



Minutes of the Full Governing Body Meeting held on Tuesday 24 March 2026 at 6pm in the College Conference Room

Present:	Sarah Carroll	Foundation Governor
	Kevin Crooks	Staff Governor
	John Fogarty	Foundation Governor
	Janet Gater	Principal
	Sue Jarvis	Co-opted Governor
	Andrew Jones	Co-opted Governor
	Mick Martin (<i>Vice Chair</i>)	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 – <i>via Teams</i>	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

For practical reasons, the Vice Chair of Governors chaired the meeting and welcomed all attendees.

1. ROUTINE AND STANDING ITEMS

1.1 Opening prayer and Catholic Life update (*previously circulated*)

The Vice Principal (Curriculum, Quality & Pastoral) opened the meeting in prayer. She referred governors to the Catholic life update prepared by the Assistant Principal. The following points were highlighted:

- Catholic Ethos Group – overview of membership and purpose of the group was explained. The group brought together various strands of Catholic life from across the College and governed student and staff formation.
- 10:10 Ethics and Values sessions – significant improvement in attendance data.
- Progress since previous update and future actions.
- Catholic Life Inclusion and Engagement Lead – new additional responsibility role.
- Lent and advent engagement activities.

The Vice Chair thanked the Vice Principal for the update.

Resolved:

- **That the Catholic life update be received and noted.**

1.2 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.

Sarah Carroll's interest was noted in item 5.1 and it was agreed that she would withdraw from the meeting for part of this item.

1.3 **Apologies for absence**

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

- Patrick Alcantara – Foundation Governor
- Brother Ben – Foundation Governor
- Paul Forester – Parent Governor
- Samuel Moore – Student Governor

The meeting was declared quorate.

1.4 **Items to be included under urgent business**

None

1.5 **Minutes of the Governing Body meeting held on 9 December 2025** *(previously circulated)*

The minutes of the Full Governing Body (FGB) meeting held on 9 December 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)*

The Governing Body noted the action log prepared by the Clerk.

2. EXECUTIVE REPORTS

2.1 **Principal's Termly Report** *(previously circulated)*

The Principal referred governors to her report and highlighted the Spring Term KPI dashboard. No significant concerns were noted and all areas were on target to achieve expectation by the end of the year. The following key points were highlighted:

- Strong student attendance and retention data
- Decreasing staff absence rate
- Change to Senior Leadership Team (SLT) responsibilities
- Mission and ethos in action – wide range of events, trips and cultural capital opportunities for students.

In terms of the future look, the Principal provided a strategic update in the following areas:

- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) reform – the government's recent consultation paper had outlined a number of proposed changes. The College was preparing a response to the consultation.
- Level 3 qualification reform – a recent Department for Education (DfE) announcement had confirmed continued funding for BTEC qualifications pending the roll out of the new V Level qualifications. It was hoped that BTEC subjects, Criminology and Psychology, would be available at V Level given the popularity of the subjects at College.
- Catholic Schools Inspection – this was expected to take place in 2026-27 and the College was liaising closely with the Archdiocese of Liverpool in preparation for the inspection.
- Academisation – the Archdiocese of Liverpool had called all Catholic headteachers and chairs of governors to a meeting on 28 April at which the

academisation strategy would be shared. A Governing Body strategy day had been scheduled for Friday 5 June to provide an opportunity for detailed discussion of the strategic impact for the College. In the meantime, an update was provided following the recent Association of Catholic Sixth Form Colleges (ACVIC) conference.

A progress update against the shorter-term strategic priorities set out in the in-year operating plan was provided. Discussion ensued on the content of the Principal's Report and comments and questions invited.

Resolved:

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

ACTION – Governing Body strategy day on 5 June 2026

2.2 EDI Annual Report (*previously circulated*)

The Vice Chair referred governors to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) annual report and strategy. The Vice Principal (Finance, Resources & Systems) highlighted the EDI strengths across the College and provided an update against the previous year's action plan. The 2025-26 action plan set out the objectives for the current year which were structured around three key strands: staff, students and whole college. The Vice Chair noted that the report had already been considered and recommended for approval by the Quality & Standards Committee when it met on 10 March 2026.

Resolved:

- **That the EDI annual report and strategy be approved.**

3. STUDENT VOICE AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

3.1 Student Governor Update (*previously circulated*)

In the absence of the Student Governor, the Governing Body considered his written report and noted updates in the following areas:

- Student Council – regular student engagement activities and town hall meeting
- Carmel Radio – back in operation
- Fundraising activities – including re-scheduled thrift market
- Leavers' celebration arrangements
- Plans for new Student Council elections

Resolved:

- **That the Student Governor Report be received and noted.**

4. FINANCE, RISK & AUDIT

4.1 Finance Update and Management Accounts – January 2026 (*previously circulated*)

The Vice Principal (Finance, Resources & Systems) referred governors to the finance update and management accounts as at the end of January 2026 and reported that these had been considered in detail by the Finance and Resources Committee at its meeting on 12 March 2026. A verbal report was provided on the February finance key performance indicators (KPIs) which had since been finalised.

Governors' questions and comments were invited.

Q – Student recruitment figures show fewer student numbers from St Helens and more from the wider region. Any insights into this?

A – In terms of actual numbers, there was a slight increase in numbers of students from St Helens compared to last year. Proportionately, however, this represents a lower percentage of total students due to the increased overall intake. Discussion ensued on the factors affecting recruitment of students from within and outside the local borough.

Resolved:

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

4.2 **Risk Management Action Plan** (*previously circulated*)

The Vice Principal (Finance, Resources & Systems) referred governors to the College's updated risk register and action plan and reported that this had been considered by the Audit Committee at its meeting on 3 March 2026. One significant risk was associated with the uncertainty surrounding academisation. In addition, a number of contingent risks were highlighted and associated mitigations set out in the risk register.

Resolved:

- **That the risk register and action plan be approved.**

Sarah Carroll withdrew from the meeting at this point

5. **GOVERNANCE**

5.1 **Membership and succession planning** (*previously circulated*)

The Clerk updated the Governing Body on the latest developments with regard to its membership and succession planning.

Reappointment of Sarah Carroll as Foundation Governor

Search & Governance Committee had considered the reappointment of Sarah Carroll for a second term of office (4 July 2026 to 3 July 2030) and recommended this to the Governing Body, subject to the necessary approval of the archdiocese. It was noted that Graeme Slater would confirm his intentions before the next meeting.

Succession planning 2026-27

The Clerk reported back on discussions held at Search & Governance Committee regarding the medium-term succession plan for the next academic year and beyond. It was noted that terms of office for four governors and associate members were due to expire and early planning was required to mitigate the potential governance impact of any loss of skills and corporate knowledge. Termly reports would continue to be reviewed by Search & Governance Committee and appropriate recruitment activity undertaken.

Resolved:

- **That the reappointment of Sarah Carroll as Foundation Governor be approved subject to archdiocesan final approval**

ACTION – Clerk to liaise with archdiocese regarding Foundation Governor re-appointment

Sarah Carroll returned to the meeting at this point

5.2 **Code of Governance** *(previously circulated)*

The Clerk presented her report on a code of governance mapping exercise to review the College's governance arrangements against the revised Charity Governance Code and the AoC Further Education Code of Good Governance. An overview was provided of the two codes and additional considerations highlighted such as the Catholic Education Service (CES) position. The College was required to adopt a code that best reflected its legal structure and operations and, given the changes to the Charity Code, the report was intended to provide a refreshed overview to help support governors' determination. It was noted that the AoC Code provided a sector-specific governance framework drawn from the regulatory environment in which the College operated. The Charity Code was more generic in its good governance principles and operated on an apply or explain basis.

It was reported that the Search & Governance Committee had considered the report at its meeting on 23 March and recommended adoption of the AoC Further Education Code of Good Governance with effect from 1 August 2026. Discussion ensued and it was clarified that the recommendation did not extend to adoption of the Colleges Senior Post Holder Remuneration Code (the AoC SPH Code).

The Clerk explained that the Governing Body was required to include a statement of corporate governance in the annual report and accounts that reported on compliance with the adopted governance code, explaining any departures. In addition, the triennial external governance review – due in 2027 – would be framed against the College's adopted code.

Following discussion and input from the Chair of Audit Committee, it was agreed to adopt the AoC Further Education Code of Good Governance with effect from 1 August 2026. The AoC SPH Code was explicitly excluded from this decision. It was further agreed that annual assessment against the Charity Code principles would continue to ensure that the College was able to draw on good governance practice from other frameworks.

Resolved:

- **That the AoC Further Education Code of Good Governance be adopted from 1 August 2026.**

ACTION – Update Governing Body Handbook and other relevant documentation from 1 August 2026

5.3 **Instrument & Articles of Government** *(previously circulated)*

The Clerk reminded the Governing Body of the Department for Education (DfE) letter requiring colleges to remove a clause from the Instrument and Articles of Government (I&A) that prevented student governors under the age of 18 from voting on certain matters due to its incompatibility with charity law expectations. Amendments to the I&A required the written consent of the Governing Body and the Trustees and Bishop, therefore the Catholic Education Service (CES) had been co-ordinating the amendment process for all Catholic colleges. The amended I&A were presented for approval and it was reported that the Search & Governance Committee had recommended adoption in full at its meeting on 23 March.

Resolved:

- **To adopt the amended I&A in full and delegate signature of the consent form to the Chair on behalf of the Governing Body**

ACTION – Signed consent form to be returned to the CES

6. COMMITTEE AND LINK GOVERNOR REPORTS

Committee Chairs were invited to highlight key points of interest arising from the recent round of Committee meetings.

6.1 Audit Committee draft minutes from 3 March 2026 (*previously circulated*)

The Committee Chair provided an update on the key matters discussed at the meeting and confirmed that Committee members had received training from the Internal Auditor on Artificial Intelligence (AI) governance and assurance.

6.2 Quality and Standards Committee draft minutes from 10 March 2026 (*previously circulated*)

The Committee Chair provided an update on matters discussed at the meeting, highlighting the decrease in safeguarding incidents, pleasing student progress at common assessment points (CAP) 1, 2 and 5, positive judgements arising out of lesson observations and visits, and progress with interventions for the subject under formal subject review. Governors' attention was also drawn to the DfE's recently published performance data and the excellent Level 3 value added data for A Levels and BTECs. The Principal provided governors with an update on the planned changes within the Foundation Learning department.

6.3 Finance and Resources Committee draft minutes from 12 March 2026 (*previously circulated*)

The Committee Chair provided an update on the key matters discussed at the meeting, highlighting the importance of the student transport strategy and the review of student recruitment data for the next academic year. A point of clarification was raised with respect to the application to enrolment conversion rate which was confirmed at 45%.

6.4 Search and Governance Committee draft minutes from 23 March 2026 (*verbal update*)

The Chair noted that the key matters arising from this meeting had already been subject to discussion under section 5.

6.5 Link Governor updates (*previously circulated*)

Link governor visit reports were received and noted as follows:

- Safeguarding and Prevent link governor (visit dates 12/02/26 and 020326)
- SEND link governor (visit date 24/02/26)
- EDI link governor (visit date 27/02/26)
- Skills, Careers and Digital link governor (16/03/26)

Additional verbal feedback on these Spring Term visits was provided by those link governors in attendance.

Resolved:

- **That all committee minutes and link governor reports be received and noted**

7. CONSENT AGENDA

The Clerk and Vice Chair reported that one query had been raised in advance of the meeting with the Clerk regarding item 7.2, Financial Regulations 2026. As a result, two minor amendments had been made to clauses 6.2 and 7.1 of the draft regulations to include explicit reference to artificial intelligence (AI). The Vice Chair advised the Governing Body that there remained an opportunity to raise any further queries if required. None were raised.

Policies and other documents *(previously circulated)*

- 7.1 **Use of Reasonable Force and Physical Interventions Policy**
- 7.2 **Financial Regulations 2026**
- 7.3 **Safeguarding College Assets Annual Report**
- 7.4 **Business Continuity Annual Report**

Resolved:

- **That all policy documents be approved**
- **That all annual reports be received and noted**

8. OTHER MATTERS

8.1 Urgent business

None

8.2 Date of next meeting

Governing Body Strategy Day – Friday 5 June 2026

Governing Body Summer Term meeting – Tuesday 30 June 2026 at 6pm

There being no further Part 1 business to discuss the meeting concluded at 7pm.

Signed by the Chair: _____



On this day: _____ 30 June 2026 _____