



# Ripon Grammar School Governors

## Full Governing Board Meeting - MINUTES

Monday 20th June 2022

1. The Chair welcomed all to the meeting.

### 2. In attendance:

Elizabeth Jarvis (EJ) [chair], Eric Medway (ERM), Andrea Edmondson (AE), Matthew Bean (MB), Steve Chaplin (SC), Jonathan Webb (JMW), Robert O'Hare (RO'H), Dave Winspear (DW), Vikki Barton-Brown (VBB), Tom Cavell-Taylor (TCT), Kiran Fernandes (KF), Helen Stiles (HS), Graham Livesey (GL)

### 3. Apologies:

Richard Grime, David Ball, Josh Stott (all with consent)

### 4. Minutes of the Meeting from 21 March 2022 and 27 April 2022

These, circulated prior the meeting (Papers 03a and 03b) were approved (proposed SC, seconded MB).

### 5. Matters Arising

GL has agreed to take on the role of Clerk to the Governing Board with immediate effect. EJ thanked him for this - and noted that this will be reviewed in 1 year.

### 6. Governor Resignations

It was noted that Mr Steve Williams had resigned from the Board. This is coincident with this daughter's completion of her school career at RGS. All noted the strong and valuable contributions that Steve has made. Steve has been thanked by the Chair, Vice Chair and other members of the board.

### 7. Governor Code of Conduct

The Governor Standing Order and Code of Practice document (06)) was circulated prior to the meeting for review. EJ drew the attention of the whole board to the Governor Code of Conduct (Page 10). All in attendance unanimously agreed with the content as written and this was approved.

### 8. Headmaster's Report

The Head presented his comprehensive report in the form of a power point presentation (paper 07) which had not been made available to governors prior to the meeting due to workload. The presentation was well received and attracted numerous questions and discussions.

Particular areas of discussion included

#### a. Pupils on Role

It was noted that the numbers of sixth form applications had reduced compared to previous years with a higher number of internal students opting for alternative educational offerings.

Governors asked the Head for information on this - in particular data on destinations and reasons for non-application.

**ACTION - JMW to report data to admissions committee (28/9/22) prior to next FGB**

#### **b. Boarding Numbers**

Governors were delighted to note that projected boarding numbers for September 2022 are 100 - 60 female, and 40 male.

Governors asked

- i) Level of confidence of the Head in these numbers - sixth form offers have all been accepted and deposits received
- ii) What happens if those who have accepted offers withdraw? They will lose their deposits and we are continuing to follow up any enquiries
- iii) What is our maximum capacity for boarders? We can take up to 112 students
- iv) How secure is our boarding staffing structure? The team is now well established. The boarding strategy document is being worked up (following the boarding strategy meeting) which will include more detail on this. The Head reported the ongoing challenge of not being able to consistently recruit gap students who have previously been useful additions to the team. It was suggested that School explore options of recruiting post Y13 students (who are on a gap year) and also linkage with York University - could there be undergraduate/PGCE students who are interested in taking up such a role

**ACTION - JMW to coordinate**

#### **c. Staffing**

- i) Governors noted the recent resignation of a member of the art department - a permanent replacement will be advertised for January 2023 and the interim cover by supply. Governors asked about the impact on quality of teaching - JMW assured of the ability of the current HOD and her team to supervise any temporary staff, and would ensure exam groups in particular were carefully monitored.
- ii) There is a vacancy in chemistry, where interviews failed to recruit a suitable candidate for a permanent position, but a supply option has been identified
- iii) Governors were pleased to note the internal appointments and in particular the feedback from the Head that these were highly competitive across the board - with good numbers of applicants.  
It was suggested that this could be an indicator of good levels of motivation and be suggestive also that this could be a positive mark of staff wellbeing?
- iv) Governors were concerned that the Duke of Edinburgh Coordinator position had not been appointed to. They asked why this was unattractive, which could not be explained other than workload.  
It was suggested to the Head that he explored external solutions - including collaboration with other schools.

**ACTION - JMW to explore**

#### **d. Ofsted and NYCC SEA visits**

- i) JMW reported that Ofsted could present at any time.
- ii) NYCC SEA visit is planned for 27/6/22 with a deep dive planned in history and MFL. Governors noted feedback on this would be given via the Curriculum Committee  
The recent visit from the SEN advisor had been extremely positive and highlighted areas of exceptional practice,

- iii) HKE has undertaken work reviews with 11 departments over the year. Governors were pleased to be told that she felt overwhelmingly that the HOD had a good 'grip' of departmental activities, assuring the board of consistency of T&L throughout. ERM reminded the Board that the Curriculum Committee scrutinises this evidence in increasing detail and can confirm this.

#### **e. School Attendance**

Noting that attendance was generally good, governors asked for more detail regarding the reduced attendance level (86.7%) of our FSM cohort. It was reported that there was one student who had a 14% attendance rate - which had influenced the data set. Governors were assured that the individual concerned was receiving significant support from the SEND and pastoral teams, and appropriate external agencies were also involved.

#### **f. Boarding Matters**

TCT asked the Head about the impact of the increased numbers of boarding students on the staffing requirements within the Boarding Houses, and the impact of the increased numbers on the workload and wellbeing of existing staff.

JMW confirmed that with the projected boarding numbers, the staff numbers are compliant with the National Minimum Boarding Standards, but went on to describe potential changes in quality as staff/student ratios increase. This brought us back to discussions on how to recruit gap students etc.

Governors expressed concern regarding workload for the AHB and SHPs. JMW confirmed his strategy for increasing the input from teaching staff into boarding - including offering /asking for this at appointment.

Governors asked to explore whether we could include this within job descriptions/person specifications as 'desirable' attributes when recruiting teaching staff

**ACTION - JMW to explore with NYCC HR Business Partner**

Governors agreed that the presentation format was very useful and thanked the Headmaster for his on-going work and leadership of the school. It was agreed to use the same format for the next FGB, and the presentation slides will be included in the papers - made available 7 days before the meeting.

**ACTION - Chair/Headmaster**

### **9. Financial Matters**

#### **a) Income and Expenditure Report**

GL presented a series of slides to summarise the current situation

- i) The 2020-21 out-turn was £156,521- the Start Budget predicted an in-year deficit of c£50k to leave £106,443 [energy costs rising from c£138 to c£288k]
- ii) Latest monthly monitoring report suggest an improved position to c£137k – a positive variance on the start budget of c£30k- due to staff savings [unfilled positions]
- iii) The start budget for 2022/23 submitted was based on energy prices predicted on 15/6/22. Subsequent bills have given significant cause for concern and suggest a predicted energy charge of c£405k (£270k variance from start budget) - consuming all but £20k of school reserves.

- iv) Electricity standing charges have increased from 12p to around £30 per day and the gas estimated increase was initially 118% and is now >300%  
No additional funding has been allocated, but there is on-going lobbying by NYCC and other LAs to central government.
- v) Is our situation unique? No - but our site, our old fashioned heating systems, the need for 24/7 heating (boarding) and our swimming pool mean our challenges are even worse.
- vi) GL explained that his first recommendation is to undertake an urgent piece of work to evaluate energy use across the site and identify areas where use is particularly high. This was unanimously supported by governors - asking for data on high consumption areas across the site where there are opportunities for waste reduction. It was agreed this work should be prioritised.  
**ACTION - GL**
- vii) Governors asked for assurance on other waste reduction strategies - GL explained he was leading work with SLT looking at expenditure across the school and would come up with options for costs savings to be taken to the next finance meeting (scheduled for 4 July).
- viii) The Board were clear that they were happy to delegate responsibility for this to the F&P committee but were also happy to reconvene urgently to ensure decisions could be made.
- ix) It was agreed that the gravity of the situation needed to be shared with parents and students. It was noted that students are very keen to reduce energy wastage and are likely to be helpful with regards to this. Parents are to be invited to contribute to the activities fund by the Chair.  
**ACTION - EJ/GL/JMW**

#### **b. Capital expenditure proposals and approvals**

In light of the concerns regarding energy expenditure, it was agreed that decisions on capital projects should be put on hold. The planned development of an additional classroom on the current site of the staff room remains a priority - and whilst funding for this has been earmarked - it was felt, reluctantly, that the focus must be on energy cost saving investments. It was agreed that this would be delegated to the F&P committee meeting, with the caveat that extraordinary meetings for the FGB can be convened for further discussions or decision making.

### **10. Strategic Items**

#### **a. Governor Action Plan**

Following the governor strategy evening the Governor Action Plan (paper 09a) has been drafted. There were no questions on this but agreement on the content.

**ACTION - EJ, JMW, Committee Chairs to review actions.**

#### **b. Strategic Development Plan and SEF**

Due to time constraints this agenda item was deferred. Committee Chairs were asked to review sections relevant to them at the next meetings - and this will be a major agenda item for the October FGB meeting

**ACTION - committee chairs/EJ**

#### **c. Estates Strategy**

The draft estates strategy document (paper 09c) was circulated prior to the meeting for comment only. SC, ROH and GL were thanked for their huge contributions to this work. This document provides a framework for decision making and governance of this. Further work is planned on this in light of comments - and will be brought to FGB for approval.

**ACTION - SC/ROH/GL**

**d. Feedback on meeting with Y13 leavers**

Paper 09d summarised the feedback from this very positive meeting. Noted in particular, were comments regarding the marketing of boarding. These will be used within the Boarding Strategy Document. It was agreed that this was a useful exercise to gain feedback from students and will be repeated next year.

It was suggested that governors should also meet with Y11 leavers - given the reduction in applications.

**ACTION - EJ**

**e. Future Governance Arrangements**

JMW summarised the School's White Paper and Education Bill. It was noted that at the June FGB it was agreed that we should explore academisation further. Meetings have occurred between the Head and ERM/EJ. Discussions have taken place between local Grammar School Heads.

It was agreed that discussions should continue - the next step being a meeting between Heads and Board Chairs in September 2022, to discuss options around a Grammar School MAT.

Concerns were raised by governors regarding loss of identity, and potential loss of autonomy over time. It was agreed that careful negotiation of Heads of Terms would be required before entering any agreement.

**ACTION EJ/JMW**

**f. Future Committee Structure**

To ensure effective and efficient governance around decisions regarding capital developments and spends, as well as ensuring we can devote sufficient support to our community work, discussions are on-going between committee chairs regarding the roles/TOR of the premises, estates and F&P committees. It was agreed to continue this - with a view to working up a firm proposal for the October FGB meeting.

**ACTION ROH/SC**

**10. Co-options to the FGB**

EJ was co-opted to the Board for a 4 year term - proposed by ERM and seconded by AE.

**11. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair for the FGB**

The chair was taken by TCT as EJ and ERM (the only nominees for the positions left the room) EJ (proposed by HS and seconded by SC) was elected as Chair of the Board for a 2 year term.

ERM (Proposed by TCT and seconded by EJ) was elected as Vice Chair of the Board for a 1 year term.

Both accepted the nominations with gratitude.

## 12. Governor Complaints/Appeals

Whilst there were no on-going complaints, governors were asked to note two staff grievances - one of which has been resolved and the second having moved to a stage 3 governor appeal hearing. There are no themes relating the two.

## 13. Committee Membership and Vacancies

It was noted that the term of office for VBB, AE and DW end in the autumn, along with that for DB (co-opted) who has indicated he does not wish to stand.

There will therefore be parent governor elections early in the Autumn Term (3 vacancies), plus vacancies for three governor co-options and a LA governor. An expression of interest for the latter has been made - details to be confirmed for the October meeting.

**ACTION - EJ**

## 14. Governors' Committee

a. **Meetings since last FGB** - full notes were shared prior to the meeting (papers 14 i-v) - and accepted in full. Chairs of Committees highlighted the following :

### i. Admissions

EM reported the focus on Y11 applications for sixth form and the relatively high number of Y11 students not applying. The Head has undertaken to review the data and in particular analyse which groups, why, and their alternative destinations for presentation to the next meeting.

It had also been a concern that for Y7 entry, the number of FSM students is around 1/3 of that expected, with low numbers of applications from particular schools in the catchment area. The Headmaster has been asked to explore this and consider ways of engaging families and schools in poorly represented areas.

### ii. Boarding

During the most recent meeting concerns had been expressed by the AHB regarding staffing levels and in particular development needs of the non-teaching staff. She was to explore this further with the Head and DSO.

It was agreed that an annual check of the boarding medication audit would be undertaken

The AHB had undertaken to revise the 'suitability for boarding form' to ensure it was still fit for purpose

The Boarding Strategy Document is to be prepared over the summer term/break for sharing next term for governor comment.

### iii. Curriculum

The strategic academic priorities were reviewed - governors noted the appointment of a KS4 MFL coordinator with good uptake of German and Spanish in next year's Y10. The SEND action plan has been completed and the SEND report reviewed.

There is work to complete to ensure consistent line management of all academic departments.

The School day is being reviewed, and the delivery of the digital strategy is underway. Governors had reviewed predicted GCSE and A level grades and asked for assurance around interventions for the higher than expected number of low (<5) GCSE grades.

The curriculum committee had asked the Headmaster for assurance that lesson registration was completed by all - and that action would be taken to remedy any deviations from this as part of safeguarding responsibility of the committee.

The pupil premium spend was reviewed and governors were satisfied that the impact of this had enabled those benefitting to access all areas of the curricular and co-curricular life.

#### **iv. Finance & Personnel**

The focus of the meeting had been on the budget and impact of the energy costs. Review of the decision making processes re capital expenditure was discussed and the interrelationships between the various governor committees.

It was agreed that an audit of non-teaching roles within school would be undertaken in the autumn term to gain assurance that no changes to job descriptions/roles were required.

There were no outstanding boarding fees.

#### **v. Pastoral**

Heads of Years had attended this meeting and discussed issues relating to Year groups and across the school - noting the increased demands on pastoral staff to respond to the needs of students presenting with SEMH issues. The school pastoral officer also attended and described her role - in particular acting as a communication resource between boarding and day school - and parents, students and staff.

A presentation had been delivered by the Head of PSHCE - describing the new format for delivery of this at KS4 through dedicated teaching sessions in addition to tutor time, all overseen by the HOD - to assure consistency and full curriculum delivery.

#### **vi. Premises**

The committee discussed the development of the Estates Strategy which was now circulated to governors.

A meeting was planned with architects to discuss options with regards to progressing outline proposals for the major capital spend project

The committee had discussed in detail the investigation into the incident whereby a student climbed over a fence and sustained a significant injury. Given this was the second such incident concerns were raised regarding this as an unfortunate coincidence or something more serious. Advice from NYCC was being sought.

#### **b. Approval of Committee Chairs for 2022-2023**

The following were recommended, and unanimously approved as Committee Chairs for the next year.

Admissions - ERM

Boarding - MB

Curriculum - ERM

Finance and Personnel - ROH

Pastoral - TCT

Premises - SC

### **15. Safeguarding Report**

DW reported his meetings with the Deputy Head (Pastoral) to discuss safeguarding. The safeguarding action plan was complete and he was confident in the roll out of CPOMS and the plan to increase reporting from within.

He noted the retirement of MJM and the appointment of Mrs Keelan-Edwards as her replacement - who was already collaborating with other schools to ensure best practice. There were no new safeguarding concerns to bring to the attention of the FGB.

## **16. Health & Safety**

No governor report was available due to the absence of DB - it was noted that the school H&S committee is now meeting termly.

This is chaired by GL who reported

- 3 serious incidents this term- 2 investigated with implemented recommendations
- Minor and major accidents continued to be monitored
- Some adaptations made to Chemistry prep room to improve work space for technician- looking at possible re-structuring of space if finance allows.

Governors asked about the serious incidents - one was an injury relating to a student climbing over the boundary fence. Governors asked about changes to the fence to prevent a repercussion, mindful of a similar incident 3 years ago. It was noted that the incident was reviewed in detail at the premises meetings and that advice from NYCC was being sought regarding further measures. In the mean time signage has been adjusted and significant education through tutor time on the potential on-site dangers is being delivered to students.

**ACTION - Premises Committee/GL**

## **17. Policies for FGB Approval**

None

## **18. Governors with Areas of Responsibility**

### **a. Staff Wellbeing**

AE expressed her concern that this important area of governor work was not been given appropriate time or priority. It was agreed that additional agenda capacity needed to be sought for this. She expressed her frustration at the lack of progress with the work she had planned.

All agreed that this work (as evidenced within the Governor Action Plan) is a priority. It was agreed that a working group would be assembled of governors and staff to move this forward.

**ACTION - EJ/AE/JMW**

### **b. Inclusion**

HS presented the SEND report to governors, which was approved. She reported her direct interactions with Head of Inclusion and her observation of practice and interaction with the students; all of which had assured her of good practice. She reported the recent feedback from the SEA which had highlighted areas of exceptional practice.

HS reported the increasing demands on the SEND team with higher numbers of students presenting with additional needs. This may require additional resource in the future but the current practice was working well.

### **c. CEIAG**

The Board recorded its thanks to Mrs Locke who retires as Head of Careers after years of distinguished service to the School. TCT reported the particular success of the Y10 work experience programme, led by a highly motivated HOY 10. Feedback from students and employers has been outstanding.



### **19. FGB Self Review**

ERM is coordinating a single self-review which includes committees. Governors were asked to complete this by end of August

**ACTION - ALL**

### **20. Calendar**

- a. A draft calendar for the year has been circulated - ensuring meetings are timed to allow flow of decisions and ability to report back. It was agreed that at least one meeting of each committee per year will be online. ERM was thanked for his work on this.
- b. Speech Day - 21 July 2022 - 2pm in school
- c. Commemoration Service - 22 July 2022 - 11am - Ripon Cathedral

### **21. Any other Business**

None

### **22. Date of Next Meeting**

10 October 2022 in School

**Approved 10/10/22**

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized initial 'L' followed by a long horizontal stroke.