Xaverian College

Governing Body Meeting
Tuesday 20th May 2025 at 6.00pm

Minutes

Governors Present:-

Francess Davies-Tagoe
Catherine Fitzwilliam-Pipe
Stephen Hall (Vice Chair)
David Harrison
Julie Hicklin
Anthony Knowles (Principal)
Monsignor Michael Kujacz
Jo Leach
Sean O'Hanrahan
Stella Parkin
Ben Quiligotti
David Sharp
Louise Walmsley

Also in attendance:-

Claire Jordan – prospective Foundation Governor
Karen Stanhope (Clerk)
Ivan Lewis (Director of Finance and Business)
Simon Channell (Vice Principal Student Support)
Antonio De Paola (Vice Principal Curriculum)

Item		Action
	The meeting was chaired by Vice Chair SH. SH welcomed everyone and AK opened the meeting with the prayer of Theodore Ryken.	
1a	**Apologies** Apologies had been received from Teresa Dervin, John Egerton, Sheldon Logue, Katie McKnight, Chris Thomas, Ameerah Ullah and Natasha Woodham.	
1b	**Notification of Urgent Business** The Chair asked if there were any items of urgent business. None were raised.	
1c	**Declaration of Interests** The Chair reminded members that they should declare any interests they may have. No declarations were made.	
1d	**Minutes of Previous Meeting** The minutes of the previous meeting on 11th February 2025 were approved by all present and signed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.	
1e	**Matters Arising** There were no matters arising from the previous minutes which were not covered on this agenda.	

2a	**Principal's Report** AK presented his report which had been circulated. He said that Ofsted had recently run a further consultation on its proposals for a new inspection model. In addition to individual responses the SFCA submitted a collective response on behalf of the sector. AK said the skills agenda was still prominent in the sector. An interim report on the Curriculum and Assessment Review has been published, highlighting a number of findings including the need to respond to technological changes such as AI, the future of 16-19 technical and vocational qualifications and the need for suitable pathways for those not achieving GCSE English and Maths. The final report is due in October. SOH asked for clarification regarding Alternative Academic Qualifications (AAQs). AK said these were slightly different but similar to the BTEC family of qualifications. He said that BTECs had been extended for a further year, and the college would be introducing some AAQs. ADP said that the single BTECS would be replaced with AAQs from September but the triple BTECs would remain for another year. He said that this would be a good solution if the BTEC triple could be continued in the longer term. AK said that an increase in the funding rate had been confirmed, bringing this to £5026 per student. IL confirmed that the funding for the difference in pay award had been received and it was likely that there would be some funding of NI however this had yet to be confirmed. AK provided an update on industrial relations. He said that the NEU dispute had ended, however the NASUWT was putting pressure on institutions to make up the difference in the pay award for the period April 2024 and September 2025. SOH asked whether some institutions had paid. AK said that a couple of SFCs had agreed to pay due to their specific circumstances, but in general the sector was holding firm and there are some colleges who can't afford to pay more. AK said that the Annual Strategic Conversation with the DfE will take place at the end of June and will include a review of the college's strategic plans and responsiveness to local needs. ADP provided an update on curriculum matters. He said that the Curriculum Plan had identified where additional teachers were needed and a number of support positions would be advertised after half term. He said exams were going well with good attendance. Booster and revision sessions were taking place and breakfast was being provided for students on exam days. Recruitment was well under way with a huge increase in applications. Course consultations had gone well and Welcome Days for new students would take place after GCSEs have finished. SOH asked whether more places were to be offered this year. ADP confirmed that this was the case. He said that much analysis had taken place at school level to ensure sufficient places were offered, particularly where conversion rates were high. SOH asked how the recruitment model was working. ADP said this was working well and that all teaching staff would be involved. SC provided an update on pastoral matters. He said that Year 13 sessions had focused on HE finance applications as well as revision and exam preparation.	

	Year 12 students had taken part in a pathways day. JL said that this had involved talks from guest speakers and a careers fair with around 60 providers covering HE, apprenticeships and gap year activities. She said that all students were encouraged to complete a UCAS entry in order to keep a range of options open to them. The format of the day had been updated to include quiet time for those who needed it. SH asked if there had been any trend in interests. JL said that the programme is tailored each year to include new options, and all subject areas had proved popular. She said that more students might opt for a degree apprenticeship if more were available. On facilities matters, SC said that the expanded Facilities team was working well with much maintenance work, including electrical, now possible in-house. The new portacabins had been available for use from Easter. These will be used by the University Programme and had also been used for recent exams. SC said that work to Marylands roof had been completed, funded by grants and college reserves, and work on the windows was also complete. SC said the new Science Hub was due for handover on 16th June, with two weeks snagging to follow. The college was very pleased with the building. The college is now considering Phase 2 of the project, namely the future of the Xavier building. One option would be to create a new building between Maryland and Teresa Quinn rather than rebuilding in the current location of Xavier. It is felt that the planning department may be more amenable to this, and it is likely to be a more cost effective option. He said that the college would like approval of the costs of taking the matter through to planning, in the region of £300k. IL confirmed that this amount would be available in the budget. SOH asked if the Xavier building could be preserved but AK said it was felt that the costs of doing so would be prohibitive. SP asked how much green space would be taken up with a new building, since the attractive campus is a selling point of the college. SC confirmed that the building would be placed between the others, with minimal effect on the lawn area. He said that additional space would also be gained in the Xavier area. SOH asked about the effect on trees. SC said that this would be taken into account. He said that the poplars had a remaining lifespan of around 40 years therefore it was important to plant new trees now for the future. Following discussion, governors were happy to approve the costs of taking the matter through to planning. AK said that staff development activities were ongoing with a number of teaching and support staff attending middle leadership training provided by Promoting Excellence. SH asked if there had been feedback on this and AK said that feedback had been very positive. JL had attended the training and confirmed that it had been very useful and had helped bring support managers together. AK said that the programme is likely to be repeated in the future. AK said there had been great successes in sport this year, particularly basketball. He also referred to the many drama and music activities covered in the report. SH asked if there would be a musical this year as previous ones had been excellent. ADP said there were plans for a future production but not in the coming term. AK circulated a copy of a new booklet summarising the Catholic Life and Mission of the College which will be circulated to all staff. It summarises the ethos and values of the college and what it means to be part of the Xaverian community.	

	Finally, AK announced that it was SC's intention to retire in the summery of 2026. He had kindly formalised this at an early stage in order that the process of recruitment could begin early. It was hoped that an advert would go out this week for a January start date in order to give some overlap prior to SC leaving.	
2b	**Academisation** AK gave an update on academisation. He said that whilst initially there was a reluctance to go down this route, it was becoming clear that the element of choice was gradually being removed. He reminded governors that various options existed such as standalone and horizontal or vertical academy trusts. The college has been exploring options for joining with other Catholic colleges to see if there is merit in a horizontal structure. There would be some advantages if strong Catholic colleges could come together with a common cause. AK reminded governors about the meeting on 30th June, when Patrick Murden, CEO of a multi-academy trust in Westminster, will be coming to talk about his experience of academisation. AK will present what he sees as the pros and cons, but he feels that we will need to move towards a decision. SH said that the Bishop of Salford seems supportive of the type of model suggested but other Bishops are not. SH suggested it would be a good idea to be proactive whilst there are options available to us and that it would not be in the College's best interests to wait it out in the long term. BQ asked to what extent the college would remain independent in a horizontal model. AK said that there did not appear to be any pressure from the Diocese to merge services e.g. support areas, although this may evolve over time. It may also be possible to ringfence budgets specific to Xaverian. SH said that hopefully the college would retain some autonomy but there may be opportunities to come together where this is beneficial. SOH said there was clearly a political push towards academisation, but it was good that discussion around the options was being allowed. AK said that three colleges together would represent around 9000 students which would be great for the future of Catholic sixth form provision.	
2c	**Accountability Agreement** IL presented the Accountability Agreement which is updated each year, tying in with the Annual Strategic Conversation. He said that the format had been updated slightly, but the document sets out the purpose and background, the context in which we operate, emerging opportunities in Greater Manchester, employment links and how the college will strive to meet local and national priorities. Actions include the expansion of the MDV programme and Xaverian Xtras, as well as the ongoing review of the vocational course offer. The agreement was approved by all present.	
3a	**Membership** SH was pleased to welcome Claire Jordan to the meeting. It was hoped that the Diocese would approve her application to become a Foundation Governor. He invited CJ to introduce herself. CJ said she was an ex-Xaverian student and was now a teacher at her former school. She was looking forward to working with the Governing Body.	

	SH also thanked Associate Governor David Sharp, who had applied to the Diocese to become a Foundation Governor. SH thanked CJ and DS for their commitment to the college and wished them well in their applications. If the applications are successful this will bring our Foundation Governor numbers back to full strength.	
3b	**Link Governor – Health & Safety** SH reminded governors that an invitation had been put out at the last meeting for a governor to become our link governor for Health & Safety. SH was pleased to confirm that SP had put herself forward for the role. SP said that she had no experience of this area so was starting afresh but she had recently met with Facilities Manager JB and had learnt a lot about what his job involves. She felt she had toured the campus with a different eye and had found the visit very interesting. The Governing Body was pleased to approve the appointment of SP to this role.	
3c	**Feedback on Curriculum Visits** SH confirmed that a wide range of visits had taken place this term. Feedback sheets had been circulated but SH invited any further comments. CFP said she would heartily recommend doing such visits. She said it had been a pleasure to undertake her recent visit to English and she had been made very welcome by the department. She had talked to staff and students and had been humbled by how positive they all were. DS said that he had also been welcomed by the BTEC Science team. He said it had been good to see the team working together to achieve great things and he had picked up some points to take back to his high school in relation to the importance of the applied science route. ADP said that the route is certainly right for some students and is not a second-rate option in any sense. He was keen to support high schools in communicating this to students and the introduction of AAQs would present further opportunities. JH visited the Additional Learning Support team which she had found interesting from both a governor and a professional viewpoint. The team had moved into the St Edwards Presbytery building and had created a warm and welcoming space for students. The set-up was very impressive, and it was clear that staff in general were aware of the support available. The team would prefer more space and a closer proximity to the pastoral team and students had expressed a wish to know more about access to the University Library which can provide an additional study space.	
4a	**Management Accounts** IL presented the management accounts as at the end of April. Income was above budget, driven by the increase in University students, but offset by lower than expected high needs funding. ESFA funding was slightly below budget following the pay-back of tuition fees, however a pay grant was due to be received in July. Pay expenditure was below budget due to some facilities staff being recruited later than planned and roles elsewhere not being required.	

	There was also an underspend on non-pay. Utility bills were less than expected, helped by a mild winter. Maintenance costs were above budget, whilst exam costs were likely to be less than budgeted. On the balance sheet debtors were down to minimal levels. IL said that the new accounts system had been installed and dual recording is currently in place whilst the new system beds in. The budget and financial forecasts are currently in preparation and will be presented to FP&R and Governors next half term. IL reminded governors that the college has two outstanding loans, one for the building of Mayfield and one for the Ward Hall extension. The outstanding amount on each is around £400k. IL proposed that one of these loans be paid off out of reserves, saving future interest. If the college was to academise it would not be allowed to have commercial loans. SOH asked whether academies were able to borrow. IL confirmed that they were not able to borrow commercially and would have to approach the DfE. SH asked if SMT were happy with this course of action and IL confirmed that this was the case. There were no objections from the governors, and it was approved that the loan with the less favourable interest rate be paid off. IL said that cash levels had fallen slightly due to invoices for the Science Block now having less grant to offset them. He said that £3.8m of the grant had already been received with a final amount due on completion. Invoices for Maryland roof had all been received. A surplus was forecast on Bursary funding, which would be carried over to next year.	IL
4b	**Financial Regulations and Procedures** IL presented the financial regulations and procedures which had been reviewed by the FP&R Committee who recommended approval. He highlighted the following areas which had been updated: - <u>Regulations</u> Section 19.3 (Procurement) had been updated in light of recent legislation. IL said that the college is not generally big enough for the relevant thresholds to take effect, however the college is working closely with the Crescent Purchasing Consortium for advice, to ensure compliance with the Procurement Act and publishing requirements. Section 19.7 (Contracts) had been updated to state that the appointment of consultants e.g. architects will be subject to tendering and other procedures where appropriate, in line with the guidance on managing public money. <u>Procedures</u> Section 3 (Budget Managers) had been updated to show that IL would be overseeing premises costs in conjunction with Facilities Manager JB. Section 5.1 (Bank Accounts) had been updated to say that any bank accounts will be opened in accordance with the Financial Regulations and the Treasury Management Policy.	

	IL said that the finance team had recently introduced a new software system and it may be necessary to review the procedures again once the system is bedded in. SH thanked IL and the finance team and invited governors to approve the Financial Regulations and Procedures. These were approved by all present.	
5a	**Quality Strategy** AK presented the Quality Strategy which had been considered by the Q&S Committee, who recommended its approval. He said the document had been reviewed and updated by CGP, Assistant Principal for Quality & Standards. AK highlighted key areas of the strategy, which sets out the framework and processes to deliver outstanding teaching and learning. The Quality Strategy was approved by all present.	
5b	**Admissions Policy** ADP presented this policy which had been considered by the Q&S Committee who recommended its approval. ADP said there were no significant changes to report. He referred governors to the section on applications and appeals. He said that whilst specific deadlines are quoted in the policy, the College tries to be receptive to appeals wherever possible. He said that admissions processes are being reviewed with a view to moving some aspects online, therefore the policy may need to be brought back to governors for further approval at a later date. SH asked about EHCP offers. ADP said that the ALS team were receiving good information on these and more offers had been made this year. SP asked what would be a typical number. ADP said this had previously been around 30 across two years, but this looked set to increase. SOH asked about course provision for these. ADP said that the college will try to offer a course wherever possible but the predicted grades are not always sufficient for the preferred programme. He added that some EHCPs have been in place for a long period and may not be found to be required in college. The Admissions Policy was approved by all present.	
6a	**Committee Minutes** SH reminded governors to take time to read the Committee minutes which had been circulated on the hub: - • Audit Committee 19th March 2025 • Q&S Committee 25th March 2025 • FP&R Committee 31st March 2025 A number of committee matters had already been considered and approved at this meeting and there were no questions at the present time.	
7a	**Urgent Business** There were no items of urgent business to discuss.	

7b	**Date of Next Meeting** The next meeting will take place at 5.00pm on Monday 30th June 2025 and will include a presentation and discussion on academisation.	
	The meeting closed at 7.35pm.	

Signed…………………………………………………

Date……………………………………………………