Full Corporation Meeting

1st April 2026

Time: 6.00 pm
Chair: Mr N Horsfall

Present:

Nick Horsfall	Carol Davies	Stephen Bamber
Mark Rigby	Munaza Muneeb	Robert Coyle
Zahid Tapas	Stuart Merrills	Nannette Blackwood
Bashir Shama	Susan Wright	Rida Zafar
Dakota O'Hara		

In Attendance:

Lesley Hart Deputy Principal	Joanne Smith Vice Principal	Nicola Sodano Assistant Principal – Teaching and Learning and Assessment
Mark Goodwin Assistant Principal – Student Experience	Sarah Ball Assistant Principal - Pastoral	Tracy Tunstall Clerk

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received and accepted by Governors from Anna-Marie Watters, Glenys Hughes, Sam Jackson and Andy Lythgoe. Karen Hon was absent.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Appointment of Parent Governor

The Chair informed Governors that three parents had expressed interest in becoming a Parent Governor. The Principal, Chair and Clerk had met with all three candidates to outline the role of Parent Governor and a ballot has now taken place. Mrs Zebulnisa Butt had been duly elected by the parent body and references have been received. The Chair proposed that Mrs Zebulnisa Butt is appointed for a four year term of office ending on 1st April 2030.

Governors resolved to formally ratify the appointment of Zebulnisa Butt as Parent Governor for a four year term of office ending on 1st April 2030.

4. Appointment of Teaching Staff Governor

The Chair informed Governors that the term of office of Mr Robert Coyle ends on 28th April 2026. Expressions of interest were sought from all members of the teaching staff and only one was received by the deadline date. Mr Robert Coyle has duly been re-elected by the teaching staff to serve a further term of office ending on 28th April 2030.

Governors <u>resolved</u> to formally ratify the appointment of Robert Coyle as Teaching Staff Governor for a four year term of office ending on 1st April 2030.

5. Appointment of External Governors

The Chair informed Governors that the terms of office of both Mrs Glenys Hughes and Mrs Susan Wright were due to expire on 28th April 2026 and that both had expressed a willingness to be re-appointed. This had been considered at the Governance and Search Committee and it is recommended that both are re-appointed for a further 4-year term of office.

Governors unanimously <u>resolved to approve</u> the re-appointment of Glenys Hughes with effect from 28th April 2026. Her term of office will expire on 28th April 2030. Governors also unanimously <u>resolved to approve</u> the re-appointment of Susan Wright with effect from 28th April 2026. Her term of office will expire on 28th April 2030.

6. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 17th December 2026 were **<u>approved</u>** as a true and accurate record.

7. Matters Arising from the Minutes

(a) Minute 11 – College Annual Self-Assessment Report and Quality Improvement Plan

The Principal informed Governors that the college is a member of the Bolton Learning Alliance and that he had approached them to seek a suitable College Improvement Partner. The Vice Principal of Xaverian College was willing to undertake this role and he had spent the day in college today, along with his Assistant Principal for Quality. A further two visits will take place although discussions have taken place to continue mutual sharing between the two colleges continuing into the future.

(b) Minute 6(b) – Curriculum and Quality Committee

The Chair asked if students were continuing to take holidays in terms time. The Assistant Principal – Pastoral reported that leave of absence is not granted for any students at this time due to revision and preparation for the summer examination period.

The Chair also asked if any students would be entered for AS Level rather than A Level and **<u>noted</u>** that final assessment data is only just available but that there may be around 6 students taking AS rather A Level in the summer.

8. Minutes of the Sub-Committees

(a) Curriculum and Quality Committee

The minutes of the Curriculum and Quality Committee held on 5th February 2026 were **noted**.

The Chair of the Committee informed Governors that the Assistant Principal – Teaching and Learning had given a detailed presentation to the last meeting. He highlighted that the VESPA framework is really good and uses shared language across the curriculum which is focussed and consistent. He reported that there are some challenges in the use of digital tools and that further investment is being considered.

The Chair of the Committee reported that BTEC results are excellent but that at A Level there were 50+ U Grades. It was **noted** that 53 students who achieved a U Grade had undertaken a re-sit and that only 8 students had not improved their grade. The Vice Principal informed Governors that the next data point ended today and that she would be scrutinising the results closely. The Chair of the Committee gave some context on the results and reported that he had been a Governor at college for the last 20 years. In that time there had been significant improvements across the borough but that some subject areas in college had not improved. He highlighted that BTEC results are consistently excellent but that A Level results were in the bottom 20% nationally, whereas Maths and English GCSE re-sits statistically were in the top 10% nationally. He reported that students are doing well when they enrol in college and that he felt that we are failing our students and stressed the need to see significant improvement.

A Governor reported that secondary schools have good scaffolding systems in place for GCSEs and that students are not able to adapt to the independent study required for A Level study. She highlighted that student motivation is difficult to achieve and that it is not that the staff are not doing enough. The Chair of the Committee expressed concern that if we are going to fail these students, then why allow them to undertake the course. A Student Governor highlighted her experience at secondary school and reported that students were 'spoon-fed' for GCSE exams and that some students find it difficult to adapt to the independent study required in college for A Levels.

The Chair of the Committee reported that he was trying to address the recurring issues so that all students can achieve the best outcomes. He asked that the Vice Principal reviews that latest data point and shares this with Governors. He suggested that a specific meeting takes place to determine whether or not the College should continue to offer some subjects or whether the grades to enrol on some courses should be increased.

(b) Risk and Audit Committee

The minutes of the Risk and Audit Committee held on 5th March 2026 were **noted**.

The Chair of the Committee drew attention to the rising number of SEND students and the financial pressures this is creating. The Committee had received a detailed presentation from the Assistant Principal – Pastoral highlighting that in recent years the cost of providing SEND support has regularly outstripped the funding councils receive from central government. With increasing numbers of SEND students there is a reduction of funded places although staffing and other additional support is still required.

The Chair of the Committee reported that the College Audit Framework (CAF) had replaced the Post-16 Audit Code of Practice and that at the previous meeting the Deputy Principal had been asked to review the College Audit Service (CAS) guidance to ensure compliance. She had presented an internal assurance programme based on the Risk Register which would be incorporated into the cycles of business of each relevant committee and a Compliance Checklist which would be reviewed regularly as a standard agenda item for the Risk and Audit Committee.

The termly Health and Safety Report had been received and noted.

(c) Governance and Search Committee

The minutes of the Governance and Search Committee held on 11th March 2026 were **noted**.

The Chair of the Committee drew attention to the proposed new Risk and Audit Committee Terms of Reference which are compliant with the DfE College Auditor Framework and Guide, and recommended that these are accepted and approved by the Full Corporation.

Governors resolved to approve the new Terms of Reference for the Risk and Audit Committee with immediate effect.

The Vice Chair had completed the annual review meetings with Governors. His summary report highlighted that governors would welcome the opportunity to meet outside of meetings in an informal manner as a team. They also highlighted the need for a Governance Portal to access key documents and information more easily.

The Chair of the Committee drew attention to the Training and Development Plan which highlights mandatory training and recommended development activities which are available to both new and more experienced governors which can be accessed online and undertaken at own pace.

Governors resolved to adopt the Training and Development Plan and to review this annually to ensure that it remains current.

The Chair of the Committee reported that it had been brought to the College's attention that a governor had been suspended from their employment pending an investigation. The Governance and Search Committee had noted that suspension is a neutral act; however, in order to safeguard the integrity and reputation of the College's governance and in line with legal advice, the Chair had written to the governor requesting that he step aside from all duties until the matter is concluded. The Governance and Search Committee recommended that in line with the Instrument and Articles of Government it was not in the best interests of the College for the Governor to remain in office.

Governors unanimously resolved that it was not in the best interests of the College for the Governor to remain a member of the Corporation and that he is removed from office with immediate effect.

(d) Student Affairs Committee

The minutes of the Student Affairs Committee held on 18th March 2026 were **noted**.

The Chair of the Committee informed Governors that the Learner Voice has developed a new website outlining their focus areas and highlighting the students involved in each area. The changes made to the Learner Voice in general, and to the website, have made it more accessible for students to engage in questions put to them. A Parent App has now been launched which is easier to use.

The Chair of the Committee informed Governors that options in relation to prayer and prayer time are currently being considered and discussions are taking place with a local Mosque.

The Chair of Governors drew attention to the changes to the Learner Voice and reported that the presentations given to Governors are excellent. He encouraged all Governors to make every effort to attend this Committee.

(e) Finance and Personnel Committee

The minutes of the Finance and Personnel Committee held on 18th March 2026 were **noted**.

The Management Accounts to 31st January 2026 had been considered in detail and were recommended to the Full Corporation for formal approval, however it was **noted** that the Management Accounts to 28th February 2026 would be discussed as a separate agenda item.

The Chair of the Committee drew attention to the Buildings Update and reported that four quotations had been received for the first phase of the replacement flooring work with each supplier tendering against the same specification. This work was included in the 2025/26 to 2026/27 financial forecasts. The first phase will take place during the summer closure period. The Chair of the Committee recommended that Lorne Stewart Facilities are appointed to carry out the replacement flooring with a total cost of £169,364.21 including VAT.

Governors resolved to approve that Lorne Stewart Facilities is appointed to carry out Phase 1 of the replacement flooring during the summer closure period.

The Chair of the Committee reported that an increased number of allegations/complaints are being received with many coming from students/parents which are often a way to deflect from issues created by the students themselves. Governors had requested trend reporting on these allegations/complaints for future comparison.

9. Management Accounts to 28th February 2026

The Deputy Principal presented the management accounts based on actual income and expenditure up to 28th February 2026 and projected to 31st July 2026. She reported that the management accounts had been discussed in detail at the Finance and Personnel Committee however these are presented with more up to date figures. She informed Governors that funded numbers for High Needs Funding Element 2 remain at 28. She reported that the budget assumes funding of £300,000 will be award for High Needs Funding Element 3. Final costings were submitted to the relevant local authorities at the end of October 2025 and based on these costings, Bolton local authority has agreed to a total of £289,500 which is £29k lower than the costings submitted. A further £66k is due from four other local authorities. She drew attention to the funding received from Bolton local authority and reported that agreed overpayments will be recovered in March 2026.

The Deputy Principal informed Governors the college has undertaken a review of its safeguarding filtering systems to ensure compliance with KCSIE requirements. The Pastoral and Welfare Support budget has incurred an additional cost of £15k however it will consolidate three existing systems into a single platform and will operate alongside the monitoring software currently in use.

Governors **noted** the projected budget outturn position as at 31st July 2026 is £944,867 against a budget surplus of £832,473.

Governors resolved to approve the Management Accounts as at 28th February 2026.

10. Strategic Plan Update

(a) Monitoring of KPIs and Strategic Development Plan

The Principal presented the Strategic Governor Dashboard as at March 2026 and informed Governors that data collection for DP7 ends today. He reported that the quality of teaching and learning remains as Good and the financial rating is outstanding.

Governors **noted** the report.

11. Principal's Report

The Principal spoke to his report. He informed Governors that the student funding rate will increase by 0.5% in 2026/27 which amounts to £28 per student. He reported that there is no increase in the Free College Meal allowance which remains at £2.61 however the college subsidises this to £3.50. Additional funding for SEND students is not yet known.

The Principal informed Governors that the Employment Rights Bill 2025 has been implemented however very few of the changes came into force immediately and will be implemented on a 'staged basis'. The changes to trade union legislation means that it is easier for unions to organise industrial action with less time for employers to put contingency plans into place to manage the action. The 40% support threshold for important public services is removed and means that strike action can proceed with lower levels of engagement. Mandates for strike action now last 12 months rather than 6, allowing unions to take action over a longer period without re-balloting.

The Principal drew attention to the current student numbers and reported that numbers have increased compared to the same point last year even though we recruited no level 2 students. He reported that student retention is good and although decreased on last year it is significantly higher than the DfE benchmark of £87.9%. There has been a marginal increase on applications for admission in September 2026, with over 2000 applications being received for 900 places.

Governors **noted** the report.

12. Review of Risk Register 2025/26

The Principal informed Governors that all risks have been allocated to the relevant Governors' committee for monitoring purposes and the Risk Register has been updated following each meeting.

Governors <u>noted</u> the Risk Register for 2025/26

13. Link Governor Update

(a) Digital and Technology

The Link Governor informed Governors that the college is positioning itself as an early adopter of ethical and responsible AI use, supported by staff development and emerging governance frameworks. Progress has been significant however sustained focus is required to ensure consistency of practice, robust measurement of impact and effective communication to all stakeholders.

14. Any Other Business

The Chair highlighted that there are currently two vacancies for external governors. If anyone knew of someone who would be interested in joining the Corporation they should let the Clerk or himself know.

15. Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be the annual Strategy Event which will be held on Thursday, 7th May 2026 from 5.00 pm to 8.00 pm.

The next meeting of the Full Corporation will be held on Wednesday, 8th July 2026 at 6.00 pm.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 7.30 pm.