Xaverian College

Governing Body Meeting
Monday 30th June 2025 at 5.00pm

Minutes

Governors Present: -

Teresa Dervin (Chair)
John Egerton
Catherine Fitzwilliam-Pipe
Stephen Hall (Vice Chair)
Julie Hicklin
Claire Jordan
Anthony Knowles (Principal)
Monsignor Michael Kujacz
Jo Leach
Sheldon Logue
Sean O'Hanrahan
Stella Parkin
Ben Quiligotti
David Sharp
Chris Thomas
Venus Woodham

Also in attendance: -

Karen Stanhope (Clerk)
Ivan Lewis (Director of Finance and Business)
Simon Channell (Vice Principal Student Support)
Antonio De Paola (Vice Principal Curriculum
Patrick Murden (CEO of The Diocese of Westminster Academy Trust) (Item 4a)

Item		Action
	TD welcomed everyone to the meeting. AK opened the meeting with the prayer of Theodore Ryken. The agenda had been structured to prioritise items for approval early in the meeting, leaving time for the important presentation and discussion on Academisation later in the meeting.	
1a	**Apologies** Apologies had been received from David Harrison, Katie McKnight, Ameerah Ullah and Louise Walmsley. Francess Davies-Tagoe was not in attendance.	
1b	**Welcome** TD was pleased to confirm that the Diocese had approved the appointment of Claire Jordan and David Sharp (former Associate Governor) as Foundation Governors. She warmly welcomed Claire and David on behalf of the Governing Body.	
1c	**Notification of Urgent Business** TD asked if there were any items of urgent business. The Principal raised one urgent matter. See Item 2k below.	
1d	**Declaration of Interests** TD reminded members that they should declare any interests they may have. No	

	declarations were made.	
1e	**Minutes of Previous Meeting** The minutes of the previous meeting on 20th May 2025 were approved by all present and signed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.	
1f	**Matters Arising** There were no matters arising from the previous minutes.	
2a	**Committee Terms of Reference** KPS presented the complete Terms of Reference (TOR) for all committees, which had been reviewed by the individual committees and recommended for approval. She said there was just one minor amendment to the Q&S TOR, removing the Director of Finance and Business from the list of attendees. In practice IL had not been an attendee, and the Committee did not feel his attendance was necessary. The Governing Body was happy with the proposed amendment and agreed to approve the amended TOR.	
2b	**Calendar of Business** KPS presented the Calendar of Business for the Governing Body which had been updated to align with the individual committee calendars reviewed throughout the year. She proposed the following changes based on committee discussions: - • Prayer and Liturgy Policy to be added to October. This was a new policy which had recently been reviewed by the Q&S Committee who recommended it being reviewed and approved by the full Governing Body. • Appointment of Auditors to be brought forward from July to May. This had been suggested by the external auditors via the Audit Committee, to ensure that re-appointment did not clash with the end of year audit preparations. • Any reference to Estates and Resources to be changed to Capital Projects and Facilities to better reflect the restructured and renamed Facilities Team. The Governing Body was happy to approve the Calendar of Business with the above amendments.	
2c	**Draft Budget and Financial Forecasts** IL presented the draft budget for 2025/26 and financial forecasts through to 2028/29. These had been reviewed by the FP&R Committee who recommended approval. IL said that the funding allocation for next year had been received, and the figures provided include recent changes to the funding rate. IL said that University student numbers had been budgeted at 230, remaining level throughout the period. Funding of the pension increase has been assumed to continue. Looking at pay expenditure IL said that the recently advertised VP position has been deferred, therefore this has been removed from the figures. He said that a spare teacher has been included as a contingency and a 4% pay award has been	

	factored in. On non-pay expenditure each departmental budget has been built up from zero, based on fixed costs and a five-year average spend per student. IL said that the maintenance figure for next year includes preliminary costs relating to the future of the Xavier building but the maintenance figure drops back down for future years. A surplus is budgeted for 2025/26, increasing in 2026/27 then dropping for the next few years. IL said that the college should retain Outstanding for financial health for the five-year period if all goes to plan. IL said that allowance has been made in 2026/27 and 2027/28 for future building work, as an indication to the ESFA of the intention to use funds for that purpose, assuming that additional capital funding becomes available. IL said the cash balance is forecast to drop until 2027/28, but is set to increase again after that. TD congratulated the team on the healthy financial position. She referred to the Annual Strategic Conversation with the DfE earlier today which had gone well. The Governing Body was pleased to approve the budget and financial forecasts.	
2d	**Audit Strategy Memorandum** IL presented the Audit Strategy Memorandum from the external auditors. He said the auditors had already completed the Teachers' Pension Audit with a clean bill of health. The main audit will take place at the beginning of September and the Audit Strategy Memorandum describes the scope and approach of the audit. He referred governors to page 10 which sets out the key risks and judgemental areas, including revenue recognition, going concern, management override of controls and value for money. IL said that the auditors will also look at the Local Government Pension Scheme, including a review of the actuarial assumptions made. The timeline for the audit is set out on page 15 of the document. The process will conclude with presentation of the Financial Statements and Management Letter to the Audit Committee in November. These will be put before governors for approval in December. The Audit Committee recommended approval of the strategy, and the Governing Body was happy to approve it.	
2e	**Internal Audit Annual Report for 2024/25** IL presented the Internal Audit Annual Report from the internal auditors. The report summarises the internal audit activities through the year, with a list of internal audits completed, along with a summary of the number and type of recommendations made. There were no high priority recommendations. IL said that actions were now in hand to address the medium and low priority recommendations. The Health & Safety Team in particular were balancing this with the demands of the building project. The report concludes that the College had adequate and effective risk management, control and governance processes to manage its achievement of the College's objectives. The Audit Committee recommended approval of the report, and the Governing Body was happy to approve it.	

2f	**Internal Audit Plan for 2025/26** IL presented the Internal Audit Plan for next year which sets out the areas to be audited and a provisional timetable. Areas to be looked at are: - • Overall Financial Controls • Marketing • Funding Review • Curriculum Planning • Follow-Up Appendix A also gives an indication of likely areas for audit in 2026/27 although these will be reviewed again nearer the time. IL said that some audits had been swapped around to best suit the needs of the college. For example Payroll has been pushed back a year to allow for the new finance system to bed in. The Audit Committee recommended approval of the plan, and the Governing Body was happy to approve it.	
2g	**Re-Appointment of Auditors** IL reminded governors that when the College last went out to tender, Murray Smith and wbg were instructed, each with a 3-year contract and an optional 2-year extension. He said that he was happy with both firms and would like to make use of the 2-year extension clause in each case. IL reminded governors that Murray Smith (external audit) conducted the End of Year Financial Statements and Regularity Audit, including the pension schemes, whilst wbg were responsible for the programme of internal audits covering a wide range of areas throughout the college (see Items 2d and 2f above, respectively). TD asked whether the Audit Committee supported this. SH confirmed that this was the case. IL said that both firms had provided a good service at a reasonable cost. The Governing Body approved the continuance of both contracts under the terms of the extension.	
2h	**Health & Safety Policy** SC presented the Health & Safety Policy which had been reviewed by the Q & S Committee who recommended approval. He said there were no material changes to report, other than that the new Facilities Manager had now taken on responsibility for H&S matters and this was reflected in the report. It was noted that the restructured Facilities Team was working well. SP had taken on the role of link governor for H&S and she had visited the team earlier this term. The Governing Body approved the updated Policy and KPS will arrange for this to be signed by AK and TD.	KPS
2i	**3-Year Strategic Plan** AK presented the 3-Year Strategic Plan which had been reviewed by the Q & S Committee who recommended approval.	

	AK reminded governors that the document begins by setting out the background and context, and the mission and values. He said that key challenges are set out on page 6, including changes to Level 3 qualifications, local demographic changes, aligning with local skills priorities, funding of much needed capital expansion and the future direction of the college in terms of possible academisation. AK said that five strategic objectives, each with three specific targets, are set out from page 7 onwards, with an update of progress made. TD said that the document was clear and concise, and the Governing Body gave its approval of the plan. AK said that the model was to be redesigned next year by the new Assistant Principal for Quality so this would be the last document in this format.	
2j	**Schedule of Meetings** KPS presented the schedule of meetings for next year. SP asked whether the Q&S schedule would change as this had been discussed by the Committee as JH was finding the Tues 2pm slot difficult. KPS confirmed that having discussed this with JH it had been agreed to keep to the existing schedule for now and review this again in the Autumn when JH would have a clearer idea of her work commitments. CT pointed out an error for the final Governing Body meeting which showed as Monday 7th July. KPS confirmed that this should read Tuesday 7th July and this will be corrected. Governors were happy to approve the schedule subject to this amendment.	KPS
2k	**Urgent Business** AK raised an urgent matter in relation to staff pay. He reminded governors of the pay settlement earlier in the year whereby staff received a 3.5% award from September to March, made up to 5% from April. The college followed the collective bargaining agreement in line with other colleges. However, the NASUWT have indicated further industrial action is now imminent on the basis that staff should be paid the difference for September to March. A number of other colleges have been threatened with strike action on taster days and in an effort to avert strike action are proposing to pay a one-off payment of £350 to all staff. AK and IL have been in touch with the DfE regarding the legality of such a payment. Having examined contract details, the DfE has indicated that such a payment is likely to be within the scope of the contract, but if not, there could be a reprimand. AK explained that the decision needs to be made urgently if strike action is to be avoided. He asked governors for their approval to go ahead with such a payment, so that the college could remain in line with the collective bargaining position. SH asked whether the payment would definitely avert the strike action. AK said that the signs were that it would, based on the experience of neighbouring colleges. SOH asked what action the DfE had taken against colleges who had already made the payment. AK said that they had not yet been challenged. JE asked what form a reprimand may take. IL said that this could be just a letter and it was possible that the auditors could qualify the accounts. CT said that different audit	

	firms may take different views but IL felt it likely that they would take the same approach on this issue. Having considered all the circumstances, including the need to support our staff, the need to remain in line with other colleges and the need to avert strike action at a critical time, the Governing Body was happy to approve a payment of £350 to all staff. The Governing Body was satisfied that the college was making the payment in good faith, having sought advice from the DfE and keeping them informed at all times.	
3a	**Capital Projects and Facilities Update** SC presented the Capital Projects and Facilities Update which had been considered at the recent FP&R Committee meeting. The paper summarised the following: - • Strategic Development Phase 1b: Sunbury. Snagging is underway and handover is due this week. Paperwork for the discharge of planning conditions is to be submitted shortly. • Strategic Development Phase 2b: Xavier. The College is currently working towards a planning application for replacement of Xavier building. The majority of current Xavier to be mothballed at the end of this academic year. • Other works include LED lighting, boundary wall repairs, Maryland roof work and plans for a new tannoy system. There were no questions at the present time, but SC said he was happy to receive e-mails should any questions arise.	
3b	**Management Accounts** IL presented the management accounts as at the end of May. He said that income remained above budget and that pay expenditure and non-pay expenditure both remained under budget. Exam costs had been less than expected and utility bills had been generally lower than the previous year. IL said that the College was showing a surplus at the end of May which was above budget. He confirmed that the June accounts would be prepared shortly.	
3c	**Committee Minutes** TD said that minutes of the recent Audit, FP&R and Q&S Committee meetings would be on the hub shortly. She encouraged everyone to read these and confirmed that committee chairs were always happy to take any questions.	KPS
4a	**Presentation on Academisation** TD welcomed Patrick Murden, CEO of DoWAT (The Diocese of Westminster Academy Trust). PM shared some insights into the role of a CMAT (Catholic Multi-Academy Trust), including the core principles to consider and some lessons learnt. He began by explaining the background and context of DoWAT. PM reminded governors of the historical context, whereby the DfE Academy Programme began around 2012. He said that the CMAT is the Catholic Church's structural response to the change. The CMAT combines school standards with	

Strategic Mission.

PM stressed that the CMAT is not a thing in itself but is there for the schools. There is always a risk of failure, but the CMAT also provides opportunities to drive a school-led system to ensure the continued excellence of Catholic Education.

The core functions of the CMAT are: -

- Mission, vision and values
- Educational standards
- Finance, resources and governance

PM described how DoWAT had developed since the early days. He said that initially there was a lack of clarity and vision. Although resources and standards were high, schools were operating in silos and the governance model was lacking. However, things are now much improved. Executive oversight involves really knowing the schools and there is a collaborative model of support. Executive experts provide challenge whilst supporting heads and governing bodies. Standards continue to rise, and resources and governance are resilient. The DoWAT Mission is 'to achieve excellence in the service of the Gospel to build a better world', based on the Catholic Social Teaching principles of solidarity, subsidiarity and the common good.

PM said there are regional differences in the development of CMATs and the North West is still developing.

PM said that key questions to consider include: -

- How does a CMAT support and challenge Catholic Education?
- Where does it fit in structural terms?
- How can the strategic mission be best delivered?

SOH asked about the governance structure and how board members are elected. PM described the structure which includes Members (including the Bishop), a Board of Directors, Senior Executive Leadership and Local Governing Bodies.

SOH asked how a CEO is appointed and who controls the spending. PM said that the CEO would be appointed by the Board. There is a Scheme of Delegation which covers responsibilities so it is important to get this right at the outset. SL raised the concern that the Scheme of Delegation can be changed further down the line and said this needs to be borne in mind.

TD said that for schools the benefit of economies of scale is often clear, but for colleges who already have large scale mechanisms for HR, Finance etc. this is less clear and we would need to weigh up the benefits carefully. It was also acknowledged that staff would be anxious about changes to their terms and conditions.

JE said we would need to consider what functions and how much autonomy we would lose and JH asked how we can maintain serving our local boroughs. PM said that this all needs to be clear in the scheme of delegation. He stressed that the mission is led by the schools, not the CMAT. The model can build in resilience to protect leadership and give strength in the locality.

SH asked what added benefits the CEO role can bring if the individual institutions already have strong leadership. PM said that with DoWAT the schools were working well individually but initially there was a central gap and the CEO function helps to bridge this gap.

	TD thanked PM for sharing his valuable insights. She said there was plenty of food for thought which would help governors in securing the future of Xaverian. PM then left the meeting so that governors could continue discussion on this important topic.	
4b	**Next Steps for Xaverian** AK began by presenting a paper on Academisation, outlining the current position. He reminded governors that there are currently three Catholic Academy Trusts (CATs) within the Salford Diocese – Romero, St Theresa of Calcutta and Emmaus. Each CAT follows a model of: - • 5 Members (including the Bishop) • CAT Board of 5-8 Directors (minimum 5 Foundation) • Local Governing Body • Central Team (CEO, CFO, Standards, HR, Clerk, Admin AK outlined advantages and disadvantages of academisation. Advantages include increased resources and a wider network of support and collaboration, whilst disadvantages include potential loss of autonomy, issues around loans and reserves and competing priorities within the CAT. AK said that with the introduction of the Skills Act, the Sixth Form sector fits less comfortably within the FE sector and many SFCs are considering whether academisation is a better option than staying in the FE sector. AK said that we have the opportunity to shape our future, and he reminded everyone of Brother Cyril's bold step in converting to a SFC all those years ago. AK said that the Diocese had initially wanted us to join the Emmaus CAT by 2030 with around 62 schools. However, the mood has changed and the Diocese seem open to alternative proposals. AK said he did not feel that joining a vertical structure like Emmaus would be beneficial to the College or to the schools, particularly with the College coming in at the end of the process. AK described an alternative proposal of a horizontal CAT with two other Catholic colleges. There would advantages and disadvantages as before, but there would be specific benefits such as: - • Securing the future of Catholic SFCs – 8000 Greater Manchester students • Developing and protecting the distinctive post-16 Catholic RE provision • Developing post-16 Catholic teachers and leaders Preliminary enquiries had been made with the Diocese and CES, and **AK said he was now seeking governors' approval to seriously explore this option further, whilst retaining the option to step away if necessary.** He invited discussion. SH said it had become apparent from a meeting he and AK had attended, that things can change quickly and that if we don't take the opportunity to shape our own future, we could be forced into a less than ideal model. He said that the College was in a good position to be ambitious in creating opportunities for the future, using the process as a springboard for excellence and looking at what would work well. TD agreed that the luxury of waiting had now passed. She said that if we want a model to maintain our values and standards, we need to drive this forward. MK said that this Governing Body is one of the best and is at the heart of the	

	College. He said that it was important to start the process with the other colleges, getting to understand each other's culture and common values, making sure we all want the same thing. He said that if the colleges had confidence in each other before going back to the Diocese with a plan, there would be a good chance of success. He said that governors have a responsibility not to let the College be given away to an unsuitable model. DS said that he felt there may be no real awareness of the needs of colleges within Emmaus. JH agreed that there was a good case for the current proposal and that it was in our interests to push for what we want. SOH said that there would need to be attention to detail to ensure our best interests. SL agreed that this proposal was the obvious option to explore and agreed that the details would be crucial. He cautioned that Schemes of Delegation are open to change further down the line and that governor expertise can be swallowed up at board level leaving the local governing body with less power. AK added that he would be pushing for the College to be well represented at Board level. JO asked how long the academisation process would be likely to take. AK said it wasn't possible to answer that at this stage. **Following the discussion TD proposed that AK takes forward a serious proposal of academisation in a horizontal model that protects and shapes the future of Xaverian.** **This was approved unanimously by all present.** TD thanked everyone for their engagement in the discussion. SP said that Brother Cyril had been a forward thinker in his day, and she felt he would be behind us in taking this forward. AK will provide a further update at the next meeting.	AK
	Date of Next Meeting The next meeting will take place at 6.00pm on Tuesday 7th October 2025.	
	The meeting closed at 8.05pm.	