



# Ripon Grammar School Governors

## Full Governing Board Meeting - Minutes

Monday 22nd March 2021, 7:00pm, MStTeams

### MINUTES

The chair welcomed all to the meeting.

#### 1. In attendance

Elizabeth Jarvis (EJ) Chair, Eric Medway (ERM), Stephen Williams (SW), David Ball (DB), Kirstin Wood (KW), Andrea Edmondson (AE), Matthew Bean (MB), Stephen Chaplin (SC), Richard Grime (RG), Tom Cavell-Taylor (TCT), Vikki Barton-Brown (VBB), Mike Chambers (MC), David Winspear (DW), Jonathan Webb (JMW).

#### 2. Apologies (with consent)

Helen Stiles (HS)

#### 3. Declarations of Interest

None

#### 4. Minutes of the last FGB meeting held on 7 December 2020

These were approved as a true and correct record (proposed by DB, seconded by ERM). There were no matters arising.

#### 5. Headmaster's Report

JMW was thanked for his comprehensive report - submitted prior to the meeting. Governors were delighted to hear of the smooth re-opening of school - and congratulated JMW and the staff team on their huge efforts and achievements during the period of closure - but also on the operation to get students back into school.

The lateral flow testing within school, led by Mrs Keelan-Edwards, and supported by staff and parent volunteers had received excellent feedback and governors noted that all the tests had been negative. The number of students not engaging in testing was small and, following the in school exercise, the majority of students were participating in home testing and reporting results into school using the required methods.

Governors asked about the arrangements for boarding and were reassured to hear how the processes were being adapted to enable 'home testing' within the boarding houses.

Governors asked about the school's response to the Ofqual announcement re public exam grading. Governors were reassured to hear that the school would continue to use the professional judgement of staff members along with the robust evidence already in place to ensure that an accurate, truthful assessment of likely attainment would be made for each student. Governors were also reassured to hear that, irrespective of any media speculation the school would not under any circumstances look to artificially inflate grades, and would stand by the principles of moral integrity and professionalism, for which there was unanimous support.

The forthcoming NYCC safeguarding review was noted. Governors were updated on the detail of this, and offered their support in attending the meetings as required. EJ assured governors of detailed feedback on the outcomes of the review.

Numbers on roll were noted - with 931 students on roll at the time of the meeting (4 students have left the school since the last meeting - all have registered with new schools, 1 is currently being home schooled).

## **6. Admissions for September 2021**

- a. Year 7 - 117 offers have been made - of whom 87 are in catchment, 37 out of catchment with 14 boarders.
- b. Year 9 - 35 students were tested for entry, 15 offers have been made - 3 of which are for boarding places.
- c. Year 12 - 124 external and 127 internal applications with 43 external boarding applications. 75 offers have been made - 35 of which are for boarding places.

## **7. Boarding Numbers**

Current boarding numbers are at 81 - but with projections for next year in the region of 100-105.

Governors, though delighted to hear of the increasing boarding numbers predicted for next year, noted the need for the development of additional accommodation should these numbers come to fruition.

It was agreed that a deadline for confirmation of places and payment of boarding deposits would be set for Friday 26th March 2021. This would then allow plans to be enacted and funding allocated to convert existing space within School House into a new annex, should boarding numbers justify this.

## **8. Financial Matters**

### **a. Budget 2020-2021: monitoring reports and update on items of major expenditure including any for FGB approval, plus deviations**

SW presented a detailed review of the papers circulated prior to the meeting. Governors were informed of the worsening financial situation with an in-year balance of c. -£74k (compared to the -£64k projected at the December FGB meeting). This is a result of the income reduction from boarding due to the period of school closure - parents paid 33% of the boarding fees for this period.

Governors were also informed that the planned accrued income as a result of catering was in doubt - and negotiations were taking place between the school and CH&Co regarding their adherence to the contract. This figure has not been included in the balance and so the potential deficit is c. £24k worse.

### **b. Start Budget 2021-2022**

SW presented the start budget, for the next financial year - based on an assumption of more normality - a recovery in lettings (including the 3G pitch), an increasing in boarding numbers (98 projected). £157k has provisionally been allocated to the capital budget but this is uncommitted and the nature of the projects is yet to be determined.

Based on these assumptions, a £45k in year balance is projected.

SW reassured the FGB that the assumptions had been tested and rigorously reviewed by the F&P committee.

Governors asked about the impact of boarding numbers on the overall budget - and the potential need for capital investment to accommodate additional numbers. Governors were supportive of this principle though all agreed that any expenditure would need to be based on a firm commitment to boarding (ie deposits) from those accepting offers. TCT reminded the board of the need for flexibility in determining accommodation for boarders.

### c. School Business Manager

EJ presented a proposal for a school business manager - highlighting the time spent by the the Headmaster and SLT on non-student focussed activities (contract management, negotiations, procurement, HR, H&S, Lettings).

There was unanimous support for the work currently being delivered by SLT. However all noted that the school has evolved over the last five years - and a new member of the SLT - who had the capability, capacity and responsibility to lead, manage and co-ordinate all key support functions and thereby deliver a high quality and efficient business support service would liberate the Headmaster and SLT to focus on the education and wellbeing of the students, and likely allow us to generate efficiencies and savings.

An outline job description was approved in principle and governors agreed to EJ, ERM , SW and JMW developing the proposal further and responsibility delegated to the F+P committee.

It was noted that a role of this magnitude would have a financial impact - but all agreed that this could be offset quickly by the savings incurred as a consequence of having the correct incumbent in position.

**ACTION EJ, SW, JMW**

## 9. Strategic Items (report on progress to date)

### a. SEF and SDP

The SEF was presented by JMW. It was noted that the school is self assessing at Grade 1 in all areas. Governors asked about areas for development and improvement, noting that grade 1 does not equate to perfection - but a consistently high standard - and agreed with the rankings.

The SDP was also reviewed - which is informed by the SEF. The Board agreed on the identified school development priorities and were pleased to see the progress made on a number of areas (uniform, pastoral management, curriculum) since the last meeting.

It was agreed that the co-curricular priorities and the estates development priorities should be included within the SDP and also the ambition to appoint a business manager (based on the identified priority to improve the business within school and also free up SLT to deliver on the priorities relating directly to staff and student development).

JMW was asked to ensure that governors could view progress within the document (so adding in progress measure column).

**ACTION: JMW**

### b. Estates Development Plan

1. JMW presented the EDP for the next year - a detailed document with multiple projects. Projects have been prioritised for the next year including
  - creation of the Housemaster accommodation within School House for September 2021
  - development of an inclusion hub (located in the former boys cloak room) - near to the reception of school. This is being funded by NYCC - to support provision for a SEN student commencing September 2021. Governors were assured this was fully funded and on track for completion in time.
  - boarding accommodation - to enable expansion of boarding numbers

Whilst the above priorities have been identified as immediate - governors recognised the other projects including IT upgrades, security and car parking. It was noted that the capital funding for projects for next

year is as yet unallocated and - should boarding numbers not exceed current demands - funding will be re-directed to other areas.

### **c. Estate Development Group Update**

DB updated governors on the work ongoing with the appointed architects evaluating options for the development of a new dining facility and assembly/performance space. Three options have been presented by the architects - of which none were felt to be entirely satisfactory by the estates development group.

Negotiations continue with the architects with a plan to bring the proposal to the next FGB to gain a steer from governors as to the next steps

**ACTION - EDG/JMW**

## **10. 3G Pitch**

The 3G pitch remains unusable by external agencies - due to a prohibition of lettings put in place by NYCC, pending the completion of (yet to be approved) sound and light mitigation works by Persimmon Homes. At the time of the meeting JMW reported that a proposal had been submitted to NYCC by Persimmon for such works. Post meeting - this has been rejected by the EHO - and further letters of protest have been received by Mr and Mrs Ratcliffe (local residents).

**ACTION - JMW has met with NYCC planning representative and Persimmon Homes and a further submission has been made.**

Governors continue to be frustrated at the current state of play. The 3G pitch is not able to be used by members of the community (as per the community use agreement) and there is a loss of lettings income to the school.

## **11. Safeguarding Audit**

This has been completed - led by Miss Murray, DSL, but with input from governors. This was approved by the Board.

## **12. Governor Complaints/Appeals**

None

## **13. Governors' Committees**

### **a. Reports**

#### **i. Admissions Committee**

ERM reported on the recent admissions committee meetings which had focussed on the Y9 applications - of which there had been 34, resulting in 15 offers being made.

#### **ii. Boarding Committee**

MB reported on recent boarding activity - the focus of which was the implementation of the staffing structure by appointing a senior housemaster for School House. New induction material has been prepared for boarding staff and students, with standard operating procedures relating to records, handover and communication between both houses. Governors were pleased to hear of the positive environment in both houses, with students settling back into boarding quickly after the period of closure. Feedback from parents has been positive.

There has been recent concern regarding the quality of catering for boarding students - this is being raised with CH&Co; similarly the reports of inconsistency in the supply of hot water to some showers in School House is being addressed by the premises manager.

### **iii. Curriculum Committee**

The curriculum committee had approved the introduction of politics at A-level from September 2021 - reporting that this subject would be served by existing members of the teaching staff with no additional costs.

The introduction of PE at GCSE was approved in principle though uncertainty regarding the delivery of this with current staffing means that the start date for this is unconfirmed.

ERM reported that a presentation was heard from the Head of MFL - in which the concept of trying to increase the uptake of German as a second language was discussed. Whilst keen on this as a concept, governors were not comfortable with any change which meant students were allocated to either Spanish or German without choice and did **not** approve this proposal..

The revised policy for the acceptable use of IT in school, for staff, students and governors was approved. Governors were directed to ensure their adherence with this.

### **iv. Finance and Personnel Committee**

SW reported on the meetings held in February and March - particular highlights included the progress in the securing of overdue boarding fees. The SFVS exercise has been completed and approved by the committee and submitted to NYCC.

It has been agreed that a school internal finance audit will be undertaken - reviewing all aspects of boarding fee processing and records. This will be undertaken by an external agency.

### **v. Pastoral Committee**

The Head Boy and Head Girl along with the lead for wellbeing attended the pastoral meeting and reported on their work to date along with aspirations for the rest of the year - focussing on mental health and interventions.

### **vi. Premises Committee**

Governors had heard about the impact of classroom air quality on learning and behaviour. Though influential, the good air quality around school - and the ability to ensure adequate ventilation in the most part, meant that further interventions at this stage are unnecessary.

The committee had reviewed the impact of the exit from the MASS scheme associated with NYCC, and approved the Pet Policy.

### **b. Any urgent business from other committees**

None

### **c. Any Health and Safety issues arising from any committee that need to be brought to the FGB attention**

None

## **14. Policies for FGB Approval**

None

## **15. Governors with specific areas of responsibility**

### **a. Child Protection and Safeguarding Governor**

DW reported on the on-going work within school to ensure safeguarding remains the highest priority.

Governors were asked to note the need within the SDP to ensure site security was prioritised and noted the plan to ensure secure fencing around the perimeter. Governors were informed of the new CPOMMS software - specifically for safeguarding records - this is a secure sensitive data set which has been well received by the DSL and pastoral team and will facilitate safe and easy recording and information sharing where needed. The increase in cases of students needing additional support for their mental wellbeing and high levels of anxiety was reported - and DW reported on the levels of staff training in place to ensure this need is met within school. Governors were pleased to hear of recent PREVENT training, and of the support the school were able to access and receive from external agencies when required.

The School Safeguarding Audit has been completed - this has been reviewed by governors and was approved by the board.

**b. Staff Welfare**

KW reported on her meeting with HKE - where again levels of stress amongst staff members were higher than normal. Staff attendance is high - and engagement with online social events is also high.

**c. Inclusion Governor**

No report

**d. CEIAG Governor**

TCT reported on the huge efforts being put in place by the careers team to support students. Governors were pleased to hear of the success of the recent virtual careers fair. It was suggested that there may be requirements for more financial resource should the current constraints continue.

**e. H&S Governor**

DB reported no new H+S issues within school. The detailed and highly comprehensive risk assessments surrounding Covid-19 have been scrutinised by governors.

The new system of allocation of policies relating to H+S to governor committees has quickly become embedded and appears to be working well.

**16. Governors' training**

The NYCC dates for governor training were circulated. MB reported on his attendance at the training session on panel hearings, the slides of which are now available in SharePoint.

**17. Plan for gaining feedback from Y9 parents and Y13 leavers**

It was agreed that we would resume processes for obtaining feedback from Y9 parents and Y13 students next term. This would need to be via MSTeams.

**ACTION: ERM to liaise with HOY9 re invitations to parents to attend on line meeting**

**ACION: EJ to liaise with Mr Fell to arrange virtual meeting with Y13 students**

**18. Off-site visits and activities - for information and approval where necessary**

None - it was noted that the planned DofE expeditions over the Easter Vacation had been cancelled due to Covid restrictions.

**19. Calendar**

It is likely that a whole School prize giving will be scheduled, but will not involve external visitors for safety reasons.

Commemoration Service - whilst this has been booked in the cathedral - details are yet to be confirmed

**20. Any other business**

Nil

**21. Date of the Next Meeting 21 June 2021**

Approved 21 June 2021

ELizabeth Jarvis