



Minutes of the meeting of the Governing Board of St. Ambrose College, held at the School on 7 March 2017 at 4.30 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Dr P Goodwin (Chair)  
Mr J Keulemans (Principal)  
Br G Gordon  
Mr R Haig  
Mr P Hatchman  
Mrs M Kerr  
Mr A Lewis (Vice Chair)  
Mr S Parkinson  
Mrs P Ridgway  
Cllr B Sharp

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Mr M A Arthur (Vice Principal)  
Miss G Tyrer (Clerk)

1. **OPENING PRAYER**

The Principal led Governors in Prayer.

2. **APOLOGIES & ATTENDANCE**

Apologies for absence were received and accepted for Mr C Dunn and Mrs H Norwood.

3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of conflict of interest, direct or indirect pecuniary interest by members of the Board in respect of any item on the agenda.

4. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16 JUNE 2016**

**Resolved:** *That the minutes of the meeting held on 16 June 2016 be approved as a correct record subject to the following amendments:*

- i) That Mr Lally be added to the attendance list*
- ii) That Principal be spelt correctly throughout.*
- iii) Page 5 Just curriculum committee*
- iv) Finance committee – remove personnel committee.*

5. **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MINUTES**

i) **College Website**

**Q. A Governor asked if there was an update on the progress of the new College website.** The Principal advised that the new website is still being constructed and will be completed in the summer term.

**Q. A Governor asked if there will be a specific Governors area which will hold minutes of meetings?** The Principal advised that there will be a Governors section on the new website which will include minutes of meetings but also stated that minutes could be uploaded onto the current website.

***Resolved: That the Principal arrange for minutes of board and committee meetings to be made available on the governors section for the past year.***

ii) **Annual Mass**

**Q. A Governor asked if a date had been set for the mass to commemorate deceased ex pupils and staff.** The Principal stated that this year's Mass had been held in November and will take place every November.

6. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 15 NOVEMBER 2016**

***Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 15 November 2016 be approved as a correct record subject to the following amendments;***

***i) That Cllr Sharp be added to the attendance list.***

***ii) That the capital H be removed from Head on page 12.***

7. **MATTERS ARISING**

i) **2016 Examination Summary**

**Q. A Governor asked if the Principal could provide Governors with a breakdown of last year's examination results.** The Principal advised that the data had been shared with the Curriculum Committee and was able to provide the Governor with a paper copy of the data requested.

ii) **Pupils receiving additional support**

**Q. A Governor asked if the Principal had provided the data relating to those pupils.** It was confirmed that Governors had discussed the data at the admissions meeting and found no correlation, so there were no concerns.

iii) **Personnel Committee**

Governors commented that they felt the Clerk had not provided enough detail in the Board minutes relating to the Committee minutes and asked for the wording to be changed.

**Resolved: That the clerk make the recommended amends to the minutes:**

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Update on staffing had been discussed  
Internal appointment of joint Director of Learning for KS3 had been made.

A level subjects and curriculum requirements had been discussed and pupils are advised to study at least 1 “facilitating” subject

iv) **Admissions**

**Q. A Governor asked if the new Admissions Policy had been completed.** The Principal confirmed that the Admissions Policy had been amended and is now available on the website.

**Q. A Governor questioned why there are often so many pupils from outside of the local area and outside of Trafford.** It was noted that the issue had been raised with Marilyn Golding (Trafford Admissions Department) and it was not possible to obtain the Parish maps from Shrewsbury Diocese. However it was confirmed that priority remains to Trafford Catholic Primary Schools but there is still a large intake from other boroughs due to the popularity of the College.

v) **Correspondence**

**Q. A Governor asked if the Principal had sent a letter to Fr Cogliolo following his resignation from the Board.** The Principal informed Governors that this task had been delegated to the office staff and that he would need to check if this had been actioned.

8. **PRINCIPAL'S REPORT**

**Resolved: That the Principal's Report be received and noted.**

9. **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PRINCIPAL'S REPORT**

i) **School Development Plan**

The Principal advised that the key priority areas have not changed for this Report and they remain constant throughout the year.

ii) **Staffing**

It was noted that Mr Arthur will be retiring as Deputy Head from September 2017 and the Principal and Governors expressed their thanks for his commitment and support over the years. Governors were advised that the process of appointing a successor had begun; the job description and person specification have been created and will be advertised by the end of this week, ready to interview just after Easter. The closing date will be the week before end of term so shortlisting can take place before the Easter holidays.

**Resolved:** *That the job description be submitted to the Personnel Committee and dates for shortlisting and interviews be arranged.*

**Q. Will these timescales provide applicants with enough notice period, ready to start in September.** The Principal confirmed this.

**Q. Where will the position be advertised?** It will be advertised in the Times Educational Supplement and the College have purchased the “push notification” service which should hopefully ensure a higher calibre of applicant.

**Q. A Governor asked if the Principal could filter the applications to reduce the workload of the Personnel Committee.** The Principal expressed concerns in doing this as it may be considered prejudicial but agreed to do this with both the Staff Governor and another Governor.

The Principal stated that he is keen not to lose Mr Arthur’s vast knowledge and expertise and is hoping to employ him next year on a temporary and part time basis while the new Deputy Head settles in to the role.

**Q. A Governor asked how long a member of the teaching staff is considered to be a new teacher.** The Head stated that this is a year.

Governors noted that Mrs V Winterbottom had also tendered her resignation and the College is currently looking for short term cover and will advertise the position shortly.

Governors also noted that Mr H Fitzwilliam-Pipe’s contract had come to end and he will be replaced by Mr D Burke.

The Head updated Governors on the 3 new teaching staff appointments and stated that he felt confident these were strong appointments. It was noted that one was an NQT but the other two are experienced teachers.

iii) **Admissions**

It was noted that the offer date for admissions was the 1 March but it will be a while until the actual numbers are released. Governors were informed that for the first time in a long time the College will be accepting those pupils that fall under Category 9 of the admissions criteria because the

number of students who passed the entrance exam but did not accept the place has risen, which implies that the number naming the college as their first choice has fallen. The actual figures selecting the College as their first choice each year is unknown as this is not released by Trafford Admissions, instead each application is considered equal.

Governor discussed the date of the entrance exam stating that it had been early compared to others and this may have had a negative impact on the pass rate, also this year the college is looking for a higher number of pupils as the school moves to 6 form entry. There are currently 138 Year 5s expressing an interest in the College but this is lower than previous years.

**Q. Governors asked for a breakdown of the categories.** The Principal agreed to circulate the admissions criteria to the board.

**Q. What would be the ideal final number of Year 1 pupils for 2017/18 admission?** The Principal stated that 180 would make the 6 forms more financially viable but based on initial figures would expect the final number to be around 165. The number may increase as it is likely there will be admission appeals for pupils who did not meet the expected pass mark. The Principal stated that he would be very pleased if the College had a total pupil population of 1030 this time next year but expects is to be more like 1015.

**Q. Does the College have space for so many pupils?** Yes, and plans are to move towards having 1100 pupils on roll. The School's main route for increasing funding is by increasing number of pupils. Currently the maximum number of pupils the school can hold is 1050.

**Q. Are AS levels being offered this year.** The Head confirmed this but advised there will need to be some changes with regards to whether pupils are forced to leave if they don't pass.

**Q. A Governor asked if the current staffing structure have capacity for 6 form entry.** The Head confirmed that it does but will need a part time Geographer and it might be that the Principal has to take some classes. **Q. Could we employ a full time Geographer?** Yes but the Principal stated that he would prefer them to have another subject as well as Geography.

The Principal added that he felt some subject areas are over filled and as the College want to avoid redundancies it is hoped there will be some natural change and retraining certain staff to work in other departments. The Principal closed the discussion by advising that Schools are in flux. The College is not financially viable long term so ways to improve sustainability must be investigated. Budgets are always changing and the changes to the national funding formula will reduce that further.

iv) **Scorecard**

The Principal drew Governors attention to the Autumn 2016 Scorecard and advised that the red figures relate to the current Year 5 (Year 11) pupils. It was noted that this year group have experienced issues with science and maths teaching. The figures are satisfactory and improvement on last year

OK but the Principal warned that because of the new curriculum the College cannot be confident in the in-year data at this point. Governors were assured that the College is closely monitoring the pupil data rather than the cohort data. The average grade is an A- and that was the same last year.

v) **Destination Measures**

Governors were pleased that last year 98% of leavers continued into higher education.

vi) **Teaching and Learning**

Governors were reassured to hear that the Principal had walked around the College earlier in the day and was very pleased with his findings, all pupils were engaged in their learning. The quality of what was being delivered and the quality of the engagement of the pupils was outstanding.

vii) **Unauthorised Absence**

The Principal advised that since the publicised court case last year the number of unauthorised absences has increased. The College is working to identify pupils with lower than expected attendance and this is starting to have a positive impact. However changes to the benchmark for persistent absence from 85% to 90% has had an impact.

viii) **Parent View**

The Principal informed Governors that the College is still struggling to get parents to complete Parent View. It was noted that a similar form is given out at speech night and the next day any forms that contain any negative comments are followed up, the parents are called to discuss the problem to look at ways to support them.

***Resolved: That the Chair remind parents to complete Parent View at this year's Speech Night.***

ix) **Curriculum**

It was noted that the SLT are currently considering the GCSE and A Level subjects that are offered and how any changes will impact on the current staffing arrangements. There might be some 6 form subjects that will not be offered as an A Level, possibly Latin and PE.

x) **Oxbridge**

Governors were pleased to hear that seven boys had applied to study medicine and all seven had received offers of 3 x A's from their selected universities.

The College provided detailed advice to the students on interviews, as well as using consultants, junior doctors and other medical professionals to

help run a series of mini interviews. Guidance was also given on the completion of the BMAT test and UKCAT.

Three boys from upper Sixth have all received offers from Oxford to study material science and English. The boys were given advice with regards to the completion of the admissions test, as well as using external professionals to assist with mock interviews.

xi) **Homework**

Governors were informed that the new GCSE and A Levels are largely about pupils being able to independently learn and research and therefore College is conducting a survey of homework styles with the aim to encourage more independent study around the subjects pupils are learning.

A Governor commented that the homework list that was sent via parent mail had been very helpful.

10. **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

i) **Staffing Committee**

***Resolved: That the minutes of the Staffing Committee meeting held on 19 January 2017 be received and noted.***

Governors were briefed on the main areas covered during the meeting;

Appointments have been made for a Physics teacher, English teacher and a temporary NQT Maths teacher.

There have been 2 flexible working requests, 1 has been refused and the other decision is under consideration.

The Committee had also discussed the 2 teachers who are receiving extra support to improve their teaching.

Areas of work include the use of mobile phones in the classroom and ways to teach pupils about the dangers of sexting.

ii) **Curriculum and General Purposes Committee**

***Resolved: That the minutes of the Curriculum and General Purposes Committee meeting held on 25 January 2017 be received and noted.***

Governors were provided with a brief overview of the meetings main discussions, which included;

A Homework survey is currently underway

The EBACC requirement changes

Departmental reviews – English, no attainment gap

Maths – an attainment gap had been identified and will be monitored closely.

A proposed expedition to the Himalayas is being considered.

iii) **Finance Committee**

Governors were updated on the Audit inspection which took place in December 2016. Steve Parker, the schools auditor produced a report which has gone to the Finance Committee. The Report highlighted 2 priority items;– the cleaning service contract needs had not been reviewed in a long time but following investigation it was found to offer good value for money. Secondly, some maintenance work had not been authorised in accordance with the agreed procedures but these were found to be due to emergency situations.

It was noted that Mr Steve Parker will visit school once per term to ensure that financial procedures are correctly administered.

A further recommendation had been that a skills audit be completed.

***Resolved: That consideration of a Skills Audit be delegated to the Finance Committee.***

Governors were advised that the School Lease has still not be signed.

It was noted that the Payroll SLA is working well and that the 4 year licencing contract had been approved.

The Committee heard that the DFE National Funding Formula Consultation is available and asked all governors to consider the consultation paper and respond. The closing date is 22 March 2017.

There are some areas of overspend compared to previous years. A deficit of £49,000 with cash in the bank lower than the national average. The number of years of cash coverage was discussed and an extraordinary meeting will be held on 14 March 2017 for all Governors at 4.30 p.m. The School will provide a clerk.

***Resolved: That an extraordinary meeting be held on 14 March 2017 at 4.30 p.m.***

**Q. A Governor questioned why the Governors access cards to the College were no longer working.** The Principal apologised for not forewarning Governors to the change and explained that as Safeguarding Lead he had made the decision to allow Governors access only to the meeting room once they have signed in.

**Q. A Governor questioned the reasons behind this.** The Principal advised that the card system was not working properly and the decision was made for the safety of staff and pupils.

The Principal advised that the Admissions Committee had not met this term and Governors will be sent the revised Policies tomorrow.

**Q. A Governor requested that the minutes of the Committee meetings be sent to all Governors much earlier so they can be read and reviewed.**

**Resolved: That Committee minutes be sent out to Governors in Draft within a week and approved and published within two weeks.**

**Resolved: That the minutes of the Finance Committee held on 2 February be received and noted.**

## 11. APPROVAL AND ADOPTION OF CODE OF CONDUCT

**Resolved: That the Code of Conduct be approved and adopted.**

## 12. SAFEGUARDING

**Q. A Governor questioned why the Board had not been informed of the two recent temporary exclusions.** The Principal confirmed that there had been two temporary exclusions which had resulted in both pupils choosing to leave the College. The Principal advised that further details could not be provided. Governors felt they needed more information about exclusions so that they would not feel out of touch with the College. The Clerk advised that temporary exclusions were the decision of the Principal and senior leadership and that by providing governors with further information could compromise any future appeal cases.

A discussion took place about how and what information could be shared with Governors. Governors felt that there needs to be an official communication channel for the Principal to report to Governors and suggested that the Chair be informed of specific details and will not sit on the appeal panel or the PDC panel.

The Principal felt this was a better idea but still expressed concerns around confidentiality. The Clerk advised the Principal to seek guidance from Governor Services.

## 13. SCHOOL TRIPS – NORMANDY AND ROME

The Principal informed Governors of the decision to cancel future Normandy trips as it falls at the same time as the trip to Rome.

**Resolved:**

**i) That the Rome trip 2017 be approved.**

**ii) That the Principal email Governors with the details of the proposed trip to London for the Creative Arts students and the proposed ski trip for February 2018.**

**iii) That the 2 proposed trips be added to the agenda for the next meeting for approval.**

## 14. CHAIR'S UPDATE

### i) College Vision

A Group met last year asking for feedback from governors and staff with a view to creating a Mission Statement. It was noted that the Chair had sent it out last week and asked Governors to provide feedback.

The Chair added that he aims to have the mission statement ready for September and it will be incorporated into the speech on the 27<sup>th</sup>. The mission statement will then lead to creating the vision.

### ii) Marketing Committee

The Chair proposed that the Board create a Marketing Committee to concentrate on the marketing of the college, ways of increasing revenue and fundraising. Governors agreed that forging closer links with St Ambrose Old Boys Association and Sappa could be beneficial.

**Q. Would this create a vacancy for another Co-opted Governor?** Yes and it was suggested that this be someone from the Old Boys Association.

**Resolved:** *That the Chair create a Marketing Committee Remit and bring it to the next board meeting.*

### iii) Audit Committee

The Chair asked Governors if they feel the current Committee fulfils its duties outlined in the remit and suggested renaming it as the Assurance and Compliance Committee. The Principal felt this would be a very beneficial Committee. A Governor suggested also having staff involvement and this would benefit their CPD

**Resolved:** *That the Committee name be changed to the Assurance and Compliance Committee and co-opt a member of staff.*

## 15. CORRESPONDENCE

### i) Mr Arthur's resignation

The Chair confirmed that he has received formal notification of Mr Arthur's intention to retire at the end of the academic year. Governors thanked Mr Arthur for his enormous contribution over 30 years at the College.

**Resolved:** *That Mr Arthur's retirement be noted with thanks.*

### ii) Miss Winterbottom's resignation

**Resolved:** *That Miss V Winterbottom's resignation be noted.*

iii) **Ofsted**

The Chair informed Governors that he had received a letter from Ofsted advising that no further action will be taken in response to a list of complaints received.

iv) **Email**

The Chair advised that the College had received an email containing a series of allegations. It was noted that the Principal had responded and had passed it on to the Trustees.

v) **Flexible Working Request – Confidential Item**

vi) **Director for Christian Brother Schools**

Governors were informed that there is a new director for Christian Brother Schools and the post-holder will be invited to attend meetings as an observer.

vii) **EFA**

Governors were informed that the College is in correspondence with the EFA regarding the description of the school. It was noted that the issue has been raised at other schools and the Diocese had agreed the correct wording.

***Resolved: That the correct wording be sent to the Chair.***

viii) **Letter from the School's Adjudicator**

It was noted that the letter had been responded to and resolved.

ix) **Governor Training**

An invitation from Thomas King had been received inviting Governors to attend the Achieving Strong Governance and Leadership in Academies Forum on 25 May in Manchester.

16. **DETERMINED ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS 2018**

***Resolved: That the Agenda Notice be received and noted.***

17. **HR POLICIES**

Governors felt this notice was not applicable to the College as it related to maintained schools only.

18. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

i) **Fundraising Carnival**

It was noted that Holy Angels Church have asked permission to use the school field for some activities during the summer carnival. Governors felt a decision could not be made until further details were known, specifically the type of activities.

ii) **Visit to Sierra Leone**

Governors were provided with a Report on the planning visit.

iii) **Speech Night**

The Principal reminded Governors to send in their request for tickets to Speech Night.

iv) **Attendance**

The Chair reminded Governors of the importance of attending all Board meetings and the high expectation of commitment by all Governors. The Chair requested that if Governors cannot attend a meeting they send any comments or questions they have to the Chair when they receive the agenda papers.

19. **ADDITIONAL AGENDA ITEMS**

**Resolved:** *That the following items be placed on the agenda for the next meeting.*

- i) Safeguarding (Standard item)*
- ii) Approval of the Ski Trip and London Trip*
- iii) Marketing Committee Remit*

20. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

**Resolved:** *That the next meeting of the Board be held at the School on 13 June 2017 at 4.30 p.m.*

The meeting closed at 7.50 p.m.

Chair of Governors .....