NOTRE DAME CATHOLIC SIXTH FORM COLLEGE
MINUTES FROM THE STRATEGIC GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE
TUESDAY 27 JANUARY 2026 AT 5.00PM

PRESENT	John Barnes (Committee Chair &Vice Chair of Corporation) David Wright (Chair of Finance & Resources) Father Michael Hall (Chair of Corporation)	Justine Barlow (Principal)

IN ATTENDANCE: Karen Petrillo (DFO)
Denise Hark (Clerk to the Corporation)

Quorum – two governors

Father Michael opened the meeting with a prayer.

1.00 1.01	**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND MEMBERSHIP MATTERS** Apologies for absence were received from Paul Casey.	**ACTION**
2.00 2.01	**DECLARATION OF INTERESTS** *Governors must declare any changes or potential conflicts of interest in items on the agenda.* There were no declarations of interest made.	
3.00 **3.01** **3.02** **3.03**	**MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING** The minutes from the previous meeting held on 10 September 2025 were **agreed** as a correct record. **Q**: Further to minute 3.06, will the Appraisal policy go to the February Finance & Resources Committee for approval? **A**: (JBW) The college is still waiting for the SFCA to publish the Sixth Form Senior Pay Policy. Once this has been published specifics around senior post holder appraisal, pay awards and rights of appeal will be incorporated into Notre Dame's existing appraisal policy. It was confirmed that the non-consolidated pay discussed at minute 6.05 has been paid to staff.	
4.00 **4.01**	**ACADEMISATION – Confidential Item** This item was deemed as confidential and is reported in the confidential Part II minutes.	
5.00 **5.01**	**ESTATES STRATEGY REPORT** A written report had been circulated with the papers for the meeting. The report highlighted the current position regarding the size of the accommodation and number of students on roll.	

5.02	At the census date 2025 there were 2875 students on roll, with 85%+ utilisation. This meant that there was no flexibility with classrooms and crossover times were busy. If a similar number of students are enrolled in 2026 this will result in 2940 students on roll with 92% utilisation with no specific growth strategy.	
5.03	The DFO reported that as the current building work does not give more utilisation capacity a formal interest has been lodged in acquiring the building at 8 St Mark's Avenue. If Notre Dame is successful with this the building would need to be demolished and could be replaced by Portakabins. If this route were followed this would alleviate utilisation back to 80% as it would be able to provide 8 to 10 additional classrooms**.**	
5.04	**Q**: Is the utilisation reducing to 80% relating to increased student numbers? **A**: Space is needed for the current number of students. Natural growth is expected to be 60 students per year.	
5.05	The Principal noted that the college wants to retain standards and the college's mission and ethos.	
5.06	AHR had advised that 8 St Mark's Avenue could accommodate 16 to 18 classrooms but there would be cost implications.	
5.07	Another option would be to remodel the Trinity building. This would allow the opportunity for up to 15 classrooms; however, post-16 capacity funding would need to be secured.	
5.08	The Chair of Finance & Resources commented that it was important to have a conversation at Board level to get a view on the appetite for growth. He added that colleges no longer have the ability to borrow commercially and there were some concerns around accessing capital funding.	
5.09	The Chair of Corporation noted a concern around continuous growth which may be a risk to the college's outstanding offer and could weaken its character.	
5.10	The Chair of Committee noted the benefit of the Portakabin model which allows for flexibility and allows a response to demographics.	
5.11	The Chair of Finance & Resources commented that if St Anne's is prepared to break up the estate into different lots the college could consider the purchase of both 8 and 6 St Mark's Avenue.	
5.12	**Q**: Is the land freehold? **A:** This is unknown, however, the understanding in the valuation report indicates that it is freehold. This would need to be ascertained during due diligence.	
5.13	It was suggested that a discussion session takes place half an hour before the Corporation meeting in March to get the Board's view on expansion. This may	

	result in a task and finish group. The Chair of Finance & Resources commented that consultancy support to the Board may be required.	
5.14	The DFO had prepared a draft scenario of the budget if student numbers remain at the current level. This was discussed.	
5.15	The DFO noted that she had approached the DfE regarding the potential purchase of a building and they had confirmed that this would not be viewed as a novel or contentious transaction.	
5.16	If Notre Dame is able to secure 8 St Mark's Avenue the replacement with Portakabins could be paid over 5 years interest free which would be a good opportunity for college not to drain resources. The DFO added that she would need a steer from the Board on what level of reserves they are willing to release.	
5.17	**Agreed:** That a discussion takes place prior to the next Corporation meeting, once a response on the building purchase has been received from St Anne's.	
6.00 **6.01**	**LESSONS LEARNED REPORT – Confidential item** This item was deemed as confidential and is reported in the confidential Part II minutes.	
7.00 **7.01**	**GOVERNOR RECRUITMENT AND SUCCESSION PLANNING** The Chair of Corporation reported that he had spoken with David Ellis (Parent Governor) to see if he would be interested into moving into a Co-opted Governor position once his term of office expires as Parent Governor. He has indicated that he wishes to be considered for this position.	
7.02	**Agreed**: To propose to Corporation that David Ellis moves from Parent Governor to Co-opted Governor.	
7.03	There will be vacancies for two Foundation Governors from mid-February. A discussion took place on the various attempts undertaken previously to attract applicants for these positions. The Principal suggested that she could include in the newsletter the skills set that Corporation is looking for to see whether this might get some interest.	
7.04	The Chair of Corporation reported that he had contacted all governors to see if anyone would like to become a member of the Audit Committee, but he had not received any positive responses. He added that he was planning to hold one-to-one meetings with governors to look at the skills of the team.	
7.05	The Chair of Finance & Resources reported that he intended to step down as Chair after the next meeting and would raise this at the next meeting of Finance & Resources. He added that he would stay on the committee and provide support.	

8.00	**GOVERNOR SKILLS AUDIT**	
8.01	A report had been prepared following the recent Governor Skills Audit.	
8.02	It was noted that an area of expertise which was lacking on the Corporation was Estates Management. This is an area which could be advertised as being a preferred skill when recruiting new governors.	
8.03	Other areas which were identified as needing strengthening were around audit and risk management.	
8.04	It was planned to address risk management through training, and a number of governors were planning to attend SFCA webinars on risk management during February.	
9.00	**PROGRESS ON EXTERNAL REVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS**	
9.01	A report was presented by the Clerk on progress on the External Review report.	
9.02	Further to recommendation 1.4 of the report, the Committee was keen to keep under review the possibility of co-opting additional people, with extensive skills in finance or estates, as committee members to the Audit and Finance & Resources Committee.	
9.03	The Chair of Corporation reported that in order to improve participation from student governors, the meeting of the Chair, Principal and Clerk had discussed whether it may be advantageous that student governors were not the Chair and Vice Chair of the Student Executive and that the role of student governors were distinct roles on the Student Executive. The Chair and Vice Chair of the Student Executive had a full workload with these roles without the added responsibility of being a student governor.	
9.04	The Principal agreed to raise this with Helen Collins who facilitates the supervision of the Student Executive with the view to look into the student governor appointment procedures for the next academic year.	Principal
9.05	The Chair of Finance & Resources (DW), who is a National Leader of Governance and carries out external reviews on behalf of the AoC, noted that in the next round of external reviews there would be more of a stringent focus on Board and team development and measuring the impact of the Board on college life. He advised that as the next external review would need to take place by June 2027, planning for this should commence in the Autumn term 2026.	
9.06	**Action:** Planning for the next external review to be agenda item for the committee meeting in September 2026.	Clerk
9.07	**Agreed:** That progress against recommendations from the external review 2024 should be kept under review and that an updated progress report should be an agenda item for each meeting.	Clerk

10.00 **10.01** **10.02** **10.03**	**GOVERNOR TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT** The Governor Training and Development record for the current academic year had been circulated with the papers for the meeting. A governor commented that there were a number of gaps for some governors and suggested that they may have overlooked the fact that training carried out elsewhere would count towards their professional development as a governor. **Agreed**: That the Clerk should update the Governor Training and Development record and include it as an item on the March Corporation meeting.	 Clerk
11.00 **11.01** **11.02** **11.03** **11.04**	**STRATEGY AWAY DAY** The Chair of Corporation offered to facilitate a session at the Strategy Away Day in June focusing on skills which governors bring to a team and to build the governance team which would probably have a significant number of new members at that point. The Principal suggested that LJ, Assistant Principal could present a session on how to ask professional challenging questions of a proactive nature. The Principal noted that she would like to invite the Associate Assistant Principals to the Strategy Day to enhance their experience of working strategically. It was **agreed** that the two sessions discussed should be presented by the Chair of Corporation and the Assistant Principal (LJ) and that there should be flexibility around a further session to allow for any areas which may arise in the meantime.	
12.00 **12.01**	**CONFIDENTIAL ITEM- REPORT FROM PRINCIPAL'S APPRAISAL** This item was deemed as confidential and is reported in the confidential Part II minutes.	
13.00 13.01	**ANY OTHER BUSINESS** There were no items of Any Other Business raised.	
14.00 14.01	**DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING** Tuesday 12 May 2026 at 5.00pm on Microsoft Teams.	

The meeting closed at 6.48pm.