

NOTRE DAME SIXTH FORM CATHOLIC COLLEGE

Minutes of the Finance and Resources Committee meeting held on Microsoft Teams on
Tuesday 23 SEPTEMBER 2025 AT 5.00PM

PRESENT David Wright (Chair)
 Justine Barlow (Principal)
 Matthew DiClemente
 Richard Hall
 Ann Marie Mealey

The quorum for a committee meeting is a minimum of two governors excluding the Principal.

IN ATTENDANCE: Denise Hark- Clerk to the Corporation
 Karen Petrillo – Director of Finance and Operations (DFO)
 Vicky Winterburn - Head of HR (Item 8 only)

The meeting was opened with a prayer.

1.00	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND MEMBERSHIP MATTERS	ACTION
1.01	There were no apologies for absence as all members were in attendance.	
2.00	DECLARATION OF INTERESTS	
2.01	There were no declarations made relating to items on the agenda.	
8.00	HR ANNUAL REPORT	
8.01	The Head of HR reported that there were 229 staff in post in September 2025. This was an increase of 3 on the previous year.	
8.02	There was a slight difference in the number of staff declared as having a disability compared to the previous year.	
8.03	A new HR system will be embedded in October. This will enable staff to update their own records re disability.	
8.04	The college had looked at how to increase diversity. This has included all job advertisements stating that applications from all faiths are welcome.	
8.05	The Principal commented that nationally there are fewer people choosing teaching as a profession.	
8.06	The age profile was reducing in some areas. There had been an increase in female teaching staff in the 30 to 39 age group, and a reduction of 3 staff in the 40-45 age group and resignations from 2 cleaners in the 50-59 age range.	



8.07	Short, and long-term sickness absence for teachers had seen a reduction from the previous year but there had been a slight increase in support staff sickness. All staff on long-term sickness absence had been supported through HR policies.	
8.08	There had been 25 leavers over the previous academic year. This included staff at the end of fixed term contracts, retirements and resignations. One of the resignations had been to take up a headship. Exit questionnaires were undertaken and all staff who responded had said that they would recommend Notre Dame as a good place to work.	
8.09	All but one of the flexible working requests had been approved. Q: Is the number of flexible working requests increasing? A: There have been 4 already this academic year. There were 17 requests last year which was slightly lower than in the previous year.	
8.10	The Principal added that the aim was to accommodate flexible work with the member of staff so that there are no shared classes.	
8.11	41 members of staff had accessed the Employee Assistance Programme which was a lower number than in the previous year.	
8.12	There had been one disciplinary investigation which had resulted in a resignation and there had been two grievances raised. One of which had been dealt with at the informal stage.	
8.13	All new staff had successfully completed their probationary period.	
8.14	One employee had taken early retirement following a performance management review.	
8.15	Agency costs for cleaners had increased due to 4 cleaners being on maternity leave and 2 permanent cleaners having left. It was reported that using the agency for cleaning staff was working well and this would continue rather than recruiting to the permanent positions.	
8.16	Total agency costs had reduced from the previous year. The Chair noted that it was pleasing to note that agency costs were being managed, and that the costs had decreased again this year.	
8.17	Q: Is there any comparison to other colleges for sickness absence? A: Sickness absence is low when compared to others in the SFCA report.	

8.18	<p>Staffing Update</p> <p>All new staff had received a thorough induction. Separate sessions had been provided for Heads of Subject or Department. There had been 5 members of staff new to these posts in September. They had all said that they had felt supported.</p>	
8.19	<p>Q: Are all posts filled? A: All posts are covered but recruitment is needed to some posts.</p>	
8.20	<p>The committee received and noted the Annual HR report. The Chair thanked the Head of HR for her report.</p> <p><i>(VW left the meeting at this point 5.36pm).</i></p>	
3.00 3.01	<p>ELECTION OF CHAIR</p> <p>DW confirmed that he would be happy to continue as Chair until February 2026 when his term of office as Foundation Governor expires. He added that he would be involved with the committee to provide support after this point. Agreed: That David Wright is appointed as Chair of the Committee.</p>	
4.00 4.01	<p>COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE</p> <p>Draft Committee terms of reference were presented for approval. It was noted that two points relating to senior postholders, which had been included in the previous year's terms of reference, had been moved to the Strategy & Governance Committee. Agreed: To recommend the committee terms of reference to Corporation.</p>	
5.00 5.01	<p>MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING</p> <p>Minutes from the Finance and Resources meeting held on 25 June 2025 had been included with the papers for the meeting. They were agreed as a correct record for signature by the Chair.</p>	
6.00 6.01	<p>REVIEW ACTIONS AND MATTERS ARISING</p> <p>International Students Provision</p> <p>A decision had been taken to wind down the International Students department with an end date of August 2026. An action plan detailing steps up to the Home Office re-visit in November had been included with the papers for the meeting.</p>	
6.02	<p>Q: What will the visit entail? A: (DFO) There will be a re-audit similar to the one in the previous year and they will look at whether the college has met the requirements of the action plan.</p>	
6.03	<p>Q: What is progress like against the action plan?</p>	



<p>6.04</p>	<p>A: (DFO) The work has more or less been completed. The data for the non-sponsored students still needs to be put into a particular format.</p> <p>Q: When do we inform the Home Office of the decision of the Board to discontinue provision? A: Correct guidance will be followed. They will be aware that enrolment has not taken place this year.</p> <p>Q: Will they ask about how the new data for the non-sponsored students is stored? A: This is clear in the sponsorship guidance. There are no issues with GDPR.</p> <p>The Chair requested that the notice from the Home Office regarding the date of the re-inspection is circulated to the committee.</p> <p>TIAA would carry out an internal audit on International Students in week commencing 13 October and Stone King would visit one day before the Home Office Audit. It was suggested that these two matters be inserted into the action plan.</p>	
<p>7.00 7.01 7.02 7.03 7.04 7.05 7.06 7.07 7.08</p>	<p>FINANCE REPORT</p> <p>The DFO presented the key features from the management accounts and highlighted the following points:</p> <p>17.4m income was significantly more than when the budget was approved due to additional funding to support pay rises.</p> <p>£78k is expected to be paid into the budget at the end of September for National Insurance costs for April to July 2025.</p> <p>There is a positive variance of £496k to the approved budget. The greatest variance was due to higher interest rates being received.</p> <p>The variance against the actuarial valuation is circa £122k.</p> <p>Electricity costs had reduced by £10k and the water costs had increased significantly from £22k to £34k.</p> <p>£77k had been spent on planned maintenance against the provision for £144k.</p> <p>Exam costs had decreased and were £27k under budget. The DFO agreed to check why this was the case.</p>	<p>DFO</p>



<p>7.09 The surplus for the year was £1.8m which was higher than the £1.5m expected in July 2025.</p> <p>7.10 An additional £15k had been allocated to the budget from the DfE for the Principal's work as a National Leader of Education. The Chair noted that this would need to be ratified by Corporation, and they would need to know how this is being handled and dealt with in the accounts. The DFO reported that there were strict guidelines on how this can be spent, and this grant can be clawed back if it is not spent.</p> <p>7.11 The surplus approved in July had been £331k, however, this had now increased to £406k.</p> <p>7.12 Student Numbers Next year's budget would be based on 2869 students if the current students are all still on roll at the October census date.</p> <p>7.13 The Chair commented that the budget continued to be well-managed and noted the appreciation of the committee for the work of the DFO and the finance team.</p>	
<p>9.00 WEST YORKSHIRE PENSION FUND</p> <p>9.01 A paper had been provided regarding the lobby to reduce employer contributions to the Local Government Pension Scheme.</p> <p>9.02 The DFO reported that a group of MATs were challenging the LGPS as they believe the LGPS is too cautious in investment strategies and employer contributions are too high. By reducing employer contributions this would put more money into communities.</p> <p>9.03 ISIO believes that the employer contributions are too high and by reducing these savings of around £220k per year could be made.</p> <p>9.04 Notre Dame could join the lobby at Stage 2 for £4k.</p> <p>9.05 Q: What does the fee include? A: The college would be involved in all meetings, and its name would be submitted to West Yorkshire Pension Fund. The savings could be substantial.</p> <p>9.06 Q: Are there any Catholic MATs involved in the lobby? A: Yes, one of the largest Catholic MATs is involved.</p> <p>9.07 Q: Would we be the only 16-19 college involved? A: We would be the only standalone one.</p>	

9.08	A governor suggested that rather than joining the lobby another option could be to write to a councillor for support. The DFO explained that ISIO have advised that here is too much wealth in the pension fund and it should be distributed. Someone with experience and actuarial knowledge is needed to do this.	
9.09	The Chair commented that the lobbying would come from the perspective of fairness as the college is paying more than is required.	
9.10	The DFO noted that the triennial valuation is due in April 2026 and ISIO want to reduce the contributions before that date.	
9.11	Agreed: To recommend to Corporation that Notre Dame joins the lobby to reduce employer pension contributions.	
10.00	POLICIES	
10.01	The following policies were presented for approval:	
10.02	Employee Magistrates Service Agreed: That the Employee Magistrates Policy is approved.	
10.03	Health & Safety Policy Statement to include TIAA amendments The Health and Safety policy had been approved at the previous meeting. The DFO reported that TIAA had recommended an overarching policy. Comments from TIAA had been included in the policy. Agreed: That the updated Health & Safety Policy Statement is approved.	
10.04	International Students Policy Q: Has there been a response from Stone King on the policy. A: (DFO) Stone King have reviewed the policy, however, some anomalies arose at enrolment which will be added into the policy. Agreed: That the International Students Policy is approved subject to input from Stone King.	
10.05	A governor commented that some questions around visas had arisen regarding other students who are not international sponsored students and suggested that thought would need to be given to a successor policy when the International Students department is wound down.	
10.06	It was agreed that clarification would be sought from Stone King on whether the policy would be better renamed International Sponsored Students policy.	
11.00	PREMISES & ESTATES	
11.01	Q: Has the issue with the trees resulted in an overall delay?	

<p>11.02</p> <p>11.03</p> <p>11.04</p> <p>11.05</p> <p>11.06</p>	<p>A: A contingency has been put in place for the January exams. Leeds Planning have said that there cannot be any cement pouring until Tree Care have submitted a report.</p> <p>Q: Who needs to make a decision on the next steps? A: The Quantity Surveyors. If there is a five-week delay this will incur costs.</p> <p>Q: Have you submitted a statement of the knock-on effect of the delay, and can we make representation on the educational effects?</p> <p>The Principal and DFO agreed to draft a report and send to the project managers.</p> <p>It was reported that the CCTV and Lockdown system were all working well.</p> <p>Quotes had been sought for the Sports Hall roof repairs. The DFO noted the difficulty in obtaining 3 quotes for the work. The first quote received had been for £50k.</p>	<p>Principal/DFO</p>
<p>12.00</p>	<p>SIXTH FORM PAY DIFFERENTIAL – Confidential Item This item was deemed as confidential and is reported in the Confidential Part II minutes.</p>	
<p>13.00</p> <p>13.01</p>	<p>RISK ASSESSMENT The Chair noted that risks pertaining to the following areas had been discussed during the meeting: International Students, and current property development and the planning issue.</p>	
<p>14.00</p>	<p>ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS There were no items of Any Other Business raised.</p>	
<p>15.00</p> <p>15.01</p> <p>15.02</p>	<p>DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING Tuesday 2 December 2025. This will be a joint meeting with the Audit Committee.</p> <p>It was agreed to move the February committee meeting to 10 February 2026.</p>	

The meeting closed at 7.36pm.