



Minutes of the Full Governing Body Meeting held on Tuesday 1 July 2025 at 6pm in the College Conference Room

Present:	Patrick Alcantara	Foundation Governor
	Brother Ben	Foundation Governor
	Janet Gater	Principal
	Susan Jarvis	Co-opted Governor
	Mick Martin	Foundation Governor
	Darren Melling	Foundation Governor
	Rob Peacock	Foundation Governor
	Andrew Rannard	Foundation Governor
	Graeme Slater	Foundation Governor
	Amelia Southward	Co-opted Governor
	Helen Stevenson (Chair)	Foundation Governor

In attendance: Michelle Williams (*Vice Principal, Finance, Resources & Systems*)
Laura Forsyth (*Vice Principal, Curriculum, Quality & Pastoral*)
Ruth Potter (*Clerk to Governors*)

PART 1

The Chair welcomed new Foundation Governors, Darren Melling and Rob Peacock, and invited the Principal to open the meeting with the College prayer.

1. ROUTINE AND STANDING ITEMS

1.1 Declarations of interest

Governors were invited to declare whether they had any direct or indirect personal, prejudicial or pecuniary interest or conflict of interest in any matter which formed part of the agenda for this meeting or was likely to be discussed at the meeting. Darren Melling declared an interest in item 3.2 due to his employment at a local Catholic Multi-Academy Trust.

1.2 Apologies for absence

Apologies had been received and accepted from the following board members:

- Sarah Carroll – Foundation Governor
- Kevin Crooks – Staff Governor
- John Fogarty – Foundation Governor
- Andrew Jones – Co-opted Governor
- Alyssa Snowden Leak – Student Governor

The meeting was declared quorate.

1.3 Membership Matters (*previously circulated*)

The following appointments to the Governing Body were confirmed:

- Darren Melling – Foundation Governor with assignment to the Finance & Resources Committee – for a term of four years from 1 July 2025.

- Rob Peacock – Foundation Governor with assignment to the Quality & Standards Committee and Search Committee – for a term of four years from 1 July 2025.
- Samuel Moore – Student Governor – for a term of one year from 9 July 2025.

The Chair confirmed that written authorisation for the two Foundation Governor appointments had been received from the Archdiocese of Liverpool.

Resolved:

- **That Darren Melling and Rob Peacock be appointed as Foundation Governors for a term of four years commencing on 1 July 2025 subject to satisfactory completion of final DBS checks.**
- **That Samuel Moore be appointed as Student Governor for a term of one year commencing on 9 July 2025 subject to satisfactory completion of usual checks.**

ACTION – Clerk to arrange all standard checks, documentation and induction for newly appointed governors.

At this point in the meeting, the Chair took the opportunity to deliver a short presentation reflecting on the 2024-25 academic year and the contributions made by the Governing Body. She concluded by thanking all present for their ongoing commitment and engagement.

1.4 Items to be included under urgent business

There were no items of urgent business.

1.5 Minutes of the Governing Body meeting held on 25 March 2025 (previously circulated)

The minutes of the Full Governing Body (FGB) meeting held on 25 March 2025 were (a) approved and the Chair authorised to sign them in accordance with Article 12(3) of the Articles of Government and (b) publication was authorised in accordance with Article 13.

1.6 Matters arising from the minutes (previously circulated)

Governors noted the action log prepared by the Clerk.

2. STUDENT VOICE AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

2.1 Student Council Annual Report (previously circulated)

In the absence of the Student Governor, the Chair invited governors to consider the Student Council Annual Report.

Resolved:

- **That the Student Council Annual Report be received and noted.**

3. STRATEGIC REPORTS

3.1 Principal's Termly Report (previously circulated)

The Principal referred governors to her report and highlighted the following points:

- Leadership and management – senior leadership team (SLT) restructure. New organisation chart shared with governors detailing key changes:
 - Assistant Principal (Student Development & Support) – merging the strategic responsibility of two posts in preparation for the planned retirement of one member of staff.
 - Creation of two additional posts – Pastoral Director (Safeguarding) and Deputy SENCO – to add greater capacity into student-facing roles.

- Redistribution of Ethics and Values (RE) and new Head of Catholic Life post.
- Title changes – Assistant Principal (Quality of Teaching, Learning & Staffing) and Assistant Principal (Vocational & Super Curriculum).
- New Power BI dashboard for governance to report on key live metrics across College. The dashboard would be refreshed and shared with governors at each board meeting.
- Student progress and outcomes – CAP6 and CAP3 progress.
- College mission and ethos in action – numerous activities reported including:
 - whole College events to celebrate the Jubilee year
 - student enrichment and engagement opportunities including visits from MPs and Liverpool City Region Metro Mayor
 - super-curriculum opportunities to promote aspiration, including student involvement in the LCR Ignite Programme.
- Future look – updates on:
 - Level 3 reform
 - viability of College’s Early Years T Level course next year
 - teacher training – new in-house PGCE course on offer next year in conjunction with the Catholic Teaching Alliance. Current enrolment figures highlighted and placement opportunities both within Carmel and local high schools.
 - AI strategy development – appointed Edutech Co-ordinator as part of the SFCA’s certification scheme. Staff places secured on an AI software trial for teachers and wider staff training scheduled with focus on ethics and GDPR. A draft AI Policy would be brought to the next meeting for governors’ consideration.

The Chair thanked the Principal for her report and invited governors’ questions.

Q – Teacher training: in future years would bursaries be offered for students specialising in shortage subjects?

A – Yes. Aim to target these subjects and offer associated bursaries as the offer develops.

Q – Safeguarding new appointments: would these posts commence now or in the new academic year?

A – Mix of internal and external appointments; external appointments due to commence at beginning of new academic year, internal appointment already beginning to transition to new role. Discussion ensued on the extra capacity provided by these appointments and the impact this was expected to have across College.

Governors were advised of the delay to the Department for Education’s (DfE) Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) statutory guidance which was expected to be published later in the month. The impact on final policy amendments and staff training was highlighted.

Resolved:

- **That the Principal’s Termly Report be received and noted.**

Darren Melling withdrew from the meeting at this point.

3.2 **Academisation – update** *(previously circulated)*

The Vice Principal (Finance, Resources & Systems) referred governors to her report and reported back on a meeting hosted by the Catholic Education Service (CES) on the future of Catholic sixth-form colleges. All colleges would be required to academise in line with their own Archdiocese's academisation strategy. The Archdiocese of Liverpool was due to refresh its academisation strategy later this year, with publication expected in the Autumn Term. Until then, the College was unable to formulate a definitive plan for academisation, however it was confirmed that some initial discussions had taken place with a local Catholic multi-academy trust (MAT) and other MAT options would also be investigated.

Reference was made to a recent SFCA Governance Webinar – attended by some governors and staff – during which the variety of potential MAT structures was highlighted, with differences of approach evident across DfE regions and Diocesan area. The Vice Chair of Governors also updated the board on discussions held at the recent Chair's forum meeting hosted by the Archdiocese of Liverpool.

Discussion ensued on the need for 16-19 expertise within any future MAT structure, as the level of specialist knowledge and support required was distinct from that in relation to primary and secondary schools.

Following further discussion, it was agreed that whilst early-stage discussions were important to investigate potential academisation options, the College must await publication of the Archdiocese's academisation strategy before determining the way forward.

Resolved:

- **That the academisation update report be received and noted.**

Darren Melling returned to the meeting at this point.

3.3 **Strategic Plan 2025-28 and KPIs** *(previously circulated)*

The Principal referred governors to the final draft of the Strategic Plan and KPIs and confirmed that one further small correction was required to the KPIs. She confirmed that staff had been consulted on the content of the Plan, and it had been shared with representatives of the Student Council. Plans for the format of the published plan were shared with both hard copy and electronic versions to be available.

Governors' comments and questions were invited. No questions were raised and the Governing Body confirmed its agreement to the content of the final plan and associated KPIs.

Resolved:

- **That the Strategic Plan 2025-28 and KPIs be approved.**

4. FINANCE AND ESTATES MANAGEMENT

4.1 **Financial Update and Management Accounts – May 2025** *(previously circulated)*

The Vice Principal (Finance, Resources & Systems) provided an overview of financial performance – as presented in the RAG rated finance dashboard – and confirmed that the College was in sound financial health. All KPIs were RAG rated green and it was reported that the College was on target to achieve the planned outturn of £50k by the year end.

It was noted that the management accounts to April 2025 had been considered by the Finance and Resources Committee at its meeting on 12 June 2025.

Resolved:

- **That the finance update and management accounts to May 2024 be noted and approved.**

4.2 Financial Forecast and Commentary 2025 to 2026-27 *(previously circulated)*

The Vice Principal (Finance, Resources & Systems) referred governors to the three-year Financial Plan 2025-2027 which detailed the anticipated financial forecast of the College for the financial years ended 2025 to 2027.

The Vice Principal confirmed that at its meeting on 12 June 2025, the Finance and Resources Committee had reviewed the financial plan and recommended approval to the full Governing Body. The Governing Body (as the corporation) was ultimately responsible for ensuring the financial viability of the College and as such must approve the College Financial Forecasting Return (CFFR).

Governors were referred to the summary table detailing the forecast outturn position over the three-year period, including:

- Forecast outturn position for 2024-25 including actuals to 31 March 2025 and forecast up to 31 July 2025.
- Forecast (and operating budget) for 2025-26
- Forecast for 2026-27.

The College's financial health had been self-assessed as Good over the three-year period to July 2027.

The Chair thanked the Vice Principal for her comprehensive report and invited governors' questions.

A point of clarification was raised regarding the final bullet point under section 7.4 'Pay Expenditure'. It was confirmed that direct employment of cleaning and estates staff contributed to the higher staff cost as percentage of income metric. It was anticipated that this percentage would be 3% lower if these staff were not factored in. The Vice Principal reaffirmed the College's decision not to sub-contract these services.

Resolved:

- **That the Financial Plan 2025-2027 be approved**
- **That the forecast for 2025-26 be approved as the operating budget for 2025-26**

4.3 DfE College Financial Assessment Letter and Governors' Dashboard *(previously circulated)*

The Vice Principal (Finance, Resources & Systems) referred to the DfE letter dated 28 April 2025. This had already been considered by the Finance and Resources Committee and had been brought to the Governing Body for all governors to consider. The letter confirmed that following its review of the College's audited financial statements and finance record, the DfE had confirmed the College's financial health as Good for 2023-24. All governors were reminded that they could access the dashboard via the DfE's 'View Your Education Data' online portal.

Resolved:

- **That the DfE letter be noted.**

4.4 Property Strategy Review (*previously circulated*)

The Vice Principal (Finance, Resources & Systems) referred governors to the College's updated Property Strategy 2023-28 which had been reviewed by Finance and Resources Committee at its meeting on 12 June 2025 and recommended for approval. The Strategy reported on activity during the previous year and planned activity over the period ahead. Proposed activity centred on phased redecoration and investment in:

- flooring
- access systems
- sustainability projects – EV chargers, meadow
- additional outside space
- furniture
- IT facilities
- further development of Stoker building to increase classroom accommodation.

On the final point, the Vice Principal confirmed that a consultant had been engaged to review the options and associated costings to extend the Stoker building.

Following discussion, governors' comments and questions were invited.

Q – To what extent was the College's energy usage derived from sustainable sources?

A – Solar panels on certain buildings and LED lighting across the whole College. Sustainability Committee in place and carbon reduction survey helped to identify opportunities to save energy and cut costs.

Q – What proportion of students had their own computer?

A – High proportion of students had smart phone / tablet / laptop. Bursary students were provided with equipment if required and a loan scheme was in operation for non-Bursary students.

Discussion ensued on the reference to high paper use and photocopying costs. Balance required between sustainability agenda and most effective teaching and learning resources to prepare students for paper-based written exams.

Resolved:

- **That the updated Property Strategy be approved.**

5. RISK MANAGEMENT AND AUDIT

5.1 Risk Management Action Plan (*previously circulated*)

The Vice Principal (Finance, Resources & Systems) presented the updated Risk Register and Action Plan. The revised document had been considered by the Audit Committee at its meeting on 10 June 2025. It was reported that the risk profile had changed since the last meeting as there was no longer a significant risk in relation to the appointment of permanent executive leaders and Foundation Governors. Seven contingent risks were highlighted within the report.

Resolved:

- **That the updated Risk Register be noted and approved.**

5.2 **Internal Audit Plan 2025-26** *(previously circulated)*

The Vice Principal (Finance, Resources & Systems) outlined the position with the tender exercise for Internal Audit Services. This had meant that the draft internal audit plan for the next academic year was not ready for formal consideration. Discussion would take place with the new Internal Auditor as soon as possible with a view to bringing a formal plan back to governors in September. In the meantime, SLT had suggested potential areas for review including: exams, the College website, and finance. Governors were invited to consider and suggest any further areas that would benefit from this assurance activity.

Following discussion, the areas of Safeguarding and SEND were suggested as potential areas for review in the following year (2026-27) to allow some time for the new staffing structure to bed in.

ACTION – FGB agenda item Autumn Term

6. **GOVERNANCE**

6.1 **Instrument and Articles of Government** *(previously circulated)*

The Clerk referred governors to the DfE letter dated 17 June 2025 and the action required in relation to the voting rights of student governors under the age of 18. The College's current Instrument and Articles of Government (I&A) were based on the CES model and included a standard provision at article 10(6) preventing student governors under 18 from voting on issues related to expenditure or contracts. This provision was understood to be inconsistent with the basic premise of charity law as it prevented such governors from fully exercising their role as charity trustees. As a Catholic College, any amendment to the I&A required the written consent of the Bishop and Trustees as well as the Governing Body. An email had been received from the CES setting out the process for effecting the required amendment. In the meantime, the Clerk sought the Governing Body's agreement in principle to proceed with steps to remove the provision in question and liaise as required with the CES and Archdiocese of Liverpool. A formal resolution would be brought back to the Governing Body in due course.

Resolved:

- **That the DfE letter be received and noted**
- **That the Clerk be authorised to proceed with the necessary arrangements to effect the required amendment to the I&A**

ACTION – Progress with I&A amendment in line with required process

6.2 **Committee Terms of Reference** *(previously circulated)*

The Clerk confirmed that all committees had conducted an annual review of their terms of reference (ToR) and the proposed amendments were highlighted. Of particular note were amendments to the Remuneration Committee's ToR to add greater clarity around the advisory role of the Committee and the ultimate authority of the Governing Body with regard to senior post-holder pay and remuneration. Further to the FE Commissioner's letter on good governance issued to all colleges in June, a further amendment was proposed to the membership clause to clarify that the Chair of the Committee should not be the same person as the Chair of Governors.

The proposed amendments to the Search Committee's ToR were also highlighted. In particular, the proposed change of name to Search and Governance Committee to better reflect the scope of its business.

Resolved:

- That the amended Committee Terms of Reference be approved.

7. COMMITTEE AND LINK GOVERNOR REPORTS

7.1 Link Governor Scheme Annual Report *(previously circulated)*

The Clerk presented this report which had been compiled in consultation with link governors. The report provided an overview of all link governor activity during 2024-25 as well as a summary of the key issues and areas of discussion that had emerged from link governor meetings.

The Chair thanked all link governors for the commitment they had demonstrated in their roles throughout the course of the year. Discussion ensued on the ongoing suitability of the existing link areas given the updated strategic priorities. The potential introduction of a Digital and Technology Link Governor was raised given the importance of AI strategy in the new strategic plan. It was proposed that the Skills and Careers Link Governor role description be updated to include AI/digital given the centrality of this technology to the skills agenda. Aside from this, it was agreed that the current link areas overlaid happily with the priorities set out in the new strategic plan.

Resolved:

- That the Link Governor Scheme Annual Report be received and noted.

ACTION – Update Skills & Careers Link Governor role description to include reference to AI/digital strategy

7.2 Search Committee – 19 May 2025 *(previously circulated)*

The draft minutes were noted.

7.3 Quality and Standards Committee – 20 May 2025 *(previously circulated)*

The draft minutes were noted and the Committee Chair referred governors to the following key points:

- CAP progress reports – final external exam results now awaited
- Subjects under formal review
- Foundation Learning entry criteria – updated Student Recruitment and Admissions Policy (item 8.4)
- Governors' professional links and networks and potential for these to support work experience opportunities across College – Chair of Governors would address this in governors' annual 1-2-1s.

7.4 Audit Committee – 10 June 2025 *(previously circulated)*

The draft minutes were noted and the Committee Vice Chair referred governors to the following key points:

- Internal Auditor's Annual Report – all areas subject to internal audit during 2024-25 had resulted in a strong assurance grading and lower than average number of recommendations when benchmarked across the sixth-form sector.

7.5 Finance and Resources Committee – 12 June 2025 *(previously circulated)*

The draft minutes were noted and key points had been addressed separately in the agenda.

Resolved:

- That all Committee minutes and verbal reports be received and noted.

