

**ST JOHN RIGBY COLLEGE
MEETING OF THE FULL GOVERNING BOARD
HELD AT 6PM ON WEDNESDAY 2ND JULY 2025
AT THE COLLEGE**



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 Nolan Principles: Selflessness/ Integrity/ Objectivity/ Accountability/ Openness/ Honesty/ Leadership

Strategic Objectives:

- To embed a learning culture which meets the needs of all students and, in doing so, improves the standards of student attendance, achievement, raises aspirations and promotes excellence across the full range of the College curriculum. In addition to providing a safe environment, we will focus on three key areas of outcomes for learners:
- Establishing consistently high outcomes across all courses
- Raising student achievement rates and challenging all courses to exceed Sixth Form College national benchmarks
- Establishing a consistently high 'progress score' for all courses
- To widen student participation, in partnership with other providers, through the offer of a comprehensive range of high-quality courses that meet the needs of our students and support developments and provision within partner high schools
- To work collaboratively with groups within College's local and extended community
- To further develop the estate to provide an outstanding learning environment for the whole college community
- To sustain a culture where all staff are committed to SJRs core values, where continuous professional development is encouraged, and organisational efficiency and effectiveness are achieved
- To maintain the College's financial stability in order to implement the College Development Plan

'Students are at the heart of everything that we do, in our actions, discussions and decisions'.

Our College Values: Integrity, Faith, Courage, Commitment, Freedom

Our College Vision: To be an outstanding, inclusive Catholic sixth form college, valuing the individual, celebrating learning and raising aspirations.

Meeting Prayer:

Lord God

Bless us as we come together for this meeting.

Grace us with your wisdom and vision.

Send your Spirit to guide us in our discussions, in our discernment and in the decisions we make for the good of all.

We make this prayer through Christ our Lord.

Amen

MINUTES

The core functions of the corporation board include:

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Business commenced at 6pm.

Meeting closed at 8.10pm.

The meeting was quorate.

The meeting opened in prayer with an additional prayer of Eternal Peace for a former student who had recently passed away.

Governors present:		
Pamela Catherall	Foundation Governor	Yes
Philip Collier (Vice Chair)	Foundation Governor	Apologies
Mark Higgins	Foundation Governor	Apologies
Pam Tate (Chair)	Foundation Governor	Yes
Catherine Morgan	Foundation Governor	Apologies
Mark Dumican	Foundation Governor	Yes
James Gresty	Foundation Governor	Apologies
Peter Cudlip	Foundation Governor	Yes <i>Via MS Teams</i>
Kate Watts	Staff Governor	Apologies
Chris Chandler	Staff Governor	Yes
Anne White	Co-opted Governor	Yes
Peter McGhee	Principal	Yes
William Smith	Student Governor (Incoming)	Yes
In Attendance:		
Allan Keating	Associate Member	Yes
Paula Nolan	Vice Principal	Yes
Victoria Brown	Vice Principal	Yes
Jim Winstanley	Finance Manager	Yes
Sophie Gardiner	Clerk to the Governing Board (Wigan Governor Services)	Yes
Amy Appleton	Wigan Governor Services	Yes

1. ROUTINE AND STANDING ITEMS

1.1 Apologies and consideration of consent to absence

Apologies had been received in advance of the meeting from Mark Higgins, Catherine Morgan, Kate Watts, Philip Collier and James Gresty and were **accepted** by the Corporation Board.

1.2 Any other Urgent Business (AOB)

- Bursary Policy
- Amendment to Instrument and Articles
- Confidential staffing item

1.3 Declarations of Interest

Staff were asked to withdraw for the confidential item which would be addressed at the end of the meeting.

1.4 Minutes of the previous meetings held on the 26th March 2025

Approved and **Authorised** for publication.

1.5 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising, actions had been brought forward to this agenda.

1.6 Minutes of the Committee Meetings

a) **Quality and Standards Committee** – 10th June 2025

The Principal highlighted the key areas discussed including the positive retention data. Progression to Year 13 was also positive. Recruitment was anticipated to increase to between 40 and 50 students. Student numbers for 2025/2026 were likely to be around 1,510.

Q This is all great news, what would you put that down to?

A We have a solid staff team effort led by Paula Nolan and Victoria Brown as well as decoupling student support and discipline, increasing efforts to provide enrichment, trips and visits and ensuring that students remained engaged as well as attention to enrolment. There had been lots of little changes that had overall accumulated into a significant transformation.

Q At the Quality and Standards Committee it was reported that there would be an additional 66 students, what was the actual figure now for transition to Year 13?

A We had projected 25 students, but this is now 41 students.

b) **Audit Committee** – 25th June 2025

The Committee Chair provided a verbal update. *Minutes to follow.*

The Committee had reviewed the CIF Funding Report and had been assured that the appropriate controls were in place. Overall conclusion was reported as a **strong level of assurance**, although several points of good practice had been recommended, including one low grade recommendation for improvement and one observation for consideration.

The Committee received the Payroll Report. The overall conclusion was graded as a **weak level of assurance**, with a total of five recommendations, these being 1 high (payroll responsibility), 1 medium and 3 low level recommendations. The Committee would monitor the progress against recommendations.

The Committee also received the Staff Absence Report. It was noted that the College had good processes in place, systematic reporting required some improvement as detailed within the report.

The Draft Annual External Audit Plan had been received. Key audit areas of risk were: assessment of Fraud Risk (continued), which was graded as significant. The Committee noted the reasons outlined for the grade.

The committee suggested other funding streams be explored as a priority.

Governors noted the recommendation to appoint a deputy for payroll and discussed the reliance on grant funding for income.

The Finance Manager confirmed that the Audit Committee had referred a review of income generation to the Finance & Resource Committee.

Q Was this because there were less applicable funds?

A There was less grant funding around and it was harder work to apply with no capacity in College to do this work.

Paula Nolan explained that the College could consider letting the unused dance hall space, but that consideration would need to be given to the overhead costs (including heating, Lighting, caretaking and key holding) of letting this out would generate sufficient income.

ACTION 1: Autumn F & R Cmt to consider income generation opportunities.

c) Finance and Resources Committee – 11th June 2025

The Committee Chair confirmed that the Management Accounts had been received and shared the following highlights:

- The College was reporting a deficit of £62,300. Contributing factors were largely outside of the College's control – such as pay award and employers contributing to National Insurance, both of which had only been partly funded resulting in a shortfall of around £88,000. Spend on non-essential items had been suspended until the end of July.
- There was a forecast of a deficit of £113,000 to be posted at end of the financial year (this had been originally forecasted to break even).
- The Committee had considered the next year's budget.
- There were new benchmarks around cash days (recommend 40 cash days each month).
- Staff to income ratio should be around 70%, College was 79%.
- Finance Regulations and Procedures had been reviewed and the Committee had recommended that Paula Nolan, as incoming Principal, would require access to training and for becoming a signatory.
- The Committee had also received an update on capital projects which were all moving to plan.
- The Committee had reviewed the Wigan Governor Services contract and agreed on the value for money provided by the clerking and training packages that the College purchased. See item 5.7 on this agenda.

2. COLLEGE ITEMS

2.1 Principals Update to Governors - including updates on College Development Plan and College Improvement Plan.

The Principal highlighted the following areas:

- Retention, this was even better than anticipated with lots of positive ongoing work around the T-Level group which had proved a successful venture into new technical qualifications.
- Academic Education visits and Career Academies – recognition of the number of opportunities provided to students outside of the classroom and their main qualifications which have added richness and been a contributing factor in retention (due to engagement and fuller programmes). These were run without funding and notably with the good will of staff which was commended (teaching and support staff).

- High Grades strategy – this was spoken about at length at Quality and Standards Committee. There had been a lot of work around the strategy but difficult to assess where we were until final grades were published.
- The College has won the National SFCA Award for Careers and Skills and named runner up for Pastoral Support – the accolades reflect the dedication of staff and ambition of students.

Mark Dumican provided verbal feedback from discussions with former students and stated that the impact of the College enrichment programme on students outside of the curriculum should not be underestimated. The College offer was fantastic and very much appreciated by students who remember their experiences throughout life.

2.2 College Development Plan 2024/2025 – RAG Rating review

The Principal drew attention to the following areas:

- High completion rate with evidence to support assessment of actions. Final sign off would be completed following results and the September review.
- There was one outstanding action around school link roles. It had previously been reported that the College had struggled with capacity due to effective resource planning. To address this, more successful events in College had been put on which seemed to have been effective in attracting student numbers. If College continued to grow to a position where there may be larger margins in the finances, then this may be possible to consider accommodating.
- Overall, a successful year of work against improvement actions.

Q Have we considered future marketeers?

A William Smith provided an update around recent student voice activity. Students were willing to act as ambassadors for the College and to become high school links. The next Student Voice meeting would focus on how students could contribute to this.

Paula Nolan explained that T-Level Marketing students could build this into their projects and that this linked with the Growth Strategy.

ACTION 2: Clerk to agenda item for Autumn Board meeting - Student Voice.

2.3 Climate Action Plan

The Corporation Board reviewed the Climate Action Plan.

The Principal reported that SLT had commended staff who had moved the College significantly into a position to be able to produce a Climate Action Plan. All schools were required to have this in place by the end of the year.

Student engagement was key and was supported by a member of staff to drive the plan forward. The Geography teacher supported this.

The student group would continue to meet and seek to secure the Eco Schools Green Flag Award and the plan would be published on the website.

It was also recommended best practice for there to be a Governor acting as a Sustainability Link to join the working group.

ACTON 3: Senior Leaders to send an invitation to all Governors to request a Link Governor.

Q Would this help with financial position?
A It would support the planet and student interests.

Q Could this work be linked to the wider College Strategy?
A Paula Nolan confirmed that there were four strands within the growth strategy and that this work was part of the engagement and student retention aspect. Accreditation would support the Marketing Strategy as this was something that mattered to students and would attract numbers and therefore, in turn, income. Leaders would continue to look at how this will feed into four strands of the work around growth. Links has also been formed with the Greater Manchester Business Hub to help support ideas to generate income or tap into income streams not previously aware of.

The Corporation Board Approved the Climate Action Plan.

3. STRATEGIC MATTERS

3.1 Academisation

It was noted that there was no further information available at present.

3.2 Risk Register – Academisation

The Corporation Board noted that the full Risk Register would be reviewed in Autumn.

ACTION 4: Clerk to agenda risk Register for Autumn Board meeting.

4. FINANCE AND AUDIT

4.1 2025/2026 Budget

Governors' attention was drawn to the F & R Committee meeting folder on Governor Hub (11th June 2025).

- The Finance Manager reported that there was £850,000 accounted for through additional income (from growth, inflation increase to core funding, National Insurance Grant and reduction in the teacher pension scheme pension grant due to recalculation).
- Additional costs – budget for 4% pay award and an additional £160,000 National oncome income resulted in £118,0000 shortfall.
- Additional pay award – adjustments and new posts and changes to SLT structure.
- Overall budget forecast of £55,000.
- Additional allocation over forecast takes surplus to just over £100,000.
- Following year – if the College makes student numbers as expected then it could anticipate a better surplus the following year.
- The College was heavily dependent on student numbers and the pay award. The Pay to income ratio was higher than national benchmark.
- Overall, because of positive allocation, surplus was just over £100,000.

Q Had the separation of cash flow for capital and operational costs made a difference?
A The underlying operating cash of 40 days (was just over one million pounds). Payments for capital projects from the DfE had been erratic. Large projects remain ongoing this way enables us to see the operational cash flow clearly.

On behalf of the Corporation Board, the Chair thanked the Finance Manager.

The Corporation Board approved the budget as presented.

4.2

a) Financial Procedures

b) Financial Regulations

Reviewed by F & R Cmt (11th June 2025)

The Board accepted the recommendation from the Finance and Risk Committee and **approved** the Financial Procedures and Regulations.

5. GOVERNANCE ITEMS

5.1 Chair's update

a) Feedback from Annual Strategic Conference

The Chair confirmed that the annual strategic conference seemed to have been received well and requested feedback from Governors and Senior Leaders to help to plan for the next one.

It was suggested that the next conference take an in-depth review of finance and look for impact of growth strategies. The item would be placed on the agenda for autumn term.

ACTION 5: Clerk to agenda discussion for Autumn Board meeting.

b) DfE/College annual conversation

The Chair shared a summary of the discussion that had taken place. A copy of the letter had been shared in advance of the meeting. It had been a positive meeting. Governance activity and the excellent achievements and success of the College had been discussed and there had been challenge around finance and recruitment. Overall, the DfE had been very supportive and complimentary around areas of best practice on display and planned to share examples nationally. Thanks were extended to all staff.

5.2 Charity Code of Governance

Governors had reviewed the following information at the Annual Strategic Conference and had discussed the merits of adopting each code.

The FE and 6th Form College Corporation Governance Guide states that: *As a condition of government funding, your **corporation must comply with one of the following governance codes of practice:** Charity Governance Code, the Further Education Code of Good Governance or the UK Corporate Governance Code (so far as it applies to college corporations as charities).*

The SFCAs have advised that the Government intend to withdraw the UK Corporate Governance Code with effect from 2026 which John Rigby currently adopts.

The Board had received a briefing paper from the Clerk outlining the available options and the requirement and had **agreed to adopt the Charity Governance Code with effect from the 1st September 2025.**

The briefing paper also outlined the requirements and expectation to adopt a Code of Conduct. This would be inline Liverpool Archdiocese Protocols which would also include a Governor statement of eligibility.

The Clerk advised the Board that the Protocols were under review by the Catholic Education Service and were anticipated to be circulated in the Autumn term by Liverpool Archdiocese.

The briefing paper also outlined the expectation and requirements for the College to review and adopt a policy for Senior Post Holder remuneration.

The Chair confirmed that the following policies remained under review and would be shared with the Board for approval in the Autumn term: Senior Post Holder Recruitment and Senior Post Holder Remuneration.

The Clerk also drew attention to the letter from DfE 16th June 2025 outlining the need to clarify the voting rights of student governors within the Instrument and Articles (I & As), the need to ensure the correct wording around quorum of meetings and the requirement to review the adopted Code of Governance due to the removal of the UK Corporate Code of Governance.

Guidance had been received from the Catholic Education Service on the 1st July advising of the process:

Trustees were to replace the I&As with new I&As from which the provision restricting student governors under the age of 18 from voting on financial and contractual matters is removed. Consent of the Bishop and the Governing Body is required for the I&As to be amended by the Trustees.

Therefore, the CES advise that the following process should be followed:

The CES will obtain consent from the Bishop of the relevant diocese.

Once the Bishop's consent has been received the CES will inform the relevant college and provide a form of resolution through which each college Governing Body will provide its consent to the amendment of the I&As.

Once the CES has received a copy of the resolution it will liaise with the Trustees to ensure that the new I&As are made.

Once the process is complete the CES will send copies of the new I&As to the relevant college, Bishop and Trustees.

ACTION 6: Clerk to add following items to Autumn Board meeting:

**Senior Post Holder Recruitment;
Senior Post Holder Remuneration;
Liverpool Archdiocese Protocols, Code of Conduct and Governor Eligibility;
Review and amendment to Instrument and Articles.**

5.3 Governor Training

The Chair drew Governors' attention to the specific requirements for Safeguarding for Governors training in accordance with KCSIE and flagged the wealth of training bookable via Governor Hub, provided by Wigan Governor Services.

ACTION 7: Clerk to continue to circulate notification of relevant training.

5.4 2025/2026 Meeting Schedule

The Chair explained that revisions had been made but not circulated. When this was done, Governors were invited to send comments directly to the Chair.

**ACTION 8: Chair to share revised meeting schedule
Governors to provide feedback to Chair
Clerk to agenda item for Autumn Board meeting**

5.5 Appointment

The Board re-appointed Anne White to the position of Co-Opted Governor with effect from the 1st October 2025 for two years.

Allan Keating (Associate Member) had informed the Chair that he was unable to continue in post and had tendered his resignation.

On behalf of Governors, the Chair thanked Allan Keating for his support and contribution to the College.

It was noted that the term of office as Foundation Governors for Pam Tate and Mark Higgins was due to expire in November 2025 and for Mark Dumican In September 2025.

ACTION 9: Clerk to send forms to governors for reappointment.

Note – actioned 3/7/25

5.6 Election of Chair and Vice Chair (for 2025/2026 academic year).

Due to the absence of the current Vice Chair, the Chair proposed that this item was deferred to the Autumn term meeting.

The Clerk led a discussion around the election procedure.

Governors **agreed** that nominations would be self or proposed and be sent to the Clerk, when requested, in advance of the meeting. Furthermore, Governors **agreed** that they would vote by open show of hands rather than utilising a secret ballot.

It was noted that the Instrument and Articles stated that the Chair of the Corporation Board must be a Foundation Governor.

ACTION 10: Clerk to agenda item for Autumn Board meeting

5.7 Governance Support

a) **Governance Training and Development Additional Buy Backs**

b) **Clerking Arrangement - To ratify** decision of F & R cmt.

(See F & R Cmt meeting folder on Governor Hub - 11th June 2025).

Sophie Gardiner and Amy Appleton were invited to remain in the meeting.

The Chair shared that the Committee had reviewed and discussed the proposed SLA details for the academic years 2025/26 and 2026/27. The Committee recognised the professional service that they received from Wigan Governor Services, under the Clerk's guidance, and the positive impact and role it has played in improving and strengthening the Governance arrangements at SJR since September 2023. The Governors recognised the value of having the SLA for clerking and training, and valued the service and professionalism it gives SJR.

Therefore, the Committee agreed that they would recommend to the Full Governing Body that the SLA for clerking and training be renewed at the terms of the quote and agreed that it was a professional and valuable service and represented good value for money.

The Board accepted the recommendations from the Finance and Risk Committee and **ratified** the decision to purchase clerking and training from Wigan Governor Services throughout 2025/2026 and 2026/2027 academic years.

6.1 POLICIES FOR APPROVAL

a) **Accountability Statement – approved.**

Governors recognised the amount of work that had been input into the writing the statement.

b) **Health and Safety Policy – approved.**

c) **Staff Capability Policy – reviewed and recommended by F & R Cmt - approved.**

7. STANDING ITEMS

7.1 Meeting Reflection/Impact

Governors and Leaders reflected on what had been achieved during the meeting and the impact of decisions made.

- Governors agreed that they had provided significant challenge on College priorities.
- Compliance items reviewed.
- Papers supplied to Governors – accessibility discussed, and Senior Leaders recognised that the team needed to focus on key areas within the meeting.
- Requirement to improve access to meetings and papers via technology to support hybrid meetings.
- Reflection on the year which had been monumental for the College, thanks and gratitude extended to Senior Leaders and all staff who had worked incredibly hard for students over the year and who went over and above expectations to provide opportunities for students. The Board recognised and appreciated all of the hard work. The Chair agreed to draft a note of thanks on behalf of all Governors, to be included in the staff bulletin at the end of term.
- This was Peter McGee's last Governors' meeting. Governors expressed thanks and appreciation for 5 years of leadership and this would be marked by a formal presentation on the 10th July 2025.
- Thanks were extended to Allan Keating for time devoted to the Governing Board.
- Thanks were also given to Sophie Gardiner for providing excellent clerking to SJR for the last two years. The Chair said that her support and advice had been instrumental in strengthening the governance procedures at SJR in that time. The Board welcomed Amy Appleton who is taking on the role of Clerk from September.

The Chair took the opportunity to say a few words of thanks to Peter McGhee for 15 years of service to St John Rigby College.

'Peter, what you have achieved in that time has been outstanding. The college is unrecognisable, and the transformation has been truly astounding. The outstanding ratings for Ofsted and the CES reviews, awards and accolades speak for themselves, but it's more than that, it's the feel of the college from both staff and students that make SJR the special place that it is. That has grown and thrived under your leadership, with your vision and unwavering dedication to SJR. Your genuine care for every student and member of staff have left a mark on everyone...thank you for everything you have done for SJR, we will miss you, but you go with our heartfelt gratitude, thanks and admiration and we all wish you a well-deserved long and happy retirement.'

Peter McGhee shared his reflections on 15 years of leadership at the College.

The Chair extended thanks to all Governor's for their commitment throughout the year to meet the demand of the governance workload this year.

Governors thanked Pam Tate for her leadership as Chair.

7.2 Urgent Items (AOB)

a) Bursary Policy – summary of changes due to new guidance - approved.

The Principal highlighted that the policy had been updated to reflect statutory changes. This involved the administration for 'care to learn' becoming the responsibility of the College (up until recently, this responsibility had rested with the Local Authority). This work would now be undertaken by the Office Manager.

b) Amendment to Instrument and Articles – addressed under item 5.2

7.3 Confidentiality

Item 7.3c was deemed confidential.

7.4 Date and time of next meeting: *Refer to item 5.7*

There being no further business to discuss, the Chair thanked those present for their attendance and contribution to the meeting and for their ongoing support and commitment to the College.

19.55pm Staff and student Governors withdrew from the meeting.

Item 7.3c was discussed and recorded confidentially.

The meeting closed at 8.10pm.

MEETING ACTION POINTS

No	Item	Action	For Who	By when
1.	1.6b	Income generation opportunities	F & R Cmt	Autumn 2025
2.	2.2	Student Voice	Clerk to Agenda	Autumn FGB
3.	2.3	Link Governor role for Sustainability	Chair/Senior Leaders	Post meeting
4.	3.2	Risk Register (review of full)	Clerk to Agenda	Autumn FGB
5.	5.1b	Discussion – strategic conference	Clerk to Agenda	Autumn FGB
6.	5.2	Senior Post Holder Recruitment; Senior Post Holder Remuneration; Liverpool Archdiocese Protocols, Code of Conduct and Governor Eligibility; Review and amendment to Instrument and Articles.	Clerk to Agenda	Autumn FGB
7.	5.3	Notify Governors of relevant training	Clerk	Ongoing
8.	5.4	Confirmation of 2025/2026 Meeting Schedule	Chair	Post meeting
9.	5.5	Application for re-appointment <i>Form sent to Governors by Clerk 3/7/25</i>	PT/MH/MD	Post meeting
10	5.6	Election of Chair and Vice Chair	Clerk to Agenda	Autumn FGB