

Xaverian College

Governing Body Meeting

Monday 8th June 2020 at 2.00pm

By Video Conference

Minutes

Governors Present:-

Mr B O'Shea (Chair)	Mr A Gornall	Mr S O'Hanrahan
Mrs T Dervin (Vice Chair)	Mr P Hartley	Mr L Ormsby
Ms M Bjedov	Mrs J Hicklin	Mrs S Parkin
Ms L Buckley (appointment pending)	Mr A Knowles (Principal)	Mr P Quinn
Mrs C Fitzwilliam-Pipe	Miss G Harrison	Mr G Walker

Also in attendance:-

Mrs K Stanhope (Clerk)
Mr I Lewis (Director of Finance and Business)
Mr S Channell (Vice Principal Student Support)
Mr A De Paola (Vice Principal Curriculum)

Item		Action
	BOS welcomed everyone to the meeting. AK opened the meeting with the prayer of Theodore Ryken.	
1a	Apologies Apologies had been received from Sr E Donoghue, Mr J Egerton, Mrs C Rafferty, Mr A Stiles, Ms M Tilley and Mrs L Walmsley. Monsignor M Kujacz was unable to join the meeting due to last minute technical issues.	
1b	Notification of Urgent Business The Chair asked if there were any items of urgent business. He raised one issue himself (see Item 4a below). No other items were raised.	
1c	Declaration of Interests The Chair reminded members that they should declare any interests they may have. SOH reminded governors that his wife is a teacher at the college.	
1d	Minutes of Previous Meeting The minutes of the previous meeting on 11 th February 2020 were approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting and the Chair will sign these when it becomes possible to visit the college in person.	BOS/KPS

<p>1e</p>	<p>Matters Arising</p> <p><u>Item 2a</u></p> <p>TD asked whether there was any update on Ofsted’s plans to remove the exemption for the inspection of outstanding colleges. AK confirmed that this will go ahead in principle however it is unlikely that inspections will take place in the Autumn Term in view of the current situation with Coronavirus. LO said that he had heard that school inspections might start in November or January.</p>	
<p>2</p>	<p>Coronavirus Planning</p> <p>BOS commended the work done by the college to keep things going and provide the necessary support to students during this difficult time. He invited AK to update governors on progress to date.</p> <p><u>Steps taken to date</u></p> <p>AK said that the last day in college for students had been 20th March. Since then teaching has been delivered online. Teaching staff were advised to follow the usual timetable as far as possible to give structure to the week and staff have responded well, with much creativity in their approach.</p> <p>The college has remained open during lockdown. Pastoral Managers have been in close contact with vulnerable students, who were invited to continue attending college if they wished, although very few did so. A number of staff with particular health issues were advised to stay at home.</p> <p>AK said that the initial focus had been on U6 teaching, until it was confirmed that results would be based on calculated grades. L6 is now the main focus for teaching. A supply of Chromebooks and laptops have been made available to those staff and students who needed them.</p> <p>AK said that all staff had been paid as usual, including cleaning staff and music peripatetics, and that bursaries to students had been paid as normal. Weekly updates have been provided to staff (and copied to governors) and RE, pastoral and careers support has continued alongside subject teaching. In the wider community the college has provided face masks to the NHS and offered its car park for NHS use.</p> <p>JH particularly thanked the college for its support of vulnerable students during this period.</p> <p><u>Reopening arrangements for the Summer Term</u></p> <p>AK said that during the week commencing 1st June pastoral managers had undertaken one to one interviews with 47 vulnerable students. The majority of these had taken place in person, with appropriate social distancing measures. Those who chose not to come into college had a one to one meeting via Microsoft Teams. AK said that those who attended seemed to benefit from the reassurance of being back in college.</p> <p>From this week, 8th June, IT facilities have been made available for those who have had IT issues at home, either through lack of broadband or through having to share equipment with other members of the household. From 15th June the plan is to allow all L6 students to come into college for a short session in each subject area, to allow staff to check on the welfare of students and to clarify what they need to achieve over the summer and into September. The reduced timetable would allow for a late start and early finish to avoid rush hour travel.</p>	

	<p>In addition all students will have a one to one Teams meeting with their teachers.</p> <p>AK said that a survey of parents indicated that 60% were happy for students to return to college, but only one third of students could get to college without using public transport. AK said that a large proportion of parents had been very pleased with the online provision, with only a few criticisms. He said that there was a continual drive to make the process as interactive as possible.</p> <p>TD thanked the senior team for keeping governors fully informed throughout and for the incredible work of all concerned during this busy and unprecedented period. She also recognised the Xaverian ethos underpinning everything, with the college keen to do the right thing by students, staff and the local community.</p> <p><u>Implications and plans for the Autumn Term</u></p> <p>AK said that it was likely that public transport would not be fully up and running by September and that social distancing rules would demand smaller class sizes, therefore different models of learning were being considered e.g. splitting the cohort – maybe half in college one week and the other half watching remotely, then swapping the following week, although union views on video recording of lessons will need to be taken into account. AK said it was not yet known whether exam boards would take into account the disruption when awarding next year’s grades.</p> <p>BOS asked about plans for enrolling next year’s L6. AK said that whilst physical taster days could not take place this year, there would be a virtual New Students’ Day as well as web-based and YouTube activities where new students can access all subject areas. He said the college is currently planning for physical enrolment in September but can fall back on remote one to one meetings if necessary.</p> <p>IL said that the college had purchased hand sanitiser and masks which will be provided to all staff and students.</p> <p>BOS asked the Student Governors how they had found the online experience. GH said that she had found all of her teachers to be available and very supportive. MB said that she was happy with how things had gone, although there was a little variation between subjects. BOS asked how she felt about using public transport. MB said that she needed to take 2-3 buses to get into college. She felt it was risky at the moment. Her mum is a nurse and so has directly experienced the effects of the virus, so they are understandably cautious.</p> <p>JH asked whether the college had any student feedback regarding destinations this year, e.g. how secure are their next steps, or will they prefer to not go to HE this year if the experience is not going to be as normal. AK said there had been no feedback on this so far, but he suspected there may be some demand to repeat a year at college if grades are not as hoped for. GH said that Edinburgh University had been in touch with very clear information and they were hoping to have student accommodation available by September. Some of her friends were considering deferring but were awaiting further information before making a decision.</p> <p>SC said that the careers department is functioning as normal and he will speak to the careers manager to see if she can summarise current feedback.</p>	<p>SC</p>
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	<p>ADP said that normal procedures would apply to Level 1 and 2 students hoping to progress to other courses. It may be that an increased number choose to stay at college and we will accommodate this wherever possible.</p> <p>AK said that the student induction period was extended last year to support the linear structure and this will help the college to be as flexible as possible this year with regard to course changes. He said that online learning will help as students will be able to test out a subject before deciding and will also be able to catch up on any work already missed.</p> <p>AK said it is likely that there will be a lot of contact from students following the release of grades. The college plans to have a Results day which will be fully resourced to support students in their decisions. LO said that there would be some disappointments and that there were challenges to face at all transition points in education.</p> <p>Student Governor MB said that there was also a level of concern amongst L6 students about how they will be assessed, with no end of term exams this year. AK said that teachers will be supportive and will take into account work prior to lockdown. He reassured MB that teachers will recognise the ability of their students.</p> <p>BOS thanked AK for the update and congratulated the college on being able to reinvent itself under such difficult circumstances, without losing its ethos of caring for people. AK said it had been a real team effort and thanked the Senior Postholders for their support throughout.</p> <p>BOS said that the current situation would require rapid decision-making as the situation and guidance continually change, and asked that the Governing Body approve the delegation of day to day matters to the FP&R Committee who will convene as necessary and report back to the Governing Body. This was agreed by all present.</p>	
<p>3a</p>	<p>Update on Pay Award</p> <p>AK said that the pay award had now been agreed. He said that a two-year deal for teaching staff had been offered, but following consultation the unions opted for a one-year deal as follows:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.5% from 1st September 2019 • 1.25% from 1st April 2020 <p>For support staff a two-year deal was agreed as follows:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.5% from 1st September 2019 • 1.25% from 1st April 2020 • 2.5% from 1st January 2021 <p>The Governing Body was happy to support these increases.</p>	
<p>3b</p>	<p>Management Accounts as at end of April</p> <p>IL said that income was above budget as at the end of April. University Student numbers were above budget and the ESFA had recently confirmed the additional funding to cover the increased pension contributions. This has now been guaranteed until March 2021.</p> <p>Pay expenditure was above budget, with accruals made for anticipated pay increases. Exam invigilators will be paid this half term.</p>	

	<p>Non-pay expenditure was below budget due largely to the reduction in orders as a result of staff not being on site. This is expected to increase slightly when staff return, but in the short term this balances the additional costs of lockdown.</p> <p>The overall surplus was well above the budgeted position.</p> <p>IL said that some maintenance works had been brought forward so that they could be completed whilst the campus is quiet, including tarmac of the main drive, carpeting in Mayfield and work in the canteen facilities.</p> <p>IL anticipated that the college would be able to maintain its financial health grading of Outstanding this year. He said that generally SFCs had fared better in the current crisis than FE colleges who were suffering the loss of apprenticeships and adult education.</p> <p>IL said that construction work on the new building had stopped with lockdown and had just started again but with social distancing measures in place. Completion is likely to be delayed until the end of November which will present some timetable challenges for September, but this has been unavoidable.</p>	
<p>3c</p>	<p>Revised Budget</p> <p>IL presented the updated budget for approval. The budget set in February had been sent to the ESFA on the new template but they had requested an updated submission by the end of July. The main focus being the 12-month cashflow as they have concerns about cash positions albeit that is more around FE Colleges .</p> <p>Looking at the forecast of Income and Expenditure IL said that the budgeted number of University students had been reduced as there was currently uncertainty regarding the enrolment of foreign students. It is possible that teaching for these students may commence in January, however the budget takes a cautious approach with a reduced number for next year and thereafter.</p> <p>IL said that depreciation will also change due to the delay in completion of the new building.</p> <p>As mentioned earlier, funding of additional pension contributions has been confirmed until Mar 2021, however IL has not assumed that this will continue beyond that date. There is also no guarantee that additional funding for high value A-levels will continue.</p> <p>Pay rises have been assumed at 2% year on year. A small increase in teaching department expenditure has been allowed for 2020/21.</p> <p>IL said that beyond 2020/21 there is more uncertainty and the cash balance is expected to drop in the medium term based no recovery of the University student numbers. However the college is currently in a good position financially, with sufficient prudence built in.</p> <p>PQ said it was reassuring to see that caution was being exercised but expressed concern that the additional pension funding may be likely to be removed in a period of certain austerity. IL said this was a risk, however the removal of funding would leave some colleges in severe financial difficulties therefore politically the government may not choose to go down that route.</p> <p>TD agreed that prudence was a good approach. She asked whether there was a possibility that building work could be completed sooner if it was possible to get more construction workers on site. SC said that if the building was not ready for the start of term, then there was nothing to be gained by saving a month or two</p>	

	<p>since the building could not be timetabled until January. He said the college has contingency plans in place to use other buildings in the meantime. BOS said that the possible delay in enrolling foreign university students may help.</p> <p>BOS asked whether the college had paid out for exam fees. IL confirmed that these had been paid prior to lockdown. It is not assumed that any money will be refunded but details are awaited as to whether anything will be carried over.</p> <p>IL also reminded governors that there is a contingency element within the budget. He said this may need to be drawn upon in the event of cancelled trips and lost deposits.</p>	
<p>4a</p>	<p>Urgent Business</p> <p>BOS raised an item of urgent business in connection with a recent matter which he wished governors to be aware of. He invited AK to provide a summary.</p> <p>AK said that the college had recently received a template letter from a group of students who had expressed disappointment that the college had not reached out to support its BME students following recent events and the Black Lives Matter campaign. A response had been sent from the pastoral team which said that the matter would be dealt with as part of the pastoral programme and suggested that the issue was too political.</p> <p>This unfortunately resulted in a social media outcry whereby the college was inundated with telephone and e-mail messages, many from sources not associated with the college.</p> <p>The college recognises that a mistake was made in not responding quickly enough and has since apologised to all students and also contacted the 30 students who sent the initial letter, inviting them in to discuss the matter. AK said he had asked Student Governor MB to look at some of the materials and thanked her for her help which had been invaluable. Many students have commented that the college portrayed on social media is not the college they recognise, however the college accepts its mistake and is working hard to rectify the matter.</p> <p>BOS asked the Student Governors for their views.</p> <p>GH said she had initially been annoyed with the response but recognised it was an error. She has worked with the pastoral team and understands that this does not reflect the college's attitudes. She said that students were reassured after receiving the apology and thanked the college for handling it in an appropriate manner.</p> <p>MB said she completely agreed. She said that the initial suggestion that the matter would be dealt with in October caused outrage due to this being so far away, however things have calmed down in the light of the college's apology. She believes that the college equally represents all students and didn't want the college to be portrayed the way it was on social media.</p> <p>BOS said that the college will learn from this but he believed that the college works hard for every student and this matter is not indicative of the college ethos.</p> <p>Finally, BOS informed the Governing Body that Parent Governor LM had chosen to step down as a governor following this incident. BOS and AK have been in contact and have offered to meet with her.</p>	

	<p>SOH said he was fully supportive of the approach taken. The college is right to acknowledge its mistake but continues to follow its principles.</p> <p>LO asked whether there had been any press involvement. BOS said that whilst there had been a suggestion of this, it had not materialised. Should this occur then the college will engage professional assistance.</p>	
4b	<p>Date of Future Meetings</p> <p>BOS said that unfortunately due to current social distancing requirements there will be no Governor Training Day in July this year. However it is hoped that governors will still meet virtually for a final meeting this term. KPS will be in touch to arrange this. He hoped that GH would be willing to share her experience, as is usual for the outgoing Student Governor. He said feedback is more important than ever at this time and he looks forward to continued contributions from MB next year.</p> <p>BOS thanked the senior team for their hard work in securing a strong position for the college during the Corona crisis and reminded them that the Governing Body is here to challenge but also to provide support should they need assistance at any time.</p>	KPS
	The meeting closed at 3.35pm.	