAG rated? A lot of time had clearly been put into the report and Governors were very grateful, but would it be beneficial to consider reporting by exception?

A The Principal agreed to review the report structure.

Q Regarding Religious Studies, the report highlighted the fact that there was one member of staff who was Head of Department – was only having one member of the team considered to be a risk?

A There was only one member of staff delivering the A Level Religious Studies programme, but this was not considered to be a risk as they were supported by a small team of teachers who delivered the Values for Living core programme. They were also managed by the Head of RE.

6.3 Liverpool Archdiocese – transfer of ownership

Transfer of the ownership of the school and operations of the Trust.

The Board noted the information provided regarding the change to the legal structure of the archdiocese and the transfer from the Trustees of the Liverpool Roman Catholic Archdiocesan Trust Incorporated to the Archdiocese of Liverpool, a CIO), effective from 1 January 2023 and the new charity number of 1199714.

It was acknowledged that no change was needed to the Instrument of Government in this respect.

7. GOVERNANCE ITEMS

7.1 Annual Declarations and Confirmations

- **Declaration of Pecuniary & Personal Interests**
- **Governor Confirmation of Eligibility** -New for 2023 from the Archdiocese
- **Governor Code of Conduct** -New for 2023 from the Archdiocese
- **Safeguarding** – Governors **confirmed that they had read ALL** of the updated Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2023)

Paper copies of relevant forms were distributed and collected at the meeting.

The Board received the new code of conduct circulated from Liverpool Archdiocese.

Governors were asked to send an email to 'Nellie' to confirm that they had read KCSIE 2023.

7.4 Governance Review

The Governance Review must be completed before July 2024. The Principal stated that it had been challenging to secure a reviewer. David Wright (National Leader of Governance) had previously worked with the Board at the start of the review process but other individuals or companies could be approached.

Work towards this had seen the completion and adoption of the Committee Terms of Reference. The Standing Orders were yet to be finalised (item 7.2).

Pam Tate recalled that a self-assessment questionnaire was completed and discussed at the last strategic conference. It had been intended to design a Governance action plan from the responses, but progress had stalled since.

The Principal proposed re-circulation of the self-assessment and that a working party be established to review this, prior to the next full Board meeting.

ACTION 5: Circulation of self-assessment
ACTION 6: Agenda item for next FGB

7.5 Academisation

The Board noted the previously circulated report.

The Principal explained that the report had been written for a meeting with the DfE and ESFA, which the college had been invited to. Leaders were asked to explain the college's plans for academisation. It had been a positive meeting and reassured leaders that academisation was a possible formal collaborative route, with more detailed extensive work needed once the DfE and ESFA approval had been given.

The Chair invited questions.

Q Did Carmel College now have a Principal in post?

A A two-year temporary appointment had been made.

STANDING ITEMS

8. Urgent Items

The Principal reported that of the nine applications received for the post of Deputy Principal, four had been ineligible (they were not practising Catholics) and five did not demonstrate the relevant experience required.

Candidates had been asked if the college could remain in contact with them when the role was re-advertised. There may be a short-term internal solution or Governors could consider removing the criteria to be a practicing Catholic.

Q What would the Principal prefer?

A This was unclear at present.

Comments - Could the practicing Catholic be 'desirable' rather than 'essential' criteria of the post?

The Principal insisted that the Board return to the earlier discussion and the need to appoint a Chair.

It was important to note that, at this time, staff were not aware of the resignation. It was important to staff to know who the Chair was.

To give Governors more time to consider the information they had been presented with at this meeting, there was a proposal to convene an extra ordinary meeting of the Full Governing Board. This was considered and agreed:

The meeting would be held via Zoom at **6pm on Tuesday 7th November 2023.**

Governors were asked to consider the points outlined in the previous discussion and to consider nominating themselves or a colleague for the positions of Chair, Vice Chair, Chair of Finance & Resources Committee and Chair of Audit Committee, along with their own ability and willingness to contribute to the significant projects facing the Board in the next six months. The meeting would need to appoint Governors to these positions.

9. Confidentiality

Part of item 5.2 was deemed confidential and reported in confidential minutes.

10. Date and time of next meetings:

Extra FGB – Tuesday 7th November at 6pm.

Tuesday 19th December 2023

Thursday 26th March 2024

Thursday 4th July 2024

Pam Tate thanked all in attendance for their contributions. The meeting closed at 7.58pm.

MEETING ACTION POINTS

Action	Item	Action	For Who	By when
1.	Pre-business	Confirmation of purchase of Governor training	PT	Post meeting
2.	Pre-business	Circulation of links to training	Clerk	Post meeting
3.	7.2	Board Standing Orders	Clerk	Agenda item for next FGB
4.	6.1	College Development Plan	Clerk	Agenda item for next FGB
5.	7.4	Circulation of self-assessment	Principal	Post meeting
6.	7.4	Review of self-assessment	Clerk	Agenda item for next FGB

Appendix A.

Paula Nolan gave a short demonstration on the updates to the Safeguarding policy in line with the updates to KCSIE 2023.

Updates included:

- KCSIE – best practice was for Governors to read the whole of KCSIE.
- There was a culture of ‘it could happen here’.
- Shared Safeguarding and welfare team members.
- Student Wellbeing team including therapy dog.
- Staff training completed and up to date (including Designated Safeguarding training, Mental Health First Aider, Trauma Informed and Prevent).
- Updates in KCSIE 2023 – filtering and monitoring of online activity.
- Updates meant that software company could not provide the relevant level of cover. Now signed contract with ‘Smoothwall’
- What was meant by monitoring and filtering? Like a fence that filters and stops students from accessing anything online of a serious nature or inappropriate. College network filter ‘Smoothwall’ can be adjusted to allow access to websites for educational purposes.
- Monitoring – ‘Smoothwall’ offers the ability to review staff and student access and alert Safeguarding team depending on the severity. Immediate response. Company speaks to DSL immediately. Safeguarding procedures can be activated.
- Dynamic Mental Health Action Plan – events shared, Danny Scunthorpe, Self harm, 42nd Street, e safety for staff, neurodiversity workshop and pilot transition project.
- Governors would be asked to undertake specific Governor Safeguarding training