

NOTRE DAME CATHOLIC SIXTH FORM COLLEGE

Minutes of the Full Corporation meeting held on:
THURSDAY 14 DECEMBER 2023 AT 5.30PM

PRESENT

David Wright (Chair)	Justine Barlow (Principal) (items 1 - 19 only)
Christine Bosch	Fr. Michael Hall
Graeme Brown	Helen Hayden
Paul Casey	Ann Marie Mealey
Natalie Cullen	Sadie Walker
Matthew DiClemente	

IN ATTENDANCE: Rebecca & Marwa, co-vice-Presidents, Student Council (items 1 to 5 only)
Scott Gillon - Wylie and Bisset (item 12 only)
Sarah Dumont - Deputy Principal (DP) (items 1 - 19 only)
Karen Petrillo - Director of Finance and Operations (DFO) (items 1 - 19 only)
David J Israel - Clerk, GSS

The meeting opened with a prayer.

1.00 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

1.01 Apologies were received and accepted from John Barnes. Governors wished John a speedy recovery.

1.02 The Board has the following vacancies: two Foundation Governors, two staff Governors and one parent Governor. Noting this was the final meeting for Sadie Walker as parent Governor, the Board noted the importance of parent Governors, and she was thanked for her years of service and contribution to the board.

1.03 Terms of Office

The Diocese is processing the reappointment of Matthew DiClemente and John Barnes as Foundation Governors. Confirmation of re-appointment will be sent to CGY.

1.04 The staff Governor vacancies were communicated to the staff team but did not bring forward any candidates. They will be re-advertised to staff at the beginning of the year.

2.00 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

2.01 There were no new declarations of interest.

3.00 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

3.01 The minutes from the Full Corporation meeting held on 12 October, 2023 had been circulated as part of the meeting bundle. One amendment was agreed to add Ann-Marie Mealey to the attendee list.

Resolved:

Subject to the amendment noted above, the minutes were accepted as a true record and the and the Chair was authorised to sign them.

ACTION

JB

4.00 REVIEW ACTIONS AND MATTERS ARISING

4.01 Minute 1.04 - Membership Matters

As noted above, the staff Governor vacancies remain, and will be readvertised in the new year. Governors noted it was important to have this voice within the board.

4.02 Minute 3.03 - Terms of Reference

Governors noted that, due to its importance, Safeguarding has been added as a standing item for Full Corporation meetings.

4.03 Minute 3.03 - Terms of Reference: safeguarding training

Governors thanked the DP for laying out the list of safeguarding training opportunities available. They recognised the need to evidence having read the keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) guidance, completing this form as confirmation: <https://forms.office.com/e/yAn9MCaXES>. The DP and safeguarding governor will review the training options and make a recommendation to governors.

4.04 Minute 6.04 - Link Governors

The notes of the working group on link governors are covered in agenda item 15.

4.05 Minute 7.02 - Catholic Life working group

The next meeting for the Catholic Life working group is scheduled for 18 January, 2024.

4.06 Minute 10.04 - proposed building work report from the DFO

The report is included with the discussion under agenda item 14.

5.00 STUDENT GOVERNORS' REPORT

5.01 Rebecca and Marwa introduced themselves to governors, noting they have been in post since the end of last academic year. To date the events they arranged include: a Nineties Day, including a best dressed competition, which raised money for future activities; an international student event, to help new students feel more comfortable in a new country and culture, to meet other students, introduce different cultures and to start the buddying scheme; an African and Caribbean event, including food, music which raised money for Sickle Cell Anaemia; a culture day, held over a week, to celebrate the diversity in the College, with over 30 countries represented and 150+ students involved, raising £1,653 against an initial target of £1,000; support and engagement with the LGBTQ+ welcome event; a staff member consultation event, focussed on feedback on the experience in the library; and ongoing meetings with the Principal to feedback students voice.

5.02 Raising the profile of the student executive has been important to ensure students know there is a space to make their voice heard, and bring ideas forward for events. The executive was also at the enrichment days and open days, and work is ongoing with the executive's selected charities. They are also active

Gov's

DP & GB

through social media to widely promote events and activities, and the marketing team is seeking students to help develop areas such as Tik Tok.

5.03 Students often put forward ideas for events, and they are supported to enable them to hold events and raise funds for charities. The faith officer works alongside students and tutors to encourage new students to be offering prayers; the international and inclusion officers held a Teams call with the College's twin school in Nigeria; plans are also being considered for a talent show next year; and an 'end-of-year something' is also being considered with achievement tutors, recognising the challenges of putting on such a large event. The handover for the next executive will be looked at to give the incoming executive a chance to 'hit the ground running', and to look at succession planning.

5.04 **Governors commented on how proud they felt at hearing the report, not least the inclusive nature of the executive's work.**

6.00 PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

6.01 The report is covered through the next three agenda items.

7.00 COLLEGE SELF ASSESSMENT REVIEW (SAR) VALIDATION

7.01 To approve the Self-Assessment Document

This annual review summarises the previous year's actions and activities, as well as setting the summary on the *foci* for the coming year. The validation panel reviewed the SAR last week, with a full report to this week's curriculum and standards (C&S) committee meeting earlier this week. The document will be uploaded to Ofsted by the end of term. **Will value added can be captured in this report?** It is measured primarily through student feedback, and the report format aims to give top line summaries of the work of the College. During an inspection, there would be the chance for inspectors to review more deeply all this work in order to triangulate and assess it. Under the new Ofsted framework, there is comment in leadership and management on skills development, which the College grades itself as strong, as it is linked through all the work of the College, not just specific skills training.

Resolved:

To approve the College SAR.

8.00 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF KEY WHOLE COLLEGE AREAS DECEMBER 2023

8.01 Governors welcomed the summary provided. The key strengths were noted including how staff wellbeing and welfare is provided, including assessing the use of the Times Education Supplement (TES) Pulse service to provide anonymous staff feedback at any time, rather than a survey at a single point in term. There is a sustainability champion and a proposed new A-level in environmental science. Key stakeholder communications include with parents and carers, the Diocese and with employers, including use of the Navigate platform. There is also feedback garnered from higher education (HE) providers to assess what skills may be missing from students joining them. This work will feed back into the strategic review. Governors asked to be sent copies of the parent newsletter.

9.00 CATHOLIC SELF-EVALUATION SUMMARY DOCUMENT (CSED) 2023-24

CGY

- 9.01 This focuses against the inspection criteria for Catholic Life and Mission, and mirrors the information they would expect. This similarly checks actions against previously identified areas for improvement. The criteria to be measured against are outlined, and the three areas in which the College will be assessed.
- 9.02 Collective Worship is an area currently graded as Good, with work underway to bring this up to Outstanding, some of which is down to ensuring the activities already happening are captured accurately, and building capacity in students leading in this area.
- 9.03 **Can students clearly express the Catholic Mission of the College?** There is confidence they can as this was heard clearly through the student governor presentation earlier, such as working with charities, leadership and inclusivity, as well as being able to describe worship in the College. **Should the Collective Worship section make clear that 50% of the students are not Catholic?** This will be placed in the context section at the start of the report.

JB

10.00 COMMITTEE MINUTES

10.01 Joint Audit/Finance and Physical Resources Committee held on 29 November 2023

The attached minutes are pending committee approval. The following areas were discussed:

- External Audit Findings Report
- Year-end Management Accounts
- Internal Audit Reports
- Annual report of the Audit Committee
- Risk Register

Policies approved:

- Digital Strategic Document - replaces the IT Policy Statement
- International Students Office Policy

Polices Recommended to Full Corporation

- Reserves Policy (see agenda item 14)

- 10.02 One issue from the meeting, as noted by the auditors, was the amount retained in the maintenance provision, which is being reviewed by the committee. This is in part due to the new building work, which was the appropriate action, done by the College. It is prudent to now action this review as it is halfway through the planned timeframe. One consideration may be to release funds from this provision to be placed into investment in the College. Advice on this will be sought from an external consultant, with an aim to bring forward recommendations this academic year. The review will also feed into the College's ambition to grow and continue to improve its education provision.
- 10.03 Also discussed was the holiday pay provision, which has been adjusted in the accounts for this year. There was a positive out-turn in the accounts, and reserves remain healthy for the size of the College. The committee agreed that the College remains a going concern, and that the letters of recommendation were accurate. There were no significant issues raised by the auditors, with the strides forward in general data protection regulations (GDPR) welcomed.

10.04 **Governors noted, and welcomed, the praise from both external and internal auditors for the hard work and diligence of College senior staff.**

10.05 **Curriculum and Standards held on 12 December, 2023**

These minutes have been drafted, but have not yet been made available. The following areas were discussed:

- Link governor working group report
- Link governors reports
- Safeguarding SAR

Policies to be approved

- SEND Local Offer 2023/24
- SEND Learning Support Policy Statement 2023/24
- Prayer and Liturgy Policy 2023/34

Policies for information

Examinations Policy 2023/24

10.06 One area noted was the review of link governance, and how governors can be further supported in their link work. This included role descriptors and *pro-forma* which may be created to help guide governors as to what they should be looking for and reviewing. This discussion followed from the review of link governance held earlier in the year.

10.07 **Why are interpreters and personal care not covered in the special education needs and disabilities (SEND) policy?** These are not areas that the College has ever provided or been responsible for, nor is obliged to provide. Making this clear in the policy is to help any student with SEND to be able to establish if the College is suitable for their needs.

10.08 **Resolved:**

Governors formally added their approval to the policies discussed, and recommended for approval, from both meetings.

11.00 AUDIT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

11.01 Governors recognised that this was based on the formula used in previous years, and shows that the College is well controlled with no concerns from the internal auditors.

Resolved:

To approve the audit committee annual report.

12.00 EXTERNAL AUDIT FINDINGS REPORT

12.01 To approve

- Management Letter - Annual Report to the Members of the Corporation on the External Audit for the Year ended 31 July 2023
- Letters of Representation - in the appendices of the Annual report
- Financial Statements Year End 31 July 2023

Governors were given a top-line review of the audit findings, including the papers listed above, and noted summary provided in the previous agenda item from last week's review of these papers. They especially noted the need for a review of the planned maintenance budget; that the College remains a going concern; had received a clean grading for its accounts, and that the letters of representation are a standard within an audit process. They thanked the external auditors for all their work on the accounts.

Resolved:

To approve the management letters, representation letters and financial statements.

12.02 The regularity self-assessment questionnaire was also received for information.

13.00 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS

13.01 For information

- Management Accounts October 2023
- Commentary on Management Accounts October 2023

13.02 Two budgets are being used alongside each other: the approved budget and a working budget, with variances shown in this. College income is projected to come in ahead of budget; staffing is currently on target, due to some as yet unfilled vacancies, and the supply budget only slightly ahead of forecast; the surplus is projected to be ahead of budget due to the increase in income, unexpected support for staff pay rises and the ongoing robust control of costs.

14.00 POLICIES FOR REVIEW

14.01 To approve

- Reserves policy
- Equality, diversity and inclusion objectives 2023 - 2027

For Information

- Digital Strategic Plan (this replaces the IT Policy Statement)
- International Students Policy
- SEND Local Offer 2023/24
- SEND Learning Support Policy Statement 2023/24
- Prayer and Liturgy Policy 2023/34
- Examinations Policy 2023/24

14.02 As part of the discussion of the reserves policy, governors also received, and considered a paper prepared by the DFO. This outlined the current and projected financial position of the College, including its reserves, and proposals for the reserves could be invested in the College for the benefit of students.

14.03 This work assessing the recent and current performance of the College budgets, shows a cash surplus which could be added into reserves. There is also an allocation for planned maintenance, as well as a prudent estimate of contingency for any unforeseen costs this year. It was noted that any funds placed into planned maintenance must be spent on the works specified, such as replacing carpets or gutters. Substantial work, such as refurbishing a classroom, would be considered as a capital cost. It was noted too that the College has an exceptional

estates staff who can undertake a substantial proportion of planned maintenance work that was initially anticipated to be done by external contractors.

- 14.04 The current reserves of the College remain positive, and the new reserves policy proposes to reduce the amount held from 11% of total annual income to 5% of total annual income, plus an additional £100,000. The health of the reserves was noted through the Cash Days target, which is 26, and currently stands at 55 days.
- 14.05 Consideration was then given to the projected population growth of Leeds, provided by the office of national statistics (ONS), in the population aged 16. This was reviewed alongside the evidence of the College remaining a key destination for these young people, and that it is currently operating at capacity. The reserves of the College are such that there is the potential to consider further expansion of student places by developing the site.
- 14.06 The report outlined that should a decision be made to make such investment, it would be possible in some scenarios, for this investment to be returned within a ten to fifteen year period, and for the College's annual finances remaining positive. These figures had also been tested within the College's budget, including factoring in the income lag inherent in its funding model.
- 14.07 Governors were asked to consider two options: capping student growth to the current plan of 2,670, or to grow them to c.2,950. The growth in numbers would be provided through the provision of additional classrooms through one of three possible building options.
- 14.08 The three options provided between a net two and seven additional classrooms, with varying costs to match. The option to remain at the current student numbers would require a range of capital expenditure in necessary items totalling c.£2.4m this year and c.£1.4m the following year. A condition improvement fund (CIF) bid for c.£450k for the boilers has been submitted, with the outcome know in spring. **If this bid is not successful will this work need to be covered by the College?** The issue is that there are two different systems which have been spliced together, the current life span of the boilers has passed and the system is extremely inefficient costing both money and creating excessive Carbon usage. The options to create additional classrooms range between c.£1m and c.£2.9m.
- 14.09 Governors began by praising the detail and clarity of the report , which clearly laid out the considerations they had to make. They also welcomed the robust and conservative projections included. **Does the College have a sense of whether our competitors are planning to grow?** A city-wide group of further education (FE) establishments meets regularly, and a new maths college was noted, and another college is planning to grow by 200 places. At the same time, there is an ongoing reduction in school sixth-form provision. **How many students were unable to get a place this year?** The admissions criteria for the College are high and there were a notable number of students who were unable to gain a place.
- 14.10 **Which of the costs in not growing our numbers are pressing?** The works to Hume House and the dining area, which can, on the whole, be covered by the estates staff team. It was noted that the knock down and replacement of Hume House would only net an additional eight classrooms. The costs of that suggest work

were so substantial, for such little return, that it was not included as an option in this paper.

14.11 **What is the risk of keeping such a large reserve?** Inflation can erode this amount, and it may be recalled by the education and skills funding agency (ESFA). The College has always had the ambition to grow, and recognises that there is a limit to this beyond which the costs of growing can't be got recovered from additional income. Also, it is important to ensure that the unique student experience available on the site is retained in any additional works, and that such works improve the physical site overall too.

14.12 Governors noted that the return on the investment (RoI) of creating a first floor in the hall, generating seven additional classrooms which could accommodate another c.300 students, is around ten years and c.10%. They recognised that this presents an acceptable risk to the College, and also enables it to pursue its ambitions to grow. In addition, this work would disrupt exams during the time of construction, which would attract other costs if there was a need to use an external space, and impact on the student experience. Also, pursuing this option would still mean other works would be required, such as the provision of a lift in the art block. **Could this decision be held until the outcome of CIF bid is known?** It is possible to do so, but given the amount of preparatory work needed to be able to, for example, better estimate costings, consider any planning obligations, carry out necessary surveys etc, starting the work now, including options on the success of CIF bid, would be prudent and allow contractors to be sought to start works during the summer holidays.

14.13 **Resolved:**
Governors agreed that the College should commit to pursuing option one of creating an additional floor in the hall. This would be done with a working group of governors supporting the staff team to: bring forward further details; pursue additional information pertinent to the works; bring additional clarity to the budget; begin works around planning; and to carry out an independent review of space to be clear that the existing space is being fully used. There should also be a plan moving forward for the dining area to further improve the student experience.

14.14 **Resolved:**
To approve the reserves policy as tabled.

14.15 Governors reviewed the EDI policy.

Resolved:
To approve the EDI policy as tabled.

15.00 SAFEGUARDING

15.01 Safeguarding SAR

Governors noted this was reviewed at this week's C&S committee, and is tabled here so that all governors had full transparency of a key issue in College life

16.00 RISK REGISTER OVERVIEW

16.01 It was noted that the register is reviewed periodically through committee meetings.

17.00 CHAIR'S BUSINESS

17.01 The link governor working group report was noted, and that Fr Hall will continue as governor link for quality assurance, teaching & learning and quality of education.

18.00 ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

18.01 There were no other items of business.

19.00 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

- 19.01
- Tuesday 25 April, 2024 at 5.30pm in Trinity Conference Room
 - Strategic Away Day at Weetwood Hotel - 14 June, 2024
 - Wednesday 3 July, 2024 at 5.30pm in Trinity Conference Room

20.00 CONFIDENTIAL DISCUSSION

20.01 Staff members left the meeting for this discussion.

Senior post holder performance management and remuneration

This item is minuted in the Part 2 Confidential minutes.

The meeting closed at 7.55pm